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America's Part in World Reconstruction

By

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An address given on December 28, 1942, the eighty-sixth anniversary of the birth of Woodrow Wilson, under the auspices of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation

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The Woodrow Wilson Library, which contains a complete collection of documents published by the League of Nations, the International Labour Office, the Permanent Court of International Justice, and the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, has pamphlets shelved and catalogued separately for easy reference.

Post-War Planning Collection contains some 1000 books and pamphlets, periodicals and newspaper clippings in the special field of international affairs and world organization, and extensive Wilsoniana, are also available for reference. The special Post-War Planning Collection contains some thousand books and pamphlets shelved and catalogued separately for easy reference.

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The funds of the Foundation were raised by popular subscription. The income has been used to award individuals or groups who have rendered within a specific period, meritorious service to democracy, public welfare, liberal thought or peace through justice.

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Additional copies of this reprint may be obtained from:
The Woodrow Wilson Foundation
8 West Forty-sixth Street
New York, New York
know him not only for his efforts to build a permanent peace but for the progressive leadership he gave our country in the years before that first World War. The "New Freedom" for which Wilson fought was the forerunner of the Roosevelt "New Deal" of 1933 and of the world-wide new democ-

ry which is the goal of the United Nations in this present struggle.

Wilson, like Jefferson and Lincoln before him, was interested first and always in the welfare of the common man. And so to the ideals of Wilson and the fight he made for them are an inspiration to us today as we take up the torch he laid down.

Resolved as we are to fight to final victory in this world-wide people's war, we are justified in looking ahead to the peace that will inevitably come. Indeed, it would be the height of folly not to prepare for peace, just as in the years prior to December 7, 1941, it would have been the height of folly not to prepare for war.

As territory previously overrun by the Germans and the Japs is reoccupied by the forces of the United Nations, measures of relief and rehabilitation will have to be undertaken. Later, out of the experience of those temporary measures of relief, there will emerge the possibilities and the prac-
ticalities of more permanent reconstruction.

We cannot now blueprint all the details, but we can begin now to think about some of the guiding principles of this world-wide new democracy we of the United Nations hope to build.

Two of these principles must be Liberty and Unity, or in other words, home rule and centralized authority, which for more than 150 years have been foundation stones of our American democracy and our Ameri-
can union.

When Woodrow Wilson proposed the League of Nations, it became apparent that these same principles of Liberty and Unity—of home rule and centralized authority—needed to be applied among the nations if a repetition of the first World War was to be prevented. Unfortunately the people of the United States were not ready: They believed in the doctrine of liberty in international affairs, but they were not willing to give up certain of their international rights and to shoulder certain international duties, even though other nations were ready to take such steps. They were in the position of a strong, well-armed pioneer citizen who thought he could defend himself against robbers with-
out going to the expense and bother of joining with his neighbors in setting up a police force to uphold civil law. They stood for decency in international affairs, but in the world of practical international politics the net effect of their action or lack of action was anarchy and the loss of millions of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars in a sec-
ond World War.

The sturdy pioneer citizen, proud of his own strength and independence, needed to be robbed and beaten only once by bandits to be ready to cooperate with his law-abiding neighbors. I believe the United States also has learned her lesson and that she is willing to assume a responsibility proportionate to her strength. England, Russia, China, and most of the other United Nations are per-
haps even more eager than the United States to go beyond the Charter which they have signed to declarations. The United Nations, like the United States 155 years ago, are groping for a formula which will give the greatest possible liberty with-
out producing anarchy and as the same time will not give so many rights to each member nation as to jeopardize the security of all.

Obviously the United Nations must first have machinery which can disarm and keep disarmed those parts of the world which would break the peace. Also there must be machinery for preventing economic warfare and enhancing economic peace between na-

tions. Probably there will have to be an in-
ternational court to make decisions in cases of dispute. And an international court pre-
-supposes some kind of world council, so that whatever world system evolves will have enough flexibility to meet changing circum-
stances as they arise.

As a practical matter, we may find that the regional principle is of considerable value in international affairs. For example, Euro-

pean countries, while concerned with the problems of Pan America, should not have to be preoccupied with them, and likewise Paul Japan, while doing economic, should not have to be preoccupied with the problems of Europe. Purely regional problems ought to be left in regional hands. This would leave to any federated world organization problems involving broad principles and those practical matters which affect coun-
tries of different regions or which affect the whole world.

The aim would be to preserve the liberty, equality, security, and unity of the United Nations—liberty in a political sense, equality of opportunity in international trade, se-
curity against war and business depression due to international causes, and unity of purpose in promoting the general welfare of the world.

In other words, the aim would be the maximum of home rule that can be main-
tained along with the minimum of central-
ized authority that must come into existence to give the necessary protection. We in the United States must remember this: If we are to expect guarantees against military or economic aggression from other nations, we must be willing to give guarantees that we will not be guilty of such aggression our-

selves. We must recognize, for example, that it is perfectly justifiable for a debtor, pioneer nation to build up its infant industries be-

hind a protective tariff, but a creditor na-

tion can be justified in high-tariff policies only from the standpoint of making itself secure in case of war.

