
Woodrow Wilson had to make many difficult decisions during his presidency. Many of his decisions involved foreign policy, which was especially important during the first several years of World War I. In his book, Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace, Arthur Link writes about many of Wilson’s foreign policies. The President is portrayed as a staunch pacifist, although it is mentioned that he believed war was sometimes necessary to fight oppression and tyranny. Wilson’s strong desire for neutrality is evident, and even as America entered the war, his primary reason for fighting was to establish a “lasting peace.” Link focuses on the dream Wilson had of establishing this peace, which he wanted to accomplish through the League of Nations. Some of the common themes of the book include the extreme mental struggle the President faced as he made decisions about the war and his foreign policies, the desire for the neutrality of the United States, and the need Wilson saw for establishing a lasting peace.

Arthur Link portrays Woodrow Wilson as a strong pacifist whose entrance into the war was the very last resort. Wilson’s struggle regarding what to do about the war in Europe is written about extensively as the President engages in communication with both sides. It is evident that the author is eager to stress the point that entering the war was not an easy decision for Wilson to make, especially since his primary goal was constantly establishing a lasting peace. The President is portrayed as being relatively patient with the foreign nations, especially Germany, who were not complying with his request for the safe shipping of merchant ships. Wilson attempted compromise several times before making the final decision to join the other side in war. The mental struggles that Wilson faced in his decision making were made very obvious throughout the book, mostly because of his strong desire to remain neutral.

The author explains in detail the great lengths to which Wilson went in order to remain neutral. It is clear he did not want the war to have a victor, but rather end in a peace agreement. Wilson was willing to do whatever it took, even eventually entering the war, to ensure the establishment of peace. The book includes letters that Wilson sent to Germany, mostly regarding the safety of shipping between America and Europe. Yet even when Germany failed repeatedly to cooperate, Wilson was still hesitant to enter the war. Link defends the President’s desire for neutrality by commenting that the American public was also eager to remain a neutral nation. Wilson was very eager to comply with the public in this regard. After the President had done everything in his power to remain neutral, including peace talks and numerous negotiations, the United States finally entered the war.

The author draws a lot of attention to the President’s desire for a lasting, worldwide peace. The reason the United States entered the war was to establish this peace, which Wilson hoped to accomplish through the League of Nations. The author stresses in detail the extent to which Wilson went to see the League of Nations passed by Congress. The portrayal of his travel throughout the country and his speeches before Congress suggest that he did everything in his power, even beyond what his physical strength could handle, to see the United States join the League of Nations. Arthur Link demonstrates how passionate Wilson was about his agenda. He discusses the President’s contact with American children during his travels, and how he desperately yearned for
them to live in a peaceful world. The author portrays the President as a caring man who wanted to see people live in peace with one another and hoped that no child would have to grow up to fight in a war.

Arthur Link portrays Woodrow Wilson as a thoughtful, intelligent man who desired lasting peace for the world. The author defends the President many times throughout the book, and he obviously favors Wilson and his decisions. He successfully portrays Wilson as a very peaceable man who was the victim of his circumstances during World War I. It is a very interesting book that causes the reader to consider the difficulty Woodrow Wilson faced when making decisions during his presidency.

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