

## 2. *We and They*

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*Democracy is becoming rather than being. It can easily be lost, but never is fully won. Its essence is eternal struggle.*

WILLIAM H. HASTIE

### OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 focused on factors that shape an individual's identity. It also described how those factors are sometimes used to exclude people from membership in various groups. Chapter 2 considers the ways a nation's identity is defined. That definition has enormous significance. It indicates who holds power in the nation. And it determines who is a part of its "universe of obligation" – the name Helen Fein has given to the circle of individuals and groups "toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for [amends]."<sup>1</sup>

For much of world history, birth determined who was a part of a group's "universe of obligation" and who was not. As Jacob Bronowski once explained, "The distinction [between self and other] emerges in prehistory in hunting cultures, where competition for limited numbers of food sources requires a clear demarcation between your group and the other group, and this is transferred to agricultural communities in the development of history. Historically this distinction becomes a comparative category in which one judges how like us, or unlike us, is the other, thus enabling people symbolically to organize and divide up their worlds and structure reality."<sup>2</sup>

This chapter explores the power of those classifications and labels. As legal scholar Martha Minow has pointed out, "When we identify one thing as like the others, we are not merely classifying the world; we are investing particular classifications with consequences and positioning ourselves in relation to those meanings. When we identify one thing as unlike the others, we are dividing the world; we use our language to exclude, to distinguish – to discriminate."<sup>3</sup>

The chapter begins with a short story that imagines a society in which differences have been outlawed so that everyone is truly equal. That story introduces the key concepts and themes of the chapter. The readings that follow apply those ideas to the real world by examining the way three nations – the United States, France, and Germany – “divided up their worlds and structured reality” in the 1700s and 1800s. The chapter shows how those divisions led to a world war. It also describes what it meant to be *them*. Were *they* tolerated? Exploited? Feared? Under what conditions could *they* become full members of a nation? Under what conditions did *they* become outcasts – individuals beyond *our* “universe of obligation.” What opportunities did *they* have to alter their status? To protect it?

A number of ideas have shaped the way such questions were answered. One was *nationalism*. Sociologist Theodore Abel defines it as “a strong positive feeling for the accomplishments of the nation, its position of power, the men and institutions and the traditions which are associated with the glorified events of its history.”<sup>4</sup> Another set of ideas stressed similarities rather than cultural differences. Those ideas are most eloquently stated in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just power from the consent of the governed.”

Both sets of ideas have had tremendous appeal to people all over the world. And both, when carried to an extreme, have been abused. Abel warns that nationalism almost always involves “a certain amount of ethnocentrism, a feeling of superiority of one’s nation over other nations, which might turn a nationalistic sentiment into chauvinism when the claim for superiority becomes associated with a claim for exclusiveness and consequent hostility to all other nations.”<sup>5</sup> In the nineteenth century, false ideas about “race” gave legitimacy to ethnocentrism and chauvinism. Democratic principles can also be perverted. In their zeal for equality, some people viewed differences with suspicion or used differences to deny *their* humanity.

Like the chapters that follow, this one uses primary sources to capture the ideas, assumptions, and observations of those living through a particular age in history. As Bronowski once wrote, those sources help us “draw conclusions from what we see to what we do not see” and “recognize ourselves in the past, on the steps to the present.”

## READING 1

### *Harrison Bergeron*

Suppose the government were to use its power to ensure that no one was superior to anyone else. Would such a society be fair to individuals? Would it be just? In the story, “Harrison Bergeron,” Kurt Vonnegut, an American author, offers answers to such questions.

This reading introduces the key themes and concepts developed in this chapter.

The year was 2081 and everyone was finally equal. They were not only equal before God and the law. They were equal in every possible way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and the 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

Some things about living still weren't quite right, though. April, for instance, still drove people crazy by not being springtime. And it was in that clammy month that the H-G men took George and Hazel Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison, away.

It was tragic, all right, but George and Hazel couldn't think about it very hard. Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

George and Hazel were watching television. There were tears on Hazel's cheeks, but she'd forgotten for the moment what they were about.

On the television screen were ballerinas.

A buzzer sounded in George's head. His thoughts fled in panic, like bandits from a burglar alarm.

“That was a real pretty dance, that dance they just did,” said Hazel.

“Huh?” said George.

“That dance – it was nice,” said Hazel.

“Yup,” said George. He tried to think a little about the ballerinas. They weren't really very good – no better than anybody else would have been, anyway. They were burdened with sash-weights and bags of birdshot, and their faces were masked, so that no one, seeing a free and graceful gesture or a pretty face, would feel like something the cat drug in. George was toying with the vague notion that maybe dancers shouldn't be handicapped. But he didn't get very far before another noise in his ear radio scattered his thoughts.

George winced. So did two out of the eight ballerinas.

Hazel saw him wince. Having no mental handicap herself, she had to ask George what the latest sound had been.

“Sounded like somebody hitting a milk bottle with a ball peen hammer,” said George.

“I’d think it would be real interesting, hearing all the different sounds,” said Hazel, a little envious. “All the things they think up.”

“Um,” said George.

“Only, if I was Handicapper General, you know what I would do?” asked Hazel. Hazel, as a matter of fact, bore a strong resemblance to the Handicapper General, a woman named Diana Moon Glampers. “If I was Diana Moon Glampers,” said Hazel, “I’d have chimes on Sunday – just chimes. Kind of in honor of religion.”

“I could think, if it was just chimes,” said George.

“Well – maybe make ‘em real loud,” said Hazel. “I think I’d make a good Handicapper General.”

“Good as anybody else,” said George.

“Who knows better’n I do what normal is?” said Hazel.

“Right,” said George. He began to think glimmeringly about his abnormal son who was now in jail, about Harrison, but a twenty-one-gun salute in his head stopped that.

“Boy!” said Hazel, “that was a doozy, wasn’t it?”

It was such a doozy that George was white and trembling, and tears stood on the rims of his red eyes. Two of the eight ballerinas had collapsed to the studio floor, and were holding their temples.

“All of a sudden you look so tired,” said Hazel. “Why don’t you stretch out on the sofa, so’s you can rest your handicap bag on the pillows, honeybunch.” She was referring to the forty-seven pounds of birdshot in a canvas bag, which was padlocked around George’s neck. “Go on and rest the bag for awhile,” she said. “I don’t care if you’re not equal to me for awhile.”

George weighed the bag with his hands. “I don’t mind it,” he said. “I don’t notice it any more. It’s just part of me.”

“You’ve been so tired lately – kind of wore out,” said Hazel. “If there was just some way we could make a little hole in the bottom of the bag, and just take out a few of them lead balls. Just a few.”

“Two years in prison and two thousand dollars fine for every ball I took out,” said George. “I don’t call that a bargain.”

“If you could just take a few out when you come home from work,” said Hazel. “I mean – you don’t compete with anybody around here. You just set around.”

“If I tried to get away with it,” said George, “then other people’d get away with it – and pretty soon we’d be right back to the dark ages again, with everybody competing against everybody else. You wouldn’t like that, would you?”

“I’d hate it,” said Hazel.

“There you are,” said George. “The minute people start cheating on laws, what do you think happens to society?”

If Hazel hadn’t been able to come up with an answer to this question, George couldn’t have supplied one. A siren was going off in his head.

“Reckon it’d fall apart,” said Hazel.

“What would?” said George blankly.

“Society,” said Hazel uncertainly. “Wasn’t that what you just said?”

“Who knows?” said George.

The television program was suddenly interrupted for a news bulletin. It wasn’t clear at first as to what the bulletin was about, since the announcer, like all announcers, had a serious speech impediment. For about half a minute, and in a state of high excitement, the announcer tried to say, “Ladies and gentlemen –”

He finally gave up, handed the bulletin to a ballerina to read.

“That’s all right –” Hazel said of the announcer, “he tried. That’s the big thing. He tried to do the best he could with what God gave him. He should get a nice raise for trying so hard.”

“Ladies and gentlemen –” said the ballerina, reading the bulletin. She must have been extraordinarily beautiful, because the mask she wore was hideous. And it was easy to see that she was the strongest and most graceful of all the dancers, for her handicap bags were as big as those worn by two-hundred-pound men.

And she had to apologize at once for her voice, which was a very unfair voice for a woman to use. Her voice was a warm, luminous, timeless melody. “Excuse me –” she said, and she began again, making her voice absolutely uncompetitive.

“Harrison Bergeron, age fourteen,” she said in a grackle squawk, “has just escaped from jail, where he was held on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government. He is a genius and an athlete, is underhandicapped, and should be regarded as extremely dangerous.”

A police photograph of Harrison Bergeron was flashed on the screen – upside down, then sideways, then upside down again, then right side up. The picture showed the full length of Harrison against a background calibrated in feet and inches. He was exactly seven feet tall.

The rest of Harrison’s appearance was Halloween and hardware. Nobody had ever borne heavier handicaps. He had outgrown hindrances faster than the H-G men could think them up. Instead of a little ear radio for a mental handicap, he wore a tremendous pair of earphones, and spectacles with thick wavy lenses. The spectacles were intended to make him not only half blind, but to give him whanging headaches besides.

Scrap metal was hung all over him. Ordinarily, there was a certain symmetry, a military neatness to the handicaps issued to strong people, but Harrison looked like a walking junkyard. In the race of life,

Harrison carried three hundred pounds.

And to offset his good looks, the H-G men required that he wear at all times a red rubber ball for a nose, keep his eyebrows shaved off, and cover his even white teeth with black caps at snaggle-tooth random.

“If you see this boy,” said the ballerina, “do not – I repeat, do not – try to reason with him.”

There was the shriek of a door being torn from its hinges.

Screams and barking cries of consternation came from the television set. The photograph of Harrison Bergeron on the screen jumped again and again, as though dancing to the tune of an earthquake.

George Bergeron correctly identified the earthquake, and well he might have – for many was the time his own home had danced to the same crashing tune. “My God –” said George, “that must be Harrison!”

The realization was blasted from his mind instantly by the sound of an automobile collision in his head.

When George could open his eyes again, the photograph of Harrison was gone. A living, breathing Harrison filled the screen.

Clanking, clownish, and huge, Harrison stood in the center of the studio. The knob of the uprooted studio door was still in his hand. Ballerinas, technicians, musicians, and announcers cowered on their knees before him, expecting to die.

“I am the Emperor!” cried Harrison. “Do you hear? I am the Emperor! Everybody must do what I say at once!” He stamped his foot and the studio shook.

“Even as I stand here –” he bellowed, “crippled, hobbled, sickened – I am a greater ruler than any man who ever lived! Now watch me become what I can become!”

Harrison tore the straps of his handicap harness like wet tissue paper, tore straps guaranteed to support five thousand pounds.

Harrison’s scrap-iron handicaps crashed to the floor.

Harrison thrust his thumbs under the bar of the padlock that secured his head harness. The bar snapped like celery. Harrison smashed his headphones and spectacles against the wall.

He flung away his rubber-ball nose, revealed a man that would have awed Thor, the god of thunder.

“I shall now select my Empress!” he said, looking down on the cowering people. “Let the first woman who dares rise to her feet claim her mate and her throne!”

A moment passed, and then a ballerina arose, swaying like a willow.

Harrison plucked the mental handicap from her ear, snapped off her physical handicaps with marvelous delicacy. Last of all, he removed her mask.

She was blindingly beautiful.

“Now –” said Harrison, taking her hand, “shall we show the people the meaning of the word dance? Music!” he commanded.

The musicians scrambled back into their chairs, and Harrison stripped them of their handicaps, too. “Play your best,” he told them, “and I’ll make you barons and dukes and earls.”

The music began. It was normal at first – cheap, silly, false. But Harrison snatched two musicians from their chairs, waved them like batons as he sang the music as he wanted it played. He slammed them back into their chairs.

The music began again and was much improved.

Harrison and his Empress merely listened to the music for a while – listened gravely, as though synchronizing their heartbeats with it.

They shifted their weights to their toes.

Harrison placed his big hands on the girl’s tiny waist, letting her sense the weightlessness that would soon be hers.

And then, in an explosion of joy and grace, into the air they sprang!

Not only were the laws of the land abandoned, but the law of gravity and the laws of motion as well.

They reeled, whirled, swiveled, bounced, capered, gamboled, and spun.

They leaped like deer on the moon.

The studio ceiling was thirty feet high, but each leap brought the dancers nearer to it.

It became their obvious intention to kiss the ceiling.

They kissed it.

And then, neutralizing gravity with love and pure will, they remained suspended in air inches below the ceiling, and they kissed each other for a long, long time.

It was then that Diana Moon Glampers, the Handicapper General, came into the studio with a double-barreled ten-gauge shotgun. She fired twice, and the Emperor and the Empress were dead before they hit the floor.

Diana Moon Glampers loaded the gun again. She aimed it at the musicians and told them they had ten seconds to get their handicaps back on.

It was then that the Bergerons’ television tube burned out.

