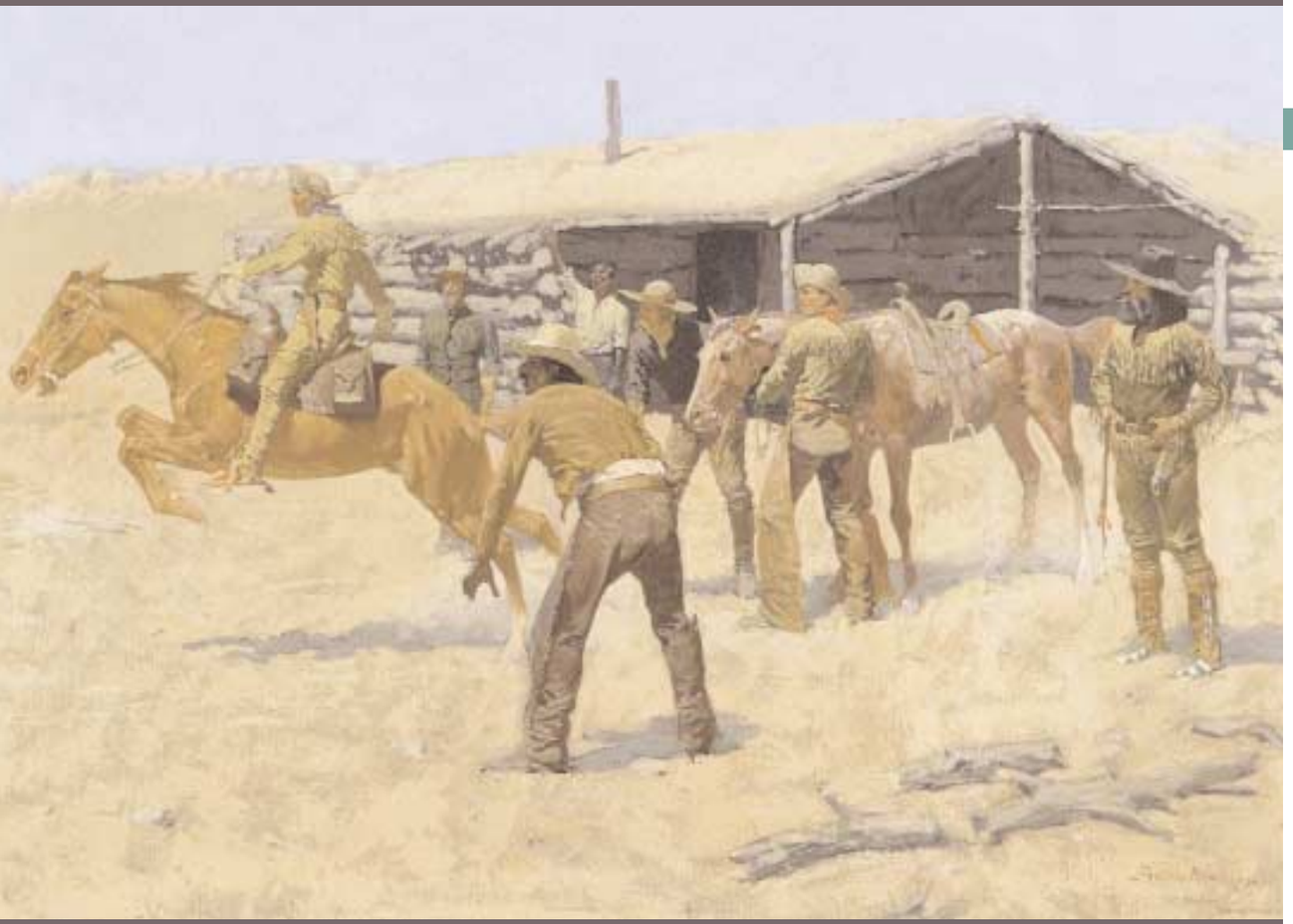


AMERICAN VOICES FROM

The Wild West

Rebecca Stefoff

Marshall Cavendish Benchmark
New York

Chapter 2

The War Against the Native Americans

THROUGH THE STORY of the Wild West runs a dark and bloodstained theme: conflict between the first Americans and those who came later. True, people from many Native American groups enjoyed peaceful, even friendly, relationships with non-Indians. The larger picture, though, was one of violence on both sides. The Indians fought to hold on to the lands where they had lived for centuries, while the settlers, believing that they had the right and the need to use those lands, struggled for control of them. Some fights were skirmishes or raids that pitted settlers or trappers against small bands of Native Americans. Later, especially toward the end of the nineteenth century, the U.S. Army did much of the fighting against larger Indian forces.

