



Internationalism/Isolationism: Concepts of American Global Power

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Internationalism and isolationism: in American discussions of the United States' role in the world, few concepts are more ubiquitous. On any issue of salience, U.S. politicians and intellectuals are sure to detect a fateful choice between internationalist engagement and isolationist withdrawal. Every president from Franklin D. Roosevelt through Barack Obama has affirmed the former creed and warned his country not to be tempted to

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retreat into “isolationism.”¹ Such anxieties, usually diffuse, acquired a corporeal target in 2016. As Donald J. Trump ascended to the White House, the U.S. commentariat interpreted him, above all, as a 1930s-style “isolationist” out to dismantle the international leadership of the United States, seven decades in the making.² Shortly before the election, for example, the president of the Council on Foreign Relations proclaimed the arrival of a great debate between “a besieged traditional internationalism and an energized new isolationism.”³ Alas, Trump’s conduct in office soon disrupted the neat dichotomy, leaving one prominent journalist to propose that Trump may be “something wholly unique in the history of the presidency: an isolationist interventionist.”⁴ The customary categories may have failed, yet observers still found it inescapable to think through them, even if only to gesture beyond them.

Given the prominence of the internationalism/isolationism dualism in U.S. political discourse, one might assume historians would have asked,

¹For presidents from Reagan to Obama, see Greg Jaffe, “Obama Warns Against Isolationism and Vows to Defend the Nation,” *Washington Post*, June 2, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-warns-against-isolationism-and-vows-to-defend-the-nation/2016/06/02/1f2b5f44-28ed-11e6-b989-4e5479715b54_story.html; George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, January 31, 2006, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=65090>; David Sanger, “Clinton Says ‘New Isolationism’ Imperils U.S. Security,” *New York Times*, October 15, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/10/15/world/defeat-treaty-overview-clinton-says-new-isolationism-imperils-us-security.html>; Douglas Jehl, “Bush Warns Against Return of Isolationism,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 1991, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-12-08/news/mn-266_1_bush-isolationism-warns; Ronald Reagan, Remarks on Signing the George C. Marshall Month Proclamation, June 1, 1987, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=34353>.

²Uri Friedman, “How Donald Trump Could Change the World,” *The Atlantic*, November 7, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/11/trump-election-foreign-policy/505934/>; Michael Hirsh, “Why George Washington Would Have Agreed With Donald Trump,” *Politico*, May 5, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/05/founding-fathers-2016-donald-trump-america-first-foreign-policy-isolationist-213873>; Libby Nelson, “‘America First’: Donald Trump’s Slogan has a Deeply Bigoted Backstory,” *Vox*, September 1, 2016, <http://www.vox.com/2016/7/20/12198760/america-first-donald-trump-convention>.

³Richard Haass, “The Isolationist Temptation,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 5, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-isolationist-temptation-1470411481>.

⁴Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine, R.I.P.,” *The Atlantic*, April 7, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/04/the-obama-doctrine-rip/522276>.

long ago, how the concepts came into usage and what purposes they have served for those who have invoked them. That these concepts carry normative valences is, after all, not difficult to detect. Few Americans have willingly positioned themselves against internationalism *tout court*, much less *for* such a thing as isolationism. Nor have the actors deploying these concepts been coy about the larger aims they seek to advance. “We reject isolationism and accept the logic of internationalism”—this was how *Time/Life/Fortune* publishing mogul Henry Luce summoned the country to take up the mantle of world leadership when he announced the start of the American Century in 1941.⁵ These were indeed the main terms through which U.S. global political and military leadership was articulated and legitimated on its birth in World War II, and perhaps ever since.

Yet scholars have neglected to ask why and to what effect Luce, among others, created and used the internationalism/isolationism dualism. Worse, even historians have often reproduced the concepts, taking freighted and partisan categories as their framework of analysis. As Andrew Johnstone observes, they continue to narrate the rise of the United States to global power in terms of an “ongoing struggle between the forces of isolationism and internationalism,” assumed to denote rival political positions embodied in opposing constellations of actors.⁶ This meta-narrative remains rife in popular discourse and interdisciplinary scholarship

⁵ Henry Luce, “The American Century,” *Life*, February 17, 1941, 64.

⁶ Andrew Johnstone, “Isolationism and Internationalism in American Foreign Relations,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2011): 7–20, here 8. Moreover, as Hilde Restad notes, even when dispensing with the terms, the literature often “still reproduces the dichotomy of isolationism/internationalism by substituting separateness or aloofness for isolationism—or, in other cases, authors still use the term isolationism.” Restad, *American Exceptionalism: An Idea That Made a Nation and Remade the World* (London, 2015), 67–68.

alike—anywhere outside the highly specialized historiography.⁷ And it continues to be employed by many specialists as well.⁸

Other historians have questioned the category of isolationism, some going so far as to dismiss it as a myth.⁹ These scholars, dating back to William Appleman Williams in the 1950s, emphasize that the so-called isolationists possessed more sophisticated and diverse views than the

⁷For example, in a chapter tellingly titled “The Ebb and Flow of American Internationalism,” the political scientist Jeffrey Legro frames his influential analysis of the transformation of U.S. foreign policy in the 1930s and 1940s around an unqualified internationalism/isolationism dichotomy: Legro, *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2005), chap. 3. The dichotomy is prominent in the growing interdisciplinary and extra-academic fields of strategic studies and grand strategy, in which isolationism appears as a more-or-less conscious past strategy and a (seldom endorsed) strategic option in the present. Examples include Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2003); Melvyn Leffler and Jeffrey Legro, eds., *To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine* (Oxford, 2008), esp. chap. 7; William Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 2015).

⁸The finest recent histories of the United States in World War II treat “isolationism” as an actually existing political position, whose decline they seek to explain, rather than as a discursive construction that misrepresented and denied recognition to those it named: Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 152; Frank Ninkovich, *The Global Republic: America’s Inadvertent Rise to World Power* (Chicago and London, 2014), 141, 146, 166; Dan Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged a Peace* (London, 2011), 17; James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York, 2011), 10, 26, 76, 94; John A. Thompson, *A Sense of Power: The Roots of America’s Global Role* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2015), 86, 102, 132–135, 142, 145, 162, 168, 180, 181, 184, 227, 229, 256. In his magisterial Oxford history of U.S. foreign relations, George C. Herring makes a point of dispelling isolationism as a “myth” and notes the term’s twentieth-century coinage, but he nonetheless concludes that the 1930s effort to keep the United States out of entanglements and war “fully merits the label isolationist.” Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford, 2008), 1, 6, 502.

⁹Bear F. Braumoeller, “The Myth of American Isolationism,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6, no. 4 (2010): 349–371; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 1; William Appleman Williams, “The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920’s,” *Science & Society* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1954): 1–20.

moniker implies.¹⁰ As a remedy, they call for greater definitional precision. Some replace isolationism with more determinate concepts, principally unilateralism or non-interventionism and sometimes anti-imperialism as well.¹¹ Others subdivide isolationism into a complex of positions.¹² In these accounts, however, the history of isolationism remains the history of the ideas and actors branded as such by their contemporary opponents, not of the opponents who performed the branding. Whether historians apply “isolationism” to history or deny that it applies, they have neglected the concept’s operation *in* history. Small wonder decades of attempts to debunk the myth that the United States was ever “isolationist” have failed to penetrate beyond the confines of specialists: to insist on different terms for a similar story can sound like semantic quibbling.

A landmark article by Brooke Blower, who dates the coinage of “isolationism” to the 1930s, points the way toward what is needed: a fully fledged conceptual history, which regards concepts not merely as tools to

¹⁰ Standing out in a large literature are Wayne S. Cole, *Roosevelt & the Isolationists, 1932–45* (Lincoln, 1983); John Milton Cooper, *The Vanity of Power: American Isolationism and the First World War, 1914–1917* (Westport, Conn., 1969); Robert Divine, *The Illusion of Neutrality* (Chicago, 1962); Justus Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939–1941* (Lanham, Md., 2000); Manfred Jonas, *Isolationism in America, 1935–1941* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966); Herbert Margulies, *The Mild Reservationists and the League of Nations Controversy in the Senate* (Columbia, 1989); Christopher Nichols, *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011); Ralph Stone, *The Irreconcilables: The Fight Against the League of Nations* (Lexington, 1970).

¹¹ Instead of “isolationism,” Herring and Walter McDougall refer to “unilateralism,” a proclivity they trace back to the American Founding. Justus Doenecke replaces “isolationism” with “anti-interventionism” in his studies of the lead-up to Pearl Harbor. Robert David Johnson recasts would-be isolationist Senators from 1913 to 1935 as anti-imperialist “peace progressives,” although he detects “isolationism” among some members of the group. Doenecke, *In Danger Undaunted: The Anti-Interventionist Movement of 1940–1941 as Revealed in the Papers of the America First Committee* (Stanford, Calif., 1990); Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon*, esp. x; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 6; McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (Boston, 1997), chap. 2; Johnson, *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).

¹² Cooper, *The Vanity of Power*; Jonas, *Isolationism in America*; Nichols, *Promise and Peril*; Stone, *The Irreconcilables*.

represent history but also as outcomes in and of themselves.¹³ When Luce framed the American Century around a contest between “those old, old battered labels—the issue of Isolationism versus Internationalism,” the historian’s first response should be neither to take Luce’s self-presentation for granted nor even to expose him for caricaturing his opponents.¹⁴ It should be, rather, to ask why Luce employed his schema in the first place. For Luce was demonstrably inaccurate: his old labels were new. “Isolationism” gained common usage only in the 1930s and vaulted to ubiquity just as Luce was writing. For most of American history, few had thought to characterize the United States as isolationist or tagged an internal rival by that name. Nor had a particular group of Americans claimed the mantle of “internationalism” all for themselves, as against another. This, too, was new—“internationalism” as anti-isolationism, not so much asking how the United States should act in the world as asserting that it must.

This chapter reveals how the internationalism/isolationism dualism was fashioned in the 1930s and early 1940s. This episode in the history of concepts made possible one of the most consequential outcomes of the twentieth century: the ascent of the United States as the premier global political and military power, holding itself permanently responsible for enforcing world order. Can conceptual innovations possess such causal power? I think so, specifically as condition of possibility for Americans to fashion global dominance as a future-oriented project, meant to outlast foreseeable events. That international leadership would become normal for Americans was hardly inevitable. Before the isolationist/internationalist dualism came into existence, a global military posture appeared to traduce American tradition. Officials and intellectuals had long cast the United States as an enemy of power politics. Especially those who

¹³Blower convincingly proposes to replace the interwar internationalism/isolationism dichotomy with a complex set of positions on neutrality. Hers nonetheless remains what Ole Wæver calls a conceptual analysis, seeking to employ signifiers that more accurately and comprehensively represent the signified. This chapter, by contrast, offers a conceptual history, which explains how the internationalism/isolationism concepts were constructed and what that construction produced. Brooke Blower, “From Isolationism to Neutrality: A New Framework for Understanding American Political Culture, 1919–1941,” *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 2 (April 2014): 345–376. Ole Wæver, “Détente between Conceptual Analysis and Conceptual History,” in Jan Hallenberg, Bertil Nygren, and Alexa Robertson, eds., *Transitions: In Honour of Kjell Goldmann* (Stockholm, 2003), 85–107.

