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THE MAKING OF A NATION -  
October 11, 2001: Woodrow  
Wilson, Part 8  
By Frank Beardsley



VOICE ONE:

THE MAKING OF A NATION -- A  
PROGRAM IN SPECIAL ENGLISH BY  
THE VOICE OF AMERICA.

(THEME)

I'M LARRY WEST. TODAY, SHIRLEY  
GRIFFITH AND I CONTINUE THE  
STORY OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE  
FOLLOWING WORLD WAR ONE. THE  
ALLIES -- LED BY BRITAIN,  
FRANCE, ITALY, AND THE UNITED  
STATES -- HAD WON THE WAR. THE  
CENTRAL POWERS -- LED BY  
GERMANY -- HAD LOST.

VOICE TWO:

AMERICAN PRESIDENT WOODROW  
WILSON WAS ONE OF THE CHIEF  
NEGOTIATORS AT THE CONFERENCE  
IN PARIS. THROUGHOUT THE EARLY  
MONTHS OF NINETEEN-NINETEEN,  
HE STRUGGLED HARD FOR A TREATY  
THAT WOULD RESULT IN PEACE  
WITH JUSTICE FOR ALL SIDES.

WILSON DEMANDED A TREATY THAT  
PROVIDED FOR A NEW  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION. HE  
CALLED IT THE LEAGUE OF  
NATIONS. TO WILSON, THE LEAGUE

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WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER PART OF THE TREATY.

NOT ALL AMERICANS SHARED WILSON'S OPINION. MANY FEARED THE LEAGUE WOULD TAKE AWAY THE POWER OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TO DECLARE WAR AND MAKE TREATIES. THEY ALSO AGREED WITH THE LEADERS OF THE OTHER ALLIED NATIONS. ESTABLISHING THE LEAGUE WAS LESS IMPORTANT THAN PUNISHING THE DEFEATED ENEMY. VOICE ONE:

THE OTHER MAJOR ALLIED LEADERS AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE WERE PRIME MINISTER DAVID LLOYD-GEORGE OF BRITAIN, PREMIER GEORGES CLEMENCEAU OF FRANCE, AND PREMIER VITTORIO OTTO OF ITALY.

LLOYD-GEORGE, CLEMENCEAU, AND OTTO UNDERSTOOD HOW MUCH WILSON WANTED THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. THEY USED THIS KNOWLEDGE TO WIN WILSON'S APPROVAL FOR OTHER PARTS OF THE PEACE TREATY.

WILSON SOON LEARNED THAT, TO GET THE LEAGUE, HE HAD TO COMPROMISE ON MANY ISSUES. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD TO ACCEPT BRITISH AND FRENCH DEMANDS TO MAKE GERMANY PAY ALL WAR DAMAGES. THE PAYMENTS ADDED UP TO MORE THAN THREE-HUNDRED THOUSAND-MILLION DOLLARS. WILSON ALSO HAD TO ACCEPT THE ALLIED TAKE-OVER OF GERMANY'S COLONIES.

VOICE TWO:

SOME OF WILSON'S COMPROMISES VIOLATED HIS BELIEF IN SELF-DETERMINATION. THIS WAS THE RIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHO WOULD GOVERN THEM.

ONE COMPROMISE, FOR EXAMPLE, GAVE TO JAPAN GERMANY'S COLONIAL RIGHTS IN THE SHANTUNG AREA OF CHINA. CHINA PROTESTED THE DECISION. IT ASKED THAT CONTROL OF SHANTUNG BE RETURNED TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT. BUT PRESIDENT WILSON NEEDED JAPAN'S SUPPORT FOR THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. SO HE ACCEPTED JAPAN'S DEMAND FOR CONTROL OF SHANTUNG.

THERE WERE OTHER VIOLATIONS OF THE POLICY OF SELF-DETERMINATION. THESE AFFECTED THE PEOPLE AND LAND ALONG THE BORDERS OF SEVERAL EUROPEAN NATIONS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THREE-MILLION GERMANS WERE MADE CITIZENS OF THE NEW NATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. MILLIONS OF OTHER GERMANS WERE FORCED INTO THE NEWLY-FORMED NATION OF POLAND. AND ITALY RECEIVED TERRITORY THAT HAD BELONGED TO AUSTRIA.

