... As we now see the grand connections more clearly, we also understand that the burden of responsibility for bringing about cultural equality falls more heavily on those who have been so privileged, so spoiled, by circumstances beyond their control. They have furnished the energies behind the world revolution of Westernization; they carry the obligation to complete it according to their ideals of freedom, equality, and human dignity and in a manner beneficial to all humanity.

FUKUZAWA YUKICHI

Good-bye Asia

Fukuzawa* Yukichi (1835–1901) was one of the most important Japanese Westernizers during Japan’s late-nineteenth-century rush to catch up with the West. The son of a lower samurai (military) family, Fukuzawa’s pursuit of Western knowledge took him to a Dutch school in Osaka, where he studied everything from the Dutch language to chemistry, physics, and anatomy, and to Yedo where he studied English. Due to his privileged background and Western schooling, he was naturally included in the first Japanese mission to the United States in 1860 as well as in the first diplomatic mission to Europe in 1862. After Fukuzawa returned to Japan, he spent many years teaching and writing the books that would make him famous. The best known of these was Seiyō Jō (Things Western), which in 1866 introduced Japanese readers to the daily life and typical institutions of Western society. According to Fukuzawa, the main obstacle that prevented Japanese society from catching up with the West was a long heritage of Chinese Confucianism, which stifled educational independence.

In the years after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, in which feudalism was abolished and power was restored to the emperor, Fukuzawa

*foo koo ZAH wah

became the most popular spokesman for the Westernizing policies of the new government. In this essay, “Good-bye Asia,” written in 1885, Fukuzawa describes the spread of Western civilization in Japan. Does he believe that it is both inevitable and desirable? Why? What do you make of Fukuzawa’s attitude toward Chinese and Korean civilizations?

Thinking Historically

Does this selection from Fukuzawa display any of the contradictions, ambivalence, or love-hate feelings that von Laue describes as common among Westernized non-Western intellectuals? Were such conflicts inevitable? How might someone like Fukuzawa avoid this conflict, ambivalence, or uncertainty?

Transportation has become so convenient these days that once the wind of Western civilization blows to the East, every blade of grass and every tree in the East follow what the Western wind brings. Ancient Westerners and present-day Westerners are from the same stock and are not much different from one another. The ancient ones moved slowly, but their contemporary counterparts move vivaciously at a fast pace. This is possible because present-day Westerners take advantage of the means of transportation available to them. For those of us who live in the Orient, unless we want to prevent the coming of Western civilization with a firm resolve, it is best that we cast our lot with them. If one observes carefully what is going on in today’s world, one knows the futility of trying to prevent the onslaught of Western civilization. Why not float with them in the same ocean of civilization, sail the same waves, and enjoy the fruits and endeavors of civilization?

The movement of a civilization is like the spread of measles. Measles in Tokyo start in Nagasaki and come eastward with the spring thaw. We may hate the spread of this communicable disease, but is there any effective way of preventing it? I can prove that it is not possible. In a communicable disease, people receive only damages. In a civilization, damages may accompany benefits, but benefits always far outweigh them, and their force cannot be stopped. This being the case, there is no point in trying to prevent their spread. A wise man encourages the spread and allows our people to get used to its ways.

The opening to the modern civilization of the West began in the reign of Kaei (1848–58). Our people began to discover its utility and gradually and yet actively moved toward its acceptance. However, there was an old-fashioned and bloated government that stood in the way of progress. It was a problem impossible to solve. If the government were allowed to continue, the new civilization could not enter. The modern civilization and Japan’s old conventions were mutually ex-
inclusive. If we were to discard our old conventions, that government
also had to be abolished. We could have prevented the entry of this
civilization, but it would have meant loss of our national independence.
The struggles taking place in the world civilization were such that they
would not allow an Eastern island nation to slumber in isolation. At
that point, dedicated men (shijin) recognized the principle of "the coun-
try is more important than the government," relied on the dignity of
the Imperial Household, and toppled the old government to establish a
new one. With this, public and the private sectors alike, everyone in our
country accepted the modern Western civilization. Not only were we
able to cast aside Japan's old conventions, but we also succeeded in cre-
ating a new axe toward progress in Asia. Our basic assumptions could
be summarized in two words: "Good-bye Asia (Datsu-a)."

Japan is located in the eastern extremities of Asia, but the spirit of
her people have already moved away from the old conventions of Asia
to the Western civilization. Unfortunately for Japan, there are two
neighboring countries. One is called China and another Korea. These
two peoples, like the Japanese people, have been nurtured by Asiatic
political thoughts and mores. It may be that we are different races of
people, or it may be due to the differences in our heredity or education;
significant differences mark the three peoples. The Chinese and Kore-
ans are more like each other and together they do not show as much
similarity to the Japanese. These two peoples do not know how to
progress either personally or as a nation. In this day and age with trans-
portation becoming so convenient, they cannot be blind to the manifes-
tations of Western civilization. But they say that what is seen or heard
cannot influence the disposition of their minds. Their love affairs with
ancient ways and old customs remain as strong as they were centuries
ago. In this new and vibrant theater of civilization when we speak of
education, they only refer back to Confucianism. As for school educa-
tion, they can only cite [Chinese philosopher Mencius's] precepts of hu-
manity, righteousness, decorum, and knowledge. While professing their
abhorrence to ostentation, in reality they show their ignorance of truth
and principles. As for their morality, one only has to observe their un-
speakable acts of cruelty and shamelessness. Yet they remain arrogant
and show no sign of self-examination.

In my view, these two countries cannot survive as independent na-
tions with the onslaught of Western civilization to the East. Their con-
cerned citizens might yet find a way to engage in a massive reform, on
the scale of our Meiji Restoration, and they could change their govern-
ments and bring about a renewal of spirit among their peoples. If that
could happen they would indeed be fortunate. However, it is more
likely that would never happen, and within a few short years they will
be wiped out from the world with their lands divided among the civili-
zied nations. Why is this so? Simply at a time when the spread of
civilization and enlightenment (bummei kaika) has a force akin to that of measles, China and Korea violate the natural law of its spread. They forcibly try to avoid it by shutting off air from their rooms. Without air, they suffocate to death. It is said that neighbors must extend helping hands to one another because their relations are inseparable. Today’s China and Korea have not done a thing for Japan. From the perspectives of civilized Westerners, they may see what is happening in China and Korea and judge Japan accordingly, because of the three countries’ geographical proximity. The governments of China and Korea still retain their autocratic manners and do not abide by the rule of law. Westerners may consider Japan likewise a lawless society. Natives of China and Korea are deep in their hocus pocus of nonscientific behavior. Western scholars may think that Japan still remains a country dedicated to the yin and yang and five elements. Chinese are mean-spirited and shameless, and the chivalry of the Japanese people is lost to the Westerners. Koreans punish their convicts in an atrocious manner, and that is imputed to the Japanese as heartless people. There are many more examples I can cite. It is not different from the case of a righteous man living in a neighborhood of a town known for foolishness, lawlessness, atrocity, and heartlessness. His action is so rare that it is always buried under the ugliness of his neighbors’ activities. When these incidents are multiplied, that can affect our normal conduct of diplomatic affairs. How unfortunate it is for Japan.

What must we do today? We do not have time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors so that we can work together toward the development of Asia. It is better for us to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with civilized nations of the West. As for the way of dealing with China and Korea, no special treatment is necessary just because they happen to be our neighbors. We simply follow the manner of the Westerners in knowing how to treat them. Any person who cherishes a bad friend cannot escape his bad notoriety. We simply erase from our minds our bad friends in Asia.

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1Yin and yang is a traditional Chinese duality (hot/cold, active/passive, male/female) illustrated by a circle divided by an “a” to show unity within duality. The five elements suggest another traditional, prescientific idea that everything is made of five basic ingredients.
Images from Japan: Views of Westernization

This selection consists of three prints by Japanese artists. The first print, Figure 9.1, called *Beef Eater*, illustrates a character in Kanagaki Robun’s *Aguranabe* (1871). The author, a popular newspaper humorist, parodies a new class of urban Westernized Japanese who carry watches and umbrellas and eat beef (banned by Buddhist law for centuries but added to the Japanese diet by Westerners). What response in the viewer does the artist seek to evoke?

The second piece, Figure 9.2, is called *Monkey Show Dressing Room* (1879), by Honda Kinkacho. What is this print’s message? What is the artist’s attitude toward Westernization?

The third piece, Figure 9.3, *The Exotic White Man*, shows a child born to a Western man and a Japanese woman. What is the artist’s message? Does the artist favor such unions? What does the artist think of Westerners?

**Thinking Historically**

Prints, like cartoons, are a shorthand that must capture an easily recognizable trait. What, evidently, were the widely understood Japanese images of the West? Where do you think these stereotypes of the West came from? Do you see any signs in these prints of ambivalence on the part of the artist?
Figure 9.1 Beef Eater.
Figure 9.2  Monkey Show Dressing Room.
Figure 9.3  The Exorcist White Man.
MOHANDAS K. GANDHI

From Hind Swaraj

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869–1948), the father of Indian independence, combined the education of an English lawyer with the temperament of an Indian ascetic to lead a national resistance movement against the British. In the century that followed British-supported reforms to the Indian education system (in the early nineteenth century), British rule had become far more pervasive and increasingly hostile toward Indian culture. Unlike Indian educational reformers, who had embraced Western culture as a means to uplift Indians, Gandhi was extremely critical of Western culture as he witnessed the havoc British rule wreaked on his country.

Gandhi began to develop his ideas of Hind Swaraj,* or Indian Home Rule, while he sailed from England to South Africa in 1909 where he served as a lawyer for fellow Indians. An early version of this essay, published then, was reissued in its present form in 1921, two years after he returned to his birthplace, India, and again in 1938, in the last years of struggle against British rule.

After Gandhi’s introduction, the essay takes the form of questions and answers. The questions are posed by a presumed “reader” of Gandhi’s pamphlet. As “editor,” Gandhi explains what he means. How does Gandhi compare life in Europe and India? What does he think of the possibility of Hindus and Muslims living together? What does he mean by passive resistance or soul-force (Satyagraha)? Why does he think it is preferable to violence, or body-force? Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu extremist in 1948 before he had a chance to shape the new nation. What kind of India would Gandhi have tried to create had he lived?