¹⁴Luce, “The American Century,” 63.

identified as internationalists maintained that peaceful interaction should, and would, supplant the reign of force. But as they conceptualized the category of isolationism, and positioned internationalism against it, officials and intellectuals effected a tectonic shift: they elided the contradiction between dominating power politics and transcending it. Now both objectives, being antonyms of isolationism, came to seem mutually implied. During World War II, American elites promulgated the internationalism-versus-isolationism narrative, projecting it back through American history and implanting it into historiography. By 1945, a global military posture looked like the fulfillment of America's *telos*—an appearance belied by the conceptual work that, this chapter shows, had to be performed first.

In exhuming the conceptual foundations of American world leadership, this chapter illustrates the potential for scholars to gain fresh perspectives on the last century by historicizing the key categories it generated. Dedicated conceptual historians have just begun to turn to the twentieth century, after tethering their research to hypotheses about the onset of modernity in Europe, what Reinhart Koselleck termed the *Sattelzeit*.¹⁵ Yet the methods of conceptual history may apply in equal measure to the history of late and post-modernity, and well beyond Europe.¹⁶ The twentieth century produced no shortage of concepts bearing the political, temporal, and spatial qualities Koselleck dated to the *Sattelzeit*. Prime examples are those that end in -ism. Koselleck called these “concepts of movement” for the way they point beyond the realm of experience and toward an expected, even irreversible future, in whose name political intervention is licensed.¹⁷

More important, the conceptual history of the twentieth century should not be left to conceptual historians. Political, social, and cultural historians may in fact be best suited to take up Willibald Steinmetz's call, issued from within conceptual history, for “micro-diachronic analyses” that do not just trace but actually explain conceptual change in specific

¹⁵ Reinhart Koselleck, “Introduction to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*,” trans. Michaela Richter, *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 6, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 1–37.

¹⁶ As Christian Geulen and Willibald Steinmetz argue in Geulen, “Plädoyer für eine Geschichte der Grundbegriffe des 20. Jahrhunderts,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 7, no. 1 (2010): 79–97; Steinmetz, “Some Thoughts on a History of Twentieth-Century German Basic Concepts,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7, no. 2 (Winter 2012): 87–100.

¹⁷ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York, 2004), esp. 248, 251. On “The Political Rhetoric of Isms,” see *Journal of Political Ideology* 23, no. 3 (September 2018): 241–369.

moments and places.¹⁸ Recently scholars such as Samuel Moyn have displayed a renewed interest in historicizing basic concepts of contemporary politics.¹⁹ But whereas Moyn performs what might be called a political history of concepts, showing how national agendas delimited the meaning of human rights, this chapter offers a conceptual history of politics. It takes conceptual innovations, invoked against particular foes, to constitute and produce political outcomes. If the twentieth century was an “age of extremes,” of constant material and ideological combat, then historians have much to gain by uncovering its combat concepts.²⁰

These concepts become intelligible by relating their semantic meanings to the targets they are meant to surpass or vanquish. In the case of the internationalism/isolationism dualism, the targets were double. The most immediate target was engaged in contemporaneous debates. This group of “isolationists” urged the United States to adopt deep and relatively impartial forms of neutrality in the 1930s. They became non-interventionists in World War II, before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the conflict. The other target lay in the past and, potentially, the future. This was an entire ethico-political tradition once known as internationalism and aimed at transcending armed conflict. No frontal confrontation with this tradition of internationalism took place; advocates of global dominance appropriated the term instead. Reconstituting internationalism as anti-isolationism, they turned the dream of overcoming power politics into a warrant to lead the world. The internationalism/isolationism dualism, a stark example of what Koselleck dubbed “asymmetric counterconcepts,” allowed advocates of U.S. global

¹⁸ Steinmetz, “Some Thoughts,” 89–90.

¹⁹ Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012). Other recent political histories of concepts include Carol Gluck and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, eds., *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon* (Durham, N.C., 2009); Udi Greenberg, “Militant Democracy and Human Rights,” *New German Critique* 42 no. 3 (2015): 169–195; A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge, 2021); Glenda Sluga, *The Nation, Psychology, and International Politics, 1870–1919* (New York, 2006); Brad Simpson, “The United States and the Curious History of Self-Determination,” *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 4 (September 2012): 675–694.

²⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York, 1994). Also see Willibald Steinmetz, ed., *Political Languages in the Age of Extremes* (Oxford, 2011).

supremacy to address their opponents without recognizing them.²¹ Rather than engage in debate, they dealt a temporal trump card. Isolationism, they said, was in the past. So it must stay forever.

As a concept, however, isolationism is thoroughly modern. It does not date to a distant past, nor was it superseded by the concept of internationalism. In fact, internationalism preceded isolationism in U.S. political discourse. When the word internationalism first came into usage, beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century and increasing in the 1920s, “isolationism” had yet to be coined. True, Americans spoke of “isolation,” deriving from the English tradition of “splendid isolation” from Europe.²² U.S. officials and writers used the term to refer to the geographic separation between the Old World and the New, and sometimes to a national policy that affirmed such separation.²³ Some invoked isolation as a temporally prior condition, out of which the United States had passed owing to the modern compression of time and space.²⁴ But all this time, the term did not demarcate major fault lines within the American political landscape. Even in 1919 and 1920, during the fight over the settlement of World War I, advocates of the League of Nations rarely accused their

²¹ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, chap. 10. See also João Feres Jr., “Building a Typology of Forms of Misrecognition: Beyond the Republican-Hegelian Paradigm,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 5, no. 3 (August 2006): 259–277; Kay Junge and Kirill Postoutenko, eds., *Asymmetrical Concepts After Reinhart Koselleck: Historical Semantics and Beyond* (Bielefeld, 2011).

²² Felix Gilbert, *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J., 1961). For surveys of the uses of “isolation” (as well as “isolationist” and “isolationism”), see Blower, “From Isolationism to Neutrality,” 351–352; Manfred Jonas, “Isolationism,” in Alexander DeConde, Richard Dean Burns, and Fredrik Logevall, eds., *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed. (New York, 2002), vol. 2, 337–338.

²³ A notable example, celebrating that an “isolated position” rendered the United States invulnerable, is Richard Olney, Note on the Venezuela Crisis, July 20, 1895, in Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1895), 558. Examples from commentators include Freeman Snow, *Treaties and Topics in American Diplomacy* (Boston, 1894), 249, 253, 423; Albert Bushnell Hart, *The Foundations of American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1901), 1.

²⁴ For instance, Henry Cabot Lodge to Elihu B. Hayes, May 18, 1898, in Nichols, *Promise and Peril*, 51; William Howard Taft, Address to the League to Enforce Peace Convention, June 17, 1915, in Frank Gerrity and David Burton, eds., *The Collected Works of William Howard Taft: Taft Papers on League of Nations* (Athens, OH, 2003), vol. 7, 52.

opponents of being isolationists, much less of propagating an –ism.²⁵ Nor even did they characterize past U.S. foreign policy that way. In 1924 the historian J. Fred Rippy wrote one of the earliest books on the “American policy of isolation,” and he did not mention “isolationists” or “isolationism” once. If the early United States was steeped in isolationism, hardly anyone thought so for the first century and a half of the republic.

It was internationalism that came first. The term entered into regular usage in the 1860s and 1870s, initially among the international peace movement and working men’s associations.²⁶ By the turn of the century, although still a central category for pacifists like Jane Addams, internationalism was on the tongue of diplomats, social scientists, and international lawyers.²⁷ World War I gave it prominence, causing Nebraska’s Gilbert Hitchcock, the Senate Democratic leader, to declare: “Internationalism has come, and we must choose what form the internationalism shall take.”²⁸ As Hitchcock’s formulation suggests, internationalism presented

²⁵ In 1919 and 1920, U.S. newspapers frequently referenced “isolation” but scarcely “isolationist” or “isolationism.” Neither the –ist nor the –ism appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Tribune*, and *Washington Post*. In the *New York Times*, “isolationist” appeared three times, once pertaining to women’s suffrage rather than foreign policy and another in a quotation of a London editorial. “Isolationism” did not appear. Statistics according to searches of the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database conducted on May 31, 2017. “Bergerism and the Treaty,” *New York Times*, December 22, 1919, 14; Virginia Herrick Fox, “Test of Suffrage,” *New York Times*, October 31, 1920, XX12; “Predicts Party Split if Republicans Win,” *New York Times*, November 1, 1920, 2.

²⁶ For example, Francis Lieber, *Fragments of Political Science on Nationalism and Internationalism* (New York, 1868); E. Gryzanovski, “On the International Workingmen’s Association: Its Origin, Doctrines, and Ethics,” *The North American Review* 114, no. 235 (April 1872): 309–376, here 328; “The Means of Lessening the Chances of War,” *Advocate of Peace* 5, no. 9 (September 1874), 68–69, here 69. Possibly the earliest mention of “internationalism” in the U.S. Congress came on June 10, 1874, when Kentucky Representative Elisha Standiford dispelled accusations that the forces of “communism and internationalism” were behind efforts to incorporate a national iron-molders’ union. Standiford, “Iron-Molders’ Union,” *Congressional Record*, June 9, 1874, 4795–4796, here 4796.

²⁷ Wilbur Crafts, *A Primer of the Science of Internationalism* (Washington, D.C., 1908); Richard Olney, “The Development of International Law,” *The American Journal of International Law* 1, no. 2 (April 1907): 418–430, here 429; Paul S. Reinsch, “Failures and Successes at the Second Hague Conference,” *The American Political Science Review* 2, no. 2 (February 1908): 204–220, here 216. Examples of continued pacifist usage are James H. Mays, “Internationalism,” *Advocate of Peace* 57, no. 7 (July 1895): 153–155; Jane Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace* (New York, 1907), 23, 114, 115, 237.

²⁸ Gilbert Hitchcock, “League of Nations,” *Congressional Record*, February 27, 1919, 4414–4418, here 4414.

itself as a modern and modernizing process. It was counterposed less to the foreign policy of isolation by the United States than to the system of power politics centered in Europe. In the words of one political scientist writing in 1930, internationalism stood against the “unholy trinity” of nationalism, militarism, and imperialism.²⁹

The term appeared in conjunction with three clusters of neighboring, if not quite synonymous, concepts. These were intercourse and interaction; world unity, especially moral and spiritual; and peace. All of these conditions, internationalists assumed, would be progressively realized with the onrush of modernity.³⁰ Accordingly, the pursuit of internationalism did not seem incompatible with the policy of so-called isolation, meaning political-military non-entanglement beyond the Western Hemisphere. The United States could simultaneously steer clear of entangling alliances while seeking to reform international society through peaceful interaction and forms of “disentangling alliance,” as President Woodrow Wilson couched the League of Nations.³¹

Professing to update America’s traditional distaste for power politics—in his Farewell Address, George Washington not only foreswore permanent alliances but also urged “liberal intercourse with all nations”—internationalism commanded wide legitimacy.³² Yet its valence was not uniformly positive. Befitting its pacifist and socialist origins, internationalism came under fire as utopian or radical. Critics depicted in it a naïve, sentimental dream of universal brotherhood or a socialist, anarchist, or otherwise European crusade.³³ Either way, internationalism could

²⁹ Parker Thomas Moon, “The League Survives Its Obsequies,” *The New Republic*, January 22, 1930, 245.

³⁰ See Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York, 2012); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, 2013).

³¹ Woodrow Wilson, Address on Memorial Day, May 30, 1916, in Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, N.J., 1982), vol. 37, 126.

³² George Washington, “An Address to the People of the United States,” September 17, 1796 (New Castle, Del., 1796), 18–19.

