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THE WOODROW WILSON FOUNDATION

A Tribute to a Great American

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A Tribute to a Great American

FOREWORD

“Do you covet distinction? You will never get it by serving yourself. Do you covet honor? You will get it only as a servant of mankind.”

—*Woodrow Wilson's Address at
Swarthmore College, October 5, 1913.*

THE world is poorer for the men and wealth that were poured into the furnaces of war. It is richer for the regenerated spirit of idealism that burnishes the record of four terrible years, and the leader of that spiritual force which enlisted the hopes of mankind was an American—Woodrow Wilson.

Woodrow Wilson saw beyond the momentous conflict of his day and made clear to men certain ideals of world relationship that helped them to prosecute the ugly business of war until victory rested with the peoples of democracy. Plain men, the men in the ranks, had begun to believe that the world had come to a pass where living was beyond endurance; yet they felt, vaguely maybe, that they were fighting and dying to establish some principle of human freedom which would in effect constitute a rebirth of civilization. It remained for the American to become their highly articulate spokesman. By word and deed he clarified the issue so that all the world could see it as a struggle between democracy and autocracy.

Those years are rapidly receding into the back-

ground. Woodrow Wilson has passed from the political stage. Much that he set out to do is still undone. Some believe that he failed utterly. But the number grows, and will continue to grow, of those who see through the confusion of conflicting opinion to the epic fight of an American for a great American ideal—for democracy and human freedom.

Any student of Mr. Wilson's life, any undertaking related to him, must come to consider this question: What is the motive that actuated him in his public life? His ideals have been published to the world; but what is the source from which they come? The answer seems to be found in those prophetic words uttered early in his first term as President of the United States. "Do you covet distinction? You will never get it by serving yourself. Do you covet honor? You will get it only as a servant of mankind."

The Foundation created in his name can find no better watchwords.

ORIGIN OF THE FOUNDATION

On Christmas Eve, 1920, a group of women met to consider what was then a nebulous wish to pay some sort of a tribute to the man who was shortly to leave the White House. There was no doubt in their minds as to the verdict of history; rather the thought was to establish a precedent, if possible, and honor a great American while he lived. Great men had seldom been so honored. Indeed, it was the fairly well established custom to sadden their lives with abuse and make amends later.

The thought of a tribute of some sort was discussed

among the women and then presented to a group of men, friends of Mr. Wilson and former members of his official family. Finally, within two weeks after Mr. Wilson had become a private citizen, there was a great winter's day meeting at a New York hotel where the wish became a fact, where the nebulous desire to honor him while he lived became the very real plan to create the Woodrow Wilson Foundation.

AMERICA'S OWN NOBEL PRIZES

The materialized idea has been developed far beyond the thought of a tribute to the former President. It is to be that, of course, but chiefly it is to perpetuate his ideals of democracy and human freedom, and in such form as to be both an inspiration and a reward to other men whose ambition it is to "enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement."

The Foundation is to be, in words now widely familiar:

"Created in recognition of the national and international services of Woodrow Wilson, twice President of the United States, who furthered the cause of human freedom and was instrumental in pointing out effective methods for the cooperation of the liberal forces of mankind throughout the world.

"The Award or Awards from the income of the Foundation will be made from time to time by a nationally constituted committee to the individual or group that has rendered within a specific period, meritorious service to democracy, public welfare, liberal thought or peace through justice."

In brief, America is to have its own Nobel Prizes.

WHERE THE AWARDS WILL COME FROM

Conceived on a propitious day, the movement to establish the Woodrow Wilson Foundation has become nation-wide in the months that have passed since Christmas, 1920. A national organization has been created, with representation in every state, to raise the permanent endowment that is to make possible America's awards for distinguished public service.

The method of raising the endowment will not be the familiar "drive" of war time; the appeal which will be issued beginning January 16, 1922, will be framed rather in the spirit of a free-will offering. Drive methods will not be necessary, it is believed, to rally Americans to the support of an American institution, created in honor of a great American, dedicated to the perpetuation of American ideals. The organization has been developed on a national scale simply to present to as many people as possible the opportunity to share in the founding of an institution that will play a significant part in the world's progress toward a higher civilization.