Thinking Historically

Some historians have argued that Gandhi’s contradictory roles—Hindu philosopher espousing secular nationalism and anti-modernist revolutionary — were ultimately unbridgeable. Notice how Gandhi makes a lawyer’s case for traditional Indian values. How does he combine both religious and secular goals for India? How does he combine Hindu religious ideas with respect for Muslims? Were Gandhi’s contradictions a fatal flaw, or could they have been his strength?

Civilization

Reader: Now you will have to explain what you mean by civilization.

Editor: Let us first consider what state of things is described by the word "civilization." Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life. We will take some examples. The people of Europe today live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilization, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness. Formerly, they wore skins, and used spears as their weapons. Now, they wear long trousers, and, for embellishing their bodies, they wear a variety of clothing, and, instead of spears, they carry with them revolvers containing five or more chambers. If people of a certain country, who have hitherto not been in the habit of wearing much clothing, boots, etc., adopt European clothing, they are supposed to have become civilized out of savagery. Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labour. Now, one man can plough a vast tract by means of steam engines and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilization. Formerly, only a few men wrote valuable books. Now, anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's minds. Formerly, men travelled in waggons. Now, they fly through the air in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day. This is considered the height of civilization. It has been stated that, as men progress, they shall be able to travel in airship and reach any part of the world in a few hours. Men will not need the use of their hands and feet. They will press a button, and they will have their clothing at their side. They will press another button, and they will have their newspaper. A third, and motor-car will be in waiting for them. They will have a variety of delicately dished up food. Everything will be done by machinery. Formerly, when people wanted to fight with one another, they measured between them their bodily strength; now it is possible to take away thousands of lives by one man working behind a gun from a hill. This is civilization. Formerly, men worked in the open air only as much as they liked. Now, thousands of workmen meet together and for the sake of maintenance work in factories or mines. Their condition is worse than that of beasts. They are obliged to work, at the risk of their lives, at most dangerous occupations, for the sake of millionaires. Formerly, men were made slaves under physical compulsion. Now they are enslaved by temptation of money and of the luxuries that money can buy. There are now diseases of which people never dreamt before, and an army of doctors is engaged in finding out their cures, and so hospitals have increased. This is a test of civilization. Formerly, special messengers were required and much expense was incurred in order to send letters; today, anyone can abuse his fellow by means of a letter for one penny. True, at the same cost, one can send one's thanks also. For-
merly, people had two or three meals consisting of home-made bread and vegetables; now, they require something to eat every two hours so that they have hardly leisure for anything else. What more need I say? . . . Even a child can understand that in all I have described above there can be no inducement to morality.

The Hindus and the Mahomedans

READER: Has the introduction to Mahomedanism [Islam] not un-made the nation?

EDITOR: India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation; they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another’s religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India.

READER: But what about the inborn enmity between Hindus and Mahomedans?

EDITOR: That phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy. When the Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain. They have long since ceased to fight. How, then, can there be any inborn enmity? Pray remember this too, that we did not cease to fight only after British occupation. The Hindus flourished under Moslem sovereigns and Moslems under the Hindu. Each party recognized that mutual fighting was suicidal, and that neither party would abandon its religion by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent quarrels recommenced. . . .

How Can India Become Free?

READER: If Indian civilization is, as you say, the best of all, how do you account for India’s slavery?

EDITOR: This civilization is unquestionably the best, but it is to be observed that all civilizations have been on their trial. That civilization which is permanent outlives it. Because the sons of India were found
wanting, its civilization has been placed in jeopardy. But its strength is to be seen in its ability to survive the shock. Moreover, the whole of India is not touched. Those alone who have been affected by Western civilization have become enslaved. We measure the universe by our own miserable foot-rule. When we are slaves, we think that the whole universe is enslaved. Because we are in an abject condition, we think that the whole of India is in that condition. As a matter of fact, it is not so, yet it is as well to impute our slavery to the whole of India. But if we bear in mind the above fact, we can see that if we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of Swaraj. It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands. Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream. There is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that, after we have once realized it, we shall endeavour to the end of our life-time to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experienced, by each one for himself. One drowning man will never save another. Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others. Now you will have seen that it is not necessary for us to have as our goal the expulsion of the English. If the English become Indianized, we can accommodate them. If they wish to remain in India along with their civilization, there is no room for them. It lies with us to bring about such a state of things. . . .

**Passive Resistance**

**READER:** Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul-force or truth-force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force. I still think that the evil-doers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment.

**EDITOR:** The [Hindu] poet Tulsidas [1532–1623] has said: “Of religion, pity, or love, is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive.” This appears to me to be a scientific truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. . . .

The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. Therefore, the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.

Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel; one of them
repents and re-awakens the love that was lying dormant in him; the two again begin to live in peace; nobody takes note of this. But if the two brothers, through the intervention of solicitors or some other reason take up arms or go to law — which is another form of the exhibition of brute force, — their doings would be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbours and would probably go down to history. And what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations. History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, being natural, is not noted in history.

Reader: According to what you say, it is plain that instances of this kind of passive resistance are not to be found in history. It is necessary to understand this passive resistance more fully. It will be better, therefore, if you enlarge upon it.

Editor: Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence I force the Government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Gandhi

Mohandas K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru* were the two most important leaders of India's national independence movement. In 1942, Nehru published his autobiography, excerpted here, in which he had much to say about the importance of Gandhi in his life. Though they worked together and Nehru was Gandhi's choice as the first Indian prime minister, they expressed in their personalities and ideas two

*jah waH lahl NAY roo

very different Indias. How would you describe these two Indias? Was it Gandhi’s or Nehru’s vision of the future that was realized? Who do you think was a better guide for India?

**Thinking Historically**

Think of Gandhi and Nehru as the two sides of the Indian struggle for independence. Did India benefit from having both of these sides represented? What would have happened if there had been only Gandhi’s view or only Nehru’s?

How was the debate in India about the influence of the West different from the debate in Japan?

I imagine that Gandhiji’s is not so vague about the objective as he sometimes appears to be. He is passionately desirous of going in a certain direction, but this is wholly at variance with modern ideas and conditions, and he has so far been unable to fit the two, or to chalk out all the intermediate steps leading to his goal. Hence the appearance of vagueness and avoidance of clarity. But his general inclination has been clear enough for a quarter of a century, ever since he started formulating his philosophy in South Africa. I do not know if those early writings still represent his views. I doubt if they do so in their entirety, but they do help us to understand the background of his thought.

“India’s salvation consists,” he wrote in 1909, “in unlearning what she has learned during the last fifty years. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and suchlike have all to go; and the so-called upper classes have to learn consciously, religiously, and deliberately the simple peasant life, knowing it to be a life giving true happiness.” And again: “Every time I get into a railway car or use a motor bus I know that I am doing violence to my sense of what is right”; “to attempt to reform the world by means of highly artificial and speedy locomotion is to attempt the impossible.”

All this seems to me utterly wrong and harmful doctrine, and impossible of achievement. Behind it lies Gandhiji’s love and praise of poverty and suffering and the ascetic life. For him progress and civilization consist not in the multiplication of wants, of higher standards of living, “but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants, which promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service.” If these premises are once accepted, it becomes easy to follow the rest of Gandhiji’s thought and to have a better understanding of his activities. But most of us do not accept those premises, and yet we complain later on when we find that his activities are not to our liking.

¹Term of endearment. [Ed.]
Personally I dislike the praise of poverty and suffering. I do not think they are at all desirable, and they ought to be abolished. Nor do I appreciate the ascetic life as a social ideal, though it may suit individuals. I understand and appreciate simplicity, equality, self-control; but not the mortification of the flesh. Just as an athlete requires to train his body, I believe that the mind and habits have also to be trained and brought under control. It would be absurd to expect that a person who is given to too much self-indulgence can endure much suffering or show unusual self-control or behave like a hero when the crisis comes. To be in good moral condition requires at least as much training as to be in good physical condition. But that certainly does not mean asceticism or self-mortification.

Nor do I appreciate in the least the idealization of the “simple peasant life.” I have almost a horror of it, and instead of submitting to it myself I want to drag out even the peasantry from it, not to urbanization, but to the spread of urban cultural facilities to rural areas. Far from his life’s giving me true happiness, it would be almost as bad as imprisonment for me. What is there in “The Man with the Hoe” to idealize over? Crushed and exploited for innumerable generations, he is only little removed from the animals who keep him company.

Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?

This desire to get away from the mind of man to primitive conditions where mind does not count, seems to me quite incomprehensible. The very thing that is the glory and triumph of man is decried and discouraged, and a physical environment which will oppress the mind and prevent its growth is considered desirable. Present-day civilization is full of evils, but it is also full of good; and it has the capacity in it to rid itself of those evils. To destroy it root and branch is to remove that capacity from it and revert to a dull, sunless, and miserable existence. But even if that were desirable it is an impossible undertaking. We cannot stop the river of change or cut ourselves adrift from it, and psychologically we who have eaten of the apple of Eden cannot forget that taste and go back to primitiveness.
LUTHER STANDING BEAR

From Land of the Spotted Eagle

Most European-Americans accepted the idea of the magazine editor John O'Sullivan, writing in 1845, that “Our manifest destiny [is] to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” Most Americans of European ancestry were not used to thinking of White settlement of Indian lands as colonialism. But manifest destiny, or not, Whites won the west by force, and the Indians who survived were herded into reservations where they lived like colonial subjects.

The American Indian confrontation with the ways of the West was not that different from that of the people of India or other European colonies. Each struggled with the conflict between Western advantage and traditional cultural identity, and each shaped a personal identity from that conflict.

Luther Standing Bear (1868–1939), born Plenty Kill, son of Standing Bear, describes his own struggle for identity in his years at boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, after he had been separated from his Lakota people. What did he see as the advantages and disadvantages of his education at Carlisle?

Thinking Historically

Would you describe the author’s attitude toward Westernization as conflicted, ambiguous, compromising, practical, or something else? How does the author show us that assimilation to Western values or “civilizing” was not just an intellectual process? Change, whether or not we choose it, can have physical manifestations. Can you recall an experience where you struggled over two competing or contradictory pulls to your identity? Do you remember any physical manifestation of the conflict?

I grew up leading the traditional life of my people, learning the crafts of hunter, scout, and warrior from father, kindness to the old and feeble from mother, respect for wisdom and council from our wise men, and was trained by grandfather and older boys in the devotional rites to the Great Mystery. This was the scheme of existence as followed by my

Luther Standing Bear, Land of the Spotted Eagle (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1933), 229–37.
forefathers for many centuries, and more centuries might have come and gone in much the same way had it not been for a strange people who came from a far land to change and reshape our world.