Hazel turned to comment about the blackout to George. But George had gone into the kitchen for a can of beer.

George came back in with the beer, paused while a handicap signal shook him up. And then he sat down again. “You have been crying?” he said to Hazel.

“Yup,” she said.

“What about?” he said.

“I forget,” she said. “Something real sad on television.”

“What was it?” he asked.

“It’s all kind of mixed up in my mind,” said Hazel.  
“Forget sad things,” said George.  
“I always do,” said Hazel.  
“That’s my girl,” said George. He winced. There was the sound of a riveting gun in his head.  
“Gee – I could tell that one was a doozy,” said Hazel.  
“You can say that again,” said George.  
“Gee –” said Hazel, “I could tell that one was a doozy.”<sup>6</sup>

## CONNECTIONS

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Would you want to live in the society Vonnegut describes? Would your opinion change if you could alter one thing in that society? If so, what would you change? What difference would that change make?

What is the “race of life?” How important is it that everyone approach it equally?

How would Harrison Bergeron define *freedom*? *Democracy*? *Equality*? How would Diana Moon Glampers define these terms? How do you define them? Record your working definitions in your journal.

Was Diana Moon Glampers a censor? Add a working definition of the word *censor* to your journal.

Why were the people in the story so obedient? So willing to conform? What could they have done to change things? Why didn’t they do so? What were the consequences of their failure to act?

Make an identity chart for Harrison Bergeron. What things influenced him? Did Harrison have the power to define himself or did society do it for him? Harrison tried to break the rules of his society. Should an individual go against society? If so, under what circumstances? What might the consequences be?

Does it take courage to fight for the things you believe in? What opportunities have you had to stand up for what you think is right? How difficult was it? What might have made it easier? Should it be easier? Record your answers in your journal so that you can refer to them later.

Many individuals and families have a “grand plan” for their future. It may involve sending their children to college, buying a home, or starting a business. Nations also devise “grand plans.” Often those plans aim at improving society. If you were to design a “perfect” society, what would it be like? What rights would you give individuals? How would you balance their rights with the rights of others?



Before you share your “grand plan” with the class, develop a list of criteria for critically evaluating ideas. In creating a list, consider the following questions:

- How can one judge whether an idea is good or bad?
- What values are assumed in the plan?
- What are the implications for those who do not share those values?
- Is a popular idea always a good one?
- What would the world be like if everyone accepted this plan?
- What strategies would you use to convince others that this plan is the “right” one?
- How can one keep the ideas that inspired this plan from being abused?

Post your list so that you can refer to it as you read about the “grand planners” of history.

## READING 2

### *First Encounters in North America*

When two people meet for the first time, each takes stock of the other, often focusing on differences. Martha Minow warns that difference always “implies a reference: difference from whom? I am no more different from you than you are from me. A short person is different only in relation to a tall one; a Spanish-speaking student is different in relation to an English-speaking one. But the point of comparison is often unstated.”<sup>7</sup> By identifying unstated points of comparison, we can examine the relationships between those who have the power to assign labels of difference and those who lack that power.

In describing the “Indians,” Europeans focused not on who they were but on who they were not.

The first meetings between Europeans and Native Americans illustrate Minow’s argument. Historians Peter N. Carroll and David W. Noble have used primary sources to describe those encounters:

[On] an otherwise ordinary autumn day shortly after sunrise, the Arawak inhabitants of the Caribbean Islands noticed strange ships sailing on the horizon, much larger than their dugout canoes. As these ships moved closer and closer, they saw strange-looking people with light skins aboard, making odd gestures. The Arawak youths stood at the banks hesitantly, and then some of the braver men began swimming toward the mysterious boats.

These strangers offered the Arawak red-colored caps, glass beads, and other curious trifles. In exchange, the Arawak brought parrots, cotton skeins, darts, and other items. Then the strangers drew out swords, which the Arawak, in ignorance, grasped by the blades, cutting themselves. It was a symbolic act, this inadvertent drawing of blood. For the Arawak and the strangers looked at the world from opposite angles, and both were fascinated by what the other was not.

That first contact between Native Americans and Europeans was repeated with increasingly frequency as other enterprising Europeans followed those first ships across the Atlantic Ocean. Whether the voyagers were Spanish, English, French, or Portuguese in origin, whether the Native Americans were Arawak, Yurok, Iroquois, Natchez, or Aztec, the initial confrontation was usually the same – two cultures looking at each other from opposite ends of the sword, each awed by the mystery of the other.<sup>8</sup>

Each group of Europeans drew from its own experiences in defining Native Americans as the *other*.

To the Arawak, the newcomers were so obviously different in language, dress, color that the Native Americans doubted that they were human beings. “They believe very firmly,” wrote Christopher Columbus after his first voyage to the Americas, “that I, with these ships and people, came from the sky.” Other native peoples reacted in similar ways to their first encounters with Europeans.

Columbus and other Europeans had their own misconceptions. They mistakenly believed that the Americans were “Indians.” Carroll and Noble write, “This misconception originated in Columbus’s basic error (which he himself never realized) in thinking that in sailing westward from Europe he had reached the Indies, which were the true object of his voyage. To Columbus, it was literally inconceivable that he had found previously unknown lands. Like other Europeans of his time, he believed firmly in the completeness of human knowledge. What he saw, therefore, he incorporated into his existing worldview, and the Native Americans thereby became, to the satisfaction of most Europeans, simply Indians.”<sup>9</sup>

In describing the “Indians,” Europeans focused not on who they were but on who they were not. They then went on to describe what the indigenous peoples did *not* have. Amerigo Vespucci, for whom the Americas are named, described the “Indians” as neither Muslims nor Jews. He noted that they are “worse than heathen; because we did not see that they offered any sacrifice, nor yet did they have a house of prayer.” John Winthrop, an Englishman who helped found Massachusetts Bay Colony, justified his claims to the Indians’ land by arguing that they “enclose no land, neither have they any settled habitations, nor any tame cattle.”

Each group of Europeans drew from its own experiences in defining Native Americans as the *other*. At about the time the first English settlers were arriving in the Americas, England was also colonizing Ireland. Not surprisingly, historian Ronald Takaki finds that “the English projected the familiar onto the strange, their images of the Irish onto the native people of

America.” He goes on to say that in Virginia, they viewed the Indians as “brutal and backward, but they were not yet seen as incapable of becoming civilized because of their race, or ‘descent.’ Their heathenism had not yet been indelibly attached to their distinctive physical characteristics such as their skin color.”<sup>10</sup>

In New England, the story was somewhat different. Although early explorers described the Wampanoag, Pequot, Narraganset and other Native American groups in New England as farmers, many English colonists in the region denied the fact. Instead they viewed them as a lazy, idle people who would rather starve than work. They claimed that like “the foxes and wild beasts,” Indians did nothing “but run over the grass.”<sup>11</sup>

To the newcomers, the Native Americans were not only “backward” but also dangerous. In Takaki’s words, “they represented what English men and women in America thought they were not – and, more important, what they must not become. As exiles living in the wilderness far from ‘civilization,’ the English used their negative images of Indians to delineate the moral requirements they had set up for themselves.” In doing so, they dehumanized Native Americans. Increasingly, “to be ‘Indianized’ meant to serve the Devil.” To be “Indianized” also meant to be “decivilized, to become wild men.”<sup>12</sup> After all, the English viewed Indians as people living outside of “civilization.”

Such ideas were rooted at least in part in religious beliefs. As Carroll and Noble point out in their description of Spanish explorers, “Europeans in the age of Columbus saw themselves as Christians, the most spiritually pure people in creation. This ethnocentric idea found reinforcement in the ideals of the Roman Catholic Church, which claimed to be a universal spiritual community. Yet this ideology clearly excluded such religiously different people as Muslims, against whom Christians had waged holy wars for centuries, and Jews, who remained outsiders throughout European society. Believing in a single unitary religion, members of the Catholic Church viewed [nonbelievers] as suitable either for conversion to the truth faith or worthy only of death or enslavement. Such religious attitudes shaped the Europeans’ relations with Africans as well as Native Americans.”<sup>13</sup> Such attitudes were not limited to Europeans who were Catholic. They were shared by Protestants as well.

Relations between the Americans and the Europeans were also shaped by the fierce competition among European nations for wealth and power. As Europeans took control of more and more of the Americas, millions of Native Americans were killed. Countless others were pushed into the interior of both continents. Still others were forced into slavery.

## CONNECTIONS

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Carroll and Noble write of Columbus, “Like other Europeans of his time, he believed firmly in the completeness of human knowledge. What he saw, therefore, he incorporated into his existing worldview.” How did Columbus’s voyage ultimately affect that world view? Do people today still hold it?

Sociologist Kai Erikson has noted that one of the surest ways to “confirm an identity, for communities as well as for individuals, is to find some way of measuring what one is *not*.”<sup>14</sup> What are the effects of a negative identity – of defining someone by what he or she is not? What did it mean to Native Americans? To Europeans? Have you ever been defined by what you are not? If so, how did it affect the way you viewed yourself? Why do you think that individuals focus on differences rather than similarities when they meet someone for the first time? How does doing so encourage myths and misinformation?

Write working definitions of *savage* and *heathen*. Both words tend to make them seem less human and therefore more threatening. Alex Bein suggests that to understand anti-Judaism, we must look at the language of Jew-hatred. How do his comments apply to “anti-Native American” sentiments? How does language affect the tolerance one group has for another? How can language lead to dehumanization?

Carroll and Noble note that Europeans in the age of Columbus consider themselves “as Christians, the most spiritually pure people in creation.” Why do the two historians consider that belief ethnocentric? Compare their definition of ethnocentrism to Abel’s in the overview to this chapter. What similarities seem most striking?

A young Native American told an interviewer, “Imagine growing up an American Indian halfbreed with the blood of Caddo, Choctaw, and Chickasaw tribes in you... Imagine growing up... knowing that you belong to a culture long native to this land before the white man ‘discovered’ it. Imagine trying to assert your identity when the majority of society affirms that ‘Indians are a dead race.’ Imagine constantly dealing with people who try their hardest to convince you that you are not an Indian. Imagine.”<sup>15</sup> What does he suggest about the power of labels? About the power of those who assign labels? How is his problem similar to that of the Bear in *the bear that wasn’t* (Chapter 1, Reading 1)? How is it unique? Why do you think he calls himself a “half-breed?” What does that label imply?

## READING 3

### *Slavery and Freedom*

In some parts of the Americas, Europeans enslaved indigenous peoples and used them to exploit the riches of the two continents and enhance their own power. In other places – particularly in what is now the United States – Indian slavery was relatively rare for several reasons. Great numbers of Native Americans died of diseases Europeans unknowingly brought to the Americas. And those who survived fought hard for their freedom. Even those captured in battle did not remain slaves for long. They knew the land too well and had too many places where they could find refuge.

[The struggle for freedom] forced upon [the slave] a need that no other human beings have felt so acutely: the need for disenslavement, for disalienation, for negation of social death, for recognition of his inherent dignity.

To meet their ever-growing need for workers, the English relied at first on “indentured servants” – men and women who were bound by contract to serve a master for four to seven years. Few came to the Americas voluntarily. Takaki notes:

Some of the servants were victims of the Irish “slave-trade.” English poor laws for the correction and punishment of rogues and idle people were enforced in Ireland, and this led to the wholesale kidnapping of young Irish women and men to supply the labor needs of the colonies. One of them, John King, recalled how he and others were “stolen in Ireland” by English soldiers. Taken from their beds at night “against their Consents,” they were put on a ship. “Weeping and Crying,” the Irish captives were kept on board until “a Lord’s day morning” when the ship set sail for America.<sup>16</sup>

By the early 1600s, the English were importing “servants” not only from England and Ireland but also from Africa. At first, they were treated similarly. But by mid-century, Africans were being degraded into “a condition of servitude for life and even the status of property.” Slavery was not a new idea to the people of any continent. According to Orlando Patterson, a sociologist, it has existed “from before the dawn of human history right down to the twentieth century, in the most primitive of human societies and in the most civilized. There is no region on earth that has not at some time harbored the institution. Probably there is no group of people whose ancestors were not at one time slaves or slaveholders.”<sup>17</sup>

Although Patterson sees similarities between slavery and other relationships based on the power of one individual over another, he regards slavery as unique in three important ways. The first is that slaves were always powerless. Secondly, they were considered “social nonpersons.” That is, they were almost always outsiders – people with no ties to others in the community. So they were outside one’s *universe of obligation* – the circle of persons “toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for [amends] by the community.”

In every society, the treatment of newly acquired slaves accentuated their isolation. They were usually dressed in special clothing or given a distinctive haircut. Many were also tattooed or branded. Few were permitted to keep their own name, language, customs, or religion beliefs. In the United States, according to historian Winthrop D. Jordan, the powerlessness and social isolation of slaves led to a “generalized conception of ‘us’ – white, English, free – and ‘them’ – black, heathen, slave.”<sup>18</sup> Patterson explains how such attitudes affected a slave’s identity and self-esteem.