The Indian Wars of the Wild West were the final phase of a conflict that had begun almost as soon as Christopher Columbus first landed in North America in 1492. Over the long course of that conflict, diseases brought to North America by the Europeans killed far more Native Americans than swords or bullets did,

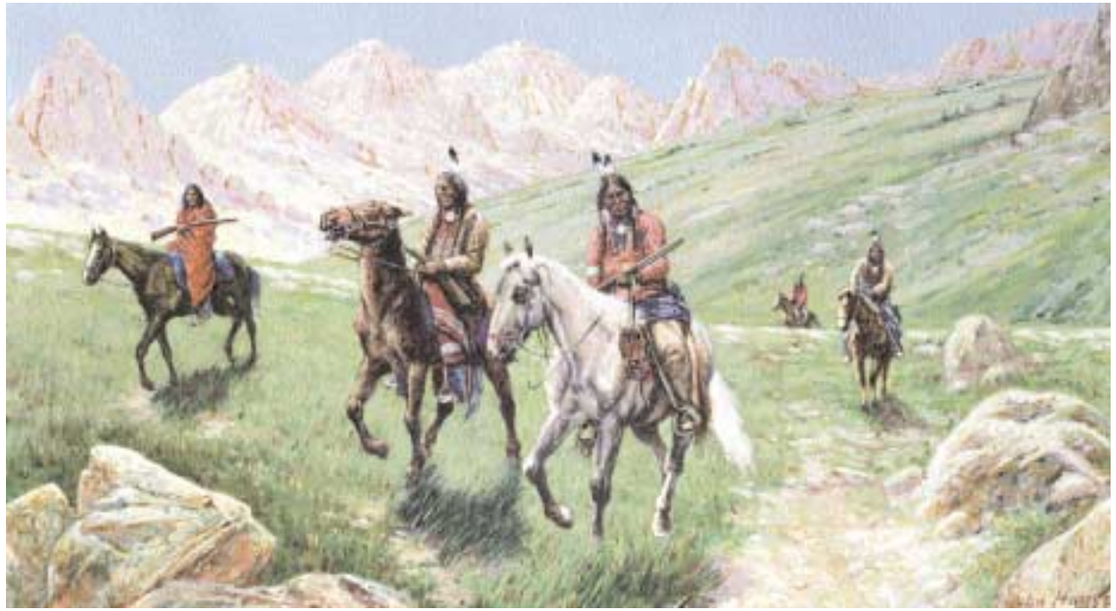
Frederic Remington, *Cavalrymen in an Arizona Sandstorm*. Oil on canvas, 1889.

Cavalrymen in an Arizona Sandstorm, by Frederic Remington. In paintings, drawings, and sculptures, Remington (1861–1909) created hundreds of images of the West. Among his favorite subjects were Native Americans and U.S. soldiers—two groups that often, tragically, made war on one another in the final decades of the western frontier.

although it was the battles that people remembered. Gradually, as settlers moved west from the Atlantic coast, the native peoples either perished or migrated west themselves, away from the advancing line of settlement.

In 1830, the U.S. Congress tried to solve the "Indian problem" with the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the government to move Native Americans onto reservations—by force, if necessary. Indian nations living east of the Mississippi River had to relocate to present-day Oklahoma. To the north, the land across the Platte River remained in the hands of the Great Plains Indians. The United States government promised that those lands would remain the property of the Indians "for as long as the grass grows and the rivers run." But it seems that the grass soon stopped growing, and the rivers went dry. Wherever settlement increased, fighting broke out between whites and Indians: in the Pacific Northwest, in the southwestern territory newly acquired from Mexico, and in California. Before long conflict was raging in the Great Plains as well.

In the long run, the Indian Wars could end only one way. Although the Indians won some notable victories, they were greatly outnumbered. They could not withstand an organized, armed military assault forever. By the 1890s, they had been overpowered. Then, through laws that regulated such things as land ownership and Indian rights, the U.S. government tried to stamp out tribal identity and culture—to bring about what one federal official in 1887 called "the beginning of the end of the Indian as an Indian." The government did not succeed . . . not entirely. Native American culture survived in various forms, but by the end of the nineteenth century, the Native Americans were no longer a power in the land.



In the Cheyenne Country, John Hauser, 1896. Hauser (1859–1918) spent twenty years touring Native American reservations in the West and painting their inhabitants. Adopted by the Sioux nation in 1901, Hauser was given the Indian name Straight White Shield.