At the age of eleven years, ancestral life for me and my people was most abruptly ended without regard for our wishes, comforts, or rights in the matter. At once I was thrust into an alien world, into an environment as different from the one into which I had been born as it is possible to imagine, to remake myself, if I could, into the likeness of the invader.

By 1879, my people were no longer free, but were subjects confined on reservations under the rule of agents. One day there came to the agency a party of white people from the East. Their presence aroused considerable excitement when it became known that these people were school teachers who wanted some Indian boys and girls to take away with them to train as were white boys and girls.

Now, father was a “blanket Indian,” but he was wise. He listened to the white strangers, their offers and promises that if they took his son they would care well for him, teach him how to read and write, and how to wear white man’s clothes. But to father all this was just “sweet talk,” and I know that it was with great misgivings that he left the decision to me and asked if I cared to go with these people. I, of course, shared with the rest of my tribe a distrust of the white people, so I know that for all my dear father’s anxiety he was proud to hear me say “Yes.” That meant that I was brave.

I could think of no reason why white people wanted Indian boys and girls except to kill them, and not having the remotest idea of what a school was, I thought we were going East to die. But so well had courage and bravery been trained into us that it became a part of our unconscious thinking and acting, and personal life was nothing when it came time to do something for the tribe. . . . Thus, in giving myself up to go East I was proving to my father that he was honored with a brave son. In my decision to go, I gave up many things dear to the heart of a little Indian boy, and one of the things over which my child mind grieved was the thought of saying good-bye to my pony. I rode him as far as I could on the journey, which was to the Missouri River, where we took the boat. There we parted from our parents, and it was a heart-breaking scene, women and children weeping. Some of the children changed their minds and were unable to go on the boat, but for many who did go it was a final parting.

On our way to school we saw many white people, more than we ever dreamed existed, and the manner in which they acted when they saw us quite indicated their opinion of us. It was only about three years

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1 An Indian who prefers traditional ideas, dress, ways. [Ed.]
after the Custer battle, and the general opinion was that the Plains people merely infested the earth as nuisances. At one place we were taken off the train and marched a distance down the street to a restaurant. We walked down the street between two rows of uniformed men whom we called soldiers, though I suppose they were policemen. This must have been done to protect us, for it was surely known that we boys and girls could do no harm. Back of the rows of uniformed men stood the white people craning their necks, talking, laughing, and making a great noise. They yelled and tried to mimic us by giving what they thought were war-whoops. We did not like this, and some of the children were naturally very much frightened. In my mind I often recall that scene — eighty-odd blanketed boys and girls marching down the street surrounded by a jeering, unsympathetic people whose only emotions were those of hate and fear; the conquerors looking upon the conquered. And no more understanding us than if we had suddenly been dropped from the moon.

At last at Carlisle the transforming, the “civilizing” process began. It began with clothes. Never, no matter what our philosophy or spiritual quality, could we be civilized while wearing the moccasin and blanket. The task before us was not only that of accepting new ideas and adopting new manners, but actual physical changes and discomfort has to be borne uncomplainingly until the body adjusted itself to new tastes and habits. Our accustomed dress was taken and replaced with clothing that felt cumbersome and awkward. Against trousers and handkerchiefs we had a distinct feeling — they were unsanitary and the trousers kept us from breathing well. High collars, stiff-bosomed shirts, and suspenders fully three inches in width were uncomfortable, while leather boots caused actual suffering. We longed to go barefoot, but were told that the dew on the grass would give us colds. Red flannel undergarments were given us for winter wear, and for me, at least, discomfort grew into actual torture. I used to endure it as long as possible, then run upstairs and quickly take off the flannel garments and hide them. I still remember those horrid, sticky garments which we had to wear next to the skin, and I still squirm and itch when I think of them. Of course, our hair was cut, and then there was much disapproval. But that was part of the transformation process and in some mysterious way long hair stood in the path of our development. For all the grumbling among the bigger boys, we soon had our heads shaven. How strange I felt! Involuntarily, time and time again, my hands went to my head, and that night it was a long time before I went to sleep. If we did not learn much at first, it will not be wondered at, I think. Everything was queer, and it took a few months to get adjusted to the new surroundings.

Almost immediately our names were changed to those in common use in the English language. Instead of translating our names into English
and calling Zinkcaziwin, Yellow Bird, and Wanblí K'leska, Spotted Eagle, which in itself would have been educational, we were just John, Henry, or Maggie, as the case might be. I was told to take a pointer and select a name for myself from the list written on the blackboard. I did, and since one was just as good as another, and as I could not distinguish any difference in them, I placed the pointer on the name Luther. I then learned to call myself by that name and got used to hearing others call me by it, too. By that time we had been forbidden to speak our mother tongue, which is the rule in all boarding-schools. This rule is uncalled for, and today is not only robbing the Indian, but America of a rich heritage. The language of a people is part of their history. Today we should be perpetuating history instead of destroying it, and this can only be effectively done by allowing and encouraging the young to keep it alive....

Of all the changes we were forced to make, that of diet was doubtless the most injurious, for it was immediate and drastic. White bread we had for the first meal and thereafter, as well as coffee and sugar. Had we been allowed our own simple diet of meat, either boiled with soup or dried, and fruit, with perhaps a few vegetables, we should have thrived. But the change in clothing, housing, food, and confinement combined with lonesomeness was too much, and in three years nearly one half of the children from the Plains were dead and through with all earthly schools. In the graveyard at Carlisle most of the graves are those of little ones.

I am now going to confess that I had been at Carlisle a full year before I decided to learn all I could of the white man's ways, and then the inspiration was furnished by my father, the man who has been the greatest influence in all my life. When I had been in school a year, father made his first trip to see me. After I had received permission to speak to him, he told me that on his journey he had seen that the land was full of "Long Knives." "They greatly outnumber us and are here to stay," he said, and advised me, "Son, learn all you can of the white man's ways and try to be like him." From that day on I tried. Those few words of my father I remember as if we talked but yesterday, and in the maturity of my mind I have thought of what he said. He did not say that he thought the white man's ways better than our own; neither did he say that I could be like a white man. He said, "Son, try to be like a white man." So, in two more years I had been "made over." I was Luther Standing Bear wearing the blue uniform of the school, shorn of my hair, and trying hard to walk naturally and easily in stiff-soled cowhide boots. I was now "civilized" enough to go to work in John Wanamaker's fine store in Philadelphia.

I returned from the East at about the age of sixteen, after five years' contact with the white people, to resume life upon the reservation. But I returned, to spend some thirty years before again leaving, just as I had gone — a Lakota.
Outwardly I lived the life of the white man, yet all the while I kept in direct contact with tribal life. While I had learned all that I could of the white man's culture, I never forgot that of my people. I kept the language, tribal manners and usages, sang the songs and danced the dances. I still listened to and respected the advice of the older people of the tribe. I did not come home so "progressive" that I could not speak the language of my father and mother. I did not learn the vices of chewing tobacco, smoking, drinking, and swearing, and for all this I am grateful. I have never, in fact, "progressed" that far.

But I soon began to see the sad sight, so common today, of returned students who could not speak their native tongue, or, worse yet, some who pretended they could no longer converse in the mother tongue. They had become ashamed and this led them into deception and trickery. The boys came home wearing stiff paper collars, tight patent-leather boots, and derby hats on heads that were meant to be clothed in the long hair of the Lakota brave. The girls came home wearing muslin dresses and long ribbon sashes in bright hues which were very pretty. But they were trying to squeeze their feet into heeled shoes of factory make and their waists into binding apparatuses that were not garments — at least they served no purpose of a garment, but bordered on some mechanical device. However, the wearing of them was part of the "civilization" received from those who were doing the same thing. So we went to school to copy, to imitate; not to exchange languages and ideas, and not to develop the best traits that had come out of uncountable experiences of hundreds and thousands of years living upon this continent. Our annals, all happenings of human import, were stored in our song and dance rituals, our history differing in that it was not stored in books, but in the living memory. So, while the white people had much to teach us, we had much to teach them, and what a school could have been established upon that idea! However, this was not the attitude of the day, though the teachers were sympathetic and kind, and some came to be my lifelong friends. But in the main, Indian qualities were undivined and Indian virtues not conceded. And I can well remember when Indians in those days were stoned upon the streets as were the dogs that roamed them. We were "savages," and all who had not come under the influence of the missionary were "heathen," and Wakan Tanka [the Great Mystery], who had since the beginning watched over the Lakota and his land, was denied by these men of God. Should we not have been justified in thinking them heathen? And so the "civilizing" process went on, killing us as it went.
José Martí (1853–1895) is the national hero of Cuba. As poet, journalist, and organizer, he devoted his life to Cuban independence. He fought Spain during the Ten Year War, 1868–1878, and directed the independence movement to the successful war of 1895–1898 but was killed in one of the first battles. Because of his revolutionary activities, Martí spent much of his life in exile in Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, and the United States. In the last fifteen years of his life he lived in New York, where he represented various Latin American governments and wrote widely for Latin American publications. This selection includes excerpts from two of his “Letters from New York.” The first, an early one published in Colombia, describes the new Coney Island amusement park to Latin American readers. The second, published in the Spanish Illustrated Review of New York, lays out his larger nationalist vision for Cuba and the other countries of Latin America. What in New York appeals to Martí? What bothers him about North American life? What does Martí mean by “our America”? What most concerns him about Latin America in 1891? What does he think needs to be done?

**Thinking Historically**

Martí’s life embodied the contradictions of the nationalist in exile. Living in New York from 1880 to the end of his life, he continually interpreted each America to the other. But his stance was hardly neutral. How did he balance the ways of North America and Latin America? How was Martí both pro–United States and pro–Latin American? In what ways was he both a nationalist and a globalist?

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*boh SAY mahr TEE

Coney Island (1881)

Nothing in the annals of humanity can compare to the marvelous prosperity of the United States of the North. Does the country lack deep roots? Are ties of sacrifice and shared suffering more lasting within countries than those of common interest? Does this colossal nation contain ferocious and terrible elements? Does the absence of the feminine spirit, source of artistic sensibility and complement to national identity, harden and corrupt the heart of this astonishing people? Only time will tell.