[A slave] had a past, to be sure. But a past is not a heritage. Everything has a history, including sticks and stones. Slaves differed from other human beings in that they were not allowed freely to integrate the experience of their ancestors into their lives, to inform their understanding of social reality with inherited meanings of their natural forebears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory. That they reached back for the past, as they reached out for the related living, there can be no doubt. Unlike other persons, doing so meant struggling with and penetrating the iron curtain of the master, his community, his laws, his policemen or patrollers, and his heritage.<sup>19</sup>

I have yet to see a serious act of violence that was not provoked by the experience of feeling shamed and humiliated, disrespected and ridiculed, and that did not represent the attempt to prevent or undo this “loss of face” – no matter how severe the punishment, even if it includes death.

Slavery was distinctive in yet another way too. Slaves were always dishonored. In his autobiography, Frederick Douglass, a former slave and an abolitionist, described the relationship between dishonor and powerlessness when he wrote of his master’s attempts to break his spirit. By fighting back, Douglass regained “a sense of my own manhood... I was nothing before, I was a man now.” He added, “A man without force is without the essential dignity of humanity. Human nature is so constituted that it cannot honor a helpless man, although it can pity him; and even that it cannot do long, if the signs of power do not arise.” Patterson stresses the importance of acts of resistance:

The slave resisted... in countless ways, only one of which, rebellion, was not subtle. Against all odds he strove for some measure of regularity and predictability in his social life. Because his kin relations were illegitimate, they were all the more cherished. Because he was considered degraded, he was all the more infused with the yearning for dignity. Because of his formal isolation... he was acutely sensitive to the realities of community. The fierce love of the slave mother for her child is attested to in every slaveholding society; everywhere the slave’s zest for life and fellowship confounded the slaveholder class; and in all slaveholding societies the existential dignity of the slave belied the slaveholder’s denial of its existence.<sup>20</sup>

Patterson notes that “the struggle itself forced upon [the slave] a need that no other human beings have felt so acutely: the need for disenslavement, for disalienation, for negation of social death, for recognition of his inherent dignity.” He goes on to say: “And so it was that freedom came into the world. Before slavery people simply could not have conceived of the thing we call freedom. Men and women in premodern, nonslaveholding societies did not, could not, value the removal of restraint as an ideal.”

## CONNECTIONS

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How does Patterson define *slavery*? *Freedom*? Write a working definition of each in your journal. What is the relationship between slavery and freedom? Between slavery and power? How does slavery differ from other relationships based on power? How important are those differences?

What is a “social nonperson?” In the mid-1900s, Ralph Ellison wrote of himself and other African Americans as “invisible men.” What do you think the term means? How might it be connected to Patterson’s description of a slave as a “social nonperson”?

How does Patterson’s views of slavery explain why few Native Americans were enslaved in English colonies? How does it explain why white indentured servants did not become slaves?

James F. Gilligan has said that he had yet to see a serious act of violence that was “not provoked by the experience of feeling shamed and humiliated, disrespected and ridiculed, and that did not represent the attempt to prevent or undo this ‘loss of face’ – no matter how severe the punishment, even if it includes death.” How do his remarks relate to slavery? Research sabotage and other acts of resistance during the years of slavery. What does your research suggest about the relationship between violence and the loss of self-esteem? What other factors encourage violence?

How would an identity chart for a slave be similar to one for a free man or woman? What would be the most significant differences?

Orlando Patterson writes that slaves and other oppressed peoples wear “masks” in their dealings with those who have power over them. What are the masks he refers to? Why were they worn? Do you know of anyone today who wears a “mask”? If so, who?

A *paradox* is a seemingly contradictory statement that is true. Why is it a paradox that the “first men and women to struggle for freedom, the first to think of themselves as free in the only meaningful sense of the term, were freedmen”?

How do you account for the fact that slaves were almost always outsiders – individuals whose race, religion, or nationality differed from that of the slaveholder?

Research slavery in Europe, Asia, Africa, or South America. Who was enslaved? By whom? How were slaves treated? How were they defined by slaveholders? How did they define themselves?

In *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, historian Bernard Lewis points out that slavery has been “accepted and even endorsed by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as other religions of the world.” How do you account for the widespread acceptance of the institution? What attitudes had to change before slavery was viewed as an evil rather than accepted part of society?

## READING 4

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### *Membership in the United States*

In 1776, thirteen of Britain’s North American colonies declared their independence. Soon after, the people who lived in those colonies formed a nation. They then had to decide who was an American and who was not. Would everyone who lived in the new United States be included in the nation? If not, how would citizenship be determined?

If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia voiced the nation’s ideals. Americans acknowledged those ideals in their state constitutions, or plans of government. But no state lived up to them. Each excluded a large number of Americans from citizenship. Everywhere, indigenous peoples were viewed as outsiders, as members of separate but inferior nations. Jefferson referred to them as “merciless savages” in the Declaration of Independence. And most other Americans agreed. Few respected the cultures of indigenous peoples or their property rights. If Native Americans refused to sell their land, they were pushed out, captured, or killed. Most white settlers were too eager for these lands to concern themselves with rights or agreements. And most state leaders, and later national leaders, reflected the prejudices of white Americans.

African Americans were also excluded even though many of them had fought for the nation’s independence. Slavery was the law of the land throughout the new nation. Still many black Americans were heartened by the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence. They repeatedly quoted the document in their demands for the abolition of slavery and the same rights other citizens enjoyed. Indeed, a few slaves successfully sued for their freedom by claiming that slavery went against the Declaration of



Independence. In deciding one such case, the Massachusetts Supreme Court noted that the state's constitution declared that "all men are born free and equal." The judges therefore ruled that slavery would "no longer be tolerated" in the state. A few other states also outlawed slavery, but none gave African Americans equal rights. Free blacks were rarely permitted to serve on juries, vote, or hold office. The prejudices that made slavery possible before the Revolution continued after it ended.

Many white Americans did not enjoy all of the rights of citizenship either. In a few states, only Christians could vote or hold office. And every state required that potential voters and officeholders own considerable property. However, no woman, no matter how much property she owned, could participate in government. Indeed, when a woman married, she lost control of her property. According to the laws of every state in the new nation, a married woman's property belonged to her husband – including her wages if she took a job.

Yet even as state constitutions limited citizenship, they also offered individuals more freedom than people had almost anywhere else. Every state protected freedom of speech, press, and religion as well as the right to peacefully assemble and to petition, or formally ask, the government to right a wrong. Indeed many Americans in 1787 refused to support a new national Constitution unless it included a formal listing or "bill" of rights. Therefore soon after the new government was formed, ten amendments were added to the Constitution. They became the nation's Bill of Rights.

Yet neither the new Constitution nor the Bill of Rights addressed the issue of slavery, partly because most white Americans in the late 1700s thought it would not survive for long in a free society. That belief was reflected in the debates at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787. The delegates made several compromises that affected slavery. In a compromise, everyone involved in a dispute gives up something to reach an agreement. For example, the convention was deadlocked for a time over the issue of representation in Congress. Delegates from the smaller states wanted equal representation. Those from larger states argued that a state's representation ought to be based on its population. They compromised by creating a Senate in which each state was equally represented and a House of Representatives with representation based on population. The delegates then had to decide *who* would be counted in a state's population. Northern delegates argued that slaves were not citizens and therefore should not be included. Representatives from the South insisted that slaves were a part of the population. Again, the delegates compromised: a slave would be counted as "three-fifths of a person."

When a few northern delegates tried to abolish the slave trade, southerners tried to block the move. As a result, the convention chose to let the trade continue for another twenty years before officially ending it. The delegates also agreed to a clause calling for the return of runaway slaves. Opponents of slavery went along with such measures, because they saw

them as temporary. They thought slavery would soon disappear. Instead, the number of slaves in the nation exploded.

There were only about half a million slaves in the United States in 1790. By 1860, there were over four million and few Americans still believed that the institution would disappear on its own. Too many white Americans now regarded slave labor as essential to their power and prosperity. Increasingly, the right to own slaves was guarded by the nation's laws, supported by the nation's courts, and backed not only by American soldiers but also by the prejudices of white Americans throughout the United States. What caused the change? Historians attribute much of it to the skyrocketing demand for cotton. As sales boomed, so did the need for workers to plant and harvest the crop. Many white southern farmers feared that the abolition of slavery would jeopardize their ability to meet the growing demand for cotton.

Some Americans – both black and white – vigorously opposed the expansion of slavery. They believed it was morally wrong and saw it as proof that the nation was sliding backward rather than moving forward. Theodore Parker, a Boston minister, wrote, “At first, Slavery was an exceptional measure, and men tried to apologize for it, and excuse it. Now it is a normal principle, and the institution must be defended and [celebrated].” For Parker, the last straw came in 1857, when the United States Supreme Court declared slavery legal even in states that had abolished it. The justices ruled that Dred Scott, a slave, did not become a free man when his master brought him to a free state. Indeed the majority argued that he had “no rights which the white man was bound to respect and the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.”

Democracy is becoming, rather than being. It can easily be lost, but never is fully won. Its essence is eternal struggle.

Parker was not the only American horrified by the ruling. The following year, the decision was hotly debated in a number of elections. In Illinois, both candidates for the U.S. Senate, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, discussed the future of slavery at every campaign stop. In one speech, Lincoln declared:

I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the [socially] superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man.

I think the authors of [the Declaration] intended to include *all* men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal in *all respects*. They did not mean to say all were equal in color, size, intellect, moral development, or social capacity. They defined, with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal – equal in “certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”<sup>21</sup>

Lincoln recognized that most white Americans believed in both the ideals expressed in the Declaration and slavery. He insisted that they would eventually have to give up one or the other. In an earlier speech in 1838, he explained why:

At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the Ocean, and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Bonaparte [the military leader, Napoleon, who destroyed the French Republic and conquered much of Europe] for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.<sup>22</sup>

Lincoln's words were prophetic. In 1861, the year he became President, eleven states left the Union because they wanted to protect slavery. In the bloody Civil War that followed, the nation and its ideals were tested as never before. At first, many Northerners believed that they were fighting only to save the Union. By 1863, the war had a new focus. On January 1, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in the rebellious states.

The following year, he reflected on the war's meaning at the dedication of a cemetery for Union soldiers in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure." Lincoln ended his speech by urging "that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

After the war, three amendments were added to the Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. The Fourteenth stated that anyone born in the United States was a citizen and entitled to all of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed every citizen the right to vote. But prejudice and discrimination continued throughout the nation. Everywhere African Americans were treated as second-class citizens.

## CONNECTIONS

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Nations, like individuals, have an identity. Make an identity chart for the United States. What values and beliefs were central to the nation's identity in 1776? In 1860? Today?

Find out more about the men who served as delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Who were they? How were they selected? Whose interests did they represent? How did they decide who was "in" and who was "out"? You may also want to research the voices that were not heard at the Convention. Who was excluded? And how did their exclusion affect the final document?

Few delegates to the Constitutional Convention considered the concessions they made to reach agreement as important as their goal – a strong, national government. Were they right? What is the legacy of the compromises Americans made in 1787? For example, how were the compromises that involved slavery related to the decision in the Dred Scott case? To the Civil War? To racism in the United States today?

How important is compromise to democracy? Are there ever issues on which one should never compromise?

The Constitution recognizes and protects slavery. Yet the words slave or slavery do not appear in the document. Instead the document refers to persons "held to service or labour." Why do you think they went to such lengths to avoid calling a slave a "slave"?

Investigate the federal laws that protected slavery. What do those laws suggest about the power of the majority in a democracy? About the vulnerability of minorities? How are vulnerable minorities protected today? How effective are those safeguards?

Why did Lincoln think that a dictator like Napoleon Bonaparte could conquer European nations but not the United States? What was the only thing that could destroy the nation in his opinion? What events in the United States in the early 1800s might have prompted his warning? What events today support his argument?

Lincoln made the speech in 1838 at a school for young men. It emphasized education as critical to the nation's future. You will find the complete speech in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (available at most libraries). What does he say about the dangers of mobs and violence? About the purpose of law in a society? About the dangers of a history that is not remembered or taught?

By the mid-1800s, many states in the South had laws that limited free speech. Those laws did not allow people to publish or distribute books, newspapers, or pamphlets that opposed slavery. They also banned meetings that "interfered" with slavery. How do such limitations on dissent

support Lincoln's argument that the nation could not achieve its goals as long as it supported slavery?

Abraham Lincoln once said, "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy." To others, democracy was not a condition but a process. A judge once said of democracy, "It is becoming, rather than being. It can easily be lost, but never is fully won. Its essence is eternal struggle." How do you define democracy? Is it equality as Lincoln suggests? Or is it a process?"