³³ In 1919, for instance, Georgia Senator Thomas Hardwick mocked internationalism as “utterly impossible until the millenium [*sic*] shall arrive,” while Ohio Senator Warren Harding objected to Wilson’s supposedly “new internationalism paralyzed by socialism” and Ohio Representative Simeon Fess associated internationalism with “entangling our feet in the meshes of European politics.” Hardwick, “Food Supplies for Europe,” *Congressional Record*, January 21, 1919, 1789–1814, here 1791; Harding, “Food Supplies for Europe,” *ibid.*, January 21, 1919, 1789–1814, here 1808; Fess, “Naval Appropriation Bill,” *ibid.*, February 6, 1919, 2821–2866, here 2846.

sound anti-national in general and un-American in particular. “We must be now and ever for Americanism and nationalism, and against internationalism,” Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge declared at the 1920 Republican convention.³⁴ Insofar as internationalism promised to usher in universal interchange, unity, and peace, it also threatened to restrain the nation, possibly to extinguish it. By contrast, those who upheld internationalism generally argued for striking a balance with nationalism rather than surpassing it altogether. “Sound Nationalism and Sound Internationalism” was how Theodore Roosevelt put his principles.³⁵ That even the militaristic Rough Rider positioned himself within the frame of internationalism testifies to its popularity, well before anything called isolationism emerged as its opposite.

Only in the crisis decade of the 1930s did “isolationism” ascend to regular usage. Although debuting in some periodicals in the 1920s, appearances of the –ism remained sporadic until the middle and late thirties.³⁶ On April 1, 1935, Massachusetts Representative Allen Treadway uttered the term isolationism for the first time on the floor of Congress (in order to complain that President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration countered opponents of tariff reductions by raising “the false alarm of isolationism,” when in fact “there is no such thing”). In the next month,

³⁴ Henry Cabot Lodge, Address of the Temporary Chairman, June 8, 1920, in *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Republican National Convention* (New York, 1920), 32. An emblematic case for “straight old-fashioned Americanism” as against Woodrow Wilson’s Europeanizing “internationalism” is George B. Lockwood, *Americanism* (Washington, D.C., 1921), iv.

³⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, “Sound Nationalism and Sound Internationalism,” August 4, 1918, in *Roosevelt in the Kansas City Star: War-Time Editorials* (Boston and New York, 1921), 191.

³⁶ “Isolationism” first appeared in 1923 in the *American Political Science Review*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, and *Foreign Affairs*; 1925 in the *New York Times*; 1927 in the *American Journal of International Law*. “Independence,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 4, 1923, 8; Pittman Potter, “The Nature of American Foreign Policy,” *American Journal of International Law* 21, no. 1 (January 1927): 53–78, here 74; “Self-Contained,” *New York Times*, February 1, 1925, E6; Henry R. Spencer, “International Politics and History,” *American Political Science Review* 17, no. 3 (August 1923): 392–403, here 398; Alfred Zimmern, “Nationalism and Internationalism,” *Foreign Affairs* 1, no. 4 (June 15, 1923): 115–126, here 115. According to searches of JSTOR and ProQuest databases conducted on May 31, 2017. The term “isolationist” followed a similar trajectory, although its first uses in the 1920s and 1930s often slightly preceded those of the –ism.

Maryland's Millard Tydings followed suit in the Senate.³⁷ By 1938 Rippey, the early historian of "isolation" only, now identified an American tradition of "isolationism" as well, introducing the -ism to the pages of the *American Historical Review*.³⁸ "Isolationism" arrived in Walter Lippmann's regular newspaper column on March 23, 1939. By then Lippmann took it to be the nation's default foreign policy, stretching "all through American history."³⁹

Notwithstanding Lippmann's claim, "isolationism" emerged in order to describe and denounce a novel specter. For Americans stunned by the Great Depression and the economic disintegration and geopolitical aggression it spawned, "nationalism" did not suffice to capture new dangers. Nationalism, after all, was generally thought to be compatible with and even constitutive of inter(-)nationalism, and it tended to imply a certain identity among nations, each of which underwent an internal process of nation building and sought to coexist externally with formal equals.⁴⁰ By contrast, "isolationism" conveyed the wholesale repudiation of internationalism. And it pointed to social and economic forces that could undermine the possibility of international coexistence and cooperation.

³⁷ "Isolationism" first appeared in floor speeches in the House and Senate in Allen Treadway, "Permission to Address the House," *Congressional Record*, April 1, 1935, 4776–4780, here 4778; and Millard Tydings, "War Debts, Disarmament, Currency Stabilization, and World Trade," *Congressional Record*, May 21, 1935, 7902–7911, here 7904, respectively, according to a search of the *Congressional Record* on the HeinOnline U.S. Congressional Documents Library conducted on October 8, 2017. The earliest *Congressional Record* entry to contain "isolationism" dates to 1929, in an excerpt of a newspaper editorial: "To Keep the Peace," *Birmingham Age-Herald*, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, February 27, 1929, 4585.

³⁸ J. Fred Rippey, Review of *American Foreign Policy, Formulation and Practice: Selected Readings* by Wilson Leon Godshall, *American Historical Review* 43, no. 4 (July 1938): 883–884, here 884. The *AHR* first printed "isolationism" in 1930 but in reference to Canadian policy vis-à-vis the British Commonwealth: Carl Wittke, Review of *The Dominions and Diplomacy: The Canadian Contribution* by A. Gordon Dewey, *American Historical Review* 35, no. 3 (April 1930): 619–621, here 620. According to JSTOR search of the *AHR* conducted on October 8, 2017.

³⁹ Walter Lippmann, "An Estimate of American Public Opinion About Foreign Affairs," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 23, 1939, 21. Lippmann had, however, used "isolationist" since the start of his *Herald Tribune* columns in 1931: "The Visit of M. Laval: The Problem of Franco-American Co-operation," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 23, 1931, 21. According to ProQuest search of Lippmann's column conducted on October 8, 2017.

⁴⁰ Carsten Holbraad, *Internationalism and Nationalism in European Political Thought* (New York, 2003), chaps. 2, 5; Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*.

“Isolationism” named and targeted, first, the totalitarian powers in Europe and Asia. Their rise, in the 1930s, discredited the internationalist assumption that a moral-spiritual unity underlay the world’s squabbles and would be progressively manifested through the spread of peaceful intercourse. For American intellectuals, totalitarianism represented not merely the recrudescence of political tyranny, long associated with the Old World, but also the incarnation of a new economic and social order, incommensurable with liberal forms.⁴¹ Unlike mere militarists, such as the Prussians of imperial Germany, totalitarians corrupted the emancipatory potential of intercourse. They impressed all aspects of life into the service of the state and turned peacetime into a prelude to war.⁴²

The isolationism coinage proved especially useful because it linked totalitarians abroad to targets at home, principally advocates of strict neutrality.⁴³ Constituting perhaps the largest antiwar movement in American history, neutrality advocates were not susceptible to being labelled as aggressive nationalists. Their defining feature was their willingness to renounce certain traditional rights of foreign trade in order to keep out of armed conflict. Neutrality advocates hoped to avoid the kinds of officially impartial exchanges they believed to have dragged the United States into World War I. Accordingly, Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts from 1935 to 1939. At their most restrictive, the acts banned the export of

⁴¹ Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, “Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930’s-1950’s,” *American Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (April 1970): 1046–1964; Benjamin Alpers, *Dictators, Democracy, and American Public Culture: Envisioning the Totalitarian Enemy, 1920s–1950s* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003); Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (Oxford, 1995); Thomas R. Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism: The American Image of Totalitarianism in the 1930s,” *The Historian* 40, no. 1 (November 1977): 85–103.

⁴² For example, Edward Mead Earle, “American Military Policy and National Security,” *Political Science Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (March 1938): 1–13; John Herz, “The National Socialist Doctrine of International Law and the Problems of International Organization,” *Political Science Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (December 1939): 536–554.

⁴³ Economic protectionists were a secondary domestic target of “isolationism.” Through the concept of isolationism, officials linked the totalitarian pursuit of economic autarky to the non-totalitarian protectionism of American tariff barriers as well as the British sterling bloc. For example, Henry F. Grady, “A New Approach to the Tariff Question,” Address to the National League of Women Voters, April 29, 1936, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, May 12, 1936, 7046–7049, here 7048; Cordell Hull, Address to the Conference of Seaport Cities on International Trade, June 12, 1935, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, June 14, 1935, 9301–9303, here 9303.

arms, extension of loans, and travel of citizens to nations engaged in war. Still, almost all advocates of neutrality—including arch-“isolationist” senators William Borah and Hiram Johnson—recoiled at the prospect of cutting off commercial activity of every kind with other states and even with belligerents.⁴⁴ As one supporter of neutrality legislation, the Illinois Republican Congressman Everett Dirksen, admitted in 1937: “We are still attempting to eat our cake and have it, too. We say we want neutrality, but along with it we want a slice of the profitable trade of belligerent nations.”⁴⁵

Nevertheless, neutrality advocates did act as though interaction and peace were not wholly compatible. Contrary to the longstanding imaginary of internationalism, they recognized that peaceful interaction could be entangling and lead to war. Partly because neutrality advocates broke with internationalist orthodoxy to this limited extent, their opponents were able to brand them as isolationists.

It was a powerful charge, all the more so for appearing under the guise of description. From the start, “isolationism” delegitimized the people and positions it named by imbuing them with a consistent and derogatory cluster of meanings—meanings that endured beyond the concept’s birth and that belie attempts by scholars to pluck it from its thick semantic fields and re-present it as a neutral analytic. The concept carried two meanings in particular, one that evoked isolation in space, the other isolation in time.

First, “isolationism” signified spatial enclosure and separation. It conjured a world without international intercourse and a United States confined, in every respect, to its borders. Despite naming Americans who renounced limited types of interaction for the purpose of avoiding military entanglement in Europe, “isolationism” connoted the rejection of all engagement everywhere. It would, Secretary of State Cordell Hull said, “compel us to confine all activities of our people within our own frontiers.”⁴⁶ For aiming to keep out of war, isolationists stood accused of seeking to “keep us out of everything,” as FDR’s speechwriter-playwright Robert Sherwood put it, or more precisely of favoring “a policy of walled separation from all contacts with other peoples,” in the words of the

⁴⁴ Jonas, *Isolationism in America*, 48–51.

⁴⁵ Everett Dirksen, “Neutrality Act of 1937,” *Congressional Record*, March 15, 1937, 2249–2258, here 2257.

⁴⁶ Cordell Hull, “Our Foreign Policy,” Address to the National Press Club, March 17, 1938, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, March 17, 1938, A1065–1067, here A1065.

Chicago Daily Tribune. Being a pro-neutrality organ, the *Tribune* retorted that no Americans actually sought such a policy.⁴⁷ But by deploying the –ism, anti-isolationists gained semantic leeway. If isolationists clearly did not intend to shut down international intercourse *in toto*, they nonetheless could be said to subscribe tacitly to what North Carolina Congressman John Walter Lambeth called a “philosophy of extreme isolationism,” whose logical if unintended conclusion was to “close our ports” in the event of war and refuse to deal with anyone.⁴⁸

With the signifier and the signified so far apart, metaphors flourished. Lambeth likened the isolationist vision for the United States to an Orientalized, premodern China that walled itself in.⁴⁹ Others recruited Tokugawa Japan for the same role.⁵⁰ The most common spatial metaphor, however, was the hunched figure of the hermit.⁵¹ This was the image summoned by Hull, whom historians have discounted for lacking influence with FDR but who gains significance as an early public ideologist of anti-isolationism.⁵² In an isolationist world, Hull warned, “the sphere of our international relationships—economic, cultural, intellectual, and other—would necessarily shrink and shrivel, until we would stand practically alone among the nations, a self-constituted hermit state.”⁵³ Emphasizing loneliness, Hull implied that an isolated United States would face one menace above all: a loss of sociability. Although he also maintained that strict neutrality and high tariffs bred war and blighted prosperity, his and other metaphors of spatial abnegation foregrounded another concern.