VOICE ONE:

TODAY, MOST HISTORY EXPERTS AGREE WOODROW WILSON WAS CORRECT IN OPPOSING THESE DECISIONS. THEY SAY GERMANY'S LOSS OF TERRITORY AND CITIZENS CAUSED DEEP BITTERNESS AND

CAUSED DEEP BITTERNESS. AND THE BITTERNESS HELPED LEAD TO THE RISE OF FASCIST DICTATOR ADOLPH HITLER IN THE NINETEEN-THIRTIES.

IN EAST ASIA, JAPANESE CONTROL OVER PARTS OF CHINA CREATED SERIOUS TENSIONS. BOTH DECISIONS HELPED PLANT THE SEEDS FOR THE BLOODY HARVEST OF WORLD WAR TWO TWENTY YEARS LATER. BUT ALLIED LEADERS AT THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE WERE NOT LOOKING FAR INTO THE FUTURE. AS ONE PERSON SAID AT THE TIME: "THEY DIVIDED EUROPE LIKE PEOPLE CUTTING UP A TASTY PIE."

VOICE TWO:

AFTER MONTHS OF NEGOTIATIONS, THE PEACE TREATY WAS COMPLETED. THE ALLIES GAVE IT TO A GERMAN DELEGATION ON MAY SEVENTH, NINETEEN-NINETEEN. THE HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OBJECTED IMMEDIATELY. HE SAID THE TREATY WAS UNFAIR. HE URGED HIS GOVERNMENT NOT TO SIGN IT.

AT FIRST, GERMANY DID NOT SIGN. THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT REFUSED AND RESIGNED IN PROTEST. BUT A NEW GOVERNMENT WAS FORMED. AND ITS LEADER SIGNED THE DOCUMENT AT A CEREMONY AT THE PALACE IN VERSAILLES OUTSIDE PARIS.

FINALLY, WORLD WAR ONE WAS OFFICIALLY OVER.

VOICE ONE:

VOICE ONE:

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES AFTER THE TREATY SIGNING CEREMONY. HE WAS NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH THE TREATY. YET HE BELIEVED IT WAS STILL VALUABLE, BECAUSE IT ESTABLISHED THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

WILSON'S BATTLE FOR THE LEAGUE WAS ONLY HALF OVER WHEN THE TREATY WAS SIGNED IN EUROPE. HE HAD TO WIN APPROVAL FROM THE UNITED STATES SENATE. THAT HALF OF THE BATTLE WOULD NOT BE EASY.

VOICE TWO:

PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS POLITICAL. WILSON WAS A MEMBER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THE SENATE WAS CONTROLLED BY THE REPUBLICAN PARTY. ALSO, WILSON HAD REFUSED TO NAME ANY IMPORTANT REPUBLICANS TO HIS NEGOTIATING TEAM AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS PERSONAL. A NUMBER OF SENATORS DISLIKED WILSON. ONE WAS REPUBLICAN SENATOR HENRY CABOT LODGE. LODGE WAS THE POWERFUL CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. HE TOLD A FRIEND HE NEVER EXPECTED TO HATE ANYONE AS MUCH AS HE HATED WILSON.

VOICE ONE:

WILSON SPOKE BEFORE THE SENATE

JUST TWO DAYS AFTER HE RETURNED FROM EUROPE. HE URGED IT TO APPROVE THE PEACE TREATY. WILSON SAID:

"THE UNITED POWER OF FREE NATIONS MUST PUT A STOP TO AGGRESSION. AND THE WORLD MUST BE GIVEN PEACE. SHALL WE AND ANY OTHER FREE PEOPLE REFUSE TO ACCEPT THIS GREAT DUTY? DARE WE REJECT IT AND BREAK THE HEART OF THE WORLD? WE CANNOT TURN BACK. AMERICA SHALL SHOW THE WAY. THE LIGHT STREAMS UPON THE PATH AHEAD AND NOWHERE ELSE."

VOICE TWO:

THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE BEGAN HEARINGS ON THE TREATY. IT HEARD A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. THEY SAID THE LEAGUE WOULD DESTROY THE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE COMMITTEE COMPLETED ITS HEARINGS AND PREPARED A REPORT FOR THE FULL SENATE. THE REPORT SAID THE UNITED STATES SHOULD REJECT THE TREATY, UNLESS CHANGES WERE MADE. THE COMMITTEE PROPOSED ALMOST FORTY CHANGES.