Throughout the Wild West era, the majority of Americans feared the Indians and wanted them controlled, perhaps even eliminated, although some citizens were deeply critical of the government's policies and acts toward the native peoples. Toward the end of the era, however, triumph at the settlers' victory was tinged with shame, sadness, and a touch of nostalgia. To many people, the twilight of the Indian meant the end of the picturesque, traditional Old West. An artist named John Hauser captured that feeling in a 1902 painting called *Wild Horse*. It shows a Native American man who wears traditional Indian clothing, but he holds a rifle and his horse wears a European-style saddle. At his feet lies the sun-bleached skull of a buffalo—an animal, once the livelihood of the Plains Indians, that had been all but wiped out by white hunters. The painting's symbolism

Corruption on the Reservation: A Sioux Man's Testimony

The federal government appointed agents to manage the Indian reservations and distribute the supplies provided by the government for the Native Americans who lived on them. Some of these Indian agents did their job well, but many did not. They stole supplies intended for the Indians and sold them for their own profit, and they also profited from shady deals involving reservation land or resources. After the Civil War ended in 1865, Congress investigated the state of affairs on Indian reservations. Its report included testimony from a Yankton Sioux man named Struck by the Ree, who lived in the Dakota Territory.

THE FIRST AGENT WAS REDFIELD; and when he came there he borrowed blankets from me to sleep upon, and agreed to return them, but never did, though I asked for them. Goods have been stored up stairs in the warehouse, and have all disappeared; perhaps the rats ate them; I don't know what became of them. If they bring any goods for the Indians to eat and put them in the warehouse, the agents live out of them, and the mess-house where travellers stop has been supplied from the Indians' goods, and pay has been taken by the agents, and they have put the money in their pockets and taken it away with them. I have seen them take the goods from the storehouse of the Indians and take them to the mess-house, and I have had to pay for a meal for myself at the mess-house, and so have others of our Indians had to pay for meals at the mess-house, prepared from their own goods.

"If they bring any goods for the Indians to eat and put them in the warehouse, the agents live out of them."

—*In* Condition of the Indian Tribes, *Senate Report 156, 39th Congress, 2nd session. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1867.*

Sioux men and women line up to receive government food supplies at Pine Ridge, one of the reservations onto which western Indians were forced in the late nineteenth century. The federal government's plan was to turn the Native Americans of the Great Plains from roving hunters into settled farmers, although farming was completely foreign to their culture and experience.

Think about This

1. If Struck by the Ree's account is true, how had agent Redfield cheated the Indians in his care?
2. Can you think of any reasons agent Redfield might have offered to justify stealing from the Indians?

A Different Kind of War: Assimilation

When the fighting ended, what was the U.S. government going to do with the Indians? The answer was a new policy called assimilation. The government wanted Native Americans to become assimilated, or absorbed, into the larger American culture. Whether or not they lived on reservations, Indians were to be encouraged—or, in some cases, forced—to live as much like other Americans as possible. Overseeing this process was the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In his official 1885 report, the head of the bureau described the goal of assimilation.

". . . they must forsake their savage habits and learn the arts of civilization."

EVERY STEP TAKEN, every move made, every suggestion offered, everything done with reference to the Indians should be with a view of impressing upon them that this is the policy which had been permanently determined upon by the Government in reference to their management. They must abandon tribal relations; they must give up their superstition; they must forsake their savage habits and learn the arts of civilization; they must learn to labor, and must learn to rear their families as white people do, and to know more of their obligations to the Government and to society.

—John Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in J. P. Kinney, A Continent Lost—A Civilization Won. *Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1937.*

Think about This

1. What do you think Atkins meant by the "arts of civilization"?
2. How would you compare the policy of assimilation that Atkins described in 1885 with American attitudes and practices toward other cultures today?

"If Peace Is Possible We Will Have It"

The last big battle of the Indian Wars took place at the end of 1890. Four years earlier, General Nelson Miles had accepted the surrender of the Apache chieftain Geronimo in Arizona. Now he was

LEFT: General Nelson Miles was victorious at Wounded Knee Creek, the last major Indian battle. BELOW: After Chief Big Foot perished at Wounded Knee, the army photographed his body as proof of his death.

AMERICAN VOICES FROM

The Vietnam Era

Virginia Schomp

BENCHMARK BOOKS
MARSHALL CAVENDISH
NEW YORK

One of the most notable features of the Vietnam era was the widespread antiwar movement. These buttons are evidence of the many different antiwar organizations and protest rallies.

her message? Are the words emotional or objective in tone? If you are looking at a photograph, examine it carefully, taking in all the details. Where do you think it was taken? What is happening in the foreground? In the background? Is it posed or an action shot? How can you tell? Who do you think took the picture, and what is its purpose? These are questions that can help you think critically about a primary source.