⁴⁷ Robert Sherwood, “Plan for Union,” *Life*, October 7, 1940, 102; “Isolation,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1933, 14.

⁴⁸ John Walter Lambeth, “Walter Hines Page,” *Congressional Record*, February 10, 1936, 1713–1717, here 1714.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1714. Other examples include Philip Jaffe, “Economic Provincialism and American Far-Eastern Policy,” *Science and Society* 5 (January 1941): 289–309, here 289, 299; C.S. Potts, “World Chaos Once More,” *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (September 1935): 1–10, here 8.

⁵⁰ Reijiro Wakatsuki, “The Aims of Japan,” *Foreign Affairs* 13, no. 4 (July 1935): 583–594, here 585.

⁵¹ For example, “American Foreign Policy,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1936, 18; James D. Mooney, “American Economic Policies for the Impending World War,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 192 (July 1937): 89–92, here 90.

⁵² On Hull’s influence, see Michael A. Butler, *Cautious Visionary: Cordell Hull and Trade Reform, 1933–1937* (Kent, Ohio, 1998); Irwin F. Gellman, *Secret Affairs: FDR, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore, 1995); Christopher O’Sullivan, *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York, 2008).

⁵³ Hull, “Our Foreign Policy,” A1067.

“Isolationism” raised the specter not so much of political-territorial or economic danger to the U.S. mainland as of permanent social-psychological injury. However safe and prosperous, the United States would end up alone in the world.

Second, “isolationism” conveyed the regression of time in addition to the enclosure of space. If one zealous law professor deemed isolationists to be “the troglodytes of the Twentieth Century,” the *Wall Street Journal* was typical in identifying isolationism with “nothing more or less than a retrogression of civilization.”⁵⁴ As Hull admonished, isolationism would “carry the whole world back to the conditions of medieval chaos.”⁵⁵ Whatever the exact destination of isolationism’s retreat, the concept implied being in the past and being passive. Isolationists were said to be negative, backward, reactive, aloof, blind, and emotional—in short, incapable of purposive action oriented toward the future. For example, Henry Stimson, the former Secretary of State who was appointed Secretary of War in 1940, assailed the supposed isolationist formula of “drift and negation” in the Far East.⁵⁶ Likewise, “no peace through passivity” was how the *Washington Post* framed its case against the Ludlow Amendment, which would have constitutionally mandated a popular vote in order to declare war (and which gained the backing of nearly half of the House of Representatives in 1938).⁵⁷ Unlike narrow nationalists—who could be enlightened and redeemed—isolationists actively chose to be passive. They were more like apostates, who turned away from the faith, than heathens, the not-yet converted.⁵⁸

From 1937 onward, the animal metaphor of the head-burying ostrich joined that of the Sinological hermit.⁵⁹ Once the war in Europe began, FDR made a frequent rhetorical target of “the American ostriches in our

⁵⁴Potts, “World Chaos Once More,” 6; Thomas F. Woodlock, “Hermit Economy,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 18, 1932, 1–2, here 2.

⁵⁵Hull, “Our Foreign Policy,” A1065.

⁵⁶Henry L. Stimson, “Stimson Warns U.S. Cannot Stand Aloof,” *Washington Post*, March 7, 1939, 1, 6, here 1.

⁵⁷“No Peace Through Passivity,” *Washington Post*, November 24, 1937, 8; Arthur Scherr, “Presidential Power, the Panay Incident, and the Defeat of the Ludlow Amendment,” *International History Review* 32, no. 3 (September 2010): 455–500, here 455–456, 486.

⁵⁸On the temporalization of the concept of the heathen, see Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 169–180.

⁵⁹Henry L. Stimson, “Stop Helping Japan,” *Washington Post*, October 7, 1937, 1.

midst.”⁶⁰ The cartoonist Dr. Seuss drew American isolationists lining up to blind themselves with ostrich bonnets.⁶¹ “Head-in-the-sand ostrichism,” as one writer put it, bespoke a witting refusal to accept modernity and engage with others.⁶² If the spatial register of isolationism warned that the United States would end up deprived of intercourse and sociability, the temporal register suggested it would be left out of the future. “We cannot run away from this modern world,” insisted Washington Congressman John Coffee, rebuking isolationists for ceding the initiative to others, for subjecting Americans to the history that foreigners would now define.⁶³

In these ways, the concept of isolationism negated the meanings of internationalism. Instead of intercourse, there would be enclosure and obstruction. In place of interaction, passivity and introversion. Yet the opposites were not equally antithetical; isolationism did not invert every aspect of the old creed. Pacifism, tellingly, switched affiliations. Prior to the 1930s, pacifism had been understood as the quintessence of internationalism; indeed, pacifists had pioneered the term in the first place. Theodore Roosevelt, among other politicians, had indicted “the professional pacifist and the professional internationalist” in one breath, in order to distinguish his own more virile brand of internationalism. But in the mid-1930s, pacifists swung around to become isolationists *par excellence*. The further they went to avoid war, the deeper their isolationism was said to be. When he sponsored his eponymous constitutional amendment requiring popular consent for war, Congressman Louis Ludlow was only tracing the unimpeachably internationalist footsteps of peace activists in

⁶⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, January 3, 1940, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15856>. Other examples are Roosevelt, Radio Address for the Drawing Under the Selective Service Act of 1940, October 29, 1940, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15886>; Roosevelt, Fireside Chat, February 23, 1942, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16224>.

⁶¹ See “Dr. Seuss Went to War: A Catalog of Political Cartoons,” Dr. Seuss Collection, UC San Diego Library, La Jolla, Calif., <https://library.ucsd.edu/speccoll/dswenttowar/index.html>.

⁶² E.H.L., “Isolationists Disappearing,” *China Weekly Review*, August 27, 1938, 409.

⁶³ John Coffee, “Economic Boycotts and Discouragement of Aggression,” Radio Address, January 14, 1938, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, January 18, 1938, A252–253, here A253.

World War I.⁶⁴ Yet now his detractors positioned him at the vanguard of isolationism.

As the fortune of pacifism suggests, the concept of isolationism revealed less about the people it named than about those who wielded it. The latter began, cautiously, to fashion a new politics in opposition to it. The resulting anti-isolationism differed from the old program of internationalism; the negation of the negation did not equal the original. Anti-isolationism allowed new scope for playing power politics, for projecting the political-military power of the United States overseas.⁶⁵ This point was not lost on those who were called isolationists. “To talk of isolation,” the *Chicago Daily Tribune* opined, “is dust throwing in an attempt to give greater emphasis of sentiment to the demand for political alliance.”⁶⁶ Edwin Borchard, an international lawyer and adviser to Senator Johnson, complained that isolationism was “merely a denunciatory word employed by the interventionists who want to line us up with other Powers for war or hostile action.”⁶⁷ Seeing themselves branded as isolationists simply for opposing war, Borchard and company concluded that anti-isolationists must really be pro-war. They wondered: However modestly anti-isolationists presented themselves—as mere “advocates of international action,” in the words of the *New York Times* editorial page—could the will to world power be far behind?⁶⁸

In fact, that will had not formed yet. Throughout the 1930s, and months after the start of World War II in Europe, anti-isolationists struggled to decide what course of action they sought. They settled on a stance of discriminatory neutrality, which would grant President Roosevelt

⁶⁴ On the Ludlow Amendment as an attempt to restrain executive power, see David Kyvig, *Explicit and Authentic Acts: Amending the U.S. Constitution, 1777–1995* (Lawrence, Kans., 1996), 316–325. On World War I-era efforts to require a popular referendum in order to declare war, see Michael Kazin, *War Against War: The American Fight for Peace, 1914–1918* (New York, 2017), esp. chap. 4.

⁶⁵ Ross A. Kennedy argues that anti-interventionists (whom he calls “isolationists”) positioned themselves against “power politics,” which they believed that collective-security schemes would intensify rather than disentangle: Kennedy, “The Ideology of American Isolationism: 1931–1939,” *Cercles* 5 (2002): 57–76.

⁶⁶ “Independence,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 4, 1923, 8.

⁶⁷ Edwin Borchard to Harry F. Ward, June 30, 1938, Edwin Borchard Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, box 1, folder “American League for Peace and Democracy, 1938” [hereafter Borchard Papers].

⁶⁸ “American Foreign Policy,” *New York Times*, February 20, 1936, 18.

discretion to restrict trade against one party in a conflict but not the other.⁶⁹ They hoped that Roosevelt, using this tool, would coordinate U.S. policy with the League of Nations' sanctions against aggressors—first Japan, then Italy and Germany. Yet the League's sanctions were ineffectual, and for years anti-isolationists failed to pass legislation through Congress that would allow the president to pick favorites among warring countries.⁷⁰ Having accepted coercive sanctions as the guarantor of world order, they could not say which entity would supply the muscle, except to exclude the United States from any leading role. “Military and political tie-ups are taboo,” agreed planners in the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the State Department when they attempted to envision the postwar world during the first eight months of World War II. Clearly the United States would have no postwar military presence beyond the Western Hemisphere.⁷¹ Abstract, almost hypothetical, prewar anti-isolationism amounted to a potentiality, a concept in search of a program to carry out.

Moreover, despite inventing the category of isolationism, anti-isolationists did not yet develop an affirmative group identity. Many who had once affiliated themselves with internationalism retreated from that self-identification during the thirties. In 1938 Secretary Hull associated U.S. policy with “enlightened nationalism,” as opposed not only to ostrich isolationism but also to “sentimental internationalism, with its

⁶⁹ Indeed, like their antagonists, anti-isolationists sought to restrict intercourse in the event of war. The difference was that anti-isolationists sought to restrict intercourse against one belligerent, not both. Wright, “The Present Status of Neutrality,” *American Journal of International Law* 34, no. 3 (July 1940): 391–415.

⁷⁰ They did, however, achieve a “cash and carry” compromise in the 1937 Neutrality Act: the United States could sell non-lethal weapons to all belligerents, but belligerents had to pay in cash and carry the goods from U.S. shores in their own ships. The Roosevelt administration calculated that the formally non-discriminatory measure would help Britain and France, which alone possessed adequate dollar reserves and ships. Divine, *The Illusion of Neutrality*, chap. 6.

⁷¹ Political Group, “American Attitudes Towards the War and the Peace, May 1940,” Memorandum, no. P-B5, May 17, 1940, *Studies of American Interests in the War and the Peace*, Council on Foreign Relations Library, New York [hereafter War and Peace Studies]. On postwar planning before the fall of France, see J. Simon Rofé, “Pre-war Post-war Planning: The Phoney War, the Roosevelt Administration, and the Case of the Advisory Committee on Problems of Foreign Relations,” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 23, no. 2 (2012): 254–279.

objectionable entanglements.”⁷² In a power-political world, it sounded better to be against isolationism than for internationalism. As World War II began, internationalism and isolationism had come into existence as polar opposites, but few Americans rushed to either side. The opposites were nonetheless unequally objectionable. The United States would never describe itself as isolationist. An internationalism less sentimental and entangling might be another matter.