For now it is certain that never has a happier, more joyous, better equipped, more densely packed, more jovial, or more frenetic multitude lived in such useful labor in any land on earth, or generated and enjoyed greater wealth, or covered rivers and seas with more gaily be-decked steamers, or spread out with more bustling order and naive merriment across gentle coastlines, gigantic piers, and fantastical, glittering promenades.

The North American newspapers are full of hyperbolic descriptions of the original beauties and unique attractions of one of those summer resorts, overflowing with people, dotted with sumptuous hotels, cross-hatched by an aerial tramway, and colored in with gardens, kiosks, small theaters, saloons, circuses, tents, droves of carriages, picturesque assemblies, bathing machines, auctioneers, fountains.

Echoes of its fame have reached the French newspapers.

From the farthest reaches of the American Union, legions of intrepid ladies and gallant rustics arrive to admire the splendid landscapes, the unrivaled wealth, the bedazzling variety, the Herculean effort, the astonishing sight of the now world-famous Coney Island. Four years ago it was a barren heap of dirt, but today it is a spacious place of relaxation, shelter, and amusement for the hundred thousand or so New Yorkers who repair to its glad beaches each day.

[Marti goes on to describe the town and beach of Gable where Coney Island was located.] But the main attraction of the island is not far-off Rockaway or monotonous Brighton or grave and aristocratic Manhattan Beach: it is Gable, laughing Gable, with its elevator that goes higher than the spire of Trinity Church in New York — twice as high as the spire of our cathedral — and allows travelers to rise to the dizzying heights of its summit, suspended in a tiny, fragile cage. Gable, with its two iron piers that advance on elegant pillars for three blocks out over the sea, and its Sea Beach Palace, which is only a hotel now but was the famous Agricultural Building at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, transported to New York as if by magic and rebuilt in its original form down to the last shingle on the coast of Coney Island. Gable, with its fifty-cent museums exhibiting human freaks, preposterous fish, bearded ladies, melancholy dwarves, and stunted elephants
grandiloquently advertised as the largest on earth; Gable, with its hundred orchestras, its mirthful dances, its battalions of baby carriages, its gigantic cow, perpetually milked and perpetually giving milk, its twenty-five-cent glasses of fresh cider, its innumerable pairs of amorous wanderers.

Gable, where families gather to seek respite from the rank, unwholesome New York air in the healthy and invigorating seaside breeze; where impoverished mothers — as they empty the enormous box containing the family’s lunch onto one of the tables provided without cost in vast pavilions.

Ferries come and go; trains blow their whistles, belch smoke, depart, and arrive, their serpentine bosoms swollen with families they disgorge onto the beach. The women rent blue flannel bathing costumes and rough straw hats that they tie under their chins; the men, in less complicated garments, hold the women’s hands and go into the sea, while barefoot children wait along the shore for the roaring wave to drench them, and flee as it reaches them, hiding their terror behind gales of laughter, then return in bands — the better to defy the enemy — to this game of which these innocents, prostrate an hour earlier from the terrible heat, never tire. The amazing thing here is the size, the quantity, this sudden result of human activity, this immense valve of pleasure opened to an immense people, these dining rooms that, seen from afar, look like the encampments of armies, these roads that from two miles away are not roads at all but long carpets of heads, the daily surge of a prodigious people onto a prodigious beach, this mobility, this faculty for progress, this enterprise, this altered form, this fevered rivalry in wealth, the monumentality of the whole, which makes this seaside resort comparable in majesty to the earth that bears it, the sea that caresses it, and the sky that crowns it, this rising tide, this overwhelming and invincible, constant and frenetic drive to expand, and the taking for granted of these very wonders — that is the amazing thing here.

Other peoples — ourselves among them — live in prey to a sublime inner demon that drives us to relentless pursuit of an ideal of love or glory. And when, with the joy of grasping an eagle, we seize the degree of ideal we were pursuing, a new zeal inflames us, a new ambition spurs us on, a new aspiration catapults us into a new and vehement longing, and from the captured eagle goes a free, rebellious butterfly, as if defying us to follow it and chaining us to its restless flight.

Not so these tranquil spirits, disturbed only by their eagerness to possess wealth. The eyes travel across these reverberating beaches; the traveler goes in and out of these dining rooms, vast as the pampas, and climbs to the tops of these colossal buildings, high as mountains; seated in a comfortable chair by the sea, the passerby fills his lungs with that powerful and salubrious air, and yet it is well known that a sad melancholy steals
over the men of our Hispanoamerican peoples who live here. They seek each other in vain, and however much the first impressions may have gratified their senses, enamored their eyes, and dazzled and befuddled their minds, the anguish of solitude possesses them in the end. Nostalgia for a superior spiritual world invades and afflicts them; they feel like lambs with no mother or shepherd, lost from the flock, and though their eyes may be dry, the frightened spirit breaks into a torrent of the bitterest tears because this great land is devoid of spirit.

But what comings and goings! What spendings of money! What opportunities for every pleasure! What absolute absence of any visible sadness or poverty! Everything is out in the open: the noisy groups, the vast dining rooms, the peculiar courtship of the North Americans — almost wholly devoid of the elements that comprise the bashful, tender, and elevated courtship of our lands — the theater, the photographer, the bathhouse — all of it out in the open. Some weigh themselves, because for the North Americans it is a matter of positive joy or real grief to weigh a pound more or less; others, for fifty cents, receive from the hands of a robust German girl an envelope containing their fortune; others, with incomprehensible delight, drink unpalatable mineral waters from glasses as long and narrow as artillery shells.

Our America (1891)

The conceited villager believes the entire world to be his village. Provided that he can be mayor, humiliate the rival who stole his sweetheart, or add to the savings in his strongbox, he considers the universal order good, unaware of those giants with seven-league boots who can crush him underfoot, or of the strife in the heavens between comets that go through the air asleep, gulping down worlds. What remains of the village in America must rouse itself. These are not the times for sleeping in a nightcap, but with weapons for a pillow, like the warriors of Juan de Castellanos:\(^1\) weapons of the mind, which conquer all others. Barricades of ideas are worth more than barricades of stones.

There is no prow that can cut through a cloudbank of ideas. A powerful idea, waved before the world at the proper time, can stop a squadron of iron-clad ships, like the mystical flag of the last judgment. Nations that do not know one another should quickly become acquainted, as men who are to fight a common enemy. Those who shake their fists, like jealous brothers coveting the same tract of land, or like the modest cottager who envies the esquire his mansion, should clasp hands and become one. . . . We can no longer be a people of leaves, liv-

\(^1\) [1522–1607], chronicler and participant in Spanish conquest of Colombia. [Ed.]
ing in the air, our foliage heavy with blooms and crackling or humming at the whim of the sun’s caress, or buffeted and tossed by the storms. The trees must form ranks to keep the giant with seven-league boots from passing! It is the time of mobilization, of marching together, and we must go forward in close ranks, like silver in the veins of the Andes.

... Those born in America who are ashamed of the mother that reared them, because she wears an Indian apron, and, who disown their sick mothers, the scoundrels, abandoning her on her sickbed! Then who is a real man? He who stays with his mother and nurses her in her illness, or he who puts her to work out of sight, and lives at her expense on decadent lands, sporting fancy neckties, cursing the womb that carried him, displaying the sign of the traitor on the back of his paper frockcoat? These sons of our America, which will be saved by its Indians in blood and is growing better; these deserters who take up arms in the army of a North America that drowns its Indians in blood and is growing worse! ...

For in what lands can men take more pride than in our long-suffering American republics, raised up among the silent Indian masses by the bleeding arms of a hundred apostles, to the sound of battle between the book and processional candle? Never in history have such advanced and united nations been forged in so short a time from such disorganized elements. The presumptuous man feels that the earth was made to serve as his pedestal, because he happens to have a facile pen or colorful speech, and he accuses his native land of being worthless and beyond redemption because its virgin jungles fail to provide him with a constant means of traveling over the world, driving Persian ponies and lavishing champagne like a tycoon. The incapacity does not lie with the emerging country in quest of suitable forms and utilitarian greatness; it lies rather with those who attempt to rule nations of a unique and violent character by means of laws inherited from four centuries of freedom in the United States and nineteen centuries of monarchy in France. A decree by Hamilton does not halt the charge of a gaucho’s horse. A phrase by Sieyes² does nothing to quicken the stagnant blood of the Indian race. To govern well, one must see things as they are. And the able governor in America is not the one who knows how to govern the Germans or the French; he must know the elements that make up his own country, and how to bring them together, using methods and institutions originating within the country, to reach that desirable state where each man can attain self-realization and all may enjoy the abundance that Nature has bestowed on everyone in the nation to enrich with their toil and defend with their lives. Government must

²French priest whose question “What is the third estate, if not the entire nation?” was said to spark the French Revolution of 1789. [Ed.]
originate in the country. The spirit of government must be that of the country. Its structure must conform to rules appropriate to the country. Good government is nothing more than the balance of the country's natural elements.

That is why in America the imported book has been conquered by the natural man. Natural men have conquered learned and artificial men. The native half-breed has conquered the exotic Creole. The struggle is not between civilization and barbarity, but between false erudition and Nature. The natural man is good, and he respects and rewards superior intelligence as long as his humility is not turned against him. . . . Republics have paid with oppression for their inability to recognize the true elements of their countries, to derive from them the right kind of government, and to govern accordingly. In a new nation a government means a creator.

In nations composed of both cultured and uncultured elements, the uncultured will govern because it is their habit to attack and resolve doubts with their fists in cases where the cultured have failed in the art of governing. The uncultured masses are lazy and timid in the realm of intelligence, and they want to be governed well. But if the government hurts them, they shake it off and govern themselves. How can the universities produce governors if not a single university in America reaches the rudiments of the art of government, the analysis of elements peculiar to the peoples of America? The young go out into the world wearing Yankee or French spectacles, hoping to govern a people they do not know. . . . To know one's country and govern it with that knowledge is the only way to free it from tyranny. The European university must bow to the American university. The history of America, from the Incas to the present, must be taught in clear detail and to the letter, even if the archons of Greece are overlooked. Our Greece must take priority over the Greece which is not ours. We need it more. Nationalist statement must replace foreign statement. Let the world be grafted onto our republics, but the trunk must be our own. And let the vanquished pedant hold his tongue, for there are no lands in which a man may take greater pride than in our long-suffering American republics. . . .

