UNITED STATES HISTORY: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION FOR HUNGARIAN STUDENTS

by

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Chapters 1 to 6 were written by Davis D. Joyce and read by Tibor Glant
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Mózes Mihálynak és Callum A. MacDonaldnak,
akiktől ugyanezt én tanultam valamikor. GT

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PREFACE

Teaching American history in Hungary, one quickly becomes aware that one of the persistent problems is the availability of resources, including textbooks. Those that do exist tend to be too expensive and too extensive for the needs of Hungarian students. We decided to solve that problem by writing our own brief overview of United States history with Hungarian students specifically in mind.

We are well aware of the revolution wrought in the writing of American history, including textbooks, in the last quarter of a century by the coverage of such non-traditional topics as "the new social history" emphasizes: minorities, women, working people, etc.--in short, the "common" people, **most** people. Such history is sometimes meaningfully called "history from the bottom up," suggesting that for too long historians have focussed almost exclusively on presidents, kings, queens, generals, rich people, i. e., the people at the top, and failed to consider what most peoples' lives were like in different periods of history, and how their lives were affected by the actions of those at the top. We are aware of this revolution, and to a degree supportive of it; we hope, for example, that in advanced courses students will be exposed to much of this material. But our objective here is such that we place primary emphasis on the political, economic, and diplomatic basics of the American past.

One more comment, by way of introduction: The historian may take a high moral position and project his or her own set of values as well as those of the highest morality onto history. Thus, for example, the rather critical assessments of slavery and twentieth century US foreign policy (our hobby horses) do not necessarily correspond with official or contemporary interpretations, we simply offer our own views. Clearly, we would make poor politicians. Still, do consider this the beginning in your exploration of the richness of United States history, not the end.

Davis D. Joyce bears primary responsibility for chapters 1-6, Tibor Glant for 7-13. However, we have read each other's work, made suggestions freely (sometimes followed, sometimes not), and are quite content to list ourselves as coauthors for the entire work.

DDJ and GT, January, 1996

CHAPTER ONE
COLONIAL BACKGROUND

One of the old standard textbooks in United States history began with a sentence something like this: Several billion years ago, that tiny speck of matter known as Earth came into being.

Well, yes, one is tempted to respond, but isn't that a bit far back to go for the beginning of American history?

At the other extreme, to begin American history with the beginning of the United States of America—which, rightly or wrongly, is what people usually mean when they say "America"—i.e., with the adoption of the Constitution in 1789, leaves out a lot of essential background.

It may seem silly to some, but there really is a legitimate question, then, as to when American history began. Somewhere between "several billion years ago" and "1789" is probably where the best answer lies. The specific dates are not so important—indeed, specific dates will not be emphasized a great deal in this brief narrative—but to look at some of those alternate ways of beginning American history should be productive.

Traditionally, the most common answer would have been 1492, the "discovery" of America by an Italian sailor in the employ of Spain, Christopher Columbus. And that is an important, though much misunderstood, event. An American Indian friend in Oklahoma used to get laughs out of saying that in 1492 the Americans discovered this lost European guy on their shores. But it makes a serious point: There were several million people already in the Americas, doing quite well, and having no idea that they needed to be "discovered." Columbus' 1492 voyage may be important, then, as the first effective discovery of America by a European. "Effective" meaning it was not the first American contact by a European—it is pretty generally agreed, for example, that the Vikings were in America in the year 1000, the same year Pope Sylvester II crowned István king of Hungary—but that it was followed up by subsequent voyages of exploration, "discovery," and colonization. "By a European," obviously, meaning that non-Europeans had reached America centuries before.

Those non-Europeans were the people Columbus called, out of his confusion as to where he was, "Indians," the Native Americans. Another way to start American history is with their story. Most scholars now agree they moved to America by a then-existing "land bridge" (or ice bridge) from northeastern Asia sometime between 10,000 and 50,000 years ago. The tendency in recent years has been for scholars to push the date for their American arrival back and the estimates for their population at the time of contact up—possibly to as many as 10,000,000, for example, in North America alone. We have used the word "contact" several times. That's what it was—not the discovery of a new world by the old, but a contact between two very old and very different worlds. The contact was to prove devastating almost from the beginning for the Native Americans. A combination of the slaughter at the hands of Europeans and the death from diseases introduced by the Europeans to which the Americans had no immunity makes the word "genocide" not entirely inappropriate.

Because the defeat of the Spanish Armada (by the British and the weather) in 1588 was such a turning point in terms of opening up the Americas to countries other than Spain for colonization ventures, it has also been suggested as a starting point for American history.

Because the United States of America developed to a great extent out of the British colonies of North America, some have suggested 1607 as the beginning. That was the year of the planting of the first permanent British colony in North America at Jamestown, in what was to become Virginia. It was the first "permanent" British colony, but not the first. Several earlier efforts had failed; it was difficult business, this planting of colonies in an alien, unknown, and sometimes harsh environment, and with native peoples and other Europeans being hostile to your efforts.

Because the British colonies of North America issued their Declaration of Independence from the British Empire in 1776, that is still another popular way to begin American history.

And so on. The Puritan historians of colonial New England—a very historically-minded people, the Puritans, who read history, wrote history, and were self-conscious about their role in history—usually began their histories by recounting the Biblical myth of the Garden of Eden, suggesting that they saw their history in America as directly linked to that beginning. One can make the case that none of these dates is the proper way to begin. Since geography helps to shape history, perhaps one should begin with the shape of the land, its mountains, forests, streams, animal life, resources, climate, etc. Indeed, though one should stop short of geographical determinism (i. e., the belief that geography determines human history), and look to many other factors as well, it is true that one should have a solid grounding in the geography of North America in order to understand its history. But that is not the intent of these pages.

Instead, out of the many possible ways to begin American history, probably the one that makes the most sense here is to devote some brief attention to the European backgrounds. For changes that were going on in Europe led to the initial contact with America and shaped early American history in profound ways.

Europe was going through incredible changes as it emerged from what historians have called "medieval" times into what they have called "modern." Every area of life was affected. Politically, the nation-state system was replacing the localism of feudal times. In religion, the Protestant Reformation began, symbolically, when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg. Intellectually and culturally, the great revival known as the Renaissance had its roots as far back as 14th-century Florence, but spread throughout Europe by the 17th century. Technologically, there are many innovations, including those in seafaring that made the voyages of exploration and discovery possible, but probably the most important in relation to the emergence of modernity is the printing press. All these are interrelated, of course; all together—along with the "discovery" of America—they constitute the beginning of modern history.

The changes in Europe that led most obviously if not most directly to contact with America were the economic ones. Some have called it a "commercial revolution." The crucial concept is mercantilism, which will appear in these pages again. Essentially, it was an economic system of thought held by those newly-emerging nations which emphasized economic self-sufficiency. To achieve that, a nation needed a favorable balance of trade, i. e., more exports than imports, and thus an accumulation of gold, silver, currency, whatever in the national treasury. Early on, it became obvious colonies could play a vital role in such a system: they could provide raw materials to the mother country, and serve as an additional market for its manufactured goods. Of course, since essentially all the new nations accepted this system, it became a competitive thing, a race. A race, in part, for America.

Though of course, initially, they did not know America was there. Beginning about the 12th century, there was an increased interest in the East, stimulated by the Crusades and travel accounts such as the famous one by Marco Polo, who went all the way to China and back and showed it could be profitable. Especially of interest to Europeans were Oriental luxuries such as rugs, spices, and fabrics. For a time, the Italian city-states dominated this eastern trade, in part because of the advantage of their location. But that dominance was quickly challenged by others, first the Portuguese: Prince Henry the Navigator pushed trade far down the coast of West Africa by the time of his death in 1460; Bartholomew Diaz rounded the southern tip in 1487; and Vasco de Gama a few years later (1498) sailed around it and went all the way to India, thereby shifting Europe's eastern trade center from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. In the meantime, Columbus, guessing he could reach the East by sailing west, stumbled on America. Whatever his intent and confusion, he did establish a claim to the territories for Spain. John Cabot followed a few years later for England, Verrazzano and Cartier a few years later still for France. And in 1522 the Spaniard Ferdinand Magellan became the first to circumnavigate the globe, presumably putting to rest any lingering doubts about the world being round.

One more figure from this "Age of Discovery" deserves brief mention, for the "new" lands were not named after Columbus, were they? In 1507, a German geographer placed an ill-defined blob of land on his map of the world somewhere over there across the Atlantic and named it "America." It was for Amerigo Vespucci (or Americus Vespucius), who probably reached the area after Columbus, but, unlike Columbus, apparently realized, or at least suspected, that it was not the East, not India or whatever, but something "new," something Europeans had not known was there. As geographical knowledge developed, Vespucci's name was given to North America, South America, Central America.

In part due to Columbus getting there first, but more due to naval power, Spain's American empire soon became the dominant one; it was marked by ugly conquests of Mexico by Cortez, Peru by Pizarro—and millions of Native Americans by disease, for they had not had the opportunity to develop immunity to diseases carried by the Europeans. Not surprisingly, other nations moved to challenge Spain's dominant position, including Portugal, France, and, most relevant for our story, England. Spain and Portugal even got the pope to issue his Line of Demarcation in 1493 dividing any territories discovered which were not ruled by a "Christian prince" between the two of them; the result, in America, was to give Brazil to Portugal, all the rest to Spain. Obviously, other nations were not too excited about that—King Francis I of France demanded to see Adam's will leaving the world to Spain and Portugal alone! So other countries, including France, began to move in anyway. Some of them were persecuted Protestants known as Huguenots who attempted a settlement in present-day northern Florida only to be slaughtered/driven out by the Spanish.

Then the English began to challenge Spain. The rivalry was intense, fueled by religious tension (between Catholic Spain and Protestant England), Philip of Spain's feeling that he had a claim to the throne of England and unsuccessful efforts to wed Elizabeth of England as a way of establishing that claim, and, most relevant in America, the raids of the Elizabethan "Sea Dogs" (pirates) such as John Hawkins and Francis Drake on Spanish treasure ships on the high seas with the obvious blessing of Elizabeth (who knighted Drake). The Anglo-Spanish conflict reached its peak in 1588 with the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Already referred to as a turning point in American history, this was also a turning point in world history, the beginning of a long process of decline for Spain and its empire. In America, it meant Spain could no longer effectively

protect her claim to essentially the entire area, that England and other nations could begin to move in. And they did.

The motives for English colonization were diverse. It is sometimes said that the Spanish were out for glory, God, and gold; all these are visible in the case of the English as well. Many people were clearly affected by the spirit of adventure, the pioneering spirit of the age; they wanted to see what was "over there," to be among the first to go. Tied up inextricably with that, however, was the lure of gold, silver, other precious items—the lure, in short, of immediate and great wealth was a motive for both individuals and the English government. There was also something of a missionary spirit, though interestingly that seems clearly not to have been as strong for Protestant England as for Catholic Spain and France; to the extent it was present, it may have been a desire to introduce the natives to the "true" Christianity rather than allowing them to be subjected to the "corrupted" version, Catholicism.

Conditions within England were a strong stimulus to colonization for many. Indeed, it is common when looking at historical migrations of people to look at expelling forces, things which made them want to leave where they were, and attracting forces, things which were (or seemed) desirable about another place. The expelling forces in England were both economic and religious, and in some cases the same people were affected by both. Economically, times were hard for many; the transition from medieval to modern was not going smoothly. Many people were without even access to land—never mind owning it, which was possible only for the wealthy few—as the enclosure movement progressed (i. e., land previously available for common usage, "the commons," was now being enclosed for such things as the raising of sheep). The soldiers and sailors discharged after the Armada could only join the ranks of the unemployed. Etc. Religion cannot be separated from politics in the England of that day—the king or queen is not only the political leader of the country but the religious leader as well after the unique English version of the Protestant Reformation established the Church of England. (It clearly had more to do with Henry VIII's marital travails than it did with any theological issues.) This leads at times to considerable pressure on non-Anglican groups such as Roman Catholics and dissenting Protestant groups, of whom the best known were the Puritans (because they wanted to "purify" the Church of England of its Roman Catholic remnants—those who went further and thought it was unpurifiable were separatists). At times, the situation led to outright religious persecution, which, interestingly, most Americans probably consider the major motive for the establishment of the English colonies in North America ("religious freedom," they will usually say), though it is easy to show that some of the other motives are more important.

Indeed, we have saved the two most important till last: land and mercantilism. So far as individual Englishpeople were concerned, it seems clear that the possibility of acquiring land, a non-existent possibility for the masses of common people, was uppermost. One thing that became known early on about America was that it was large, and that landownership might be possible for all. For the English government, on the other hand, the motivation is complex, but is captured best by the idea of mercantilism; we've already mentioned it—it will come back again as a central element in understanding the relationship between England and the colonies.

Resulting from a mixture of these motives, English efforts to establish a colony in America began as early as the 1570s. The early, failed efforts need not detain us long here. The 1583 failure led by Sir Humphrey Gilbert did include one Hungarian, Stephen Parmenius; both died in a shipwreck off the coast of Nova Scotia. Gilbert's half-brother, Sir Walter Raleigh, then took over the effort. His most famous attempt was on Roanoke Island. It lasted long enough for the first English birth in North America to take place (Virginia Dare), but ultimately all trace of the

settlement disappeared, making it the famous "lost colony." Suffice it to say that these early efforts were carried out by individual Englishmen who soon learned that their resources were not adequate for the difficult task at hand. Thus a system developed of pooling resources, most often in the form of joint stock trading companies. It is also important to note that though we speak of "the English colonies of North America," the English government itself did not establish a single colony; rather, they were all the result of private English initiative. That is an interesting and important contrast with the colonial ventures of other nations such as Spain and France.

The first successful effort, as we have noted, took place at Jamestown, in 1607; it was a project of one of those joint stock trading companies, in this case the Virginia Company. Because it is first, and in many ways representative, it is the only one of the British colonies we will look at here in some detail. A look at Jamestown's early history will show that it almost became just another failed effort at English colonization, for almost everything imaginable went wrong at first. It proved difficult to get people to go, many people by now having heard of the death/disappearance of earlier "colonists," so a pretty sorry lot generally was secured, those who basically who had no other options available to them. (Thomas A. Bailey used to say there were more "jailbirds" who came to America than there were people who came for religious freedom, but it should be noted that those "jailbirds" were not necessarily criminal types—some might have been facing debtor's prison, for example, for their inability to pay for a loaf of bread for their family.) Jamestown was not a good site: low, swampy, mosquito- and disease-ridden—and with nearby Native Americans who were understandably skeptical of the arrival of these strangers to their shore. The "colonists" had a tendency to spend their time looking for gold and silver rather than doing the hard work necessary for survival in the wild. One man in their midst, though apparently a notorious liar—most doubt, for example, the veracity of his famous story about the Indian princess Pocahontas saving his life from her father's ax—took over and saved the venture. He was Captain John Smith (of some fame in Hungarian history as well), and his central rule was "Those who don't work, don't eat." It worked. The colony was in bad shape for some years, including the "starving time" when more than half died, but it would likely have failed without Smith.

Between 1613 and 1619, a series of turning points took place in the history of Jamestown which assured that it would not only survive but prosper and spread. First, after a brief period in which members of the Virginia Company controlled all the land, a system of private landownership was begun; obviously, it was now much easier to get people to come over from England. The settlers were also given a voice in their own governance at an early date, with the establishment of a precedent-setting representative system. Ironically, at virtually the same time as the introduction of some degree of self-government, the introduction of its antithesis also occurred: A Dutch trading vessel brought the first boat-load of Africans to Jamestown, the beginning of the institution of slavery. The company also made a decision to admit women to the colony. Yes, English colonial activities to this point had been essentially all male. Obviously, this decision boosted morale considerably—and the birth rate. Finally, the crucial turning point so far as the colony beginning to turn a profit—which, remember, is why the company was involved in this venture—was the introduction of tobacco as a commercial crop. John Rolfe is credited with being the first to raise it and sell it back in England. He also married Pocahontas and improved the Anglo-Indian relationship for a while. Tobacco, much of it grown with slave labor, quickly became the basis for the prosperity and growth of the Virginia colony. (As the

settlements spread out from Jamestown, that's what it came to be called, after the supposed virgin queen, Elizabeth.)

In 1624, as the result of a dispute between the king and the members of the company, the charter granted by the king to the company was revoked. This has the effect of making Virginia a royal colony, i. e., a government colony, one controlled directly by the crown. And it establishes a pattern: Though, as stated, none of the English colonies were established by the government, eight of the original thirteen had become royal colonies by the time of the American Revolution. (It is perhaps not too bold to suggest that this pattern has something to do with the coming of revolution.)

In 1676, Bacon's Rebellion occurred. Though some historians have made much of Nathaniel Bacon as the "torchbearer of the revolution," and his rebellion is significant as being the first instance of organized resistance to British authority in the American colonies, it was essentially a frontier-seaboard conflict over Indian control. Bacon was clearly no democrat; indeed, he was an example of the few aristocrats who went to America, being the younger son in a wealthy, land-owning family who was cut out of the family estate by the practice of primogeniture, requiring that the estate go intact to the oldest son.

Just a few highlights from other colonies during the period of the founding, then we will move to some hopefully helpful generalizations about life in the colonies.

The Pilgrims. The Mayflower. Plymouth Rock. Powerful images associated with the beginning of American history. But they occurred some thirteen years after Jamestown. Historians pay a lot of attention to "firsts." We have already mentioned several. The Mayflower Compact has sometimes been considered the first written constitution in the New World. The Pilgrims, let it be noted, were separatists; they did come to America for religious freedom. Their Compact, signed on board the ship before they went ashore, was basically an agreement to abide by majority rule, so it is glorifying it a bit much to consider it a written constitution, but it is important, precedent-setting for democracy. Probably the document that better deserves the honorific "first written constitution of the New World" is the much lesser known Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, associated with the founding of that spin-off colony from Massachusetts in 1639. It really spelled out in some detail a system of government. The significance, obviously, of all this debate about the first written constitution is that by the time 1787 rolls around, the Americans take it for granted that a system of government must be committed to print—though the English constitution, of course, as opposed to the American one, is not written.

The first voluntary union of English colonies in North America—obviously another important precedent as the colonies tried to develop unity to oppose the British later—came as early as 1643, in the form of the New England Confederation. Consisting of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Plymouth (a separate colony at first, eventually part of Massachusetts), and New Haven (a separate colony at first, eventually part of Connecticut), the Confederation was essentially a military alliance for defense against the Indians, the Dutch, and, it has been suggested only somewhat facetiously, the heretics of Rhode Island. (Rhode Island had been founded by such people as Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, cast out by the Puritans of Massachusetts, who proved as intolerant of others as the authorities had been of them in England. Williams believed in separation of church of state and religious freedom, and believed also that the Indians had certain rights which whites were bound to respect. Rhode Island is generally a radical exception to any generalization one wishes to make about New England or the colonies in general—and notice that it is indeed excluded from the New England Confederation.) The Confederation

worked, also, in the sense that it helped the colonists win the important King Philip's War against the Indians in the 1670s, and thus showed that colonial unity could accomplish things.

The last of the English colonies of North America to be founded was Georgia in 1733. Though we have obviously skipped over a lot of detail, let us assume that the colonies are all founded now, and engage in some broad generalizations about life in the colonies. Notice that our story focuses on the thirteen English colonies of mainland North America, because those are the ones from which the United States of American emerged. But it is also important to note that these thirteen are hardly all there is to the British Empire, indeed hardly its more important parts from the point of view of London. Even in America, British possessions in the West Indies, for example, were clearly of greater interest and profit (interrelated) than the mainland colonies. By the end of the 17th century, the British colonial empire was so diverse and widespread that perhaps it is not surprising that British statesmanship ultimately failed to hold it together.

Looking at the thirteen mainland colonies, it is traditional and helpful to break them down into three regions: New England, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island; the Middle Colonies, including New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware; and the Southern Colonies, including Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Let us attempt a brief characterization of each region according to their population, economy, religion, and culture. By population, we mean not so much numbers (which would doubtless impress most readers as remarkably small—the total population by the time of the Revolution was around 2.5 million) as national origins, i. e., where most of the people in each region came from. By economy, we mean the dominant economic activities of each region, the way most people made their living. By religion, we mean the dominant religious group or groups in each region, what church was established there. And we mean the broadest definition possible of culture, i. e., education, art, literature, music, etc.; we will want to determine which regions are more or less advanced culturally, and why.

First, New England. The population, as even the name might suggest, was overwhelmingly English. And mostly a middle- to upper-middle-class type of Englishperson also, which gave the region a particular orientation and made it the most homogeneous region of the colonies. When one thinks of the economy of the New England colonies, one probably thinks of maritime activities, i. e., activities related to the sea, such as fishing, shipbuilding, and trade or commerce. And that is not wrong—Boston, for example, quickly established itself as one of the major ports for the colonies. But the fact is most people in New England—as in all the colonies—made their living through agriculture. Here it was a particular kind of farming, usually known as subsistence agriculture to suggest that the norm (or at least the ideal) was for each farm family to grow what it needed to subsist. In religion, the official, established faith was the Congregational church of the Puritans—except, of course, in Rhode Island! The Puritans were Calvinistic in their theology. One must be careful not to credit them with religious toleration. They may have gone to America because they were not tolerated in England, but that does not mean that they were committed to the concept of religious toleration. Indeed, there are ugly examples of their intolerance, especially to dissenting groups such as the Quakers. (Often, fiction can bring history to life; Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter is an unforgettable portrayal of one side of Puritanism.) Culturally, New England clearly deserves to be ranked as the most advanced region of the colonies. To keep this in perspective, it should be borne in mind that the colonies overall were not very advanced culturally. They were colonies—their major work was survival and then making a living (and, of course, profit for their founders); colonists historically have not had much time to devote to education, literature, the arts. So New England's relative degree of cul-

tural advancement can be explained by several factors: the upper-middle-class origin of much of its population, thus their greater orientation toward things cultural; the commercial nature of their economy, thus their greater degree of cultural contact with the mother country and other areas; and what we might call the education-mindedness of the Congregational church—they established Harvard, for example, British America's first institution of higher learning, in 1636, only six years after the colony of Massachusetts itself was founded.

Second, so that the contrasts will be even more clear, the Southern colonies. In population, the South had a majority of English people also. But they were very different English people by and large from those to be found in New England—that is to say, they were from a lower socio-economic order. And there were at least three large and important non-English groups: German, Scotch-Irish, and African. The Germans and Scotch-Irish had not come originally to the Southern colonies, but rather to the middle ones, from which they migrated down the valley systems of the Appalachian mountains into the western portions of the Southern colonies; they were the stereotypical frontiersmen of the colonial period. The Africans were the only group to migrate involuntarily, which, obviously, made a world of difference, just as their presence, overwhelmingly as slaves, made a world of difference in the history of the South and the United States. As in New England, most people in the South made their living through agriculture, but a very different system dominated. The emphasis was on a staple crop economy, in which farmers grew primarily one crop—whether tobacco, rice, indigo, or, later, cotton—and sold it to get what they needed to subsist. Much of the staples was grown by slave labor on plantations—though the image that brings to mind might not be an entirely accurate one, of which more later. The Church of England itself was the established one in the Southern colonies. But do not assume that means it was the dominant one in terms of membership, or that its favored status was popular. Those Germans and Scotch-Irish were hardly Anglicans, were they? Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc., were growing in number, and none too fond of seeing their tax money go to the Church of England. When the Revolution came, disestablishment came; the Church of England in America became the American Episcopal church. Culturally, the Southern colonies were the most backward region of the colonies. That is explained by the overwhelmingly agricultural nature of their economy, so that there were few towns and cities of any size to serve as cultural centers, and by the fact that the Anglican church was definitely not education-minded—education was essentially something only for the elite, and only those people enjoyed it who could afford it, through a private system, emphasizing individual tutors. (Eli Whitney, when he later invented the cotton gin, had gone south to tutor the children of a wealthy plantation owner.)

Surely, even from this brief characterization, you can see how different was the development of North and South in America from the earliest days of the colonies. The Middle Colonies were in the middle not only geographically but in terms of these characteristics as well. Their population was a dense mixture; if there was a melting pot in colonial America, it was in the middle colonies; and if there was an ethnic group to be found anywhere in the colonies, they were surely to be found in the middle colonies: English, German, Scotch-Irish, Irish, African, Dutch, Swede, etc. The economy of the Middle Colonies was a mix as well, with some large-scale trade and commercial activity (New York and Philadelphia, for example, early on rivaled Boston as great colonial ports) but also with some large-scale agriculture, especially the raising of wheat, leading to the label "breadbasket of the colonies." Religion of necessity was a mixture as well. All the well-known groups were there, as well as many others. Pennsylvania had begun as a

haven for Quakers (formally the Society of Friends); they were a minority there, but deserve credit for their toleration of other groups. Finally, there is no place left to put the middle colonies culturally but in the middle, lower than New England, higher than the South. It depends on where you point your finger on the map—if to New York, obviously, one of the more advanced areas, but if to the frontier regions of Pennsylvania and New York, one of the more backward.

Indeed, it might be helpful to see the frontier as a fourth area, overlapping with the other three, consisting of their newly-settled western fringes. If we see it as a separate region, and attempt briefly the same characterization, we see that it was something of a mixture in terms of population but featured a lot of Germans and Scotch-Irish, that its economy was overwhelmingly subsistence agriculture, its religion largely of a Protestant fundamentalist variety, and its culture the most backward of all. The frontier, even as early as the colonial period, shows some of those characteristics that developed it into an American myth, including the "Americanization" of diverse peoples, democracy, and individualism.

There were few cities, as you and I think of cities, in the colonial period. But they played important roles, including cultural centers, manufacturing centers, trading centers. The ten largest were Philadelphia, Boston, Newport, New York, Charleston, Salem, Hew Haven, Baltimore, Norfolk, and Wilmington. Two other important ones were Annapolis and Williamsburg, not so much for their commercial impact as their social and political prestige.

Benjamin Franklin is perhaps the only American of the colonial era who achieved (and deserved) international reputation. He is such an interesting and important character that he deserves a brief sketch here. He lived from 1706 to 1790. Biographical dictionaries list him as statesman, diplomat, editor, scientist, author, inventor, philanthropist, etc. He was all that, and more—someone has called him one of the last of the "Renaissance men." He began life in Boston. As a young boy, he learned the printer's trade as an apprentice to his brother. He moved to Philadelphia in 1723, acquired the *Pennsylvania Gazette,* and edited it until 1748. One of the things he is most famous for is *Poor Richard's Almanack,* an annual publication from 1732 to 1757. It included all sorts of helpful information on the weather, crops, etc. It also included wise and funny sayings. (A favorite: "Guests, like fish, smell after three days.") It was acclaimed both in America and Europe. Franklin founded the American Philosophical Society, the first public library, Philadelphia's first fire company, an academy which became the University of Pennsylvania… The list goes on. His international fame began in the 1740s with his invention of the Franklin stove, but perhaps the most celebrated image is of him flying a kite as a part of his electrical experiments. He was postmaster-general for the colonies, a delegate to the Albany Congress of 1754 (at which he presented an important, precedent-setting plan of union—though it was not adopted), and he was instrumental in securing the repeal of the odious Stamp Act in 1766. During the Revolutionary War, he served in the Continental Congress, helped draft and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and performed crucial diplomatic service by securing the treaty of alliance with the French and helping to negotiate the peace treaty with England. Finally, he was a member of the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia in 1787; he lived just long enough to see that document, which still survives, ratified in 1789, and died the following year.

Something further should be said about religion in colonial America. It is, literally, an almost incredibly important factor in early American history—almost incredible, that is, to the modern reader. Despite what we have said about other motives being more important, religion was part of the motivation for English colonization. Several of the original settlements were essentially "religious" in nature, including Plymouth (Pilgrim separatists), Massachusetts (Puritans), Rhode

Island (dissenters), Maryland (Catholics), and Pennsylvania (Quakers). Religion played a major role in making the three regions of the colonies distinctive. One of the powerful ideas to shape America came out of religion—though some would deny that it was religious. The reference is to Deism, an approach sometimes called "natural religion." It rejected traditionally Christian supernatural concepts of God as a personal presence in human life, and emphasized "providence" as a creative force that "allows" the universe, including human affairs, to operate without intervention according to natural law. Thomas Paine was one of its best-known adherents, but most of America's "Founding Fathers" are accurately described by the label deist as well, including Franklin and Thomas Jefferson—though it's hard to get right-wing Christian televangelists in America today to acknowledge that fact.

A movement which began as a religious phenomenon but became much more than that was the Great Awakening. While it is doubtless true that the men and women of the colonial period were essentially religious and lived in an age when religious convictions and differences were taken very seriously, it is also true that among the characteristics of the history of religion in the colonies was a decline of religious fervor. (The other two most obvious ones were the great multiplication of religious groups and the rise of religious toleration.) The modern reader needs to understand that religion was so central to peoples' daily lives then that it is difficult for even the normal religious person of today to identify with, and that any departure from that would look to them like a decline of religious zeal. Still, as early as the 1720s, some ministers began to call for a religious revival. It came; indeed, it swept the colonies from the 1720s to the 1750s, peaking in the 1740s. It featured such leaders as George Whitefield from England, closely associated with the Wesley brothers of Methodist fame, and, best known of all, Jonathan Edwards, who besides being a minister and theologian was a philosopher and one of America's great intellectuals—later president of Princeton University, for example. Some have difficulty reconciling that intellectual image with Edwards'—and other Great Awakening ministers'—almost totally emotional approach. Edwards' sermon, for example, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," "Americanized" the strict predestinarian system of Calvinism, it is said, by emphasizing the centrality of the religious experience of "conversion." To lead to this, Edwards emphasized his listeners' unworthiness, cultivated their fear of eternal damnation. It was not at all uncommon for Great Awakening sermons to culminate in emotional jerks, shouts, howling at the moon, climbing trees to be closer to God, etc.

But more important than the Great Awakening's methods were its results—and they went way beyond the narrow confines of religion. Yes, it led to an emphasis on fundamentalism in religion, and the growth of some of those churches, such as the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, which followed that approach. And it led to a renewed emphasis on missionary work, including among African and Native Americans. But it also served as an impetus to higher education—and though the universities founded were predominantly religious in tone at first, anyone knows that a university is a dangerous place, sprouting all kinds of ideas. The Great Awakening also helped lead to the further development of religious toleration. Not that many of its leaders preached religious toleration as a positive principle; rather, these were churches that were not "established," and they didn't care much for those that were, and they certainly wanted their own church to be tolerated. Religious toleration, in other words, seems to have developed in America primarily as an inevitable result of the great religious diversity that developed. Finally, and broadest in its implications, the Great Awakening helped to break the hold of the conservative upper classes and gave the common people more influence in religious affairs. If the people who traditionally have considered themselves your "betters" religiously really aren't . . . then

maybe they are not your betters in other areas of life either. In short, the Great Awakening had broadly democratic implications. Its message of religious equality seemed to suggest equality in other areas as well: social, economic, political. It is not too much to say that the Great Awakening helped to prepare the way for the American Revolution.

CHAPTER TWO
RELATIONS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE COLONIES, 1607–1783

The chapter on colonial background provided only a small part of the necessary basis for understanding the culmination of colonial history, the American Revolution. To really understand the Revolution, one needs to go back to the very beginning of the establishment of the English colonies in North America and look at the history of the relationship that developed between mother country and colonies.

It should prove helpful in approaching this all-important aspect of colonial history to break the topic down into four time periods, each with a dominant theme, then begin to look at each period in some detail. Obviously, there was a relationship between England and her North American colonies from 1607, the year the first colony was founded there, through 1783, the year England accepted the Treaty of Paris and thus the independence of her former colonies, now the United States of America. The four periods are: 1607–1660, salutary neglect; 1660–1763, mercantilism; 1763–1775, conflict; and 1775–1783, revolution.

The first time period is 1607 to 1660; it is sometimes called a period of salutary neglect. "Neglect," obviously, suggests that not much was going on in the relationship during this period, and "salutary" that this was beneficial in terms of the development, economic and otherwise, of the colonies. This was a period when many colonies were just being founded and beginning to struggle and grow; remember, the English government itself did not establish any of them directly. It has even been suggested that this neglect was an intentional thing on the part of the British government, i. e., that they were letting private enterprise take the risks, then, when it became evident that a colony was going to make it, or, especially, to prosper, they would figure out a way to turn it into a royal colony. Probably we don't need to be that conspiratorial in order to understand this period; probably, as a matter of fact, English colonial officials were not thinking through anything that logically. (A fairly viable case can be made that the American Revolution resulted from a series of blunders on the part of the British.) Instead, the period of relative neglect can be explained by two major factors. First, Britain was new to this game of empire; she had no previous experience with colonies, and some time was required to work out anything like a coherent colonial policy. Thus, the period is not one of total neglect—papers are being drawn up, alternative policies considered, even some legislation passed. Second, internal conditions in England were such that she hardly had a lot of available time and resources to devote to working out a colonial policy; this is the period, remember, of the English Civil War. With the restoration of the Stuart family to the throne of England in 1660, and the return of some stability that occasion marked, England could begin to spend more time on her colonies, and did.

One further thought about salutary neglect: In one sense, it was not so salutary. That is to say, if your concern was with the long-range preservation of the English empire, this period was very problematic indeed. After roughly half a century of essentially being left alone, many colonists were likely to be resentful of virtually any colonial policy introduced. If they could make it that

long with basically no regulations, restrictions, controls, why, many of them wondered, should they have such regulations, restrictions, and controls after 1660?

But they did. The second period in the relationship between England and the colonies runs from 1660 to 1763 and is best labeled the century of mercantilism. 1660 is not only the date of the Stuart restoration, it is also the year of the passage of the first of the navigation acts; 1763 marks the end of the French and Indian (or 7 Years) War, but it is also one of the incredibly important turning points in the history of the English-colonial relationship. The century in between those two dates is very different from what came before—and after. The central goal of English colonial policy in those years was to bring the colonies in line with the economic theories of mercantilism. (If that word brings no clear images to mind, look back to its introduction in the first chapter.)

It is important to look at the first navigation act in some detail, as it established the pattern for the ones to follow—indeed, for the entire century of mercantilism in the English-colonial relationship. Colonies, remember, existed for the sole benefit of the mother country; the two primary ways they were to provide that benefit was to provide raw materials for the manufacturing industries of the mother country and to serve as an additional market for its manufactured goods. (Thus, the most valuable colonies were those which provided something crucial that England did not have access to otherwise. Example? Sugar from the British West Indies.)

The first navigation act can be divided helpfully into two parts. The first part provided that products of the colonies, whether in America or elsewhere, could be carried to England only in English-owned and English-manned vessels. This was aimed especially at the Dutch, and the "elsewhere" is an important point, indicating that this legislation was for the entire British empire, not just its North American parts. From Europe to the colonies, goods must be carried either in English vessels or ships of the country which produced the goods. (In other words, there is still some limited room for foreign participation in the carrying trade with English colonies—a French boat loaded with French hemp, say, could still sail legally to South Carolina.) The second part was a list of goods which could be shipped legally only to England or another English colony. These were called "enumerated articles," and the initial list included such important American colonial products as tobacco, sugar, cotton, ginger, and dye woods.

One cannot resist the temptation to stop for a moment and ask whether this act was good or bad for the colonies. Of course, a good mercantilist would have said that was the wrong question; the right question was whether it was good or bad for the empire. Probably the first part was good for the colonies, the second part bad. Remember, the colonists were English, so the act did not eliminate their vessels from the carrying trade, and probably served to further stimulate the shipbuilding industry of New England as well. But the idea of enumerated articles, while it did guarantee the colonies an outlet for their produce, limited their flexibility and made them by definition criminals if they sold their goods in a foreign market even when they could clearly have secured a better price by doing so.

The second, third, and fourth navigation acts, passed in 1663, 1673, and 1696 respectively, were really just designed to plug loopholes in the first. Let us look at the issue of enforcement for a moment. It is probably not wrong to conclude that the most obvious result of the navigation acts in America was a great increase in smuggling. (An old professor in colonial history used to have a multiple choice question on all his exams which said "The most important industry in colonial America was . . . ." One of the choices was "smuggling," and he insisted that was the correct answer!) Americans have always liked to think of themselves as a uniquely law-abiding people, but the evidence would suggest that from the very beginning they were somewhat selec-

tive about which laws to obey. When it came to those laws which sought to make the colonies play their "proper" role within the mercantilistic system, they were selective indeed, obeying the laws that seemed to them to be in their best interest, disobeying with no apparent qualms those which they perceived not to be. Smugglers, of course, tend not to keep careful records! Thus, it is impossible to say what percentage of colonial commerce was legal, what percentage illegal, and historians have always argued about the issue. What is clear is that there was enough illegal activity that the British authorities considered it a serious problem. Massachusetts was probably the single greatest violator; she had, of course, more opportunities to smuggle than most colonies, being one of the greatest commercial centers. It was surely because the government of England found it difficult to discipline Massachusetts that her charter was revoked in 1684, thus turning Massachusetts into still another royal colony.

It was also in 1684 that the so-called Dominion of New England was formed, a forced consolidation of the eight northernmost colonies under a single royal governor (Edmund Andros), with the Church of England as the official church (in Puritan New England!), with royal taxes, etc. There is room for doubt as to whether this was even a legal action by the British; it involved ending without their consent the governments of all three types of colonies, charter, proprietary, and royal, and turning them all into one big royal colony. There is no room for doubt that one of the primary motivations for the move was more effective enforcement of the navigation acts! Whether legal, it was certainly unpopular, for all sorts of reasons—religious, political, and financial. Governor Andros was also a problem; he was terribly authoritarian, and oblivious to (or unconcerned about) colonial sentiments. It has been suggested that only one thing kept the American Revolution from breaking out almost 100 years early: the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England. In the colonies, Andros was run out, barely escaping with his life, and the Dominion of New England, which had never really been effectively instituted anyway, was brought to an end.

The Glorious Revolution, of course, was a vital turning point in English history, the end of the "divine right" theory of monarchical rule and the beginning of the rise of Parliamentary power. As one wag put it, God didn't choose William and Mary for the throne, Parliament did! But it marked no essential change in colonial policy. Parliament still sought to make the colonies fit into the mercantilist system through the navigation acts and other measures, and there was still a noticeable tendency over the years toward conversion of other types of colonies into royal ones, in part so they could be more effectively controlled.

There were several supplementary measures to the navigation acts passed by Parliament during the century of mercantilism. Not navigation acts, strictly speaking, their goals were consistent. For example, the number of enumerated articles was constantly expanded, reaching a point where colonists must have begun to think, "Aha, I get it—anything of value that we produce here, they are going to put on that list." They were, of course, exactly right in that suspicion.

If colonies are supposed to provide raw materials for the manufacturing activities of the mother country and serve as an outlet for the mother country's manufactured products, it might follow that colonies themselves should not engage in manufacturing. It did. Especially if the manufacturing might compete with goods manufactured in England itself. That's all you need to know to understand such pieces of Parliamentary legislation as the Hat Act, Iron Act, Woolens Act; that is to say, they were all restrictions on colonial manufacturing.

There were also consistent attempts to end colonial issues of paper money. In principle, the British may have been right here. Certainly paper money is not worth much without sound back-

ing. But as with so many mercantilistic policies, this one denied a real colonial problem, i. e., inadequate currency in circulation.

The last of these supplementary measures—supplementary, that is, of the navigation acts, and designed to accomplish the same purpose: make the colonies be good colonies by narrow mercantilistic standards—is an important one, and serves as an excellent case study of the way colonial officials would notice a specific problem with the imperial system and move to remedy it. The Molasses Act of 1733 placed a tax on foreign molasses coming into the colonies. So what's the problem? Just this: One of the most important aspects of colonial commerce is the so-called "triangular trade." Feature the North American mainland colonies, the West Indies, and Europe (and Africa) as the three points on the triangle. Molasses flows from the West Indies to the mainland colonies, where it is used, among other things, for the manufacture of rum, which flows from the colonies to Europe, where it is used, among other things, to exchange for African slaves, who "flow" to the West Indies, where they are used, among other things, for the production of molasses . . . . Etc. This is a greatly oversimplified picture; other things "flowed" between those points as well, and things "flowed" the other way also. But keep it in mind. Keep also in mind that not all parts of the West Indies are British; there are Spanish West Indies, French West Indies, Dutch West Indies. And the colonists, being good capitalists, are naturally going to get their molasses where they can get the best available at the cheapest price. It appears most often that was from French suppliers. But that doesn't fit with the mercantilistic system, does it? So the Molasses Act was an effort to stop the flow of foreign molasses into the colonies. If it had been effectively enforced, it would clearly have harmed colonial trade substantially. But "if" is one of the biggest words in the English dictionary. Even those scholars who do not emphasize smuggling so much seem to agree that the Molasses Act was generally ignored. Thus, the Molasses Act is not only a good case study of English intent, but of the failure of their colonial policies to work out as planned.

Before moving into the third, crucial period of the relationship between England and her North American colonies, it is necessary to step aside briefly from the chronological account of events and look at another subject, seemingly unrelated. The other subject is the struggle that developed between England and France for control of the continent of North America; and, though seemingly unrelated, the two subjects come together in a powerful way in 1763.

French claims to North America based on exploration were considerably later than English, Verrazzano having arrived there about a quarter of a century after Cabot. But French colonization began only a year after Jamestown—Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec in 1608. French settlement followed a very different pattern from the English. This was partially dictated by the harsher climate, poorer soil, and greater distance from the coast. These factors, and perhaps others, led the French to spread out over a much greater area than the English, though they were considerably fewer in number, and to focus their economic activity almost exclusively on the fur trade with the Indians. Part of this spread involved voyages through the Great Lakes region and the "discovery" of the Mississippi River by La Salle, and the subsequent spread of "New France" down that river to the Gulf of Mexico where New Orleans was established as the southern capital (of "Louisiana", as that part of New France was sometimes called). So what we have is a relatively thin band of French settlements encircling the denser band of English settlements along the coastline. Not surprisingly, the result was conflict, taking the form of a series of four "intercolonial wars," the ultimate objective of which was control of the continent.

American history, however, does not take place in a vacuum; you might be familiar with these wars from your European history textbooks as the War of the League of Augsburg, the

War of the Spanish Succession, the War of the Austrian Succession, and the Seven Years War. In America, they were named after the British sovereign at the time (thus King William's War, Queen Anne's War, and King George's War) until the last one, which is known, somewhat confusingly, as the French and Indian War. (It was really England versus France, with most of the Indians on the French side.) It is adequate for our purposes to generalize about the first three of these conflicts by saying that they were basically American aspects of much broader European conflicts, that they were limited military most of the time to border raids or frontier skirmishing, and that they were indecisive so far as the control of the continent was concerned. (The British did, however, make significant gains, including in the Hudson Bay region, and Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, in the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 which ended Queen Anne's War or the War of the Spanish Succession.)