By ordering the invasion of France in the middle of 1940, Adolf Hitler inadvertently propelled American opponents of “isolationism” to acquire the policy agenda that had eluded them. In a stroke, the Third Reich conquered France and achieved mastery of Europe. By the autumn, Nazi Germany bombed the British Isles and formed the Triple Axis alliance with Italy and Japan.⁷³ The stunning transformation of geopolitics confronted American observers with the unanticipated, almost unimagined prospect of living in a world led by totalitarian dictatorships. It was the specter of isolationism that provided the rationale, the deepest conceptual underpinning, for the response that American officials and intellectuals began to formulate before Pearl Harbor and implemented thereafter:

⁷²Cordell Hull, “Trade, Prosperity, and Peace,” Radio Address, February 6, 1938, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, February 8, 1938, A484–486, here A485. Most anti-isolationists stopped referencing internationalism at all. They often self-identified not as adherents to an –ism but as advocates of a policy, especially “collective security.” If they claimed affinity with any –ism, it was with “nationalism.” As the *Austin Statesman* put it, “intelligent nationalism is not ostrich isolationism.” “Will Wealth Of America Be Open Invitation To Force Of Dictators To ‘Come And Get It?’” *Austin Statesman*, April 28, 1939, 15.

⁷³The argument in the section that follows is elaborated in Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 2020). In addition, an overview of the global impact of the fall of France is David Reynolds, *From World War to Cold War: Churchill, Roosevelt, and the International History of the 1940s* (Oxford, 2006), chap. 2. Also see Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford, 2003); Benjamin Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016), chaps. 5–6; Ernest R. May, *Strange Victory: Hitler’s Conquest of France* (New York, 2000); Jeremy Yellen, “Into the Tiger’s Den: Japan and the Tripartite Pact, 1940,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 51, no. 3 (July 2016): 555–576. For a recent programmatic statement on the global significance of the Axis alliance, see Daniel Hedinger, “The Imperial Nexus: The Second World War and the Axis in Global Perspective,” *Journal of Global History* 12, no. 2 (July 2017): 184–205.

intervention in the world war and political-military leadership of the post-war world.⁷⁴

The success of their agenda was by no means assured. The many Americans who did *not* fear “isolationism” favored another course. From diverse ideological positions, they maintained that the safety and prosperity of North America did not depend on the war’s outcome in Europe and Asia. The Axis powers, principally Nazi Germany, could not successfully invade the U.S. mainland or significantly damage its economy by restricting or regimenting overseas trade. So long as the United States defended the entire Western Hemisphere—on which the America First Committee, the citizens group formed in September 1940, insisted—it possessed no vital interest in joining the world war or in diverting resources from hemisphere defense to come to Britain’s aid.⁷⁵

Most foreign policy elites, however, arrived at a different view in the eighteen months between the fall of France and the attack on Pearl Harbor. Historians have struggled to explain why these Americans, led by President Roosevelt, wished to align closely with Britain, even at the risk of war. John A. Thompson has recently demonstrated how little a sense of physical or economic necessity can account for the emergence of interventionist sentiment, not to mention its growth over the course of 1941 even as the perceived danger of an Axis victory receded.⁷⁶ A new explanation begins by analyzing the conceptual mechanics through which interventionists made their case. For they did not so much rebut the claims of their opponents as shift the goalposts. They argued, in the main, that it would be bad

⁷⁴David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt’s America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago, 2001); David Schmitz, *The Triumph of Internationalism: Franklin D. Roosevelt and a World in Crisis, 1933–1941* (Washington, D.C., 2007), chap. 4; Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World*, chaps. 2–3.

⁷⁵At the time, few regarded an invasion of North America as more than a distant prospect, even if Germany were to defeat Britain. “We shall not be invaded,” as the interventionist columnist Walter Lippmann stated flatly. Lippmann, “The Accessary Plan of American Defense,” *New York Herald Tribune*, May 14, 1940, 23. See Thompson, *A Sense of Power*, chap. 4; John A. Thompson, “Conceptions of National Security and American Entry into World War II,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 16, no. 4 (December 2005): 671–697. On the America First Committee, see Blower, “From Isolationism to Neutrality,” 351; Wayne S. Cole, *America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940–1941* (Madison, Wis., 1953); Justus Doenecke, ed., *In Danger Undaunted: The Anti-Interventionist Movement of 1940–1941 as Revealed in the Papers of the America First Committee* (Stanford, Calif., 1990); Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon*.

⁷⁶Thompson, *A Sense of Power*, chap. 4.

enough for Americans to be imprisoned in a state of “isolation” if the Axis powers extended their rule in Europe and Asia. The United States might remain physically safe and economically sound, but it would end up isolated in the world and in world history. Not invasion or ruination but isolation was the master signifier that interventionists repeated in order to articulate the unacceptable fate that would befall the United States. In 1940 and 1941, the terms isolationist and isolationism exploded in usage in outlets of political discourse.⁷⁷

During this debate with advocates of hemisphere defense, interventionists elaborated on the spatial and temporal registers of isolationism that they pioneered in the 1930s and now attached to the concrete projection of an Axis-dominated world. A chorus of interventionist politicians and commentators invoked “isolation” to depict the spatial confinement of the United States in such a world. If Britain fell, they repeated, the United States would become “isolated in a totalitarian world” (columnist Walter Lippmann), “isolated in a world of furious wars and barbaric dictators” (*The Washington Post* editorial page), or “isolated in a world totally ruled by dictators” (Colonel Henry Breckinridge of the Committee to Defend

⁷⁷ Major newspapers began to use “isolationism” regularly from 1937 to 1939 and to use it heavily in 1940 and especially in 1941. In the *Atlanta Constitution*, the term appeared in 15 articles in 1940 and 44 in 1941, compared with a total of 25 articles in the three years from 1937 to 1939. In the *Boston Globe*, it appeared in 28 articles in 1940 and 63 in 1941, up from a total of 52 from 1937 to 1939. After featuring “isolationism” in 7 articles from 1937 to 1939, the *Chicago Tribune* printed the term in 8 articles in 1940 and 17 in 1941. In the *New York Times*, “isolationism” in 105 articles in 1940 and 175 in 1941; the total was 75 articles across the preceding three years. In the *New York Herald Tribune*, the number was 86 in 1940 and 178 in 1941, as opposed to 78 from 1937 to 1939. *Washington Post* articles mentioning isolationism tallied 31 in 1940 and 84 in 1941, compared with 72 across the three years prior. Statistics according to searches of the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database conducted on December 4, 2017.

Academic journals show a similar pattern. In the *American Historical Review*, “isolationism” appeared only in one item from 1937 to 1939 but appeared in one article in 1940 and four in 1941. In the *American Journal of International Law*, “isolationism” figured in one article from 1937 to 1939 but in one article in 1940 and four in 1941. In the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, where the future U.S. role in world politics was actively debated, “isolationism” appeared in a total of 15 articles from 1937 to 1939 before appearing in two in 1940 and eight in 1941. Statistics according to searches of JSTOR conducted on December 4, 2017.

America by Aiding the Allies).⁷⁸ In 1941 the United States took the dramatic and un-neutral measure of extending Lend-Lease aid to Britain, and both presidential candidates from the previous year justified the aid as a means of avoiding global enclosure. Republican businessman Wendell Willkie told Congress that the United States must build an “open world” in opposition to the “closed world” embodied by the Axis.⁷⁹ Similarly, President Roosevelt, on declaring a national emergency in May, explained that the United States could not tolerate a “Nazi wall to keep us in.”⁸⁰ Despite making a variety of arguments as to why Americans would suffer economically, FDR and other interventionists emphasized avoiding isolation as such. They thereby implied that a world environment open to liberal intercourse was itself a vital interest of the United States.

Isolated from international interaction, Americans would also, interventionists warned, become isolated from world history if the Axis powers won. In its temporal register, the specter of isolationism implied that a Nazi victory in Europe would deprive the United States of agency to define the future. Although interventionists put forward no shortage of fanciful scenarios of how the United States might eventually be invaded, more common and less speculative were their depictions of a country constantly on the defensive, unable to project itself and fulfill its destiny on the world stage. If Germany defeated Britain, “we would be set back upon our haunches,” Admiral Harold Stark wrote in his “Plan Dog” memorandum of November 1940, the first naval war plan to link U.S. national security to the global balance of power. “While we might not *lose everywhere*, we might, possibly, not *win anywhere*.”⁸¹ It sufficed to cite the lack

⁷⁸Walter Lippmann, “The Economic Consequences of a German Victory,” *Life*, July 22, 1940, 65–71, here 69; “Sailing To Byzantium,” *The Washington Post*, June 16, 1940, B8; Henry Breckinridge, Address in Berwyn, Penn., October 18, 1940, Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies Records, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, box 36, folder “October 1940.”

⁷⁹Wendell Willkie, Statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 11, 1941, in U.S. Senate, *To Promote the Defense of the United States: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 77th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C., 1941), 870–906, here 877.

⁸⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt, “On an Unlimited National Emergency,” Fireside Chat, May 27, 1941, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/may-27-1941-fireside-chat-17-unlimited-national-emergency>.

⁸¹Harold Stark, “Plan Dog” Memorandum, November 12, 1940, President’s Secretary’s File, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY, box 4, folder “Navy Department ‘Plan Dog.’”

of initiative, rather than any particular disaster scenario, that the United States would suffer.

Stark's boss brought together the spatial and temporal dimensions of "isolationism" in a fiery speech delivered in the midst of France's collapse. Beginning by asking what future lay ahead for the American people, Roosevelt warned that totalitarians abroad and isolationists at home sought to turn the United States into a "lone island in a world dominated by the philosophy of force." Such a fate, FDR scoffed, "may be the dream of those still talk and vote as isolationists," but it was really a "nightmare of a people lodged in prison, handcuffed, hungry, and fed through the bars from day to day by the contemptuous, unpitiful masters of other continents."⁸² As Roosevelt spoke, the United States remained the largest economy on earth and dominant in the Western Hemisphere. Roosevelt did not suggest any of those facts would change. Even so, through the concept of isolationism, he rendered economic strength and hemispheric dominance as tantamount to total enclosure, indeed imprisonment.⁸³

Despite America's privileged geopolitical position, the specter of isolationism appeared to be compelling because Axis victories did threaten pre-existing ideals and expectations of many Americans. Especially those political and economic elites who had identified with internationalism had long presumed to be able to interact on basically liberal, U.S.-style terms across most of the globe. It was this vision of internationalism, carrying a sense of entitlement, morality, and responsibility, that an Axis triumph menaced. Yet foreign policy elites did not quite explicitly revive "internationalism" after the fall of France. Rather, they espoused anti-isolationism. Although a double negative, anti-isolationism was not identical to internationalism, because isolationism had negated internationalism asymmetrically. Anti-isolationism implied the familiar objective of an "open world" of liberal intercourse and American initiative, but severed it from the aspiration to transcend power politics.

⁸² Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Stab in the Back" Speech, June 10, 1940, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/june-10-1940-stab-back-speech>.

⁸³ Portraying totalitarian powers as closed to intercourse, anti-isolationists forestalled consideration over how the United States might trade and otherwise coexist with totalitarian regimes—a prospect that anti-interventionists, by contrast, did contemplate. See Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon*, chap. 9. At the same time, because totalitarianism was not explicitly present within the concept of isolationism, the Roosevelt administration gained the flexibility to frame the war against "isolationism" even after aligning with the Soviet Union after June 1941, although anti-isolationism would be turned against the Soviet Union in the late 1940s.