Some tools have been included with the documents to help you in your investigations. Unusual words have been listed and defined near the selections. Thought-provoking questions follow each document. They help focus your reading so you can get the most out of the document. As you read each selection, you'll probably come up with many questions of your own. That's great! The work of a historian always leads to many, many questions. Some can be answered, while others require more investigation. Perhaps when you finish this book, your questions will lead you to further explorations of the Vietnam era.

A Veteran-Poet Reflects on "Guerrilla War"

William Ehrhart joined the marines at age seventeen and served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. In an interview for a television documentary, he described the frustration GIs felt simply trying to identify the enemy.

AND SO, DAY AFTER DAY, you had dead Marines, wounded Marines, and nobody to fight back at. In the meantime, . . . you're on a patrol, somebody hits a mine and there's a couple of dead people. And here's Joe the rice farmer out in his field. He just, he don't even stop. He don't even, it's like he didn't even hear the blast. And after awhile, you start thinking, wait, these people must know where these mines are. How come they never step on them? They must be VC [Vietcong]. They must be VC sympathizers. And so, over a relatively short period of time, you begin to treat all Vietnamese as though they are the enemy.

"...you begin to treat all Vietnamese as though they are the enemy."

—*From* Vietnam: A Television History, *"Episode 5: America Takes Charge, 1965–1967."*

After the war's end Ehrhart became one of the most well-known Vietnam veteran-poets. In "Guerrilla War," he uses poetry to present ideas similar to those expressed above.

It's practically impossible
to tell civilians
from the Vietcong.

Nobody wears uniforms.
They all talk
the same language
(and you couldn't understand them
even if they didn't).

They tape grenades
inside their clothes,
and carry satchel charges
in their market baskets.

Even their women fight;
and young boys,
and girls.

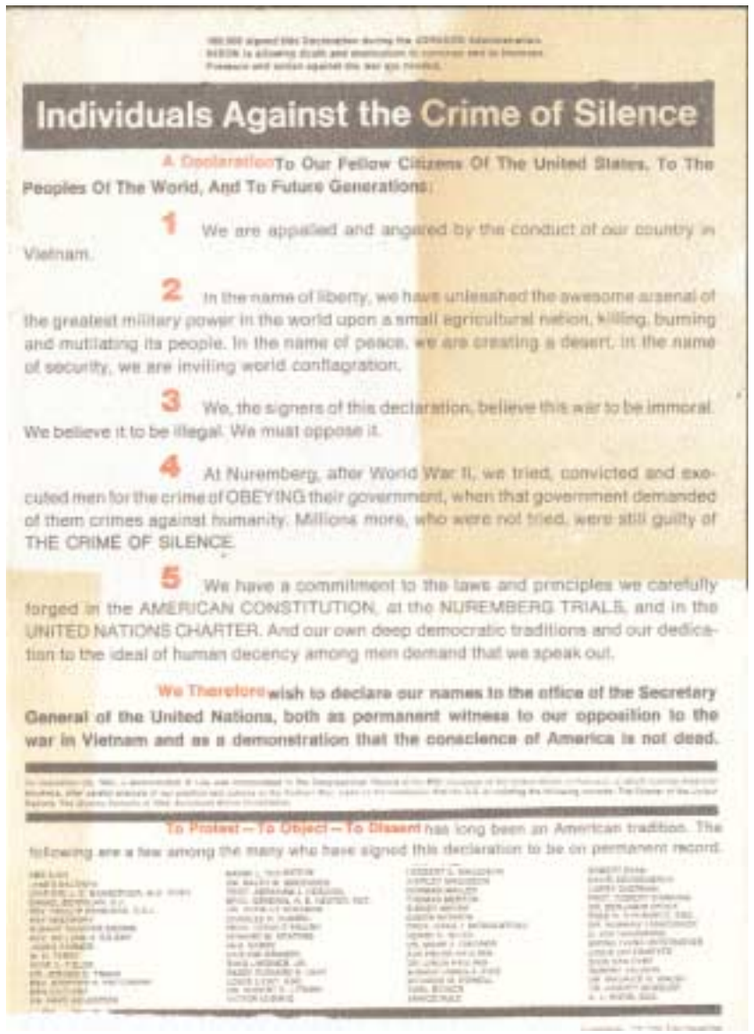
It's practically impossible
to tell civilians from the Vietcong;

after awhile,
you quit trying.