The goal is one million dollars or more. One million dollars represents a gift of one cent from each inhabitant of the United States, and an endowment so widely subscribed is the ideal at least toward which the energies of the Foundation organization are directed. Woodrow Wilson was the spokesman for the liberal thought of the world, but for America particularly. His ideals are American ideals. His principles of democracy and human freedom are the principles upon which the republic is founded. It seems fitting that this undertaking should be created

by the free-will offering of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of the United States. A Foundation so created is the objective.

The founding of an institution which is to be a significant demonstration of America's belief in idealism is an historical occasion, and to be commemorated as such. An emblem has been adopted which will permanently represent the spirit of the Foundation. The central feature of the emblem is a portrait of Woodrow Wilson.

A number of reproductions of this emblem have been struck off in the form of certificates to be presented to subscribers to the endowment. They will mark the recipient as one of the founders, and they will be treasured for their artistic value as well as their historical significance.

HOW THE AWARDS WILL BE ADMINISTERED

It is the present purpose of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation to raise the endowment. When that has been done a board of trustees composed of eminent Americans will be appointed and entrusted with the administration of the fund and the granting of the awards for "meritorious service to democracy, public welfare, liberal thought or peace through justice."

No attempt has been made at this time to settle the question of the permanent home of the Foundation, specific kinds of public service to be awarded or other matters concerning its future course. The present organization has considered its task to be the creation of the Foundation through the widespread support of the nation, leaving the board of trustees to

determine the policies with which they will be vitally concerned.

STEALING A MARCH UPON HISTORY

Maximilian Harden has said of the war and its aftermath: "Only one conqueror's work will endure—Wilson's thought."

Wilson's thought and work were for "the voiceless mass of men who merely go about their daily tasks, try to be honorable, try to serve the people they love, try to live worthy of the great communities to which they belong." Upon that fundamental ideal all his public acts were premised. He was a servant of mankind. History will so regard him—but in the meantime the Woodrow Wilson Foundation offers an opportunity to steal a march upon history.

Some Appraisals of Mr. Wilson

WOODROW WILSON'S PLACE IN HISTORY

*By General the Right Honorable Jan Christian Smuts,
Premier of the Union of South Africa*

Pretoria, South Africa, January 8, 1921

It has been suggested that I should write a short estimate and appraisal of the work of President Wilson on the termination of his Presidency of the United States of America. I feel I must comply with the suggestion. I feel I may not remain silent when there is an opportunity to say a word of appreciation for the work of one with whom I came into close contact at a great period and who rendered the most signal service to the great human cause.

There is a great saying of Mommsen (I believe) in reference to the close of Hannibal's career in failure and eclipse: "On those whom the gods love they lavish infinite joys and infinite sorrows." It has come back to my mind in reference to the close of Wilson's career. For a few brief moments he was not only the leader of the greatest State in the world: he was raised to far giddier heights and became the center of the world's hopes. And then he fell, misunderstood and rejected by his own people, and his great career closes apparently in signal and tragic defeat.

What is the explanation for this tremendous tragedy, which is not solely American, which closely concerns the whole world? Of course, there are purely American elements in the explanation which I am not competent to speak on. But besides the American quarrel with President Wilson there is something to be said on the great matters in issue. On these I may be permitted to say a few words.

The position occupied by President Wilson in the world's imagination at the close of the great war and

at the beginning of the peace conference was terrible in its greatness. It was a terrible position for any mere man to occupy. Probably to no human being in all history did the hopes, the prayers, the aspirations of many millions of his fellows turn with such poignant intensity as to him at the close of the war. At a time of the deepest darkness and despair, he had raised aloft a light to which all eyes had turned. He had spoken divine words of healing and consolation to a broken humanity. His lofty moral idealism seemed for a moment to dominate the brutal passions which had torn the Old World asunder. And he was supposed to possess the secret which would remake the world on fairer lines. The peace which Wilson was bringing to the world was expected to be God's peace. Prussianism lay crushed: brute force had failed utterly. The moral character of the universe had been signally vindicated. There was a universal vague hope in a great moral peace, of a new world order arising visibly and immediately on the ruins of the old. This hope was not a mere superficial sentiment. It was the intense expression at the end of the war of the inner moral and spiritual force which had upborne the peoples during the dark night of the war and had nerved them in an effort almost beyond human strength. Surely, God had been with them in that long night of agony. His was the victory; His should be the peace. And President Wilson was looked upon as the man to make this great peace. He had voiced the great ideals of the new order; his great utterances had become the contractual basis for the armistice and the peace. The idealism of Wilson would surely become the reality of the new order of things in the peace treaty.