Far from replacing armed force, the peaceful activities of Americans now seemed to depend upon force in order to exist at all. Such was the conclusion reached by the State Department's postwar planners, working in secrecy in the CFR prior to Pearl Harbor. They mapped a "Grand Area" designed to achieve "military and economic supremacy for the United States," first against a projected Nazi Europe and then, by the autumn of 1941, to extend throughout the world.⁸⁴ "We cannot relive 1919," summarized one planner, the geographer Isaiah Bowman, who had advised President Woodrow Wilson at Paris. "Only force will make and keep a good peace."⁸⁵

America's will to world power, explicit in the work of postwar planners, was embedded in the very concept of isolationism, as deployed against internal as well as international targets. At home, opponents of aid to Britain or intervention in the war were labeled asymmetrically as isolationists rather than symmetrically as non- or anti-interventionists. Anyone opposed to the extra-hemispheric use of force—spanning the ideological gamut from the pacifist-socialist Norman Thomas to Sears Roebuck executive Robert E. Wood, who chaired the America First Committee—became construed as "isolationists," a cohesive group that sought an "unrealistic withdrawal from a narrowed-down, highly integrated, modern world," in the words of *American Mercury* magazine.⁸⁶ For favoring peaceful intercourse without extra-hemispheric force, "isolationists" qualified as such. Then, for appearing as isolationists, they were rendered

⁸⁴Economic and Financial Group, "The War and United States Foreign Policy: Needs of Future United States Foreign Policy," Preliminary Memorandum, no. E-B19, October 19, 1940, War and Peace Studies. On the Grand Area, see G. William Domhoff, "The Council on Foreign Relations and the Grand Area: Case Studies on the Origins of the IMF and the Vietnam War," *Class, Race and Corporate Power* 2, no. 1 (2014): <http://digitalcommons.u.edu/classracecorporatpower/vol2/iss1/1>; Luke Fletcher, "Confusion and Convergence: The Nazi Challenge to World Order and the CFR Response, 1940–1941," *International Politics* 55 (2018): 888–903; Carlo Santoro, *Diffidence and Ambition: The Intellectual Sources of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colo., 1991); Laurence Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and United States Foreign Policy* (New York, 1977), chap. 4; Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley, 2003), chaps. 12, 15; Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World*, chaps. 2–3.

⁸⁵Isaiah Bowman, "Guiding Principles for the Preparation of Memoranda," May 20, 1940, Council on Foreign Relations Records, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, box 298, folder 4.

⁸⁶Alexander P. de Seversky, "Why Lindberg is Wrong," *American Mercury* 52 (May 1941): 519–532, here 532.

hostile to peaceful intercourse. “Isolationism” thus destroyed truly peaceful intercourse as a conceptual possibility. Those who deployed the term implied that peaceful intercourse paradoxically required armed force to back it.

In the same stroke as they developed a rationale for American global leadership, anti-isolationists laid down a foundation for hegemony in the domestic political arena. In invoking isolationism, they made more than a routine rhetorical move in a policy debate; they also expelled their opponents from the sphere of legitimate discourse. As Henry Luce urged in his American Century essay of February 1941, “We can make isolationism as dead an issue as slavery.”⁸⁷ A dead issue, an obvious anachronism, is just how politicians and writers cast “isolationism” as they began, before Pearl Harbor, to read the concept back onto the past.

Tellingly, anti-isolationists offered no coherent narrative of how isolationism figured in American history. Everyone spun his or her own tale of when isolationism had reigned and who had expounded it. Some dated isolationism to the founding of the republic and saw it diminishing ever since.⁸⁸ For others, isolationism was a recurrent phenomenon, receding during crises and rushing back in times of peace.⁸⁹ Many located isolationism’s heyday in the interwar period. Lippmann, for example, blamed twenty years of “separatism, isolationism, disarmament, pacifism, and cynicism” for bringing on World War II and sapping the Anglo-American powers of the will and arms to fight.⁹⁰ Some anti-isolationists agreed but blamed Republicans alone, absolving Democrats. Others claimed that in the interwar period “everybody was an Isolationist, regardless of party.”⁹¹ Florida Senator Charles Andrews had it both ways in the same speech. The United States, he maintained, followed an uninterrupted “policy of

⁸⁷ Luce, “The American Century,” 64.

⁸⁸ For example, expressing confidence that Americans were learning to face up to international responsibilities, Washington Congressman John Coffee surveyed American history and concluded that “the isolationism so characteristic of America for its first century and a quarter is not a predominant factor in our national concept today.” Coffee, “Home Folks Comment on Aid to Britain and Foreign Policy,” *Congressional Record*, January 16, 1941, A164–166, here A164.

⁸⁹ Rear Admiral Adolphus Andrews, Address to the Society of Tammany or Columbian Order, New York, July 2, 1941, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, July 9, 1941, A3309–3310, here A3310.

⁹⁰ Walter Lippmann, “The Atlantic and America,” *Life*, April 7, 1941, 91.

⁹¹ “Turning Point,” *Time*, May 20, 1940, 19.

passive isolationism” from 1921 onward, yet somehow “no President, except possibly Harding, has ever been an isolationist while in office.”⁹²

Anti-isolationists scarcely quibbled over these vastly different interpretations of history. However and whenever isolationism was supposed to have flourished, what mattered was that it belonged to a bygone age. If so, the American people did not need to consider the merits of isolationist arguments. They had only to recognize that isolationism was an archaism and bury it on the ash-heap of history. Isolationism would be irreversibly overtaken. Vice President Henry Wallace likened isolationism to childhood: “We of the United States can no more evade shouldering our responsibility than a boy of eighteen can avoid becoming a man by wearing short pants. The word ‘isolation’ means short pants for a grown-up United States.”⁹³ Harsher still was William Bullitt, the U.S. ambassador to France and patient-turned-collaborator of Sigmund Freud. As Congress debated Lend-Lease legislation in February 1941, he accused isolationists of suffering from a “gruesome form of dementia praecox which causes men who cannot bear to face the harsh reality of the real world to regress mentally and to traverse backward, in search of a lost paradise, all the stages of their existence.”⁹⁴ Whereas Wallace optimistically depicted a progressive graduation from isolation, Bullitt revealed the corollary: those who refused to go forward expelled themselves from history.

Confronting a concept that consigned them to the past and wrote them out of the future, the so-called isolationists sought to change language as well as laws. They knew that if they became known as isolationists, their cause would automatically lose. In October 1941, Willkie led Republican leaders in pledging to repeal the Neutrality Act and remove “the ugly smudge of obstructive isolationism” from the face of their party.⁹⁵ North

⁹² Charles Andrews, “Modification of Neutrality Act,” *Congressional Record*, November 7, 1941, 8601–8680, here 8630.

⁹³ Henry A. Wallace, “Our Second Chance,” Address to the Foreign Policy Association, April 8, 1941, in *Prefaces to Peace* (New York, 1943), 363–364, here 363.

⁹⁴ William C. Bullitt, Address to the Overseas Press Club of America, New York, February 27, 1941, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, February 28, 1941, A894–897, here A895. Isolationism was often psychologized, nowhere more directly than in “The Psychology of Isolationism” by the eminent neurologist Foster Kennedy. Kennedy relayed the case of an elderly lady who “showed me a picture of herself shaking hands with [anti-interventionist] Senator [Burton] Wheeler; and, with no insight at all, went on to explain how all her life she’d been so afraid of things.” Foster Kennedy, “The Psychology of Isolationism,” *Virginia Medical Monthly* 69 (April 1942): 176–180, here 179.

⁹⁵ “Willkie Statement on Neutrality Act,” *Daily Boston Globe*, October 21, 1941, 10.

Dakota Senator Gerald Nye, although an anti-interventionist unlike Willkie, recognized the same difficulty:

Because we are asking and insisting that our country be kept from involvement in foreign war we are called isolationists, with emphasis upon the implication that we are blind, or would bury our heads in the sands, that we would have no social, no economic relations with the rest of the world, that we would simply ignore all the world, and that we would even abandon foreign trade.⁹⁶

So Nye and his allies put forward a host of alternative names for their position. “What you term isolationism I term noninterventionism,” Massachusetts Congressman George Holden Tinkham wrote to a constituent.⁹⁷ Several politicians, including Michigan Senator Arthur Vandenberg, preferred the term insulationist, conveying their desire only to insulate the country from war.⁹⁸ Many identified as nationalists out to

⁹⁶Gerald Nye, “Asking for Trouble,” Address to America First Committee Rally in Newark, September 23, 1941, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, October 9, 1941, A4567–4568, here A4567. A handful of anti-interventionists did wear “isolationism” as a “badge of honor,” as Missouri Senator Bennett Clark put it in 1939. But even they tended to use the term ironically, as a conscious act of appropriation. For instance, Montana Senator Burton Wheeler rhetorically asked why his colleagues kept condemning “isolationism” when the term was ill-defined and ill-described U.S. foreign policy: “Do they mean that anyone who wanted to keep this country out of war was an isolationist? If that is what they mean, then let me say that I am proud to be called an isolationist.” Others (including FDR in 1936) endorsed “isolationism” surgically defined to pertain to political-military entanglements, as when Minnesota Senator Henrik Shipstead proclaimed himself to be an “isolationist on foreign wars” but on no other issue. Clark, “Neutrality and Peace of the United States,” *Congressional Record*, October 11, 1939, 266–295, here 283; Wheeler, “Collaboration for Post-war Peace,” *Congressional Record*, October 29, 1943, 8886–8909, here 8888; Roosevelt, Address at Chautauqua, N.Y., August 14, 1936, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15097>; Shipstead, “Modification of Neutrality Act,” *Congressional Record*, November 3, 1941, 8414–8439, here 8422. Other examples of isolationist self-labeling are Rush Holt, “Appropriations for Work Relief and Relief,” *Congressional Record*, June 12, 1940, 8050–8076, here 8052; Robert Rice Reynolds, “American Nationalism Versus Internationalism,” *Congressional Record*, December 16, 1944, 9587–9593, here 9587.

⁹⁷George Holden Tinkham to Ellery Sedgwick, May 30, 1940, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, May 31, 1940, A3468.

⁹⁸Vandenberg did, however, write privately that he wished for “all of the isolation which modern circumstances will permit.” Arthur Vandenberg, Diary Entry, February 2, 1940, in Arthur Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), 4. Other examples are Karl Mundt, “Amending the Neutrality Act,” *Congressional Record*, November 12, 1941, 8770–8807, here 8781; Bennett Clark, “Neutrality and Peace of the United States,” 283.

resist any infringement of American sovereignty. Some cleverly redressed the premodern and antisocial connotations of isolationism and turned the accusation around. Lawyer Jerome Frank championed “integrated America” against “disintegrated Europe.”⁹⁹ Denouncing the “false name— isolationism,” historian Charles Beard characterized his preferred policy as “continentalism.”¹⁰⁰ The many efforts to escape the lexicon of isolationism suggest the inherent partiality of the name and concept. Isolationists, if known as such, would lose all legitimacy. Then they truly would become relics.

That was the fate that befell them on the morning of December 7, 1941, when Japanese planes bombed a U.S. naval base in the territory of Hawaii. Even before the Pearl Harbor attack, however, their opponents had outflanked them by popularizing the concept of isolationism and forging a positive agenda from its negation. As Vermont’s interventionist Senator Warren Austin reflected one month earlier, Americans had already resolved to “transform a country which had become almost entirely isolationist and pacifist into the most powerful military country on earth.”¹⁰¹ His implausible posing of extremes as the only options—either total withdrawal or armed preeminence—was the achievement of the new concept of isolationism.