The prejudices that made slavery possible did not end when slavery itself was abolished. Laws alone are not enough to ensure a democratic society. In 1993, President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic reflected on the need not only for democratic institutions but also for what he calls a "civil society" – one that encourages people "to act as citizens in the best sense of the word and drive out manifestations of intolerance." He called the building of such a society the "biggest challenge of our time."<sup>23</sup> How does one build a civil society? How is the idea related to Bronowski's definition of tolerance (Chapter 1, Reading 15)? To Lincoln's definition of democracy?

After the Civil War, Sojourner Truth, a former slave and an abolitionist, argued that the fight for equality was not yet over. In her view, unless women could vote, slavery was only partly destroyed. What do you think she meant? Do you agree?

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke to a crowd of over two hundred thousand people who gathered in Washington, D.C., to demand equal rights for all Americans. He told them, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.' I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and sons of former slaveholders will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood."

According to historian Garry Wills, Lincoln viewed the Declaration of Independence as a pledge "to people of all colors everywhere." What do you think he meant? How is that pledge related to King's dream? To what extent had that pledge been fulfilled in 1963, the year King gave his speech? What were the legacies of the nation's failure to keep that pledge in 1963? What are the legacies today? How do they threaten Havel's "civil society?"

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, considered slavery immoral. Yet he himself was a slaveholder who considered Africans a threat to "white racial purity." In reflecting on efforts to free the slaves, he wrote, "This unfortunate difference in color, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people." Despite such beliefs, Jefferson has inspired generations of African Americans. In a speech, Julian Bond, a civil rights activist, tried to explain why:

Martin Luther King didn't care whether the... author of the Declaration of Independence thought he was inferior. The man may have thought so, but his words belied the thought.

For King and his audiences, the significant Thomas Jefferson was not the Ambassador to France or the Secretary of State, the farmer or the slaveholder; as did Jefferson, they thought his chief virtue was as author of the Declaration of Independence, specifically of those self-evident truths that all are created equal.

The promise of the words – for King, for those before him and us – became the true measure of the man.<sup>24</sup>

Are Jefferson's most famous words the "true measure of the man"? Or should he be judged by his deeds?

Lincoln believed in "progress." He, like others of his time, did not expect the nation to realize its ideals all at once. Lincoln was killed in 1865. Use an American history book or an encyclopedia to research the progress the nation made in his lifetime. To what accomplishments could he point with pride? What work remained?

Do individuals also "progress"? As a young man, Lincoln regarded Africans as inferior. Use a biography or an encyclopedia to find out how his views had changed by the time he ran for the Senate. How had they changed by the time he became President? What prompts people to change their views of other people?

For more information about the efforts of abolitionists to bring about social equality, see Chapter 2 of *Choosing to Participate*.

## READING 5

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### *Nationalism, Power, and Identity in Europe*

Europeans eagerly watched as the Americans experimented with democracy. People there were struggling with similar issues. They, too, were deciding how power should be divided in their nations and what rights individuals ought to have. In 1789, the French replaced their king with a government that allowed individuals a say in their own future. In their Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, they expressed the ideals that inspired their revolution:

I. Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of their rights ...

IV. Political liberty consists in the power of doing whatever does not injure another...

X. No man ought to be molested on account of his opinions, not even on account of his religious opinions, provided his avowal of them does not disturb the public order established by the law.

Like the Americans, the French had to decide how their new government would reflect their ideals. Would citizenship be open to all or limited to a few individuals and groups? In the end, the National Assembly took a democratic approach to citizenship. It eliminated distinctions between nobles and ordinary people. Then it turned its attention to religious minorities within the nation – particularly to Protestants and Jews. The assembly declared that both were citizens and entitled to the rights other citizens enjoyed.

France's new republic did not last long. Within a few years, Napoleon Bonaparte, a general in the French army, had destroyed it and made himself emperor. He then set out to conquer neighboring countries. As he took over one nation after the other, his armies spread the ideals of the revolution, particularly the ideals of liberty and equality. They also unknowingly unleashed a new force in the world: nationalism. As Europeans struggled to drive the French army from their land, they began to see themselves in a new way. In the past, people expressed loyalty to their ruler, not to their country. Now many began to see themselves as Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Slavs, or Italians. It was an idea that lived on long after Napoleon was defeated in 1815 and traditional rulers regained their thrones.

Historian Hans Kohn stresses the importance of membership to the idea of a nation. He defines *nationalism* as “a state of mind inspiring the large majority of a people and claiming to inspire all its members. It asserts that the nation-state is the ideal and the only legitimate form of political organization and that the nationality is the source of all cultural creative energy and of economic well-being.”<sup>25</sup> Sociologist Theodore Abel views *nationalism* as a feeling “more positive than patriotism, or love for one's country for its ‘beautiful streams, valleys, and mountains’” and warns that it may involve “a certain amount of ethnocentrism, a feeling of superiority of one's nation over other nations.”<sup>26</sup>

By the early 1800s, many Europeans were defining a *nation* as a people who share traditions and a history. Among the leaders of this movement were a number of Germans who argued that the character of a people is expressed through its *Volkgeist* – its unchanging spirit as refined through history. They insisted that a common language, history, and culture are essential to national identity. In 1810, one German nationalist wrote, “A state without *Volk* is nothing, a soulless artifice; a *Volk* without a state is nothing, a bodiless airy phantom, like the Gypsies and the Jews. Only state and *Volk* together could form a *Reich*, and such a *Reich* cannot be preserved without *Volkdom*.”<sup>27</sup>

Many German students responded to such ideas by organizing patriotic fraternities dedicated to uniting the German people. They were

Nationalism is a feeling more positive than patriotism, or love for one's country for its “beautiful streams, valleys, and mountains”... It involves a certain amount of ethnocentrism, a feeling of superiority of one's nation over other nations.

inspired by history books that pictured their ancestors as a pure people who were self-reliant, courageous, free, and loyal. Those who did not share that ancestry were increasingly viewed not only as outsiders but as an evil force that threatened the unity of the nation. In 1817, many of these young men assembled at Wartburg to celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of Martin Luther's break with the Catholic church and the start of Protestantism. The students regarded Luther as more than a religious leader. To them, he was also a German nationalist. After vowing that they would never fight other Germans, become censors, or join the secret police, the students threw dozens of books into a huge bonfire. A witness reported:

Those who  
burn books  
may some day  
burn people.

A big basket was then brought to the fire filled with books, which were then publicly, in the presence of the German people, consigned to the flames in the name of Justice, the Fatherland, and the Spirit of the Community. This was supposed to be a righteous judgement over the wicked books, which dishonoured the Fatherland and destroyed the spirit of community; it was supposed to frighten the evil-minded and all those who, with their banal superficiality had – alas! – marred and attenuated the ancient and chaste customs of the Volk. The title of each of those books was read out by a herald; and every time a great cry rose from those present, expressive of their indignation: Into the fire! Into the fire! Let them go to the devil! Upon which the corpus delicti was delivered up into flames.<sup>28</sup>

To the young men who gathered around the bonfire, nationalism was a crusade. Its aim was not only to create a German nation but also to protect its purity. It was an idea that also attracted such scholars as Friedrich von Schlegel who imagined the founders of the German *Volk* as a gifted “race” that left India in the distant past and carried its language and culture westward. Schlegel did not have a name for this ancient people. But others called them Indo-Europeans. It was not until later in the century that they were known as “Aryans.”

Throughout the 1800s, the “Aryans” were romanticized. One German writer pictured their route from east to west as the route of civilization. He wrote, “The march of culture, in its general lines has always followed the sun’s course.” A French scholar agreed, but he saw the route as leading “from India to France.” The British had their own myth. They had already linked their ancestors – “free Anglo Saxons” – to Germanic tribes. Now they traced a journey through the forests of Germany to the British Isles.<sup>29</sup>



## CONNECTIONS

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Whom did the French consider part of their “universe of obligation”? Whom did the young German nationalists regard as part of theirs?

The way a people define their “universe of obligation” determines who has the power to make the rules or laws. It also determines who will be protected by those laws and who will not.

If the United States had a *Volkgeist*, what would it be? Whose culture would it include?

In 1807, Napoleon called together seventy-one rabbis and other Jewish religious leaders to help him decide whether the Jews of France were members of the French nation. He asked:

In the eyes of Jews, are Frenchmen considered as their brethren? Or are they considered as strangers?

Do Jews born in France, and treated by the laws as French citizens consider France their country? Are they bound to defend it? Are they bound to obey the laws and to conform to the dispositions of the civil code?

By 1807, Jews had been living in France for about two thousand years. What do the questions suggest about the way they were viewed? About the way Napoleon, in particular, regarded them? How would you feel if the President of the United States were to ask a group you belonged to similar questions? How would you respond?

The Jews Napoleon questioned offered the following response:

The love of country is in the heart of Jews a sentiment so natural, so powerful, and so consonant to their religious opinions, that a French Jew considers himself in England, as among strangers, although he may be among Jews; and the case is the same with English Jews in France.

To such a pitch is this sentiment carried among them, that during the last war, French Jews have been seen fighting desperately against other Jews, the subjects of countries then at war with France.

What point were the French Jews trying to make? What were they trying to tell the emperor about the way they defined themselves? About their loyalty? Why do you think that loyalty was questioned?

Chapter 1 explored the need individuals have to belong. How did Napoleon decide who belonged and who did not? How did the German students make those decisions? What similarities do you notice? What differences seem most striking?

Nationalism is a positive idea. It is a way of uniting people. At what point is it dangerous? Can any idea, no matter how positive, be abused?

What is censorship? How are the students at Wartburg who condemned censors and then burned books like Diana Moon Glampers (Reading 1)? How are they different? What part does censorship play in a free society? What is the role of free thought?

Heinrich Heine, a great German poet who lived in the nineteenth century, once wrote that those who burn books may someday burn people. What do you think he meant? How do you think the students would have responded to his remark? How might Diana Moon Glampers respond? Why do you think individuals sometimes choose to cast the things they fear or regard as evil into flames?

Why did German students regard Martin Luther as a German nationalist? What does that suggest about whom they regarded as a “true” German and whom they did not? Were Germans who belonged to the Catholic Church included? What about Germans who followed other religions? What do your answers suggest about the reason that many consider the separation of church and state critical to democracy? Investigate how church and state came to be separated in the United States. How does that separation safeguard democratic institutions? How does that separation promote Havel’s “civil society” – one that encourages people “to act as citizens in the best sense of the word and drive out manifestations of intolerance”?

In the journal you began in Chapter 1, describe how you feel about your country and its people. Do you regard yourself as a patriot? A nationalist? Or a chauvinist? What is the difference between those terms? Some people are naturalized citizens. How do they reconcile their loyalty to their new country with their feelings for the country of their birth?

Schlegel’s notion of the origins of the “Aryan” race is fiction rather than fact. Yet in 1904, a French writer noted, “Today, out of 1,000 educated Europeans, 999 are convinced of the authenticity of their Aryan origins.”<sup>30</sup> What effect do you think such beliefs had on the way a nation viewed its citizens? On the ways individuals regarded themselves and others? Historians maintain that what people perceive as true can be more important than the truth itself. Do you agree?

→How do immigrants become citizens of the United States? Observe a naturalization ceremony. One such ceremony, *Arn Chorn: Naturalization Ceremony, 1993*, is available on videotape from the Facing History Resource Center. It includes a speech by Chorn, a survivor of the Cambodian Genocide.

## READING 6

### *Nation Building in Germany*

Debates over freedom and equality continued in the United States, France, and Germany throughout the early 1800s. Those debates had a particular urgency in Germany. During those years, the country was not a united nation but a confederation of more than thirty autocratic states, each jealously guarding its independence. (In an autocracy, a few individuals hold almost unlimited power.) German rulers agreed only on the need to outlaw democratic ideas and maintain their own power. As a result, censorship was a part of life in each German state. Yet in every state, a few individuals managed to spread democratic ideas, even as others vigorously defended authoritarian rule. In the mid-1800s, two Germans came to symbolize those two points of views. Although both were born in Prussia, the largest of the German states, their backgrounds were quite different. Carl Schurz came from a family of peasants, while Otto von Bismarck was a *Junker* or noble. Yet there were peasants who defended autocracy and nobles who were committed to democracy.

Democracy is not an ideal state, but simply a state in which the forces of good have a free field against the forces of evil.

The two men came to public notice in 1848. That year, a new revolution began in France and spread to the various German states. Carl Schurz, then a nineteen-year-old university student, was among the first to join the rebels. He later wrote, “Republican ideas were at first only sparingly expressed. But the word democracy was soon on all tongues and many, too, thought it a matter of course that if the princes should try to withhold from the people the rights and liberties demanded, force would take the place of petition.”<sup>31</sup>

By the time word of the revolution reached Otto von Bismarck’s country estate, fighting had already begun in Berlin. Bismarck immediately rushed to the support of his king. His response grew out of a distaste for what he called “mob interference with political authority.” He insisted that when people vote for their leaders, “arithmetic and chance take the place of logical reasoning.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1848, Bismarck’s position was not a popular one. In one German state after another, rulers frightened for their lives turned power over to the people. By May, an elected assembly was meeting in the city of Frankfurt to write a constitution that would unite Germany. It was not an easy task. Northern Germany was mainly Protestant and southern Germany, Catholic. The country was also home to dozens of ethnic groups. Were all of these people Germans? Should they all be citizens? In the end, the delegates were guided by democratic principles. They allowed men of various ethnic and religious groups to fully participate in the life of the nation for the first time. Women, however, no matter what their ethnicity, continued to be excluded.