SAVED THE "LITTLE CHILD"

In this atmosphere of extravagant, almost frenzied expectation he arrived at the Paris Peace Conference

Without hesitation he plunged into that inferno of human passions. He went down into the Pit like a second Heracles to bring back the fair Alcestis of the world's desire. There were six months of agonized waiting, during which the world situation rapidly deteriorated. And then he emerged with the peace treaty. It was not a Wilson peace, and he made a fatal mistake in somehow giving the impression that the peace was in accord with his Fourteen Points and his various declarations. Not so the world had understood him. This was a Punic peace, the same sort of peace as the victor had dictated to the vanquished for thousands of years. It was not Alcestis; it was a haggard, unlovely woman with features distorted with hatred, greed and selfishness, and the little child that the woman carried was scarcely noticed. Yet it was for the saving of the child that Wilson had labored until he was a physical wreck. Let our other great statesmen and leaders enjoy their well-earned honors for their questioned success at Paris. To Woodrow Wilson, the apparent failure, belongs the undying honor, which will grow with the growing centuries, of having saved the "little child that shall lead them yet." No other statesman but Wilson could have done it. And he did it.

PEOPLE DID NOT UNDERSTAND

The people, the common people of all lands, did not understand the significance of what had happened. They saw only that hard, unlovely Prussian peace, and the great hope died in their hearts. The great disillusionment took its place. The most receptive mood for a new start the world had been in for centuries passed away. Faith in their governors and leaders was largely destroyed and the foundations of the human government were shaken in a way which will be felt for generations. The Paris peace lost an opportunity as unique as the great war itself. In

destroying the moral idealism born of the sacrifices of the war it did almost as much as the war itself in shattering the structure of Western civilization.

And the odium of all this fell especially on President Wilson. Round him the hopes had centered; round him the disillusion and despair now gathered. Popular opinion largely held him responsible for the bitter disappointment and grievous failure. The cynics scoffed; his friends were silenced on the universal disappointment. Little or nothing had been expected from the other leaders; the whole failure was put to the account of Woodrow Wilson. And finally America for reasons of her own joined the pack and at the end it was his own people who tore him to pieces.

MUST WAIT FOR JUDGMENT

Will this judgment, born of momentary disillusion and disappointment, stand in future, or will it be reversed? The time has not come to pass final judgment on either Wilson or any of the other great actors in the drama at Paris. The personal estimates will depend largely on the interpretation of that drama in the course of time. As one who saw and watched things from the inside, I feel convinced that the present popular estimates are largely superficial and will not stand the searching test of time. And I have no doubt whatever that Wilson has been harshly, unfairly, unjustly dealt with, and that he has been made a scapegoat for the sins of others. Wilson made mistakes, and there were occasions when I ventured to sound a warning note. But it was not his mistakes that caused the failure for which he has been held mainly responsible.

Let us admit the truth, however bitter it is to do so, for those who believe in human nature. It was not Wilson who failed. The position is far more serious. It was the human spirit itself that failed at Paris. It is no use passing judgments and making scapegoats of

this or that individual statesman or group of statesmen. Idealists make a great mistake in not facing the real facts sincerely and resolutely. They believe in the power of the spirit, in the goodness which is at the heart of things, in the triumph which is in store for the great moral ideals of the race. But this faith only too often leads to an optimism which is sadly and fatally at variance with actual results.

SAYS HUMANITY FAILED

It is the realist and not the idealist who is generally justified by events. We forget that the human spirit, the spirit of goodness and truth in the world, is still only an infant crying in the night, and that the struggle with darkness is as yet mostly an unequal struggle.

Paris proved this terrible truth once more. It was not Wilson who failed there, but humanity itself. It was not the statesmen that failed so much as the spirit of the peoples behind them. The hope, the aspirations for a new world order of peace and right and justice—however deeply and universally felt—was still only feeble and ineffective in comparison with the dominant national passions which found their expression in the peace treaty. Even if Wilson had been one of the great demi-gods of the human race, he could not have saved the peace. Knowing the Peace Conference as I knew it from within, I feel convinced in my own mind that not the greatest man born of woman in the history of the race would have saved that situation. The great hope was not the heralding of the coming dawn, as the peoples thought, but only a dim intimation of some far-off event toward which we shall yet have to make many a long, weary march. Sincerely as we believed in the moral ideals for which we had fought, the temptation at Paris of a large booty to be divided proved too great. And in the end not only the leaders but the peoples

preferred a bit of booty here, a strategic frontier there, a coal field or an oil well, an addition to their population or their resources—to all the faint allurements of the ideal. As I said at the time, the real peace was still to come, and it could only come from a new spirit in the peoples themselves.