Still, as Austin’s formulation illustrates, anti-isolationists did not yet widely proclaim the virtues of “internationalism,” or any –ism. Before Pearl Harbor, politicians uttered “internationalism” in contempt as well as esteem. Almost every appearance of “internationalism” in the *Congressional Record* from 1940 and 1941 carried a negative valence. Few Americans wanted to join a group that “floats on a cloud of internationalism,” in one Congressman’s words.¹⁰² The most frequent antonym of “isolationism” was, instead, “interventionism,” a pejorative lobbed by non-interventionists but also used by relatively neutral commentators and occasionally

⁹⁹ Jerome Frank, *Save America First: How to Make Our Democracy Work* (New York and London, 1938), v, 27–37.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Beard, *A Foreign Policy for America* (New York and London, 1940), 89, 108.

¹⁰¹ Warren Austin, “Modification of Neutrality Act,” *Congressional Record*, November 7, 1941, 8592–8601, here 8594.

¹⁰² Joseph Martin, Jr. Address at the Wolfenden Republican Club in Haverford, Penn., March 2, 1940, reprinted in *Congressional Record*, March 28, 1940, A1755–1756, here A1756.

anti-isolationists themselves.¹⁰³ Even the latter remained loath to identify with internationalism, which they associated with the universalist delusions—like faith in public opinion and the League of Nations—that had brought Europe to the brink of fascist rule.¹⁰⁴

Through most of 1941, therefore, anti-isolationists rejected a future international organization with universal membership. Planners in the CFR and Roosevelt administration envisioned a postwar world policed by an exclusive American-British alliance.¹⁰⁵ In August FDR endorsed this vision in the Atlantic Charter, pledging to disarm only aggressor nations and striking from drafts any mention of a new League.¹⁰⁶ Although historians have drawn a straight line from Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and Atlantic Charter in 1941 to the creation of the United Nations Organization

¹⁰³The many anti-interventionists who termed their opponents "interventionists" include Edwin Borchard to John Bassett Moore, October 3, 1940, Borchard Papers, box 10, folder "Correspondence with John Bassett Moore"; Gerald Nye, "Asking for Trouble," A4567; Alexander Wiley, "Modification of Neutrality Act," *Congressional Record*, October 30, 1941, 8330–8351, here 8344. Many relatively neutral commentators also depicted "interventionists" as constituting one side in the debate: George Gallup, "Isolationists Weak, Poll Finds," *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 21, 1941, 2B; "'Interventionists' and 'Isolationists,'" *The Hartford Courant*, July 6, 1940, 6; Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., "Modification of Neutrality Act," *Congressional Record*, November 4, 1941, 8467–8499, here 8477; Henry McLemore, "It Depends Entirely On Own Viewpoint: Isolationists, Interventionists, Differ Widely," *The Austin Statesman*, June 7, 1941, 10. Some anti-isolationists affiliated themselves with the "interventionist" position in 1941: William Allen White, "U.S. Foreign Policy Has Kept War Away," *Daily Boston Globe*, August 31, 1941, B1, 14.

¹⁰⁴See "Preliminary Report of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace," *International Conciliation* (April 1941): 195–204.

¹⁰⁵See Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World*, chap. 3. An example is Francis P. Miller, Political Group, "Note on a Program of Joint Action for the American and British Governments," Memorandum, no. P-B18, May 2, 1941, War and Peace Studies; Political Group, "The Political Considerations of American-British Partnership," Memorandum, no. P-B20, June 4, 1941, War and Peace Studies.

¹⁰⁶Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, August 11, 1941 (11 a.m. meeting), Sumner Welles Papers, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY, box 151, folder 8 [hereafter Welles Papers]; Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, "British-American Cooperation," August 11, 1941 (afternoon meeting), Welles Papers, box 151, folder 8.

in 1945, the path was not linear.¹⁰⁷ In the formative moment of U.S. global leadership, political elites valued the projection of power internationally to the exclusion of the international control of power. They espoused anti-isolationism without internationalism.

This formula delegitimized so-called isolationism, but would it be enough to legitimize U.S. preeminence? From the start, many wondered. As the CFR planners told the State Department, the Eight Points of the Atlantic Charter “fell like a dead duck” in Congress and among the public, failing to fire the imagination like Wilson’s Fourteen Points from the previous war.¹⁰⁸ Global leadership sounded like old-fashioned power politics. Ordinary Americans detected an “imperialistic connotation” in the project, the planners gingerly noted.¹⁰⁹ As it happened, Luce had pointed to a solution in his American Century essay. In addition to calling on Americans to make “isolationism” a dead issue, Luce urged them to fly the flag of “internationalism” once more. “We can,” he wrote, “make a truly *American* internationalism something as natural to us in our time as the airplane or the radio.”¹¹⁰ A truly *American* internationalism: America Firsters were not the only ones who wanted to put America first.

After the United States entered World War II, foreign policy elites followed Luce’s lead. They reclaimed the mantle of internationalism and rallied around a new international organization with universal membership. Scholars since then have naturalized this outcome, as Luce wished they would. Historians and political scientists have taken world leadership and world organization, anti-isolationism and internationalism, to run seamlessly together, as though the concepts were mutually implied if not one

¹⁰⁷ Contrary to Elizabeth Borgwardt, “When You State a Moral Principle, You Are Stuck With It”: The 1941 Atlantic Charter as a Human Rights Instrument,” *Virginia Journal of International Law* 46, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 501–562, here 504–505, 559–560; Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven, 1997), 40; Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (New York, 2006), 25; Dan Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN: How the Allies Won World War II and Forged a Peace* (London, 2011), 24–27.

¹⁰⁸ Political Group, Memorandum of Discussions, no. P-A14, August 26, 1941, War and Peace Studies.

¹⁰⁹ Political Group, “A Comparative Analysis of the Wilsonian and Roosevelt-Churchill Peace Programs,” Memorandum, no. P-B32, December 3, 1941, War and Peace Studies.

¹¹⁰ Luce, “The American Century,” 64.

and the same.¹¹¹ But American elites had formulated a position from 1939 to 1941 of espousing world leadership while opposing world organization. Why did they change course after Pearl Harbor and launch a massive campaign of public education in favor of “internationalism”?

The answer lies, once more, in the target against which “isolationism” was deployed. This time, the isolationist tag was not arrayed against a sizeable and assertive group of American politicians and citizens. The positions hitherto labeled isolationist—neutrality in the 1930s and non-intervention from 1939 to 1941—almost completely disappeared after Pearl Harbor. Erstwhile isolationists, so called, fell in behind the war effort. Nor did they mobilize against the creation of a successor to the League of Nations. As early as July 1942, Americans overwhelmingly supported U.S. participation in a postwar international organization. Popular support remained around the three-quarters mark through 1945.¹¹² When the Senate ratified the United Nations Charter by a vote of 89 to 2, the outcome reflected the paucity of outright opposition all along.

¹¹¹ Among others, Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*; Robert Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II* (New York, 1967); Patrick Hearden, *Architects of Globalism: Building a New World Order during World War II* (Fayetteville, Ark., 2002); Johnstone, *Dilemmas of Internationalism*; Plesch, *America, Hitler and the UN*.

¹¹² See polling data in Hadley Cantril, *Public Opinion, 1935–1946* (Princeton, N.J., 1951), 373–374; George Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935–1971* (New York, 1972), vol. 1, 340, 377, 383, 387–388, 392, 409–410. The State Department closely monitored public-opinion polls on postwar matters, and as early as 1942 its analysts highlighted “striking” support for world organization: Division of Special Research, “Summary of Opinion and Ideas on International Post-war Problems,” no. 1, July 15, 1942, Welles Papers, box 190, folder 1.

And yet: in the years from 1942 to 1945, foreign policy elites railed against isolationism as frequently as before.¹¹³ Nothing frightened them so much as the prospect that after the war the public might “retreat to isolationism” (FDR), “return to isolationism” (Lippmann), “swing back to isolationism” (journalist and State Department planner Anne O’Hare McCormick), “try isolationism once again” (Minnesota Senator Joseph Ball), and so forth.¹¹⁴ These future-oriented utterances indicate the new target of “isolationism”: prospective more than actual opponents of U.S. military dominance. The doyen of British internationalism, Arnold Toynbee, observed the phantasmic nature of the concept when he visited the United States in the autumn of 1942. “I was frequently told that Isolationism is dead,” Toynbee reflected, “but just as often that it is likely to rise again in some new avatar or metamorphosis.” Toynbee believed that the former was true but the latter revealing. He concluded that his American counterparts were seeking to rally their public to create a “bulwark” of legitimacy for the exercise of U.S. power in the postwar world.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Across the entirety of the war, from 1939 to 1945, the peak years for utterances of “isolationism” were generally 1942 and 1943. In the next two years the term’s frequency of usage remained at or above pre-1942 levels. To take the newspapers cited previously, “isolationism” averaged appearances in 60 articles per year from 1942 to 1945 in the *Atlanta Constitution*, compared with an annual average of 37 from 1940 to 1941. In the *Boston Globe*, the average was 56.5 from 1942 to 1945, after a 45.5 average from 1940 to 1941. Articles referencing “isolationism” jumped in the *Chicago Tribune*, from 12.5 in 1940 and 1941 to 42.75 in the next four years. Likewise, in the *New York Times*, the averages rose from 140 in 1940 and 1941 to 230.75 from 1942 to 1945, and in the *New York Herald Tribune*, they increased from 132 to 212.25. *Washington Post* articles mentioning isolationism rose from 57.5 to 92.5. Statistics according to searches of the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database conducted on December 4, 2017. Similarly, academic journals saw “isolationism” increase in usage after 1941, though the peak years tended to come in 1944 or 1945, perhaps because books on the postwar settlement of both world wars were discussed and reviewed then. In the *American Historical Review* and *American Journal of International Law*, the peak year was 1944, when “isolationism” appeared in six and five items, respectively. It was 1945 in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, which featured 11 items containing “isolationism.” Statistics according to searches of JSTOR conducted on December 4, 2017.

¹¹⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, January 6, 1945, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16595>; Walter Lippmann, “Idealism without Imagination,” *New York Herald Tribune*, December 30, 1944, 13A; Anne O’Hare McCormick, “Abroad: A World That Waits to Be Reshaped,” *New York Times*, January 31, 1945, 20; “Senator Ball Urges World Collaboration: Win Peace Now,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 29, 1943, 2.

¹¹⁵Arnold Toynbee, “Visit to the United States, 23rd August to 20th October, 1942,” Arnold Toynbee Papers, Weston Library, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, box 92, folder 16/17.

To achieve this purpose, U.S. officials and intellectuals needed not only to reject isolationism but also to embrace internationalism. For internationalism, as it had previously been known, was the real obstacle to the permanent acceptance of global dominance. Enjoining Americans either to avoid or to transcend the system of power politics, internationalism might still supply intellectual resources through which Americans could reject policing the world. This concept of internationalism was what advocates of U.S. global supremacy targeted when they warned against a post-war resurgence of isolationism. They did not, on the whole, perform this manipulation consciously. Advocates of global dominance sincerely comprehended isolationism to be their target, to judge by the correspondence of their public and private articulations. Nevertheless, they succeeded in coopting the tradition of internationalism. Repositioned against the novel and prejudicial concept of isolationism, internationalism came to mean not so much the transcendence of power politics as the ascendance of the United States.