The showdown came in the French and Indian War, 1754–1763. Obviously, that's more than seven years, suggesting that this one, unlike the others, began in America and did not become a general European conflagration until a couple of years later. A comparison of the two sides at the outbreak of this decisive war reveals that the French had significant weaknesses in America, including substantially less population (only about 1/20th that of the English), and that more widely dispersed, and a shaky economy, involving a rather primitive agricultural system, virtually no industry, and little commerce—other than the fur trade, which looks a rather unstable thing on which to base an empire. But the French also had strengths, including unified royal control, a good standing army present in America, a strategic string of forts from Quebec to the Ohio valley, and the already-mentioned Indian allies. British weaknesses centered around the lack of unified control and the resultant conflicting plans and failure to cooperate even between colonies (never mind the conflict and jealousies between colonial troops and British troops who were sent to America to fight the war!). But British strengths were impressive, ultimately decisive. They included the population advantage, control of the seas, and one important Indian ally, the Iroquois.

The new area of conflict which proved crucial in leading to the war was the rich and strategic Ohio River valley, centering around present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, between the westward-expanding English colonists and that thin circle of French settlements to the west. When French forces fired on the 150 men led by young George Washington—whose family was part of the land-speculating group that pushed English interests into the area—the war had begun. It was July 3, 1754. Within two years, the conflict renewed in Europe as well—thus, the "Seven Years'" War, 1756–1763, ended by the Treaty of Paris. Militarily, for the first few years, almost everything went badly for the British. The low point came when General Edward Braddock's effort to take Fort Duquesne from the French ended in failure, ambush, and many deaths, including Braddock's own. Things began to turn around when William Pitt took over the reins of power in England. He focussed on America, he brought up several able new military leaders, and his requisition system secured much more effective colonial support of the war effort than heretofore—though in some areas, especially those far removed from the "French menace," colonists continued a pattern of supplying the enemy's troops as often as the mother country's. A series of English military victories followed: Louisburg, Duquesne, Quebec, Montreal.

Peace was reached in 1763 at Paris. The treaty's provisions in relation to North America left no doubt that in the conflict between England and France for control of the continent England was victorious. Indeed, except for some limited possessions in the West Indies and fishing rights and a couple of small islands off the coast of Newfoundland, the French were virtually elimi-

nated from North America. (Not all of it went to England—the Spanish acquired all French possessions west of the Mississippi, so-called Louisiana, of which more later.)

Now, what does the successful conclusion, for the British, of this struggle for the continent have to do with the relationship between England and the colonies? A great deal. Indeed, it might be said that the two subjects, relations between England and the colonies and the struggle between England and France for control of North America, came together dramatically in 1763 and created one of the great turning points of early American history. Before the British were able to celebrate their victory over the French, they began to realize that their relationship with their North American colonies was in very bad shape indeed. And partly this was the result of the war itself. The British felt that they had fought this long, bloody, costly war for the sake of the colonies, and without effective colonial cooperation, so they were not in a very good mood, so to speak; they were determined to make the colonies pay off part of the debt generated by the war, for instance, and generally were more inclined than ever before to begin to regulate, restrict, and control the colonies. The colonies, on the other hand, in a celebratory mood now that the French menace was gone, and more generally having enjoyed fifty years of salutary neglect and another hundred years of mercantilism ineffectively enforced, were even less receptive than ever before to being regulated, restricted, and controlled.

In short, in 1763, at the end of the French and Indian War, the relationship between England and the colonies was in bad shape. It would soon get worse. Which is why with 1763 we enter into a new time period in the relationship, 1763–1775, most often labeled the "decade of conflict"—though obviously it was a bit more than a decade. As we look back at that era now, we can see each major event leading closer to a total breakdown of the relationship, to revolution. But it is important as students of history to evaluate each crisis on its own terms, to remember that they did not know as we do that the final result would be revolution.

The first crisis came the very same year as the end of the war, as a result of the Proclamation of 1763. The British, facing among other things the "Indian problem" if large numbers of English colonists began to move into the newly-acquired areas, drew an imaginary line down the crest of the Appalachian mountain system and said in effect that the colonists were not to cross that line. They had good reasons for taking this action—from their point of view. There were problems with the Indians, for example Pontiac's Rebellion (or "Conspiracy"), and the British knew that they needed some time to work out policies for their expanded empire. But the colonists saw it differently—as they were to see almost everything from now on. "Why did we fight this war," they asked in effect, "if not to go beyond the mountains?" And, continuing their pattern of highly selective obedience to imperial regulations, they moved beyond the mountains anyway. Such figures as Daniel Boone, for example, became heroes in part as a result of this movement.

The period from 1763, then, the end of the French and Indian War, to 1775, the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War, is a period of almost constant crisis. It is a period marked by British efforts to strengthen those ties over the colonies which she already has, and the introduction of what is to prove the crucial new element, taxation of the colonies. The Prime Minister at the beginning of this crucial era was George Grenville. He probably meant well, as they say, but he had no first-hand knowledge of colonial conditions or attitudes, no advisors who did—and perhaps it did not even occur to him to care. He began a general attempt to tighten the customs service; for example, he began to keep British war ships in colonial waters, and to enlarge the jurisdiction of the Admiralty courts, those that dealt with supposed violators of the navigation acts. And, incredibly, for the first time, British troops, some 10,000 of them, were permanently

stationed in the colonies. (This might be seen as incredible in two very different ways: Some readers might find it incredible that troops had never been permanently stationed in the colonies before, but instead had been sent to the colonies when needed for a particular crisis. But the colonists found it incredible in quite another way, i. e., they felt that they did not need the troops now that the French menace was gone, and innately knew that the real reason they were there was not for protection of the colonists but to keep their eyes on them!)

Three pieces of Parliamentary legislation in 1764 and 1765 triggered the next specific crisis. In 1764, the Sugar Act replaced the old 1733 Molasses Act. On the surface, that would seem an innocuous thing. Especially when one notes that the tax on foreign molasses was cut in half. But the colonists protested vigorously. Why? Clearly, because this time there was to be a determined effort to actually collect the tax. (And because this was the first time the British had attempted to levy import duties on colonial trade for the purpose of revenue rather than regulation.) Also in 1764 came the Currency Act. It specifically forbade colonial issues of paper money. The Sugar Act, it might be said, hit only the merchant class, while the Currency Act hit the ordinary citizens. The real problem, however, was neither of those laws, but rather the Stamp Act of 1765.

The Stamp Act was designed primarily to raise money to help pay for the support of the British troops stationed in the colonies. It would do this by requiring the placing of revenue stamps on a broad range of legal and commercial documents, including newspapers, playing cards, and liquor. The colonists objected not so much to the nature of the tax; revenue stamps were—and are—a common form of taxation. Rather, they objected to its purpose—they didn't even want the troops on their soil, and now they were to be taxed to pay for their presence there! And they objected because, effectively speaking, they had not been taxed, certainly not in such a visible and odious form. In any case, for whatever reason or reasons, they did object.

The resistance was more vigorous by far, and more organized, than anything to this point. Its culmination is known as the Stamp Act Congress, a meeting in New York of representatives of nine of the thirteen colonies. Their decision, momentous indeed, was that the Stamp Act was illegal—it was, they held, a case of "taxation without representation."

That was to become a rallying cry for the revolutionary movement. Literally, of course, it was true: Parliament passed the tax, and there were no colonial members of Parliament. This line of thinking would lead to the conclusion that only their own legislatures, in which they were represented, could legitimately tax the colonists, a conclusion which many of them did indeed reach. But the issue is more complex than that. The British had an answer to the cry of "taxation without representation." It was known as "virtual representation." It held that most English people within England were not directly represented in Parliament either, in the sense that they could not vote, but that virtually they were represented, because members of Parliament represented all English people, not just those of their specific constituencies who could vote. Clearly, this line of argument continued, the colonists were English, so, virtually, they were represented in Parliament also. If you find yourself reacting a bit skeptically to this as you read, imagine how the colonists must have reacted. But carry this one step further. Why not just let the colonists elect their own member or members of Parliament? Some suggested that. But among those opposed to the suggestion were most colonial leaders, the very same people who were crying "taxation without representation." They knew that if there were colonial members of Parliament, a measure would be introduced to tax the colonies and the only opposition would likely come from the colonial delegates. Then the colonists would be taxed. But they couldn't say "taxation without representation" anymore. In short, they didn't want representation in Parliament. But even more they didn't want to be taxed!

So, the delegates to the Stamp Act Congress have decided that the Stamp Act is illegal. What are they going to do about it? When you see the answer, you will see just what a crisis this is in the relationship. They decided, first, not to pay the tax, and second, to boycott British goods until the tax was repealed. Whatever one might think about mercantilism, surely it is easy to see that if there is anything that does not fit the system, it is a colony refusing to buy goods from its mother country—never mind the audacity of deciding for themselves what is legal and what is not, which laws they will obey and which ones they will not!

The "enforcement agency" set up to carry out this plan of colonial opposition is known in the pages of history as the "Sons of Liberty." The British often called them sons of . . . something else, for they were essentially bands of ruffians who engaged in such high patriotic acts as tarring and feathering and otherwise terrorizing tax agents and other British officials in the colonies. It worked. The radicals, those who were actively opposing British authority, were clearly a minority at this point. But due to their efforts, the Stamp Act was bringing in practically no revenue. Furthermore, British merchants began to complain about their loss of trade. You are perhaps familiar with the saying that politics makes strange bedfellows. Here, it was not so much politics as economics that did so. Colonial merchants and British merchants in effect join hands in pressuring Parliament to back off on the obnoxious legislation. The merchants couldn't have cared less about the position of the radicals, but they did care about their own account books.

A new British government, led now by Lord Rockingham, did back down. Sort of. The Stamp Act was repealed, but at essentially the same time Parliament passed the so-called "Declaratory Act," declaring their right to legislate for the colonies "in all cases whatsoever"—obviously including taxation. The colonists, being human, celebrated the Stamp Act's repeal and paid little attention to the Declaratory Act. What did they care if Parliament claimed the right to tax them as long as it didn't tax them? Also at essentially the same time, however, Parliament passed the Quartering Act, requiring colonies in which British troops were stationed to provide quarters and supplies for them.

So where does the relationship stand at this point? The colonists have forced the mother country to back down, yes. But, in an effort to save face, England is insisting on full powers over the colonies. And,in the meantime, she has found another way of making the colonies pay for the troops anyway! In a sense, we have a standoff. But it should be noted that a dangerous precedent has been set: By illegal means—and they were illegal even if they were "right"—the colonists have forced the mother country to back down. Clearly, they will not hesitate to use such tactics again.

Perhaps it is appropriate here to pause for a moment and see how the pattern of legislation emanating from England looked to the colonists. Doing so, we see how radical sentiment can be understood certainly, perhaps even justified. The Proclamation of 1763 would stop western migration when there was the greatest need for it because of hard times economically following the French and Indian War—never mind the already-mentioned sense of the colonists that they were being denied what they had fought for. The Sugar Act would hamper trade with the foreign West Indies and interfere with the normal flow of hard money into the colonies, thus increasing the difficulty for the colonists of repaying their debts to London. To get around this problem, colonies issued paper money—but now that would be stopped by the Currency Act. Then, just as all these things were making it harder to have any money, the Stamp Act demanded more money—and for a use which many colonists found offensive!

After the Stamp Act crisis, there was a brief period of calm in the relationship for a while. But the absence from the scene at this crucial time, due to illness, of William Pitt—the "great

commoner," "organizer of victory," "America's friend"—allowed "blunders" in colonial policy which might not have been made otherwise. The Townshend Duty Act seems clearly, with the advantage of 20/20 hindsight, to have been such a blunder. Charles Townshend was the Chancellor of the Exchequer and a "yes-man" for King George III who felt that the colonists should indeed contribute revenue directly to the British treasury without regard to their feelings about the matter.

The act, passed in 1767, reopened the obviously touchy question of taxation of the colonies. Paper, glass, paint, and tea were among the items to be taxed as they were brought into the colonies. This time, the money was to be used for paying the salaries of British officials in North America—including such ever-popular officials as royal governors and tax collectors! So once again, there is a dual problem: the tax, and the use to which the revenue is to be put. (Also at issue, the "power of the purse"—that is to say, by removing the power to pay the salaries of colonial officials from the individual colonies' representative assemblies, the act was removing their most potent weapon for control of recalcitrant officials.) Lord North is the new Prime Minister who has to face this crisis—and the continuing crisis through the Revolution. Need it be said that colonial protests occurred? The opposition begins to focus, geographically, in Massachusetts, and economically, on tea. Samuel Adams was the leader of the radicals in Massachusetts, and in his "Circular Letter"—i. e., it was circulated around the colonies—urged the colonists to take the now-familiar approach of not paying the tax and not buying anything British as long as the tax was in effect. The result also is practically a rerun of two years earlier, i. e., Parliament backs down but tries to save face: the duties are all repealed except that on tea. Did they really believe that would be acceptable to the colonies? Perhaps. If so, it illustrates just how bad communication was getting between the two.

Three years later, the situation is further agitated by the so-called Boston Massacre. Accounts vary widely, but the basics seem to be: Redcoated British sentries were standing guard at the customs house in Boston. Remember that their very presence is resented by many. Remember that Adams and his followers are just looking for incidents, and don't mind helping to create them, that they can use for propaganda purposes against the British. And remember that it's winter in Boston, which means lots of snow and ice. The "massacre" apparently began as a snowball fight, with citizens throwing them at the troops, and some troops reciprocating in a friendly manner. But with the tension just under the surface, the situation rapidly deteriorated. Some began to put rocks in their snowballs; some began to forget to put the snow around the rocks. The soldiers took up their weapons, and, realizing the situation was out of hand, called for their commander. When he arrived, he gave the crowd ample opportunity to disperse, but they did not. Shots were fired. Five colonists died. Is it accurate to call this event as described a "massacre"? Does accuracy matter? Adams and the radicals were able to use the incident to keep the resistance movement alive, ready to respond at the next crisis.

The next crisis came three years later, and this time it was unabated through the Revolution itself—no more periods of relative calm. The Tea Act of 1773 is what did it. Ironically, the act was not really motivated by the colonial situation at all. One of those joint stock trading companies chartered by the government, the East India Company, was in serious financial crisis. To save it, Parliament passed the Tea Act. (Do not assume that was a disinterested act: many members of Parliament owned stock in the company.) The act granted a monopoly on tea sales in the colonies to the company, and actually lowered substantially the tax on tea. Americans could now get good tea at a reasonable price and with lower taxes than they had been paying. You know they objected. But why? Well, legal tea was now cheaper than smuggled tea, so some smugglers

didn't like it. All colonists probably resented the element of coercion, the fact that the only place they could now legally buy tea was from the local agent of the East India Company. Finally, even though it was lower, it was after all still a tax. And it should have been clear to any perceptive observer by now that the colonists were going to find some rationale for opposing any Parliamentary tax anyway.

The resistance is more extensive, and more violent, than ever before. The "Committees of Correspondence" are set up throughout the colonies to coordinate the opposition. In some places, the ships carrying the tea were simply met by armed bands who refused to allow the tea to be brought ashore. In others, it was sabotaged by being stored in damp places to ruin. Most dramatically, it was destroyed. The most famous such incident, not surprisingly, was in Boston—the Boston Tea Party. Sam Adams' followers, inebriated and disguised as Indians, boarded the company's vessels and threw the tea, some forty-five tons of it, into the harbor. (The disguise has always seemed a strange choice—what would the Indians care about a conflict between mother country and colonists over tea?)

Even many Americans, including, for example, Benjamin Franklin, felt the colonists had gone too far this time, that such destructive behavior in response to such an act could not be justified. Parliament, fair to say, was shocked. Indeed, Parliament agreed unanimously on an action in colonial policy for the first time ever. What they agreed to was that the colonists had gone too far, and must be punished for their actions. Both the unanimity and the punishment motive make this another turning point in the relationship. The colonists might have said they were being punished before, but it had not been the case; now it was.

The punishment took the form of four measures Parliament collectively called the Coercive Acts. Passed in 1774, they were:

(1) the Boston Port Bill, which called for closing the harbor at Boston completely until the destroyed tea had been paid for (Parenthetically, it didn't work. The colonists felt that all were being made to suffer for the actions of a few, and, significantly, other colonies came to Massachusetts' aid so she would not have to bow to British authority.);

(2) the Massachusetts Government Act, which among other things forbade town meetings unless they had the consent of the royal governor. (Since these meetings were the much-celebrated traditional birthplace of democracy in America and the setting in which the radicals had been coordinating their activities, this consent was highly unlikely.);

(3) the Impartial Administration of Justice Act, which meant by "impartial" the removal from colonial courts of British officials accused of crimes in carrying out their official duties; and

(4) the Second Quartering Act, which carried the principle of the first one a giant—and unconstitutional?—step further by giving British commanders the right to take whatever quarters they wished for their troops! (Notice that the first two singled out a particular colony, Massachusetts; that also was new, with all previous legislation we have covered here applying to the empire as a whole.)

A fifth bill found its way through Parliament at almost the same time. Usually called the Quebec Act, it had to do with the former French possessions the British now held, and was probably one of the few wise decisions the British made in this period. It gave the predominantly French settlers in the former New France, all now being called Quebec, the government and institutions they were accustomed to. They liked it. But the Anglo-American colonists, or at least their radical leaders, did not. Quite illogically, they lumped it together with the four

coercive acts and referred to the five as the "Intolerable" Acts. The five could not have been better designed if their purpose had been to arouse resistance. The first result was the Continental Congress; the final result was the American Revolution.

The Continental Congress began its meetings at Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. Now, every colony except Georgia was represented. The delegates were angry. But they were ambivalent as well. For example, for the first time, publicly, someone suggested a break with England, independence. But the majority recoiled from that frightening prospect immediately. They couldn't even agree on a moderate plan of union presented by Pennsylvania delegate Joseph Galloway—who subsequently wound up being a Loyalist rather than supporting the Revolution. But they did draw up a "Declaration of Rights," which stated in no uncertain terms the case against "taxation without representation" and referred to the Coercive Acts as "unjust," "unconstitutional," and, of course, "Intolerable." They also set up the Continental Association to enforce the by-now-familiar boycott of British goods—but with the significant added twist that they would now not sell anything to the mother country either. (Remember when we suggested that if anything doesn't fit with a mercantilistic system, it's a colony refusing to buy anything from its mother country? Even more clearly, if there's anything that doesn't fit with a mercantilistic system, it's a colony engaging in a complete stoppage of trade with its mother country! Obviously, the relationship between England and her North American colonies was in deep trouble.) Finally, the delegates made the important decision to get together again the next year; up to this point, they had merely been responding to specific crises, but now their movement had some continuity. Little did they know that when they next convened, they would have a war on their hands!

How did that war begin? General Thomas Gage, commander of the British forces in the colonies, was appointed acting governor of Massachusetts. That may sound rather innocuous, but it was not. Many colonists resented the very presence of the military, and now one of them was to be the governor of a colony! In any case, the time was ripe, i. e., if it had not been Gage's appointment that triggered a new level of opposition, it would probably have been something else. He knew that things were getting out of hand. He was aware, obviously, of the Continental Congress, but also aware that militia units were springing up around the colonies (the famous "Minutemen"), and that arms and ammunition were being stored at strategic points as well. He decided to seize the supplies at Concord, and arrest the two individuals generally regarded as the major opposition leaders in Massachusetts, Sam Adams and John Hancock. (A movement that boasts these two as its leaders is a broadening movement—Adams was a professional troublemaker, but Hancock was a wealthy merchant.) The effort to seize the supplies succeeded easily. In doing so, it led to the famous midnight ride of Paul Revere warning the citizens of the area, "the British are coming." And it led to the opening shots of the American Revolution, at Lexington, on the way from Boston to Concord. It was April, 1775.

The skirmish at Lexington, then, marks the beginning of the final time period in the relationship between England and the colonies, the American Revolutionary War. It was to last eight years, and end with the Treaty of Paris of 1783 which recognized the independence of the United States of America. But to state it so simply in a single sentence makes it sound much smoother than it was; it was a long, hard, uncertain process indeed.

On May 10, the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia. Obviously, they faced some difficult decisions. It quickly became clear that they were more militant than the first congress. Yet, surprisingly and illogically to us—but remember, we know the outcome; they did not—the majority apparently still hoped to work things out peacefully within the context of the

British empire. To indicate this, they composed a letter to King George III, essentially a petition for redress of grievances. We're good loyal Englishmen, but we're being mistreated by Parliament, so won't you please intervene on our behalf? That was its tone. Even they seemed to lack confidence that it would work, for their second major action was to appoint George Washington of Virginia as Commander-in-Chief of something they were already beginning to call the Continental Army.

The military details of the war need not concern us much here. It should be noted, however, that the British seemed unwilling or unable to adapt to the kind of wilderness, almost guerilla-style warfare the colonists had learned from the intercolonial wars, and from the Indians. They kept expecting the colonists to fight like gentlemen, in the traditional European manner, like they did. This was a problem from the beginning. After the events at Lexington and Concord, the British began to march neatly down the little country road back to Boston. More and more Minutemen showed up with their guns, firing at the British in an unorganized fashion from behind a little rock fence that lined the road and even from trees. When the British got back to Boston, they were approximately 300 less in number than when the day began.

Bunker Hill, the first major battle of the war, which took place before Washington arrived to assume command, also illustrated the problem. The British "won," because they took the hill. But, as one wag commented, many more such victories and the British would soon lose the war.

The Declaration of Independence, as you know, was not issued until July 4, 1776. So the fighting, essentially a stalemate, was going on for more than a year with the purpose presumably of securing redress of grievances within the British empire. John Adams later suggested that during this crucial time colonial opinion was probably divided into thirds: 1/3 favored independence to the point that they were willing to fight for it; 1/3 opposed it to the point that they were willing to work, even fight, against it; and 1/3 were neutral, apathetic, or undecided. In the absence of public opinion polling in those days, let's just accept that as roughly accurate.

Clearly, some factors are at work during that April '75-July '76 period pushing things along the road to independence. What are they? For one thing, the king delayed a long time in responding to the petition for redress of grievances, and responded very negatively when he finally did. He called the colonists "rebels," and began to hire foreign mercenaries, the famous German Hessians, to use against them. Most of the colonists apparently sincerely did not think of themselves as "rebels"—yet. But some of them obviously began to think that if the king was going to respond in this way, then maybe rebelling was the logical thing to do. Also a factor was that, with the outbreak of fighting, many royal colonial officials fled, fearing for their safety. In their absence, the radical element was able to exercise influence out of all proportion to their numbers. Third, it was increasingly realized that if the Americans did declare their independence, such enemies of England as France, maybe Spain, would be glad to help (for their own purposes). Thomas Paine also played a crucial role. His pamphlet, "Common Sense," was widely read and discussed, and clearly influenced many people with its down-to-earth language. George III was a "royal brute," said Paine, and monarchy itself was a pretty weird idea; the colonies had already gone too far to work things out peacefully; why should a little island off the coast of Europe control the vast continent of North America anyway—wouldn't "common sense" dictate the reverse? Finally, the longer the fighting went on, the more people found personal, as opposed to ideological, reasons for being angry at the British. "The Smith family down the road lost a son at Bunker Hill." To more and more people in the colonies, the logical conclusion of this anger was to simply break with the British entirely.

For whatever reasons, the shift did occur—though most historians still insist that it was not a majority but a well-organized minority, as is so often the case with historical change, that brought about the Declaration of Independence. That document did far more than declare the colonies independent of the British empire. Influenced by John Locke and others, Thomas Jefferson, who chaired the committee and essentially wrote the document, briefly but brilliantly explained the reasons for doing so. He spoke of "self-evident" truths, such as equality and "unalienable" rights ("Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"). The only legitimate reason for the existence of government was to secure these rights, asserted the Declaration. And since government derives its powers from the consent of the governed, "whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it." Not only "Right," but "Duty"! Assuming, then, the existence of a compact or contract between government and governed, Jefferson proceeded to spell out in detail the ways in which England had violated the contract. Then, the Declaration of Independence: "That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved."

Quoting the Declaration of Independence briefly does not do it justice. Read it! It echoes down the halls of history; its ideals have had a profound and direct impact on subsequent movements for national liberation. It was propaganda, true; it is not the place to look for an accurate account of the relationship between England and the colonies. It was designed to convince. And it did. The undecided 1/3 knew they were now in danger of becoming part of the dead 1/3; they must either become Revolutionaries (or "Patriots," or sometimes "Whigs") or Loyalists (or "Tories"). France clearly took note as well.

But the Declaration of Independence did not immediately change the military situation. When one looks at the overwhelming British advantages, it is still possible to be amazed that the colonies won. The British had one of the best armies in the world, some 60,000 men, supplemented by Hessians, Loyalists and Indian allies; the colonists never had more than 16,000 or so, and usually far less. The British had the best navy in the world; the colonists really didn't have one, though they achieved some success with privateering activity. And it has been estimated that the British had at least three times the total financial resources of the colonies. Still, the colonies had that long, indented coastline, and the British were fighting some 3,000 miles away from home; there was also that problem with wilderness fighting already referred to. Besides, the colonists were not exactly alone. Without the French, without the French army, navy, money, and French volunteers, most historians agree the colonists could not have prevailed. Spain would not ally herself directly with the colonies because of the bad example she was afraid that would be for her own American colonies, but she did ally with France. Other nations filled the gap in colonial commerce, refusing to go along with the British request for all nations to boycott her rebellious colonies. And many individuals from other countries were moved by the ideals of the American Revolution to volunteer in support of the cause—including Hungarian Colonel Michael Kováts, who is generally credited with being the founder of the American cavalry.

The turning point came at Saratoga, in New York, in October of 1777. Just a few months later, the French entered into a permanent military treaty of alliance with the United States of America, thanks in part to the untiring efforts of Benjamin Franklin. The end came at Yorktown, in Virginia, in October of 1781. The land force that trapped the British there and forced them to surrender was partially French; the naval force that kept the British from escaping was French.

Two years later, in 1783, the Treaty of Paris brought the war to an official end. Several of its provisions will concern us later, but at this point, only one is important: The British recognized the independence of the United States of America. The relationship between England and her North American colonies was over.

CHAPTER THREE
PRE-CIVIL WAR DIPLOMACY

The Treaty of Paris of 1783 ended the relationship between England and her North American colonies; it began the relationship between England and the United States of America. Not surprisingly for two countries that had long been mother country and colonies, the relationship for many years was not a smooth one. Some of the problems lay in the Treaty of Paris itself.

That treaty would have been a great victory for the Americans if it had done nothing more than recognize their independence; that, of course, is what they were fighting for. But it also involved English recognition of their claim to "the West," the vast area between the Appalachians on the east and the Mississippi River on the west, and between the Great Lakes on the north and Spanish Florida on the south. The problematic portions of the treaty involved debts and property. Specifically, there was a provision about the payment of debts which Americans owed the British, and a provision about the restoration of lands which had been confiscated from Loyalists by the Americans. The British interpreted those clauses as promises that the debts would be paid and the lands would be restored; the Americans did not. The British used this supposed violation of the treaty by the Americans to justify a clear violation of their own, i. e., they kept troops on American soil, especially in the Northwest, for years after the war was over. The Americans objected, of course—they had objected to British troops on their soil even before independence—but were impotent to do anything.

Indeed, that impotence has something to do with the fundamental problem in American foreign policy in the years following the war. The evidence seems clear that the real reason the British kept troops on American soil was that they felt this ridiculous experiment in republican government in the wilderness of North America would fail, that the so-called "United States of America" would fall to pieces—and they were determined to be present to pick up the pieces, to reclaim their colonies. (Also, economically, they didn't want to give up the profitable fur trade until they had to.)

Under the loose Articles of Confederation government (see the next chapter), the Americans were really unable to handle effectively any of their foreign policy problems. The basic problem seemed to be that they were given no respect by foreign powers. Maybe that was inevitable, the result of their recent colonial status and need to prove themselves as a nation. The problem is best symbolized by John Adams' experience as the new country's diplomatic representative to England just after the war. His mission was to secure a trade treaty, obviously essential to former colonies trying to establish themselves economically. The story is that the English negotiator opened their first session with the sarcastic query, "Mr. Adams, do you wish to sign one commercial treaty, or thirteen?" In other words, do you represent a nation, or thirteen struggling little "colonies" that cannot really get their act together? No respect. Needless to say, Adams failed in his effort. The US was also struggling in its efforts to pay its debts to its former allies, so its relations with them were none too smooth either.

After ratification of the Constitution in 1789, the first foreign policy crisis for the United States was the result of the French Revolution. At first, most Americans supported it, even feeling, perhaps somewhat arrogantly, that the French were following their example. But when heads started rolling, and the French declared war on England, some Americans began to have second thoughts. What to do? The US had a treaty of alliance with France, so clearly the French felt that the Americans should help them against England. And some Americans agreed. In general, the South tended to be pro-French, the North pro-British. But most people apparently agreed when President George Washington issued a neutrality proclamation.

Agreeing on neutrality as an objective, while the new republic got on its feet economically and diplomatically, was relatively easy; maintaining that neutrality proved difficult indeed. For many years then, the US attempted to walk the tightrope of neutrality. If she fell off to one side, there was danger of war with England; if she fell off to the other, there was danger of war with France. Ultimately, she went to war with England (again): the War of 1812.

Part of the problem was that the US insisted on definitions in the area of neutral rights that were not generally accepted, certainly not accepted by the English or the French. And the US, again, was impotent to force anyone to agree. The British practice of impressment proved to be one of the most galling specific problems. It began as an effort to get back their own sailors who had deserted. Even that was problematic if they were now serving on American vessels. But it was rather hard to tell an American from an Englishman in those early days, and the British sometimes didn't seem to try too hard; they were even known to argue "Once an Englishman, always an Englishman"—in other words, to refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of American naturalization. Washington attempted a one-month embargo in 1794, but it clearly hurt the US more than anyone else. He then attempted direct negotiations. John Jay was sent to England with several objectives: get the British to give up their posts in the Northwest, to pay for ships illegally seized, to sign a favorable commercial treaty (especially trade with their West Indies), and, in general, to agree to the American definition of neutral rights. Supposedly, Jay's bargaining power lay in an implied threat to honor the French alliance and go to war with England if they didn't make some concessions. One theory is that the aggressively pro-British Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton undercut Jay by making it clear through his secret contacts that this was a bluff. In any case, what Jay got fell far short of what he sought. Jay's Treaty was ratified with obvious reluctance, by a narrow margin, and only because it was a better option than war.

Spain, learning of the American negotiations with England, apparently feared the US was joining ranks with England against her, and offered to negotiate her outstanding differences with the US. Whereas Jay didn't have a chance, Thomas Pinckney, the US representative in Spain, couldn't go wrong. Pinckney's Treaty gave the US the right of navigation on the Mississippi River, right of deposit at New Orleans (i. e., access to port facilities there), and a small area of Florida that was in dispute; in short, everything the US wanted.

Under the second president, John Adams, the pendulum swung toward war with France. The specific crisis was the so-called "XYZ Affair," when three American delegates found they couldn't even get in to see the French without a bribe. There were demands for war in America, but cooler heads, including President Adams, prevailed. Still, there was the so-called "undeclared naval war of 1798," which actually lasted until 1801. During that time, in 1800, the treaty of alliance of 1778 was ended. In 1801, with Napoleon in power, the French approached the US for a restoration of friendly relations.

Thomas Jefferson and his followers, largely southern and largely pro-French, set out to discredit Adams and defeat him in the presidential election of 1800. In response, Adams and his followers, already being referred to as Federalists (for the full story of early party developments, see the next chapter), passed a series of four laws which they justified as "war measures" (a shaky justification at best, since no one had declared war), the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. They increased the years of residence required for citizenship from five to fourteen, gave the president extensive discretionary powers for imprisoning and deporting aliens, and, most controversial of all, attempted to stifle criticism of the government with stiff fines and penalties for "sedition." (It was defined so broadly one drunk was reportedly fined $10 for saying, on the occasion of a 21-gun salute at the launching of a new naval vessel, "I wish one of those cannon balls would hit John Adams in the seat of his breeches!") Clearly extreme and partisan, these acts doubtless backfired on Adams and were used to defeat him in the upcoming election. (The Sedition Act was probably also unconstitutional; the Federalists in effect admitted it was problematic, as it had a built-in termination date: the end of Adams' administration!)

With Jefferson's assumption of the presidency, the tone may have changed, the sympathies may have changed, but the basic foreign policy problems remained the same. Against his pacifist, balanced-budget principles, he got the US involved in perhaps its least-known war: the Tripolitan War, 1801-1805, against the so-called "Barbary States," or "pirate states," of North Africa. Jefferson triggered the conflict by refusing to continue the tradition of paying them bribes to leave American vessels alone. At more cost than it was probably worth, the war did succeed in forcing the Pasha of Tripoli to agree to exact no more tribute from the US.

Jefferson's greatest accomplishment as president, it is usually said, was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. (The supposedly secret Treaty of San Ildefonso between France and Spain had transferred control of Louisiana from Spain back to France.) Napoleon was disillusioned with his American empire, in part because of the recent rebellion in Santo Domingo, and he needed money for the war against England. The US was in a position to benefit from this. Though portions of the boundary were vague, Louisiana was indeed a major acquisition for the US, more than doubling her size and giving her control of the Mississippi River. There were problems, however; for one thing, the vague boundaries were to lead to problems with Spain. The famous Lewis and Clark expedition, to learn more about the area acquired, followed the purchase; actually, Jefferson had quietly made plans for their explorations even before the purchase.

The war between England and France revived in 1803. So did the problems of the US with neutrality, for neither power paid much attention to what the Americans thought were their rights as a neutral. The French, through their "Continental System," sought to prevent trade with England. The English, through a series of "orders in council," sought to prevent trade with France. Thus, US trade was obviously in bad shape. Then the British revived the practice of impressment. The worst incident was the *Chesapeake* affair, in which three Americans were killed and eighteen injured when the British fired on the American frigate while it was still inside American territorial waters. Jefferson was determined to preserve peace in the face of renewed demands for war. He did demand an apology, reparations, freedom for the men impressed, and punishment of the responsible British officers. The British, not surprisingly, refused. Jefferson followed with the passage through Congress of the Embargo Act of 1807.

A complete stoppage of trade with Europe was reminiscent of the colonial boycotts. But it proved very unrealistic of the US to think she could coerce anyone into respecting her neutral rights in such a fashion; the evidence is clear that she was hurt by the embargo more than England or France. James Madison followed his friend Jefferson into the presidency in 1809 and quick-

ly backed down. First, Congress restored trade with all nations except England and France, and tried to get one or the other (or both?) of them to respect America's neutral rights by saying that if either of them would repeal her restrictive measures against American commerce she would open trade with that nation but not the other. Nothing happened. So Congress backed off another step, restoring trade with everybody, but still saying that if either England or France would respect America's neutral rights, she would stop trading with the other. This time, something did happen. But it was tragic in its consequences. Madison insisted on interpreting the Cadore letter, from the French foreign minister to the American minister to France, as a French pledge to respect American neutrality. Trade was stopped with England. The War of 1812 followed.

Neutral rights, then, is the area usually considered the cause of the War of 1812. But that was not all. Clearly the US wanted England out of the Northwest, and blamed renewed Indian problems there on the British presence. More broadly, the US had territorial ambitions. One does not have to guess about this. The so-called "War Hawks" in Congress, young congressmen from the South and the West, were open in their expressions of interest in British Canada and Spanish Florida.

The US won very few battles in the war. The British burned the capital at Washington, but did fail in their effort to take Baltimore—a confrontation which led Francis Scott Key to write what would eventually become the American national anthem. The greatest American victory actually came two weeks after the war was over: the Treaty of Ghent was signed on Christmas eve, 1814; the Battle of New Orleans, in which General Andrew Jackson achieved fame and eventually the presidency by wiping out some 2,000 Englishmen while losing only seventeen Americans in a twenty-minute engagement, was fought on January 8, 1815. Obviously, neither the Americans nor the British knew that the peace treaty had already been signed!

The Treaty of Ghent called basically for a return to the status quo ante bellum, i. e., things as they were before the war. One might want to make the case that all wars are useless; certainly this one was. The Americans were lucky to get out in one piece; if the British had not been more concerned with what was going on in Europe than with these relatively minor events in their former colonies, the US would have been in even deeper trouble. Still, the war led to a great growth of American nationalism, as we shall see.

Since the war solved none of the outstanding issues between the two countries, several limited agreements followed shortly after the war. First, in 1815, the British did sign a commercial treaty which removed many restrictions against America. (However, the US still did not gain access to the important trade with the British West Indies.) Then, in 1817, the Rush-Bagot Agreement provided for the withdrawal of British troops in the Old Northwest and an armaments freeze along the American-Canadian border; thus, it might be said to have begun the non-fortified Canadian-American boundary of today. Finally, in 1818, an agreement between England and the US allowed the latter once again access to the rich fishing banks off the coast of Newfoundland, and set the 49th parallel as the Canadian-American boundary west to the Rocky Mountains. (West of the Rockies, the agreement provided for "joint occupation" for ten years, an arrangement which would obviously be a problem again.)

John Quincy Adams, son of second president John Adams, is generally considered to be one of the greatest secretaries of state in American history. Two major accomplishments account for this: the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819 and the Monroe Doctrine of 1823.

The years following the War of 1812 were one of the most rapid periods of westward expansion in all of American history. Among the reasons for this: a temporary lull in the "Indian menace;" soldiers who had become acquainted with the west during the war led their families

in (some states even gave land bonuses, aiding in this process); reports of explorers such as Lewis and Clark began to become known; the development of the steamboat and other improvements in transportation made it easier for people to move west; American families were still large, thus "surplus" children were looking for opportunity; prosperity, thus good prices for western agricultural products; and the spread of the South's "Cotton Kingdom." (This latter factor was complex: Continuous cotton growth exhausts the land, thus some planters moved west looking for more land; small, non-slaveholding farmers were crowded out by the plantation system and sought opportunity further west; and some, opposed to slavery, moved especially into the Northwest.) This westward expansion led to diplomatic problems in some areas, including Louisiana and Florida.

When President James Monroe sent New Orleans hero Andrew Jackson to restore order in a border conflict with the Seminole Indians in the Southeast, Jackson paid no attention to national borders; he pursued the Seminoles right into Spanish Florida, shipped protesting Spanish officials off to Cuba, and executed two Englishmen while he was at it! Needless to say, both Spain and England were perturbed. Adams faced the difficult task of preventing war with either or both. His stance was one of humility and apology toward the stronger England, but considerably tougher toward the weaker Spain. Essentially, he denied nothing, blamed the whole ugly episode on the Spanish, and warned them that if they could not maintain order, America might have to return. He then offered to purchase Florida. Not surprisingly, the Spanish agreed. The Adams-Onis Treaty, then, is sometimes called the "Florida Purchase" treaty. But that is a misnomer: No purchase price was actually paid—the US merely agreed to assume some $5 million in claims of American citizens against Spain. Perhaps more importantly, Adams secured a definite western boundary for the Louisiana Purchase: major segments of it included the Sabine River, the Red River, the 100th meridian, the Arkansas River, the crest of the Rocky Mountains, and the 42nd parallel. (Notable were the facts that the US gave up any claim to "Texas" by this arrangement, but secured Spanish recognition of her claim to the Oregon country.)

The Monroe Doctrine, however one ultimately evaluates it, is surely one of the crucial events of American foreign policy in the nineteenth century. One can make a case for calling it the "Adams Doctrine," for it was Secretary of State Adams who convinced President Monroe to issue it, especially in the particular form it took. (Indeed, Adams wrote it.) It was in part a product of the post-War of 1812 surge of nationalism; it might also be considered a formal statement of the American policy of isolationism.

Some background: Spain was well along in the process of losing her once-great colonial empire in America. Effectively, after Mexico declared her independence in 1821, she controlled only Cuba and Puerto Rico. Of course, she did not accept this fact, and hoped to secure assistance from European allies to regain her colonies. Among those who hoped to keep this from happening were England and the Unites States. Another threat, at least to the US, were the activities of the Russians in the Northwest; already they owned Alaska, and they were pushing their trading activities and territorial claims down the coast to California. England proposed a joint Anglo-American statement opposing European intervention in America, and disavowing any territorial ambitions of their own. Monroe was inclined to accept the offer; former presidents Jefferson and Madison were among those who encouraged him to do so. But Adams said no. The US, he said, would appear as a mere "cock-boat in the wake of a British man-of-war;" in other words, the English would get all the credit in the case of a joint statement. Besides, he argued, England's interests were so strong in the matter, with the profitable economic ties she was developing with Spain's former colonies, that her naval power would back up even a unilateral statement from

the US. Finally, he asked, was the US so sure she had no territorial ambitions? Monroe decided to issue the statement alone.

Essentially, the Monroe Doctrine was just a portion of the President's annual message to Congress in 1823. He made three important points, sometimes called nonintervention, noncolonization, and isolation. The "nonintervention" refers to the principle of no further intervention by European powers in the Western Hemisphere; "noncolonization" means, obviously, no further establishment of European colonies there; and "isolation" means that the US will stay out of international politics in Europe.

Most countries paid no attention to the statement; to the extent it was effective, it was primarily because of British naval power; it was many years before it was used (in Mexico, to get the French out at the end of the American Civil War); and it was many years also before anyone called those portions of Monroe's address the "Monroe Doctrine." But in the long run, it became a key element of American foreign policy. For almost a century after the Doctrine's enunciation, the US was to focus on domestic and Western hemispheric events and almost ignore developments in Europe; it was 1917, World War I, before she was to send troops to Europe.

Someone has suggested that the War of 1812 was the second war of American independence, that the Revolution had established the political independence of the United States but that the War of 1812 had something to do with growing economic independence. If that has any validity, it might also make sense to call the Monroe Doctrine the second Declaration of Independence.

Building on his reputation as a military hero against the Indians and the British, Andrew Jackson was elected to the presidency in 1828. Foreign affairs during his administration has been labelled "shirtsleeve diplomacy," suggesting that his was a blunt, practical, problem-solving kind of approach—just take off your jacket, roll up your shirtsleeves, and go to work. Some problems were solved with relative ease. It had long been a goal of American presidents to get open trade with the British West Indies, but Jackson succeeded where earlier presidents had failed. He should not be given too much credit here—England, along with other nations, was backing off a bit from mercantilism, was ready to open up trade more with her possessions. Jackson also succeeded in securing French payment for the so-called "spoliation claims," an amount the Americans felt the French owed them from the undeclared naval wars. (Of course, many critics did not feel it was worth the war scare Jackson created to get this money!) Texas proved to be a far thornier issue.

It is hard to think of Texas as a foreign policy issue, because it has, of course, been a state for so long. But before 1845, it had been part of Spain's northern territories, then part of Mexico, then an independent republic. Some background: The Austin family, first Moses and then Stephen F., secured permission from Spanish authorities to lead American settlers into Texas; after Mexico secured her independence from Spain in 1821, they secured permission from Mexican authorities. At first, Americans were welcomed—Mexico, among other things, saw it as a chance to develop an essentially undeveloped northern territory. By 1830, there were already some 20,000 Americans living in Texas.

But problems quickly developed. Some of the American settlers began to agitate for Texas to be made a self-governing Mexican state because Mexicans were in the majority in the Texas-Coahuila state legislature. The Americans were also skeptical of Mexican land titles, different from what they were used to. Mexico insisted American settlers be Roman Catholic, but few of them were. Underlying all this, and perhaps most important of all, these settlers did not think of themselves as Mexicans, and had no intention of becoming Mexicans—they were sentimen-

tally attached to America, and for most of them the ultimate desire was probably for annexation to the US. The US was clearly in sympathy with this, and had tried even before Jackson's presidency to purchase Texas. Mexico resented all this, and began to close the doors, so the speak: restrictions were placed on American immigration, and on the importation of slaves; high duties were charged on American goods coming in to Mexico. But it was too late.

