

Summary of walter mcdougall, woodrow wilson: egocentric crusader

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History and Political Science Summary of Walter McDougall, " Woodrow Wilson: Egocentric Crusader" Essay

This article introduces a reader to an imperative topic in American history. It is about Woodrow Wilson who was a Virginian descended from Presbyterian ministers on both sides of his family, where he took for granted the religion of household in the cerebral and sometimes arrogant way of the Calvinist elect. He was certain to his spiritual correctness and deaf to the aesthetics of other Christian Eucharists. He had conviction in predestination and knew that he had been chosen by God to do great things. While in school, Wilson fancied being the leader in games and clubs. Wilson attributed the death of American oratory to the congressional system in which decisions were made through committee rather than debate on the floor. As time went on, the article notes that Wilson progressively embraced imperialism (McDougall 178). As a result, Wilson became the president of Princeton University where he attained a reputation of a bold reformer and a thorough authoritarian (McDougall 178).

Wilson was described as power loving, and craved and glorified power. He defined power as the " capacity to make effective decisions so as to nudge people and instructions along their appointed road toward perfection" (McDougall 179). He never imagined power as something negative and not positive. He rose to national politics where he was elected the governor and nominated for president in 1912 when the Republican Party was torn by the Teddy Roosevelt's insurgency. As McDougall notes, the campaigns of 1912 became a three-way fight for the soul of industrial America (McDougall 180). When Wilson was elected the president he considered it risky, ungraceful

and unfair to practice a foreign policy grounded on material self-interest. As a result, he refused to commit the nation to conflict in order to save some banker's bonds. Though the World War I seemed to have affected America's commerce, this did not worry him (McDougall 181). He believed that remaining above the war was the best way to exert moral authority required to end the war and make a lasting peace. He believed in good leadership and before the end of the war, he forged peace talks, which sounded like cant and madness in European ears. There were no clear enemies in the war, so he saw no need to go to war. Though many people have questioned whether America should have gone to war, it gave it a stake in an allied victory (McDougall 183). By forging for the peace talks, Wilson converted the American people into a lost crusade rather than telling them to fight and defend the Atlantic Ocean from German.

Works Cited

McDougall, Walter " Woodrow Wilson: Egocentric Crusader" in Cobbs, Hoffman E, Edward J. Blum, and Jon Gjerde. Major Problems in American History: Documents and Essays / Edited by Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, Edward J. Blum, Jon Gjerde. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012. Print.