—*From W. D. Ehrhart,* Beautiful Wreckage: New & Selected Poems by W. D. Ehrhart. *Easthampton, MA: Adastra Press, 1999.*

Think about This

1. Who do you think is "speaking" in Ehrhart's poem, and who is that person's audience?
2. How does the experience of reading Ehrhart's poem differ from that of reading his spoken narrative? Is one clearer than the other? Easier to understand? More emotionally expressive?



Individuals Against the Crime of Silence

A Declaration To Our Fellow Citizens Of The United States, To The Peoples Of The World, And To Future Generations:

1 We are appalled and angered by the conduct of our country in Vietnam.

2 In the name of liberty, we have unleashed the awesome arsenal of the greatest military power in the world upon a small agricultural nation, killing, burning and mutilating its people. In the name of peace, we are creating a desert. In the name of security, we are inviting world conflagration.

3 We, the signers of this declaration, believe this war to be immoral. We believe it to be illegal. We must oppose it.

4 At Nuremberg, after World War II, we tried, convicted and executed men for the crime of OBEYING their government, when that government demanded of them crimes against humanity. Millions more, who were not tried, were still guilty of THE CRIME OF SILENCE.

5 We have a commitment to the laws and principles we carefully forged in the AMERICAN CONSTITUTION, at the NUREMBERG TRIALS, and in the UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. And our own deep democratic traditions and our dedication to the ideal of human decency among men demand that we speak out.

We Therefore wish to declare our names to the office of the Secretary General of the United Nations, both as permanent witness to our opposition to the war in Vietnam and as a demonstration that the conscience of America is not dead.

To Protest — To Object — To Dissent has long been an American tradition. The following are a few among the many who have signed this declaration to be on permanent record.

—From "Individuals against the Crime of Silence" antiwar petition, 1969.

Think about This

1. The petition compares people who do not speak out against the Vietnam War to those who remained silent during the Nazi atrocities of World War II. Do you think this is a fair and reasonable comparison?
2. Why do you think the petition writers included the names of famous doctors, scientists, writers, actors, and other celebrities at the bottom of the document? Would a list like this influence your decision to sign a petition?
3. What role has dissent played in American history?

A Reporter Runs with Rioters in Chicago

While most antiwar protests were peaceful, some turned ugly. Chicago was the scene of two of the worst episodes. The first came in August 1968, during the Democratic National Convention. As delegates met in the convention hall to choose the Democratic Party's candidate for president, five thousand demonstrators clashed with police and National Guardsmen outside. The violent free-for-all wounded hundreds of people, including both protesters and innocent bystanders. About a year later, the city exploded again. A radical group called the Weathermen scheduled "Four Days of Rage" in Chicago, hoping to provoke a crisis that would lead to a full-scale "mass revolutionary movement" against American government and society. Although the group predicted that "10,000 revolutionaries" would join them, only about 300 showed up. On the night of October 8, 1969, *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter Tom Fitzpatrick ran with the rioters to find out who they were and what made them fight.

gas to shooting shotguns loaded with no. 8 birdshot. They fired point-blank into the crowd. Kids went down. . . . My God, they were shooting at us. All we wanted was a place for kids to play—a park—and they were shooting at us. . . .

A couple thousand National Guardsmen arrived and a curfew was declared. The grown-ups had once again gone to war with their children.

—*From David Obst,* Too Good to Be Forgotten. *New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998.*

Think about This

1. In your opinion, where do Obst's sympathies lie in this account—with the students or with the authorities?
2. Obst wrote this piece thirty years after the events he describes. How do you think the passage of time may have affected the way he tells his story?
3. Did the students and street people have a right to take over the park?

A *Life* Poll Examines the Generation Gap

In May 1969 *Life,* one of the most popular and influential magazines of the Vietnam era, took an in-depth look at the generation gap. The magazine conducted a poll at one hundred high schools across the United States. Pollsters asked 2,500 students, parents, and teachers for their opinions on issues affecting their schools, such as whether students should have more say in the rules, discipline, and topics discussed in class. The results of the poll pointed out some of the areas of disagreement between the younger and older generations.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MAKING

	STUDENTS	PARENTS	TEACHERS
Want more	58%	20%	35%
Want less	2	11	4
About same	39	65	60
Not sure	1	4	1

IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MAKING

	STUDENTS	PARENTS	TEACHERS
Very important	54%	25%	30%
Somewhat important	34	38	39
Not very important	11	33	31
Not sure	1	4	*

*Less than 0.5%

A student sits at the desk of Columbia University's president in April 1968. Radicals occupied campus buildings for several days in one of the Vietnam era's most violent confrontations between students and educators.