In 1836, Americans in Texas revolted and declared their independence of Mexico. At such famous sites as the Alamo (in San Antonio) and Goliad, they suffered heavy losses, but they prevailed at San Jacinto. General Santa Anna, at least, recognized their independence—but he was in and out of power and favor in Mexico City, and the Mexican government still insisted Texas was hers. Texas functioned for the next nine years as in independent republic, with Sam Houston as her first president. But what Texas really desired was annexation to the US. President Jackson was fully supportive of that desire—he was a Southerner, a slaveholder, a Westerner, an expansionist, a nationalist, even a personal friend of President Houston. But an election was coming up, and Jackson was no fool. He knew annexation of Texas would be seen as a pro-South, pro-slavery move, so he held off. He did recognize Texas independence (the day before he left office, after his hand-picked Democratic presidential candidate, Martin Van Buren, had already safely been elected), and he also sent American troops to the Sabine River to show American support for Texas.

Van Buren, though Jackson's right-hand man, differed with Jackson on slavery and expansion. So during his administration, he refused to consider annexation of Texas. The Lone Star Republic, in the meantime, was doing fairly well, establishing commercial ties with England and others; her interest in annexation seemed to be declining. The Whig party, the new opposition to the Democrats, won the presidency for the first time in 1840 with William Henry Harrison as their candidate. He lived only one month before being replaced by his vice president, John Tyler of Virginia, an ardent pro-slavery expansionist. Tyler became a very unpopular and ineffective president, stymied by a Democratic House and a northern and western Whig Senate—and stymied almost throughout his administration in his desire to annex Texas. James K. Polk, like Jackson from Tennessee and an ardent expansionist Democrat, was elected to the presidency in 1844. Clearly, he planned to annex Texas. But he didn't get the chance: the "lame duck" President Tyler pushed it through by a joint resolution of Congress rather than the usual treaty method of territorial acquisition because he knew he could not get the necessary 2/3 majority for a treaty. (Tyler's only other success was also in the area of foreign policy, and was actually the work of his Secretary of State Daniel Webster: the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842, which resolved several accumulated problems with England, including mostly minor Canadian-American boundary disputes. It did not so successfully resolve the touchy situation with the slave trade—illegal since 1807, it nevertheless was to continue down to the Civil War.)

It was 1845. The result of the annexation of Texas was much more than just the addition of a big new Southern slave state—the result, in a sense, was the Mexican War. More broadly, the war was the result of "Manifest Destiny." Americans, you see, while condemning the practice of imperialism by other powers, have been just as imperialistic themselves; it is just that they have disguised it (most of all from themselves) by calling it other, nicer things, in this case "Manifest Destiny." Look those two words up in your dictionary and you will see that the claim is being made that it was obviously predetermined that America was to expand—probably throughout North America, and certainly with God's blessing. The superiority of Americans and their institutions is clearly implicit in this doctrine; in short, it was both nationalistic and racist.

Manifest Destiny led to an interest not only in Texas, but also in New Mexico, Oregon, California. Polk, in addition to demanding annexation of Texas during his campaign for the presidency, had also demanded "54 40 or Fight!" That meant the desired northern boundary for the Oregon country. But Polk, while a militant expansionist, again like Jackson, was no fool. He knew, given the choice of enemies, that it made more sense to fight the weak next-door neighbor Mexico than England still again (and that there was more potential territorial gain). So he compromised at the 49th parallel as the northern boundary of the US from the Rockies to the Pacific—rather logical, in a sense, as the 49th parallel was already the boundary to the Rockies—and thus completed the Canadian-American boundary. Thus, also, he freed himself from potential conflict with England so that he could concentrate on getting what he wanted from Mexico.

It should be noted that even when Mexico was willing to talk about Texas as a separate entity, she saw its boundaries considerably differently from the US view. The heart of the problem was a disputed area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. Polk sent a representative to Mexico to offer to buy the disputed area (Does that appear to support the validity of a claim?), and California. The Mexican government refused to even talk to the American representative. Incredibly, Polk's diary shows that he considered asking for a declaration of war because of this refusal.

Clearly, Polk had decided war with Mexico was necessary to secure American objectives. He sent an American force of some 3,500 men under the command of General Zachary Taylor across the Nueces, through the disputed territory, to the Rio Grande. Not surprisingly, a skirmish ensued. Polk had his excuse. Mexico, he told Congress, "has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil . . . . war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself." Interestingly, among those who saw through this claim was a young Whig Congressman from Illinois by the name of Abraham Lincoln, who called, in the so-called "spot resolution," upon President Polk to please show the spot where American blood had been shed upon American soil! He was not elected again (until he was elected to the presidency in 1860).

Not surprisingly, the war itself was an almost unbroken chain of victories for the US. General Taylor, after the initial skirmish, began to advance south into Mexico with such success that the Democratic President Polk, knowing the Whigs had already developed a reputation for running military heroes for president, ordered Taylor to stop his advance; one can hardly imagine a better example of politicization of the military. Polk then sent an army of some 10,000 under General Winfield Scott which landed at Vera Cruz, then advanced overland to conquer the capital at Mexico City. Both Taylor and Scott subsequently ran for the presidency under the Whig banner! In the meantime, other forces took New Mexico and California. John C. Fremont, who became the military governor of California, though subsequently courtmartialed for insubordination for his role there, still became the first presidential candidate for the new Republican party in 1856.

In short, the war was messy and highly politicized, but overwhelmingly successful for the US and tragic for Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended it in 1848. The only real question was how much of Mexico's territory the US was going to take. There were some, especially anti-slavery types, who said "none." But that was not likely. There were others, the most militant advocates of Manifest Destiny, who said "all." That was probably more likely; ironi-

cally, one of the reasons it did not prevail was the very racism which fueled Manifest Destiny, that is to say, concern about integrating all those "inferior" Mexicans into the US. In the end, the US gained Texas, including the disputed area, California, and everything in between, essentially the entire Southwest—it was called the "Mexican Cession." The US did pay Mexico $15 million and assumed another $3.25 million in Mexican debts to US citizens. (Why, one wonders, if Mexico was the aggressor as the US officially claimed? Fear Mexico would reopen the war? Guilt?)

Most would agree that the Mexican Cession was one of America's most tainted territorial acquisitions. It also led to a renewal of the crucially divisive question about the expansion of slavery into the territories—but that is a story best told elsewhere.

The little of American diplomatic history that remains to be told here also relates largely to the effort to expand slavery's domain. A strange American filibuster named William Walker took an "army" (a few dozen men) to Nicaragua, seized control there, called himself King William I, recognized slavery, and asked for the annexation of Nicaragua as a state. President Franklin Pierce, a Democratic "doughface," i. e., a northern politician with southern principles, was inclined to support the annexation! Fortunately, one is tempted to say, Walker was overthrown in a counter-revolution and the scheme fell through.

The interest in acquiring Cuba was more serious, as evidenced by the Ostend Manifesto of 1854. President Pierce instructed the American ambassadors to Britain, France, and Spain to meet at Ostend, Belgium, to discuss Cuba and the likely reaction of those countries to the US taking it. The "Manifesto" they drew up recommended the US offer to purchase Cuba from Spain; further, it took the position that if Spain refused, the US would be justified in seizing Cuba as necessary to American peace and security. When the statement became public knowledge, the Secretary of State, most of the North, and, needless to say, most of Europe, opposed it vigorously, and Pierce had to give it up.

Thus, the only actual territorial gain Pierce managed was the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, and it had little if anything to do with the effort to expand slavery. It was, however, a southern move, pushed hardest by future president of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis during his tenure as Secretary of War under Pierce. It grew out of the desire for a southern route for a transcontinental railroad, and the realization that the best place to build it still belonged to Mexico. Tthe US paid Mexico $10 million for still another relatively small chunk of its territory, a bit of present-day southwestern New Mexico and a bigger bit of present-day southern Arizona. Why the rather high price? Some critics were quick to suggest this was more "conscience money" to assuage American guilt over the Mexican War.

The Mexican War, in a very real sense, led to, or at least helped to lead to, the Civil War. Indeed, all events from 1848 to 1861, foreign and domestic, seem now, with the advantage of hindsight, to be leading inexorably toward that crucial conflict.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE CONSTITUTION, AND PRE-CIVIL WAR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

It seemed only logical to carry on with the story of American diplomatic history after the Treaty of Paris of 1783 established American independence. But now it is necessary to go back to the revolutionary era to trace the political (and economic) aspects of the American story between those two watershed American wars, the Revolution and the Civil War.

When the Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia on May 10, 1775, and found that the war had already begun, its members realized that they had little if any authority to govern. But otherwise, there was no government, so the Congress became in effect a provisional government for the united colonies, a role it was to play until 1781, when the war was practically over. The delegates moved early, in 1776, to set up a more permanent government, but it took a long time to get there, largely because of the exigencies of war.

The full name of the plan of government adopted in 1781 was the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. "Perpetual" has a bittersweet sound to it today, because that government lasted only eight years, until 1789 when it was replaced by the Constitution still in effect today. The Articles of Confederation government was a very logical one for a group of colonies recently upset by the actions of a strong central government to adopt—it was a loose confederation of fundamentally autonomous states, with not much of a strong central government at all. Examples abound, but perhaps most impressive are such facts as these: voting in the Articles of Confederation Congress was by state; each state had one vote; it took 2/3 of the states to pass any important measure; it required unanimity to bring about any amendment; the "President" was merely the presiding officer of the Congress, with no real executive power; the judicial process was left almost completely in the hands of the individual states; states retained such important powers as coining money, levying taxes, and regulating commerce; and the Congress had only those powers specifically assigned to it, with the states retaining all the rest.

Is it taking unfair advantage of the clarity of hindsight to suggest that a government which builds into itself an essential inability to change has also guaranteed its own demise? Little Rhode Island could and did prevent an amendment more than once that all the other states considered vital; the Articles were never amended.

If one divides the problems faced by the Articles of Confederation into the three areas of foreign affairs, the frontier, and finance, it can be readily seen that the only one in which the government achieved any success was the frontier. This is a reference specifically to the series of ordinances dealing with the Northwest, and involving such issues as the surveying of land (with, significantly, a portion set aside for public education), the admission of new states (a process which has been followed ever since, and which involved the important precedent of new states being equal to the old), and the prohibition of slavery in the Northwest. Five states were eventually created out of this area: Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Ironically perhaps, it was the slaveholding Thomas Jefferson, who had written of freedom and equality in the Declaration of Independence, who also insisted on the prohibition of slavery in this area.

Also ironically, the Articles of Confederation government's one accomplishment came too late to save it—the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 was passed at virtually the same time a group was meeting in Philadelphia to draw up a new constitution.

Certainly in foreign policy there was little success for the Articles government, as we have seen. And it was perhaps that government's failure to deal with financial issues, related to issues of general internal disorder, which above all other matters determined that "Perpetual" would mean only eight years. Hard times economically usually follow war; that principle would probably have applied even if another, stronger government had existed. But certainly this government proved impotent to deal with the crisis. Each state had its own currency, and individual states began to levy import taxes on the goods of other states. Perhaps you can see why John Adams was asked in England if he represented one country or thirteen. The crucial problem proved to be creditor-debtor relations, centering on the matter of paper money. It sounds familiar to many times and places in history: The farmers, laborers, tradesmen, etc., the common people, the masses of people, those in debt, wanted larger amounts of cheaper paper money in circulation. The creditor class, of course, did not.

In Massachusetts, the struggle took on additional issues and became something of a coastal towns versus interior farmers struggle known as Shays' Rebellion. Yes, rebellion. Daniel Shays, a veteran of the Revolution, led the forces of discontent, and there was bloodshed. The movement was put down within a few months, significantly by state troops, i. e., without the help of the Articles of Confederation government. Some conservative, nationalistic types, already filled with a dread of "radical democracy" which Shays' forces represented to them, used his rebellion to justify moving toward a stronger central government, toward a nation rather than a loose confederation.

Looking back, it is clear that that movement began at Alexandria, Virginia in 1785; it's called the Mt. Vernon Conference because it met at the Washington family estate nearby. This conference involved delegates from only two states, Maryland and Virginia, who considered a very limited agenda of mutual problems of navigation on Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River. The problems were resolved, but more importantly, the delegates decided to invite all the states to a conference on national commercial problems the next year. The very fact that they perceived a need for such a conference might testify to the impotence of the Articles of Confederation.

The general conference on commercial problems is called the Annapolis Convention; it took place in September of 1786. Though all states were invited to send delegates, only five did: Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. (Right, not Maryland, even though the meeting took place on her soil.) Not much could be accomplished on the commercial problems which brought them together with such low-level participation, so the most important accomplishment of the Convention was the adoption of a resolution, presented by Alexander Hamilton of New York, calling for a convention of all the states in Philadelphia in May of the following year. The purpose: "to devise such further provisions as shall appear to them necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union." Hamilton—and, since the resolution passed, clearly the majority of the delegates—was strongly nationalistic. The fancy wording of the resolution was a thinly-disguised way of saying look, we all know this government is inadequate, so let's get together to draw up a stronger one, to create a real nation.

And they did. It was, however, a long and difficult process. The meeting which took place in Philadelphia from May to September of 1787 we call the Constitutional Convention. But it is important to understand that it was by no means certain when it began that they would draw

up a new constitution. For one thing, when the Articles of Confederation Congress saw that the meeting was going to take place, they issued a call for it, but for the express purpose of suggesting possible amendments to the Articles; in other words, they sought to limit what the meeting might do. And since the Articles, like it or not, was the government, and its call the only "official" call, the only "legitimate" purpose of the meeting was indeed to suggest amendments. Thus, when the convention began, the first decision of the delegates was to go into secret session, i. e., not to allow the press or the public access to their meetings. That was wise, since their next decision was to go beyond their instructions.

Historiography is the study of historians and their interpretations of history. Occasionally, an interpretation is of such significance that its author must be introduced even into a brief narrative such as this. One such is Charles A. Beard, who wrote *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States of America* in 1913. Beard may not have been right on every point, but he was right in his characterization of the delegates: the elite, conservative, nationalistic, well-educated, wealthy, mostly lawyers and businessmen. (Need one add white and male?) Those characteristics, Beard would insist, had something to do with why the delegates drew up the kind of government they did. They might agree that two basic tasks of government were to safeguard liberty and protect property, but their emphasis was clearly on the latter. And the property to be protected was theirs, and that of their class. Many Americans are not fond of hearing this, don't even like the word "economic" being mentioned in connection with their idealistic "Founding Fathers." But it should be noted that Beard's characterization doesn't make them bad; it makes them human. And one might agree with Beard entirely and still admire the work the Founding Fathers did and be amazed that it has now survived for more than two hundred years.

Twelve states (excluding Rhode Island, of course) selected 74 delegates, but only 55 actually attended. (At the end of the long, hot summer, when their work was done, only 42 remained.) It was an outstanding generation of political leadership, possibly America's greatest, and many of the greats were present. George Washington was there. Indeed, his prestige—already he was being referred to as "the father of the country"—helped make the whole thing work; he was elected chairman of the deliberations. Alexander Hamilton was there. He was as responsible as anyone for bringing the group together. But he was frequently unhappy, because he was often out-voted by the other two delegates from New York and because he felt the document drawn up didn't go far enough in establishing a strong central government. James Madison was there. He deserves the honorific "father of the Constitution" at least as fully as Washington does his, both for his extensive notes which tell us most of what we know about what took place in the meetings and because it was his "Virginia Plan" which served as the primary basis for the Constitution. Benjamin Franklin was there. The grand old man of the Convention, he helped hold it together through a couple of rancorous sessions. (Other delegates were afraid he would leak secrets while he was hanging out at the tavern across the street from the meeting hall—a place where many of the decisions were actually made—so they always, without his knowledge, made sure someone else was with him!) Of the many others who might deserve mention, there's only room for Pennsylvania's Gouverneur Morris. As chairman of the convention's committee on style, he faced the difficult challenge of committing to print the decisions made; when you read the Constitution, you are really reading his words.

Four very important leaders of the day were conspicuous by their absence. Revolutionary hero Sam Adams was not chosen to be a part of the Massachusetts delegation—he would not have fit in anyway. Patrick Henry of Virginia, another revolutionary hero who had achieved

lasting fame for saying "Give me liberty or give me death," was not there. He said he "smelt a rat;" in other words, he did not go along with the nationalistic trend represented by the convention. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were not there. Both were on foreign missions, Adams in England, Jefferson in France. But even from abroad Jefferson expressed his concern about the strong-central-government trend; he had, after all, responded to Shays' Rebellion by saying a little rebellion now and then was "a good thing."

Despite the basic agreements suggested by Beard's characterization, there were differences between the delegates, necessitating a number of compromises. Perhaps the major conflict was between large states (in terms of population) and small. Small states, led by New Jersey, initially seemed to want to only revise the Articles. When they did move on to a new document, they still thought in terms of the centrality of the states. Thus, they wanted representation in the legislature to be based on the states, each state having an equal vote. The large states, led by Virginia, clearly wanted to trash the Articles and come up with a new system. They prevailed. On the specific issue of state representation in the legislature, they wanted a weighted system which would give them the advantage because of their greater population. The "Great Compromise" which resolved this issue gave the small states their way in the upper house, the Senate, and the large states their way in the lower house, the House of Representatives. Because the large states felt they were yielding more, they managed to prevail in requiring that tax and revenue measures must originate in the House, where they had the advantage.

Another conflict requiring compromise was between North and South. The South wanted to count its slave population fully for purposes of representation (rather strange, one might note, since they were regarded as property rather than persons and obviously did not participate in the political process), but not at all for purposes of direct taxation. The North wanted it just the opposite. The solution: the 3/5 Compromise. That's right: count 3/5 of the slave population for both purposes. One result, obviously, was to give the South a weighted advantage politically as long as slavery lasted. A civil rights leader many years later suggested how the compromise looked to an African American by calling his book *3/5 A Man*.

The other North-South conflict involved slavery as well—or actually the slave trade. Pay attention: Several southern delegates wanted to stop the slave trade, several northern ones wanted to continue it. Things are not always as you might expect. Slavery, you see, had not yet caught hold in the South to the extent it was to do a few years later (after the invention of the cotton gin). And most of those profiting from the carrying trade in human flesh were from the commercial centers of the North. The "compromise" here was to say Congress could not outlaw the slave trade for twenty years (though there was to be a per head import fee). (In 1808, Congress did—but it continued illegally down to the Civil War.)

Four characteristics of the new government provided for in the Constitution should help to understand it (and to contrast it with the Articles of Confederation which it replaced). The first is enumerated powers. That is to say, the powers of each branch of government, and of the government itself, were clearly spelled out. What one notices right away is that the central government has all the powers it had under the Articles, plus taxation and control of commerce and foreign affairs. And the power "To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers." That's the famous "necessary and proper" or elastic clause, and its presence in the Constitution suggests a fundamental reversal of the Articles of Confederation system. If it is not obvious enough, notice that the Constitution also includes several specific limitations on the powers of the states. They cannot engage in foreign relations, for example, or coin money.

The second characteristic, closely related to the first, is separation of powers. There's an executive, a legislative, and a judicial branch. They are supposedly equal. The powers of each branch are enumerated. And there's a built-in system of checks and balances. Congress (the legislative branch), it is said, makes the laws. The President (the executive) enforces them. The Supreme Court (the major part of the judiciary) interprets them. But notice that the President can veto an act of Congress. But notice also that Congress can override the veto (with a 2/3 majority). And notice that the Supreme Court can declare the law unconstitutional anyway! (That's a bit misleading. It's called "judicial review," and while it may have been implied, it was not actually spelled out in the Constitution, but rather became an accepted part of the system later.) It doesn't sound like a very efficient system, many have noted. But if you want efficiency, try dictatorship. The Constitution created a system which has "worked" for over 200 years.

The third characteristic is the amendment process. It grew directly out of the experience of the Articles of Confederation government, that is its inability to change. The amendment process, then, was made easier. Not easy, but easier. It required ratification by 3/4 of the states, which could be given either by the state legislature or by a special ratification convention. Twenty-seven amendments have been added in just over 200 years.

The final characteristic can best be called built-in checks against radical democracy. To call it that is admittedly somewhat Beardian. If you study the Constitution closely, you will notice that in each branch of the government officials are chosen differently and for a different length of time. Members of the House are chosen by popular vote, for 2-year terms. Members of the Senate were chosen by state legislatures, for 6-year terms—and the elections were staggered so that no more than 1/3 of the Senators would be new every two years. (A subsequent amendment, the seventeenth, part of the progressive reform era of the early twentieth century, changed the method of electing Senators—they are now elected directly by the voters of the individual states.) The President is elected by the Electoral College, for a 4-year term (and by the twenty-second amendment is limited to two terms). Federal judges are appointed by the President, for life (or "good Behavior"). Why was it all set up this way? Apparently because the conservative, nationalistic Founding Fathers distrusted "radical democracy"—Shays' Rebellion was still fresh on their minds—and wanted to make it very difficult for "outsiders" to take over the government.

By September 17, 1787, the convention had done its work. Three delegates, ominously, refused to sign the completed document. The rest went to the tavern across the street to celebrate. (Surely the Founding Fathers would have been shocked and appalled if they could have known that one day an amendment would be added to their constitution making it illegal for them to do so!) Now the document had to be approved by the people (or the states). We tend to think that what happened in history was inevitable, but approval of the Constitution was by no means a foregone conclusion. Notice that the method of ratification provided for was itself controversial: nine of the thirteen states would be considered adequate, and the approval was to be given by special conventions. (Under the Articles of Confederation—still the government, remember—unanimity, of the state legislatures, was required, even to bring about an amendment.) If the Declaration of Independence was pushed through by a minority, so was the Constitution. But, significantly, a somewhat different minority. For these two founding documents of the United States of America are fundamentally different. (Just as you must read the Declaration of Independence, so you must read the Constitution; it's not as much "fun," but it's worth the effort.) The Declaration is a radical document, placing its emphasis on universal human rights.

The Constitution is a conservative document, placing its emphasis on stability and protection of property. Perhaps that is not to praise or criticize either. Their goals were just fundamentally different. Some historians have made a fairly good case that the Constitution was indeed the product of a conservative counter-revolution. The majority of the people of the US in 1787, most historians agree, were still in a more democratic, loose-central-government mood than the Founding Fathers were, and probably would have rejected the Constitution had they been given a fair chance to do so.

But history does not deal with "probably." What happened was that the Federalists, as those who supported the Constitution came to be called, were well organized, and pushed the document through to ratification. Even so, it was not easy, and some rather dubious tactics were used. Some centers of known opposition didn't even get news of the elections until too late to participate, polling places were frequently far removed from those areas, the ferry needed to cross the river to get to the polling place was owned by a Federalist and just happened to be closed that day . . . . In Pennsylvania itself, where the Constitution was drawn up, enough Anti-Federalist delegates were bodily carried into the ratifying convention so that a quorum would be present, and the Constitution was approved; when people learned of that, they rioted in the streets.

The Anti-Federalists developed three main arguments against ratification of the Constitution. First, they argued that it was unconstitutional. Their point was a good one. The existing government was the Articles of Confederation; its call for the Convention was the legal one, and limited its role to suggesting amendments; and now an entirely new system of government was to be approved with less support than required to amend the old. Secondly, they emphasized states' rights. And finally, they complained of the absence from the new document of a "Bill of Rights." Several states ratified with the condition that one be added; thus, the first ten amendments, commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights, were added in 1791.

So there was a real struggle. Still, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify on June 21, 1788. Now, presumably, the Constitution was to go into effect. But the four remaining outside the fold were Rhode Island, North Carolina, Virginia, and New York. While the new government might be viable without the first two, it clearly must have the latter two, both large and important states. In Virginia, the old revolutionary hero Patrick Henry led the opposition. He complained, significantly, even about the Preamble; it should, he argued, have said "We the states" instead of "We the people." When ratification came, largely through the influence of Virginians Washington and Madison, it was by a vote of only 89 to 79.

All eyes turned to New York. The struggle there was particularly rancorous. To support ratification, Hamilton, Madison, and John Jay wrote "The Federalist Papers." Collectively, they are probably the best explanation of and justification for the Constitution ever done, and deserve to be ranked as third to the Declaration and the Constitution as America's greatest political documents. The Articles of Confederation, they argued, was clearly inadequate, and a stronger central government was needed. The proposed Constitution was not a danger to the liberties of the people or the states—indeed, it was the only alternative to anarchy. Due in part to "The Federalist Papers," but also surely due to the realization that the Constitution had more than the adequate number of states and was going to be tried anyway, New York finally ratified on July 26, 1788. The vote was 30 to 27. History is sometimes made by the narrowest of margins. (North Carolina and, ultimately, even Rhode Island joined the adventure later.)

Many people probably overcame their reservations about the Constitution because of George Washington. He was, after all, the hero of the revolutionary generation, and he had chaired the convention and supported its result. It seems to have been generally assumed that he would

become the first President. He did. He was unopposed. The story of his inaugural is interesting and revealing. The Constitution said it was to occur on March 4. But it appears that Washington had not even heard of his election yet on that date. When he did hear, he borrowed money from a friend to travel to his inaugural. (Washington was quite wealthy, but like many southern planters, didn't have much ready cash available.) His travel was slowed down by all the parades and celebrations every little town along the way wanted to have in his honor. Finally, he arrived in New York, and after a quorum of Congressmen also arrived, he was inaugurated. It was April 30, 1789. In many ways, it was not a very auspicious beginning.

In many other ways, it was. Washington was, among other things, a good judge of character and a good delegator of authority. His first two important appointments were both brilliant. It is hard to imagine that there was a more able person to preside over the new nation's financial affairs as Secretary of the Treasury than Alexander Hamilton. Just so, it is hard to imagine that there was a more able person to preside over the nation's foreign affairs as Secretary of State than Thomas Jefferson. However, having them in the same small presidential cabinet proved to be something like trying to mix oil and water. They clashed both personally and ideologically.

Everyone realized finance was a crucial area for the new government. Failure in that area more than any other led to the downfall of the Articles of Confederation. Hamilton's policies included assumption by the federal government of the outstanding state debts, full funding of both foreign and domestic debts, a tariff and an excise tax to raise money, and, most controversially, the establishment of a national bank. The Constitution did not specifically authorize the establishment of such an institution. Hamilton said it was an "implied" power, covered by the "necessary and proper" clause. Jefferson led the group which said no. Banking, he argued, was something best left to the state and local level, and besides, if the Constitution didn't say you could do it, it was probably unconstitutional to do it. When President Washington went along with Hamilton's position and the bank was established, Jefferson left the administration to lead the opposition.

The Founding Fathers had not foreseen the development of political parties. More, they considered them a bad thing. Washington himself was on record as saying that he considered them a dangerous form of factionalism which threatened to tear the republic apart. But the split between Hamilton and Jefferson marked the beginning of the development of political parties. Looking at those parties, their avowed principles, and the presidents associated with them, is helpful not only in understanding America's early political history, but all of her subsequent political history as well.

On the Hamiltonian side of the political spectrum, there have been three separate and distinct political parties. At first, Hamiltonians cleverly, if inaccurately, adopted the name Federalist. (Inaccurate because their views were really more nationalist than federalist.) That party was essentially dead by the time of the War of 1812, and was not replaced by another "Hamiltonian" party until the Whigs developed out of opposition to Andrew Jackson in the 1830s. The Whig party lasted only two decades; it died as a result of the furor over the slavery expansion issue in the 1850s. That furor gave birth to the Republican party, which still exists.

On the Jeffersonian side of the spectrum, there has been only one continuously existing political party, but it has gone by three major names. For a while, by default, it was called the Anti-Federalist party. That was unfortunate, because it was not only bad to be "anti," it was specifically bad to be known by a name that implied opposition to the Constitution itself. Soon they took the name Democratic-Republican, but, because democracy was still a negative concept in some quarters, and because the name was so burdensome, they were usually known as simply

the Republican party. (Yes, that means there is a "Republican" party on both sides of the political spectrum. You'll just have to work at keeping it straight, and one helpful way to do so is to remember that if it's before the 1850s it has to be the Jeffersonian Republicans.) Beginning with Andrew Jackson and "Jacksonian Democracy" in the 1820s, the party began to use the first part of its name, and it has been the Democratic party ever since.

Next, some of the principles to which the parties supposedly adhered—at least initially. Hamiltonians were especially strong in the North, favored a strong central government, a broad (sometimes called "loose" or "liberal") interpretation of the Constitution that emphasized implied powers or the necessary and proper clause, were supported primarily by the wealthier classes of society such as commerce and business, believed in a relatively restricted suffrage, were pro-British in foreign policy, and supported a strong national judiciary, a standing army and navy, high tariffs, and, of course, the national bank.

Jeffersonians were stronger in the South, emphasized states' rights (or a weaker central government), a strict interpretation of the Constitution, were supported primarily by agrarian and working classes, believed in a relatively broader franchise (though still limited by modern standards, essentially to white adult males), were pro-French in foreign policy, and opposed a strong national judiciary, a standing military, high tariffs, and the national bank.

On the issue of strong versus weak central government, the influence of the Enlightenment should be noted. It emphasized reason, the democratic process, and the scientific method. But the emphasis it placed on the possibility of human perfection is the relevant issue here. That is to say, the Jeffersonians were far more receptive to that possibility than the Hamiltonians were, so they wanted a weaker central government, thus allowing people to work out their own future, while the Hamiltonians felt a strong government of "wise men" was necessary to decide for the masses.

Finally, it should prove helpful to see how the presidents of the US line up on this Hamiltonian-Jeffersonian spectrum. Washington may have rejected the very concept of parties, but he was essentially a Federalist. So was the second president, John Adams. But that was it—the Federalists never elected another president. One major reason was that as the nation became more democratic, a party whose founder (Hamilton) had once referred to "the people" as "a great beast" was not likely to do very well. Then came the "Virginia Dynasty" of (Jeffersonian) Republicans: Jefferson himself, Madison, and James Monroe. It should be noted that when Jefferson, the first non-Federalist, was elected, in the somewhat misnamed "Revolution of 1800," the party system became an accepted reality.

After the War of 1812 there is a so-called "Era of Good Feeling" when the Democratic-Republicans are the only party around. Of course, they soon split. The sixth president, John Quincy Adams, was something of an aberration, i. e., he was the son of John, but in many ways more of a Republican; he called himself a "National Republican," and was the only one who ever used that label. Jackson and Martin Van Buren, now using the name Democrat, dominated the 1820s and 30s. But a new opposition party was generated by Jackson's "democracy" and authoritarian nature, the Whigs. William Henry Harrison and John Tyler were their first two presidents, followed by the Democratic James K. Polk, then two more Whigs, Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore. That was it for the Whigs. Democrats Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan sat in the White House as the nation moved toward civil war in the 1850s. The new Republican party achieved its first success with Abraham Lincoln in 1860. Post-Civil War presidents can best be dealt with at a later time.

One does not have to know very much about the two major political parties of America today, the Republican and Democratic, to see that the list of principles above doesn't fit anymore. To learn how that changed is to understand a great deal of American political history. It began with Jefferson himself. His election may have been called a "revolution," but many observers had trouble telling him from a Federalist; indeed, the great historian (and descendant of John Adams) Henry Adams said he "outfederalized the Federalists." Partly, that meant he became more nationalistic. His great accomplishment, the Louisiana Purchase, for example, could hardly be reconciled with a strict interpretation of the Constitution. The trend of his party was to continue after his presidency, to the point that in 1816, with the Federalists dead and gone, the Republicans re-established the national bank!

The War of 1812 may have been a useless war, but it was part of a watershed period of American history. Four characteristics mark the history of the country in the years during and following the war: growing economic independence, the growth of nationalism, westward expansion, and isolationism. Enough was probably said about isolationism in the previous chapter (the Monroe Doctrine especially), but the other three all need some attention here.

The label "Second War of American Independence" has been suggested for the War of 1812. To the extent that has validity, it has to do with the process of growing economic independence. Partly out of necessity, the new republic began to develop some industry of its own, so it would not be so dependent on the former mother country and other European powers. Textiles and iron were two of the more important early industries. Cotton was rapidly becoming the major agricultural crop in this period, and was proving to be quite profitable as well. The development of an internal transportation system is a crucial factor in this process of growing economic independence. The great historian Edward Channing once went so far as to suggest that "The development of transportation in the years following the Treaty of Ghent is the most significant factor in American life between the inauguration of Washington and the firing on Fort Sumter." One could argue with that—events related to slavery seem rather important as well—but certainly the building of roads, canals, the development of the steamboat, and the beginning of America's incredibly important rail network were all crucial developments in this era.

The growth of nationalism may well be the most important of these characteristics. Difficult to define precisely—look it up in your dictionary rather than assuming you know what it means—it is a potent force, for better or worse, in human history, and it developed dramatically in the US in these years after the War of 1812. Indeed, the war had something to do with its development. Since they heard of Jackson's victory over the British at New Orleans about the same time they heard the war was over, many Americans deluded themselves into thinking they had defeated big, tough England again; they were inordinately proud, and made Andrew Jackson the greatest national hero since George Washington. The feeling which develops among a people of unity or oneness, the force that holds a nation together, nationalism is closely related to patriotism, isn't it, and in the US is closely related to an emphasis on the union, the nation, as opposed to the component parts, states or regions.

This awakening of American nationalism can be observed in virtually every area of life. Foreign visitors to America such as the famous Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville and Hungarians Sándor Bölöni-Farkas and Ágoston Haraszthy began to notice the emergence of a distinctive American "type," with character traits such as provincialism, boastfulness, patriotism, ingenuity, restlessness, a passion for work, optimism; they also noted the relative equality of opportunity in America, the rise of democracy, and individualism. American artists began to explore American themes, sometimes in their own style rather than the European imitations of the past. The same

was true in literature, best marked by Washington Irving's mining of American history to become the first American literary figure to gain fame abroad. Thomas Jefferson himself self-consciously sought to develop a distinctively American architecture. And Noah Webster, creator of the famous Webster's dictionaries, was inspired in part by a desire to create and catalog a distinctively American English.

The most important aspects of nationalism for our purposes here are the political ones. Two major points should be emphasized. First, as we have noted, to say that the Jeffersonian Republicans, once they achieved political power, proceeded to out-federalize the Federalists is to say that they became increasingly nationalistic. Even in his inaugural, Jefferson proclaimed "We are all republicans, we are all federalists." That was followed, either during his presidency or the presidencies of his followers, by the Tripolitan War, the Louisiana Purchase, and the re-establishment of the national bank.

The second aspect of political nationalism to be emphasized is the "judicial nationalism" of the Supreme Court under the leadership of Chief Justice John Marshall from 1801 to 1835. Notice the dates—long after the death of the Federalist party, the court continued to support its nationalistic principles in decision after decision. Marbury v. Madison (1803), establishing once and for all the court's power of judicial review, and McCulloch v. Maryland (1819), upholding the constitutionality of the national bank and proclaiming the broadest possible view of national power, are simply two of the outstanding examples. One is almost tempted to conclude that it didn't matter that the Federalist party had died out, since the Republicans were increasingly becoming more nationalistic and occupying formerly Federalist positions on many issues, and since the Supreme Court was continuing its principles as well.

Ironically, however, as nationalism grew, westward expansion helped to lead to the problem that eventually tore the nation apart. (First, it led, or helped lead, to the Panic of 1819, the first in a series of depressions that hit the American economy about every twenty years over the next century. A perhaps too-rapid westward expansion involved lots of unsound banking practices and rampant land speculation. The panic was also a reminder of the inter-relatedness still between the US and European economies, for it was clear that the collapse of the British textile boom led to a collapse of American cotton prices.) Jefferson, in retirement, referred to the slavery expansion issue as a "firebell in the night," a warning that the nation might be torn apart. It was prophetic. The specific occasion was the rapid movement of people westward, including into portions of the Louisiana Purchase. There were enough in Missouri by 1819 that they asked for admission to the union—as a slave state.

It is important to note that there was then a balance between the number of slave states and the number of free states (eleven of each). It is also important to note that the nation already had in effect a clear dividing line between the two areas: the Mason and Dixon line, the southern boundary of Pennsylvania, was symbolic, but powerful; the Northwest Ordinance line, along the Ohio River, was not symbolic, but real. What to do? Maine had been part of Massachusetts ever since the colonial period, but desired separate statehood. Members of Congress who were looking for a compromise, led by Henry Clay from the border state of Kentucky, now saw one. The Missouri Compromise involved the admission of Missouri as a slave state, the admission of Maine as a free state, and the drawing of a line (36 degrees, 30 minutes) to divide free and slave territory in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase.

It is fairly easy to see why it used to be common to refer to the post-War of 1812 era as an era of good feeling. The Republican party was the only one in existence—its presidential candidate in 1820, James Monroe, was unopposed; the country was enjoying prosperity (until the

Panic of 1819); almost all Americans joined in the surge of nationalism and isolationism as expressed in the Monroe Doctrine.

But it is even easier to see that "era of good feeling" is a misnomer. There were few good feelings between North and South at the time of the Missouri Compromise controversy. And the Republican party tore itself apart in the presidential election of 1824. It was largely along sectional lines. The North had its candidate: John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts. The South had two: John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, and William H. Crawford of Georgia. The West also had two: Henry Clay of Kentucky (then one of the newer, more western states), and Andrew Jackson of Tennessee. All five claimed to be good Jeffersonian Republicans, but except for the "American System" of Clay, who admirably devoted his political career to trying to hold together the nation's diverse sectional interests and thus earned the honorific "The Great Compromiser," they all represented a narrow set of largely sectional interests. When the election was over, there was no clear winner. As the Constitution provided, the decision was made in the House of Representatives. The Speaker of the House was Henry Clay. He had finished too far back to be considered, but his position gave him the chance to heavily influence the outcome. Though Jackson finished first in both popular and electoral votes, he was denied the victory; the House chose Adams. If there had been an era of good feeling, it was certainly over. Jackson and his followers cried "corrupt bargain"—not only because Jackson had finished first and lost, but because Adams quickly appointed Clay Secretary of State, the position that was already being considered the most likely stepping-stone to the presidency—and began immediately the presidential election of 1828.

Largely due to Jacksonian opposition, Adams' presidency was a very frustrating four years for him and the country, almost devoid of accomplishment. Jackson defeated him soundly in the mud-slinging election of 1828; Adams was using the party label National Republican, while Jackson had begun to use the first half of the Democratic-Republican handle.

Jackson's election is one of only two in US history to be known as revolutionary, the "Revolution of 1828." If one is willing to define "revolution" very loosely and broadly, as connoting significant change, it probably deserves the label, at least more than Jefferson's election in 1800. First, it is often said that Jackson's election marks the coming of age of the common man in American politics. Barriers to participation in the political process were falling as the country moved toward universal white male suffrage, and many of the new voters were not willing to vote for their "betters" (or even willing to acknowledge anyone as their better) as in the old days of deferential politics. Second, Jackson himself, while hardly a common man—he was a general and a slaveowner—was in a position to benefit from these political changes. He was very different from the pattern set by the first six presidents: a man of minimal education and political experience, he was first and foremost a military hero. Third, Jackson, with his strong personality, strengthened the presidential office. He used the veto, for example, more than all previous presidents put together, and he viewed his cabinet not as being really in charge (as Washington had), but as errand boys to carry out his wishes. Fourth, Jackson carried the so-called "spoils system" to new highs (or lows!). "To the victor belongs the spoils," went the saying; under Jackson, it seemed as if being qualified for an office was not nearly as much of an issue as whether the person supported him politically. Finally, though it was the work more of Martin Van Buren than Jackson himself, it was under the Jacksonian Democratic party that the modern party system, with its organization from national down to precinct level, the nominating convention, and all the campaign methods (banners, slogans, etc.) came into existence.

Jackson offended many with his authoritarian manner and his apparently inconsistent policies. On the "Indian problem," Jackson reacted as a westerner. Known for his efficiency in Indian warfare, it is perhaps not surprising that one of the darkest blotches on his administration—and the country—is the policy of forced Indian removal. It is known appropriately in the histories of many of the individual tribes affected, including the Cherokee, as "The Trail of Tears." On the issue of internal improvements (i. e., the building of roads, canals, etc.), and specifically the issue of the appropriateness of the federal government assisting in these endeavors, Jackson reacted as a southerner when he refused to approve further federal appropriations. Of course, Jackson was both a westerner and a southerner—a slaveholding southern planter in the frontier portion of the new state of Tennessee, and known for his Indian-fighting and nationalistic expansionism.

On the bank issue, Jackson reacted as a southern states' rights advocate. When his opponents sought to extend the national bank's charter, he vetoed the measure (the bank, he said, was un-American, undemocratic, and unconstitutional), and when they sought to use the veto against him in his 1832 re-election bid, he prevailed. On the tariff issue, Jackson seemed to react as a northern nationalist, insisting that South Carolina had no right to nullify an act of the federal government. The reconciliation of Jackson's apparently contradictory positions on these issues might be found in his tendency to personalize issues: On the other side of the bank issue were Jackson's political enemies, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and especially bank president Nicholas Biddle, whom Jackson hated; on the other side of the tariff issue was Jackson's "disloyal" vice president, John C. Calhoun. (One version of Jackson's last words: "I only regret that I did not live to hang John C. Calhoun.")

Jackson's policies may have helped cause the nation's second depression, the Panic of 1837, which broke just after he left office. Certainly his policies and authoritarian manner generated an opposition which coalesced into a new party on the Hamiltonian side of the political spectrum, the Whigs. About the only things that held them together were their opposition to Jackson and their upper-class orientation, so when the crisis over the expansion of slavery became the dominant political issue in the 1850s, they were torn apart and disappeared almost overnight, to be replaced by the new Republican party. That part of America's political history can best be told in connection with the story of slavery and the Civil War in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE
SLAVERY, ABOLITION, THE 1850S, CIVIL WAR, AND RECONSTRUCTION

This chapter will carry forward the story of American history chronologically from 1848 to 1877. But the best way to do that seems to be by focussing on the story of African Americans, and going way back beyond 1848 for some background.

For to enter into the African American part of American history is to enter into a world of myth, defined here (somewhat narrowly, we admit) as false beliefs about the past. And the first such myth is the myth of the dark continent of Africa. That is to say, there has been a tendency to see Africa as so backward, savage, without culture worthy of our attention, that it almost seems a favor that Europeans took Africans out of all that and enslaved them. The truth is far different. Most of the Africans taken to America as slaves were taken from West Africa, where, as leading black historian John Hope Franklin has written, "civilization had reached its highest point on the continent, with the possible exception of Egypt." The great empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay were there. Clearly, Franklin is correct in stating that the region "culturally was within some measurable distance of Europe" at the time the slave trade began in the fifteenth century. It is easy to move from the assumption that a people has no history worth knowing to the assumption that they have no rights worth defending. African Americans do have a history worth knowing. It is perhaps as important to look at the African background of American history as it is to look at the European background.