Now advocates of global dominance read the dualism back into American history. In a spate of new narratives of the League fight, commentators not only relegated “isolationists” to the past but added that “internationalists” had been their antagonists all along. The pursuit of global preeminence thus acquired a historical pedigree. Far from deviating from their values, Americans could redeem “Our Second Chance,” in the title of a Woodrow Wilson Foundation pamphlet.¹¹⁶ This teleological narrative effaced prior internationalists, turning them into anti-isolationists plain and simple. Wilson and his followers became prophets, valued as precursors of the future, not for what they achieved in their time. As the *New York Times* summed up the two hours and 34 minutes of the 1944 film *Wilson*, released in Technicolor by Twentieth Century Fox (which Willkie chaired): “the League is but a symbol of international accord, and the opposition to it—with Senator Lodge as the villain—is just an inchoate obstructive force.”¹¹⁷ The *Times* praised the film nonetheless for inspiring millions of Americans with its subject’s ideals.

In rewriting the American debate over the League of Nations, then, intellectual and cultural producers did not merely blame past isolationists. They also blamed internationalists for losing out by squabbling amongst themselves. In two influential volumes on the League fight, the historian

¹¹⁶ Charlotte Burnett Mahon, ed., *Our Second Chance* (New York, 1944).

¹¹⁷ Bosley Crowther, “‘Wilson,’ an Impressive Screen Biography, in Which Alex Knox Is the Star, Has Its World Premiere at the Roxy,” *New York Times*, August 2, 1944, 18.

Thomas A. Bailey reproached Wilson for preventing the Senate from making mild reservations to the Treaty of Versailles. According to Bailey, one of the foremost diplomatic historians of mid-century America, a stubborn Wilson failed to unite internationalists to defeat isolationists and thus to get the country to “assume that world leadership which had been thrust upon her.”¹¹⁸ Likewise, the historian Ruhl Bartlett blamed internationalists for quibbling over minutiae but glossed over what the ostensible minutiae contained. Readers of his *The League to Enforce Peace* could be forgiven for missing that its eponymous group favored a legalistic world organization, centered on an international court, unlike Wilson’s parliament of politicians.¹¹⁹ If the League fight did not actually pit internationalists against isolationists, it *should* have done so.

By constructing the needless debate of World War I, the new internationalists created a non-debate in World War II. Self-identified internationalists closed ranks, suppressing differences of vision lest isolationism capitalize.¹²⁰ Because isolationism was a phantom enemy, the result was a sterile and symbolic public debate at precisely the moment when the United States ascended to global leadership. From 1942 to 1945, no alternative models of world organization garnered widespread interest, in

¹¹⁸ Thomas A. Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal* (New York, 1945), vi; also see Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace* (New York, 1944). On Bailey, see Alexander Deconde, “Thomas A. Bailey: Teacher, Scholar, Popularizer,” *Pacific Historical Review* 56, no. 2 (May 1987): 161–193; Lester Langley, “The Diplomatic Historians: Bailey and Bemis,” *The History Teacher* 6, no. 1 (November 1972): 51–70.

¹¹⁹ Ruhl Bartlett, *The League to Enforce Peace* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1944), 209. On the League to Enforce Peace, see Benjamin A. Coates, *Legalist Empire: International Law and American Foreign Relations in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York, 2016), chap. 7; Stephen Wertheim, “The League That Wasn’t: American Designs for a Legalist-Sanctionist League of Nations and the Intellectual Origins of International Organization, 1914–1920,” *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 5 (November 2011): 797–836.

¹²⁰ Highlighting the anemic debate among non-official internationalists, but explaining it through their coziness with the state rather than by conceptual change within “internationalism,” is Andrew Johnstone, *Dilemmas of Internationalism: The American Association for the United Nations and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1941–1948* (Burlington, Vt., 2009).

contrast to the competing proposals that circulated during World War I.¹²¹ Hardly anyone opposed what became the United Nations Charter outright, despite unease over the great-power privilege embodied in the original Dumbarton Oaks proposals of October 1944.¹²² Months later, the president directly warned internationalists to get in line. “Perfectionism, no less than isolationism or imperialism or power politics, may obstruct the paths to international peace,” Roosevelt averred.¹²³ The internationalism/isolationism dualism continued to structure public discourse as the Senate moved to ratify the Charter in July. It presented an obvious choice of *whether* to lead the world or retreat from it altogether, inhibiting consideration of *how* the United States might participate in global affairs. The “vociferous public debate,” as the historian Elizabeth Borgwardt characterizes it, in fact proved insubstantial.¹²⁴ The non-debate produced less a “multilateralist moment” than the legitimation of U.S. global preeminence.¹²⁵

U.S. officials had hoped to achieve such a result when they decided to create a postwar international organization. Gathering in the State Department in the months after Pearl Harbor, they discussed whether to broaden the exclusively American-British security organization contemplated in the Atlantic Charter of the previous year. Although historians have recently excavated the global and imperial imaginaries that animated

¹²¹ On world order proposals in World War I, see Johnson, *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations*, chap. 3; Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton, N.J., 1995), chaps. 4–7; Warren Kuehl, *Seeking World Order: The United States and International Organization to 1920* (Nashville, Tenn., 1969), chaps. 9–14; David S. Patterson, *The Search for Negotiated Peace: Women’s Activism and Citizen Diplomacy in World War I* (New York, 2008); Wertheim, “The League that Wasn’t.” Revealingly, Or Rosenboim’s recent work on ideas of world order nearly skips from 1942 to 1945, the crucial years in which the United Nations was established. As her narrative suggests, the main alternative to the United Nations was world federalism, but most world federalists supported the U.N. Charter and proposed radical changes only after the war ended in the atomic bombings of Japan. Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism*, chaps. 3–4, 6. Also see Joseph Baratta, *The Politics of World Federation* (Westport, Conn., 2004).

¹²² For example, Ralph Barton Perry, “Working Basis Seen: Peace Plans Not Perfect but at Least Map of Road,” *New York Times*, January 7, 1945, E8. See Robert Hilderbrand, *Dumbarton Oaks: The Origins of the United Nations and the Search for Postwar Security* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1990), 245–257; Johnstone, *Dilemmas of Internationalism*, 97–111.

¹²³ Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, January 6, 1945.

¹²⁴ Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*, 160.

¹²⁵ Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*, 130, 132, 139, 143, 250–251, 286–288, 290.

twentieth-century experiments in international organization, American planners located their rationale closer to home.¹²⁶ Citing domestic isolationism—“the grave danger of losing ‘the will to do,’” in the words of *Foreign Affairs* editor and CFR-turned-State Department planner Hamilton Fish Armstrong—they agreed in March 1942 to erect a postwar world organization with every state a member.¹²⁷ The planners had barely broached, at that point, what kind of international-functions the body would perform. What seemed paramount was to set up some sort of universal entity, which by capturing the public imagination could contain “the innate longing of Americans for their old-time isolation,” as the historian James Shotwell put it on presenting his fellow planners with the inaugural draft.¹²⁸ The American architects of the United Nations built the organization on the new concept of anti-isolationism. However much its machinery ended up resembling that of the League, the United Nations was originally valued for the way it promised to legitimate the projection of American power, precisely because a world organization symbolized the contradictory aspiration to do away with power rivalries.¹²⁹

Not only was U.S. global leadership cleansed through its alliance with internationalism, but that alliance also allowed internationalism to

¹²⁶ Duncan Bell, *Reordering the World: Essays on Liberalism and Empire* (Princeton, N.J., 2016); Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge, 2012); Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton, N.J., 2009); Helen McCarthy, *The British People and the League of Nations: Democracy, Citizenship and Internationalism c. 1918–45* (Manchester, 2011); Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism*; Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*; Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin, eds., *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, 2017).

¹²⁷ Subcommittee on Political Problems, Chronological Minutes 1, Meeting of March 7, 1942, Harley A. Notter Records, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md., Record Group 59, box 86, folder “PIO Documents 1–26” [hereafter Notter Records].

¹²⁸ James Shotwell, “Preliminary Draft on International Organization,” July 31, 1942, Subcommittee on International Organization, Document 2, Notter Records, Record Group 59, box 86, folder “PIO Documents 1–26.”

¹²⁹ On continuities between the League and the United Nations, see Patricia Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946* (Oxford, 2013); Patrick Cottrell, *The Evolution and Legitimacy of International Security Institutions* (Cambridge, 2016), chap. 3; Leland Goodrich, “From League of Nations to United Nations,” *International Organization* 1, no. 1 (February 1947): 3–21.

overcome damaging connotations of its own. From 1939 to 1941, as mentioned previously, politicians spoke of “internationalism” mostly disparagingly, linking it with sentimental pacifism and un-American radicalism. The term’s primary antonym remained reliable “nationalism,” not deplorable “isolationism.” But from 1943 onward, “internationalism” became a rallying cry in the House and Senate. Now aligned against “isolationism” and with global leadership, it no longer sounded so quixotic or foreign. As the establishment of international organization legitimized global dominance, so did the reverse: global dominance rescued internationalism and international organization. Americans celebrated internationalism in the confidence that the United States alone possessed “leadership and unparalleled influence among the nations of the world,” as a director of the American Association for the United Nations testified to Congress.¹³⁰ If the “triumph of internationalism” occurred in World War II, as contemporaries maintained and historians have repeated, it was a new concept of internationalism that triumphed, one whose appeal turned on hiding its novelty.¹³¹ To the extent Americans still wished for peace, they believed it to depend on anointing the United States as the world’s superior power and defining agent.

Historians have not necessarily erred in narrating America’s ascent to global power as a linear process, whether they attribute the cause to security threats, economic imperatives, or ideological factors. Such narratives nevertheless risk exaggerating the coherence and inexorability of America’s drive for preeminence. Strange as it may seem from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, U.S. global dominance contains a gaping contradiction in its conceptual constitution. Americans originally devised and accepted the role of global leadership only by inventing a way to tell themselves that transcending power politics and dominating power politics were essentially one and the same. By creating the category of isolationism and positioning themselves against it, U.S. political elites turned “internationalism” into a warrant for exercising power, blurring once sharply drawn lines separating peace from war and cooperation from domination. They founded the world leadership of the United States *on*, not despite, this contradiction.

¹³⁰ Livingston Hartley, Statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 12, 1945, in U.S. Senate, *The Charter of the United Nations: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C., 1945), 514–532, here 520.

¹³¹ Divine, *Second Chance*; Schmitz, *The Triumph of Internationalism*.

Logically, contradictions are supposed to fail. But in the realm of politics and culture, they may do the opposite. They may succeed by virtue of promising to satisfy opposing values, each absorbing the criticism of the other. For this reason, the concepts of internationalism and isolationism proved more generative in World War II than the concept of exceptionalism, to which scholars have recently devoted a great deal of attention as a cause of U.S. expansion.¹³² Exceptionalism does not suffice to explain the U.S. embrace of world leadership. For one, most so-called isolationists were exceptionalists too, convinced that the New World's unique experiment in liberty required politico-military separation from the Old World. More profoundly, advocates of global dominance faced the objection that the United States should not be domineering like empires past. To solve this problem, internationalism offered a resource that exceptionalism could not. As a concept of equality, not hierarchy, it conferred vital legitimacy on the project of American primacy. Ever since, internationalism has remained a key legitimating concept, all the more effective for seldom being recognized as such.

¹³² See Jason Edwards and David Weiss, eds., *The Rhetoric of American Exceptionalism: Critical Essays* (Jefferson, N.C., 2011); Fabian Hilfrich, *Debating American Exceptionalism: Empire and Democracy in the Wake of the Spanish-American War* (New York, 2012); Michael Ignatieff, ed., *American Exceptionalism and Human Rights* (Princeton, N.J., 2005); Deborah Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Jackson, Miss., 1998); Hilde Restad, *American Exceptionalism: An Idea That Made a Nation and Remade the World* (London, 2015); Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York, 1995).