SHOULD STUDENTS HAVE MORE SAY?

	STUDENTS	PARENTS	TEACHERS
In making rules	66%	24%	40%
In deciding curriculum	63	35	47
In determining discipline of students	48	28	37
In deciding how to conduct classes	48	21	28
In determination of grades	41	14	18

SHOULD THESE TOPICS BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS?

	STUDENTS	PARENTS	TEACHERS
Folk rock music	35%	6%	19%
Black students' rights	52	27	36
Underground paper and films	40	17	36
Sex hygiene	52	41	62
Hair, dress, styles	37	30	28
Use of drugs	70	66	72

—From "The Life Poll," Life *magazine, May 16, 1969.*

Think about This

1. What is the greatest area of disagreement between students and both parents and teachers?
2. On which issues are students, parents, and teachers most in agreement?

Country Joe McDonald Sings at Woodstock

Rock-and-roll was *the* music of the Vietnam generation. As a reporter for *Rolling Stone* magazine wrote, rock was viewed not just as entertainment but as "an essential component of a 'new culture,' along with drugs and radical politics." The ultimate joining of rock music and the counterculture was the Woodstock festival, held in New York's Catskill Mountain region in August 1969. Almost all of the top rock and pop music artists of the day performed at Woodstock, before a crowd made up of a half million young people high on music, drugs, peace, and love. A number of the songs performed, including Country Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die-Rag," reflected the younger generation's frustration with the Vietnam War. McDonald's song became an anthem of the antiwar movement, sung by protesters at home as well as soldiers in Vietnam. The artist brought a special insight to this song. As a child he had watched his father, a member of the American Communist party, suffer emotional and financial hardships after being hounded by a government committee on un-American activities. At age seventeen McDonald enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where he served for three years, until 1962.

I-FEEL-LIKE-I'M-FIXING-TO-DIE-RAG

Yeah, come on all of you, big strong men.
Uncle Sam needs your help again.
He's got himself in a terrible jam.
Way down yonder in Vietnam.
So put down your books and pick up a gun.
We're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

Refrain:
And it's one, two, three,
What are we fightin' for?

AMERICAN VOICES FROM

World War I

Adriane Ruggiero

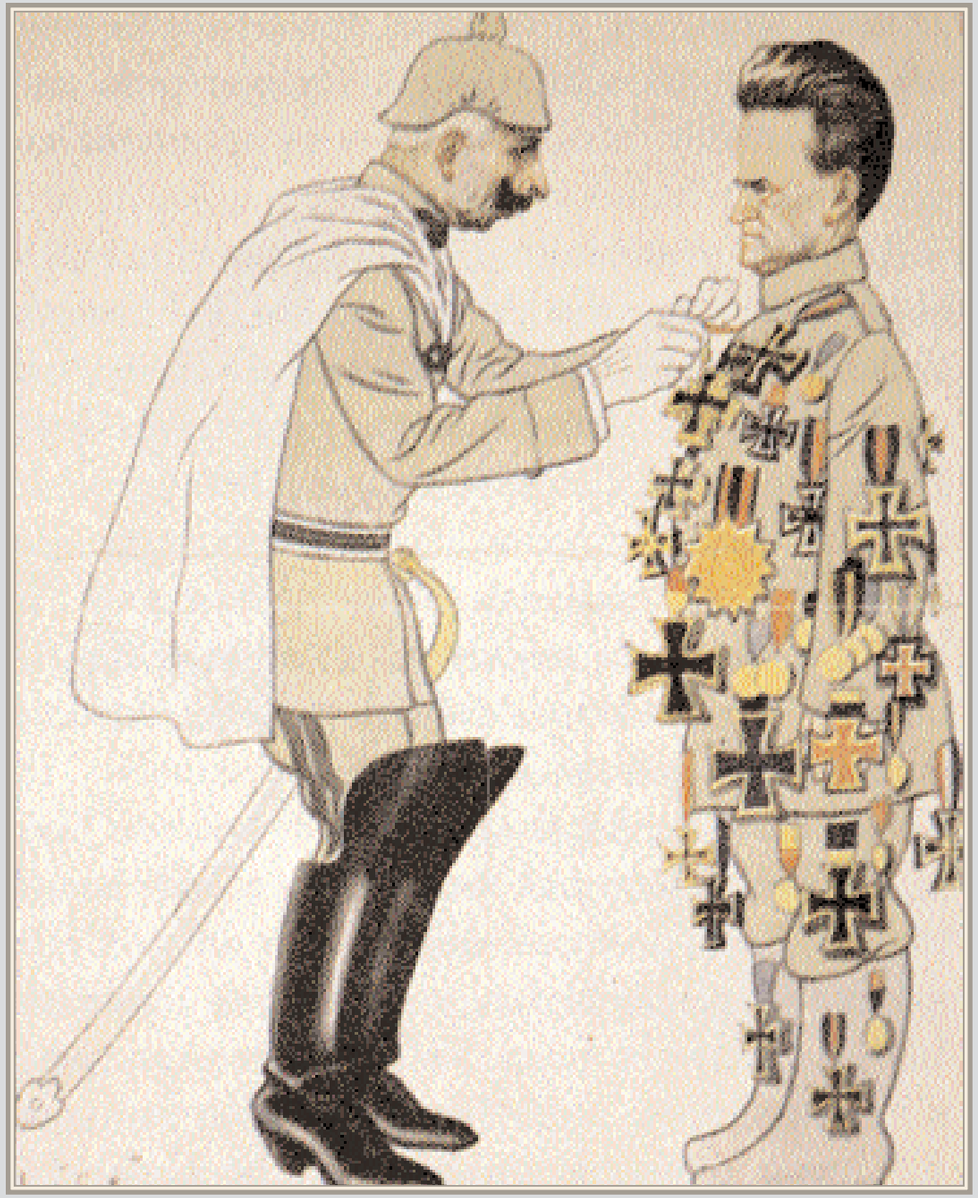
BENCHMARK BOOKS
MARSHALL CAVENDISH
NEW YORK