If slavery is one of the ugliest blotches on American history, then the slave trade is the ugliest specific portion of the story, especially the "Middle Passage," i. e., the voyage of the captured Africans from Africa to America on the slave-trading vessels. It was not uncommon for half of the "cargo" to die of disease, mistreatment, or a combination of the two. Not surprisingly, again in the words of Franklin, "Africans offered stiff resistance to their capture, sale, and transportation to the unknown New World." Not surprising, yet it defies another myth, the myth of black docility and acceptance of slavery and all that it entailed. More on this all-important resistance theme later.

Dealing with the African background of American history inevitably leads to consideration of the controversy about African survivals in the African American subculture. Scholars have taken extreme positions on both sides of this issue. The truth, as usual, lies somewhere in between. The African American subculture historically has evidenced a surprising degree of African survivals, especially in such areas as family, religion, music, dance, and arts and crafts—but it is also a distinctively American subculture, the result of the experience of the plantation and the ghetto.

Often it has been said, almost as if it provided an excuse for slavery and the slave trade, that slavery already existed in Africa. Of course it did—slavery, unfortunately, is almost as old as human history. But that anyone could state that as a justification for what white western Europeans did to black Africans over the three to four centuries of the slave trade seems almost incredible. Besides, African slavery was fundamentally different from the slavery that was to develop in

America. African slavery was not racial, not hereditary, and not dehumanizing. Not racial because the slaves were of the same basic color as the masters, since slavery usually resulted from one tribe defeating another in tribal warfare and enslaving the survivors. Not hereditary because the fact that you were a slave did not mean that your descendants would be from here to eternity. And perhaps we should have said not as dehumanizing, but the fact is that at least slaves still had status as human beings in African society. Turn those three statements inside out and you already know a great deal about American slavery: It was racially based, to the point that being black in America caused others to assume you were a slave—if you were free, you had better have your papers with you to prove it; if you were a slave, your descendants would be forever; and American slavery became "chattel" slavery in which slaves were property, pure and simple, and had no rights as human beings.

The impact of the slave trade was broad and deep. Most obvious is the impact on the people directly involved, possibly as many as 20,000,000 over the centuries. It was, says Franklin, "one of the most far-reaching and drastic social revolutions in the annals of history." Briefly and bluntly, Lerone Bennett, Jr.—through *Ebony* magazine, something of a popularizer of black history—makes its broader impact clear: "The slave trade left a bloodstained legacy. During the four centuries the trade was pursued, it wrecked the social and economic life of Africa, set tribe against tribe and village against village. The trade was no less disastrous in Europe and America where it left a legacy of ill will and guilt and a potentially explosive racial problem."

The African experience began in America, as Bennett entitled one of his books, Before the Mayflower. Remember the first boat load of Africans which landed at Jamestown in 1619? Though they may not have been slaves initially, it soon degenerated into slavery. And it was not confined to the South. Rather, slavery was a legal institution in all thirteen British North American colonies. In the South, the plantation system developed in the production of staple crops. In the Middle Colonies, there were fewer slaves and their employment was more diverse. In the North, there were fewer still, mostly employed as servants, artisans, etc.—but don't forget the attachment of northerners, in New England especially, to the slave trade. Slavery, then, did not really begin to divide North from South until the era of the American Revolution. By then, there were probably half a million blacks in the colonies, most of them slaves. The Declaration of Independence spoke of equality. In all honesty, its author, the slave-owning Thomas Jefferson, probably did not include blacks in his thinking when he wrote that. Still, some people did. The admirable early feminist and equalitarian Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John: "It always appeared a most iniquitous scheme to me to fight ourselves for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have." In other words, how could a revolution be based on universal human rights and at the same time deny the most basic of those rights to an entire people? Some 5,000 blacks actually fought for the Patriot cause in the Revolution; most fought in integrated units, and most secured their freedom for their efforts. (More secured their freedom by fleeing to the British, but very few fought for them.) Interestingly, in the early stages of the conflict, blacks were very visible: at the Boston Massacre, one of the victims was a mulatto, Crispus Attucks, and there were blacks at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. Then the Continental Army made a decision to exclude blacks. One wonders if the leadership sensed at some level the conflict between their ideals and the reality, and feared to let blacks take up arms for freedom because it would have deadly consequences for the institution of slavery. In any case, as the war dragged on and states began to have difficulty meeting the troop quotas assigned to them by the Congress, they began to accept blacks and the Army reversed its decision.

Certainly the Revolution did have an impact on slavery. Indeed, it is in this period that the Mason-Dixon line begins to be seen as the dividing line between free and slave. Why did slavery begin to disappear in the North? The reasons were partially political (the struggle for freedom and its broader implications, as noted), partially economic (slavery had never caught hold in the North anyway), partially philosophical (the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason, democracy, and natural rights), and partially religious (best known for their early anti-slavery views were the Quakers). Why didn't these same factors lead to the beginning of the end for slavery in the South? There were greater numbers of slaves there, thus the institution of slavery had taken a greater hold, and there was a real dilemma, recognized by such thinkers as Jefferson: Are you doing a favor to a slave if you free him or her in a slave-based society? Even if you want to end the institution, how do you do it?

It has been suggested that the South went through three stages in its dominant attitude toward slavery. Up to the Revolution, most southerners agreed with most northerners that slavery was an evil. Then they began to think of it as a necessary evil; there was, after all, a labor shortage, and wasn't slavery the only way to fill it, as well as the only way Africans could be worked productively? By the 1830s, most southerners had clearly moved to the third and final deadly stage in their thinking about the "peculiar institution" (as they liked to call slavery): it was a "positive good" (to use the redundant phrase associated with John C. Calhoun). When the South reached that stage, it was no longer even safe there to question or criticize slavery. (Also, when the South reached that stage, it used every conceivable argument to support slavery—racial, social, economic, religious, etc. J. B. D. DeBow is perhaps the best-known defender of slavery.)

What an incredible watershed the 1780s were in American history—and in African American history as well! First, as noted, the Revolution, based on the Declaration of Independence, seemed to hold out some promise for African Americans. But then, at the very moment the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 guaranteed that slavery would not expand into the Northwest, the Constitutional Convention accepted slavery (without ever actually using the word!), protected slave owners against their slaves running away, and, as we have seen, accepted the 3/5 Compromise and guaranteed the perpetuation of the slave trade for another twenty years! A few years later, in 1793, Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin further sealed the fate of African Americans, for it helped to make the production of cotton with slave labor profitable and expansive.

We must make an effort, then, to incorporate African American history into American history—it's not really fully American history until we do. This entire chapter, in a sense, is an effort to do that. But it does not always incorporate smoothly. The Constitution and the cotton gin, both frequently celebrated as signs of progress, were giant steps backward for African Americans! American freedom, American slavery—with what complexity are they woven together!

In all the myths about black history, perhaps the greatest is about slavery itself. *Gone With The Wind* may or may not be a good novel. It may or may not be a good movie. But it is clearly awful history. Yet many Americans have internalized its images and failed to separate them from historical reality. If you asked Americans to close their eyes and come up with images of what life in the South was like before the Civil War, many of them, at least until a few years ago, would come up with something like this: The plantation owner sits in the shade of a magnolia tree sipping a mint julep, his every need being served by a big fat slave mammy. Off in the distance is the big, beautiful, white-columned plantation mansion. Further in the distance are hundreds of slaves happily singing while hoeing the cotton. Do we exaggerate? Not much. Yet

it is easy to show that there are many things wrong with that picture, that it is essentially a fictional image, in short a myth.

First, let us emphasize three facts: (1) Most white southerners didn't own slaves. (2) There were not very many large plantations. (3) Those whites who did own slaves, especially those who owned large numbers of them, dominated the South in every way. (That may be part of the reason so many people think there were more of them than there really were.)

In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, of some 8,000,000 white southerners, only about 380,000 owned slaves. Multiply that 380,000 by five, the average size of a family, and you get 1,900,000 members of slave owning families, or less than 1/4 of all white southerners. Since there were almost 4,000,000 slaves by that time, it is easy to see that the largest single group in the South's total population of about 12,000,000 was whites who did not own slaves. Shouldn't the visual image of what life was like in the South include them? Who were they? Mostly they were small, independent farmers, usually called yeomen. Some of them were professionals. Some of them were so-called poor white trash. But the point to be emphasized here is that over 3/4 of the South's white population did not own slaves. So the largest group in the South's social system was whites who didn't own slaves; the second largest group was blacks who were slaves; the smallest group (well, other than free blacks, of whom there may have been a quarter of a million by 1860) was whites who owned slaves. It doesn't quite fit the image, but it is history.

Secondly, we said there were not very many large plantations. In other words, most of that small minority of white southerners who did own slaves didn't own very many. Almost 90% of slave owners owned less than twenty slaves; over 70% owned less than ten; over 50% owned less than five. Of the 347,525 slave owning families in 1850, only 1,733 owned 100 or more slaves. And 100 or more slaves is usually the standard for inclusion in the great planter class. It is hard for us to visualize the scene for those slave owners who owned 1-4 slaves, almost as hard as to visualize the lives of the South's non-slaveholding majority. Basically, the owner was likely to work in the fields with the slaves, and engage in a direct supervisory role. Again, it doesn't fit the image; again, it is history.

Why then did the planter class play such a dominant role? For they did truly dominate the South in every way you can imagine: politically, economically, socially. Part of the answer lies in the fact that "The great majority of the staple crops were produced on plantations employing slave labor, thus giving the owners an influence out of proportion to their number." (Franklin) It is also relevant to note that the South's cotton crop was a powerful factor not only for the South but for the nation, accounting by 1860 for almost 60% of the total value of American exports. (Among other things, that makes it easy to see why southerners proclaimed "Cotton is king" and why the Confederacy based its hopes on "King Cotton Diplomacy.") Another part of the explanation of the dominance of the planter class is explained by the hope of rising, of social mobility. Again in Franklin's words: "Then, there was the hope on the part of most nonslaveholders [sic] that they would some day become owners of slaves. Consequently, they took on the habits and patterns of thought of slaveholders before they actually joined that select class." And thus helped to keep that class in power!

It is not the amount or type of work slaves were forced to do that makes slavery such an evil. Slaves may have worked from sunup to sundown in the fields, but so did yeoman farmers. The basics of life provided for slaves—food, clothing, and shelter—were minimal, but adequate. After all, the owner had an investment in his property. But that is the basic problem, isn't it?

Slaves were property. All the arguments about the profitability of slavery seem somehow inconsequential in the face of that fundamental fact. As do the arguments about how often slaves were punished. One example of a human being hanging by a rope, naked and upside-down, being beaten across the buttocks with a board with holes in it by another human being until choking on their own blood is about all we need, don't you think? But the fact is there are many such examples.

Which brings us, again, to the resistance theme. Is there any surprise that slaves would resist? Resistance, rather than an exception, was a part of the common pattern of slave life. It took many forms. Some the owners couldn't even recognize as resistance. Called "puttin' on ole massa," they included sabotage of tools and faked sickness, laziness, and stupidity. (There's a danger in such forms of resistance, isn't there? Faked laziness or stupidity might tend to reinforce the stereotype the master class holds of you anyway, that you are so lazy, stupid, etc., that you are obviously fit only to be a slave.) Even the songs the slaves seemed so happily to be singing in the fields frequently held thinly-veiled themes of resistance and escape. Self-mutilation and even suicide were not uncommon among the slave population. And running away was very common indeed. One suggestion is that about 1,000 per year succeeded in the period from 1800 to 1850. If that's accurate, imagine how many more tried and failed, getting captured by one of the patrollers with dogs that constantly worked the plantation areas. After 1850, it got worse (or better!), with the help of the "Underground Railroad," of which more later.

The most dramatic form of slave resistance was rebellion or revolt. We used to be told it didn't happen all that often. We know better now. Herbert Aptheker told us way back at the time of the Second World War that there were some 250 organized slave uprisings in America before the Civil War. Even weeding out the ones that involved a minimal number of slaves or that were planned but never really occurred, that still leaves a large number, amazingly large considering what a closed system the slave South was, what precautions were taken against slave rebellion, and what harsh punishment was meted out to slaves who were caught. The most famous and important uprising was Nat Turner's Rebellion, in Virginia, in 1831. Turner was recognized as a preacher in the slave community, and apparently considered himself a sort of black Moses, designated by God to rise up and lead his people out of bondage. He and about sixty followers managed to kill an equal number of whites before the rebellion was quelled. Turner, obviously, was executed. But his uprising had a powerful impact. Along with the abolitionist movement, it had Virginia and the rest of the slave South living in constant fear of slave uprisings, and led to even stricter codes controlling the activities of blacks in the South.

The abolitionist movement. Now there is resistance to slavery! The movement to abolish the evil institution entirely. In the early years, before the 1830s, it was moderate, religious, colonizationist, and partially southern. Elihu Embree is a good example of its southern activities. He began publication in 1820 in Jonesboro, Tennessee, of "The Emancipator," the first paper in the US devoted entirely to the abolition of slavery. Benjamin Lundy is a good example of the movement's religious roots. A Quaker, he managed to publish an anti-slavery paper in New Jersey from 1821 all the way down to 1836. William Ellery Channing is a good example of the moderation of the early abolitionist movement. Considered the founder of American Unitarianism, he addressed himself to southern slaveowners in a sermon in the following terms: "We consider slavery as your calamity, not your crime, and we will share with you the burden of putting an end to it." Colonizationist? The American Colonization Society, founded in 1816, sought to end slavery—and send all blacks back to Africa. The African nation of Liberia resulted from their efforts, but not much else. For one thing, it was clearly a racist solution to the problem, a

form of ethnic cleansing; for another, most African Americans, while they wanted freedom, wanted it in America, not Africa. The American Colonization Society sent only about 6,000 blacks back to Africa during its entire existence (it folded just after the Civil War, in 1867); about that many were being born into slavery each year. Around 1830, a series of turning points changed the abolition movement drastically—no longer was it so moderate, religion played less a role, colonization was not an acceptable alternative, and "southern abolitionist" was almost an oxymoron. What were these turning points? First, in 1829, David Walker, a free black from North Carolina who had just moved to Boston, published his "Appeal," a call for violent resistance to slavery. Then in 1831, William Lloyd Garrison began publication of *The Liberator,* the best-known of the radical abolitionist newspapers. Indeed, Garrison was the leading radical abolitionist, demanding immediate and uncompensated emancipation and refusing to work through the political system because the Constitution itself was tainted with slavery. He was instrumental in forming the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1831 and the American Anti-Slavery Society, the first national organization devoted to ending slavery, two years later. It was also, of course, in 1831 that Nat Turner's Rebellion occurred. And the big North-South confrontation over the tariff during Jackson's presidency is also a part of this watershed period. It is important to note that blacks played a vital role in the abolitionist movement; freedom for blacks was not a gift of whites, but something blacks took, with the help of concerned whites. Blacks were involved in all the abolitionist activities we have mentioned; indeed, according to Franklin, there were already about fifty black anti-slavery societies in existence before the abolitionist movement became more radical (and fashionable) in the 1830s. Frederick Douglass is perhaps the most impressive of the black abolitionists. An escaped slave, he brought eloquence and experience to the struggle against slavery; his paper, *The North Star,* far exceeded Garrison's in circulation. Black women played an important role as well. Bennett says there were "talking abolitionists" and "walking abolitionists." Sojourner Truth—what a wonderful name!—best represents the former, with her successful and influential speaking tours at home and abroad. Harriet Tubman best represents the "walking" type; after herself escaping from slavery, she became a leading "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, making some twenty trips into the South, taking her freedom and her life in her hands every time she did, and helping an additional 300 people to freedom.

Whether white or black, abolitionists developed a strong case against slavery, emphasizing, in addition to its generally evil character, four points: It was contrary to the teachings of Christianity; it was contrary to the fundamental principles of the American way of life, with its supposed emphasis on freedom and equality; it was economically unsound; and its very existence was a menace to the peace and safety of the country, as well as an embarrassment abroad. In addition, abolitionists focussed effectively on the specific evils of slavery, such as the slave trade, the breeding of slaves for the domestic slave trade, and punishment of slaves. Abolition was the central reform in America's first major wave of reform in the decades just before the Civil War; women's rights, peace, temperance, education, prisons, and care for the mentally ill were also addressed.

Historians of America have used a lot of ink discussing different views of Civil War causation. Few would agree anymore with the view of 19th-century historian James Ford Rhodes: "Of the American Civil War, it can be safely said that there was a single cause—slavery." Such a single-cause theory seems far too simplistic, ignoring as it does the broader constitutional and economic issues. Yet slavery was at the center. And surely we can agree that the dispute over slavery's expansion into the territories was the form the issue took in the period between 1848 and 1861, and indeed was the central problem of that era.

Remember that in 1848 the US was a divided nation, roughly half free territory and half slave. There was the old Mason-Dixon Line, then the Northwest Ordinance Line, then the Missouri Compromise Line. But now that the Mexican War was over, the country had acquired another massive chunk of territory, and inevitably the question of whether slavery would be allowed to expand into it would arise. Indeed, it arose even before the war was over, when a Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania attempted, in what came to be known as the Wilmot Proviso, to outlaw slavery in any territory to be acquired from Mexico. That was just the beginning of a controversy that occupied center stage in American politics until the Civil War itself.

The issue was no longer a hypothetical one when the Mexican Cession became part of the US. A short time later, gold was discovered in California. The rush of the "Forty-Niners" was on. Quickly, enough Americans were in California that they organized as a territory and asked to become a state. A free state. Remember the practice for some time of balancing free and slave states. In the Compromise of 1850, that balance was upset. California was admitted without slavery, and no slave state was admitted. Some radical southerners were ready to secede from the union right then, but it did not happen, in part because there was a supposedly major concession to them in the Compromise also: a strong fugitive slave law, that gave southern slaveowners essentially everything they had been asking for in terms of protection against slaves running away. So why did we say "supposedly" a major concession? Because the Fugitive Slave Act that became a part of the Compromise was so strong, clearly stacking the deck against runaway slaves, that more and more northerners refused to support it, instead supporting the activities of the Underground Railroad, the network of people devoted to helping slaves escape.

The Compromise of 1850—put together, again, with the leadership of "The Great Compromiser," Henry Clay—dealt with other issues as well. The slave trade, but not slavery itself, was abolished in the nation's capital. Congress was declared to have no authority over the domestic slave trade. The boundaries of the state of Texas were finally definitely set, large enough theoretically that it could subdivide and the South could thereby gain more slave states. (It never happened.) And the rest of the Mexican Cession, i. e., other than California and Texas, was to be organized as territories without the Wilmot Proviso. Notice that that means slavery will not be outlawed there, but fails to say whether it will be allowed there! That provision alone was enough to make it very unlikely that the Compromise was the final solution. Yet people clearly hoped it was.

Both sides in the growing conflict tended to look to the Constitution for the answer; the problem was that they looked at it differently. Article IV, Section 3, Paragraph 2 seemed to provide an answer: "The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State." The problem: northern anti-slavery forces tended to read down to the semi-colon, and claim slavery could be outlawed in the territories; southern pro-slavery forces tended to read from the semi-colon to the end of the sentence, and claim any effort to outlaw slavery was unconstitutional, being clearly prejudicial to the interests of the southern states.

So the Constitution didn't provide an answer. Thus, as noted, people hoped the Compromise of 1850 had done so. Events of 1852 should have been enough to disillusion them of that notion. In the presidential election, Democrat Franklin Pierce, a "doughface" (northerner with southern principles), emerged victorious, mostly because he said he did support the Compromise. More importantly, Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Whether it was great literature, or an accurate portrayal of slavery, could be argued; what cannot be argued is that it was the most important document in the history of the anti-slavery crusade. It became an influential

overnight best-seller in the North; it was virtually outlawed in the South. President Abraham Lincoln supposedly said to Stowe, when he met her during the Civil War, "Ah, so you're the little lady who wrote the book which started this great war!" If he did, it wasn't very nice, and it wasn't accurate, but it made a point. Passions were increasingly inflamed on both sides; the Compromise clearly had not provided a final solution.

It almost seems as if Americans created other issues in the 1850s in an effort to avoid the one which they knew at some level threatened to divide them. One such "issue" was the movement sometimes known as "nativism." It was anti-foreign in general and anti-Catholic in particular, and was partially a response to the large number of Irish and German immigrants. (Substantial numbers of Hungarian immigrants went to the US in this period as well, following the revolution of 1848-49. Louis Kossuth himself visited America in 1851, and was hailed as a democratic hero.) Nativism even had its own political party for a while, the American or "Know-Nothing" Party—a strange moniker they earned by the "I know nothing" answer they regularly gave to questions about their motives and program!—but it never achieved any success, and disappeared after the election of 1856 as the nation became more and more preoccupied with the slavery expansion issue.

If the Compromise of 1850 had provided a sort of uneasy truce on the slavery expansion issue, that truce was completely broken by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Part of the debate among historians about Civil War causation has been the inevitability issue—was the war a repressible or an irrepressible conflict? One is tempted to be flippant and say it happened, didn't it, so it must have been irrepressible. But more seriously, if one has to determine the point at which war became inevitable, one could hardly do better than to point at the Kansas-Nebraska Act. At first, the bill sounds rather innocuous: It called for the organization of Kansas and Nebraska as territories on the basis of "popular sovereignty" as the answer to the slavery expansion problem—i. e., the people of each territory were to be allowed to determine for themselves whether they wished to recognize slavery as legal there. But there were major problems with such a proposal. Never mind that the "popular sovereignty" of blacks was not being considered by much of anybody. More specifically, both Kansas and Nebraska (which was to extend all the way to Canada) were north of the old Missouri Compromise Line. Thus, many southerners saw a chance to get another slave state, while many northerners felt a "sacred agreement" had been violated.

Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois was responsible for the bill. When asked why he did it, he said it was to take the slavery issue out of politics—a somewhat incredible claim for a measure that arguably made civil war inevitable! More likely, he did it because of his own presidential ambitions (hoping for southern support while not losing northern and western because of the democratic appeal of his solution) and economic interests (he stood to profit from a transcontinental railroad to be build through the new territories). Why he did it is less important than the impact the Kansas-Nebraska Act had. Politically, the Whig party, unable to hold its diverse sectional elements together on this divisive issue, fell to pieces overnight. Also overnight, the new Republican party came into existence to fill the vacuum on that side of the political spectrum; its position on the slavery expansion issue was to firmly oppose any further expansion. A "civil war" broke out in Kansas, where both pro- and anti-slavery settlers were determined to claim the territory as their own. Feelings ran high everywhere, including in the halls of Congress, where Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina achieved fame or infamy, depending on your viewpoint, by beating Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts bloody with a walking cane on the floor of the Senate.

The presidential election of 1856 led to success for another Democratic doughface, James Buchanan of Pennsylvania. Neither he nor the Democratic party had much to offer, but clearly it seemed to the voters a better alternative than the Republican John C. Fremont ("Free Soil, Free Men, Fremont," they sloganized). The Republicans were clearly a sectional phenomenon, purely northern at this point, and most people seemed to fear division of the country if they won.

Maybe the Supreme Court could provide an answer to the dilemma which now haunted the country with renewed intensity? In 1857, the Court tried. Supposedly. The problem was that the court was loaded with southern pro-slavery Democrats. When Dred Scott, a Missouri slave, sued for his freedom on the basis of his temporary residence in free territory after his master took him into the state of Illinois and Minnesota Territory, the Missouri courts, not surprisingly, ruled against him. With abolitionist support, he appealed, after being "sold" to a citizen of New York ("sold" in quotes because this was clearly a plan to get the case before the Supreme Court—also, slavery was illegal in New York!). The Supreme Court's decision was the most pro-Southern, pro-slavery, anti-black decision imaginable. First, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney ruled, Scott was not a citizen and could therefore not sue in the federal courts. ("They have no rights" are the words that echo down the halls of history from his ruling.) If that were true—and, literally, it was—Taney should have said nothing more. But he did not stop. He went on to say that the Northwest Ordinance, the Missouri Compromise, and anything else which had ever outlawed slavery in any territories belonging to the United States were all unconstitutional because they deprived citizens of their property without due process of law.

The pro-slavery South celebrated. The increasingly anti-slavery North refused even to acknowledge the legitimacy of the "decision" in the Dred Scott case, noting, accurately, that everything Scott had said after ruling that Scott was not a citizen and could not sue was obiter dicta, after the decision, thus merely his opinion and not binding. (It was also noted, and true, that all nine justices actually wrote their own opinion.) In short, the Supreme Court had not resolved the dilemma, but merely made it worse.

One of the reasons the country wanted so desperately to stop fighting over the slavery expansion issue was because it did not want to disturb the basic economic prosperity it was enjoying. Ominously, that prosperity came to a halt in the Panic of 1857. Not surprisingly, even the depression accentuated the sectional controversy, for the South practically escaped the hard times while the North blamed them on the South's control of the government and its general argumentativeness and divisiveness.

The mid-term Congressional elections of 1858 showed clearly just how far the division had advanced—and assured that it would advance even further. Southerners overwhelmingly voted for radicals who were ready to secede at the drop of a hat, while northerners overwhelmingly voted for Republicans, who actually gained control of the House of Representatives, and that only four years after they had come into existence. Much attention also focussed on Abraham Lincoln's Republican challenge to incumbent Democrat Stephen A. Douglas for the US Senate seat in Illinois. Lincoln lost the election, but gained the publicity necessary to make him the Republicans' successful presidential candidate two years later.

In the inexorable march of events toward civil war, 1859 featured John Brown's raid. Brown was a radical abolitionist, some would want to say a fanatic. He and his small band of followers, including several of his sons, had been involved in the violence in Kansas a few years before. Now he quietly secured some abolitionist financial support for an incredible venture: a raid to seize arms and ammunition from a federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and lead the slaves

of the South in a general uprising to secure their freedom. Practically, there were indeed several things wrong with the plan, including the location of Harpers Ferry in far northwestern Virginia, a mountainous region with few slaves. Obviously, the federal government could hardly smile benevolently on Brown's activities regardless of how high his motives might be. When he seized the arsenal, US army troops—led, ironically, by Robert E. Lee, soon to be the South's greatest general in the Civil War—seized him. He was brought to trial for treason, convicted, and hanged. But his story does not end there. Brown realized he was worth more dead than alive to his cause, the destruction of slavery, and he was willing to pay the price. Those who emphasize his impractical plans, possible mental instability, and criminal past miss this fundamental point. A short time later, Union troops were marching into battle singing "John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on." Indeed it did. Indeed it does. If you compiled a list of the top ten persons who contributed to the end of slavery in America, John Brown's name would have to be close to the top of the list.

In the North, Brown was considered a martyr; in the South, he was vilified. Thus his activities just became the latest of a series of events deepening the division between North and South. With things having reached this feverish pitch, the presidential election of 1860 was held. It is a complicated and important one. The Democrats split, the regular majority nominating Douglas on a platform of popular sovereignty, the radical southerners holding their own convention and nominating John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky on a platform calling for federal protection of slavery in all the territories (a la the Dred Scott decision). The Democrats had thus virtually assured the election of the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, who emphasized his party's opposition to any further expansion of slavery. There was a "compromise" party in the election also. Calling themselves the Constitutional Union Party, they said the Constitution was their only platform and preservation of the Union their only goal. That was nice, but perhaps unrealistic, and the fact that they carried only three states seems to indicate that the generation inclined to compromise solutions had died out. Breckenridge got few votes in the North, Lincoln none in the South. But Lincoln's 40% of the popular vote was enough to secure him a majority of the electoral votes, so he was the clear, if minority, winner.

Radical southerners had threatened to secede if a "Black Republican" were elected to the presidency. Now the question was whether they meant it. Probably a majority of southerners were against immediate secession, but a well-organized minority pushed it through, first in South Carolina, then within two months in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Representatives of those seven states met in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 8, 1861, a month before Lincoln was even inaugurated, and formed the so-called Confederate States of America, with Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as their President.

Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune may have expressed northern public opinion best when he wrote that whether secession was legal or not, it was not worth a war. A number of last-minute efforts at compromise broke down. Lincoln's inaugural address made his position clear. Secession, he said, was unconstitutional. Thus, those attempting it were in rebellion against the government. His oath of office had just bound him to uphold the Constitution, and he would do so; the rebellion must be put down. "A house divided against itself cannot stand," Lincoln had said in a famous earlier speech. "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other."

A first move of the seceding states was to seize federal properties within their borders. When South Carolina did so with Fort Sumter, in the harbor at Charleston, in April of 1861, the first shots of the Civil War were fired.

Lincoln issued a call for volunteers to put down the rebellion; interestingly, he thought it would only take ninety days. States that had been holding back were now forced to choose. Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas chose the Confederacy, completing its eleven states. (Several states which did have slavery remained loyal: Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky.)

A brief comparison of the two sides seems in order. Not surprisingly, virtually all the advantages seemed to be in favor of the Union. The South's eleven states were doubled by the North. More significantly, the North's population was almost double that of the South as well—and it should not be forgotten that almost 4,000,000 of the South's 12,000,000 people were slaves, who could hardly be expected to fight for their own continued enslavement. The North had almost 90% of the manufacturing, two-and-a-half times more railroad mileage, practically all the military supplies and enlisted men, and probably three-fourths of the officers. The South did have a higher percentage of high-ranking officers, because of the southern tradition of the military as one respectable profession for southern gentlemen. And they were fighting a defensive war—that meant they were familiar with the territory and had short supply lines. They hoped for foreign assistance for their cause. And perhaps most of all they felt they were fighting to defend not only their homes but their way of life. If the North will just leave them alone, they have won. The North, on the other hand, to win, had to really go down south and win, and they had to be motivated to do so by some vague philosophical ideal, whether saving the union or freeing the slaves.

As usual, the military details of the war will not receive much emphasis here. In the early stages of the war, the South's advantages were most noticeable, then it settled into a long stalemate. But gradually the North's advantages, especially manpower, told the tale. The two major turning point battles were Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania, the eastern theater of the war, when the Union repulsed the Confederacy's sole attempt to invade northern territory, and Vicksburg, in Mississippi, the western theater of the war, when the Union drove a wedge into the heart of the Confederacy, so to speak, and gained control of the all-important Mississippi River. Ironically, in a war that was fought in part to preserve the United States as it had been founded by the Declaration of Independence, both battles reached their culmination in 1863 on July 4! By the spring of 1865, the South was drained of men, supplies, and morale. Her forces totaled some 200,000, the North's more than 2,000,000 (with another 1,000,000 trained reserves ready if needed). In April, almost exactly four years after Fort Sumter, General Robert E. Lee surrendered Confederate forces to US forces led by the appropriately-initialled General U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia. The Civil War was over.

But to deal with it so briefly does not do it justice. Its impact was incredible—politically, economically, psychically. And in terms of deaths: approximately 620,000 died, more than America has lost in all of its other wars together from the Revolution to the present. Many would claim this is another place where fiction can capture the essence of the event better than the facts and numbers of history; try Stephen Crane's powerful novel of a young recruit, *The Red Badge of Courage.*

A few words need to be added about its impact on slavery and African American life as well. Blacks participated in the war extensively. By the end, some 200,000 Union troops were black, a percentage out of all proportion to their numbers in the population. Despite great discrimination

in pay, uniforms, equipment, food, etc.—including the requirement that they fight in separate units with the only whites being their officers—African Americans performed nobly. Their desertion rate was lower, their award rate higher. Again we need to be reminded that in a very real sense blacks took their freedom, or at least helped take it, rather than having it given to them. At some level they knew what was at stake. Leading black abolitionist Frederick Douglass served as an advisor on race to President Lincoln during the war, and as a recruiter of black troops; he knew that if you put a black man in the uniform of the US army, slavery could not survive. Abolition of slavery was the truly revolutionary aspect of the American Civil War, revolutionary among other ways in the sense that it was a massive extension of the ideals of the Revolution. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did not end it completely—indeed, Lincoln made clear that his primary goal was preservation of the union, and he came only slowly and with some reluctance to the position that the war must end slavery—but the 13th amendment to the Constitution did. The 14th and 15th amendments are also a part of the Reconstruction program. The 14th defined citizenship to include all persons born or naturalized in the US, provided proportional loss of congressional representation for any state that denied suffrage to any of its male citizens, disqualified prewar officeholders who supported the Confederacy from state or national office, and repudiated the Confederate debt. The 15th prohibited the denial of suffrage because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

It might be argued, politically, that the Civil War marked the emergence of the United States of America as a nation. Prior to the war, one cannot help but notice, it was common to refer to "the United States" in the plural: "The United States are . . . ." Ever since the Civil War, it has been the singular: "The United States is . . . ."

Psychically, what can you say? Henry Clay, "The Great Compromiser," perhaps knew what he was doing in trying to prevent civil war; when it came, seven of his grandsons fought in it—four for the Union, three for the Confederacy. It was, literally, a "brothers' war," especially in border states like Kentucky. For many years, there was not even agreement on what to call it. The US government's massive documentary collection is called Official Records of the War of the Rebellion. Obviously, that doesn't please many southerners, who tended to prefer the "War for Southern Independence." For a while, "War Between the States" was fashionable. Most seem now to settle for simply "The Civil War."

Economically, the greater amount of the devastation, of course, was in the South. Which leads us to a brief consideration of those twelve difficult and controversial years following the war, 1865-1877, the so-called Reconstruction. In one sense, it is aptly named, for much rebuilding, both politically and economically, had to take place. In another major sense, it is a misnomer, for no one is really talking about restoring exactly the former situation. Slavery is clearly gone, for example, and that alone means that revolutionary changes must occur politically, economically, and socially. In short, the prostrate, impoverished condition of the South determined that Reconstruction must provide immediate relief and be economic in nature as well as political; the hatred, frayed nerves, and suspicions on both sides determined that it would likely be emotional rather that rational in nature; and the new freedom of African Americans determined that they would be central to any Reconstruction plans.

The Freedmen's Bureau, established during the war to help blacks with the transition from slavery to freedom, helped a great deal, including relief and education. But the basic failure, not just of the Bureau but of Reconstruction itself, was the failure to get the South's land and labor back together again in a viable arrangement. Or, in the words of radical historian Staughton Lynd, the "fundamental error in Reconstruction policy" was that "it did not give the freedman

land of his own." Without "the economic independence to resist political intimidation, manhood suffrage was inevitably artificial; supported by the presence of Union soldiers, it collapsed when they were withdrawn." That quotation mentions two additional important points: Blacks were given the vote along with their freedom, and US troops occupied the South following the war, in some cases for the entire twelve years of Reconstruction.

Other dominant aspects of the period included the struggle within the North between President and Congress about who should control the Reconstruction process. (The Supreme Court did not play much of a role here; it was pretty effectively sidelined by the radicals.) This conflict became much worse after Lincoln was assassinated and his southern, Democratic, and largely incompetent vice president Andrew Johnson took over. The radicals in Congress impeached him, and conviction failed by only one vote. It is probably fortunate that it did fail, for removing a president for clearly personal and partisan motives would have set a very dangerous precedent indeed. The other major struggle, overlapping in complex ways, was between radicals and moderates about just how harshly the South should be treated. Partly because of the South's apparent unwillingness or inability to accept that they had indeed lost the war—the continued flying of the Confederate flag, the refusal even to accept the reality that slavery was over, the violence against blacks by the Ku Klux Klan and other groups—the radicals basically prevailed. Sadly, perhaps, the real reason may have been a political one rather than one of principle, i. e., the Republican party felt it had to go radical in order to assure its own continued control, for it knew it was a minority party and would be even more so when the southern states became fully functional in the Union again. This latter point is supported by the outcome of the disputed presidential election 1876, when the Republican party, in return for the presidency, agreed, in the so-called Compromise of 1877, to withdraw the last troops of occupation from the South and end Reconstruction. In agreeing to that, they also agreed to leave the former slaves in the control of their former masters. The pleasantness of sectional reconciliation as the last troops withdrew made it easy to forget that the price for it was being paid by the South's 4,000,000 blacks.

We began this chapter with the concept of myth and its relevance for understanding African American history. It seems appropriate that we end it by coming back to that concept to take a look at three destructive myths of Reconstruction that long survived, especially in the South. The first myth: Blacks showed themselves incapable and unworthy of first-class citizenship. This is, of course, just an updating of the myth of black inferiority that underlay slavery itself. It does not even hold up in terms of the basic facts of Reconstruction, for the state governments in which blacks played a major role (along with northern "Carpetbaggers" and southern "Scalawags") actually accomplished a great deal, especially in terms of relief, education, and suffrage. The saddest thing was the acceptance of the myth even in the North, so that thirty years after the Civil War the South's system of disfranchisement, segregation, and violence against blacks was being almost taken for granted. Even the Supreme Court drifted along, in its infamous Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896, which established the "separate but equal" doctrine (that was to be reversed by the Court in 1954 in Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka County, Kansas).

The second Reconstruction myth is the one about the Ku Klux Klan, which holds with equal invalidity that the KKK was a bunch of good guys and that they were crucial in throwing off the cruel yoke of radical Republican Reconstruction. Not many of us, surely, need to be convinced that terrorism and violence are not a good thing. Radical Republican Reconstruction was not cruel and harsh to the South as compared with the postwar period in virtually any other civil war

in history; one might make the case more readily that its only fault was that it did not go far enough in providing black equality, thus necessitating a "Second Reconstruction," which the civil rights movement beginning in the 1950s is sometimes called. And the KKK and other such terrorist organizations did not really play all that important a role in ending Reconstruction anyway, being rather effectively curbed by a series of federal government "enforcement acts" during the period; it's just that if you throw a white sheet over your head and terrorize people, it will get a lot of attention, and might give some the impression that it played a more prominent role than it really did.

The third and final myth is the myth of southern suffering during Reconstruction. Southern politicians from that day to this, including such a well-known national figure as Alabama governor and 1968 independent presidential candidate George C. Wallace, have built careers on acceptance as truth of this (and the other) Reconstruction myths. "Oh, we just suffered so long and hard at the hands of you damned Yankees." We have already noted the minimal cruelty and harshness of Reconstruction. We should add that most of the South's suffering was not the result of Reconstruction, but rather the continuing result of the devastation of the war—a war, arguably, provoked by the South. Recovery, as measured for example by the major economic factor of the South's cotton crop, was surprisingly rapid, with the cotton crop already back up to its pre-war high by 1871. And there was, of course, no great blood purge of the so-called Confederacy's leaders as one might expect for the losing side in a civil war.

Acceptance of myths, defined as we have done here as false beliefs about the past, has a verifiably destructive effect. These from Reconstruction have been used to keep blacks "in their place," to glorify violence, and to provide excuses for the South's backwardness in education, industry, and other areas.

CHAPTER SIX
TOWARD THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: POLITICS, ECONOMICS, AND DIPLOMACY, 1877–1896

Can you name an American president between Abraham Lincoln (1861-1865) and Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909)? No? It's probably not just your ignorance. They were mostly mediocrities, like James A. Garfield or Benjamin Harrison, or worse, like U. S. Grant. Alan Brinkley, in one of the better surveys of American history, *The Unfinished Nation,* wrote that the government during much of this period was "ill equipped to deal with the new challenges confronting it." The political system, in the face of "unprecedented dilemmas," "responded with apparent passivity and confusion," and the "issues with which it was concerned generally had little to do with the nation's most important problems." Further:

> Rather than taking active leadership of America's dramatic transformation, the American political system for nearly two decades after the end of Reconstruction (a period often called "the Gilded Age," a phrase used by Mark Twain) was locked in a rigid stalemate—watching the remarkable changes that were occurring in the nation and doing little to affect them. The result was a set of problems and grievances that festered and grew without any natural outlet.

"It was not surprising, under the circumstances," concluded Brinkley, "that in the 1890s the United States entered a period of national crisis."

Look up "gilded" in your dictionary and you will see that it has something to do literally with coating something with gold or a gold-colored substance, and more symbolically with something appearing to be other than it is. Perhaps another analogy is helpful for understanding the era. The great Progressive-era historian Vernon L. Parrington called it a "Great Barbecue"—to which only the very wealthy were invited. Corruption abounded.

But enough of analogies and quotations. Let's be blunt: Politics in the period from the 1860s to the 1890s is a pretty drab scene. Other themes dominate, the "remarkable changes" Brinkley had in mind, especially the twin forces of industrialization and urbanization that were transforming America from the traditional agrarian republic of pre-Civil War days into the giant economic power of the twentieth century. But more of that in the next chapter.

The "heroes" of the era are not the politicians, but the "industrial statesmen" or "robber barons"—it depends on your point of view—such as John D. Rockefeller (oil), Andrew Carnegie (steel), Cornelius Vanderbilt (railroads and shipping), J. Pierpont Morgan (financier), Mark Hanna (diverse financial interests, including groceries, coal and iron, banking, and railroads). The issue is not just whether they were heroes, however. They were the powerful figures of the era, not the presidents and other political figures. Sometimes they literally bought their own politicians. Hanna supposedly told William McKinley in 1896, "Bill, you stay home and keep your mouth shut, and I will buy you the presidency." He did, and he did. More rarely, the industrial giants

chose to go into politics for themselves. Hanna again is a good example, for he entered the US Senate in 1897.

Politicians of the era are mostly second-(or even third-)rate hacks, who make pompous speeches while the special interests maneuver for advantage behind the scenes. Politics, then, seems to be an almost meaningless side-show. Both the major political parties, still the Republican and the Democratic, look to the past. The Republicans prove especially adept (and successful, since Cleveland was the only Democrat of the entire period) at a tactic known as "waving the bloody shirt," i. e., reminding voters that they were the party that saved the union (and freed the slaves, though that was not mentioned quite so prominently), while the Democrats were the party of treason and rebellion. The real issues of the day cut across party lines, and were usually ignored. One almost gets the impression that the Republican party existed solely to oppose the Democrats. And vice versa. Yet, having said all that, we should also acknowledge that party loyalties were strong, party discipline strict, and campaigns fought hard—almost, one is tempted to cynically conclude, as if they really mattered. And they must have done something right, for voter turnout was amazingly high, 82% of the eligible voters participating in the presidential election of 1876, for example, the highest ever. (In recent years, it is usually only just over 50%.)

Having generalized in such a way about the political scene in late-nineteenth century America, we can obviously be forgiven for lingering over it only briefly. U. S. Grant may have been a great general, but he was clearly a terrible president, one of only two almost generally agreed to have been failures in the office. The other was Warren G. Harding in the 1920s. The problem in both cases was that their administrations were rocked by scandal. Still, the people elected Grant in 1868, then re-elected him in 1872. (Waving the bloody shirt?) The popular vote was close enough in 1868, by the way, that one can make the case that the black vote may have been crucial in Grant's victory.

The Grant scandals were becoming generally known by 1876, so the Republicans knew they were in trouble. They won, with another Civil War veteran, Rutherford B. Hayes, but only narrowly, and only by agreeing to the already-referred-to Compromise of 1877.

The administration of Republican Chester A. Arthur (1881-1885) is perhaps worthy of mention because of civil service reform, the Pendleton Act of 1884. It was named for Democratic Senator George H. Pendleton of Ohio, but it passed through the Congress with President Arthur's help. It was a much-delayed response to the excesses of the "spoils system," which had gotten so bad that qualification for office hardly seemed to be a factor. It set up a civil service commission to provide examinations for potential employees. Though it included only a small number of positions at first, it was at least a beginning, and has been expanded over the years.

