

World Journalism Preparatory School
Regents US History/Gov't (RUSH)
Mr. Tesler's Classes

Assignment - Interpreting Primary Sources

Directions: Carefully read the documents below. Please highlight, or underline any words that you didn't know. Please list them in the space below, look up their meaning, and state their definition in your own words.

After you've finished reading all of the documents, please complete the questions at the bottom of the page.

The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name....We must be impartial in thought as well as in action.

President Wilson, 1914

There is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight.

President Wilson, 1915

It must be a peace without victory....Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last.

President Wilson, January, 1917

The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against all mankind....Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion....Armed neutrality, it now appears, is impracticable. Because submarines are in effect outlaws when used as the German submarines have been used against merchant shipping, it is impossible to defend ships against their attacks as the law of nations has assumed....

Our object...is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power....We are glad...to fight...for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the right of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience. The world must be made safe for democracy....We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make....

It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war....We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts,--for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.

President Wilson's war message, April, 1917

Never forget that this league is primarily...a political organization, and I object strongly to having the politics of the United States turn upon disputes where deep feeling is aroused but in which we have no direct interest. It will tend to delay the Americanization of our great population....We have interests of our own in Asia and in the Pacific which we must guard upon our own account, but the less we undertake to play the part of umpire and thrust ourselves into European conflicts the better for the United States and the world.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, 1919, on the League of Nations

To what extent was America's war a war for business? Did Woodrow Wilson lead America into war in order to serve the selfish interests of the few? The answer is determined by looking into the essential facts. In the first place, Wall Street wanted war.

John Kenneth Turner, 1922

The Hun within our gates is the worst of the foes of our own household, whether he is the paid or the unpaid agent of Germany. Whether he is pro-German or poses as a pacifist, or a peace-at-any-price-man, matters little....The German-language papers carry on a consistent campaign in favor of Germany against England. They should be put out of existence for the period of this war....Every disloyal native-born American should be disfranchised and interned. It is time to strike our enemies at home heavily and quickly.

Theodore Roosevelt, 1917

People...ask questions which involve the reasons for my acts against the "Reds." I have been asked...to what extent deportation will check radicalism in this country. Why not ask what will become of the United States Government if these alien radicals...carry out the principles of the Communist Party?

This indictment is founded wholly upon the publication of two leaflets....The first....says that the

President's cowardly silence about the intervention in Russia reveals the hypocrisy of the plutocratic gang in Washington....It says that there is only one enemy of the workers of the world and that is capitalism....The other leaflet...says..."Workers in the ammunition factories, you are producing bullets, bayonets, cannon, to murder not only the Germans, but also your dearest, best, who are in Russia and are fighting for freedom"....

The United States constitutionally may punish speech that produces or is intended to produce a clear and imminent danger that it will bring about forthwith certain substantive evils that the United States constitutionally may seek to prevent. The power undoubtedly is greater in time of war than in time of peace because war opens dangers that do not exist at other times....

It is only the present danger of immediate evil or an intent to bring it about that warrants Congress in setting a limit to the expression of opinion where private rights are not concerned. Congress certainly cannot forbid all effort to change the mind of the country....

When men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe...that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas....I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, dissenting opinion in *Abrams et al. v. U.S.*

Questions: Please answer each question in a thoughtful, detailed paragraph (at least 3 to 5

sentences)

1. Why does the United States enter World War I? Do you find the reasons persuasive?

2. What are America's goals in fighting the war? Do you think that Wilson's goals unrealistic and misleading? Why do think Wilson's goals were not achieved?

3. Which principles should guide American diplomacy--moral and legal ideals or national interest? In other words, should our relationships, and actions toward other nations be based on what's "the right thing to do," or what's best for our country?

4. What questions of loyalty and civil liberties were raised by the war?