We were a phenomenon with the chest of an athlete, the hands of a dandy, and the brain of a child. We were a masquerader in English breeches, Parisian vest, North American jacket, and Spanish cap. The Indian hovered near us in silence, and went off to hills to baptize his children. The Negro, pursued from afar, poured out the songs of his heart at night, alone and unrecognized between the waves and wild beasts. The peasant, the creator, turned in blind indignation against the disdainful city, against his own child. We wore epaulets and judges' robes in countries that came into the world wearing hemp sandals and headbands. . . . Neither the Europeans nor the Yankee could provide
the key to the Spanish American riddle. So the people tried hatred instead, and every year the countries amounted to less. Exhausted by useless hatred, by the senseless struggle between the book and the lance, between reason and the processional candle, between the city and the country, weary of the impossible rule by rival urban cliques over the natural nation tempestuous or inert by turns, we are beginning almost unconsciously to try love. Nations stand up and greet one another. “What are we?” is the mutual question, and little by little they furnish answers. When a problem arises in Cojimar, they do not seek its solution in Danzig. The frockcoats are still French, but thought begins to be American. The youth of America are rolling up their sleeves, digging their hands in the dough, and making it rise with the sweat of their brows. They realize that there is too much imitation, and that creation holds the key to salvation. “Create” is the password of this generation. Make wine from plantains; it may be sour, but it is our own wine! ... Thaw out frozen America with the fire of your hearts! Make the natural blood of the nations course vigorously through their veins! The new Americans are on their feet, saluting each other from nation to nation, the eyes of the laborers shining with joy. The natural statesman arises, schooled in the direct study of Nature. He reads to apply his knowledge, not to imitate. Economists study the problems at their point of origin. Speakers begin a policy of moderation. Playwrights bring native characters to the stage. Academies discuss practical subjects. Poetry shears off its ... locks and hangs its red vest on the glorious tree. Selective and sparkling prose is filled with ideas. In the Indian republics, the governors are learning Indian languages. ...

There can be no racial animosity, because there are no races. The theorist and feeble thinkers string together and warm over the bookshelf races which the well-disposed observer and the fair-minded traveler vainly seek in the justice of Nature where man’s universal identity springs forth from triumphant love and the turbulent hunger for life. The soul, equal and eternal, emanates from bodies of different shapes and colors. Whoever foments and spreads antagonism and hate between the races, sins against humanity. With a single voice the hymn is already being sung; the present generation is carrying industrious America along the road enriched by their sublime fathers; from Rio Grande to the straits of Magellan, the Great Cemi, astride its condor, has scattered the seeds of the new America over the romantic nations of the continent and the sorrowful islands of the sea!

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3Near Havana, Cuba. [Ed.]
4Spirit worshipped by the Taino people of the Caribbean. [Ed.]
REFLECTIONS

We have looked at the conflict between Westernization and nationalism through windows on three different societies: Japan, India, and the Americas. For the Japanese, the borrowing of Western institutions and ideas provided an escape from colonization. By the time India gained political independence in 1947, it had become partially Westernized by three hundred years of colonialism. Yet in both countries, as in the countries of the Americas, there were those who resisted Western ways, those who embraced them, and others still who developed what von Laue called (after Dostoyevski) “heightened consciousness” from the contrary experiences or “love-hate” feelings within their own hearts.

This last response — accepting the contradictions: treasuring the traditional while trying the new — may have been the most difficult, but ultimately the most useful. It must have been far easier to cast off everything Asian, as Fukuzawa urged, or make fun of any contact with the West as buffoonery, monkeying around, or frightful miscegenation, as the Japanese cartoons suggested. Japan may have made the most successful non-Western transition to industrial modernity because it steered a path between Fukuzawa’s prescription for wholesale cultural capitulation and the cartoonists’ blanket rejection of anything new and foreign.

India, with older indigenous traditions than Japan, but also a longer period confronting the influence of Western culture, approached independence in 1947 with a political elite trained in English law, liberal and Marxist political parties, a literate English-speaking middle class, and a long-suppressed hunger for economic freedom and material well-being. Gandhi feared violence, anticolonial in 1909 and anti-Muslim in 1947, more than the repressions of the old society. While he sought a new social cohesion in traditional religious spiritualism, Nehru hoped to forge a new solidarity along the Western industrial socialist model.

In America, where the ideal of assimilation was not just a sham (as it was for many Africans and Native Americans), it required a cultural whitewashing in exchange for material success. Few could condemn themselves or their countrymen to economic dependence, but Martí, and others among the best and brightest, could insist on the need to find their own way.

Our brief summary of Westernization raises many questions. Why do so many nationalist leaders emerge from outside their native countries? Did Gandhi become more Indian in England or South Africa? Were Indians who lived overseas more free to express themselves, better able to contribute financially, or more optimistic about changing societies? Did Martí become a Cuban and first citizen of all the Americas
through his travels, or his life in Nueva York? We cannot overlook the international aspects of nationalist movements in the twentieth century; Westernizers and anti-Westernizers seem to have been profoundly influenced by their foreign travel experiences. Is the history of Westernization, and of the opposition to Westernization, ultimately a global story? And are the global processes such that the story eventually becomes irrelevant?

In his book *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914*, historian C. A. Bayly observes that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is difficult to distinguish Westernization from globalization, as the forces that threaten the national economies or cultures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America tend to come from every direction. Perhaps future generations will see Westernization as only the initial stage of a larger process of economic and cultural integration, which we now call globalization.
World War I and Its Consequences

Europe and the Soviet Union, 1914–1920

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Europe that so many non-European intellectuals sought to imitate or reject between 1880 and 1920 came very close to self-destructing between 1914 and 1918, and bringing many of the world’s peoples from Asia, Africa, and the Americas down with it. The orgy of bloodletting, then known as the “Great War,” put seventy million men in uniform, of whom ten million were killed and twenty million were wounded. Most of the soldiers were Western European, though Russia contributed more soldiers than France or Germany, while Japan enlisted as many as the Austro-Hungarian empire that began the war. Enlisted men also came from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the colonies: India, French West Africa, German East Africa, among others. The majority of soldiers were killed in Europe, especially along the German Western front — four hundred miles of trenches that spanned from Switzerland to the English Channel, across northeastern France. But battles were also fought along the borders of German, French, and English colonies in Africa, and there were high Australian casualties on the coast of Gallipoli in Ottoman Turkey.

The readings in this chapter focus on the lives and deaths of the soldiers, as well as the efforts of some of their political leaders to redefine the world around them. We examine the experiences of soldiers and how the war changed the lives of those who survived its devastating toll. We compare the accounts of those who fought on both sides of the great divide. Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire, joined by the Ottoman Empire, formed an alliance called the Central Powers (see Map 10.1). In opposition, England, France, and Russia, the Allied Powers, were later joined by Italy, Greece, Japan, and the United
States. We compare views across the generational divide as well as from the trenches and government offices.

THINKING HISTORICALLY
Understanding Causes and Consequences

From 1914 to 1920, the greatest divide was the war itself. It marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. Few events have left the participants with such a profound sense of fundamental change. And so our study of the war is an appropriate place to ask two of the universal questions of major historical change: What caused it? What were the consequences?

The causes are those events or forces that came before; the consequences are the results, what the war itself prompted to occur. Thus, causes and consequences are part of the same continuum. Still, we must remember that not everything that happened before the war was a cause of the war. Similarly, not everything that happened afterward was a result of the war.

In this chapter we explore specific ideas about cause and consequence. Our goal is not to compile a definitive list of either but, rather, to explore some of the ways that historians and thoughtful readers can make sense of the past.
SALLY MARKS

The Coming of the First World War

Sally Marks, a modern scholar, begins the following selection by declaring that, after much debate, historians have recently come to agree that Germany was the country primarily responsible for causing the First World War. Other countries were not blameless, however, and waging war in the twentieth century required willing recruits and popular support on all sides. Further, as Marks notes, there were secondary or background causes that precipitated the outbreak of war. What were these secondary causes? How important were they?

Thinking Historically

In studying the causes of major historical events, historians distinguish between structural or long-term causes, direct or immediate causes, and contingent events or accidents. Which events and circumstances leading up to the First World War would you place in each of these categories? Marks writes mainly of political decisions made by governments, which are often the most immediate causes of war. She also writes of long-term historic developments, however, such as competition for colonies, the difference between “young” and “old” states, the balance of power in international politics, the development of nationalism, as well as more personal factors such as leaders’ fears and miscalculations. Were any of these long-term developments “causes” of war? How important does Marks think they were? Why does she think German political decisions were more important?

There is little that historians debate more endlessly than causation, and certainly much ink has been expended in arguing the origins of World War I. In recent years, however, a degree of consensus has emerged, even among German scholars, that primary responsibility should be assigned to the Second Reich, though debate continues about German motives and intentions. It now seems clear that Germany’s

power, policies, actions, and diplomatic style provided a continual factor between its creation in 1870-1871 and the great collision of 1914.

Germany's unification, coupled with its industrial and demographic growth, brought a young but very strong power to the center of the European stage, hitherto a comparatively weak area. The power balance was at once implicitly altered. But Prince Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of the new Germany until 1890, chose not to make this explicit in Europe or elsewhere. Preferring to build the Reich's institutions and industry, he restored the Concert of Europe, used it to settle quarrels threatening the peace and his new empire, and eschewed colonies. Between 1894 and 1914, however, a series of political, economic, and diplomatic events contributed to a gradual coalescing of the great power alliances—Russia, France, Great Britain (and later Italy) on the one side, and Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey on the other—that would confront each other in World War I. Other key developments in this period and leading up to 1914 included Germany's growing policy of expansion, hunger for colonies, and military buildup, this last evolving into a fast-escalating naval race with Great Britain.

Although the old Concert was not quite moribund, all European powers of consequence were thus aligned in the two blocs, the Triple Alliance down the center of Europe, and the Triple Entente on the edges. Germany saw the Entente policy of containment as encirclement, and its fears in this respect only increased "the amalgam of insecurity and self-assertion in her make-up...". Thus its diplomacy became more bullying, which had the effect of driving Britain and France together, causing the Triple Entente to solidify. Both Germany's insistent claims and Russia's return from East Asia to compete with Austria in the Balkans contributed to growing conflict and tension between the two alignments.