Yet even as delegates were planning a new government, the mood in the country was changing – particularly the mood of educated and well-to-do German citizens. They were beginning to realize that in a democratic nation, they would have to share power not only with people who were less educated and less well-to-do but also with those whose economic and political beliefs differed from their own. As a result of their fears, most of Germany’s kings and princes regained power.

Many rebels, including Schurz, were forced to flee the country or face prison. Schurz settled in the United States, where he took part not only in the debate over the future of slavery but also in the Civil War as a general in the Union army. After the war, he served the nation as a United States Senator from the state of Missouri and as Secretary of the Interior. His experiences convinced him that a democracy “is not an ideal state, but simply a state in which the forces of good have a free field against the forces of evil.”<sup>33</sup>

Bismarck remained in Prussia and served his king. And he continued to believe that “it is not by speeches and majority decisions that the great questions of the age will be decided – that was the big mistake of 1848 and 1849 – but by blood and iron.” He used Prussia’s military might to unite the nation. Under his leadership, Prussia allied with Austria in 1864 to defeat Denmark and win control of the German-speaking areas of Schleswig-Holstein. A quarrel with Austria over the future of the Danish territory led to a second war in 1866. That victory gave Prussia control over most of Germany and parts of Central Europe. By 1868, Bismarck’s employer, the king of Prussia, was the most powerful man in Germany.

That year, Schurz returned to Prussia for a brief visit. To his amazement, he was invited to dine with Bismarck. Schurz later recalled that Bismarck had wondered how a government could keep order if the people had no respect for “authority.” In reply, Schurz noted that “the Americans would hardly have become the self-reliant, energetic, progressive people they were, had there been... a police captain standing at every mud-puddle in America to keep people from stepping into it.” Schurz firmly believed that democracy is not an orderly system of government. He pointed out “that in a democracy with little government, things might go badly in detail but well on the whole, while in a monarchy with much and omnipresent government, things might go very pleasingly in detail but poorly on the whole.”

Bismarck was not persuaded. He told Schurz, “I am not a democrat and cannot be. I was born an aristocrat and brought up an aristocrat. To tell you the truth, there was something in me that made me instinctively sympathize with the slaveholders as the aristocratic party in your civil war. But this vague sympathy did not in the least affect my views as to the policy to be followed by our government.”<sup>34</sup>

Bismarck supported the North because it was richer and more powerful – not because he believed it was in the right. In his view might made right. As he put it, “Great crises form the weather that fosters Prussia’s

growth in that we exploit them fearlessly, perhaps even quite ruthlessly.” In 1870, he went to war again, this time with France. During that war, King William of Prussia, now known as Kaiser Wilhelm I, proclaimed the German Empire in Versailles, France, on January 18, 1871. Four months later, Bismarck became the kaiser’s chancellor, or chief advisor.

Once Germany was united, Bismarck and Wilhelm prepared a constitution. Like the one drafted in 1848, it gave all German men the right to vote. But the Reichstag, Germany’s parliament, had very little authority. The French ambassador compared its meetings to a play:

[The] rules are correctly applied, the customs observed... in short everything is done that can give the illusion and make one believe in the gravity of the debates or the importance of the votes; but behind this scenery, at the back of the stage, intervening always at the decisive hour and having their way, appear Emperor and Chancellor, supported by the vital forces of the nation – the army dedicated to the point of fanaticism, the bureaucracy disciplined by the master’s hand, the [courts] no less obedient, and the population, skeptical occasionally of their judgments, quick to criticize, quicker still to bow to the supreme will.<sup>35</sup>

Bismarck’s response to the growth of the Socialist party suggests how the system worked. The Socialists wanted a government that would foster economic and political equality. Bismarck vigorously opposed their goals but took no action against the group until it posed a political threat. In 1871, the Socialists had two delegates in the Reichstag; just six years later they had twelve. Bismarck was now determined to eliminate the group. His initial efforts to suppress the party, however, only increased its popular appeal. So he decided to move in a more roundabout way. When several attempts were made on the emperor’s life in 1878, Bismarck blamed the Socialists even though he had no evidence they were involved. But the charge was enough to persuade the Reichstag to pass a law calling for the abolishment of any group with “social-democratic, socialistic, or communist tendencies” and the closing of any newspaper that supported such a group.

Bismarck then focused his attention on voters who supported the Socialists. Realizing that most were workers, he offered them a well-thought-out program of benefits, including pensions and health insurance. Bismarck was gambling on the idea that they would be willing to accept restrictions on their political rights in exchange for economic security. In the late 1800s, that gamble paid off.

## CONNECTIONS

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Write working definitions of *democracy* and *autocracy*. What do the two forms of government have in common? What differences seem most striking? Why do you think Bismarck and Wilhelm hid authoritarian rule behind the illusion of a parliamentary government?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of Schurz's arguments? Of Bismarck's? On what issues did they agree? On what issues did they clash? Record your ideas in your journal. Later, you will see how the ideas of both men affected the course of history.

When the revolution began, Schurz wrote that "if the princes should try to withhold from the people the rights and liberties demanded, force would take the place of petition." The Declaration of Independence takes a similar stand. It states that if a government abuses the right of the people to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," people have not only the right but also the duty "to throw off such a government, and to provide new guards for their safety." What do those who share this view consider a government's main responsibility? Would Bismarck agree?

Make an identify chart for Bismarck and Schurz. How did each man's values and beliefs affect the way he responded to the Revolution of 1848? To ideas like democracy and equality? Lincoln became more democratic in his views over the years. If he changed, could someone like Bismarck also change?

Schurz claimed that democracy is "a state in which the forces of good have a free field against the forces of evil". If so, do the "forces of good" always win? Or does might make right? What do Bismarck's remarks about the American Civil War suggest about the way he defines his "universe of obligations"? About the way he perceives himself and others?

Bismarck was always quick to find someone to blame for Germany's problems. Sometimes it was the Socialists; at other times it was the Catholics or the Jews. Each was labeled an "enemy of the state." What are the consequences of uniting a nation by creating enemies? It is a question that a number of German scholars have tried to answer in assessing Bismarck's legacy. In Max Weber's view, it left the German nation "without any political will whatever." Theodor Mommsen, a contemporary of Bismarck and an early supporter, argued that "Bismarck has broken the nation's back." What does it mean to leave a nation without "political will"? To "break the back of a nation"?

Suppose you were present for the conversation between Schurz and Bismarck. What questions might you have asked? What might you have added to their discussion? Record your ideas in your journal.

## READING 7

### *A Changing World*

In the 1800s, the world seemed to be changing faster than ever before. Many people were bewildered by those changes. They longed for the “good old days” when life was safe and secure. Stefan Zweig, a writer who grew up in Austria-Hungary, described such a time:

In a rootless society, it was easy to blame someone else for all that was new and disturbing. *They* were responsible for society’s ills. *We* are blameless.

Everyone knew how much he possessed or what he was entitled to, what was permitted and what forbidden. Everything had its norm, its definite measure and weight. He who had a fortune could accurately compute his annual interest. An official or an officer, for example, could confidently look up in the calendar the year when he would be advanced in grade, or when he would be pensioned. Each family had its fixed budget, and knew how much could be spent for rent and food, for vacations and entertainment; and what is more, invariably a small sum was carefully laid aside for sickness and the doctor’s bills, for the unexpected. Whoever owned a house looked upon it as a secure domicile for his children and grandchildren; estates and businesses were handed down from generation to generation. When the babe was still in its cradle, its first mite was put in its little bank, or deposited in the savings bank, as a “reserve” for the future. In this vast empire everything stood firmly and immovably in its appointed place, and at its head was the aged emperor; and were he to die, one knew (or believed) another would come to take his place, and nothing would change in the well-regulated order. No one thought of wars, of revolutions, or revolts. All that was radical, all violence, seemed impossible in an age of reason.<sup>36</sup>

Long before Zweig was born, the old ways were beginning to change. Many of those changes were a result of the Industrial Revolution. It began in England in the 1700s with the invention of machines powered by steam. That innovation quickly led to thousands of others. People everywhere felt the impact of the changes, whether they worked at home or took a job in one of the many new factories that were springing up throughout Europe and North America.

The Industrial Revolution changed not only the way goods were made but also where they were made. More and more people were now leaving the countryside for jobs in large urban centers. Some mourned the change. Friedrich Tonnies, a sociologist, accentuated the differences between the old and the new by comparing a society rooted in tradition with a modern, rootless society in which the old ways were no longer respected. Traditional society was exemplified by the small, rural communities that dotted Europe and much of the United States. In those communities, every

family was linked in some way to every other family. People knew their neighbors. Modern society, on the other hand, was exemplified by large industrial cities where people lived and worked among strangers.

In a rootless society, it was easy to blame someone else for all that was new and disturbing. *They* were responsible for society's ills. *We* are blameless. Who were *they*? Sometimes, *they* were people who held unpopular ideas. *They* were communists, socialists, even feminists. Often, *they* were people who were different in some way. In the Ottoman Empire that straddled Europe and Asia, *they* were Armenians, a Christian minority in a Muslim empire. In the United States, *they* were immigrants, African Americans, and Native Americans. In much of Europe, *they* were Jews.

Human beings use labels to describe and sort their perceptions of the world. The particular labels often chosen... can carry social and moral consequences while burying the choices and responsibility for those consequences.

## CONNECTIONS

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How is the society Zweig describes like the one Harrison Bergeron (Reading 1) lived in? What differences seem most striking? What does Zweig mean when he writes that “all that was radical, all violence, seemed impossible in an age of reason”? What is he implying about the age that followed it?

Write a working definition of the word *revolution*. Was the Industrial Revolution a revolution?

According to Martha Minow, a legal scholar, “Human beings use labels to describe and sort their perceptions of the world. The particular labels often chosen... can carry social and moral consequences while burying the choices and responsibility for those consequences. The labels point to conclusions about where an item, or an individual, belongs without opening for debate the purposes for which the label will be used.”<sup>37</sup> How do those labels affect who is “tolerated” and who is not?

Why are periods of rapid change often periods of intolerance? What conditions seem to encourage racism? What conditions foster tolerance? Find examples to support your answers from current events.

## READING 8

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### *“Race Science” in a Changing World*

Increasingly, in this new more modern world, people looked to science to justify their ideas about who was “in” and who was “out.” The first scientists to respond were not Europeans but Americans. In the United States, dozens of scientists set out to prove the superiority of the “white race” over all others. Such research allowed some to insist that *they* are less than



human and therefore less deserving of having their rights protected or being granted full citizenship than we are.

In the early 1800s, for example, a white surgeon from Philadelphia, Samuel Morton, hypothesized that there was a link between brain size and race. He maintained that it was therefore possible to rank races “objectively.” After measuring a vast number of skulls, he concluded that his findings “proved” that whites were “superior” to other races. He was not sure if blacks were a separate race or a separate species, but he did insist that they were different from and inferior to whites. He also added a new twist to racist thinking – the idea that each race is fixed, intrinsically different from all others, and incapable of being changed. Although he gathered data just before the Civil War, Morton claimed the debate over slavery had no bearing on his research.

Frederick Douglass disagreed. He claimed that Morton was one who “reasons from prejudice rather than from facts.” He went on to say, “It is the province of prejudice to blind; and scientific writers, not less than others, write to please, as well as to instruct, and even unconsciously to themselves, (sometimes,) sacrifice what is true to what is popular. Fashion is not confined to dress; but extends to philosophy as well – and it is fashionable now, in our land, to exaggerate the differences between the Negro and the European.”<sup>38</sup>

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It was also fashionable in Europe. Many people there were also intrigued with the idea that they belonged to a superior race.

A French anthropologist, Paul Broca, later built upon Morton’s theories. Broca believed that only “compatible” races would produce fertile or what he called “eugenic” offspring. He therefore warned against “race mixing.” These ideas had powerful effects when governments applied them to everyday life.

In the years before the Civil War, Americans used such research to force indigenous peoples onto tiny reservations in the West. After the Civil War, they used it to defend the separation of African Americans from others in the community. In 1896, Homer Plessy, an African American, decided to challenge a Louisiana law that kept blacks separated from whites on public transportation. After deliberately taking a seat in the “white” section of a train, he was arrested, tried, and found guilty. He appealed the verdict, arguing that John Ferguson, the Louisiana judge who convicted him, had violated his rights as stated in the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. That amendment guarantees every citizen equal protection under the law. The Supreme Court, however, sided with Ferguson, who argued that as long as the railroad offered “separate but equal” seating for whites and blacks, Plessy’s rights were protected. Broca’s research supported that ruling. It also encouraged other states to pass similar laws. By the early 1900s, those laws affected every aspect of American life. African Americans were kept apart in schools, factories, churches, theaters, hospitals and even cemeteries.