VOICE ONE:

THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT WAS A BLOW TO PRESIDENT WILSON BOTH POLITICALLY AND PERSONALLY. HE HAD WORKED EXTREMELY HARD TO WIN EUROPE'S SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA OF A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

IDEA OF A LEAGUE OF NATIONS.  
GREAT CROWDS IN PARIS HAD  
CHEERED HIM AND HIS IDEA. NOW,  
THE SENATE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY  
WAS ABOUT TO REJECT IT.

WILSON DECIDED HE MUST TAKE  
HIS CASE OUT OF THE HANDS OF  
THE PEOPLES' REPRESENTATIVES.  
HE WOULD TAKE THE CASE  
DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE  
THEMSELVES. HE WOULD BUILD  
PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE TREATY.  
IF ENOUGH CITIZENS SUPPORTED  
IT, HE BELIEVED, THE SENATE  
COULD NOT REJECT IT.

VOICE TWO:

PRESIDENT WILSON PLANNED A  
SPEAKING TRIP ALL ACROSS THE  
COUNTRY. HIS FAMILY AND HIS  
DOCTOR URGED HIM NOT TO GO.  
THEY SAID HE WAS STILL WEAK  
FROM A RECENT SICKNESS. BUT  
WILSON REFUSED THE ADVICE. HE  
SAID THE TREATY WAS MORE  
IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN HIS OWN  
LIFE.

THE PRESIDENT LEFT WASHINGTON  
IN EARLY SEPTEMBER. HE  
TRAVELED IN A SPECIAL TRAIN.

IN CITY AFTER CITY, HE MADE  
SPEECHES AND RODE IN PARADES.  
HE SHOOK THOUSANDS OF HANDS.  
AT TIMES, HE SUFFERED FROM A  
PAINFUL HEADACHE. BUT THERE  
WAS NO TIME TO REST.

VOICE ONE:

EVERYWHERE WILSON STOPPED, HE  
URGED THE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT  
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. IT WAS,

HE SAID, THE ONLY HOPE FOR PEACE.

IN BOULDER, COLORADO, TENTH-THOUSAND PEOPLE WAITED TO HEAR HIM. BY THEN, WILSON WAS EXTREMELY WEAK. HE HAD TO BE HELPED UP THE STEPS OF THE BUILDING WHERE HE WAS TO SPEAK. HE MADE THE SPEECH. HE SAID HE WAS WORKING TO HONOR THE MEN WHO HAD DIED IN THE WAR. HE SAID HE WAS WORKING FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

VOICE TWO:

WILSON PUT ALL HIS HEART AND ENERGY INTO HIS SPEECHES. AND, AS HIS FAMILY AND DOCTOR HAD WARNED, THE PRESSURE WAS TOO GREAT. WHILE IN WICHITA, KANSAS, THE PAIN IN HIS HEAD BECAME TERRIBLE. HE COULD NOT SPEAK CLEARLY. HIS FACE SEEMED FROZEN. A BLOOD VESSEL HAD BROKEN IN HIS BRAIN. WILSON HAD SUFFERED A STROKE.

THE PRESIDENT WAS FORCED TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON. HIS CONDITION GOT WORSE EVERY DAY. SOON, HE WAS UNABLE TO MOVE.

WOODROW WILSON WOULD SPEND THE REST OF HIS PRESIDENCY AS A TERRIBLY SICK MAN. HE CONTINUED TO HOLD ON TO HIS DREAMS OF A LEAGUE OF NATIONS. BUT HIS DREAMS NOW FILLED A BROKEN BODY.

WE WILL CONTINUE OUR STORY NEXT WEEK.

(THE END)

(THEME)

VOICE ONE:

YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO THE  
MAKING OF A NATION -- A  
PROGRAM IN SPECIAL ENGLISH BY  
THE VOICE OF AMERICA. YOUR  
NARRATORS WERE LARRY WEST AND  
SHIRLEY GRIFFITH. OUR PROGRAM  
WAS WRITTEN BY FRANK  
BEARDSLEY.

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