Grover Cleveland is the only person ever elected to the presidency twice—with someone else in between! That is to say, he won in 1884, lost in 1888, and won again in 1892. He is also the only candidate ever to win the popular vote but lose the electoral vote—in 1888, obviously. (Andrew Jackson, remember, had received both more popular votes and more electoral votes in 1828, only to lose in the House.) And we have already noted that he was the only Democrat in this entire period. But we should also note that it didn't make much difference: He was basically as conservative and pro-big business as the Republicans who preceded and followed him.

Most would agree that the only real excitement on the political scene in this period is provided by the People's Party, commonly referred to as the Populists. They were, among other things, a part of the response to the "crisis" to which Brinkley referred.

To understand the origin of the Populists, we must understand that one of the basic economic problems of late nineteenth-century America was the bind which the country's farmers found themselves in: Almost every year from the Civil War to the beginning of the present century, the prices farmers secured for the goods they produced went down, while the prices they had to pay for the basic goods and services they needed to farm successfully (farm equipment, railroad rates, grain elevator storage rates) went up. Farmers, in short, were one of the many groups who did not necessarily benefit from the much-vaunted "progress" of industrialization.

One of the first organized responses of farmers to their economic woe was the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, commonly called the Grangers. Formed in 1867, they began by providing social occasions for farmers, and encouraging better farming methods, but quickly became a protest organ. They enjoyed some success in politics at the state level in Iowa, Wisconsin, etc., and also deserve a great deal of credit for the passage of the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887 for regulation of railroad rates and abuses, the beginning of the federal government's role in regulating the economy. A few years later, in 1890, that role was broadened to apply to other corporations by the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, but it was to be a long time before any president took these laws seriously. (Most would agree that Theodore Roosevelt was the first, beginning in 1901.)

The Greenback Party of the 1870s and 1880s must be seen in the same context as the Grangers. "Greenbacks" were fiat currency, i. e., paper notes issued without metal backing. Farmers, and others of the debtor class, wanted more of it. The Farmers' Alliances were the next major step toward the People's Party. Beginning in the 1870s, by the 1890s there were two of them, one in the South and one in the North, and though they had achieved some limited political success, they were unable to unite and become a major national force.

Building on this background, the Populists launched their effort at a new national political party in Cincinnati, Ohio, in May of 1891. It was hoped that it would become a national party, but one of its problems was that it remained largely a western phenomenon. It was also hoped that it would become a movement of both farmers and industrial laborers, but it succeeded primarily in drawing farmers. In 1892, the Populists launched their first presidential campaign, with James B. Weaver of Iowa as their standard-bearer. They did not win, obviously. They never did. But there has probably never been a more important platform drawn up by a political party, certainly never by a third party, than the Populist platform of 1892. It summarized, in angry and dramatic language, most of the discontent of the period. It stood for: currency inflation; nationalization of the railroads; the eight-hour day; women's suffrage; a graduated income tax; direct election of US Senators. There was more, but that is enough to illustrate the point. The Populists were condemned as a bunch of wild-eyed, illiterate, radical farmers for supporting those causes. Yet within a few years, the Democrats and Republicans were out-doing each other to bring those things about. Every major part of the Populist platform except nationalization of the railroads became reality.

Perhaps unfortunately, the only part of the Populist agenda which attracted attention in the campaign was the idea of "free silver," i. e., the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen (silver) to one (gold). Thus, the presidential election of 1896 became the "free silver crusade." But the strangest thing is what happened to the Populist party in that campaign. The Democrats stole their big issue from them by supporting free silver, and nominated William Jennings Bryan, a 36-year-old former congressman from Nebraska known for his great oratorical ability who sounded more like a Populist than a traditional Democrat. The Populists endorsed

his candidacy as well, tried to hold onto some sense of identity as a separate party by putting forward their own vice presidential candidate, but were almost forgotten about in the course of the campaign. Even Bryan, clearly feeling he had a better chance as a Democrat, failed to acknowledge Populist support. Thus, we have the incredibly ironic situation of the party which had supplied the issue that the campaign focussed upon, currency reform, being almost totally overlooked in the campaign! In a sense, it didn't matter. McKinley and the Republicans were stronger and better organized. They were also wealthier, outspending the Democrats, according to some estimates, more than sixteen to one, and thus giving new meaning to the "16-to-1 ratio."

The election of 1896 is an important one. In a sense, it marks the end of the nineteenth century. More specifically, the forces of discontent were not large enough, or, more likely, not united enough to prevail. If we take the position that Bryan represented agriculture (and, to a lesser extent, labor), or traditional America, and McKinley represented the new forces of urbanization and industrialization, or modern America, clearly the future belonged to the cities.

A few words about the election's aftermath. Prosperity, which had collapsed twice in this era, in depressions or "panics" of 1873 and 1893, soon returned. The real reasons were new discoveries of gold, including in Alaska, and increased farm prices due to European crop failures, but the Republicans were in a position to take the credit, and obviously did not hesitate to do so. And the Populists? They continued to run candidates until 1912, but they were never again a serious factor in American politics. Still, as already suggested, their principles did live on, taken up by others in the Progressive era of the early twentieth century. The fact that the People's Party never won a national election should not lead us to minimize their contribution to the American political system.

Meanwhile, urban development and industrialization led to the emergence of a new urban working class—with all the benefits and the problems of a new social, economic and political phenomenon. "Big business gave rise to big labor" might be suggested as a truism in American history. Certainly one response, perhaps an inevitable one, of working people to the changes wrought by industrialization and urbanization was a renewed effort to organize. "Renewed" because earlier efforts had indeed been made, some even before the Civil War, but they had never accomplished much. Perhaps because Americans have always liked to think of themselves as a classless society, perhaps because labor unions were considered too European to be appropriate in America, unions have always struggled in America, with opposition coming from both employers and the general public.

But in late nineteenth century America, working people had legitimate complaints: the loss of contact with employers because of the very bigness of business (the depersonalization of the workplace); low wages, long hours, poor working conditions (including unsanitary factories, dangerous machinery, etc.); the use and abuse of women and children in the workplace; and the growing number of immigrants, who were desperate to work for any pay at all, and thus tended to keep wages low. No wonder, then, that efforts to organize labor began with a new intensity just after the Civil War.

There were three major national efforts to organize. The first was the National Labor Union, founded by William Sylvis in 1866, just one year after the war ended. It was a federation of many local labor organizations, and held annual conventions to discuss labor's problems. It advocated the 8-hour day, regulation of factories, arbitration of labor disputes, etc. It may have had as many as half a million members at its peak, but it soon failed, perhaps because its membership was too diverse to hold together (skilled, unskilled, farmers), perhaps because it broad-

ened into social reform, perhaps because its Labor Reform Party made such a bad showing in 1872 as to be embarrassing, but most of all because of the economic collapse known as the Panic of 1873.

During the depression which followed the panic, there was a period of considerable disorder, even violence, in the country and in the labor movement. In the coal fields of eastern Pennsylvania, for example, the Molly Maguires, a secret order of predominantly Irish miners, proved not unwilling to use violence to advance their cause—but the owners showed the willingness also, and a greater capacity, when they called in the Pinkerton detective agency's armed men to put down the workers. The unfortunate result of the crisis was to attach the image of violence in the public mind to all labor activity. The summer of 1877 was a particularly violent one in the country, with a railroad strike in Pennsylvania and West Virginia the most notorious.

The second major effort of labor to organize was dominated by the Knights of Labor under the leadership of Terence V. Powderly from 1878 to 1886. They began as a secret, fraternal order, but went public as a labor union which emphasized the concept of "one big union," i. e., skilled and unskilled all together. If we can measure the need for labor unions by the response of workers to their organization, they were badly needed in America: the Knights soon had an estimated one million members. It has even been suggested that their success led to their failure, in the sense that the organization grew so rapidly and with such diverse membership that it was unprepared and simply could not hold together. But also, after winning a few strikes, they lost a big one in 1886. And the cooperatives they had founded for their members began to fail, some of them in scandal. And they gained a reputation for violence, especially with the famous Haymarket riot in Chicago with which they were not really associated.

For whatever reasons, 1886 was the end of the period of dominance by the Knights of Labor and the beginning of the American Federation of Labor. To show the latter organization's success, it is enough to note that it is still, in 1995, considered the major voice of labor in the United States (though in a different form—it is now the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations, or AFL-CIO). Why did the AFL succeed where other efforts had failed? For one thing, its approach has been from the beginning more conservative. Based essentially on the British trade union model, it has traditionally opposed direct political activity. Samuel Gompers, the AFL's primary leader from 1886 to his death in 1924, didn't make the mistakes made by the earlier organizations. He did not form a political party, he did not form coops, he excluded unskilled workers, he discouraged radicals, etc. The AFL has basically sought a greater share of the profits for labor, through such methods as voting for politicians known to be favorable to their cause, collective bargaining, and, as a last resort, boycotts and strikes.

The 1890s, like the 1870s, were a difficult period for labor. Once again, there was depression and disorder. Two strikes were especially prominent: the Homestead Strike against the Carnegie Steel Company, which ended in violence involving the Pinkerton agency again, and the breaking of the strike after six months and ten deaths; and the Pullman strike against the Pullman Palace Car Company which manufactured sleeping cars for trains (now known as Pullman cars). The Pullman strike/boycott spread across the country. Attorney-General Richard Olney secured an injunction against the strikers under the provisions of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act; Eugene V. Debs, president of the American Railway Union (which started the strike in response to the company's layoffs, wage cuts, and refusal to accept arbitration), was one of those imprisoned for violating the injunction, and emerged from prison to become one of America's leading socialists. President Cleveland sent in federal troops to restore order, leading to the first shots being

fired by government forces against American workers and to much labor antagonism against the government.

Still, despite all the difficulties, it might be suggested that organized labor by the turn of the century was being accepted, if somewhat begrudgingly by many, as a part of the American industrial scene.

The rise of labor, together with the "farmer's revolt," as the Populist movement is sometimes called, is related to yet another phenomenon which helps mark the transition of America from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, i. e., the so-called "closing of the American frontier." The significant role the westward movement of peoples played in American history has already appeared in this narrative. But it was in the census of 1890 that the frontier, defined as a clear-cut line beyond which the density of settlement was less than two people per square mile, was reported to have ended. Young University of Wisconsin historian Frederick Jackson Turner used that to come up with one of the most important essays in American historical writing, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," presented at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 celebrating the 400th anniversary of Columbus' "discovery" of America. Most relevant here, Turner's essay implicitly raised the question: If internal expansion is ended, where will the nation expand? The answer, clearly, was abroad. In short, the closing of the frontier helps lead to American imperial expansion abroad, beginning especially with the Spanish American War of 1898. But that is jumping a bit ahead. Let us look briefly at American diplomatic history, specifically the roots of American imperialism, in the years following the Civil War.

During the Reconstruction years, domestic developments overshadowed foreign affairs, but three things deserve our attention. The French had used America's war with itself as an opportunity to set up the Archduke Maximilian of Austria as Emperor of Mexico. During the war, the US could do little but protest, but after the war, mobilization of an army along the Rio Grande and invocation of the Monroe Doctrine led Napoleon III to withdraw his forces from Mexico. This left the unfortunate Maximilian in the hands of the Mexicans, who quickly overthrew his regime, captured him, and executed him. The incident is generally considered a diplomatic success for the US, and helps to establish some legitimacy for the Monroe Doctrine.

In 1867, Secretary of State William H. Seward was largely responsible for the purchase of Alaska from Russia. Few realized its significance at the time, and it was widely regarded as a waste (of $7,200,000, a paltry sum by later standards), referred to as "Seward's Folly" and "Seward's Ice Box."

Finally, in 1871, the Treaty of Washington resolved an outstanding issue in the relationship between England and the US. The problem was that the Americans felt England had violated neutrality during the American Civil War by allowing English shipyards to build ships for the Confederacy. One such ship was the *Alabama;* thus, the sum which America demanded England pay for shipping damages done by these vessels was referred to as "the *Alabama* claims." One effort, by Seward two years earlier, had failed because the British had not apologized. Now, Grant's Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish (one of the few able individuals in Grant's remarkably bad administration), succeeded in getting the matter submitted to international arbitration and in getting Britain to express regret for the whole affair. The US was eventually awarded some $15,000,000.

Isolationism had long been one of the basic underlying principles of American foreign policy; even the Monroe Doctrine had this as one of its major motives. (It is sometimes hard to remember that because of all the interventions it was subsequently used to justify.) But clearly, forces were working to get the US increasingly involved abroad. We have mentioned the closing

of the frontier. With industrialization, the US was over-producing certain commodities; the "logical" place to expand the market was abroad. Also, for the first time in its relatively brief history, America, or at least specific American individuals and corporations, found that excess capital was available for investment abroad. In Hawaii, Venezuela, and Cuba, specific events led toward a further move away from isolationism and toward imperialism.

American traders, whalers, and missionaries had begun to move into Hawaii early in the nineteenth century. Their descendants were now a powerful element there. From the 1840s on, the US found ways to make it clear that no other power should become interested in Hawaii. By 1875, it almost appeared the US was already thinking of Hawaii as part of her territory, for a reciprocal trade treaty of that year allowed Hawaiian sugar free entry into the US market. Even more ominously, in 1887 the US secured from Hawaii the exclusive right to build a fortified base at Pearl Harbor. Finally, in 1893, a revolution, led largely by Americans, established a republic in Hawaii and asked for annexation to the US. President Cleveland opposed it, and managed to hold it up. But this was the beginning, not the end.

In Venezuela, the problem was a boundary dispute between that country and next-door British Guiana, a boundary dispute that simmered for a long time, then flared up openly when gold was discovered in the disputed area. When the US recommended arbitration, and Britain refused, Secretary of State Richard Olney issued a statement sometimes referred to as the "Olney Corollary." The US was "practically sovereign in this hemisphere," he stated as a general principle—though some must have wondered where he got such an idea. Specifically, he went on to say that any advance of the British Guianan boundary at Venezuela's expense would "greatly embarrass the future relations between this country and Great Britain." Britain, preoccupied with imperial crises elsewhere that seemed more important and desiring a friendly relationship with the US, agreed to arbitration—then got most of the territory she claimed from the arbitration process anyway!

This is perhaps a minor episode in the overall history of American foreign policy, but it is a revealing one in looking at the origins of American imperialism. The US evidenced an attitude common to imperialistic powers, for though it might be argued she was defending Venezuela against Britain, the fact is the weaker Venezuela was hardly consulted during the entire ugly episode. Calling Olney's message the "Olney Corollary" suggests it was corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. But noted diplomatic historian Thomas A. Bailey, who is not noted for being remarkably critical of American foreign policy, entitled his treatment of the Olney Corollary "Olney Rewrites Monroe's Doctrine," and concluded appropriately: "To suggest that the United States could insist on the arbitration of any New World dispute growing out of European interference was certainly enough to make Monroe writhe in his grave." But that attitude got worse before it got better, for Theodore Roosevelt was to add his own remarkable corollary to the Monroe Doctrine a few years later.

The third area we mentioned where events illuminate the stirrings of American imperialism was Cuba. But that story relates directly to the Spanish American War of 1898, and is best left to a subsequent chapter.

It is noteworthy, in providing a transition to a treatment of Progressivism and imperialism, that the presidential election of 1900 was a rerun of 1896 in terms of candidates, i. e., McKinley for the Republicans and Bryan for the Democrats. But the issues were very different. In 1896, it was free silver, and more generally the kinds of reform the Progressives were soon to enact. In 1900, it was imperialism.

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1900–1917

When the American Civil War started in 1861, there were but few indications that the US would become the leading industrial power of the globe within forty years. The Civil War and the subsequent Reconstruction Era halted America's first industrial revolution, which centered around light industry based upon agricultural production (textile and food packing) and agricultural machinery. Political issues came to dominate the minds of the people between 1861 and 1877, and the war kept men away from farm and factory. It was the drive westward (which did not stop during the Civil War) and the construction of railroads that restarted economic development in the New World. To distinguish this period from previous and subsequent phases of US economic expansion, the final quarter of the nineteenth century came to be called the era of America's second industrial revolution, and a set of unlikely heroes, the "Captains of Industry," also known as the "Robber Barons," took center stage. Spectacular economic growth brought many changes to America, and Progressivism, an over-arching reform movement with a strong moral overtone, can hardly be understood without first looking at these developments.

Central to America's new phase of economic development, as indicated earlier, was a revolution in transportation; namely railroad construction. Railroads were not new in America in the 1870s, but it was only then that the transcontinental railroad lines were completed. This meant easier and quicker access to all corners of the country, which helped not only political campaigners, but, perhaps more importantly, created a unified national market for domestic goods. Building thousands of miles of railroad required a huge (and cheap) labor force, raw materials like coal and wood, and industrial products, above all, steel and tools. Construction workers needed food to eat and clothes to wear; railroad building thus became an industry of its own. Added to all that was the necessity to build bridges across the Ohio and Missouri Rivers for the main lines, which called for innovations in engineering, and more steel. The construction of the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City is arguably the best such example, and back in 1883, when it was opened, the press hailed it without much exaggeration as a twentieth century feat. (In fact, it has been suggested that the Chain Bridge in Budapest served as a model for it.)

Thus, the railroad became an integral part of everyday life in America, but it badly needed improvements in terms of both safety and comfort. Air brakes, the invention of one of the most creative minds of the period, George M. Westinghouse, were introduced in the late 1860s, and telegraph lines followed the railroads everywhere. Sleeping and dining cars (George M. Pullman) were also introduced, and the present-day time zone system was applied to help create usable timetables. People like Pullman and Westinghouse, as well as James J. Hill of Great Northern and Cornelius Vanderbilt of New York Central Lines, came to be the symbols of this golden age of railroad construction in America.

The introduction of the Bessemer process and other related innovations helped cut the price of steel by some 90% and thus provided the perfect raw material for American industry and infrastructure. Steel was used in making railroad engines, cars and tracks, in building bridges

and skyscrapers; even the first motorbikes, automobiles and planes were made of steel. Coal and iron ore were found in abundance in the Great Lakes region and the Alleghenies. Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, and Birmingham, Alabama became centers of steel production, and millions of jobs became available. Steel production in America was identified with one man: Andrew Carnegie. His US Steel Co., founded in 1901, controlled three fifths of America's steel production, and made him one of the richest Americans ever. Carnegie himself was a self-made man, and later in his life he gave freely for humanitarian purposes (some $350m). His best-known venture was the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which, among many other projects, completed the most detailed survey of the First World War. The Republican politician Elihu Root, formerly Secretary of War and State under Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt, was elected President of the Endowment and, receiving the highest possible honor for his services, he became America's second Nobel Peace Prize winner (after the trigger-happy Theodore Roosevelt, of all people) in 1912.

Oil production also became big business after the 1860s. Then, oil was used primarily for producing artificial fertilizers for agriculture, and plastics. As for the car industry, one may say that oil lay the foundations of America's third industrial revolution (the 1920s), in which internal combustion engine driven cars played a major part. The captain of the oil industry was the Cleveland merchant John D. Rockefeller, who matched Carnegie's methods, success and philanthropy. His Standard Oil Co., first of Ohio then of New Jersey, became open prey for anti-trust legislators and investigative journalists alike.

Frantic business activity and the concentration of capital inevitably led to rapid developments in the banking world as well. The mogul of American bankers was arguably the best known Robber Baron, J. P. Morgan of New York City. After taking control of Drexel, Morgan and Co. in 1895 (and reorganizing it as J. P. Morgan and Co.) he worked on the concentration of other branches of industry. By the turn of the century he had "Morganized" (i.e., merged) one third of the railways and in 1901 he supervised the creation of US Steel Co., too. Until his death in 1913, Morgan was among the most influential Americans of his time, both at home and abroad.

Added to these developments was an electronic revolution, triggered by the realization (Westinghouse again) that the direct electric current, if turned alternating, can be transported at a very low cost over long distances. Telegraph lines spread all over the country like wildfire and Western Union came to dominate 80% of the market. Another major advancement in communication was Alexander Graham Bell's invention, the telephone (1876), which was eventually bought up by IT&T. The first long distance service was started as early as 1884 along the East Coast. But the center of this spectacular electronic revolution was Thomas Alva Edison's "invention factory" at Menlo Park, New Jersey. Edison's most important inventions included the electric light bulb, the storage battery, the phonograph and the motion picture projector, none of which require introduction. The first electric motors (designed by Nikola Tesla, an immigrant from Hungary), streetcars, and elevators were also constructed during the 1880s.

Such sweeping changes in the economy transformed everyday life and society once and for all. Arguably the most significant development was rapid urbanization: the fact that in 1860 every sixth American while in 1920 every second lived in the cities speaks for itself. Central to this urbanization process was the emergence of an urban working class, composed mostly of so-called "new immigrants." Between the end of the Civil War and the outbreak of the First World War some 26 million immigrants entered the US. But unlike the earlier "old immigrants" from Northern Europe, Germany and Britain, these people came from the poorer parts of East and Central Europe, had strikingly different values, led a life of their own, and often viewed the

US as an economic springboard rather than their new homeland. Another wave of immigrants arrived from the Far East and faced the very same problems—but perhaps in an even more striking way. New immigrants took the meanest jobs, were discriminated against, and became targets of verbal and sometimes of physical abuse. Clearly, racial preferences (WASP, i.e., White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant values) were more important than the guidelines set out by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, or Emma Lazarus' words on the foot of the Statue of Liberty:

> ... "Give me your, tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
> Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
> I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Ethnic neighborhoods mushroomed; according to the historian Maldwyn A. Jones, by 1900 "New York had more Italians than Naples, more Germans than Hamburg, twice as many Irish as Dublin, and more Jews than the whole of Western Europe."

The massive concentration of people in urban areas boosted sales and advertising, and the first department and mail order stores, many of which still exist (Woolworth's, Montgomery Ward, Sears and Roebuck, Macy's, etc.), were founded in this period. Various forms of entertainment ranging from the theater through the movies to professional sports all found huge audiences among urban dwellers. By the turn of the century some 2,000 daily and over 15,000 weekly newspapers were published in America: the New World had more press than the rest of the world combined.

But all was not well in America. The whole system had to be adjusted to the realities and needs of a twentieth century industrial society, and the changes outlined above not only made possible but actually called for sweeping reforms. The reform movements which emerged after 1900 came to be called collectively Progressivism, and tried to solve the problems of America's transition from being an agrarian to an urban-industrial democracy. Individuals, social groups, states, and eventually even the federal government got involved in this Progressive movement, which culminated in President Wilson's New Freedom program, and was cut short by the World War. The conflicts of early twentieth century America reflected the complex nature of the country and its society: the classic capitalist-against-worker conflict was complemented with the issues of organized and child labor, woman suffrage, the treatment of immigrants, and racial strife. The Progressive movement was as diverse as the challenges it faced, but its leaders shared the desire to make the US a better place to live.

But before we introduce the various critics of turn-of-the-century industrial America and their plans to improve the situation, it is perhaps not entirely out of place here to have a brief look at its defenders. The leading political philosophy of the age was Social Darwinism. The British philosopher Herbert Spencer applied Darwin's theory of evolution to society and described it as a living organism undergoing constant changes. Reigning supreme in human society, according to Spencer, was the principle of "the survival of the fittest," and the government had no right to interfere with the life of the people. It was the Yale sociologist William Graham Sumner who introduced the two basic concepts of Social Darwinism, namely laissez faire and natural selection, to Americans. He described millionaires as the "naturally selected agents of society" destined to bring about order and prosperity not only for themselves but for all. Sumner saw no problems

with the concentration of capital and industry, he simply claimed that the Robber Barons were good enough to make it. Carnegie, Morgan and Rockefeller had similar views. They considered their wealth a just reward for their efforts and engaged in various philanthropic activities to improve the position of others. They viewed the concentration of industry as a necessity, the chief prerequisite of bringing about order. It is easy to see that fascination with order, which came to be one of the main features of twentieth century American liberal capitalism, was a natural development. Order and evolution rather than chaos and revolution were the key to welfare and unhindered economic expansion, both at home and abroad.

However, a few benevolent millionaires and impressive philosophical ideas were not enough to make the US a better place to live. Indicative of this was the fact that according to Horatio Alger one needed "luck and pluck" to rise "to the pinnacle of society." Being good enough to make it was not sufficient, one also needed luck; this major devaluation of the American Dream thus challenged the traditional myth of classlessness and upward social mobility. Thus, towards the end of the Reconstruction, just when the US economy was taking off, the first dissenting voices were also heard: Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1879) is generally seen as the first such piece. Edward Bellamy in one of the best-known American utopian novels, *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888), called for an equal distribution of wealth in a kind of cooperative order which ruled out competition (i.e., laissez faire). An even more direct attack on the new industrial elite of the country was the Norwegian immigrant Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), in which he described millionaires as parasites abusing the majority of the people.

The most successful individual critics of urban-industrial capitalism were a group of investigative journalists and writers, collectively known as the Muckrakers. So named by Teddy Roosevelt, these people reported on the dismal conditions of the slums and exposed the shameful practices of the big companies. Their biggest breakthrough was a series of articles in the 1902 issues of *McClure's,* a leading New York monthly. Lincoln Steffens described life in the slums in "The Shame of the Cities," Ida M. Tarbell disclosed Rockefeller's exploits in "The History of Standard Oil Company," and Ray Stannard Baker, later President Wilson's chief-of-press at the Paris Peace Conference, put the "Railroads on Trial." Another major muckraking success was Upton Sinclair's novel, *The Jungle* (1905; hence the image of the urban jungle). Sinclair described life and the lack of even basic sanitation in the Chicago slaughterhouses, directly provoking federal legislation to improve the situation. It appears that most individual critics of American capitalism considered government intervention through reforms necessary.

This was also the case with pressure groups. Arthur S. Link, one of the leading authorities on Progressivism, claims that the Progressive era saw pressure groups replacing the traditional parties. What he means by this is that particular interests may be too small or controversial for one of the two main parties to include in their platforms. Special interest (or pressure) groups were there to raise these issues in the state and federal legislatures. Furthermore, seeing that neither the people nor the government were able to sort out the problems of everyday life, for the first and perhaps the only time ever in American history, the church began to claim an active part in reform and in shaping the future of the country. The chief representatives of this so-called Social Gospel movement were Walter Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden and George D. Herron. Individual, church and pressure group activity indicated that the states and even the federal government would sooner or later have to take sides in the question of reform.

The state of Wisconsin, "the laboratory of democracy" (as TR called it), under the governorship of Robert M. LaFollette between 1900 and 1906, offers a case study of Progressivism on

the state level. LaFollette introduced the "Wisconsin idea" of consulting University of Wisconsin experts on various social, economic and political issues before making decisions. He passed legislation regulating railroads, banks and insurance companies, fixed the maximum working hours for women and children, restricted lobbying, curbed the trusts and introduced income taxes. Similar reforms took place in many other states as different as California (under Hiram W. Johnson), Oregon (under William S. U'Ren) and New Jersey (under Woodrow Wilson); a clear indication that many politicians seriously meant business.

This became even more apparent when the federal government joined the reform movement, and the three Progressive presidents, Theodore Roosevelt (1901-09), William Howard Taft (1909–13) and Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1913-21) transformed the economic, social and political life of the country. What makes Progressivism an amazing thing is that it would be difficult to imagine three more different characters: Roosevelt was an East Coast aristocrat, adventurer, cowboy, warrior and hunter, who eventually won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating peace between Russia and Japan in 1906; Taft was a professional lawyer, cool and calculating; Wilson was a university professor turned politician, a moral idealist.

When the newly reelected president, William McKinley was assassinated in 1901, his Vice President, Theodore Roosevelt, became the 26th chief executive of the US. TR was the first truly Progressive president, and he carried out a set of reforms affecting several aspects of everyday life. One of his early successes was railway regulation, something that had been in the air for quite some time. Besides setting strict rules for the business, TR also legalized the time-zone system, thus laying the foundations of a modern railroad system. First among the presidents, he also vigorously promoted the conservation of natural resources and helped develop the national park project. Upton Sinclair's revelations in The Jungle must have impressed him greatly because he also initiated sanitary and health care legislation (Pure Food and Drug Act, Meat Packing Act). Through non-legislative activity, TR also displayed a genuine concern for the ordinary man as well as for the future of the country. In an atmosphere apparently hostile towards economic concentration, he used the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act (which declared all trusts illegal) to break up ("bust" was the word back then) forty-odd trusts. On the other hand, during the 1907 banking crisis he teamed up with the Robber Baron J.P. Morgan; and the two of them worked out a program to save Wall Street. It appears that for the benefit of his country TR was willing to make serious concessions. (A study of his Far Eastern policy offers a similar conclusion.)

In 1908, TR named the Republican lawyer of national fame, William Howard Taft, to be his successor. With no serious Democratic contender in sight (William Jennings Bryan was trying it for the fourth time), Taft easily won, and began to apply his legalistic views to America. A superficial look at Taft's four years in office might suggest a relatively poor record, especially in terms of legislation, but this was not the case. Taft continued TR's trust-busting activity and doubled his mentor's score. In response to growing labor unrest, he created the Department of Labor and the Federal Children's Bureau. He granted federal employees a 48-hour working week and responded to one of the most serious immigrant-related problems by introducing mine-safety legislation. His chief achievements, however, were the passing and ratification of two Amendments to the Constitution. The 16th amendment rearranged federal revenues by introducing the more just method of taxation according to income. Even more importantly, the passing of the 17th amendment proved to be one of the greatest victories of the entire Progressive Era: it ruled for the direct election of US Senators. The old elitist Hamiltonian idea of "wise men"

ruling the country thus received a fatal blow; the democratization of American politics finally spread from the municipal and state to the federal level.

But Taft also had his own problems. According to the Pulitzer Prize winning American humorist, Dave Barry: "The year 1908 saw the election of the first U.S. president to successfully weigh more than three hundred pounds, William Howard Taft, who ran on a platform of reinforced concrete . . . . " He was scorned by his critics for being "fat, lazy and reactionary," the last of which was way off the mark. However, his apparent conservatism disappointed many Progressive Republicans. He caused more trouble in the GOP (Grand Old Party, a nickname for the Republicans) ranks by defending his apparently corrupt Secretary of the Interior, Richard A. Ballinger, and by firing TR's close friend, Gifford Pinchot, who had been Chief Forester until then and who charged Ballinger with misconduct. This event largely contributed to the break between Taft and Roosevelt, which was soon to have serious consequences. Perhaps surprisingly, Taft was pretty confident about the impending 1912 election. This election, however, proved to be more complex than Taft had hoped it would be. In this campaign Taft, Roosevelt and Wilson all ran for president, and the crucial issue was how to complete the Progressive transformation of the country. Taft, the incumbent, was rather complacent and did little to outline a program for the next four years. When he secured the Republican nomination, TR walked out on the Convention and established his own Progressive (Bull Moose) Party. Central to his "New Nationalism" program was a revised attitude towards big business (perhaps the result of his 1907 cooperation with Morgan, who knows): he accepted economic concentration but wanted to draw trusts under federal control. The idea was that not trusts but the federal government would provide order. The election, with the Republicans clearly split between Taft and TR, was eventually won by Thomas Woodrow Wilson, who promised a "New Freedom" to his fellow Americans. Little did people suspect that Wilson would turn out to be one of the formative presidents not only of his age but of the entire twentieth century, albeit more because of his foreign than for his domestic policies.

Wilson, a southerner, grew up during the Civil War and the Reconstruction and had a successful academic career in political science, which took him eventually to one of the most prominent American universities, Princeton. After teaching there for some time, he was elected President of the university and his achievements gave New Jersey Democrats the idea to nominate him for governorship of the state. Wilson's amazing political career thus started with a two-year term as Governor of New Jersey, between 1910 and 1912. In 1912, after 46 ballots he won the Democratic nomination, defeating Champ Clark, Speaker of the House of Representatives, who enjoyed the full support of the (in)famous press magnate William Randolph Hearst. In his New Freedom program Wilson promised an all-out showdown with the trusts as well as a reform package that would reshape the entire socio-economic structure of his beloved country.

After his inauguration, Wilson took Congress straight on and forced through several important pieces of legislation. The first of these was the Underwood (-Simmons) Tariff Act, which lowered protective tariffs by as much as one third on average. But there was much more to the Underwood Tariff than mere reduction of duties. In fact, on goods the US was also producing tariffs were actually raised. Thus, Wilson improved America's trading position in two ways, underlying one of his 1913 statements, that in foreign trade "government and business must be associated." On the one hand, he made foreign trade easier by cutting import duties, but, at the same time, he carefully protected American industry from foreign competition at home. This was a clear message to big business that the all-out war on trusts was mere rhetoric and not policy. To make up for lost federal revenues, the same act introduced income tax on a national

basis. Wilson's next piece of legislation, by no means less significant, was the Federal Reserve Act of 1913. The FRA created twelve regional Federal Reserve Banks to control banking activities outside Wall Street and to solve the problem of issuing a sufficient amount of federal money. The establishment of the Federal Reserve Board, coordinating the twelve banks, also suggests the policy of drawing banking under at least some federal control. Wilson's more relaxed attitude toward big business became apparent with the passing of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act in October 1914. It outlawed certain "unfair trade practices" but offered little more than the Sherman Act in terms of trust regulation. At the same time, however, it declared trade unionist and picketing activities legal, which led Samuel Gompers, the leader of AFL, to hail the act—with some exaggeration—as the "Magna Carta of Labor." The Clayton Anti-Trust Act, especially the section banning interlocking directorates of industrial firms with a $1m plus capital, shows that Wilson, like TR, came to consider big business acceptable (money talks, you know) but wanted to draw it under federal control. Similar motives can be detected behind the Federal Trade Commission Act, which created a Federal Trade Commission to regulate inter-state trade and advise the trusts on the position of the government on various issues.

By 1915 Wilson had gone as far as he wanted to go. A set of domestic and international developments, however, forced him to abandon his initial reluctance to deal with other issues like child labor, women's rights, and loans for farmers. But since this "Second New Freedom" belongs more to the history of America's war effort than to the Progressive Era, it will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. Of Wilson it must be said that he represented a new presidency: an active chief executive leading his country in domestic, and as we will soon see, in foreign affairs alike. His model was picked up by post-1945 presidents; in this sense, he was the first really modern president of the United States.

Drawing the balance of the Progressive Era is no easy task because of the number of issues at stake. Progressive reform in the US by the turn of the century had become a must, and a group of politicians, senators, governors and presidents alike, well understood this. But reforms tend to go only as far as they are pressed: if one particular issue has strong support, it will go through, if it does not, it will not. Thus, Progressivism dealt with several key issues of the day including the regulation of big business, labor movements, conservation, health care and sanitation, banking, tariffs, etc. However, it failed to take on or solve several equally crucial problems like the attitude towards immigrants, women's rights, and racism. Still, whatever its shortcomings, Progressivism achieved its main goal of adapting the US (more or less) to twentieth century realities. Parallel with this adjustment to twentieth century realities, the US also became active on the foreign policy front: within a couple of decades it abandoned its long established diplomatic tradition of isolationism, became involved first in Latin America, then in the Far East, and eventually in what contemporaries came to call the Great War. These developments are discussed in the following two chapters, starting with a few general thoughts about US foreign policy in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE MAKING OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

Between the 1890s and 1920, the US appeared on the global stage, made a serious attempt to bring about a new world order even at the expense of getting involved in a European great power showdown (eventually escalating into World War I), and then retreated to semi-isolation. This chapter first offers some introductory thoughts about US foreign policy in general, and then discusses the ideological setting and the details of America's entry into global diplomacy. It must be noted that the First World War and the peace treaties ending it are examined in subsequent chapters.

Diplomacy in Europe has long been taken for granted and recognized as a means of maintaining peaceful relations between the various states on the old continent. However, attitudes towards diplomacy in America are quite different. The American Revolution would never have succeeded without direct French and indirect Spanish and Dutch support: to a very large extent, the birth of the US was the result of a favorable diplomatic constellation and the ability of the Founding Fathers to make proper use of it. Diplomacy, however, has certain disadvantages, especially commitments. This was exactly the case with the young republic, too, during the final decade of the eighteenth century. American diplomats worked hard and eventually succeeded in disengaging from these commitments by 1800, so completing America's independence. The nation's first president, George Washington, described what he considered to be the best possible course of action for his country in his farewell address in September 1796:

> The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. . . . Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. . . . Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice? It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it. . . .

Thus, Washington laid down the foundations of American diplomacy for the next century. This American diplomatic tradition of isolationism had two cornerstones: physical (geographical) separation from the political center of the world, Europe, and a stern belief that the new world had been predestined to become a better place than the old one. As early as 1630, John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, declared that America was to become "a

city upon a hill," a model for the rest of the world to follow. Similar ideas were voiced by Thomas Paine in *Common Sense* as well as by Washington in his farewell address.

A strong isolationist impulse did not actually mean the lack of diplomacy on the part of the Americans; simply, US foreign policy remained confined (with a very few exceptions) to the North American continent. After successfully defending American independence in the War of 1812 (but failing to get hold of Canada and Florida), US diplomats focussed on one thing: westward expansion and the removal of European colonizers and Mexico from North America. When justifying westward expansion, Americans coined three phrases which eventually became an integral part of both US foreign policy and rhetoric, but with a meaning only vaguely resembling the original one. Manifest Destiny was a primarily religious, racial, social and political excuse for taking large chunks of Mexican territory, but by the end of the nineteenth century, as a "New Manifest Destiny," it came to be applied to overseas diplomacy as well. The Frontier initially described the dividing line between the wilderness and the civilized world; but in the twentieth century it has been used to describe overseas markets to be conquered. Unlike Manifest Destiny and the Frontier, the Monroe Doctrine, at its very making, was meant to be a foreign policy course aimed at Europe. In his 1823 state of the union address, President James Monroe reiterated the underlying message of Washington's farewell address that the US should stay out of European affairs, but also warned European powers against further colonizing in the Western Hemisphere. Little did Monroe suspect back in 1823 that within three quarters of a century his doctrine would be used to justify the attempts to draw various Latin American countries under US political and economic domination; in other words, to turn Latin America into the first, and still the most important, American sphere of influence. (And in the twentieth century he simply would not have recognized it at all.)

There can be hardly any argument about the fact that the US had no military power to enforce the Monroe Doctrine during the nineteenth century. The historian William R. Keylor (in his impressive *The Twentieth Century World*) lists several cases of nineteenth century military intervention in the Western Hemisphere by Britain, France and Spain, and also points to indirect German economic penetration. He quite rightly argues that the enforcement or suspension of the Monroe Doctrine until the 1890s depended not on Washington, D.C., but on London. It is also obvious that the various European powers were otherwise engaged during the second half of the century; and the absence of any serious attempt to legalize the separation of the Confederacy from the Union in the Civil War by either Britain or any other European great power clearly indicates that the US was not seen as a potential challenger outside the Western Hemisphere. But this European attitude soon proved to be an underestimation of the new world.

America's earlier outlined rapidly unfolding second industrial revolution brought about unprecedented—and one may say even unexpected—economic expansion: American industry grew out its domestic market rather quickly. With the completion of westward expansion (either by the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 or by the final showdown with Native Americans at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1890) the US had to seek new economic frontiers overseas. Obviously, the European great powers were not exceptionally pleased with this new American project, and by the 1890s the makers of US foreign policy faced a twofold task. On the one hand, they had to sell their new expansionist ideas to both Europe and the American people (i.e., to lay a justifiable and reasonable claim to overseas markets) and, on the other hand, they needed strong armed forces to back up these claims.

The single most influential promoter of such diplomacy and expansion was Capt. Alfred Thayer Mahan, who, according to Walter LaFeber, "was a friend of presidents and emperors

because he knew how to use history to justify expansionism and the building of great navies." Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1600–1783* was published in 1890. In it he argued that the US needed to look for markets overseas, and, to carry on that trade, a huge merchant marine. Drawing a parallel, often rather unhistoric, between ancient Rome and the modern world of his time, he also concluded that the US needed an all-powerful navy to protect its merchant ships and naval bases, especially in the Pacific. Actually, by the time Mahan's book was published, "the Great White Fleet that fought the 1898 war [with Spain] and formed the basis of the twentieth-century US Navy" was already under construction, with the friendly assistance of Bethlehem Steel Co. and Andrew Carnegie. Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt were also quick to subscribe to this new line, not least because active foreign policy called for a new, more active presidency—which, if successful, also meant personal prestige.

But simply calling for a powerful US Navy was not enough to sell overseas expansion to the American people; it had to be explained to them in familiar, or semi-familiar terms. Still, stating that US foreign policy worked with a set of catch phrases would be doing injustice to it. What makes American foreign policy in the twentieth century extremely interesting is a peculiar balance between idealism (the sincere desire to make our world a better one) and raw self-interest (of American capitalism and big business). American diplomacy in our century has been based upon these twin considerations more or less balancing each other out, with a religious emphasis until 1919, and without it ever since. The only exception is the Nixon era, when megalomania ruled supreme in the White House. But of that, in the final chapter.

In order to justify America's search for overseas frontiers, the concept of a "New Manifest Destiny" was introduced, which did not speak about Americans' right "to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of [the Americans'] yearly multiplying millions" anymore, but about spreading culture (i.e., American values and goods) outside the US. The catch phrase, "the white man's burden," coming from a poem by Rudyard Kipling, meant practically the same. Civilizing actually was the chief excuse for both European and American colonizers around the turn of the century; it was God's will that white people, especially WASPs (notice here the inclusion of the Germans with Saxon) should teach the less developed peoples of the world morality and religion, and, if necessary, force upon them the best form of government. This WASP superiority complex, racist and arrogant at the same time, thus characterized not only domestic politics, key politicians, even Presidents like TR and Wilson, but also American foreign policy in general.

This civilizing mission concept brings up the issue of imperialism and spheres of influence. The word imperialism carries in itself the Latin word for empire; and for Americans European imperialism meant the conquest of the non-European regions of the world, and their organization into colonies. Americans rejected this method and prided themselves in not doing anything similar. As we will see later, they in fact did something strikingly similar, but did it in a more clever way. Since leading American politicians and makers of public opinion did not describe America's conduct abroad as being imperialist (It would have been shooting themselves in the leg, would it not?), they also rejected the concept of spheres of influence. By definition, a sphere of influence is a region of the world where one great power monopolizes the control of economy and politics, even against the will of those who actually live there. Reading the following account of America's emergence in Latin America and in the Far East, it is difficult not to see twentieth century American diplomacy as imperialist, since its makers played the European sphere of influence game whenever they could.

According to the ever witty Dave Barry, the very "first thing American imperialism noticed when it woke up was Cuba. At the time Cuba technically belonged to Spain, which, . . . in previous confrontations with the United States, had proved to be about as effective, militarily, as a tuna casserole. So it seemed like the ideal time to barge down there and free Cuba from the yoke of Spanish imperialism by placing it under the yoke of U.S. imperialism, the only problem being that at the time the United States did not have what international lawyers refer to . . . as a 'reason.'" Barry's account is on target, but there was more to this conflict which came to be called the Spanish-American War. What actually happened was that a revolt broke out against the Spanish in Cuba, which is some 90 miles off the coast of Florida. Using various excuses, the US got involved in this colonial war of liberation, and completed the removal of Spain from North and Central America. Actually, the US achieved even more than that.