WILSON HAD TO BE CONCILIATED

What was really saved at Paris was the child—the covenant of the League of Nations. The political realists who had their eye on the loot were prepared—however reluctantly—to throw up that innocent little sop to President Wilson and his fellow idealists. After all, there was not much harm in it, it threatened no present national interest, and it gave great pleasure to a number of good unpractical people in most countries. Above all, President Wilson had to be conciliated, and this was the last and the greatest of the fourteen points on which he had set his heart and by which he was determined to stand or fall. And so he got his way. But it is a fact that only a man of his great power and influence and dogged determination could have carried the covenant through that Peace Conference. Others had seen with him the great vision; others had perhaps given more thought to the elaboration of the great plan. But his was the power and the will that carried it through. The covenant is Wilson's souvenir to the future of the world. No one will ever deny that honor.

The honor is very great indeed, for the covenant is one of the great creative documents of human history. The peace treaty will fade into merciful oblivion and its provisions will be gradually obliterated by the great human tides sweeping over the world. But the covenant will stand as sure as fate. Forty-two nations gathered round it at the first meeting of the League at Geneva. And the day is not far off when

all the free peoples of the world will gather around it. It must succeed, because there is no other way for the future of civilization. It does not realize the great hopes born of the war, but it provides the only method and instrument by which in the course of time those hopes can be realized. Speaking as one who has some right to speak on the fundamental conceptions, objects and methods of the covenant, I feel sure that most of the present criticism is based on misunderstandings. These misunderstandings will clear away, one by one the peoples still outside the covenant will fall in behind this banner, under which the human race is going to march forward to triumphs of peaceful organization and achievements undreamt of by us children of an unhappier era. And the leader who, in spite of apparent failure, succeeded in inscribing his name on that banner has achieved the most enviable and enduring immortality. Americans of the future will yet proudly and gratefully rank him with Washington and Lincoln, and his name will have a more universal significance than theirs.

(Written for the New York *Evening Post*.)

WOODROW WILSON—AN INTERPRETATION

From the New York World

Mr. Wilson's enemies are fond of calling him a theorist, but there is little of the theorist about him, otherwise he could never have made more constructive history than any other man of his generation. What are commonly called theories in his case were the practical application of the experiences of history to the immediate problems of government, and in the experience of history Mr. Wilson is an expert. With the exception of James Madison, who was called the "Father of the Constitution," Mr. Wilson is the most profound student of government among all the Presidents, and he had what Madison conspicuously lacked,

which was the faculty to translate his knowledge of government into the administration of government.

* * *

When people speak of the tragedy of Mr. Wilson's career they have in mind only the temporary aspects of it—the universal dissatisfaction with the treaty of peace, his physical collapse, his defeat in the Senate and the verdict at the polls in November. They forget that the end of the chapter is not yet written. The League of Nations is a fact, whatever the attitude of the United States may be toward it, and it will live unless the peoples of the earth prove their political incapacity to use it for the promotion of their own welfare. The principle of self-determination will remain as long as men believe in the right of self-government and are willing to die for it. It was Woodrow Wilson who wrote that principle into the law of nations, even though he failed to obtain a universal application of it. Tacitus said of the Catti tribesmen, "Others go to battle; these go to war," and Mr. Wilson went to war in behalf of the democratic theory of government extended to all the affairs of the nations. That war is not yet won and the Commander in Chief is crippled by the wounds that he received on the field of action. But the responsibility of the future does not rest with him. It rests with the self-governing peoples for whom he has blazed the trail. All the complicated issues of this titanic struggle finally reduce themselves to these prophetic words of Maximilian Harden: "Only one conqueror's work will endure—Wilson's thought."

Woodrow Wilson on this morning of the fourth of March can say in the words of Paul the Apostle to Timothy:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

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WOODROW WILSON. By Hamilton Holt

It was Woodrow Wilson who focused the heterogeneous and often diverse ideals of the war on the one ideal of pure Americanism, which is democracy. The peoples with one accord followed the banner he unfurled.