Most of the conflicts concerned imperial matters although a European power struggle underlay them all. Part of the trouble was that the days when there were plenty of colonies available for everybody had passed, and as the powers bumped into each other, the latecomers were dissatisfied. Timing proved crucial to the imperial race; those who did not seize the moment encountered difficulties in doing later what other powers had done earlier. The latecomers were Germany, Japan, and Italy, impatient youngsters who remained dissatisfied, always seeking more until they went down to decisive defeat in World War II. But in the decade before the First World War, the collisions were not only in Africa and Asia, but also in the Balkans, as Russia turned to Austria's sole remaining sphere. Wherever confrontations occurred they brought with them the risk of a major conflagration, not merely a local conflict between two states, but a global struggle between two alignments of powers.

War among the major powers was avoided for a decade despite a series of crises, but only at the price of exhausting options and reducing
flexibility, thus rendering resolution more difficult for the future. Great powers, especially the more precarious ones, could not repeatedly accept defeat and humiliation and still remain great powers. Another option which several states exhausted was that of not supporting an ally. With Europe divided into two camps, both of which were arming briskly, retaining one’s allies was vital. However, one can desert an ally only so often and still keep it as an ally. Equally, the need for allies meant that both crises and atonements for desertion tended to solidify the two rival alignments, further reducing flexibility.

During the decade before 1914 the Anglo-German naval competition continued, despite British efforts to come to terms, and crises, often entailing lack of support from allies or diplomatic defeat, were too numerous to recount briefly. Though all depleted the reservoirs of good will and elasticity, only a few were so serious that they brought the risk of a pan-European war. Nonetheless, the fact that Europe came to the brink of a great war five or six times in ten short years is indicative of the instability and tension which were mounting.

Part of the problem was that Europe’s power system was increasingly out of balance. The Habsburg Empire was no longer really a great power, while France was fading in comparative terms. Russia’s vast size did not fully compensate for technological and organizational weakness, especially after the regime was shaken by defeat and revolution in 1905, while at the other end of the continent, Britain’s economic lead was less commanding than before. In the middle of Europe Germany was becoming comparatively something of a superpower, already dominant economically, especially in relation to its neighbours, and aspiring to a comparable political and world position. And this young, thrustingly ambitious Reich pursued a high-risk policy of confrontation which created or aggravated crises, contributing to ten years of international tension.

In the chancellories of Europe, a major war was anticipated before long. Some leaders thought that sooner rather than later would be more advantageous for their countries. All assumed that a pan-European war would be short — for economic and technological reasons. But despite the decade of crises and mounting tension, the situation seemed more serene in 1914. In particular, Anglo-German relations appeared improved. The two countries had worked together at the conference of ambassadors in London in 1913 to prevent an Austro-Serbian war, though the German calculations and hope was that if war came, Russia would be blamed and Britain would remain neutral. But that was not public knowledge. However, the citizenry did know that there had not been a major European war for a hundred years; collisions between the great powers had been short and snappy, especially since mid-century, and the last one had occurred nearly 45 years before. A widespread assumption had developed that wars were something which
occurred only overseas or in the backward Balkans among quarrelsome infant states. Even Anglo-German naval relations were now less tense, and in July of 1914 the two countries reached an agreement about the Berlin to Baghdad railway. For these and other reasons, the prospects for peace looked better than in the recent past as the spectacularly beautiful summer of 1914 opened.

The sunny calm was shattered on 28 June 1914 by the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, by young Bosnian nationalists backed by Unification or Death, a secret Serbian society in which key Serbian army officers were dominant. Their complicity is clear; members of the Serbian cabinet may have had partial foreknowledge as well. The chanceries of Europe anticipated an Austrian reaction directed against Serbia, whose involvement was widely assumed, but not a major war. However, the assassination led to the July crisis of 1914, culminating in World War I.

Austria’s actions played a substantial contributory role, and the Habsburg monarchy is usually assigned secondary responsibility for causing World War I, but only secondary, because Austria’s actions were obviously contingent. It is beyond serious doubt that it would not have acted against Serbia or risked war with Russia without solid German support. Berlin not only gave that support and repeatedly urged Austria on but also decided upon war now and declared it against Russia and France without any direct provocation from either. A leading German scholar of the July crisis has concluded that “the German Government opened Pandora’s box in an act of sheer political and ideological despair.”

One must ask what brought the European continent’s strongest power to such despair and created a situation where it almost desperately opted to set off a continental war with the risk of world war. Some of the answers lie within German domestic politics and the psychological frame of reference of its leaders. Additional answers lie, as do the contributory errors from other powers, in broader aspects of the European scene in 1914.

For example, there were both men and nations which could ill afford to back down. Too often in the past, the Russian foreign minister, his Austrian counterpart, and the German Kaiser had all displayed timidity, hesitation, and reluctance to commit themselves to firm action. Kaiser Wilhelm in particular was determined to prove that he was not a coward, and, like the Russian foreign minister, he was rather unstable. Similarly, it was doubtful whether the Austrian and Russian regimes could survive major diplomatic defeats. Austria was internally

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1Popularly known as the Black Hand.
so precarious and Russia had sustained so many recent humiliations that disintegration of the one and revolution in the other were real possibilities. This factor loomed large in the calculations of leaders in Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Berlin. Paris concentrated more on retaining its Russian ally. Moreover, the intensity of public opinion in most countries made backing down almost impossible for weak regimes and politicians who wished to retain office. Under the circumstances, it was easy to hope that a strong stand would deter others and solve the problem.

The stronger great powers feared that their allies would cease to be great powers and, to varying degrees, felt a need to bolster them. There was also a widespread fear of losing an ally altogether. Both Britain and France had worried in past crises about losing Russia: France because she compensated for her own deficiencies with the Russian tie, Britain from fear of adding Russia to its enemies. Austria and Germany feared losing each other: Austria because its need was great, Germany from a sense of isolation. Both France and Germany worried that Russia and Austria would fight only if their own interests were involved. Each concluded that it was better for war to come on an issue where the ally's concerns were directly engaged.

Most states feared losing prestige and great power status. This was of intense concern to Austria and Russia, and in both instances was focused primarily on the Balkans, which impacted on domestic concerns and where the situation had changed so rapidly with the removal of Turkey. Yet dread of the results of backing down was widespread and extended even to Britain, master of the seas and of the world's greatest empire. On 31 July 1914, a senior British official argued for action by saying, "The theory that England cannot engage in a big war means her abdication as an independent state... A balance of power cannot be maintained by a State that is incapable of fighting and consequently carries no weight."

Threats to prestige, authority, and vital interests were almost universally perceived. Britain had long recognized a German challenge on and beyond the seas; the invasion of Belgium seemed to be striking at the British heartland. France, aside from other considerations, could hardly hand over her border forts without becoming a defenceless laughing stock. Russia felt its future in the Balkans and among the Slavs was at stake. Austria saw Serbia as a danger to its very existence, whereas Germany perceived a Russian threat and perhaps was as obsessed by Russia as Britain had been in the mid-nineteenth century and the United States would be in the mid-twentieth century. Clearly, some threats were more real and immediate than others, but leaders acted upon their perceptions, even if erroneous.

Nationalism, whether unifying or divisive, and imperialism contributed to the crises and tensions of the pre-war years, if they did not
themselves directly cause the war. And certainly Austria-Hungary’s ageing, archaic multinational empire, trying to maintain itself against mounting nationalist pressures, was a major contributing factor, as was the Austro-Russian rivalry among the infant national states of the Balkans. The pre-war arms race contributed to the international tension of the era but of itself was not a direct causal factor, despite the beliefs of a later generation, particularly of Americans.

More important, probably, was a widespread pseudo-Darwinian view of international politics, an assumption that it was a question of dog eat dog with the strongest and speediest dog surviving. Furthermore, crises had become the norm, so much so that some leaders expected war before long. Especially in Germany, there was a belief that war and Darwinian struggle were unavoidable, which perhaps explains the preoccupation with an assumed Russian threat and a fatalistic view that a Russo-German war was inevitable soon. Nowhere was there any awareness of what a war would be like; as a result there was scant caution about the dangers war would bring. The short war illusion was widespread and had contributed to the arms race on the assumption that the war would be fought with what equipment one had at the outset. The businessmen would see to it that the war was brief (if they did not prevent it altogether, as some believed, but not those determining national policies). Few in power had much appreciation of what the industrialization, nationalization, and democratization of war signified. Indeed, it was widely held that war was good and glorious and cleansing.

In some countries, military men and military plans played a considerable role. The military plans were rigid, too few in number, and had tight timetables; the military men were wedded to them. The generals tended to be more eager for war than the civilian leaders; even where they were not, there was a fear that any delay in mobilization would be catastrophic. Initially there was often lack of co-ordination between civilian and military leaders, thanks to administrative inadequacy at the top, especially in Germany and Russia, and then tugs-of-war ensued, particularly to sway the autocrat. At a more fundamental level, appreciations in various countries of the military balance of power, then and as it would be in the future, clearly contributed to the pressures toward war.

The alliance system did not of itself cause any war, local, continental, or world. But it constituted a substantial reason why a local crisis became a world war, and partially explains why a murder in Bosnia caused Germany to invade Belgium and why that event in turn led to a world war, with Japan occupying Germany’s Asian colonies. This is particularly true in view of the suddenness and speed of the crisis. Peace movements collapsed, and little time was left for diplomacy. Furthermore, previous crises had made the alliances more rigid. Europe had
managed to edge past the abyss repeatedly in recent years, but only at
the price of expending options and losing flexibility. Now governments
felt they had few choices left...

In the end, the debate always comes back to Germany. Clearly,
Austria intended to start nothing without Germany at its side, and none
of the Entente powers actively wanted a war in 1914. There was no En-
tente equivalent to Wilhelm’s “Now or never.” Thus, one must ask
whether Germany wanted war in 1914, if so why, and what its reasons
and motives were. Why did it encourage local war, accept continental
war, and risk world war? The answers are contradictory, thanks to il-
logic, conflicts, and differing perceptions within Berlin’s upper eche-
lons, where policy-making was disorganized...

War came when it did primarily because Germany opted for a war,
if not necessarily for the war which eventuated. There has been a good
deal of debate about why Germany did so and to what end. Was it
largely a matter of miscalculation? Had there been a systematic two-
year German plan for world conquest? Was Germany running a calcu-
lated risk, hoping to get its way without intent of war? Was the goal a
preventive war, to deter future Russian aggression, or was Germany it-
self engaging in an opportunistic war of aggression?