Getting involved in Cuba was a logical step following the navy program started on Mahan's initiative. That navy had to be tested, and the US needed some quick success, a walkover. And where better to get it than practically next door, and against an enemy incapable of defending itself. Furthermore, Cuba was all-important for big business because of her sugar production. (Remember the earlier attempt to get hold of the island?) First, only indirect—non-military—support was provided for the revolutionaries, including extensive news coverage by the Hearst papers. When this did not prove sufficient, the US looked for an excuse, and found it in the explosion on board the US warship Maine, then harbored in Havana. The press immediately blamed it on the Spanish (why would they have provoked the US, one wonders) and President McKinley successfully approached Congress for a declaration of war. (LaFeber contends that an investigation conducted later proved that the explosion was spontaneous, probably caused by the overheated engine of the ship.)

So began the Spanish-American War, which was a military expedition with the purpose of expelling Spain from Cuba. Teddy Roosevelt, later winner of the Nobel Peace Prize if you remember, organized a group of Rough Riders and supposedly played a major part in the American victory. He also sent a toy bear back to his children, which was named Teddy Bear after him. (If you ever get to Stratford upon Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace, try also to check out the world's only Teddy Bear museum there.) The US, following a well-established tradition, went to Paris to make peace: Spain withdrew from Central America, but the US did not effectively annex Cuba. Spain also sold several islands including the Philippines and Puerto Rico, at bargain price, to the US. These islands are in the Pacific, not in the Atlantic, mind you. But of that, later.

The Spanish-American War was America's first war for territory overseas, and represented the first step towards degrading Latin America into a playground for US expansionism. McKinley claimed that it was the Lord Almighty who suggested that he should start the war, and he used the by now familiar religious-civilizing mission concept to justify the armed destruction of the subsequent Philippino resistance. In one of the most embarrassing episodes of American history, Gen. Arthur MacArthur (father of Douglas of World War II and Cold War fame) went to the Philippines supposedly to convert to Christianity a people—who had already been converted by the Spanish. If you check out the Philippines on the map you will immediately see its significance as a springboard to the Far East. But before we turn our attention towards that region, first we must look at some other Latin American adventures of the United States.

The first of these was the acquisition of the Panama Canal. According to the Clayton-Bulwer treaty (1850), the US and Britain would build the canal together and would not fortify it. The significance of the isthmian canal is apparent: it provides a direct and short route between the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, and whoever controls it has quick access to Europe and Africa

on one side and to the Far East on the other. It is hardly surprising that Mahan gave a high preference to this venture, and TR fully agreed. In 1901 Britain agreed to let the US build the canal alone. But Columbia did not, and this was a problem. Luckily, a revolution broke out in the Panamanian section of the country and TR was quick to send in the US Navy to prevent the reunification of the country. The grateful new state of Panama of course approved the American project of the canal and surrendered the required territory, too. Construction of the canal began in 1907 and was completed by 1914.

The Panamanian adventure may have been a well-taken opportunity on TR's part, but the next year he really shocked Latin America with what came to be called the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine:

> It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. . . . Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to an exercise of an international police power. . . . We would interfere with [Latin American affairs] only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations.

The actual content of this powerful statement of US intentions in Latin America, which was formulated in response to a crisis in Santo Domingo in 1904, became apparent within two decades, by which time the US Navy had come to be called State Department troops—a reference to the fact that the appearance of official American representatives in one country or another was almost inevitably followed by armed intervention. Suffice it to say here that TR and Wilson combined for some ten plus military interventions, including an all-out but undeclared war with Mexico in the 1910s.

The first target for overseas economic expansion was naturally Latin America, the closest region, which was also within the Western Hemisphere. Now, as long as Latin American countries played the game of big business, we speak of Dollar Diplomacy. Not playing the game of big business qualified as "chronic wrongdoing," and resulted in military intervention, big stick diplomacy. (The name comes from TR, who is credited with the saying, "Speak softly and carry a big stick, and you will go far.") Dollar diplomacy (economic blackmail) and the big stick became the two major forms of conducting America's foreign affairs in the twentieth century; usually in that order. This is why we will refer to twentieth century American foreign policy as a diplomatic counterrevolution. Further explanation will be provided in the final chapter.

While the events between the Spanish-American war of 1898 and Wilson's Mexican adventure of 1916 transformed Latin America into the first US sphere of influence, American policy makers also set their sights on the Far East. Central to their attention was a country with the single largest (overseas) market yet to be colonized, China. And this is why in the war supposedly fought to free Cuba from the Spanish yoke the US took those islands in the Pacific, and then built the Panama Canal.

China, unlike all other parts of Asia and the whole of Africa, was not colonized by European powers; Britain, France and Russia could only secure exclusive trading rights in territories bordering on their holdings in the Far East. Two latecomers also appeared on the stage: Japan and Germany. It was only after practically all questions were sorted out that the US entered the scene, in 1899. (American contacts with the Far East date back to the 1850s, but a trading treaty with Japan was not followed by further agreements.) Then, Secretary of State John Hay issued his first open door note, which was followed by another one the next year. In that—enjoying full British support, by the way—Hay demanded equal and unhindered access to the China market for all. The open door became a diplomatic "weapon," one which could be, and often has been, called upon to promote economic expansion. Ironically, the US, which based its economic diplomacy on the open door, has had protective tariffs ever since George Washington's presidency!

Besides the open door, China provided the US with yet another key foreign policy concept, that of collective security. In 1900 the Boxer Rebellion took place in China and an international force, including US troops, was used to put it down. The theory of collective security was further developed by Wilson during the war and some of it was realized in the form of the League of Nations. Another but more peaceful way of maintaining international order was through international arbitration. Actually, around the beginning of the twentieth century there was a strong international peace movement. Yet another form of it, the Interparliamentary Union, helped Count Albert Apponyi, one of the leading Hungarian politicians of the time, to a couple of trips to America. There he made several important friends, with TR among them. (Roosevelt actually returned Apponyi's visit in 1910, but their friendship broke up during the Great War.)

The Far East, besides being the target for the American search for economic frontiers overseas, also created serious problems. Chinese and Japanese immigration was met with much ill feeling along the west coast. They were different in many ways, most tragically in the color of their skin. This was more than enough to declare them unwanted, and their great numbers gave rise to such racist concepts as the "yellow peril." According to it, there were way too many "yellow" people in the world and they were seen as a potential political threat. Clearly, their immigration into the US had to be restricted; the first ever federal piece of legislation limiting immigration is actually known as the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882).

Meanwhile in 1905, a revolution broke out in Russia, and Japan, its chief rival for Manchuria, that richest part of China, took full advantage of the situation. The Russo-Japanese war ended with an easy victory for Japan, and TR mediated the peace between the two in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1906. (It was for his efforts in the matter that he was awarded that often mentioned Nobel Peace Prize.) Within two years the US and Japan again sat down to talk, this time about Manchuria and immigration. A deal was struck (the Root-Takahira agreement of 1908), according to which the US would abandon the open door in Manchuria (thus leaving it in the hands of Japan), and in return, Japan would voluntarily cut off overseas migration to the US. By approving the Root-Takahira agreement Roosevelt proved himself a great President. He was willing to surrender some of his principles (personally, he probably would have preferred even fighting Japan) for the benefit of his country and won a concession which helped solve a serious domestic problem.

Taft and Wilson, although for entirely different reasons, paid little attention to Far Eastern problems. Taft authorized American participation in a six-power banking consortium which was to reopen the open door (Dollar Diplomacy without the big stick), but stayed out of all political ventures. Wilson, taking the advice of his first Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, forced

US bankers to pull out of the banking consortium not because he was against the open door but in order to lead the US alone into China. Wilson recognized the 1911 revolution in China and was ready to cooperate with any ruler, democrat or autocrat, who was willing to guarantee stability. Thus, by 1913 America's attitudes towards Latin America were being applied to the Far East. Wilson's pretensions were cut short by the outbreak of the First World War, which diverted his attention from the region. As regards the Far East, for the rest of his tenure of office he had one goal in mind: to keep Japan out of China, which provided the guiding line for his conduct during the war and the Siberian intervention. But of those, later.

While between the 1890s and 1913 much of Latin America was turned into a US sphere of influence and American influence was also rapidly growing in the Far East, the US paid little attention to European developments and practically ignored the Middle East and Africa. Especially interesting was the American attitude towards Europe, which then was undoubtedly the political center of the world. The American diplomatic tradition of isolationism certainly worked towards Europe. Nothing proves this point better than the fact that American ambassadors were appointed in return for party loyalty and financial contributions to election campaigns; qualifications mattered but little. Therefore, neither the State Department nor the Presidents had a clear understanding of what was going on there. And there was a lot going on with the great power combinations shaping up for confrontation. Characteristically, not a single American diplomatic representative in Europe pointed to the possible consequences of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June 1914.

Still, "isolationism" may be misleading when describing early twentieth century American attitudes and policies towards Europe. Americans after all willingly participated in the aforementioned international peace movements, joined the Hague Tribunals and signed treaties of arbitration with several European countries with Austria-Hungary among them. Moreover, TR acted as a troubleshooter in great power conflicts involving colonial matters; his best known contribution was the organization of the Algeciras Conference (1906) solving the so-called First Moroccan Crisis, the details of which should not concern us here. But Algeciras was only one of many such great power conflicts in Europe before World War I, and the American policy of trading with Europe but ignoring its deepening political crisis was soon to cause great anxiety in the White House.

It follows from the above that American diplomacy between the 1890s and 1913 began to take shape: many of its catch phrases (open door, collective security, overseas frontiers, New Manifest Destiny, etc.) were coined and tested in Latin America and in the Far East, while the traditional aversion towards European politics prevailed. This American diplomacy was driven by economic need and missionary spirit. When the World War broke out and found Wilson in the White House, the time had come for the US to take center stage in global politics and try to sort out the problems of the "decadent old world" while securing just (economic) rewards for its effort. But this story belongs to the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE
THE US IN WORLD WAR I

The First World War brought significant changes not only for Europe but also for the United States of America. The map of Europe was completely redrawn, great powers went down the drain, colonial holdings were redistributed, and the first socialist country of the world, Soviet Russia, was also born. Changes in America may seem less spectacular but are equally significant: from an ordinary debtor nation the US turned into the leading economic power of the globe and contributed to peacemaking both in Paris and Washington. On the American side of the Atlantic only the most ardent internationalists hoped for such sweeping changes. Ordinary people and leading politicians were concerned with domestic reform; and if they looked abroad in the summer of 1914 they turned their eyes not towards Europe and the escalating war, but towards the opening of the Panama Canal. American newspapermen of the time claimed that it would be difficult to imagine a more striking contrast between the old world and the new. And they were right.

Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the US, also showed little interest in European affairs; he is reported to have said in early 1913: "It would be an irony of fate if my administration had to deal with foreign problems, for all my preparation has been in domestic matters." Eventually, the US did get involved in the Great War. For that the international situation had to change completely, American business interests had to prompt that step, and the country needed a charismatic President who was able to justify American involvement in the war not only to his own people but to the rest of the world, too. The driving force at the helm of the American war effort was Thomas Woodrow Wilson, who therefore needs some further introduction. His domestic reforms have already been outlined in an earlier chapter; however, he became known worldwide not for his Progressive reforms but for his foreign policies, most notably for his grand design of the League of Nations. It must be remembered that before the First World War foreign policy was a rather unusual claim to fame by any President, while since World War Two it has been commonplace.

Wilson was a deeply religious Protestant (his father was a minister) and believed in his own chosenness. Now this might sound strange to the ordinary reader, but it must be remembered that Protestants believe that everyone, chosen or not, has to work for making the world a better place, in maiorem gloriam dei (i.e., for the greater glory of God). Some are chosen for salvation, others are not. Wilson believed that he was chosen, which gave him enormous confidence—while it made him rather impatient and arrogant with the ones who dared to disagree with him. His religious beliefs were combined with America's New Manifest Destiny: it is not by accident that the leading expert on Wilson, Arthur S. Link, described his foreign policies as "missionary diplomacy." In many of his academic writings around the turn of the century Wilson wrote about a new presidency in America: revealing very modern views, he claimed that the President should lead not only his party but also the entire country. There can be hardly any argument that he lived up to his ideals both in domestic and in foreign matters.

In one of his famous writings, the Hungarian historian Gyula Szekfû describes count István Széchenyi as a "conservative reformer." One may argue whether that description is accurate or not, but it would certainly be difficult to find a better one for Wilson. On the one hand he was among the greatest reformers of his time both at home (Progressivism) and abroad (the League of Nations); but, on the other hand, he was against revolutions, was not too keen on radicals (with the exception of Walter Lippmann, who eventually became one of the leading American conservatives), strongly disliked feminists, and was overtly racist. Also, he displayed little originality; instead, he embraced other people's ideas, internalized them, translated them into political catch phrases and carried them out. In so doing, he may not have been an outstanding academic, but he certainly was a very talented and effective politician.

In conducting the foreign affairs of his country Wilson applied hitherto unseen methods. According to Link, he conducted US foreign policy single-handedly, and took the advice only of his closest friend, Colonel Edward Mandell House of Texas. (He was known as "Colonel House," but his rank was only honorary; he never took any official position in the Wilson administration, but was described as the President's "Super-Secretary of State.") All Wilson's ambassadors were political appointments and had little or no previous diplomatic experience; they were mostly publishers and financial contributors to his election campaign. (The best examples are Walter Hines Page of Doubleday, Page and Co., and Thomas Nelson Page, who became famous for his romanticizing accounts of pre-Civil War life in the South written for New York magazines in the 1890s.) Whenever possible, Wilson used private representatives and hardly ever read ambassadorial reports, not even during the war. As the maker of American foreign policy he displayed a then typical WASP superiority complex (remember TR?) which made him surprisingly arrogant at times. The following quote is from one of his 1913 public addresses, in which the tried to justify military intervention in the Caribbean:

> If I cannot retain my moral influence over a man except by occasionally knocking him down, if that is the only basis upon which he will respect me, then for the sake of his soul I have got occasionally to knock him down . . . [and] sit on his neck and make him listen.

Military interventions from Mexico through Europe to Siberia testify to the fact that Wilson really meant business. Still, showing Wilson as a narrow-minded interventionist would be doing great injustice to the man in the White House between 1913 and 1921. Wilson's chief contribution not only to American but to world history is the vision of a liberal capitalist world under US guidance, a new world order manifested in the League of Nations. The British historian Patrick Devlin, in Too Proud to Fight, has gone as far as to claim that the "American Century" actually began with Wilson. Now in the light of later developments in the 1920s and 1930s this is an obvious overstatement; but Wilson's influence on post-World War Two Presidents cannot be denied. The two who quoted him most often (remember that Wilson was a Democrat) were Richard M. Nixon and Ronald Reagan, both right-wing Republicans! That is how successful Wilson was in spelling out and selling his ideas.

In August 1914 most of the world went to war, but the US did not. On getting the news of the Sarajevo assassination, Wilson sent a telegram of condolence to the ageing Emperor Francis Joseph, and, taking the only logical step, called on his fellow countrymen to maintain neutrality "in thought as well as in action." Wilson quickly understood that the World War offered him on a plate the greatest of opportunities: it meant business for the country and a chance to carry out

America's New Manifest Destiny of reshaping the world according to American ideals. Initially, Wilson expected to do that as the bringer of peace, and his repeated offers of mediation (August 1914, December 1916) sufficiently prove this point. And that peace was going to be something spectacular, a Pax Americana. Wilson projected a liberal capitalist Progressive image of the United States onto the world, christened it the League of Nations, and made it his own and, consequently, America's main war aim. Between December 1915, his first recorded reference to a league of nations, and the Fourteen Points in January 1918, when he defined it as America's war aim, Wilson developed in detail his concept of a new liberal world order. He envisaged a regulated capitalist system based upon disarmament, collective security, and the open door providing for the orderly development of white peoples and the securing of an international harmony of interests. According to Wilson, international cooperation would exclude the possibility of future wars and revolutions and supply the framework for teaching the less developed, i.e., non-white, and occasionally even non-WASP white, peoples of the world democracy and self-determination. As primus inter pares, the United States would find and secure new frontiers and markets in abundance in this world made "safe for democracy."

But besides developing a coherent foreign policy concept, Wilson had to deal with more down-to-earth problems during the period of American neutrality: chiefly with immigrants and neutral trade. The United States was in a peculiar situation during the early stages of the war, inasmuch as she held the largest colonies outside the mother country of practically all warring parties. Wilson had to conduct a policy which would satisfy English as well as German and Irish immigrants living in the new world; and this was no easy task. His reelection in 1916 by the narrowest of margins indicates that he responded to this challenge in a sufficient manner, primarily by not offending any of the major immigrant groups living in the country.

While treating the immigrants in the proper way proved to be a relatively easy task for Wilson, issues related to neutral trade caused major problems for his administration, especially in 1915. As early as August 1914 the Allies placed the Central Powers under blockade, thus cutting them off from neutral American trade. This became a serious issue since the Americans began to produce contraband, i.e., war supplies, which both parties needed in the war. The not too strong American protests against arbitrary restrictions of neutral trade fell on deaf ears in London—and so did the protests of the Central Powers in Washington, D.C. Official and unofficial representatives of the Central Powers then began to take steps to improve this, from their point of view extremely unfavorable, situation. Financed by the German embassy, George S. Viereck launched an English-language weekly, *The Fatherland,* with the motto: "Fair Play for Germany and Austria-Hungary!" It became the semi-official organ of the German and Austro-Hungarian governments in America and had to face serious challenges from other, pro-British press organs. Independently from the Viereck campaign but still as part of the attempt to familiarize the American public with the Habsburg interpretation of the war, Ct. Albert Apponyi wrote a series of widely read articles for *The New York Times* during 1915.

But quite unfortunately for them, the Central Powers used other, actually illegal methods as well. Sabotage in the form of calls for strike or terrorist attacks on munitions factories became practically everyday stories; they badly hurt the prestige of immigrants form the Central Powers, and eventually resulted in the forced withdrawal of Constantin Theodore Dumba, the Habsburg ambassador in Washington, in November 1915. (Never again did the Monarchy have an ambassador in America.) On top of that, German U-Boats sank a number of ships carrying contraband to Europe. The best known such incident was the sinking of the British passenger liner, the *Lusitania*—an event which almost brought about a German-American break in mid-1915. The

official story is that the ship was sunk by a German submarine and more than a hundred Americans died in the attack. What contemporary reports failed to point out was the fact that the Lusitania was loaded with contraband, and that the Imperial German Government had issued warnings earlier that any non-neutral ship carrying contraband to the Allies would be considered a fair target. As a protest against Wilson's not too convincing position that Americans had the right to travel on any ship and his provocative notes to Berlin, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan handed in his resignation. (The only other US Secretary of State to resign on moral grounds was Cyrus Vance, who so protested against Carter's plan to send helicopters to rescue American hostages from Iran. Ironically, Vance resigned, the helicopters were sent off, but never reached their target, they simply started to fall from the sky. Vance also led the American delegation which returned St. Stephen's crown to Hungary in January 1978.)

The *Lusitania* incident was presented to demonstrate how war psychology works. The British obviously used innocent and unsuspecting Americans as a human shield to protect war supplies. The options were: the Germans either let the ship pass or they sink it and thus provoke the Americans. The Germans on their part had no qualms, they sank the ship and killed hundreds of civilians. This was all-out war, psychological, diplomatic, military—but what always prevails is the winner's version of the events. The above revelations regarding the Lusitania were not published until well after World War II.

The conduct of the representatives of the Central Powers in America and on the high seas would have been enough to create a rather unfavorable public mood in America. But the British wanted to go for sure an launched a brilliantly planned and executed propaganda campaign to further discredit Germany. Capitalizing on the obviously illegal occupation of neutral Belgium by the Germans, they compiled the most comprehensive set of wartime lies, the so-called "Bryce Report," which featured stories of beheaded children, raped and mutilated women, and crucified Canadian soldiers. British propagandists proved to be extremely successful in America because they spoke the same language, made better preparations than the Germans, conducted a less obvious covert campaign, and had the monopoly of war news reaching the new world. (Also in August 1914, the British cut the German underwater cables of communication to America.) Clearly, by the end of 1916, the British had won the race for American support—in other words: the US was neutral neither in thought nor in action.

Meanwhile, stormclouds were gathering on the horizon in the Far East, too. In 1915 Japan put forward "21 Demands" with the intention to gain control of China. Wilson vigorously protested and the 1917 Lansing-Ishii agreement (named after the then US Secretary of State and Japanese Ambassador in Washington) destroyed the Japanese scheme. As we will see this incident later played an important part in Wilson's attitude towards the so-called Siberian intervention in 1918.

In 1916 Wilson won reelection with the slogan "He kept us out of war!" However, he also introduced "Preparedness" in 1916, and he was preparing for war. By April 1917 a combination of political, military and diplomatic developments convinced the President of the necessity to declare war on Germany. The factors involved in his decision included: (1) the ever-increasing anti-German sentiments, also incited by the President's domestic opponents, TR among them; (2) the German declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare on the last day of January, 1917; (3) sweeping political changes in Russia; and (4) the infamous Zimmermann telegram. While the first two points hardly need further explanation, the other two certainly do.

The March Revolution in Russia ended the monarchy and brought to power a supposedly liberal regime. This event was well-received in America and Wilson was the first head of state

to officially recognize the new regime. In so doing, he was led by two considerations. On the one hand, this seemed to be the first victory of Wilson's new world order idea: in a traditionally autocratic country the people themselves destroyed the monarchy and brought about a liberal turn. This (supposedly) democratic turn also solved one of Wilson's greatest problems, namely selling the war at home and abroad. He now could present it as a struggle between good and evil, between democracy (represented by the Allies including a "democratic" Russia and the US) against autocracy (represented by the Central Powers). It was exactly this rhetoric he used on April 2, 1917, when he asked Congress for a declaration of war on Germany. To do so, however, he needed a casus belli, an open German provocation. And by April he had that, in the form of the Zimmermann telegram.

Generally seen as the first twentieth century open violation of the Monroe Doctrine, the German Foreign Minister Zimmermann in a confidential cable offered large chunks of US (but formerly Mexican) territory to Mexico in return for attacking the US in the back. (You may recall that the Americans had just abandoned their abortive attempt to bring about a "proper" Mexican government.) It is easy to see why the publication (with the assistance of the ever helpful British intelligence) of this cable did little to improve German-American relations. A diplomatic break in February was followed by a declaration of war by the US. Thus, in the early days of April 1917 the unthinkable happened: the US went to war. (The only Congressperson to vote against both World Wars was the first woman in Congress, Jeannette Rankin of Montana.) The European reader might find it unbelievable, but during the Congressional discussions the possibility of actually having to send American soldiers to fight overseas was not considered as a serious possibility. Clearly, Americans had a different concept of war.

Entering the World War created new challenges on the domestic, military, and diplomatic fronts for the Wilson administration. The President had to create a unified national stand—in perhaps the most diverse great power in human history.

The first and perhaps most important task Wilson had to face in April 1917 was the mobilization of the American public in support of the war effort. He chose propaganda to achieve that goal and proved to be very successful in his efforts. Wilson in his Flag Day address began to talk about not Germany and her allies but of a Mitteleuropa controlled by the German military. He thus created an enemy mighty enough to threaten the USA. Incidents like the Zimmermann telegram were presented to indicate that German expansionism had to be rooted out before it spread to the Western Hemisphere. Wilson also called on many prominent public figures to support his Liberty Bond campaigns. Arguably the most spectacular moment came when the comedian Charlie Chaplin addressed an audience well over 100,000.

But Wilson knew he needed to do more and two days before Congress had actually declared war on Germany he established the first modern American propaganda ministry, the Committee on Public Information (hereafter CPI). Headed by the progressive journalist George Creel, the CPI controlled the publication of diplomatic correspondence, censored the press, issued its own *Official Bulletin,* and even employed Four-Minute Men, who delivered four-minute talks in movie theaters before the main feature films. The CPI also released the first propaganda movies ("Under Four Flags" and "Pershing's Crusaders") as well as regular newsreels. On top of that, Creel drew practically the entire foreign language press (including all 27 Hungarian-American newspapers) of the country under CPI control. According to the historian Stephen L. Vaughn, the CPI also redefined American nationalism for decades to follow.

Another major problem Wilson had to face was economic and military mobilization. Mounting Allied diplomatic pressure made clear that the US had to send troops to the Western Front. In

the absence of sufficient volunteers Wilson introduced conscription—but exempted "enemy aliens" (people who had come from the Central Powers). The American Expeditionary Forces were eventually despatched to Europe under the leadership of John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, who had already proved his incompetence by leading a "punitive expedition" into Mexico—without ever meeting the enemy. The necessity for effective economic mobilization raised the issue of government intervention in the lives of the people yet again. And Wilson responded to the challenge in his own somewhat autocratic way: he created the War Industries Board and turned its head, Bernard Baruch, into the economic dictator of the country, and he also nationalized the railroads temporarily. Partly in compensation for the obvious violation of constitutional liberties and also in order to satisfy various pressure groups, Wilson agreed to limit child labor and granted cheap loans to Midwestern farmers. Furthermore, he approved the 18th amendment to the Constitution on Prohibition. It was an obvious gesture towards the almost one hundred-year-old temperance movement, but also reflected Wilson's fears that drunken workers and soldiers might hinder the war effort. However, the subsequent Volstead Act, which provided the details, was passed over the President's veto. Thus, the final two years of the war saw the creation of a unified domestic stand in America and provided Wilson with an excuse to continue the centralization of American politics and economy. This is why some historians call his policies after April 1917 the Second New Freedom.

The challenges the United States faced on the diplomatic and military fronts were by no means smaller and actually revolved around two main issues: (1) winning the war, and (2) realizing Wilson's vision of a new and better world. After going to war against Germany, Wilson promptly defined the US as an Associated Power to indicate that he did not share all the war aims of the Allies. He would define American war aims as late as January 8, 1918, in his famous Fourteen Points, which he amended several times during the final year of the war. However, the US did not declare war on Germany's allies (Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria), which rendered the work of the newly established Supreme Allied War Council practically impossible. Together with other considerations involving domestic, military and diplomatic affairs, this eventually prompteed Wilson to call for a declaration of war on Austria-Hungary in December 1917, which was granted by Congress.

By that time, however, Wilson had to face yet another challenge—coming from Bolshevik Russia. It has been mentioned earlier that Wilson was quick to recognize the March Revolution because he saw it as the first major success of his new world order idea. The Bolshevik Revolution (November 7, 1917) on the other hand brought new worries for the White House. V. I. Lenin's new government decided on immediate exit from the war, which was sanctioned by the March 1918 Brest Litovsk treaty between Russia and the central Powers. This practically meant the closing of the Eastern front and made possible the moving of German troops to the Western one. But Wilson found the possible effects of the new Bolshevik program equally disturbing: Lenin, like Wilson, called for a new world order based upon collective security and global integration. But unlike Wilson's regulated international capitalist world order, Lenin's was to be a Socialist one, born in a world revolution that would destroy capitalism first. Thus, practically overnight Russia became a serious military and ideological concern for Wilson. Some action was needed.

Meanwhile, the American attitude toward winning the war was quite simple: they considered the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire to be the weakest link among the Central Powers and saw its removal from the war to be the key to Germany's defeat. Between February 1917 and April 1918 Wilson sought to achieve this goal by secretly negotiating the Monarchy out of

the war. The Americans offered peace and guarantees of the territorial integrity of the Empire in return for immediate exit from the war, i.e., a break with Germany, and the restoration of Poland (in order to secure the Polish vote in American elections). But between April and June 1918, a series of events made secret talks with Vienna impossible—and the President needed an entirely new policy.

In the early days of April 1918 a heated diplomatic showdown between the French Premier Georges Clemenceau and the Habsburg Foreign Minister Count Ottokar Czernin ended all peace talks by revealing details of the negotiations in progress. (Interestingly, in diplomatic histories of the World War the effects of this so-called "Sixtus affair" are largely underrated.) Meanwhile, Wilson's concerns over Russia reached new heights. The Allies demanded American military support for the reopening of the Eastern Front through various interventions in Siberia and the Far East. The historians Lloyd C. Gardner and N. Gordon Levin have sufficiently demonstrated that by the spring of 1918 Wilson was ready to intervene but wanted to stop short of open war. Wilson obviously wanted the Bolshevik regime in Russia to fail, but he could find no proper excuse for violating his own principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries. That excuse was eventually found when a 50,000 strong Czechoslovak Legion (under French command) got involved in the civil war raging in Russia between the various white and red armies. The Czechs took the entire Trans-Siberian railway line, which was the artery of Asiatic Russia. At the same time, the Allies were ready to intervene and let the Japanese move in alone. (With the memories of the "21 Demands" in mind, Wilson repeatedly rejected this proposal.) Then, Wilson decided to change his policies and in a sweeping diplomatic move agreed to support the Czechs now in Vladivostok. In this new situation, however, the Allies had to recognize the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris as a de facto belligerent government. This at the same time meant that the Monarchy would not be negotiated out of the war but broken up through its various nationalities. Wilson publicly announced his new policy on May 29, 1918 and a final joint Allied propaganda offensive was launched against the Habsburg Monarchy. Bulgaria was the first to surrender (September 30), Austria-Hungary followed suit (November 3), and eventually, on November 11, 1918, Germany also gave in.

Having won the war and having established himself as the leader of the Allies, Wilson now set out to realize his new world—but he left it for the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Wilson and the American Commission to Negotiate Peace went to Paris with the program of making one umbrella treaty and establishing the League of Nations. This may have been a sound plan for the US, but the various European Allies wanted much more: territories and reparations from the defeated powers. Eventually, the League was established and not one but four major treaties were signed (each including the Covenant of the League of Nations as article one). Obviously, Wilson had to make concessions to realize his grand design. Next, he went home and expected Congress to approve his achievements. This a Republican-dominated Congress refused to do—in part because it had reservations about various aspects of the treaties and also because of personal reasons. Wilson got into the "treaty fight" and embarked upon a national speaking tour to support his position. During this tour he suffered several strokes and his health broke down. By the end of 1919 the unthinkable had happened: the United States of America refused to join the League of Nations and rejected the Versailles treaties. His own beloved country had turned the table on Wilson and the Nobel Peace Prize offered little consolation. After completing his second term in office Wilson retired from public life and died in 1924. (The leader of the opposition was Henry Cabot Lodge, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Half a century later the Democrats took revenge: at the height of the 1963 crisis in Vietnam J. F.

Kennedy sent Lodge's son as ambassador to Saigon and reportedly commented on his decision saying: "If we are going to **** up, let's make it bipartisan.")

Thus, during World War I the United States took center stage in international affairs for the first time in its history, led the Allies to the successful conclusion of the war, largely contributed to the reorganization of the world outside the Western Hemisphere, and then retreated to semi-isolation: clearly, old reflexes prevailed. The other set of treaties was signed at the Washington Conference (1921-22), which set the ground rules for the Far East. But that belongs to the next chapter.

CHAPTER TEN
THE INTERWAR YEARS

The two decades between the World Wars saw the United States embark upon a road of its own, a road that was quite different from the one taken by other countries. Interestingly, the two decades offer striking contrasts, too: the extremely successful 1920s (actually the years between Wilson's 1921 exit from the White House and the Stock Market Crash in 1929) was followed by the depression era of the 1930s (from the 1929 crash to 1941, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor). This contrast may also be demonstrated on domestic politics (Republican 1920s and Democratic 1930s, the New Deal era) and in foreign affairs (the predominantly isolationist 1920s followed by the diplomatically more active 1930s). The present chapter offers some insight into the history of these two decades.

The 1920s is arguably the most successful decade in twentieth century American history. Coming out of the World War as the only untouched great power and the economic leader of the world, between 1921 and 1929 the US produced an almost unbelievable 39% economic growth. This was to a very large extent due to the fact that the car, the radio and Hollywood transformed everyday life in America once and for all—and this is why this decade is often referred to as America's third industrial revolution. The 1920s also created long-lasting images: the Roaring Twenties, the Prohibition Era, the Jazz Age, as well as the flapper, Fordism and the Model T, Al Capone, Charles Lindbergh and Herman "Babe" Ruth. And now the details.

In terms of domestic politics the 1920s is not an exceptionally exciting period. The Republicans took control both of Congress and the presidency. In the White House Wilson was followed by Warren G. Harding (1921-23), Calvin Coolidge (1923-29) and Herbert Hoover (1929-33). The dates in brackets indicate that Harding died in office; Coolidge, his Vice President, succeeded him and then was elected President in his own right in 1924. Harding called his policy "Return to Normalcy"—by which he and his supporters, the "Ohio Gang," meant the deconstruction of the Wilsonian order. In brief, the Republican reflex clicked in: the government had to withdraw from the life of the people. As Coolidge put it: "America's business is business." Harding's administration, however, was seriously discredited by the so-called Teapot Dome scandal, in which several members of the cabinet were directly involved. What actually happened was that Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall leased federal oil reserves at Teapot Dome, Wyoming and Elk Hills, California to private developers. Harding died before the news was officially broken, which helped calm the storm over the issue.

Violent anti-communism first surfaced in America in 1920, when Wilson's Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, launched his raids and arrested several hundred people who were supposedly communists. Meanwhile, two Italian-Americans, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were also arrested and charged with murdering a paymaster at a shoe factory in South Braintree, Massachusetts. Although the evidence was inconclusive (to say the least), they were sentenced to death and executed in 1927. Many saw the Sacco-Vanzetti case as yet another demonstration of intolerance and suspicion towards immigrants. (Much later, the protest singer Joan Baez paid

wonderful tribute to the two Italians in a song called "The Ballad of Sacco and Vanzetti.") Going hand in hand with violent government action, the Ku Klux Klan also experienced a major revival. The issue became so serious that W. E. B. DuBois' National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (hereafter NAACP; it was founded in 1909) released paid advertisements in order to support the first federal anti-lynching act (1922), which eventually was killed off in the Senate. The first year without lynching in American history was 1951. (This issue is of great importance because the 1920s was to a large extent a decade dominated by African Americans: jazz, the New Negro, etc.) Meanwhile in 1924, American citizenship was finally granted for the Native Americans who had survived the Indian wars.

The immigrant issue was also taken on by the federal government in most drastic ways. After two temporary measures, the 1924 Immigration Act introduced the national (or ethnic origins) quota system, and limited immigration in any year to 2% of the 1890 census. It allowed for 437 Hungarians per year. This quota system marks a new departure in the history of American immigration and was repealed only as late as 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In all fairness, it must be added that the US did not slam the door in the face of political and religious refugees entirely: for example, during the late 1930s a large number of persecuted Jews found refuge in America and they were allowed in above the national quota.

Meanwhile, the American economy took off in a most spectacular way. The driving forces behind this new phase of American economic development were the automobile, the radio, various labor saving devices, and construction. These combined to transform American life once and for all. The car took America by storm—by the end of the decade over 20 million cars were running on the roads. Just like the railroad barely more than fifty years before, car manufacturing promoted various forms of industry and infrastructure: roads and gas stations were needed (it is here the construction comes into the picture first), oil refinement became even bigger business than it had been before, and the rubber industry boomed. Roadside motels mushroomed, the first drive-in fast food restaurants were soon established, and even drive-in movies were opened. In his factories Henry Ford, one of the symbols of the whole decade, introduced assembly line production (popularly known as "Fordism"), raised wages, limited working hours, and offered various bonuses to boost production. Consequently, unionism declined and the "open shop" became the ideal of the day in other fields of the economy, too. However, all was not well, and people's worries over the machine and especially the assembly line were brilliantly summed up by the famous feeding scene in Chaplin's movie "Modern Times."

Various labor saving devices also appeared on the market and made everyday life considerably easier, especially for housewives. These included the refrigerator, the vacuum cleaner, the electric iron and the first washing machines. Commercial radio broadcasting started in 1920 and Hoover was the first presidential candidate to campaign on the radio. This fact clearly indicates that the new form of media took over the US in less than a decade—just like the TV did during the 1950s. The radio brought the news, politics and entertainment (especially music and sports) into the home. Now, Americans did not have to go out to have some fun. The radio also boosted advertising and helped create what we call the American mass culture. Not only was the US rapidly urbanizing, it was also leading the world in new welfare trends. Another important element in that was the rising popularity of Hollywood. The earlier black and white silent movies were soon replaced by talkies and color films, and new stars, new American heroes, emerged: Edward G. Robinson, Rudolph Valentino, and perhaps the greatest comic actor of all times, Chaplin. Sports offered another form of outdoor entertainment, and the baseball player Babe Ruth of the Boston Red Sox and then of the New York Yankees became one of the most popular

figures of his time. Other individual achievements also attracted much attention. The most spectacular of these undoubtedly was Charles Lindbergh's solo non-stop trans-Atlantic flight in his plane *The Spirit of St. Louis*.

But even during the extremely successful 1920s the US was facing serious problems, too. References to crime and the revival of the KKK have already been made. Organized crime also emerged and the first "great" gangsters practically assumed control of the big cities. The most famous of all was Al Capone, "Scarface," who terrorized Chicago for almost a decade before he went to jail—for not paying taxes. Bootlegging and speakeasies became everyday icons and still appear in movies about the 1920s. Growing violence and racial strife went hand in hand with a mistaken federal economic policy, which was soon to bring disillusionment, crisis, and social and economic trouble for the United States of America.

When Herbert Hoover, arguably the most popular American politician of the decade, was inaugurated in March 1929, the country looked ahead into the future most complacently, believing the best was yet to come. Instead, in October the stock market crashed and within a couple of years the entire US economy collapsed. Historians representing a wide range of ideals and ideas have tried to account for these dramatic changes. According to the Marxist interpretation, there are endemic contradictions within the capitalist system, which lead to regular crises and wars. The more developed the system the deeper the crisis, they argue, since capitalism works towards global economic integration. Communist economic historians view 1929 not as the beginning of the crisis of global capitalism but as perhaps the most violent outbreak of it. The Hungarian-born American economist Károly Polányi offers a different interpretation. He identifies the World War as the cause of the crisis and argues that it set back the economic development of the world by decades. The war destroyed national economies in Europe and two generations of work force (the one that died on the fronts and the one that could not be born because of that). These wounds, according to Polányi, could not be healed. The crisis was coming inevitably but was delayed until 1929 when the combined deficit of the victorious and defeated powers brought down the US economy, too. While both interpretations carry several very good points, we must combine their findings with the views of John Maynard Keynes and David Landes to really understand the causes of the crisis and the way the US got out of the subsequent depression.

In the 1920s the US detached itself from global economic realities in search of more and more profit. During the third industrial revolution the Americans were producing things no one outside the United States wanted or could afford to buy. To put it simply: during the early 1920s Europe needed money for recovery and rebuilding its industries and not cars or electric washing machines. Added to this was a mistaken federal economic policy which strangled possible competition from Europe by raising protective tariffs and devaluing the dollar. These measures may have served the interests of big business but had a devastating effect on the economic life of the US and the world. Furthermore, the US moved late to lend a helping hand to Germany and thus contributed to continuing economic instability in Europe. All this led to overproduction and a decline in US foreign trade. Meanwhile, spectacular economic growth meant more jobs and better wages for American workers. But there comes a time when people earn more than they spend—which also leads to overproduction. People put their money into banks since profits are low and there is no point in investing it. Consequently, the circulation of money stops, jobs are cut back, wages are reduced and stock prices fall—and this is exactly what happened in America in 1929.

The above mentioned developments combined with President Hoover's reluctance to admit the seriousness of the crisis brought hard times for Americans. The crisis of American agriculture

actually dates back to the postwar years when no steps were taken to cut back wartime production to peacetime levels. American farmers were producing far more than the national market could soak up and in the absence of demands for their products they could not pay back their bank loans. Banks then tried to take the land of the farmers who occasionally responded by shooting the representatives of banks. On top of that, natural disasters, the so-called "dust bowls" (check Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* for details) destroyed the soil in the Midwestern farming region. Industrial workers were facing equally serious problems in the shape of losing jobs and wage reduction. Unionism was revived but workers on strike were often beaten up (even in the Ford factories!) or sacked. World War I veterans were also in need of federal support to find their way back to everyday life. When none came, veterans marched on Washington. In a most shameful street battle in the federal capital, US Army troops led by Dwight D. Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur beat up the protestors. Furthermore, this was a crisis period when even long-standing core American values did not seem to work: there was no equality of opportunity but equality in the lack of opportunities; in the absence of jobs people could not work hard and with the collapse of the financial system even thrift lost its meaning. All that is brilliantly summed up by a 1931 *Chicago Tribune* cartoon: It depicts a "victim of bank failure" sitting on a tree trunk and smoking a pipe with a squirrel close by. The squirrel asks him, "But why didn't you save some money for the future, when times were good?" And the desperate answer is, "I did."

Clearly, the US was facing a crisis never seen before and this challenge had to be met with new and successful means. In the 1932 presidential elections Franklin Delano Roosevelt ran on the Democratic ticket and promised a New Deal for his fellow countrymen. He scored one of the easiest victories in American history against Hoover who stood for reelection. FDR's New Deal is one of the most hotly debated issues in twentieth century American history because its supporters and opponents represent the two basic attitudes towards the economic life of the country. Roosevelt and the Democrats argued that the crisis had gone too far and the federal government had to intervene to restore not only the economy but people's belief in American values and the future. However, FDR introduced such sweeping changes that even some Democrats turned their back on him while the Republicans, who stood for laissez faire and a passive federal government, opposed him from the start. This debate has been carried on by historians ever since.

The New Deal came in two main phases and with considerable simplification it may be said that the First New Deal (1933) introduced stopgap measures to prevent further decline, while the Second New Deal (1935) aimed to reorganize American life in order to bring about social justice and root out the possibility of similar crises in the future. The First New Deal was met with much resistance and by 1935 the Supreme Court had declared its major legislation unconstitutional. In response, FDR called for the reorganization of the Court (1936) by raising the number of Supreme Court Justices—which would have allowed him to add more Democrats to it. This plan of "packing the Supreme Court" eventually failed but clearly indicated that the President's plans and measures had a rather mixed reception. Another interesting feature of the New Deal was that unlike in the Progressive Era, this time the federal government did not wait for individual calls for reform or state-level tests but went straight ahead with its own recovery program. In solving the problems of the United States FDR had a lot of support from the above mentioned Keynes, whose ideas the President's "Brain Trust" freely used but whom the chief executive refused to meet. Keynes argued that the crisis could be ended in two ways: (1) by introducing a global regulation of supply and demand of goods, and (2) by investing the excess

capital available into ventures that would not bring immediate profit. These measures combined with a gradual return to war economy in the second half of the 1930s eventually restored the American economy and general belief in the system. Social and economic ups and downs thus followed each other in rapid succession during the first half of the twentieth century in the United States.

The First New Deal of 1933 dealt with three major areas of economic life: banking, agriculture, and industry. The Emergency Banking Act was passed to save the large banks and to prevent panic. The Agricultural Administration Act offered farmers subsidies for cutting back on production and tried to solve the problem of farm loans. The National Industrial Recovery Act created the National Industrial Recovery Board and legalized unionist activities. But these measures were often seen as too dictatorial and the Supreme Court, as has been mentioned above, declared First New Deal legislation unconstitutional.