Chapter 3

Whose War Is It?

THE DECLARATION OF WAR did not end discussion about it. Some Americans were filled with dread at the thought of the huge sacrifices that lay ahead. Critics of the war—both government officials and citizens—spoke out against U.S. involvement. Some were pacifists; they opposed *all* war on moral grounds. Other critics viewed the conflict as being outside U.S. interests. People who took a firm stand against the war often suffered persecution for their beliefs. Some even went to jail for taking exception to U.S. war aims. Other Americans were anxious to end the war and saw their participation as the only way to bring it to a conclusion. They took patriotic pride in their willingness and ability to get the job done.

World War I saw the federal government mobilize for war in new and interesting ways. Special commissions such as the Committee on Public Information were set up to build patriotic support. Writers wrote stirring songs and artists painted vivid posters to capture the public's attention. Pamphlets were printed in several languages explaining America's role in the war. School textbooks



Cartoons published during World War I provide a satiric view of the times. This cartoon from *Life* magazine misrepresents Senator Robert La Follette as a traitor decorated with medals by the German Kaiser. For his part, La Follette believed that most Americans shared his opposition to the war: "The poor . . . who are the ones called upon to rot in the trenches, have no organized power."

urged children to help out, too. Everyone was asked to pitch in and "do their bit." American factories and workers churned out goods as never before.

An Opponent of the War Speaks Out: Senator Norris's Speech before the Senate

Not all Americans wanted the United States to enter the war. Pacifists spoke out against U.S. involvement. Peace organizations sprang up throughout the nation. Their members tried to influence congressional leaders and the newspapers. In Congress, opponents of the war included Senator Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin and Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska. Both spoke out against the war and were bitterly criticized for it. The following excerpt is from Senator Norris's speech before the Senate, April 4, 1917, two days before the War Resolution was passed.

THE RESOLUTION NOW before the Senate is a declaration of war. Before taking this momentous step, and while standing on the brink of this terrible vortex, we ought to pause and . . . consider the terrible consequences of the step we are about to take. . . .

". . . consider the terrible consequences of the step we are about to take."

The reason given by the President in asking Congress to declare war against Germany is that the German Government has declared certain war zones, within which, by the use of submarines, she sinks, without notice, American ships and destroys American lives. . . .

There are a great many American citizens who feel that we owe it as a duty to humanity to take part in the war. Many instances of cruelty and inhumanity can be found on both sides. Men are often biased in their judgment on account of their sympathy and their interests. To my mind, what we ought to have maintained from the beginning was the strictest neutrality. If we had done this, I do not believe we would have been on the verge of war at the present time.

It is now demanded that the American citizens shall be used as insurance policies to guarantee the safe delivery of munitions of war to belligerent nations. The enormous profits of munition manufacturers, stockbrokers, and bond dealers must be still further increased by our entrance into the war. This has brought us to the present moment, when Congress . . . is about to declare war and engulf our country in the greatest holocaust that the world has ever known.