The answers to these questions are a matter of opinion and the ob-
ject of heated historical debate. Certainly there was miscalculation
aptly, and repeated gambles constituted calculated or miscalculated
risks. It is perhaps begging the question to say that little German policy
formulation was systematic, but, despite conferences debating war in
December 1912 and thereafter, evidence for a conscious systematic
two-year drive toward a world war depends heavily on interpretation
and is hotly disputed. Clearly, Germany seized the opportunity for a
war of aggression, but the question is why it thought it should.

Perhaps it is best to let German leaders speak for themselves. In
February 1918 Bethmann Hollweg, who had been Chancellor in 1914,
explained privately, “Yes, my god, in a certain sense it was a preventive
war. But when war was hanging above us, when it had to come in two
years even more dangerously and more inescapably, and when the gen-
erals said, now it is still possible, without defeat, but not in two years
time.” And in August 1916, Bethmann’s close aide and confidante,
who himself propounded the theory of the calculated risk, explained
that the purpose of the war was “defence against present-day France,
preventive war against the Russia of the future, struggle with Britain
for world domination.”
ERICH MARIA REMARQUE

From All Quiet on the Western Front

In this selection, the beginning of one of the most famous war novels ever written, we are introduced to the main characters and to the daily routines of the German army on "the Western Front," the long line of trenches that stretched across northern France from Switzerland to the English Channel for most of the war between 1914 and 1918. What does this selection suggest about the types of people recruited to serve in the army? How does Remarque view friendship, authority, and discipline in the army? Do you imagine these German soldiers behaved very differently from French or English soldiers?

Thinking Historically

Remarque's novel is not intended as an explanation of the causes of war, but this excerpt offers an explanation of how young men were recruited to fight and gives us some idea of their mental state. How might you use material from this novel, assuming that it is factual, to propose at least one cause of World War I?

In this brief selection, the author also suggests something about the consequences of the war. What, according to Remarque, are the war's likely outcomes? The consequences described here are arrived at very early in the war. Is it likely that they will change significantly as the war continues?

Kantorek had been our schoolmaster, a stern little man in a grey tailcoat, with a face like a shrew mouse. He was about the same size as Corporal Himmelstoss, the "terror of Klosterberg." It is very queer that the unhappiness of the world is so often brought on by small men. They are so much more energetic and uncompromising than the big fellows. I have always taken good care to keep out of sections with small company commanders. They are mostly confounded little martinets.

During drill-time Kantorek gave us long lectures until the whole of our class went, under his shepherding, to the District Commandant and

volunteered. I can see him now, as he used to glare at us through his spectacles and say in a moving voice: "Won’t you join up, Comrades?"

These teachers always carry their feelings ready in their waistcoat pockets, and trot them out by the hour. But we didn’t think of that then.

There was, indeed, one of us who hesitated and did not want to fall into line. That was Joseph Behm, a plump, homely fellow. But he did allow himself to be persuaded, otherwise he would have been ostracized. And perhaps more of us thought as he did, but no one could very well stand out, because at that time even one’s parents were ready with the word “coward”; no one had the vaguest idea what we were in for. The wisest were just the poor and simple people. They knew the war to be a misfortune, whereas those who were better off, and should have been able to see more clearly what the consequences would be, were beside themselves with joy.

Katzcinsky said that was a result of their upbringing. It made them stupid. And what Kat said, he had thought about.

Strange to say, Behm was one of the first to fall. He got hit in the eye during an attack, and we left him lying for dead. We couldn’t bring him with us, because we had to come back helter-skelter. In the afternoon suddenly we heard him call, and saw him crawling about in No Man’s Land. He had only been knocked unconscious. Because he could not see, and was mad with pain, he failed to keep under cover, and so was shot down before anyone could go and fetch him in.

Naturally we couldn’t blame Kantorek for this. Where would the world be if one brought every man to book? There were thousands of Kantoreks, all of whom were convinced that they were acting for the best — in a way that cost them nothing.

And that is why they let us down so badly.

For us lads of eighteen they ought to have been mediators and guides to the world of maturity, the world of work, of duty, of culture, of progress — to the future. We often made fun of them and played jokes on them, but in our hearts we trusted them. The idea of authority, which they represented, was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a more humane wisdom. But the first death we saw shattered this belief. We had to recognize that our generation was more to be trusted than theirs. They surpassed us only in phrases and in cleverness. The first bombardment showed us our mistake, and under it the world as they had taught it to us broke in pieces.

While they continued to write and talk, we saw the wounded and dying. While they taught that duty to one’s country is the greatest thing, we already knew that death-throes are stronger. But for all that we were no mutineers, no deserters, no cowards — they were very free with all these expressions. We loved our country as much as they; we went courageously into every action; but also we distinguished the false from true, we had suddenly learned to see. And we saw that there was
nothing of their world left. We were all at once terribly alone; and alone we must see it through.

Before going over to see Kemmerich we pack up his things: He will need them on the way back.

In the dressing station there is great activity: it reeks as ever of carbolic, pus, and sweat. We are accustomed to a good deal in the billets, but this makes us feel faint. We ask for Kemmerich. He lies in a large room and receives us with feeble expressions of joy and helpless agitation. While he was unconscious someone had stolen his watch.

Müller shakes his head: "I always told you that nobody should carry as good a watch as that."

Müller is rather crude and tactless, otherwise he would hold his tongue, for anybody can see that Kemmerich will never come out of this place again. Whether he finds his watch or not will make no difference, at the most one will only be able to send it to his people.

"How goes it, Franz?" asks Kropp.

Kemmerich’s head sinks.

"Not so bad... but I have such a damned pain in my foot."

We look at his bed covering. His leg lies under a wire basket. The bed covering arches over it. I kick Müller on the shin, for he is just about to tell Kemmerich what the orderlies told us outside: that Kemmerich has lost his foot. The leg is amputated. He looks ghastly, yellow and wan. In his face there are already the strained lines that we know so well, we have seen them now hundreds of times. They are not so much lines as marks. Under the skin the life no longer pulses, it has already pressed out the boundaries of the body. Death is working through from within. It already has command in the eyes. Here lies our comrade, Kemmerich, who a little while ago was roasting horse flesh with us and squatting in the shellholes. He is still and yet it is not he any longer. His features have become uncertain and faint, like a photographic plate from which two pictures have been taken. Even his voice sounds like ashes.

I think of the time when we went away. His mother, a good plump matron, brought him to the station. She wept continually, her face was bloated and swollen. Kemmerich felt embarrassed, for she was the least composed of all; she simply dissolved into fat and water. Then she caught sight of me and took hold of my arm again and again, and implored me to look after Franz out there. Indeed he did have a face like a child, and such frail bones that after four weeks’ pack-carrying he already had flat feet. But how can a man look after anyone in the field!

"Now you will soon be going home," says Kropp. "You would have had to wait at least three or four months for your leave."

Kemmerich nods. I cannot bear to look at his hands, they are like wax. Under the nails is the dirt of the trenches, it shows through blue-black like poison. It strikes me that these nails will continue to grow
like lean fantastic cellar-plants long after Kemmerich breathes no more. I see the picture before me. They twist themselves into corkscrews and grow and grow, and with them the hair on the decaying skull, just like grass in a good soil, just like grass, how can it be possible —

Müller leans over. “We have brought your things, Franz.”

Kemmerich signs with his hands. “Put them under the bed.”

Müller does so. Kemmerich starts on again about the watch. How can one calm him without making him suspicious?

Müller reappears with a pair of airman’s boots. They are fine English boots of soft, yellow leather which reach to the knees and lace up all the way — they are things to be coveted.

Müller is delighted at the sight of them. He matches their soles against his own clumsy boots and says: “Will you be taking them with you then, Franz?”

We all three have the same thought; even if he should get better, he would be able to use only one — they are no use to him. But as things are now it is a pity that they should stay here; the orderlies will of course grab them as soon as he is dead.

“Well, we could exchange,” suggests Müller again. “Out here one can make some use of them.” Still Kemmerich is not to be moved.

I tread on Müller’s foot; reluctantly he puts the fine boots back again under the bed.

We talk a little more and then take our leave.

“Cheerio, Franz.”

I promise him to come back in the morning. Müller talks of doing so, too. He is thinking of the lace-up boots and means to be on the spot. Kemmerich groans. He is feverish. We get hold of an orderly outside and ask him to give Kemmerich a dose of morphia.

He refuses. “If we were to give morphia to everyone we would have to have tubs full ——”

“You only attend to officers properly,” says Kropp viciously.

I hastily intervene and give him a cigarette. He takes it.

“Are you usually allowed to give it, then?” I ask him.

He is annoyed. “If you don’t think so, then why do you ask?”

I press a few more cigarettes into his hand. “Do us the favour ——”

“Well, all right,” he says.

Kropp goes in with him. He doesn’t trust him and wants to see. We wait outside.

Müller returns to the subject of the boots. “They would fit me perfectly. In these boots I get blister after blister. Do you think he will last till tomorrow after drill?” If he passes out in the night, we know where the boots ——”
Kropp returns. “Do you think ———?” he asks.

“Done for,” said Müller emphatically.

We go back to the huts. I think of the letter that I must write to-morrow to Kemmerich’s mother. I am freezing. I could do with a tot of rum. Müller pulls up some grass and chews it. Suddenly little Kropp throws his cigarette away, stamps on it savagely, and looking around him with a broken and distracted face, stammers “Damned shit, the damned shit!”

We walk on for a long time. Kropp has calmed himself; we understand, he saw red; out there every man gets like that sometime.

“What has Kantorek written to you?” Müller asks him.

He laughs. “We are the Iron Youth.”

We all three smile bitterly, Kropp rails: He is glad that he can speak.

Yes, that’s the way they think, these hundred thousand Kantoreks! Iron Youth! Youth! We are none of us more than twenty years old. But young? Youth? That is long ago. We are old folk.

World War I Propaganda Posters

Posters were the communication medium of the First World War. In an age when governments had still not taught most people how to read but increasingly needed their consent or compliance, images often spoke louder than words, but those images had to be persuasive.

The American poster from 1917 and the German poster from 1915–1916 (Figures 10.1 and 10.3) implore men to enlist in the army; the Italian poster from 1917 (Figure 10.2) encourages people to buy war bonds. What do you think accounts for the similar graphic style used in these three posters? How effective do you think they were and why?