It was Woodrow Wilson who first announced that the United States wanted no territories or indemnities. Europe marvelled.

It was Woodrow Wilson who first drove the wedge in between the Hohenzollerns and the German people. Autocracy began to totter.

It was Woodrow Wilson who first enunciated the basis of peace. His fourteen points won the war. Had not he, or some other responsible head of a great power done this the Allies might have lost the war. The people had then been fighting for over three years. No government had publicly proclaimed the aims for which it was asking its people to die. It looked as though the whole three years of agony would end in stalemate. The people were getting restive. They began to fear an imperialistic peace. They demanded to be told what the governments wanted so that having achieved it the government would not make them fight on merely to gratify the secret ambitions of selfish politicians.

Mr. Samuel Gompers was invited to go to England and France to confer with labor leaders in those countries. He said to me afterwards: "I don't think, I know, that had not Woodrow Wilson or some other responsible head of a state proclaimed the aims of the war when he did, there would have been revolutions in England and France in the early part of 1918."

TWO PICTURES. By Joseph P. Tumulty

Two pictures are in my mind. First, the Hall of Representatives crowded from floor to gallery with expectant throngs. Presently it is announced that

the President of the United States will address Congress. There steps out to the Speaker's desk a straight, vigorous, slender man, active and alert. He is sixty years of age, but he looks not more than forty-five, so lithe of limb, so alert of bearing, so virile. It is Woodrow Wilson reading his great war message.

The other picture is only three and a half years later. There is a parade of veterans of the Great War. They are to be reviewed by the President on the east terrace of the White House. In a chair sits a man, your President, broken in health but still alert in mind. His hair is white, his shoulders bowed, his figure bent. He is sixty-three years old but he looks older. It is Woodrow Wilson.

Presently in the procession there appears an ambulance laden with wounded soldiers, the maimed, the halt and the blind. As they pass they salute, slowly, reverently. The President's right hand goes up in answering salute. I glanced at him. There were tears in his eyes. The wounded is greeting the wounded; those in the ambulance, he in the chair are, alike, casualties of the Great War.

A REALLY GREAT MAN. By Senator Carter Glass

It is my considered judgment that Woodrow Wilson will take a place in history among the very foremost of the great men who have given direction to the fortunes of the nation. No President of the United States, from the beginning of the republic, ever excelled him in essential preparation for the tasks of the office. By a thorough acquisition of abstract knowledge, by clear and convinced precept and by a firm and diligent practical application of the outstanding principles of statecraft, no occupant of the Executive chair up to his advent was better furnished for a notable administration of public affairs. And Wilson's administration has been notable. Its achievements in enumeration and importance, have

never been surpassed; and it may accurately be said that most of the things accomplished were of the President's own initiative.

Of the President's personal traits and characteristics I cannot as confidently speak as those persons whose constant and intimate association with him has given them observation of his moods and habits. To me he has always been the soul of courtesy and frankness. Dignified, but reasonably familiar; tenacious when sure of his position, but not hard to persuade or to convince in a cause having merit, I have good reason to be incredulous when I hear persons gabble about the unwillingness of President Wilson to seek counsel or accept advice. For a really great man who must be measurably conscious of his own intellectual power, he has repeatedly done both things in an astonishing degree during his administration; and when certain of a man's downright honesty, I have never known anybody who could be readier to confide serious matters implicitly to a coadjutor in the public service.

(Written for the New York *Times*, February 18, 1921.)

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Portland Journal, Portland, Oregon

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January 11, 1922



FOUNDATION FACTS

Name: Woodrow Wilson Foundation.

National Headquarters: 150 Nassau Street, New York.

Object: To endow permanent awards for distinguished public service.

Appeal: For an endowment.

Amount: One million dollars or more.

Time: January 16, 1922.

Method: A free will offering, not a drive. Checks payable to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. Liberty and Victory bonds accepted at par.

Founder's Certificate: Every subscriber will be entitled to receive an artistic certificate, a reproduction of the design commemorating the founding.

Expense: Expense of organization has been underwritten through special subscription. Every dollar received during the period of public appeal, and before that time, will go toward the permanent endowment.

Disposition of Funds: Invested in securities of the United States Government.

Depository: Central Union Trust Co., 80 Broadway, New York City.

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