Racists also found support for their arguments in work that seemed unrelated to human societies. In 1859, Charles Darwin, a British biologist, published *The Origin of the Species*. It explained how various species of plants and animals physically change, or evolve, over time. Darwin's work suggested that each competes for space and nourishment and only those with a selective advantage survive to reproduce themselves. A number of Europeans and Americans, including a British writer named Herbert Spencer, began to apply Darwin's ideas to human society. Referring to Darwin's work but using his own phrases such as "the struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest," Spencer helped popularize a new doctrine known as *Social Darwinism*.

The idea of pure, superior races and the concept of a racial enemy solved too many pressing problems to be easily discarded.

Social Darwinists saw their ideas at work everywhere in the world. Those who were fit were at the top of the social and economic pyramid. Those at the bottom were "unfit," they reasoned, because competition rewards "the strong." Many Social Darwinists therefore questioned the wisdom of extending the right to vote to groups who were "less fit." They argued that if the laws of natural selection were allowed to function freely, everyone would find his or her rightful place in the world. Increasingly that place was based on race.

In every country, people interpreted Social Darwinism a little differently. In Germany, Ernst Haeckel, a biologist, popularized the idea by combining it with romantic ideas about the German *Volk*. In a book called *Riddle of the Universe*, he divided humankind into races and ranked each. Not surprisingly "Aryans" were at the top of his list and Jews and Africans at the bottom.

Haeckel was also taken with idea of eugenics – breeding "society's best with best" – as a way of keeping the "German race" pure. That idea also came from England. Its originator was Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton's ideas were popular not only in Germany but also in the United States. American eugenicists used them to advocate restrictions on marriage and immigration as well as laws that would sterilize the "socially unfit."

Scientists who tried to show that there was no "pure" race were ignored. In the late 1800s, the German Anthropological Society, under the leadership of Rudolph Virchow, conducted a study to determine if there really were racial differences between Jewish and "Aryan" children. After studying nearly seven million students, the society concluded that that the two groups were more alike than they were different. Historian George Mosse said of the study:

This survey should have ended controversies about the existence of pure Aryans and Jews. However, it seems to have had surprisingly little impact. The idea of race had been infused with myths, stereotypes, and subjectivities long ago, and a scientific survey could change little. The idea of pure, superior races and the concept of a racial enemy solved too many pressing problems to be easily discarded. The

survey itself was unintelligible to the uneducated part of the population. For them, Haeckel's Riddles of the Universe was a better answer to their problems.<sup>39</sup>

## CONNECTIONS

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What do you think motivated Morton and other scientists to rank “races”? Morton’s work had far-reaching effects mainly because he was considered a scientist – one who judges from evidence. What does *objective* mean? Was Morton objective? Are modern scientists objective?

Define the word *scientific*. Is Social Darwinism scientific? Are scientific proofs more convincing than other proofs? In the 1800s, Social Darwinism and other ideas about “race” were preached from the pulpit and taught in universities. In the United States, those ideas triggered a debate that forced some to question both the message and the messenger. In other societies that debate was censored. Why is the freedom to debate ideas essential to a free society?

What is the danger in linking nationalism with race? How does it increase the vulnerability of minorities? The fragility of democracy?

In the early 1800s, Congress debated whether to break its treaties with the Cherokee and other Native American nations to open more land for white Americans. During the debate, Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey asked his fellow senators, “Do the obligations of justice change with the color of the skin?” What does the question suggest about the way Americans in the early 1800s defined their “universe of obligation”? How would the work of Morton and Broca affect the way Frelinghuysen’s fellow senators might answer that question?

Think of times when prejudice has blinded you or someone you know. How did you react? How did you feel? What are the consequences of allowing prejudices to become “fashionable”? How do Mosse’s comments support the view that what people believe is true is more important than the truth itself?

What problems did the idea of “pure races” solve in the United States? How does your answer explain why people were so reluctant to disregard the idea? What are the legacies of those solutions?

What are the legacies of Social Darwinism? How can it be used to explain attitudes toward welfare recipients, for example? Toward work? Toward the rich and the poor? To gather information to answer these questions, see *Choosing to Participate*, Chapter 3.

## READING 9

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### *Citizenship and European Jews*

The tightening link between nationalism and race in the late 1800s had a profound effect on the ways European Jews defined their identity. Michael A. Meyer, a professor of Jewish history, writes:

Long before the word became fashionable among psychoanalysts and sociologists, Jews in the modern world were obsessed with the subject of *identity*. They were confronted by the problem that Jewishness seemed to fit none of the usual categories. Until the establishment of the state of Israel, the Jews were not a nation, at least not in the political sense; being Jewish was different from being German, French, or American. And even after 1948 [the year the state of Israel was declared] most Jews remained nationally something other than Jewish. But neither could Jews define themselves by their religion alone. Few could ever seriously maintain that Judaism was, pure and simple, a religious faith on the model of Christianity. The easy answer was that Jewishness constituted some mixture of ethnicity and religion. But in what proportion? And was not the whole more than simply a compound of those two elements?

Martin Buber, surely one of the most profound of twentieth-century Jewish religious thinkers, argued that the Jews eluded all classification.<sup>40</sup>

The problem was a new one. In the past, Jews had known exactly who they were. Their identity was defined by Jewish law and reinforced by both the Jewish community and the larger Christian society. Meyer notes, “Parents implanted in children the same values that they had absorbed in growing up, values sanctioned by a spiritually self-sufficient Jewish society. Continuity prevailed across the generations.” Meyer went on to explain, “Conversion was the only pathway out of the ghetto. Within its walls, clear models of Jewish identity were instilled in the home, in the school, in the community. There were no significant discontinuities, no occasions for severe crises of identity.”<sup>41</sup>

In those days, Jews who converted, or so the reasoning went, were no longer outsiders. They belonged. Many Christians who favored equal rights for Jews believed that once Jews had those rights they would abandon their faith and end the “Jewish problem.” Indeed many Jews did respond to freedom by assimilating – by becoming more like the majority. They were confident that once they were “more German,” “more French,” or “more British,” discrimination would end.

Instead, racists turned the “Jewish problem” into a permanent problem. Neither assimilation nor conversion to Christianity altered one’s race. Jews

would always be Jews, because they belonged to a different “race.” This new view of the Jew combined older stereotypes with the pseudo-scientific thinking of the age. In 1879, Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist, published a pamphlet entitled *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*. In it, he used the word *antisemitism* for the first time. It meant, and still means, hatred of Jews. Marr attacked Jews as a separate, evil, and inferior race.

Antisemitism found a home everywhere in Europe. In Germany, it became particularly popular. In 1883, Theodor Fritsch published *The Racists’ Decalogue* to explain how a good “German” should treat “Jews.” It stated in part:

Thou shalt keep thy blood pure. Consider it a crime to soil the noble Aryan breed of thy people by mingling it with the Jewish breed. For thou must know that Jewish blood is everlasting, putting the Jewish stamp on body and soul unto the farthest generations...

Avoid all contact and community with the Jew and keep him away from thyself and thy family, especially thy daughters, lest they suffer injury of body and soul.

Two years later, Hermann Ahlwardt, a member of the German Reichstag, urged that Germany’s borders be closed to “Israelites who are not citizens of the Reich.” His arguments were based on the idea that “Semites” [Jews] were racially different from Germans whom he referred to as “Teutons.”

Ahlwardt was concerned by the growing number of Jews moving to Germany and Austria-Hungary to avoid religious persecution in Russia. In 1886, Germans elected their first deputy from an antisemitic party. By 1893, such parties had sixteen deputies in the lower house of parliament; by 1895, they held a majority there.

By the late 1800s, German Jews were increasingly aware that assimilation did not free them to define their own identity nor did it protect them from antisemitism. Walter Rathenau, a prominent businessman and politician, wrote, “In the youth of every German Jew there comes the painful moment which he will remember for the rest of his life, when for the first time he becomes conscious that he has come into the world as a second-class citizen, and that no ability or accomplishment can liberate him from this condition.”<sup>42</sup>

Some German Jews tried to ignore the attacks. Others tried to prove that they were more “German” than the Germans. But no matter what they did, the attacks continued and even intensified. One group of prominent Jews in Berlin decided to appeal to the kaiser for help. Raphael Loewenfeld was among those who vigorously opposed the idea. He argued that as “citizens we neither need nor demand any protections beyond our legal rights.”

Many German Jews supported Loewenfeld’s stand. They formed groups that publicly refuted antisemitic attacks and pressed charges

against anyone who infringed upon their civil or political rights. Eugen Fuchs, a leader of the largest of these groups – the *Centralverein* (C.V.) defended its efforts by asking: “Should one always preach caution and patience? Should one console the Jews by holding out hopes for a future when the social question will have been solved? And should one, in the meantime, stand by in idleness because in favorable cases a petty fine results and in the majority of cases the wrongdoer is acquitted? Should one graciously leave in peace the broadsheets which awaken and stir up the fanaticism of the masses and continually try to convince the people that the Jews commit perjury for religious reasons, adulterate foodstuffs, and slaughter Christian children? Is it any wonder if these accusations are raised again and again without a hand or a voice moving against them, that then the people finally believe these fairy tales?”<sup>43</sup> In Fuchs’ view, to do less “would mean to despair in the German state and in humanity.”

## CONNECTIONS

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By the late 1800s, membership in a nation required more than residence. A would-be national had to adopt the language and culture of the nation. How did that pressure to conform affect Jewish identity in the late 1800s? What groups today face similar pressures?

Write a working definition of the word *assimilation*. How is it like *conformity*? How does it differ?

What was the “Jewish problem”? Why was it a problem? For whom was it a problem? Does our society face similar “problems” today?

What are the underlying themes of Fritsch’s *Racists’ Decalogue*? How does the language he uses affect your understanding of his message? What steps did he urge all Germans to take? What was his solution to the “Jewish problem”?

Jakob Wassermann, a Jewish writer from Vienna, Austria, saw no way of combating negative stereotypes:

Vain to seek obscurity. They say: the coward, he is creeping into hiding, driven by his evil conscience. Vain to go among them and offer one’s hand. They say: why does he take such liberties with his Jewish pushiness? Vain to keep faith with them as a comrade-in-arms or as a citizen. They say: he is a Proteus, he can assume any shape or form. Vain to help them strip off the chains of slavery. They say: no doubt he found it profitable. Vain to counteract the poison.<sup>44</sup>

Orlando Patterson (Reading 3) writes that slaves and other oppressed peoples wore “masks” in their dealings with those who had power over them. Did Wassermann wear a mask? Did Rathenau?

Compare the moment Rathenau describes with the one Miriam Thaggert writes of in Chapter 1, Reading 12. What similarities do you notice? What differences seem most striking?

What is the difference between a citizen and a subject? Why did Loewenfeld believe it was unnecessary for citizens to demand protection beyond their legal rights? Do you agree? Compare Loewenfeld's definition of nationality with the one French Jews developed in response to Napoleon's questions (Reading 5). What differences do you detect? What similarities seem most striking?

Have you ever been stereotyped? What is the most effective way to fight a stereotype? What is the least effective way?

→Father Robert Bullock talks to students about the difference between *antisemitism* written with and without a hyphen. A person can be anti-Catholic, anti-Protestant, anti-Jewish, because these refer to group labels. But since there is no such group as *semites* there should be no hyphen. William Marr used the word with a hyphen, because he assumed that the Jews belonged to the "Semitic race." There is no such thing. The word *semitic* refers to a group of languages not to a people. Therefore, Facing History and Ourselves uses the word *antisemitism* without a hyphen to refer to attitudes of hatred toward Jews. Two videos are available from Facing History Resource Center. In one Father Bullock discusses the spelling of antisemitism. In the other, he traces its Christian roots.

## READING 10

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### *Citizenship and African Americans*

In Europe, *they* were Jews; in the United States, *they* were African Americans. As in Germany, "race science" in the United States gave legitimacy to old myths and misinformation. By the late 1800s, white historians such as Philip A. Bruce were claiming that the abolition of slavery had cut off African Americans from "the spirit of White society." Emancipated slaves regressed to a primitive and criminal state. According to Bruce, middle-class black men posed the greatest danger. They were the "most likely to aim at social equality and to lose the awe with which in slavery times, Black men had learned to respect the women of the superior race." Popular magazines called the phenomenon "The New Negro Crime."

The negative images evoked by such stories affected the way African Americans saw themselves and others. In his poem, "We Wear the Mask,"

As racist thinking became more and more "respectable," incidents of violence increased sharply.
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Paul Laurence Dunbar, a noted poet, expressed the way he and other African Americans responded to those stereotypes.