Then in 1935, FDR launched the Second New Deal. He revived federal work relief by creating the Works Progress (later Projects) Administration and put his confident friend, Harry Hopkins, in charge. The Federal Arts Project offered jobs for hundreds of artists who in return participated in restoring national confidence. Construction contributed to the recovery of the national psyche in an interesting way: the pre-war race to build bigger and bigger skyscrapers was revived and New York City prided itself in setting new records. (The Flatiron Building was built in 1902 and was 87 meters tall. The Woolworth Building of 1913 held the record for 17 years with 214 meters. The Chrysler Building was completed in 1930 and towered 241 meters above street level, while the Empire State Building reached 318 meters and was completed a year later.) Even Hollywood made documentaries to teach farmers how to use new crops in the regions hit by the dust bowls. The National Labor Relations Act (also known as the Wagner Act) lent federal support to the various trade unions. But perhaps the most radical piece of New Deal legislation was the Social Security Act, which introduced a federal system of old age pensions and unemployment benefits—out of the realization that success is not inevitable. (Questions of welfare funding have been the most serious bone of contention between Democrats and Republicans ever since and most recently President Obama was given a hard time over the issue in Congress.)

The New Deal also featured regional problems and side issues which are worthy of mention. The Tennessee Valley Authority (construction again) for example brought about rapid economic development in the South by providing cheap electricity coming from dams built on the Tennessee River. At the same time racial issues were largely ignored, women made few advances (although FDR appointed the first female cabinet member), while Native American cultures were to be protected according to a 1934 piece of legislation.

Public approval for the Second New Deal was almost unanimous and in the 1936 election FDR carried all but two of the states. But by then, entirely new challenges were awaiting the United States, this time from abroad. To understand the nature and seriousness of those challenges we must now look at interwar American diplomacy.

American foreign policy between the World Wars has been described as isolationist, and this claim is not entirely unfounded. However, a closer look suggests that isolationism prevailed especially towards Europe in the 1920s. There was for example active American foreign policy in Latin America and the Far East long before the storm clouds of World War II were gathering over Europe. Furthermore, the global economic crisis prompted Americans to seek remedies in international agreements during the early 1930s. Added to all that was the coming of World War II.

It was the 1921-22 Washington Conference that set the rules especially for the Far East. Masterminded by Harding's Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, the Conference yielded the Four, Five and Nine Power Treaties—involving various European and Far Eastern countries and the United States of America. To a large extent, the Washington treaty system was a very Wilsonian venture with a typical Republican twist to it: it limited the navies of the powers involved, banned the construction of additional naval bases in the Far East, called for an open door and guaranteed the territorial integrity of China; on the other hand, just like the European settlement of 1919, it created no international organization with American participation in it to look after the deal. Being in need of an ally in the Far East but with Russia out of the game for obvious reasons, Hughes practically blackmailed the Japanese into these agreements with the help of the Wall Street financial mogul Tom Lamont. But this was a rather shaky construct: the Americans developed one single line of policy toward the Far East and they based the whole project on the hope that Japan would honor its promises and commitments. Within eleven years, they were to pay a heavy price for that.

At the same time Latin America remained an uncontested US sphere of influence, and between the wars there was not much going on in the Western Hemisphere. Although the Americans moved in and out of Mexico and got involved in Nicaragua and Cuba, the time of regular military interventions seemed to have passed. This was even more so when Roosevelt announced a new "Good Neighbor" policy toward Latin America. This favorable turn in US-Latin American relations was largely due to the realization that hemispheric cooperation might help to solve the crisis that hit America and the world in 1929. Another consideration on FDR's part was that an aggressive American policy in the region might bring Latin American countries and the newly emerging Nazi Germany closer to each other.

Unlike Latin America, the second major US sphere of influence, the Far East, posed more serious questions after the mid-1920s. The 1927 banking collapse in Tokyo shook the very foundations of the Japanese political system and helped the militarists to power. Japanese fascism, following the guidelines set out by Kita Ikki back in 1917, was rapidly growing in strength, Japanese prime ministers were assassinated every other year, and plans were drawn up for the invasion of Manchuria. China offered an easy target since the nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai-shek and the communists led by Mao Zedong fought each other and made no plans to meet the impending Japanese attack. When the US cut off Japanese imports in 1930, the military decided to turn the table on the Americans and invaded Manchuria in 1931. Next, a puppet regime called the state of Manchukuo was established while President Hoover and Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson officially condemned Japanese expansionism. Thus by 1932 American foreign policy in the Far East had run into a cul de sac simply because Japan refused to cooperate. There was no point in switching over to supporting the Chinese since Chiang and Mao were busily chasing each other around in the country instead of fighting the invaders. A major revision of America's Far Eastern policy became imminent.

In November 1934 Franklin D. Roosevelt officially recognized the Soviet Union. In making his decision he was guided by two main considerations: (1) Soviet Russia was the only great power who could possibly contain Japan in the Far East, and (2) this agreement opened up the Russian markets for American wheat and industrial products. Earlier, the official American position had been non-recognition—while unofficial business relations were maintained with Soviet Russia. These included relief work during the 1922 Russian famine, the construction of railroads, and even sending over urban development experts and engineers.

During the 1920s American political and economic diplomacy in Europe remained rather limited in scope. Although the US decided not to join the League of Nations, hundreds of American observers joined the various commissions of the League. Through the Dawes and Young plans the US also took a leading part, albeit somewhat belatedly, in German financial recovery and developed strong economic ties with the Weimar Republic. As regards America's former wartime allies, the only two agreements worthy of mention here are the Briand-Kellogg Pact and the Red Line Agreement, both in 1928. The former condemned war in general terms while the latter divided up the then known (excluding Saudi Arabian oil) Middle Eastern oil reserves with the Americans getting their fair share of the deal. Of this, the historian Anthony Sampson (in a book also available in Hungarian) wrote: "The open door proved to be a mysterious portal, with the habit of swinging shut again, just as the Americans had got inside."

However, with the coming of the 1930s, this (justifiably) lackluster American diplomacy was replaced with a more active one, in which both the global economic crisis and the rise of fascism played its part. To tackle the depression going on both in America and Europe and to discuss further disarmament, Hoover arranged for an economic conference in London for 1933. Meanwhile, FDR entered the White House and on finding out that the conference intended to tie the dollar and other currencies to a new international standard, he called off the deal. Nonetheless, economic cooperation remained a hot issue during the rest of the decade. With Roosevelt, the first Democrat in the White House since Wilson, the United States re-entered the global stage.

There is evidence to suggest that from his earliest days in office Franklin D. Roosevelt was preoccupied with the problem of Hitler and Nazism in Germany. He repeatedly warned the Hitler regime against the mistreatment of Jews but considered the maintenance of order in Europe to be the primary responsibility of France and Britain. In order to avoid US involvement in another all-out European war (or even in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39), Congress passed various neutrality acts between 1935 and 1937. Meanwhile in Europe Britain and France embarked upon a policy of appeasement with the intention to contain Germany by seemingly minor territorial concessions. All that was openly manifested in the 1938 Munich agreement which granted Germany large chunks of Czechoslovak territory—without the consent of the Czechoslovak Republic. (Another similar concession to Germany was their tacit approval of the Anschluss of Austria.) Eventually in August 1939, Nazi Germany and communist Russia, supposedly deadly enemies, signed a non-aggression deal called the Ribbentropp-Molotov Pact. They also agreed in secret to divide Poland between themselves. World War II was around the corner, with the United States of America again not ready but expecting to stay out of the impending European great power showdown.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THE US IN WORLD WAR II

The Second World War created many long-lasting images and heroes, and the 50th anniversary celebrations of V Day in 1995 are still a fresh memory. It was the bloodiest and most devastating war of humankind and its effects and consequences are deeply imprinted in the minds of generations. The present chapter offers some insight into the nature of the American war effort by summing up domestic and foreign affairs alike.

Of World War II it must be remembered that it was more than a fascist-anti-fascist showdown. Between 1939 and 1945, for the first and only time in the twentieth century, three great power combinations representing three mutually exclusive world views became active on the global stage, and fought it out. The three were: (1) the liberal capitalist world order represented by the US and its western allies; (2) fascism, another basically capitalist system centered around Hitler's Third Reich idea and represented by the axis powers; and (3) communism, represented by the Soviet Union. As pointed out above, each of these three had a concept of the future in which there was no place for the other two. By the coming of World War II the question was: Which two will team up against the third and who will win the conflict?

This "triangle" was taking shape during the interwar years, when German-Soviet cooperation began. With all its ups and downs, European diplomacy created a situation by August 1939 in which the openly anti-communist Germany (the leader and founder of the Anti-Comintern Pact) signed the already mentioned non-aggression treaty with Soviet Russia. The Soviet-German line was thus manifested in an official treaty. So was the American-Soviet line, which came to be known as the Grand Alliance. Following the June 1941 German attack on the Soviet Union, Washington and Moscow struck a separate deal against Berlin and remained allies until the end of the war. The third line of connection, between the US and Germany, appears to stick out of this picture. But it does not. During the 1920s, when big business and foreign policy were going different ways (one of the main causes of the depression, remember?), the former got deeply involved in German recovery. But by the late 1930s the situation had become rather awkward: American big business was tied to Nazi Germany while President Roosevelt was looking for an excuse to declare war on it. Basically, the question between September 1939 and December 1941 was whether the US would abandon its huge financial interests in Germany and join the anti-fascist forces or try to remain neutral. Obviously, this was a very tough decision for FDR.

But before we look at the American war effort in some detail it is perhaps not entirely out of place here to stop briefly and outline the military developments of the war. The conflict exploded in Europe with Germany and the Soviet Union invading and dividing up Poland between themselves in September 1939. (Only then did the actual nature of the Ribbentropp-Molotov deal became obvious for the rest of the world.) The early stages of the war saw several local conflicts like that: Hungary's wars for the territorial revision of the Trianon treaty, the Russian-Finnish war, and the German invasion of Belgium and France. By mid-1940 Germany seemed to have won the war in a Blitzkrieg and was waging an air war against Britain. The first major

escalation of the war came in June 1941 when Germany attacked the Soviet Union. In December 1941 the war escalated further, when the US declared war on Japan after the Japanese army had destroyed most of the US Navy at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii—which then was not yet a state in the Union. The Japanese expansion in the Far East and the Pacific was first halted by the American victories at Midway and on the Coral Sea. In October 1942, Erwin Rommel, the legendary "Desert Fox," was defeated at El Alamein—this was the first defeat of Nazi German forces in open battle, and cut off the Germans from the vital oil reserves in the Middle East. But the actual turning point of the war came on the Russian front, during the winter of 1942-43: the German forces led by Paulus were encircled and forced to surrender at Moscow. The myth of the invincibility of the Wermacht was gone forever—this was far more than an ordinary military victory. During the summer of 1943 the Americans opened a second front in Italy and started to push northward from Sicily. (Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* is a brilliant account of the everyday life of US servicemen involved in the campaign.) The "Second Front," which really was the third in Europe, was opened on D Day, June 6, 1944, when allied troops landed in Normandy and pushed back the German defenses orchestrated by Rommel. Following a dogfight during the harsh winter of 1944-45, Germany eventually surrendered on May 7, 1945. On August 6 and 9, 1945, the US dropped two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (called "Little Boy" and "Fat Man," respectively). Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945 and the war was finally over. American troops in the Far East were led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and in Europe by Gen. George S. Patton and the would-be president Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Having briefly surveyed the military events of the war it is now time to look at the American war effort in more detail. The US remained officially neutral between September 1939 and December 1941. The future vice-president and president Harry S Truman summed up the underlying American attitude by saying: "If we see that Germany is winning the war we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and in that way let them kill as many as possible." Clearly, American neutrality during the early stages of World War II was remarkably different from American neutrality during World War I. In fact, the experience of World War I determined American policies: neutrality legislation was passed before the conflict had even started. When the war started the Americans introduced "cash and carry," which meant that anyone was free to buy American contraband provided he paid for it and carried it straight away. The US did not want to lend money or get involved in the seemingly inevitable controversy over submarines—in other words, there was not going to be another *Lusitania* case.

However, following the German attack on the Soviet Union, the Roosevelt administration introduced "lend lease" first to help Britain and then Russia. Interestingly, anti-German sentiments were relatively quiet compared to the public mood of World War I, the big issue being the German massacre of the Jews. Another consideration against going to war was a typical American concern: Washington did not want to send American soldiers to fight and die overseas.

That notwithstanding, the decision for war was soon to come. Obviously, several factors played their part in it and next we will have a look at the most important ones. One main reason was Germany's conduct. The Nazi regime murdered Jews by the million (this is the Holocaust) while there was an extremely strong Jewish lobby in the US. The Germans broke their word and attacked Russia less than two years after signing the non-aggression treaty. Furthermore, Hitler disclosed his views about the US. In a propaganda book by Hermann Rausching, *The Voice of Destruction* (1940), anyone could read the Fuhrer's rather unfavorable assessment of America:

> This is the last death-rattle of a corrupt and outworn system. . . . Since the Civil War, in which the Southern States were conquered against all historical logic and sound sense, the Americans have been in a condition of political and popular decay. In that war, it was not the Southern States, but the American people themselves who were conquered. In the spurious blossoming of economic prosperity and power politics, America has ever since been drawn deeper into the mire of self-destruction. . . . The beginnings of a great new social order based on the principle of slavery and inequality were destroyed in that war, and with them also the embryo of a future truly great America that would not have been ruled by a corrupt caste of tradesmen, but by a real Herren-class that would have swept away all the falsities of liberty and equality.

Clearly, this was not the way to protect US-German business interests and secure American neutrality in the war.

Meanwhile, during 1941 in a series of articles which came to be called collectively "The American Century," Henry Luce, the editor of *Time* and *Life* magazines, called for a more active American policy against Germany and its allies. Luce argued that the US would have to stand up as the protector of freedom around the world, defend democracy, and bring about the American Century. And Luce's, as well as other war hawks', calls for action did not fall on deaf ears in the White House. As mentioned in the previous chapter, FDR from the first days in office had been concerned with the possible threat of Germany. According to the diplomatic historian Walter LaFeber, by mid-1941 he was ready to go to war against Germany and was waiting for an excuse. On December 7, 1941, Japanese forces attacked and destroyed most of the American fleet at Pearl Harbor. This open violation of the Monroe Doctrine (or rather of what it came to represent in the twentieth century) called for immediate action, and the US declared war on Japan. This still did not solve FDR's dilemma—he wanted to fight Germany. And on December 11, 1941 Berlin did a great favor to Washington by declaring war on the US. Of that, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson wrote: "My first feeling was of relief that the indecision was over and that a crisis had come in a way which would unite all our people." (This is a most telling account since some historians have suggested that the US knew about the impending Japanese attack but did not prevent it in order to have an excuse to enter the war.) Thus, after 150 years of diplomatic isolation, the US entered the second global war within a quarter of a century. Great power status does indeed change attitudes.

Before taking a look at wartime American diplomacy it is best to sum up briefly the developments on the domestic front. The leading theme of the domestic American war effort was to create a unified national stand, which was to be achieved by propagandistic means. But unlike in World War I, this time there was no Mitteleuropa, but global fascism represented by Japan, the "violator" of the Monroe Doctrine, and Germany, which turned the table on its own ally and murdered millions of innocent Jews. Hence, domestic propaganda in World War II had two targets: the Germans were treated pretty much like during the Great War, while attitudes towards the Japanese included hatred, revenge and racism. More than 100,000 Japanese-Americans were actually locked up in concentration camps. (In all fairness, it must be mentioned that the Museum of American History in Washington, D. C., features an exhibition disclosing the shameful details of the mistreatment of the Japanese-Americans. Can you name another country which voluntarily runs a permanent exhibition in the very heart of its capital revealing such a dark chapter of its history?)

Other key features of the domestic American war effort were a spectacular economic recovery, a switch to war economy, and centralization. As indicated in the previous chapter, the US found its way out of the depression not through the New Deal but by producing contraband during World War II. It is easy to see how the growing demand for war supplies revived the national economy and created new jobs. During the war the US managed an impressive 60% economic growth. (Mind you, figures may be quite misleading: this 60% came form practically zero, while the 39% of the 1920s was achieved on the high tide of an economic boom created by World War I.) The already-referred-to rise of patriotism played an important part in business-labor relations, too. While no prohibition was introduced (after all it was FDR who repealed it in 1933), unionism and strikes came to be viewed as unpatriotic activities and FDR introduced various measures to avoid any serious conflict. Yet another issue of great significance was the fact that the bulk of the domestic labor force was made up of women. During World War I it was mostly "new immigrants" and Afro-Americans, who migrated to the big cities around the Great Lakes. But since the 1924 immigration act cut short mass migration into the US and since Afro-Americans were conscripted in large numbers, it was the women of America who had to take over in the factories. This created an entirely new situation for women, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

But now, back to the war itself. On entering the war, FDR and his staff outlined America's war aims, which continued to develop as the war dragged on. According to the President, the US had to win the war and lay the foundation of a postwar liberal capitalist world order, preferably even during the war. The Americans wanted to keep everyone out of Latin America, contain Japan in the Far East, and get hold of oil reserves in the Middle East. As for Europe, they tried to avoid fighting the German army as long as possible and sought possible means of containing Russian expansion into Eastern Europe. Running the entire show of American foreign policy during the war was President Roosevelt himself, who has often been described, and not without reason, as being inconsistent. But what he really did was, besides occasional hesitation, diplomacy in the European sense of the word. As he put it:

> You know I am a juggler, and I never let my right hand know what the left hand does. . . . I may have one policy for Europe and one diametrically opposite for North and South America. I may be entirely inconsistent, and furthermore I am perfectly willing to mislead and tell untruths if it will help win the war.

Perhaps the most intriguing element of wartime American diplomacy is the relationship between the US and Soviet Russia. It has rightly been described as a "shotgun marriage" and did not last very long: the Grand Alliance was made in 1941, there were signs that it would fall apart as early as 1945, and the US and Russia became the two major players in the postwar era known as the cold war. Therefore, when looking at US diplomacy during World War II we will focus not only on the immediate issues of the war but also on FDR's attempts to shape the postwar world. In that the two main themes were political and economic diplomacy.

In August 1941, that is after the German attack on the Soviet Union but before Pearl Harbor, FDR met with the British Premier Winston Churchill. Together they signed the Atlantic Charter, which was a joint declaration of war aims following Wilsonian principles. The next step was the United Nations Declaration on New Year's Day, 1942. (Eventually, the UNO deal was finalized at Dumbarton Oaks, which is in Washington, D. C., in 1944.)

With the general outlines thus set, the time had come to work out the details. After several preliminary talks, the "big three" (FDR, Churchill and Stalin) were scheduled to meet in Teheran in November 1943. En route to Teheran, FDR met Churchill and Chiang in Cairo and outlined his four policemen idea to them. According to Roosevelt, the world was to be cut up into four spheres of influence with a great power looking after each one. The four great powers FDR had in mind were the US, Russia, Britain, and China. Apparently, China was to replace Japan in the Far East, and in return FDR promised Chiang a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

The subsequent Teheran Conference, the first of the three major wartime summits, dealt with the opening of the second front and scheduled it for the summer of 1944, and also raised the issue of the UNO and Poland. Poland, because of its strategic position, was a hot issue during the war. Both Moscow and London had a potential government for the new country (the so-called Lublin and London Poles, respectively), and the Soviet Union had territorial demands, too. Although with obvious exaggeration, the historian Stephen A. Ambrose claimed that the cold war started because of Poland. However, at Teheran the issue was postponed, just like further discussions of possible spheres of influence.

The next major conference met in February 1945 in Yalta, which is in the former Soviet Union. Preliminary talks were again held, this time between Churchill and Molotov, in Moscow. In December 1944 they struck the so-called "percentage deal." According to contemporary accounts they bargained for political influence in various Eastern and Southern European countries by writing percentage figures on a piece of paper. At the end of the discussion Churchill warned Molotov that he should avoid the term "spheres of influence" because the Americans were quite touchy about it. (Secretary of State Cordell Hull certainly was, FDR was not.) At Yalta several major agreements were made, which is why during the cold war a rather false parallel was drawn between Munich (1938) and Yalta (together with equating fascism and communism, i.e., "red fascism," at a time when the US was allied to the fascist dictator Franco of Spain.) At Yalta, the UNO deal worked out in detail at Dumbarton Oaks was approved, and the big three agreed to create a Polish government by mixing the Lublin and London Poles. Germany was to be cut up into occupation zones and Russia agreed to declare war on Japan three months after the end of the conflict in Europe. To cover up the Churchill-Molotov deal, which the Americans accepted without much debate, the conference issued the "Declaration of Liberated Europe," calling for free elections in every liberated country after the war.

The Yalta Conference was held when the end of the war was in sight—it was something like a preliminary peace conference. The next summit was to be held after the German surrender, and in Germany. When FDR died in April 1945, his Vice President, Truman, succeeded him. Since FDR kept many options open, his sudden death left American policy makers in deep trouble: there were several people who were absolutely convinced that only they knew what Roosevelt wanted to do. Truman introduced a tough line of policy against Russia, claiming that he would get 85% if he could not get 100%. Truman's 85% meant a reversal of policy towards Russia, which became obvious at the Potsdam Conference, held in Germany in July-August 1945. The seemingly confident but actually quite insecure Truman scheduled the meeting (with Churchill and Stalin) in a way to be able to use the news of the first successful atomic bomb test as a diplomatic lever. The conference itself approved the four-way division of Germany and agreed upon German reparations. The Poland deal was also finalized by shifting the whole country westward! This meant that the Soviet Union would get territories in Eastern Poland, and Poland, in return, would get German territories. The American-Russian deal over the Far East was also confirmed, and Truman announced that he had an extremely destructive new weapon.

This first instance of "atomic diplomacy" did not really impress Stalin—some say because he knew all about it. Wartime allies were spying on and threatening each other.

Thus in the big three conferences and several other meetings, the allies worked out the details of a postwar order—and the seeds of the cold war were also sown. The Paris Peace Conference of 1947 simply confirmed wartime agreements. With the removal of fascism, the conflict became essentially bipolar: liberal democracy against communism, with Russia expanding into Eastern Europe.

Economic deals were also struck during the war. Wartime economic diplomacy served two main goals: to decide the future of Germany as an economic great power and to create an integrated system for the postwar era—under American leadership. The representatives of the non-Axis powers met in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in mid-1944. The conference created the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund—in an attempt to realize Wilson's vision of a regulated international capitalist world order, based upon the open door. This threatened not only the newly emerging Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe but also the British policy of excluding American goods from the Commonwealth. The concept of the open door thus had very little appeal to Churchill, and another meeting took place in Quebec to discuss the details. But instead of talking over the Bretton Woods agreements, Churchill had to deal with FDR's new plan for the future of Germany. At some point between Bretton Woods and Quebec, the president subscribed to the so-called Morgenthau plan, which aimed to turn Germany into an agricultural country by destroying its industry. Thus, Churchill spent most of his time trying to persuade FDR to abandon this plan, which the president eventually did. However, unlike the political settlement, the nature and extent of postwar economic integration was left wide open.

There is one issue without which any discussion of World War II is incomplete, and that is the dropping of the two atomic bombs on Japan. This event ranks among the most horrible war crimes in history and is something the Americans are yet to come to terms with. In 1939, Albert Einstein and Leo Szilárd approached FDR and suggested that a new all-powerful weapon might be created by using the energy released in a nuclear chain reaction. The "Manhattan Project" was launched in due course; it was carried out in separate locations and employed tens of thousands of people—many of whom did not even suspect what they were working on. The best scientists involved in the project (many of them were of Hungarian stock) worked at Los Alamos, New Mexico, and believed that they were running a race with the Germans. The bomb was produced by July 1945, by which time Germany had surrendered. Therefore, several scientists on the project protested against the use of the bomb—but this did not impress Truman and his advisors.

The bomb was used against Japan twice within four days and various explanations have been offered for this barbarous act. The official American claim was that it was to force Japan to surrender and save American lives in the Pacific theater of war. Truman himself also hinted that the Japanese actually deserved it for Pearl Harbor. According to cold war interpretations, it was a warning to Russia, while still others claim that the Americans wanted to test the effects of the bomb—preferably on non-white peoples. Add to all that the irrationality of the war that had been dragging on for almost six years by then, and you get an answer as close to the truth as can be.

Of the available explanations for the use of the bomb, the one linking it to Russia is most interesting, since with the benefit of hindsight we now can state that it was one of the first signs of the cold war. In order to set the stage for the final chapters of out textbook we are now going to look at American-Russian relations in the Far East during World War II. When Japan turned the table on the Americans in the early 1930s, Washington had to look for a new ally in the Far

East. The obvious choice was China because that way both Japan and Russia could be checked. The only problem was that China did not want to fight Japan; as has been indicated earlier, the nationalist forces of Chiang and the communist troops of Mao chose to fight each other instead. The Americans forced the two of them into cooperation (after Chiang had been arrested by his own generals who wanted him to fight the Japanese invaders!), and Gen. Joseph W. "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell became the US commander attached to Chiang's headquarters. Financial support mattered but little and the Japanese swept the Chinese and British forces. Following the loss of Burma, Stilwell explained the causes of defeat in no uncertain words: "We are allied to an ignorant, illiterate peasant son-of-a-bitch called Chiang Kai-shek." Walter LaFeber's comment on Stilwell's racist outburst is: "Clearly, U.S. relations with its most important Asian ally, China, could be improved."

To achieve that, FDR came up with his already mentioned four policemen idea, but even that proved insufficient motivation for Chiang. Then, Roosevelt turned towards the Russians and began bargaining with Stalin. They agreed that Russia would get Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands (both Japanese possessions) in return for attacking Japan in the back. But when American policies began to change and suspicion against Russia was rising, Truman tried to call the deal off. And the best way to do that was to force Japan to surrender before the Soviet Union declared war on it. Events followed each other in quick succession: the first bomb was dropped, Russia entered the war two days later, the second bomb was dropped, and Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945—on the very same terms MacArthur and Truman had rejected before using the bomb. Thus, the US controlled Japan, had huge interests in China, kept Russia out of both countries, while the Russians took their islands off the coast of Japan. Great power confrontation was around the corner in the Far East, too; the US and Russia forgot rather quickly about their wartime alliance. The seeds of the cold war were sown in Asia, too.

But before looking at international relations since World War II, next we will survey briefly domestic American developments since 1945.

CHAPTER TWELVE
DOMESTIC AFFAIRS SINCE 1945

Having won World War II, the US set out to bring about the American Century both at home and abroad. We will now take a look at domestic developments in the US during the past half century. Our enquiries will show that in this period the US, just like during the first half of the century, had its spectacular ups and downs: socially, politically, and economically. We will survey the various challenges and answers to them in a decade by decade breakdown.

The second half of the 1940s was marked by the presidency of Harry S Truman, who held office between 1945 and 1953; he chose not to run in 1952. The main issue of the time was how to return to peacetime economy and politics without repeating the mistakes of the 1920s. Truman's answer was the "Fair Deal," a set of government reforms, which he could not realize but which still helped him to a victory in the 1948 election. (Then he was the underdog and his victory has been dubbed as the biggest political upset in twentieth century American history.)

At the end of the war America was facing several serious problems: some familiar, some entirely new. For various reasons which are outlined in the next chapter, Truman decided not to cut back seriously on the production of contraband. This way jobs in the war industry were maintained, and the military hardware for the newly emerging cold war was also available. More serious was the problem of the farmers, since Truman wanted to avoid the re-emergence of the agricultural crisis of the 1920s. Therefore, he made the farmer issue one of the central themes of his reform package. Women were also at the crossroads and faced new challenges: their well-paying jobs in the factories were threatened by the returning servicemen from the front. They faced the choice between peacefully surrendering their jobs or standing up for their rights. It became clear only by the early 1960s that they would go for the second option. Returning veterans were offered tuition-free higher education in the G.I. Bill of 1944. Thus, a combination of the baby boom and the G.I. Bill helped postpone the impending confrontation over jobs.

Another and more traditional issue was the place of Afro-Americans in society, especially because World War II brought serious changes in this department of life, too. Afro-Americans were drafted into the US army and realized in Europe and on the other fronts that people of color could be treated in a better way. And on returning home, they wanted more than what they had before the war. This was a hot issue and race relations appeared in national politics, too. In the 1948 election, Henry Wallace ran on the Progressive ticket as a third party candidate with the slogan "Jim Crow Must Go!" And although he did not win the election, his call marked the coming of a new era in American race relations. Meanwhile, President Truman ordered the desegregation of the US Army. The first major breakthrough came in professional sports, in baseball. Jackie Robinson became the first Afro-American player in Major League Baseball (before that there were separate Negro Leagues!) when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers. His case was so touchy and unusual that his manager had him sign a contract according to which for three years he would take any abuse from opponents, fans and team-mates alike! He stood the test successfully, and opened the floodgates for people of color into pro sports. But these were

only minor achievements, the early signs of the sweeping Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Realizing that his country was in trouble and having matured politically under FDR during the New Deal, Truman considered government reform to be the only way ahead for the US. His Fair Deal project had four cornerstones: tariff reduction, subsidies for farmers, public housing, and national health insurance. Although all four reform drives were of great significance for everyday life and/or high politics, Truman's proposals were defeated by Congress. This is why the Fair Deal is an often forgotten chapter in the history of American reform movements.

Interestingly enough, the year 1950 was a more important turning point in both domestic and foreign affairs than 1952, when the Republicans recaptured the White House after 20 years. As we will see in the next chapter, 1950 with NSC 68 and the Korean War marked the beginning of a new phase in the cold war. At home, the likes of Richard M. Nixon and Senator Joseph McCarthy launched an all-out witch hunt for real and imaginary communists. This became the major domestic political issue until 1955. The whole thing started in January 1950, when Alger Hiss, a State Department official who escorted FDR to Yalta, was convicted for perjury. He claimed to have no communist contacts, but Nixon, then a young California Republican congressman, proved him a liar. Some say Nixon was acting out of patriotism, others claim that it was vendetta—but whatever the reason, he became a national hero overnight and a new "red scare" was on. In the very same month, January 1950, a spy ring was discovered and it became evident that one of its key members, Klaus Fuchs, leaked nuclear secrets to the Russians. However, this period is known as "McCarthyism" because the man running this often disgraceful show of communist hunting was Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. In a widely televised series of hearings in the House Committee on Un-American Activities (which was established during the "red 1930s" when the membership of the communist party soared) McCarhtyists accused various people, often without evidence, and ruined the reputation of many respectable Americans of all walks of life: cabinet department officials, university lecturers, Hollywood directors, US army staff, etc. Eisenhower drastically put an end to all that in 1955.

McCarthyism is only one of the main features of the 1950s, a decade dubbed as "the good old days" or the Eisenhower era. Eisenhower, popularly known as Ike, was an unusual character: besides his earlier outlined military career he served as the first commander of the NATO and as president of Columbia University, New York City, before deciding to run on the Republican ticket in 1952. He won the contest and was reelected in 1956; and because of the 22nd amendment to the Constitution, which limits the presidency to two terms, he could not and did not run in 1960. Then he was replaced by the Democrat John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who won the election against Nixon in the first ever televised presidential debate.

The 1950s was a successful but rather conformist decade and many Americans tend to look back on it with nostalgia—especially after the experience of the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1950s there was one major issue that united the nation: anti-communism and the cold war. Economically, it was such a successful period that it came to be called America's fourth industrial revolution. This period was very much like the 1920s, inasmuch as this was not really an industrial boom but more like the development of the "consumer culture." At the heart of this economic boom were suburban home construction, car production, civic aviation, war industries, electronics, and the mass production of everyday consumer goods like chewing gum and mouthwash. This welfare period transformed American society, too: it created a baby boom (which for obvious reasons postponed the feminist issue), led to suburban development (something that had already

started during the 1920s) and brought about a decline in unionist activities (although the AFL and the CIO merged in 1955 into AFL-CIO, and has been the biggest union ever since).

A period of welfare is likely to bring new trends in entertainment—and this was the case in the US of the 1950s, too. Hollywood experienced its bleakest period because of the blacklisting of the McCarthy era and because of the emergence of a new, all-powerful media, the television, which combined audio effects (like the radio) with visual ones (like the newsreels or the movies). Although the TV was invented by the Scotsman John Logie Baird in 1927, commercial TV broadcasting in America began only in 1946. In 1950, 17% of American homes had a TV set, while in 1960, 87%. TV revolutionized politics (especially elections), advertising, professional sports and even music. (The new musical trend was rock and roll, represented above all by the Memphis truck driver turned singer Elvis Presley.) Americans did not have to go out to have fun anymore.

However, simply presenting the 1950s as a successful decade, the calm before the storm of the 1960s, would be a gross misrepresentation of American history. The decade saw the emergence of the criticism of the complacency and conformism of the age and brought about two major crises: the 1957 Sputnik crisis and the African-American Civil Rights Movement.

First, the critics. David Riesman, in his widely read book, *The Lonely Crowd* (1950, co-authored by Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney), explored the "changing American character" and pointed out that complacency, alienation, and dependence upon peer groups were replacing the traditional individualism, vigor, and can-do spirit of the people. Similar ideas were voiced in another cult book of the decade, William H. Whyte, Jr.'s 1956 volume called *The Organization Man.* Whyte described Americans as being simply cogs in the big machine, without ambition or character. If the sociologists were unable to shake up their fellow Americans, certain social and political crises did the trick. In 1957 the Russians launched the first man-made satellite, the Sputnik, into outer space. Consequently, a Sputnik crisis swept America: many felt that the US was legging behind the Soviet Union, its public enemy number one, in terms of scientific development. Therefore, curricula all over the country were reformed and the natural sciences received considerably more attention than ever before. The Beat Generation also emerged during the late 1950s, and, in a quite East European manner, literature came to play a key role in calling for change and social reform.

Another major feature of the 1950s is the emergence of the Civil Rights movement, the drive to bring about racial equality, almost one hundred years after Lincoln's famous Emancipation Proclamation and three subsequent constitutional amendments. The first public showdown over segregation in the South took place in 1954, when Chief Justice Earl Warren (who later headed the commission which investigated the assassination of President Kennedy) declared school segregation unconstitutional in the famous Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka County case. And in the next year another and equally significant racial crisis shook the nation. In Montgomery, Alabama, the NAACP activist Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus. She was arrested for violating state segregation laws! In response, Afro-Americans led by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., a brilliant baptist preacher and one of the key figures of the 1960s, launched a 13-month boycott of buses which eventually brought about the repeal of segregation on public transportation, too.

Actually, the Sputnik crisis and the emergence of the Civil Rights movement marked the beginning of arguably the most hectic decade of twentieth-century American history, the 1960s. This was a long decade; in fact, it began with the 1960 election in which John F. Kennedy narrowly edged out Nixon, and ended with Nixon's resignation over the Watergate scandal in August

1974. Thus, this was a politically mixed decade: the Democratic administrations of JFK and Lyndon B. Johnson (popularly known as LBJ) were followed by the Nixon presidency, which began on a high note in 1968, continued triumphantly in 1972, and ended in disgrace in 1974. This decade has produced many striking images from political assassinations through the Vietnam War and the landing on the Moon (1969) to street riots, anti-war protests, and Watergate. (A narrow, and less convincing, interpretation would place the Sixties between 1960 and 1968, and represent the emergence of Nixon and the return of the Republicans as the coming of the 1970s.)

The decade started with the inauguration of JFK, who in his first address told his fellow Americans: "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." He promised "New Frontiers" for America and that Americans would walk on the Moon by the end of the decade. Despite all the promises, his presidency, cut short by his assassination in Dallas, Texas, in November 1963, did little to improve the domestic and the international position of the United States. As we will see in the next chapter, JFK largely contributed to such crises as the Bay of Pigs incident and the Cuban Missile Crisis and helped provoke the Russians to build the Berlin Wall.

The domestic situation did not look any better. In order to take on the hottest issue of the day, race riots, JFK appointed his brother, Robert, as Attorney General. The Kennedys fought for federal voting and civil rights legislation as well as for health care reform, all of which were realized during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson. Following the assassination of President Kennedy, Johnson promised the nation that he would carry on his predecessor's work—and on the domestic front he did. He was elected president in his own right in 1964 and then set out to realize his grand design of a "Great Society" in which everybody would be middle-class and there would be no poverty. Johnson's "Great Society" was yet another government reform package for America, but unlike the New Deal or the Fair Deal, it was prepared in response to violent crises, calls for reform, and social trouble. In this regard, it resembles the Progressive Era.

In 1964 Johnson pushed through Congress the Civil Rights Act (101 years after the Emancipation Proclamation) and in the next year the Voting Rights Act—both of which were conceived during the Kennedy years. In order to complete the social security and welfare legislation program started by FDR in the New Deal (LBJ himself was a New Dealer: he worked on the TVA), Medicare and Medicaid were also passed by Congress. On top of that, Johnson in 1965 repealed the 1924 quota act restricting immigration into the United States of America. At home Johnson was a very popular and successful president.

Then came the year of 1968. Now there are quite shocking years in the history of every nation (think about 1526 or 1919 in Hungary), and 1968 was perhaps the single worst year in US history. The Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King and the Democratic presidential candidate Robert Kennedy were assassinated, communist forces launched the Tet offensive in Vietnam, Johnson announced that he would not run again, the Prague Spring was put down by the Russians, there were street riots in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention, and a group of American soldiers massacred an entire village in South Vietnam. (Those involved in the My Lai massacre were later given a presidential pardon by Nixon!)

Nixon won the election with the slogan "Law and Order" and because he claimed to have a "secret plan" to end the war in Vietnam. He was of Quaker stock and supposedly opposed all forms of violence. He was a well-known albeit somewhat controversial character in domestic politics: he was a member of the China lobby supporting Chiang, he demonstrated his anti-communism in the Hiss case, he was Ike's Vice President, lost to Kennedy in 1960, announced his

retirement twice, etc. Then in 1968 a "new" Nixon went to the White House after an easy victory. He was a conservative and a right-wing Republican, and many felt he was the man the country needed. And while he brought dramatic new departures in US foreign policy, his domestic efforts remained rather limited—mostly to putting down demonstrations and riots and to breaking federal laws and violating the Constitution. In 1972, CREEP (Committee for the Re-Election of the President) agents broke into the Watergate building and read various documents after cracking the safe in the Democratic headquarters. Nixon denied any contact with the intruders, but he was proved a liar and resigned before he could be impeached on August 7, 1974. The decade was over in a bang.

The 1960s was a decade marked by various social and political movements—a backlash after the complacent 1950s. One of the main issues, as has been mentioned, was the Civil Rights movement, which started during the mid-50s. Its early victories encouraged Afro-Americans to stand up against segregation in all departments of life. They began to "sit-in" at cafes serving only whites, went to libraries to "read-in," etc. This peaceful wing of the movement, based upon the idea of "civil disobedience" outlined by Henry David Thoreau, was led by Martin Luther King, Jr. He organized a march on Washington in August 1963, and standing on the stairs of the Lincoln Memorial, he delivered one of the best and most moving American political speeches ever. Among other things he said:

> I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and the frustrations of the moment I still have a dream. It's a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal." . . . I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

However, King was assassinated in 1968 and the movement died down. The Civil Rights movement had another, more militant wing, too, represented by the Black Muslims and Black Panthers. They were led by Malcolm X, a pimp and pusher (drug dealer) turned Civil Rights activist, who was also shot dead, three years before King. The loss of its leaders and the introduction of federal civil rights legislation pulled the carpet from under the movement, although the boxer Muhammad Ali summed up the general attitude of Afro-Americans toward the system when he refused to join the army: "No Vietcong ever called me a nigger."

Another major issue of the 1960s was the anti-Vietnam War movement. A lot of people did not understand why they or their sons had to go to fight in Asia, some 10,000 miles away from home. Protesters took to the streets, the slogan "Make love not war!" spread like wild fire and draft resistance became fashionable. As the war dragged on protests became more and more violent (and so did the response to them), until in May 1970 four students were shot dead by the Ohio National Guard on the Kent State University campus in Ohio. Nixon in a widely televised speech called students protesting against the war "bums."

The students were especially active in this period, although they were the ones to go to Asia. Their movement, the Students for a Democratic Society, was launched with the 1962 "Port Huron Statement" and they were actively involved in many protests like the 1968 street riots in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention. Backing up the student movement was rock music, which for the first and only time really did have something to say. The rock in politics movement

started with Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" and peaked during the three-day festival at Woodstock, where Jimi Hendrix, much to the dislike of ordinary Americans, played the "Star Spangled Banner" on electric guitar and Country Joe McDonald told the federal government where it should go in "Looks-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag."

During the 1960s the issue of women also came to the center of attention. As has been indicated earlier, World War II brought major changes in their lives, and a confrontation between them and those who mistreated them seemed inevitable. Betty Friedan's 1963 volume, *The Feminine Mystique,* challenged the old stereotypes of women. Friedan argued that women were not to be treated as toys and objects of desire, nor as homemakers, and that they were not genetically inferior and incapable of working. Friedan created the National Organization of Women and a constitutional amendment (the so-called Equal Rights Amendment, or ERA) was drafted. Had it been passed, it would have outlawed discrimination on the basis of sex. One major breakthrough was the 1973 Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision, which legalized abortion. Radical feminism also emerged during the Sixties, although there is evidence to suggest that much talked about bra-burnings never took place. Gay Liberation also started in this period, the watermark being the Stonewall riots of 1969.

Various ethnic and racial minorities also stood up for their rights. The Chicanos and the Puerto Ricans (the Young Lords) issued a joint statement demanding fair treatment in March 1963. "Indians of all tribes" occupied the island of Alcatraz (which then was not a federal prison anymore), reclaimed the land and issued a powerful written manifesto supporting their claim and ridiculing the methods of white men. In February 1973, Oglala Sioux warriors occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the site of the last Indian massacre in 1890, and declared it liberated territory. They were stormed by the National Guard and some of them were sent to jail. Interestingly, in response to the rediscovery of the Native-Americans and their attitude toward nature, a new environmentalist movement also began to take shape. People worried about man's abuse of nature protested so successfully that President Nixon declared April 22, 1970 the first Earth Day. Interestingly, this environmentalist revival continued largely undisturbed into the 1980s.

This was also the decade of counterculture, the rejection of traditional American values and ideals. In the social sciences a New Left emerged, which disclosed and emphasized the dark chapters of US history. On the other side of the political spectrum, the New Right emerged and stood up for traditional Christian values.

All this upheaval qualified as the violation of law and order according to the White House, and the FBI was unleashed to stop these movements. Students, university lecturers, and other people were arrested and the press (especially war news) was heavily censored. "Monster," an all-time classic by Steppenwolf, a rock group, sums it all up: "America, where are you now?/ Don't you care about your sons and daughters?/ Don't you know, we need you now/ We can't fight alone against the monster."

Then, suddenly, the 1960s were over. Peace was made with Vietnam in January 1973 and next summer Nixon resigned to avoid impeachment. What he left behind was neither law nor order, but a discredited presidency, a severe economic crisis, and a frustrated nation questioning traditional American values and the mission of America.

What came next was the 1970s, a decade which lasted for about six years. It started with Nixon's resignation and ended in 1980, when the second class movie hero turned politician Ronald Reagan was elected president a year after the Russians had moved into Afghanistan. Ford succeeded Nixon in the White House and granted him a presidential pardon. Consequently, he lost the 1976 election to the rank outsider James Earl Carter, the former governor of Georgia.