A special problem that will face the United Nations immediately upon the at-
tainment of victory over either Germany or Japan will be what to do with the defeated nation. Revenge for the sake of revenge would be a sign of barbarism—but this time we must make absolutely sure that the guilty leaders are punished, that the defeated na-

tion realizes its defeat and is not permitted

to rearm. The United Nations must back up the military disarmament with psycho-

logical disarmament—supervision, or at least inspection, of the school systems of Ger-

many and Japan to undo so far as possible the diabolical work of Hitler and the Japa-
nese lords in poisoning the minds of the young.

Without doubt in the building of a new and enduring peace, economic reconstruc-
tion will play an all important role. Unless there is careful planning in advance, the re-
turn of peace can in a few years bring a shock even worse than the shock of war.

The magnitude of the problem here in the United States, for example, is indicated by the probability that in the peak year of the war we shall be spending something like 90 billion dollars of public funds in the war effort, whereas two years later we may be spending less than 20 billion dollars for mil-
itary purposes. In the peak year of the war effort, it is probable that we shall have around 10 million men in the armed services and 10 million additional men and women producing war goods for the armed services. It would seem that within the first two years after the peace at least 15 million of these 30 million men and women will be seeking jobs different from those which they had when peace came.

Our expenditures have been going on at a rate fully seven times as great as in World War No. 1 and the conversion of our indus-
try to wartime uses has been far more com-
plete. Thousands of thoughtful business-
men and economists, remembering what happened after the last war, have warned us with the fantastic figures of this war, and knowing the severity of the shock to come, have been greatly disturbed. Some have con-
cerned themselves with plans to get over the first year. Others have given thought to the more distant future.

It should be obvious to practically every-
one that, without well-planned and vigor-
ous action, a series of economic storms will follow this war. These will take the form of inflation and temporary scarcity, perhaps,
followed by surpluses, crashing prices, unemployment, bankruptcy, and in some cases violent revolution. If there is lack of well-planned and vigorous action, it is quite conceivable that the human misery in certain countries after the war may be even greater than during the war.

It is true that in the long run any nation, like any individual, must follow the principle of self-help, but it is quite easy for the individual to raise his own living standards. But it is also true that stronger nations, like our own, can provide guidance, technical advice, and in some cases capital investment to help those nations which are just starting on the path of industrialization. Our experience with the Philippines is a case in point.

The suggestions I have made with a view to promoting development and encouraging higher standards of living are necessarily fragmentary at this time. But in some quarters, either knowingly or unknowingly, they have been grossly distorted and misrepresented. During the recent political campaign one member of Congress seeking re-election made the flat statement that I was in favor of having American farmers give away a quart of milk a day to every inhabitant of the world. In other quarters these suggestions have been referred to by such terms as "utopian," "soggy sentimentality," and the "dispensing of milk and honey." But it is not "utopian" to foresee that South America, Asia, and Africa will in the future experience a development of industry and agriculture comparable to what has been the experience in the past in Europe and North America. Is it "utopian" to foretell that South America, Asia, and Africa will in the future experience development of industry and agriculture comparable to what has been the experience in the past in Europe and North America? Is it not true that during the war the spirit of self-sacrifice which now appears in the United States and our American way of life is a very valuable part of our national inheritance, which we shall have to conserve in the future? The type of business leader I have in mind has caught a new vision of opportunity in the future. The type of business leader I have in mind has caught a new vision of opportunity in the future.
home to fight—and die if need be—for freedom. Those who have this fear think that a return of blind selfishness will keep the nations of the world from joining to prevent a repetition of this disaster.

We should approach the problem objectively from the standpoint of finding the common meeting ground on which the people of the world can stand. This meeting ground, after all, should not be hard to find—it is the security of the plain folks against depression and against war. To unite against these two evils is not really a sacrifice, but only a common-sense facing of the facts of the world in which we live.

Now at last the nations of the world have a second chance to erect a lasting structure of peace—a structure such as that which Woodrow Wilson sought to build but which crumbled away because the world was not yet ready. Wilson himself foresaw that it was certain to be rebuilt some day. This is related by Josephus Daniels in his book, The Life of Woodrow Wilson, as follows:

Wilson never knew defeat, for defeat never comes to any man until he admits it. Not long before the close of his life Woodrow Wilson said to a friend: "Do not trouble about the things we have fought for. They are sure to prevail. They are only delayed." With the quaintness which gave charm to his sayings he added: "And I will make this concession to Providence—it may come in a better way than we propose."

And now we of this generation, trusting in Providence to guide our steps, go forward to meet the challenge of our day. For the challenge we all face is the challenge of free world democracy. In the new democracy there will be a place for everyone—the worker, the farmer, the businessman, the housewife, the doctor, the salesman, the teacher, the student, the store clerk, the taxi driver, the preacher, the engineer—all the millions who make up our modern world. This new democracy will give us freedom such as we have never known, but only if as individuals we perform our duties with willing hearts. It will be an adventure in sharing—sharing of duties and responsibilities, and sharing of the joy that can come from the give-and-take of human contacts and fruitful daily living. Out of it, if we all do our part, there will be new opportunity and new security for the common man—that blend of Liberty and Unity which is the bright goal of millions who are bravely offering up their lives on the battle fronts of the world.