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheek and shades our eyes  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should that world be otherwise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
    We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To Thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh, the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
    We wear the mask.

Whenever African Americans failed to wear “the mask,” many white Americans took it upon themselves to keep blacks “in their place.” As racist thinking became more and more “respectable,” incidents of violence against blacks increased sharply. Only a handful of people had the courage to demand that such crimes be punished. One of them was an African American woman named Ida B. Wells. At a time when few blacks and even fewer women could vote, she led a national campaign to stop the violence associated with racism. Her crusade began after a mob in Memphis, Tennessee, murdered Thomas Moss, a grocer whose only crime was running a successful business. His murder convinced Wells that no one was safe as long as the lynchings went unpunished.

Wells set out to awaken the nation's conscience by gathering information about the 728 lynchings that took place in the United States between 1882 and Moss's death in March of 1892. The more she investigated those murders the more convinced she became that the deaths were linked to racist teachings. Her research revealed that many of the victims were successful businesspeople who posed a threat to notions of white supremacy. She also discovered that a number of women and even children were murdered. Most of the lynchings were for such “crimes” as “testifying against whites in court,” “race prejudice,” “quarreling with whites,” and “making threats.” Although a third of the victims were accused of rape, many of them were black men who had long-standing relationships with white women. At the time, it was a crime in most states for a black man to have relations with a white woman. Very few states would allow such a couple to marry. The reverse was also a crime but rarely enforced.

Wells quickly discovered that lynch mobs had widespread support. At times, whole towns turned out to watch the execution and cheer on the



mob. Wells's research also suggested that even though most of the slayings took place in the South, the silence of white Americans in other parts of the nation allowed the crimes to continue. Wells set out to break that silence by exposing the truth. White Americans were so threatened by her campaign that she was forced to carry a gun to protect herself. After her newspaper office was burned, she had to leave Memphis for her own safety. Wells continued her campaign in New York. With the active support of black women's clubs, black newspapers, and a few white supporters, she turned lynching into a national issue. After she completed a speaking tour through Britain, it became an international issue as well. At the time of her death in 1931, Congress had not yet passed a lynch law. But at least thirteen states, including Tennessee, now had one and the number of lynchings was declining throughout the nation. Her campaign inspired the African Americans who led the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

## CONNECTIONS

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What is the purpose of a mask? How does the one that Paul L. Dunbar refers to in his poem accomplish that purpose? Why is it a mask that "grins and lie"? Why is it one that "hides our cheek and shades our eyes"? Paul Dunbar was a contemporary of Walter Rathenau and Jakob Wassermann. Did the two wear the "mask" Dunbar described? Do people today wear it? If so, who?

How do Lincoln's warnings about the dangers of mob violence (Reading 4) relate to the experiences of African Americans in the late 1800s? How did that violence threaten democracy?

How were the experiences of African Americans similar to those of European Jews? What differences seem most striking? Was assimilation possible for African Americans?

In 1849, Frederick Douglass wrote, "If there is no struggle there is no progress." He went on to state, "the struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." How do Wells's efforts support his view? Was her struggle moral, physical, or both?

→Often we think of an historical event in terms of a simple cause and an immediate effect. How does Ida B. Wells's long crusade complicate that view? To fully appreciate who she was, what she did, and what her work means for our lives today, you might want to investigate life in the South during and after Reconstruction, focusing on the Ku Klux Klan, Black Codes, the Freedmen's Bureau, and the presidential election of 1876. You may also want to explore the effect her work had on education and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. More information can be found in

*Choosing to Participate*. Also available is a documentary entitled *A Passion for Justice: The Life of Ida B. Wells*.

→Maya Angelou (Chapter 1, Reading 5) wrote a variation on Dunbar's poem. She can be heard reading it on the videotaped conference *Facing Evil* available from the Facing History Resource Center.

## READING 11

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### *"Race" and Identity in France*

In the late 1800s, Germany and the United States excluded many individuals and groups from their "universe of obligations." In both nations, "race" increasingly determined who "belonged" and who did not. Many people believed that France was different. It seemed free of the racism they observed in the United States and Germany. African Americans often felt freer there than they did at home. And French Jews experienced none of the open antisemitism that marked German life. Yet the French also struggled with issues related to racism. The intensity of that struggle was revealed in nation's response to the Dreyfus case. It exposed ancient hatreds and fostered angry exchanges over who was a citizen and who was not.

Through hatred, the anti-Semite seeks out the protective community of men of bad faith, who reinforce each other through a collective uniformity of behavior.

In November, 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer, was accused of selling secret documents to the Germans. Two months later, he was convicted of treason. At a special ceremony, the army publicly degraded Dreyfus. He was brought before a group of officers and told, "Alfred Dreyfus, you are unworthy to bear arms. In the name of the French people we degrade you!" A senior officer then cut off his badges and buttons and broke his sword in half. The prisoner was then marched around a courtyard as his fellow soldiers watched silently. Dreyfus himself was not silent. He repeatedly shouted that they were degrading an innocent man. A huge crowd gathered outside. When they heard Dreyfus's cries, the spectators responded by whistling and chanting "Death to Dreyfus! Death to the Jews!"

In describing the trial, reporters repeatedly referred to Dreyfus as a Jew even though his religion had no bearing on the case. Antisemites like Leon Daudet wrote, "Above the wreckage of so many beliefs, a single faith remains authentic and sincere: that which safeguards our race, our language, the blood of our blood, and which keeps us all in solidarity. The closed ranks are our own. This wretch is not French. We have all understood as much from his act, his demeanor, his physiognomy."

At first Dreyfus's family and friends fought the conviction on their own. In time, others joined the struggle. Their efforts divided the nation. For some, the issue was clearly antisemitism. They argued, "Because he

was a Jew he was arrested, because he was a Jew he was convicted, because he was a Jew the voices of justice and of truth could not be heard in his favor.” For others, the honor of the army and the nation was more important than any individual Jew’s rights. They believed that it would weaken the army – and ultimately the nation – to reconsider the case or suggest a mistake had been made. When an officer found proof that Dreyfus was innocent, the army transferred the man to North Africa to keep him quiet. Others interpreted French honor differently. They believed that it required a retrial.

As more and more evidence of Dreyfus’s innocence came to light, tempers flared. Debates often ended in fights, duels, and even riots. Finally, in 1899, Dreyfus was retried and once again convicted. But the day after his second conviction, he was pardoned. The courts did not vindicate him until 1906 – twelve years after the case began.

Not my country right or wrong, but, my country: may she always be in the right, and if in the wrong, may I help to set her right.

## CONNECTIONS

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What themes and issues turned the Dreyfus case into a national debate? Why did that debate touch off rioting and violence? What does the case suggest about the effects of racism on democracy? How does it support the concerns that Abraham Lincoln expressed in the 1838 speech (Reading 4)? What trials in recent years have divided people the way the Dreyfus case did? What themes and issues underlie those cases?

How did French in the late 1800s define their “universe of obligation”? Who came to Dreyfus’ aid? Who did not?

Jean-Paul Sartre, a French philosopher, tried to describe the choices an individual makes when he or she becomes an antisemite. “Through hatred, the anti-Semite seeks out the protective community of men of bad faith, who reinforce each other through a collective uniformity of behavior... The phrase ‘I hate the Jews’ is one that is uttered in chorus; in pronouncing it one attaches himself to a tradition and a community – the tradition and community of the mediocre.”<sup>45</sup> How do those choices apply to the individuals described in this reading? To those described in previous readings?

Carl Schurz responded to patriots who shouted, “My country, right or wrong!” by saying, “Not my country right or wrong, but, my country: may she always be in the right, and if in the wrong, may I help to set her right.” How would he answer those who argue that nations cannot admit mistakes? Where do you stand on the issue?

Theodore Herzl attended Dreyfus’s trial as a reporter for an Austrian newspaper. Although a Jew, he was not religious. Indeed, he had once considered converting to Christianity. Now shocked by the hatred of Jews the case touched off, Herzl changed his views dramatically. In 1896, he wrote *Der Judenstat* (The Jewish State). In it, he argued:

The Jewish question still exists. It would be foolish to deny it. It is a remnant of the Middle Ages, which civilized nations do not even yet seem able to shake off, try as they will. They certainly showed a generous desire to do so when they emancipated us. The Jewish question exists wherever Jews live in perceptible numbers. Where it does not exist, it is carried by Jews in the course of their migrations. We naturally move to those places where we are not persecuted, and there our presence produces persecution. This is the case in every country, and will remain so, even in those highly civilized – for instance, France – until the Jewish question finds a solution on a political basis.

Herzl's solution was to create a Jewish state in Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Jewish people. He hoped that European leaders would help the Jews set it up. Zionism, the Jewish form of nationalism, said Herzl, was to everyone's advantage. Evaluate Herzl's idea. How do you think an antisemite like Marr would respond to it?

## READING 12

### *Nationalism, "Race," and Empires*

Nationalism and "race" affected not only the way people regarded each other but also the way leaders defined their nation's universe of obligations. Every country wanted to be the strongest and the most powerful. By the late nineteenth century, European nations were competing for power in a variety of ways. They vied economically for resources and markets for their goods. And they contended politically and militarily for territory both in Europe and abroad. By all measures, Britain was the richest and most powerful. Yet, some people there were concerned about the growing economic and political might of the newly united Germany, which had also begun to build an empire.

Earlier in history, nations justified their conquest of other countries on economic, religious, or political grounds. Now Social Darwinism provided a new rationale for imperialism.

Earlier in history, nations justified their conquest of other countries on economic, religious, or political grounds. Now Social Darwinism provided a new rationale for imperialism. Many Europeans and Americans now believed that as a superior people, they had a responsibility to "uplift" those who were less advanced. What made Native Americans, Asians, or Africans "less advanced"? Increasingly, the answer was their "race."

In 1884, Otto von Bismarck called an international meeting known as the Congress of Berlin. Fifteen western nations gathered to establish rules for dividing up the continent of Africa. By agreeing to abide by a set of rules, European leaders hoped to avoid a war at home. They paid little or no attention to the effects of their decision on the peoples of Africa. Those

who did consider the effects on Africans tended to share the attitudes expressed in a poem by Rudyard Kipling. He wrote it in 1898 to persuade the United States to make the Philippines a colony.

Take up the White Man's burden –  
Send forth the best ye breed –  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild –  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.

A nation is ready to give up much of its domestic freedom if, in return, it gains more power and prestige in the foreign field.

The poem ends with the following verse:

Take up the White Man's Burden –  
Have done with childish days –  
The lightly proffered laurel,  
The easy, ungrudged praise.  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years,  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers!

## CONNECTIONS

Labels once applied to groups within a nation were now being applied to whole nations. What did Kipling mean when he spoke of the “White Man’s Burden”? Why was it the “white man’s” to bear?

In 1863, a law limiting freedom of the press went into effect in Prussia. A newspaper editor responded to the law by saying, “A nation is ready to give up much of its domestic freedom if, in return, it gains more power and prestige in the foreign field.” What are the dangers in such an attitude? What happens when people in other countries feel the same way about their nation?

Look carefully at a map of the world in 1900. Who were the strongest nations in the world? How did you reach that conclusion?

Ali A. Mazuri, an African scholar, asks, “Africa might have been denied its full credentials as part of human civilization, but must it also be denied its size in square miles? Can we not begin to experiment in schools with maps and globes that are less distorting?”<sup>46</sup> It is impossible to portray a round Earth on a flat map without distortion. Compare the way Africa looks on two different world maps and a globe. What differences are most striking?

What effect do those differences have on your perception of Africa? Of other continents?

Which countries are powerful today? On what basis did you rate those countries as “strong”? Is your rating based on military might? What other sources of strength does a nation have?

→An animated film called *Bags* uses bags and other household objects to discuss symbols of power and offer insights into aspects of the governing recess. The film, available from the Facing History Resource Center, is one that can profitably be seen more than once.

## READING 13

### *The Eve of World War*

As the competition among nations increased, the world became a more and more dangerous place to live. One nation could expand its empire only at another’s expense. As tensions mounted, nations built more and more ships, stockpiled more and more weapons, and trained more and more soldiers. They also looked for allies. As a result, a conflict between any two nations could draw almost the entire world into war. That is exactly what happened in the summer of 1914.

The First World War proved to be neither a glorious adventure nor a quick fight.

On June 28, a Serbian nationalist shot the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife. One month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. So did Germany, an ally of Austria-Hungary. Russia was also drawn into the fighting, as an ally of Serbia. Within days, France, an ally of Russia, was invaded. Britain entered when Germany began its invasion of France by marching through Belgium, a neutral nation that Britain had pledged to defend. By 1915, the Ottoman Empire had entered the war on Germany’s side. Italy now supported France and Britain. A “world war” had indeed begun. By the time it ended in 1918, thirty countries were involved.