The following anecdote tells all about Carter and the general mood of the era: In 1976 he told his mother that he would run for president, and she asked: "President of what?" This was to be an apolitical era, to say the least.

The new era of detente in international relations and the calming of the storm of the 1960s perhaps inevitably led to a quiet period in which people decided to mind their own business. The 1970s are sometimes called a "me-decade" (as opposed to the "we-decade" of the 1960s) and people turned not toward the future but toward the past. A July 1977 *Newsweek* article appropriately called this "Everybody's Search for Roots." The cult book of the decade, fiction (and history combined) and not sociology, was Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976), a reconstruction of the past of his (Afro-American) family. (The TV serial made from the novel was a great success in Hungary, too.) Many people also questioned the unifying myths of America, especially that of the "melting pot." In a book written in 1963 but which became a bestseller in the 1970s, *Beyond the Melting Pot,* authors Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan concluded that in New York City "the melting pot did not happen." But still, there is an America culture, and to account for its emergence the concept of the "salad bowl" was introduced. According to that, the American culture and the American nation is a mixture of European, Asian, African, etc., cultures and peoples; it is not entirely American, like in a bowl of salad one can see its ingredients. Further social criticism came form Christopher Lasch in his widely read *The Culture of Narcissism* (1978). Lasch challenged his fellow Americans for turning inward and abandoning long standing core American values.

The 1970s also brought economic trouble for the United States of America. The senseless military spending to "close the [actually non-existent] missile gap" during the Kennedy years and then Nixon's "Vietnamization" project wore out the national economy so much that Chrysler and Lockheed (the official airplane manufacturer of the federal government) could only be saved by a major financial injection from the White House. Added to that was the 1973 oil embargo introduced by the Arab countries against the US: thirty years after the US economy had produced more than the rest of the world combined, its very foundations were shaking now. A new policy of monetarism was introduced, but the rapid rise of Japan and Western Europe continues to undermine America's leading role in the world economy even today.

On July 4, 1976, the US turned 200, but sadly, or perhaps even tragically, at a time when patriotism and national feeling hit an all-time low. However, within three years the future-oriented nature of the country and a set a foreign and domestic developments shook up the nation: the 1980s arrived with the "Second Cold War" and with Ronald Reagan leading Hollywood into the White House.

The revival of the outside threat of communism (i.e., the Russian invasion of Afghanistan) led Reagan to claim during the 1980 presidential election that America needed a leader above all. He defeated Carter and introduced a neo-conservative turn into American politics. But, mind you, conservatism in America means something else than in Europe: going back to old ideals and to values and institutions tested by time, and limited government intervention in the everyday life of the people. Reagan set out to unify the nation using the outside threat of communism—which was exaggerated by such major Hollywood contributions to human culture as the 1984 movie, "Red Dawn," in which a group of high school kids sacrificed their lives to hold up the entire Russian army which invaded the US! Reagan also introduced the policy of "God, family and country" in an obvious attempt to recreate the spirit of the 1950s: the honoring of traditional values, anti-communism, patriotism, and a belief in "making the world safe for democracy." But despite the president's ambitious plans, the 1980s turned out to be a politically

passive period. (One historian quite appropriately described it as "sleepwalking through history.")

The 1980s saw a minor religious revival, too, the "God" section of the Reagan slogan. This was brought about by the New Religious Right, which promoted protestant values quite vehemently (e.g., televangelists) and raised issues like abortion. They put the right to life ahead of everything and wanted to declare abortion illegal. The only problem was that in a period of economic depression the baby boom of the 1950s could not be reproduced; people tend to think twice before deciding to have several children at a time when unemployment is riding high.

This economic crisis was perhaps the biggest problem of the decade—it was the net outcome of some forty years of cold war games and of Vietnam. Reagan surprised the country in 1980 by promising to cut taxes and raising the defense budget. This seemed so improbable that George Bush, then a challenger to Reagan for the Republican nomination, called it voodoo economics. (However, when Reagan chose him as his running mate, Bush cast aside his reservations—this is what modern politics is all about.) Reaganomics, or the Reagan revolution, did come about. He "managed" to raise the national debt to an all-time high $1.5 trillion by sending military spending through the roof, and did cut the taxes. He sought to compensate for the loss of federal revenue by cutting welfare spending, thus ruining millions of "welfare families" who could find no jobs and now were cut off from federal subsidies, too. The age old principle of "if you are good enough you will make it" does not always work. As regards the economy, Reagan left a difficult task for his self-appointed successor, George Bush.

The 1980s saw yet another major political scandal in America: the so-called Iran Contra Affair. The story was that Reagan sold arms to Iran, which was against federal law since Iran had held American hostages since 1979, and then pumped the money into one of his Latin American pet projects, the Contras in Nicaragua, which was also banned by federal law. Reagan claimed to have no knowledge of the transactions and the man who eventually took all the blame was Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North. Clearly, two back to back Watergate scandals of two Republican presidents could easily have destroyed the GOP. (North ran for Senate in the 1994 mid-term elections, but Americans had the common sense not to elect him.)

The biggest surprise for Americans came when all cold war rhetoric, and the entire Reagan policy built upon it, became meaningless. Gorbachev (*Time* magazine's man of the decade for the 1980s) appeared on the scene, withdrew Russian troops from Afghanistan, and offered a practically unilateral nuclear disarmament deal to the White House. The cold war was over and Americans were learning Russian words like glasnost and perestroika.

The collapse of the Russian block brought new challenges for America, which were met not by Reagan but by George Bush, who served for one term between 1989 and 1993. (He then lost the 1992 election to the then Democratic governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton.) The early 1990s saw the removal of the outside threat of communism—hopefully once and for all—and brought new challenges and problems in the form of multiculturalism. The United States of America, for the first time in its history, did rise up to "live out the true meaning of its creed" and bring about racial and sexual equality. Multiculturalism resulted in a major revision of values and attitudes; the formerly WASP male dominated American culture now begins to look like a "salad bowl." The main issues of multiculturalism include political correctness (an often ridiculed attempt to create a language which is not offensive toward anyone), racial equality, feminism, and environmentalism. Calls for reform have been spelled out more than once but a Republican-dominated Congress stopped all Clinton's attempts to improve the situation. (Furthermore, he was impeached, but acquitted, on makeshift charges connected to sexual relations with an intern,

Monica Lewinski.) But multiculturalism carries destructive elements in itself, too: extreme feminism (calling all men potential rapists), controversial legal decisions with a political "message" (the O. J. Simpson case), race riots (the Rodney King affair in 1992), the growing racial divide; in a word, multiculturalism might break up the entire system and the country.

The hotly contested 2000 presidential election, in which the Supreme Court stopped the (state level) recount in Florida on the basis of the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment, started a new chapter in American history. Questions about the legitimacy of George W. Bush's presidency were soon swept aside when Al-Quaeda terrorists flew hijacked passenger airliners (!) into the Pentagon and the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Tragedy struck America in a way she had not been struck before. The cowardly and bestial attacks of September 11, 2001 (9-11 for short, 911 being the public emergency phone number in the States) created a unified stand against terrorism. The US PATRIOT Act was passed, giving the federal Government and the newly established Department of Homeland Security unprecedented licenses to collect information about, and monitor the activities of, suspicious individuals and organizations. Anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner feelings are riding high once again, partly because of the shock of 9-11, and partly because some of America's key allies (notably France and Germany) refused to participate in the preventive war against Iraq. On January 5, 2004, US authorities began fingerprinting and photographing all foreigners traveling on a visa. Tourists are now assigned color codes to show the level of terrorist threat authorities think they represent to the US. The Bush administration declared war on terrorism, and at times of war such abuses have not been unheard of before. Meanwhile, because the show must go on, the Austrian-born action movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger became Republican governor of California, when, for the first time in its history, the state decided to recall its incumbent Democratic governor.

Bush and Republicans lost most of their popularity because of the two wars (Iraq and Afghanistan) and because of the global financial collapse brought about by financial speculators in the final quarter of 2008. In the historic 2008 presidential elections the incumbent president was asked NOT to campaign on behalf of the Republican candidate John McCain and his running mate, Sarah Palin, incidentally the first woman ever nominated by the Republicans. The Democrats had to choose between former First Lady and New York Senator Hillary Clinton and Illinois Senator Barack Obama, a half white, half Afro-American candidate. Obama barely edged Clinton out, but, much to the surprise and delight of the outside world, easily won the election. Another major color barrier was thus broken: the first non-WASP male person was elected US president. Some say Obama is black, others say he is half white or half black.

The Republicans contributed to the economic collapse of not only the US but of the world (Hungary's economic growth for 2009 was –7.2%!) by military overspending (war on terror) and by financial deregulation. One of the final acts of the Bush administration was the creation of the first bailout package for Wall Street. When Obama assumed office, he continued the bailout and launched an unprecedented government spending program to restart the economy and reform immigration and health care. The Republicans shifted gear and returned to fiscal conservatism, accusing the Democrats of overspending and overtaxing people. One creative project on their part was the launching of the Tea Party Movement, which protests against the termination of tax cuts for people with incomes over 250,000 dollars. The carefully chosen reference is to colonial resistance to British attempts to tax the North American colonies during the Decade of Conflict (1763–75), an early and heroic period of American history. And the greatest show on earth goes on…

America on the eve of the 21st century, just like one hundred years before during the Progressive Era, faces a stern test of character—but many people around the world continue to hope that the "city upon a hill" can be and will be built someday.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY SINCE 1945

We are now taking a look at a unique chapter of American history: never before had the United States of America conducted active global diplomacy when not at war. At the end of World War II US policy makers were facing an interesting choice: they could retreat to semi-isolation (i.e., isolation toward Europe and active diplomacy in Latin America, Asia and perhaps in the Middle East), or, capitalizing on the quite favorable situation of the time, they could try to carry out America's mission and make the world safe for democracy. Those favorable conditions were actually extremely favorable: the US controlled more than half of the industrial production of the world and world trade, it was the greatest military power and had sole possession of the most destructive weapon ever made, and was practically untouched by the war. We all know that American policy makers went for the second option. Below a few introductory remarks are followed by a chronological survey of United States foreign policy during the past seventy years.

In earlier chapters we have already referred to this period as diplomatic counterrevolution. In chapter eight we have also pointed to the lack of trained diplomats and to Wilson's desire to reshape international relations. (The first of his Fourteen Points reads: "Open covenants of peace openly arrived at.") This lack of diplomatic training and experience combined with a sometimes naive attitude toward international relations constitutes one of the two components of what we might call the diplomatic counterrevolution. The other one is that the US seems to use only two methods in making foreign policy: dollar diplomacy and the big stick; i.e., economic blackmail and military intervention. This is what Senator Fulbright, who for some time served as the Chair of the all-powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee (remember Lodge, Wilson and the treaty fight?), called "the arrogance of power:" American policy makers and diplomats tend to dictate terms instead of negotiating about them.

Having said that, the Truman administration took the necessary steps to create a properly functioning foreign policy establishment for the cold war era: the Joint Chiefs of Staff were regularly called on for advice as well as the State Department's Policy Planning Staff and the newly established National Security Council; the War and Navy Departments were merged into one Defense Department; and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was created to carry out undercover activities. In order to avoid conflicts like the treaty fight in 1919, Truman worked out a bipartisan agreement with the then Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Republican Senator from Michigan, Arthur Vandenberg. He really did mean business.

Another thing we must look at before starting our main discussion is the use of terminology. The period between 1945 and 1990 has often been called the cold war era. But this term applies only if we mean by this the entire network of international relations—and not just what was going on between the Kremlin and the White House. Simply viewing this period as a communist-anti-communist struggle would be disregarding the so-called third world and the non-aligned movement as well as Europe's role in international relations and American adventures in Latin

America and Russian ones in Eastern Europe. (Although all these are integral parts of a broader picture, a detailed survey of the period would go much beyond the scope of this textbook.)

Two more things: limited war and containment. Limited war is a term often used to describe wars since 1945, or as a recent British TV series called it: "Wars in Peace." Its basic idea is quite simple: the two superpowers (the US and the Soviet Union) had to avoid a face to face military showdown because that might have led to all-out nuclear war. Limited war thus (supposedly) means that if one superpower gets militarily involved in a war the other one supports its opponents only with money and contraband, but never with troops. The best examples are Korea and Vietnam on the one hand and the Russian invasion of Afghanistan on the other. Having said that, post-cold war research in Eastern bloc archives has revealed that Soviet pilots flew all MIG-15s in the Korean War, which has led to a revision of limited war theories recently. Containment became the cornerstone of American diplomacy for the cold war. The term itself was coined by the State Department official Gorge F. Kennan in his famous "Long Telegram" and "Mr. X article." Kennan actually said what Truman wanted to hear and at the time he wanted hear it: namely that the Soviet system is an inherently expansionist one, that the American and Soviet views of the world are mutually exclusive, that in order to make the world safe for democracy the US has to remain diplomatically active even after World War II, and that it has to check (i.e., contain) the expansion of communism all around the world. If this was done, Kennan argued, the Soviet system would fall apart. And time did prove him right. (Note that every foreign policy making team after 1945 had its own interpretation of containment; these will be introduced one by one.)

The story of international relations since 1945 is best understood if we divide it into five periods: the first "cold war" (1945-49); a "new cold war" (1950 to the mid-60s); "detente" (mid-60s to 1979); the "second cold war" (1979 to the end of the 1980s; note that this is an obvious misnomer); and the "post cold war world" (since 1989). Next we will survey these periods one by one, focusing on the main issues of the time.

The first cold war, 1945-1949. The United States of America (1) out of the fear that the domestic economy might collapse if they cut back on wartime production too soon, (2) lured by the idealist hope that its mission now could be realized, and (3) driven by the lust for power, decided to pursue an active diplomacy after World War II. With America's earlier diplomatic record, this was a daring decision, made by Truman and his closest advisors including Kennan and Secretaries of State George C. Marshall and Dean Acheson. This was a "Europe first" period in American diplomacy. What this means is that Truman's main concern was to stop the spreading of communism from the Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe into Western Europe. He used the CIA and various other subversive means to quiet the rather powerful Italian and French communist parties, struck a deal with General Franco's fascist regime in Spain, and carried out a successful airlift to West Berlin, which the Russians had cut off from the western zones of occupation. These western zones were actually united into the Federal Republic of Germany and the German mark (the currency) was stabilized. (The Russian occupation zone, which included Berlin, but not all of it, became the Peoples' Republic of Germany.)

Yet the two most spectacular manifestations of Truman's Europe first policy were the so-called Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Truman once called these "the two halves of the same walnut." In March 1947 President Truman informed Congress that the US would stand up to defend the free world from autocratic regimes (he must have meant communism by that since he sought the cooperation of Franco's Spain). During the 1947 Harvard graduation ceremony Secretary of State George C. Marshall announced that the US would launch a major financial

aid program for European recovery. Russia and its satellites were also invited to participate but financial aid was tied to such political commitments that Molotov, who led the Soviet delegation, simply walked out on the meeting. (The Soviet response was the COMECON, the Council of Mutual Economic Cooperation.) Truman decided to back up his European policies by the first peacetime military alliance the US has entered: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, established in 1949). Thus by economic and military means and also by using the threat of the bomb, communist expansion in Europe was indeed contained along the Yalta lines. (Other, for the purpose of our discussion less significant, European developments included the 1947 Paris Peace Conference and the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi war criminals.)

While not much was going on in Latin America (besides the creation of the Organization of American States), the US scored major successes in the Middle East and Asia. One by one, Britain abandoned its interests in Greece, Turkey, and Iran, which were picked up by the US. (It was at the height of the Greek crisis that Truman put forward his doctrine in Congress.) Furthermore, the Americans actively participated in the creation of the state of Israel in the middle of the Arab world—a decision which proved to be quite controversial, to say the least.

America's diplomatic record in the Far East proved less impressive. Under pressure from the powerful China lobby in Congress, Truman continued to support Chiang's nationalist forces in China in the hope that he would soon defeat Mao and the communists. Meanwhile, the Americans occupied Japan and MacArthur set out to pacify and Americanize the former enemy. His staff forced an American-style political, economic, and educational system on Japan and even wrote a new constitution for it. It was very much like the American one, but it carried a section according to which Japan would never raise an army or produce military hardware. (For various reasons, this provision was in effect for about two years!) Furthermore, MacArthur hanged war criminals and introduced a successful land reform.

All in all, it seemed by 1949 that the US was winning the cold war without doing anything special, by simply maintaining World War II military production and strategic positions. Then in 1949, the whole thing collapsed: the Russians tested their own atomic bomb and Mao won the civil war: China was "lost" (as if the Americans ever had it). A major revision of US foreign policy became imminent, and the options were clear: the US could retreat to the Western Hemisphere or it could step up military production, raise a standing army to defend Western Europe, and develop a new and even better bomb. But this is the story of the new cold war starting with the year 1950.

As indicated in the previous chapter, 1950 turned out to be a year of decisions. The National Security Council prepared a proposal for Truman (it was called NSC-68), in which it argued that: (1) the US had to meet the communist challenge on all fronts, man for man, bullet for bullet; (2) the US economy could support a major increase in military spending; and (3) a new and better bomb should be built. This was a daring and ambitious project, not unacceptable to Truman, but he needed a spectacular excuse to implement it. Rather unexpectedly, he got it in Korea of all places, where the communist North Korean forces attacked the southern half of the country during the summer of 1950. The communists were "on the move" and the Korean War started.

Truman acted with amazing speed: MacArthur was ordered to move in from Japan, the US "rediscovered" Chiang who had fled to the off-shore island of Taiwan (Formosa), a separate US-Japanese peace treaty was signed, and Japan—in violation of the Constitution written for it by MacArthur—was told to produce arms and raise an army. Things and preferences were changing really fast in Asia. However, despite all its efforts, the US could not win the war, since Chinese "volunteers" (about two million of them) poured into North Korea and rolled the

Americans back. The front line froze along the original armistice line, the 38th parallel, by 1951, but a truce was not signed until 1953. The delays were largely due to the fact that Chinese and North Korean POWs refused to be sent home. The US tied its first major post-World War II conflict, which was also the first limited war of the cold war era.

That notwithstanding, NSC-68 and the Korean war marked the beginning of a new era in international relations, a period described as "a new cold war" by Robert A. Divine in his excellent book, *Eisenhower and the Cold War.* The focus of attention shifted from Europe to the third world, and practically all major confrontations took place there. US foreign policy in the Eisenhower era was conducted by the president in cooperation with the Dulles brothers—John Foster was Secretary of State, Allen Welsh headed the CIA. They promised America a "New Look" in 1952, which really was a budget conscious cold war, based upon rhetoric—liberation and rollback—and atomic diplomacy—"massive retaliation" and "nuclear brinksmanship." Massive retaliation meant that in case of communist aggression, the US would choose the time and method of retaliation, while nuclear brinksmanship meant that atomic diplomacy became an integral part of the Eisenhower foreign policy structure: the US would go to the brink of nuclear war and stop only there. (Its most spectacular and frightening implementation took place during the Cuban Missile Crisis during the Kennedy years.)

Actually, US-Soviet relations, despite the rhetoric, improved considerably during the 1950s. The US kept out of the various East European revolutions (East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia) and the Soviets did not interfere with American adventures in Latin America. (Not even when a legally elected government in Guatemala was overthrown by the CIA in 1954. The story was that the new government confiscated the uncultivated lands of the United Fruit Company since people were dying of hunger. The only problem was that John Foster Dulles worked as the lawyer for the company before joining the State Department. This was raw self-interest, and not even of the country but of big business.) Following Stalin's death, the Kremlin introduced a new policy of peaceful coexistence and agreed to sign the Austrian State Treaty and evacuate the country (in 1955). A nuclear arms limitations conference, the so-called "Open Skies," was also scheduled to meet in Paris in 1960. But all was not well. Following the Sputnik crisis the Americans stepped up reconnaissance activity over Russia, and the Russians shot down a U2 spy plane just before the conference. An angry Khrushchev turned the table on Eisenhower at Paris. But this was also because by the time Ike left the White House in 1961, the US had established some forty-odd military alliances encircling the Soviet Union and China and acquired over 200 military bases around them (hence the term pactomania). Still, there was no open confrontation between the two superpowers during the 1950s.

Meanwhile, the Americans continued to gain ground in the Middle East, which had nothing to do with communism but was all about oil. In 1953 they helped the young shah, Reza Pahlavi, to power and in 1956 they made further advances in the Suez crisis. (1956 was a very telling year: it was election year in the US and just before Election Day two crises emerged simultaneously: the Revolution in Hungary and the Suez conflict. Eisenhower had to act cautiously and choose between rhetoric—the "liberation" of Hungary—and raw self-interest—oil in the Middle East. He went for Suez, which from an American point of view certainly was the logical choice.)

Interestingly enough, the region that was to pose the most serious problems for the US during the next decade, the Far East, remained relatively quiet after Eisenhower had ended the Korean War in 1953. Having "lost" China and wanting to contain the Russians, the Americans continued to support Chiang (still on Taiwan) and Japan.

The first half of the 1960s was a kind of transition between the new cold war of the fifties and the coming detente of the late sixties. In his farewell address Eisenhower warned against the military-industrial complex—not least because he knew that his successor, Kennedy, would launch a new arms race to "close the missile gap"—which did exist, but in favor of the US. Kennedy defined his policy as flexible response, which was a return to the (symmetrical) containment idea of NSC-68, namely to meeting the communist challenge on all fronts with equal strength. He also established the counterinsurgency forces to fight guerrillas in third world conflicts.

The overall diplomatic record of the Kennedy years is rather disappointing: all he had to show against three major US-Soviet confrontations (one of which almost ended in nuclear war) and the chaos in Vietnam was a friendly turn in US-Latin American relations (except with Cuba, of course). Following his inauguration, Kennedy called for an Alliance for Progress to help the staggering Latin American economies back on their feet and to restore their faith in the US. With some exaggeration we may say that during the 1960s the good neighbor policy of the Roosevelt era was back.

But all this did not apply to Cuba, where Fidel Castro came to power in 1959 and under serious threats from the US "discovered" Marxism-Leninism. This earned him the hatred and rejection of Washington and the support of Moscow; after all Cuba is about 90 miles off the shore of Florida. Eisenhower and Allen W. Dulles drew up a plan to help Cuban "nationalists" invade the island, and Kennedy gave the go-ahead signal in April 1961. The invasion, known as the Bay of Pigs incident, was a spectacular failure, and Kennedy had to go on TV to explain his deeds.

Next, Kennedy met Khrushchev in Vienna in June 1961. They discussed the future of West Berlin: Khrushchev wanted the US to turn it over to the East German regime, but JFK flatly refused to do so. This was met by the construction of the Berlin Wall, perhaps the most visible symbol of the cold war until it was torn down; and Kennedy's protocol visit to Berlin did little to calm the storm.

And the worst was still to come. Kennedy's undercover actions to get rid of Castro by any means (hurt pride because of the Bay of Pigs, you know) prompted the Cuban leader to turn to Moscow for help. Khrushchev promptly replied by sending nuclear missiles to Cuba. When the CIA found out about the operation, Kennedy went on national television (October 22, 1962) and (1) announced the naval quarantine of Cuba, (2) demanded the withdrawal of the missiles, (3) and warned that he would retaliate against the Soviet Union should missiles from Cuba hit the US. This was the third major twentieth century violation of the Monroe Doctrine and it almost ended in nuclear war. Some seven days of heavy bargaining followed, some open and some behind the scenes, and on October 28 Khrushchev retreated by accepting Kennedy's ultimatum: an American no-invasion pledge for the removal of the missiles. (Another secret deal was that the US would later withdraw missiles from Turkey, which was a neighbor of the Soviet Union.) Never before or after has the world been so close to an all-out nuclear war—but common sense and sheer luck saved us all. A set of post-cold war conferences revealed that both Kennedy and Khrushchev gave preliminary authorization to certain commanding officers to use tactical (i.e. short-range, 20-30 miles) nuclear weapons. The planned American invasion of Cuba, the ultimate (and to the present day vehemently denied) phase of Operation Mongoose, was to take place in the first half of October, but bad weather prevented any move by Washington. Russian projects to complete the planting the rockets (Operation Anadyr) were also delayed by bad weather and operational difficulties. It was under these circumstances that the U2 flights revealed the Soviet

missiles on October 16. With neither side aware of nuclear predelegation orders in the other camp, Kennedy and Khrushchev died without finding out how close we really were to nuclear Armageddon.

Preoccupied with Cuba and Berlin, JFK had little time left to deal with the newly emerging hotspot of Southeastern Asia, Indochina. To understand the developments in Vietnam we have to go back to the Eisenhower era for some background information. Indochina used to be a French colony and after World War II the North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh launched a colonial war of liberation against the French. He won a major victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Armistice talks were held in Geneva, Switzerland, and two agreements were made: (1) the French and Ho agreed on a ceasefire and drew a temporary dividing line along the 17th parallel; (2) and neither north nor south Vietnam were to join military alliances or allow foreign powers to have military bases on its territory. The American delegation to Geneva, led by the rather reluctant John Foster Dulles, refused to sign the Geneva Accords, hoping to be able to call the deal off. Thus began a process of Vietnamization—i.e., the systematic build-up of the Army of the Republic of (South) Vietnam, the ARVN, and financial support was also lent to the Saigon regime headed by Ngo Dinh Diem. However, when Eisenhower briefed Kennedy on the Far Eastern situation in January 1961, he called his successor's attention not to Vietnam but to Laos, where the Pathet Lao, the local communists, had seized some key areas.

Still, Vietnam turned out to be the real trouble-spot in Indochina. Kennedy continued to finance the Diem regime and sent various missions there to evaluate the situation. But being otherwise engaged and receiving contradictory reports, Kennedy paid little attention to Vietnam until mid-1963, when the situation exploded. Buddhist monks protesting against Diem's regime and the ever-growing American presence (according to the Geneva Accords, 685 military advisors were allowed, but by 1963 the US had over 16,000 in South Vietnam) burned themselves publicly in the streets of Saigon. All that was televised in the US and the shock became even bigger when the wife of Diem's brother called it a "barbecue show" and offered some oil to the other monks who wanted to burn themselves. Diem's own generals, with the tacit approval of Kennedy and Ambassador Lodge, overthrew Diem and killed him and his brother. This happened on November 1, 1963. Three weeks later Kennedy was assassinated—the time of decision had come.

And that decision was made by Lyndon Johnson in 1964. He claimed that American ships were attacked on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin (which happens to be between communist China and communist North Vietnam) and Congress passed the "Gulf of Tonkin resolution," which allowed Johnson to escalate the war and start bombing both South and North Vietnam. Yes, South Vietnam also. The Americans in Vietnam were in a difficult situation: they simply did not know who was friend and foe. The Americans and the South Vietnamese regime controlled the big cities south of the 17th parallel, while the Vietcong held North Vietnam and most of the countryside in the south. The Americans sought to destroy the Vietcong by bombing both the southern and the northern parts of the country and, during the Nixon years, by Operation Phoenix, in which CIA agents murdered an estimated 21,000 civilians whom they rightly or wrongly considered Vietcong.

Johnson's policy in Vietnam, which became an obsession for him, was bombing for peace between 1965 and 1967. He bombed the country, then put forward a peace proposal, and when it was rejected he resumed the bombing; meanwhile he sent more and more troops to Vietnam. But this was not simply a cynical scheme to break down the enemy: on the one hand it became a war of honor (no one wanted to be the first president to lose a war), and on the other hand Johnson did want to make Indochina a better place to live—after the removal of the communists.

Most notably, he repeatedly proposed the "friendly development of the Mekong," a river that springs in China, runs through Laos and Cambodia, and has its delta in South Vietnam. (Johnson was a TVA man during the 1930s and there is evidence to suggest that he really did mean this project seriously. But it was always rejected, just like a similar offer earlier during the Korean War about "the friendly development of the Yalu," the border river between China and Korea.)

Although neither bombing nor dollar diplomacy brought the desired result, Johnson announced in January 1968 that "we are winning the war." Well, they were not. Also in January 1968, during the lunar new year, Tet (hence the name of the offensive), the communists launched an all-out open attack in South Vietnam and even stormed the US Embassy is Saigon. The American and ARVN troops, led by General Westmoreland, drove the communists back. Westmoreland then asked for more troops arguing that he could finish the Vietcong off once and for all. Johnson turned him down and announced on TV that he would not run for reelection. This practically marked the end of his political career; after Nixon's inauguration he retired and died soon after.

It was now up to Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, to get out of the war without further damaging the prestige of the US. The two of them designed and carried out a brave foreign policy (the "great Nixon turnaround"—as the historian Lloyd C. Gardner called it) which brought major breakthroughs and spectacular failures for them. However we interpret the foreign policy of the Nixon era, it is beyond doubt that he and Kissinger did reshape international relations in a most dramatic way. But to understand their policy of detente and linkage, we must look at certain developments in Europe.

The new cold war of the 1950s marked the beginning of an Asia first attitude in US foreign policy. France was the first to protest: it ordered the NATO headquarters out of the country and then left the alliance; and when De Gaulle assumed power the French began to work on their own bomb. Meanwhile, Willy Brandt became the German foreign minister in 1966 and introduced a new policy of detente. He recognized East Germany, Russia, and other iron curtain countries, arguing that the normalization of European relations was the best way of achieving German reunification. And although with his policies he committed political suicide, it is beyond any doubt that without him there would be no unified Germany today. This kind of vision and courage makes great politicians, you know.

On entering the White House in January 1969, Nixon had two things in mind: he had to get out of the Vietnam War without losing it and he had to sort out the staggering economy of his country. Nixon, one of the wildest anti-communists of the 1950s, now sought to achieve these two goals with the help of China and Russia! He and Kissinger picked up the detente line of Brandt and carried it forward in a most spectacular way: in 1972 Nixon visited first Beijing and then Moscow to meet with Mao and Brezhnev. The supposedly deadly enemies signed over forty agreements and opened talks about strategic arms limitation (SALT I). By opening contacts with China and Russia Nixon expected that closer economic cooperation would help the US economy and that Moscow and/or Beijing would help him get out of Vietnam with head held high. The first part of it worked, the second did not. Economic agreements were linked to political concessions on the part of the Russians (hence the term linkage), especially regarding human rights and allowing Russian Jews to emigrate. But what both China and Russia refused to do was help Nixon out of Vietnam—he had to do it alone.

Therefore, Nixon had to use his "secret plan" to end the war. Since international diplomacy did not bring the desired result, he employed a combination of Eisenhower's Vietnamization

policy and Johnson's bombing for peace. He began to withdraw troops from South Vietnam, stepped up the bombing of both halves of the country, continued to beef-up the ARVN, and sent Kissinger to Paris to negotiate with a North Vietnamese delegation led by Le Duc Tho. Meanwhile, disregarding Congressional legislation, Nixon sent troops to Cambodia (1970) and Laos (1971) to drive the communists back and to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which was the main communist supply line between North and South Vietnam but which ran on the Laotian side of the border. On the eve of Election Day in 1972, Kissinger announced that peace was "at hand" and Nixon was reelected. Then Kissinger returned to Paris with seventy (!) modifications to the agreement made only a few days before. Le Duc Tho said "no" and called Kissinger a liar. In retaliation, Nixon ordered Operation Linebacker II, which is known as the Christmas bombing of North Vietnam. In barely more than two weeks the Americans claimed to have dropped more explosives on North Vietnam than during all of World War II. International protests were disregarded, and a shameless Kissinger called it "calculated barbarism." Peace eventually was made in January 1973 in Paris, and Nixon got what he wanted most: a decent interval between the American withdrawal and the inevitable North Vietnamese invasion of the south. Ho Chi Minh's dream of national reunification was completed in 1975, six years after his death. Within half a decade communist Vietnam was fighting communist Cambodia and China: not only were dominoes not falling (Eisenhower's worst nightmare) but communists were busily killing each other. "America's longest war" in Vietnam turned out to have very little to do with containment.

Besides its many achievements, "Nixingerism" (the policies of Nixon and Kissinger) suffered spectacular setbacks in Latin America, the Middle East, and Europe. First, Latin America. Being otherwise engaged, Nixon paid little attention to the affairs of the Western Hemisphere; and in the absence of American interest and cooperation, Latin American countries increased their trade with Western Europe and the Soviet Union. And the only time when Nixon dealt with a Latin American country, Chile, many felt he should not have done so. In 1970 Salvador Allende, a socialist politician, won the national elections. The American Ambassador reported home that Chile had decided to go communist. White House fun factory Henry Kissinger commented that he could not understand "why we have to let a country go Marxist just because its people are irresponsible." Well, they did not let Chile go Marxist; and the interests of IT&T and Coca-Cola played a major part in this decision. The CIA was mobilized and in 1973 Allende was overthrown (and probably murdered) by General Augusto Pinochet. Such conduct did little to improve US-Latin American relations.

Nixon, however, suffered even more serious setbacks in the Middle East and Europe. Following up an earlier Arab-Israeli showdown (the 1967 Six-Day War), in October 1973 Egyptian and Syrian troops attacked Israel during the sacred Jewish holiday, the Yom Kippur (hence the name: the Yom Kippur War). But this was no ordinary war: the Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat worked out a deal with the OPEC countries, who announced that anyone intervening in the conflict would be placed under an oil embargo. The US did, but its European allies (except for Portugal) did not—and the embargo was on (the only dissenter was Iran). Meanwhile, however, the Israeli army defeated both invaders, and Nixon sent Kissinger to the Middle East to restore order. Brezhnev made an abortive attempt to intervene on behalf of Egypt, only to see Kissinger tell him to stay out of it and place the US army on stage three alert all around the world (this was almost nuclear alert!). Next, Kissinger blackmailed the belligerents into a truce and had the embargo lifted. However, the Yom Kippur War left open many of the most pressing issues of the region including the future of the Golan Heights and the West Bank of the River Jordan, as

well as the fate of the Palestine Liberation Organization (established by Arafat in 1968), which represented the millions of Palestinians who were uprooted by the Six-Day War. It hardly needs to be emphasized that the Middle East even today, forty years later, is still in turmoil. It was in this region that the US could have and should have done real diplomacy, since neither dollar diplomacy nor the big stick seems to work—this is perhaps the most obvious example of the diplomatic counterrevolution we mentioned earlier.

1973 was a tough year for Nixon: the Watergate hearings started, the oil embargo created a domestic crisis and even his European allies turned their back on him. Kissinger thought that their European (NATO) allies had let them down during the Yom Kippur War—and he was right. The Europeans had no such commitments to Israel as the Americans did and they wanted to avoid the oil embargo. The only European country to go along with Kissinger was Portugal—in return for supporting the Salazar regime's wars against its colonies in Africa. (The definitive study of American policies toward Africa since 1945 is yet to be written. It appears that the Americans responded to the various colonial wars of liberation on a day to day basis. The one exception is the Belgian Congo, which broke away from Belgium in 1960, only to be controlled by Americans five years later—because of its strategic raw materials. Other than that, it seems that the US and the Soviet Union were playing supposedly cold war games there but were actually going for raw materials.)

When drawing the balance of the Nixon era, we must point out that it had very little to do with "making the world safe for democracy" or with the containment of communism. The Nixon-Kissinger foreign policy establishment served the raw self-interest of the US and of big business, and, when thinking about it, terms like genocide (one million dead Vietnamese), racism (Nixon once described his African policy to Kissinger as "Let's leave the niggers to Bill,"—Bill being Secretary of State William P. Rogers) and megalomania come to mind. This was just about the only period in the history of America's foreign relations when the combination of idealism and self-interest (check chapter eight for details) did not work: any form of genuine idealism was missing.

Nixon's exit in shame form American politics following the Watergate scandal did not mark the end of detente. Gerald Ford, his successor, kept Kissinger as Secretary of State and continued to attend summit meetings with Brezhnev. Eventually, the Helsinki Agreements were signed in 1975 and to demonstrate Soviet-American cooperation, a joint space expedition, the Soyuz-Apollo flight, took place. SALT II negotiations also began.

In contrast with the Nixon era, the foreign policy of James Earl Carter commands much respect, even though he was unable to realize many of his ambitious projects. His foreign policy staff consisted of the talented duo of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. Unlike any other president before or after him, Carter placed the observation of human rights ahead of everything. His general policy was called trilateralism, an attempt to solve the domestic economic crisis by building closer economic ties with the newly emerging power centers, Japan and Western Europe. However, on one of his trips to Germany, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt bluntly turned him down; later Carter claimed that he had never been spoken to like that before. America's prestige was rapidly declining.

Carter's other projects included (1) a deal with Panama about the return of the Canal, (2) a Middle Eastern peace accord, (3) opening cultural and economic ties with the iron curtain countries, and (4) concluding the SALT II agreement with Moscow. (1) According to the 1977 agreements between Panama and the US, the Latin American country gained control of the Canal in the year 2000. (2) In order to replace the truce made by Kissinger in the Middle East, Carter

invited Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Camp David, Maryland. They signed an agreement which was followed up by the first Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in March 1979. (3) Carter also promoted economic and cultural cooperation with Eastern European countries—an obvious outcome of the detente era. It was during his presidency that the Holy Crown was returned to Hungary on 6 January 1978, and that Hungary received "most favored nation status." (4) The completion of the SALT II deal with Moscow seemed to herald the end of the cold war, as did the American decision to extend full diplomatic recognition to Communist China on 1 January 1979.

During the second half of his tenure of office, Carter suffered two major setbacks. One of them was the Iran hostage crisis. Iran, led by the shah Reza Pahlavi, was an ardent supporter of the US in the Middle East until the late 1970s when dramatic changes swept over the country. Islam fundamentalist opposition led by the Ayatollah Khomeini had been growing until the whole thing exploded into a revolutionary civil war in February 1979. Khomeini assumed control and the shah fled to America. The new regime, anxious to lay its hands on the shah, stormed the US Embassy in Teheran, took 53 Americans hostage, and began to blackmail the White House. In April 1980 Carter sent helicopters to rescue the hostages—and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance resigned in protest. Ironically, the choppers never reached Teheran: three of them simply crashed due to engine failure. Not surprisingly, Carter lost the 1980 presidential election to Reagan, and on inauguration day in 1981, Khomeini released the hostages. (He soon took new ones and continued to blackmail Washington.) But the Iran hostage crisis was dwarfed by another, more serious, one: in 1979 Soviet troops for the first and only time during the cold war era crossed the 1945 armistice lines (the Americans did so in 1950 during the Korean War) and moved into Afghanistan. An angry and disappointed Carter told Congress not to ratify the SALT II treaty. The "second cold war" was on and Reagan entered the White House. No one expected that within less than a decade the whole thing would be over. But it was.

Reagan's foreign policy had four cornerstones: (1) a return to the strong presidency of the pre-Watergate era; (2) ardent anti-communism; (3) a distinction between "authoritarian" and "totalitarian" regimes; and (4) military build-up. While the first two probably do not require further explanation, the other two most certainly do. "Authoritarian" regimes were neither communist nor democratic—but mostly the ones the Americans have created all around the world. "Totalitarian" regimes were either communist or fascist, and had to be destroyed. To achieve that and with a new cold war at hand, Reagan called for a massive nuclear and defensive build-up. The latter was called Strategic Defense Initiative (or Star Wars by its critics), and aimed to create a high-tech defensive shield against incoming missiles over the US. (This rather utopian project was the brainchild of the Hungarian born scientist Edward Teller, the "father of the hydrogen bomb.")

But besides a new arms race, wild rhetoric (he called Russia "an evil empire"), and pumping money and contraband into the anti-communist forces in Afghanistan, Reagan had to deal with more important issues. He set out to bring about order in the Western Hemisphere (he called it the rollback of communism) by various open military and indirect financial and CIA operations in the Philippines, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Grenada. In terms of rhetoric and Latin American policies, it seemed as if the era of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson had returned.

Nicaragua, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, got linked up with the hostage crisis in a most peculiar way: the Iran Contra affair indicates that Reagan, like Nixon, had little respect for Congress and the Constitution. Ironically, the US had to abandon the Contras and the hostage crisis was resolved only after Reagan's exit from the White House.

After 1985, US-Soviet relations took an unexpected turn—which ended the cold war in a bang. Two years after Brezhnev's death, in 1985, Gorbachev came to power and realized that his country could not afford to play cold war games anymore. He agreed to a practically unilateral nuclear disarmament deal (one year after the movie "Red Dawn" was made—check the previous chapter for details), withdrew troops from Afghanistan, and let go of the East European satellites of the Soviet Union in 1989. The next year Germany was reunited after the "3+2 talks," which guaranteed the territorial integrity of Poland. Eventually, on Christmas Day in 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. The US won the cold war—but had to face new challenges.

Many believed that with the coming of the post-cold war era history had come to an end: democracy prevailed over communism and fascism, its two main challengers during the twentieth century. Others maintain that the world is heading toward the age of new barbarism and wars. And one is tempted to believe in the former (you know, historians can also be daydreamers) although there has been more than one indication of the latter: the Gulf War, the Bosnian crisis, the Middle East, a general loss of values all around the globe, etc. American policy makers are facing a dilemma yet again: whether to retreat to the Western Hemisphere or to serve as the policeman of the world. The Gulf War and the Middle Eastern crisis suggest that both Bush and Clinton chose the "policeman" role—but the sweeping Republican victory in the 1994 midterm election and the rhetoric of leading Republicans indicate that the isolationist line is still alive and well. And then came one of the key events in modern history, the September 11 (2001) terrorist attacks.

9-11 ended the age of American innocence: the concept of Fortress America was destroyed in but a few minutes of carnage. The Bush administration declared war on terrorism, and launched a major military operation against Afghanistan, a country under Taliban control, considered to be responsible for the 9-11 attacks and accused of harboring America's new public enemy number one: Osama Bin Laden. In his 2002 state of the union address President Bush identified the Axis of Evil, the new terrorist threat to the free world, in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Washington accused Iraq of producing banned weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and of supporting and harboring Al-Quaeda terrorists. The rest of the world expressed some reservations, but the US and Britain went to war again, this time against Saddam Hussein. Lacking UN approval and NATO backing, Washington was unable to convincingly justify its actions, which has turned (a considerable part of) global public opinion against the US. It also caused a breach in NATO comparable only to the fallout from the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The Bush doctrine of preventive wars against terrorism and countries supporting terrorists is among the most hotly debated issue of the post-9-11 world. Much to the dismay of the world and liberals at home, the Bush administration captured and tortured suspected terrorists and held them at the Guantanamo Bay naval base in defiance of American laws. Muslim prisoners were humiliated and abused in the Iraqui prison of Abu Ghraib, with disgusting photographs flooding the internet. Saddam Hussein was captured and executed, but no WMS were found in Iraq. Terrorist attacks on civilian targets took place in Madrid and London and the Taliban fled from Afghanistan to Pakistan, a country now harboring terrorists but supposedly an ally of the US. The two unfinished wars combined with the international loss of prestige of the US helped the Democrats score an easy victory in the 2008 elections. President Obama (who made his earlier rival, Hillary Clinton, his secretary of state) promised to catch Bin Laden, offered reconciliation in the Middle East, and proposed sweeping immigration legislation to handle the rapidly escalating situation along the Mexican border.

One wonders whether the US can build the "city upon a hill" with or without foreign policy and what the real nature of American democracy is like. These are among the many questions that the 21st century will hopefully answer in a positive way.

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