—*From* Congressional Record, *65th Congress, 1st sess., Vol. LV, pt. 1: pp. 212–213.*

Think about This

1. According to Senator Norris, who would benefit by America's entrance into the war?
2. What action did Norris urge his fellow senators to take?
3. Did Norris present a convincing argument? Why or why not?

America Calls Forth an Army: A Citizen Explains His Opposition to the Draft

Once the United States was in the war, an army had to be assembled. On April 5, the government formally requested enforced service in the army. On June 5, 1917, ten million American men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty were required by the Selective Service Act to register their names with the government at local draft offices. In return, they received a green card with a number on it.

A recruitment poster encourages young American men to volunteer for military service. To ensure that the army had sufficient manpower, the government enacted the Selective Service Act.

The idea of a draft alarmed Americans. Immigrants, many of whom had fled enforced service in European armies, were especially upset by the new law. Opponents of conscription held protest meetings and asked that young men not register for the draft.

In the following excerpt from the *New York Herald*, Dr. Leonard Abbot, a speaker at an anticonscription meeting in New York City, gives his reason for opposing the law.

CONSCRIPTION IS IMMORAL, unAmerican, and unconstitutional. Why in the name of humanity drag us into a war which we disapprove? . . . Conscription is the thin entering wedge of military despotism. . . . Go to Europe and fight Germany if you want to, but do not try to drag us with you. . . . The Government must have a guilty conscience when it arrests college boys and girls and tries to break up meetings that are opposed to its conscription.

—*From the* New York Herald, *June 5, 1917. Quoted in H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite,* Opponents of War, 1917–1918. *Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957.*

Think about This

1. On what grounds did the speaker oppose the draft?
2. What did the speaker fear the draft would lead to?
3. Think about writing a letter to the editor of the *New York Herald.* How would you present an argument for or against Dr. Abbot's statements?

A Song in Support of the War

Many government leaders believed the draft would result in mass riots across the United States. Much to their surprise, however, most American men went willingly to their draft offices. There they registered and were given a number. The number was thrown into a huge fish bowl and mixed up with others. Then the numbers were drawn out. The men whose numbers were drawn out were drafted into the army.

The call to arms was an opportunity for songwriters to express America's willingness to go to war. "Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh" was one of the most popular songs of World War I. The lyrics were written by Ed Rose to the music of Abe Olman.

This poster, designed especially to appeal to immigrants, asks Americans to support their nation and the cause of liberty.

Uncle Sam is calling now for ev'ry mother's son.
To go and get behind a gun,
And keep Old Glory waving on the sea.
Now prepare to be right there to help the cause along,
To ev'ry chap you meet when you're on the street,
You can sing this little song.

Oh, Johnny! Oh, Johnny! why do you lag?
Oh, Johnny, Oh, Johnny! Run to your flag.

Your country's calling, can't you hear?
Don't stay behind while others do all the fighting,
Oh, Johnny! Oh, Johnny! Get right in line
And help to crush the foe.
You're a big husky chap,
Uncle Sam's in a scrap,
You Go! Johnny,
Go! Johnny Go! Go!

—From "Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh!" written by Ed Rose. Music by Abe Olman. Copyright 1917, renewed 1944, by Forster Music Publisher, Inc., Chicago, Illinois. All rights reserved.

Think about This

1. To what emotions did the songwriters appeal in this song?
2. Why should American men fight, according to the words of "Oh Johnny"?
3. How would you have reacted to this song if you were a young man of draft age in 1917? How might you react today?

A Song of Protest against the War

"I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier" was one of the most famous antiwar songs of World War I. It was written by Alfred Bryan and Al Piantadosi and came out in 1915. Pacifists and women's suffrage groups (those who supported giving women the right to vote) sang it at meetings to help attract followers to their cause. Of course, anyone who sang the song was suspected of being anti-American. Here is a chorus of the song:

I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,
I raised him up to be my pride and joy,
Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder,
To shoot some other mother's darling boy?
Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,
It's time to lay the sword and gun away,
There'd be no war today, If mothers all would say,
"I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier."

—From "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier" written by Alfred Bryan and Al Piantadosi. Copyright 1915, renewed 1943 by Leo Feist, New York.

Think about This

1. How did the songwriters think the war should be settled?
2. Who was the main audience for this song?
3. How would you have reacted to this song if you were a mother living in 1917? How would you have reacted if you were a supporter of the war?