In 1914, most people greeted the war with enthusiasm. Many young men viewed it as the adventure of a lifetime and feared only that it would end before they had a chance to fight. Just before the war began, Rupert Brooke, a young British poet, wrote “The Soldier.”

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there’s some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England’s, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

The First World War proved to be neither a glorious adventure nor a quick fight. On Germany's western front, the two sides faced one another across lines of trenches. Victories were measured in yards rather than miles. As the weeks became months, each side introduced ever newer and more technologically advanced weapons in an effort to break the stalemate. Poison gas, machine guns, aerial bombings, and tanks increased the number of casualties but did not result in a clear-cut victory for either side. After a visit to the front, a British commander said, "I don't know what this is. It isn't war."

## CONNECTIONS

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What does Rupert Brooke mean when he says "some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England"? How does he picture war? How does he imagine his death? Why do you think young people responded to the war with such enthusiasm? How was their response to war similar to that of German students in 1848 to news of a revolution in France? How was their response different?

European alliances were based on the principle that "the enemies of my enemy are my friends." What are the problems of an alliance system based on that principle? Do nations still use it?

→Historian Steve Cohen has prepared a packet of materials on World War I, including a video. It is available from the Facing History Resource Center.

## READING 14

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### *Creating Enemies of the State: The Armenians*

Under the stresses of war, prejudices are often heightened and tolerance toward vulnerable minorities forgotten. As United States President Woodrow Wilson told a friend a few weeks before the United States entered the war, "Once lead this people into war and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance... A nation cannot put its

This reading is a brief case study. It introduces concepts that will be expanded upon in later chapters.



strength into a war and keep its head level; it has never been done.”<sup>47</sup> The president may have been thinking of a war within a war that was taking place in the Ottoman Empire, then an ally of Germany.

In 1915, soon after the war began, Turkey, which then ruled the Ottoman Empire, turned against the Armenians, a Christian minority that had lived for generations within the Muslim Ottoman Empire. The Armenians were accused of divided loyalties, because there were Armenians in Russia as well as in the Ottoman Empire and Russia was now the enemy. In April, the Turks arrested six hundred Armenian leaders. But these arrests were just the beginning. On April 28, the *New York Times* wrote:

An appeal for relief of Armenian Christians in Turkey, following reported massacres and threatened further outrages, was made to the Turkish government today by the United States.

Acting upon the request of the Russian Government, submitted through Ambassador Bakhmeteff, Secretary [of State William Jennings] Bryan cabled to Ambassador [Henry] Morgenthau at Constantinople to make representations to the Turkish authorities asking that steps be taken for the protection of imperiled Armenians and to prevent the recurrence of religious outbreaks.

Instead of preventing more outbreaks, the Ottoman government moved against the Armenians. On July 12, the *New York Times* carried that story on page four under the headline “TURKS ARE EVICTING NATIVE CHRISTIANS.” By October 4, the story appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* under the headline “TELL OF HORRORS DONE IN ARMENIA.” The subheadings outlined the story. “Report of Eminent Americans Says They Are Unequaled in a Thousand Years.” “Turkish Record Outdone.” “A Policy of Extermination Put in Effect Against a Helpless People.” “Entire Villages Scattered.” “Men and Boys Massacred, Women and Girls Sold as Slaves and Distributed Among Moslems.”

Once lead this people into war and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance... A nation cannot put its strength into a war and keep its head level; it has never been done.

Even as reporters were filing their stories, Morgenthau was sending a “private and confidential” memo to Washington.

I am firmly convinced that this is the greatest crime of the ages. The repeated advice of some of the Ambassadors not to have any massacres may have led the Turks to adopt this fearful scheme of deportations which they turned into such diabolical massacres, accompanied with rape, pillage, and forced conversions. The Turkish authorities claim that they could not spare more than one battalion to escort this people and that therefore they were exposed to attacks by Kurds, etc. If that is true, they had no right to deport them, because they knew they would be pillaged and murdered on the way, unless properly protected. Halil Bey himself admitted that even the gendarmes that had been assigned to act as escort to the deported Armenians, committed some of the worst crimes against them.





Unfortunately the previous Armenian massacres were allowed to pass without the great Christian Powers punishing the perpetrators thereof; and these people believe that an offense that has been condoned before, will probably be again forgiven. Their success in deporting in May and June of 1914 about 100,000/150,000 Greeks without any of the big nations, then still at peace with them, seriously objecting thereto, led them to the conclusion that now, while four of the great Powers were fighting them and had unsuccessfully attempted to enter their country, and the two other Great Powers were their Allies, it was a great opportunity for them to put into effect their long cherished plan of exterminating the Armenian race and thus finish once for all the question of Armenian Reforms which has so often been the cause of European intervention in Turkish affairs.<sup>48</sup>

Abraham Hartunian, an Armenian Protestant minister, told the story from a more personal point of view:

On August 6 a terrible order was given: "All Armenians must surrender to the government whatever firearms they have; if a gun is found anywhere during the ensuing search, the owner will be shot instantly." At the same time preparations were being made to deport us the very next day.

Saturday, August 7, had come! The day of hell! The prison gates were thrown open, and about a hundred captives [Armenians] from Zeytoon and Fundejak were brought out. Chained together, they were

led to their slaughter through the streets, to the shouts and joyous outcries of the Turks. Some were hanged from scaffolds in the populous centers of the city. The rest were driven to the foot of Mount Aghur and there were shot in the presence of a great multitude...

These hundred corpses were still lying on the ground when suddenly hell's harbingers ran through the streets shouting, "All Armenian men, seventeen years old and above, must go out of the city and gather in the Field of Marash, to be deported; those who disobey will be shot."

As I now recall that day, there is a trembling in my body. The human mind is unable to bear such heaviness. My pen cannot describe the horrors. Confusion! Chaos! Woe! Wailing! Weeping! The father kissed his wife and children and departed, sobbing, encrazed. The son kissed his mother, his old father, his small sisters and brothers, and departed. Those who went and those who remained sobbed. Many left with no preparation, with only the clothes on their backs, the shoes on their feet, lacking money, lacking food, some without even seeing their loved ones. Already thousands of men had gathered in the appointed place, and like madmen, others were joining them.

The scene was so dreadful that even the hardened Turkish heart could not stand it, and a second order was given: "Those who have gone, have gone; the rest may remain. Let them not go."

Thus the thousands who had given themselves over to the hands of the bloodthirsty gendarmes were driven out to the desert slaughter houses. The remainder, crushed, pale, hopeless, were left in the city to await their turn. It was no more a secret that the annihilation of the nation had been determined.

How can I describe my mental anguish, the agonies of my heart, my emotions! The scenes of that day had bereft me of mind and strength and will. But in this thrice-exhausted condition I still had to comfort my family, to encourage my remaining people, and to do my possible best. I had to visit houses to give consolation. I had to appeal to the governor and to other officials – bowing before them, to beg and cry for mercy for the Armenians. And I too was waiting to walk the road of deportation.

I had all the furnishings of my house packed in boxes and bundles and sent to the American buildings. For the journey I brought together the absolutely necessary things: a tent, water jugs, a cradle! All the money I had was eight liras. How was it possible to travel with my wife and five small children? My God! The very thought makes me shudder!

On Sunday, August 8, the subject for our thought at church was the crucifixion. The nation was on the cross.

From this day on, the work of deportation was carried out systematically. Every day new lists were prepared, and successively, the convoys were put on their way. Everyone knew that in a little while his turn would come. There was not a glimmer of hope. Indeed the

bitter scenes daily enacted in the city rendered the people willing to go out and face death as soon as possible. Innocent Armenians by the dozens were hanged from scaffolds in different sections of the city, and their corpses dangling in the air wrought horror upon the people. On different days and in different places, nearly five hundred Armenians were either shot or hanged.

On Sunday, August 15, the subject of our spiritual meditation was the burial of Jesus. My people were being entombed.<sup>49</sup>

The word *genocide* was coined during World War II to describe the murder of an entire people. Although the word did not yet exist in 1915, the crime took place nonetheless.

## CONNECTIONS

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The Turkish government singled out the Armenians as “enemies of the state.” They were accused of divided loyalties. What does that mean? What factors allowed the Turks to scapegoat them? What does your answer suggest about what happens to a “tolerated minority” in time of war?

What did the press report about the horrors that were taking place? What could the United States and other countries have done? What should they have done?

In 1915, most Europeans and Americans believed that a genocide like the one in the Ottoman Empire could not have taken place anywhere else in the world. Do you agree?

→*The Armenian Genocide*, available from the Facing History Resource Center, highlights the events of 1915-1923 and relates them to other atrocities throughout history. The video shows the steps that may lead to genocide and encourages discussion of human rights violations. Reading materials and other films, including video tapes prepared by survivors as well as a lecture by scholar Richard Hovannisian are also available from the resource center. Chapter 10 (Readings 10-12) contains more information on the Armenian Genocide.

## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, (Free Press, 1979), 4.
- <sup>2</sup> From *THE ASCENT OF MAN* by Jacob Bronowski. Copyright 1973 by J. I Bronowski. By permission of Little, Brown and Company.
- <sup>3</sup> Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference*, 3.
- <sup>4</sup> Theodore Abel, *Why Hitler Came to Power* (Prentice-Hall, 1938), 29.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>6</sup> Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., "Harrison Bergeron," *Welcome to the Monkey House* (Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence). Copyright 1961 by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Originally published in *Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Reprinted by permission.
- <sup>7</sup> Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference*, 22.
- <sup>8</sup> Peter N. Carroll and David W. Noble, *The Free and the Unfree; A New History of the United States*, Second Edition, (Penquin Books, 1977, 1988), 34.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.
- <sup>10</sup> Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Little Brown & Company, 1993), 34.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 38.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.
- <sup>13</sup> Peter N. Carroll and David W. Noble, *The Free and the Unfree*, 37.
- <sup>14</sup> Quoted in Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 41.
- <sup>15</sup> Carol Hampton, "A Heritage Denied," *Sojourners*, January, 1991.
- <sup>16</sup> Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 54.
- <sup>17</sup> Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, (Harvard University Press, 1982), vii.
- <sup>18</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, (Norton & Co., 1968), 94.
- <sup>19</sup> Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, 5.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.
- <sup>21</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "Reply to Stephen Douglas, August 21," *Created Equal? The Complete Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858*, ed. Paul Angle, (University of Chicago Press, 1958), 11.
- <sup>22</sup> "Address before the Young Men's Lyceum, January 27, 1838," *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (Rutgers University Press, 1953), 109.
- <sup>23</sup> Henry Kamm, "Havel Calls the Gypsies 'Litmus Test,'" *New York Times*, 10 December, 1993.
- <sup>24</sup> Julian Bond, "Address," (Jefferson Conference, October 16, 1992), 19-20.
- <sup>25</sup> Hans Kohn, *Nationalism* (D. Van Nostrand, 1955), 9.
- <sup>26</sup> Theodore Abel, *Why Hitler Came to Power*, 29.
- <sup>27</sup> Quoted in *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* by Lucy S. Dawidowicz (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975), 27.
- <sup>28</sup> Quoted in *The Course of German Nationalism* by Hagen Schulze (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 57
- <sup>29</sup> Quoted in Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Harvard University Press, 1981), 35-36.
- <sup>30</sup> Quoted in Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth* (Basic Books, 1974), 277.
- <sup>31</sup> *The Autobiography of Carl Schurz: An Abridgement in One Volume of The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, 26.
- <sup>32</sup> Otto von Bismarck, *Reflections and Reminiscences*, (Harper & Row, 1968), 32.
- <sup>33</sup> *The Autobiography of Carl Schurz*, 26.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.
- <sup>35</sup> Comte de St. Vallier, quoted in Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron* (Alfred Knopf, 1977), 205-206.
- <sup>36</sup> Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday, An Autobiography* (Viking, 1945), 1-2.
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- <sup>38</sup> *The Life and Writings of Fredrick Douglass*, Vol. 2, ed. Philip S. Foner, (International Publishers, 1950), 298.
- <sup>39</sup> George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution, A History of European Racism* (Fertig, 1978), 92.
- <sup>40</sup> Michael A. Mayer, *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* (University of Washington Press, 1990), 3.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 6.

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- <sup>42</sup> Quoted in Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, (Harper & Row, 1987), 407.
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- <sup>44</sup> Jakob Wassermann, *Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, (Berlin: Verlag, 1921).
- <sup>45</sup> Jean-Paul Satre *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. G. J. Becker (Schocken, 1948), 22.
- <sup>46</sup> Ali A. Mazuri, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (Little Brown & Company, 1986), 24.
- <sup>47</sup> Quoted in Cobb of "The World" by John L. Heaton (E.P. Dutton & Co., 1924).
- <sup>48</sup> Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New Age Publishers, 1919), 301-304.
- <sup>49</sup> Abraham Hartunian, *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep, A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*, trans. Vartan Hartunian (Beacon, 1968), 63-65.