Another strategy for promoting loyalty, patriotism, and support for a war that was lasting far longer than anyone had anticipated was to demonize or ridicule the enemy. What feelings does the U.S. anti-German poster from 1916 (Figure 10.4) attempt to provoke in viewers and how does the scene shown achieve this? Compare this portrayal of German brutishness to the narrator of All Quiet on the Western Front and his soldier companions. Why is it often essential to dehumanize the enemy in wartime? Figure 10.5, a German propaganda
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We all three have the same thought; even if he should get better, he would be able to use only one — they are no use to him. But as things are now it is a pity that they should stay here; the orderlies will of course grab them as soon as he is dead.
"Won't you leave them with us?" Müller repeats.
Kemmerich doesn't want to. They are his most prized possessions.
"Well, we could exchange," suggests Müller again. "Out here one can make some use of them." Still Kemmerich is not to be moved.
I tread on Müller's foot; reluctantly he puts the fine boots back again under the bed.
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poster, takes a different tack, depicting the Allied Powers as a series of ineffectual toy soldiers. The caption in German mockingly confirms this notion: “You six aren’t worth the waste of shot and powder.” Although it may be difficult to discern, each soldier bears a letter above or next to his head indicating his country of origin. Viewing them left to right the soldiers are Montenegrin, Serbian, Russian, English, French, and Belgian. What cultural and ethnic stereotypes do these figures reveal?

The signing of the armistice in 1918 did not mean the end of propaganda, as Figure 10.6, a lithograph from 1920 exhorting French citizens to help repay the war debt, shows. The female figure striding optimistically forward is the goddess Victory holding aloft an olive branch, a symbol of peace. What do you make of the other elements in this print? What sentiments does this picture appeal to?
Figure 10.2  Italian Poster for National War Loan, 1917.
Source: Snark/Art Resource, N.Y.
Reichswehr

Figure 10.3 Recruiting Poster for German Army, 1915–1916.
Figure 10.4  Propaganda Poster, United States, 1916.
Alle Sechse
seid ihr keinen Schuß Pulver wert!

Figure 10.5  German Propaganda Poster, 1916.
Source: Roger Viollet/Getty Images.
Figure 10.6  French War Loan Poster, 1920.
Source: The Image Works.
Thinking Historically

When war broke out overseas, President Woodrow Wilson declared it a European matter that had nothing to do with the United States and most Americans agreed. Indeed, the United States did not join the war and throw its crucial weight behind the Allied Powers until April 1917. What role do you think propaganda such as Figure 10.4 played in swaying public opinion? This and the other posters illustrate both sides' efforts to promote and sustain the cause of war. But do they reveal anything about the changes wrought by the war?

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Base Details

An English gentleman and pastoral poet before the war, Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967) enlisted with a noble innocence soon challenged on the battlefield. In addition to his own sobering experiences, his brother and a fellow officer were among the many slaughtered in the failed Allied effort of 1915 to conquer Turkish defenses at Gallipoli. What is the message of this poem?

Thinking Historically

Poems are not, of course, exercises in historical explanation. Nevertheless, there is here a partial explanation of the continuation, if not the cause, of the war. What is that explanation? How is it similar to, or different from, others you have read in this chapter?

Siegfried Sassoon, Counter-Attack and Other Poems (London: W. Heinemann, 1918).
If I were fierce, and bald, and short of breath,
    I'd live with scarlet Majors at the Base,
And speed glum heroes up the line to death.
    You'd see me with my puffy petulant face,
Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel,
    Reading the Roll of Honour. "Poor young chap,"
I'd say — "I used to know his father well;
    Yes, we've lost heavily in this last scrap."
And when the war is done and youth stone dead,
    I'd toddle safely home and die — in bed.

WILFRED OWEN
Dulce et Decorum Est

Wilfred Owen (1893–1918) enlisted in the British Army in 1915, was wounded in 1917, and was hospitalized, released, and sent back to the front, where he died on November 4, 1918, one week before the end of the war. In this poem, he describes a poison gas attack. Like the machine gun and the airplane, gas was a common element of the new mechanized mass warfare. Owen describes how physically debilitating the effects of gas were. Why was gas such an effective and deadly weapon? How, according to Owen, had the nature of war changed?

Thinking Historically

The concluding phrase, which means "Sweet and proper it is to die for one's country," was a Latin declaration of patriotic duty that English students repeated as a lesson, not only in Latin classes but, more important, in their political education as subjects of the British empire. How does Owen portray this lesson as a cause of the war? What does he imagine to be the consequences of fighting a war with such patriotic slogans in mind?

Dulce et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed
through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began the trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all
blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines\(^1\) that dropped
behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of
fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime. . . .
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green
light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking,
drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gurgling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest,
To children ardent for some desperate glory.
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

\(^1\)German artillery shells. [Ed.]
ROSALUXEMBURG

The Junius\(^1\) Pamphlet

Many Europeans greeted the onset of war with enthusiasm, expecting a quick victory. Before 1914 the socialist parties of Europe were among the few voices for peace and international cooperation. But when war came, the socialist parties of Germany, England, and France were swept up in the nationalist furor for war, like everyone else. Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), a Polish refugee who had earned a doctorate in Switzerland and became a leader of German socialism, feared their capitulation. When it happened she broke with the German Social Democratic party and founded the more radical Spartacus League. Because of her activities, she spent most of the war in jail. There she wrote the Junius Pamphlet in 1915. What reasons did she give for opposing the war?

*Thinking Historically*

Rosa Luxemburg’s opposition to the war was based on a Marxist interpretation of history according to which the wars of capitalist societies were products of particular causes. What were these causes? What, according to this view, would be the consequences of capitalist wars?

The scene has changed fundamentally. The six weeks’ march to Paris has grown into a world drama.\(^2\) Mass slaughter has become the tiresome and monotonous business of the day and the end is no closer. Bourgeois statecraft is held fast in its own vise. The spirits summoned up can no longer be exorcised.

Gone is the euphoria. Gone the patriotic noise in the streets, the chase after the gold-colored automobile, one false telegram after another, the wells poisoned by cholera, the Russian students heaving

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\(^1\)Perhaps a reference to Lucius Junius Brutus, a republican hero of ancient Rome, legendary founder of the Roman Republic, c. 509 B.C.E. [Ed.]

\(^2\)Six weeks was the time allotted for victory on the Western Front by the Schlieffen Plan. The general staff was forced to scrap the plan in October 1914, as the war of movement swiftly devolved into grinding trench warfare. [Ed.]

bombs over every railway bridge in Berlin, the French airplanes over Nuremberg, the spy hunting public running amok in the streets, the swaying crowds in the coffee shops with ear-deafening patriotic songs surging ever higher, whole city neighborhoods transformed into mobs ready to denounce, to mistreat women, to shout hurrah and to induce delirium in themselves by means of wild rumors. . . .

The spectacle is over. German scholars, those “stumbling lemurs,” have been whistled off the stage long ago. The trains full of reservists are no longer accompanied by virgins fainting from pure jubilation. They no longer greet the people from the windows of the train with joyous smiles. Carrying their packs, they quietly trot along the streets where the public goes about its daily business with aggrieved visages.

In the prosaic atmosphere of pale day there sounds a different chorus — the hoarse cries of the vulture and the hyenas of the battlefield. Ten thousand tarpaulins guaranteed up to regulations! A hundred thousand kilos of bacon, cocoa powder, coffee-substitute — c.o.d., immediate delivery! Hand grenades, lathes, cartridge pouches, marriage bureaus for widows of the fallen, leather belts, jobbers for war orders — serious offers only! The cannon fodder loaded onto trains in August and September is moldering in the killing fields of Belgium, the Vosges, and Masurian Lakes where the profits are springing up like weeds. It’s a question of getting the harvest into the barn quickly. Across the ocean stretch thousands of greedy hands to snatch it up.

Business thrives in the ruins. Cities become piles of ruins; villages become cemeteries; countries, deserts; populations are beggared; churches, horse stalls. International law, treaties and alliances, the most sacred words and the highest authority have been torn in shreds. Every sovereign “by the grace of God” is called a rogue and lying scoundrel by his cousin on the other side. Every diplomat is a cunning rascal to his colleagues in the other party. Every government sees every other as dooming its own people and worthy only of universal contempt. There are food riots in Venice, in Lisbon, Moscow, Singapore. There is plague in Russia, and misery and despair everywhere.

Violated, dishonored, wading in blood, dripping filth — there stands bourgeois society. This is it [in reality]. Not all spic and span and moral, with pretense to culture, philosophy, ethics, order, peace, and the rule of law — but the ravenous beast, the witches’ sabbath of anarchy, a plague to culture and humanity. Thus it reveals itself in its true, its naked form.

In the midst of this witches’ sabbath a catastrophe of world-historical proportions has happened: International Social Democracy has capitulated. To deceive ourselves about it, to cover it up, would be the most foolish, the most fatal thing the proletariat could do. . . .

Friedrich Engels once said: “Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism.” . . .
This world war is a regression into barbarism. The triumph of imperialism leads to the annihilation of civilization. . . .

The war means ruin for all the belligerents, although more so for the defeated. On the day after the concluding of peace, preparations for a new world war will be begun under the leadership of England in order to throw off the yoke of Prusso-German militarism burdening Europe and the Near East. A German victory would be only a prelude to a soon-to-follow second world war; and this would be the signal for a new, feverish arms race as well as the unleashing of the blackest reaction in all countries, but first and foremost in Germany itself. . . . from this side, too, [an Anglo-French] victory would lead to a new feverish armaments race among all the states — with defeated Germany obviously in the forefront. An era of unalloyed militarism and reaction would dominate all Europe with a new world war as its ultimate goal. . . .

The world war today is demonstrably not only murder on a grand scale; it is also suicide of the working classes of Europe. The soldiers of socialism, the proletarians of England, France, Germany, Russia, and Belgium have for months been killing one another at the behest of capital. They are driving the cold steel of murder into each other's hearts. Locked in the embrace of death, they tumble into a common grave.

"Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles! Long live democracy! Long live the Tsar and Slav-dom! Ten thousand tarpaulins guaranteed up to regulations! A hundred thousand kilos of bacon, coffee-substitute for immediate delivery! . . . Dividends are rising, and the proletarians are falling. And with every one there sinks into the grave a fighter of the future, a soldier of the revolution, mankind's savior from the yoke of capitalism.

The madness will cease and the bloody demons of hell will vanish only when workers in Germany and France, England and Russia finally awake from their stupor, extend to each other a brotherly hand, and drown out the bestial chorus of imperialist war-mongers and the shrill cry of capitalist hyenas with labor's old and mighty battle cry: Proletarians of all lands, unite!