The President as Statesman

Stid, Daniel D.

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INTRODUCTION


2. Ibid.


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I: TOWARD “POWER AND STRICT ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ITS USE”


13. The phrase is from “The Orator,” p. 467.


17. Ibid., 1:148–49.


19. Wilson to E. L. Axson, January 1, 1884, PWW, 2:641–42; for the intellectual milieu at the university and Wilson’s experience there, see Niels Thorsen, The Po-
20. On this point, see R. H. S. Crossman’s introduction to The English Constitution, pp. 5–27.


26. Wilson discussed these dynamics at length in chapters 2–4 of Congressional Government. It is worth noting that he reserved most of his criticism for the House, to which he devoted two chapters. In his single chapter on the Senate, Wilson argued that the smaller numbers, less business-like organization, longer terms, and freer debates made it a somewhat more functional legislative body, although in its dealings with the president on matters of appointments and treaties, it, too, had shown itself to be detrimentally presumptive of executive prerogatives.


29. Ibid., 1:505–7; “Committee or Cabinet Government?” ibid., 2:632–35.


35. See “Government by Debate,” December 4, 1882, ibid., 2:203–15; “Commit-
tee or Cabinet Government," January 1, 1884, ibid., 2:622–35; Wilson, Congressional Government, 97–98.


38. PWW, 1:618 (Wilson's emphasis).


40. PWW, 2:155 (Wilson's emphasis).


44. Wilson to R. Bridges, February 5, 1883, ibid., 2:298 (Wilson's emphasis).


47. Ibid., 4:236–40.


2: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERPRETIVE LEADERSHIP, AND THE PRESIDENCY


11. Christopher Wolfe has argued that Wilson’s change in views regarding the imperative of amendments and the possibility of adaptation reflected a historicist shift in Wilson’s constitutional thinking, i.e., he came to see it as a document whose meaning changed with time; “Woodrow Wilson: Interpreting the Constitution,” *Review of Politics* 41 (January 1979): 121-42. However, Wilson had exhibited a historicist understanding from the beginning. A basic theme of the writings that culminated in *Congressional Government* was that through informal changes the meaning of the document had changed considerably, and Wilson held to the idea of a “living constitution” right from the start: see pp. 7-10, 242-43. Wilson’s dropping his advocacy of formal amendments was largely a function of his bow to political expediency; his subsequent stress on the adaptability of the Constitution originated in his newfound belief in the generally progressive direction of political development.

12. Critique of Bagehot’s *Physics and Politics*, *PWW*, 6:335 (I have transposed the first and second quotations).


24. Ibid., 6:463 (Wilson's emphasis).
29. Ibid., 8:172, 175–76.
30. Ibid., 8:175–78.
33. *PWW*, 2:68.
35. “Mr. Cleveland as President,” *ibid.*, 10:105.
36. Ibid., 10:118–19.
37. Ibid., 10:109–13 (the quotations have been transposed).
43. Ibid., 10:301 (the quotations have been transposed). See also “The Making of the Nation,” *ibid.*, 10:219.
46. “What Ought We to Do?” August 1, 1898, ibid., 10:575.
49. Wilson, Congressional Government, pp. 43–44. In his revised preface in 1900 (p. xii), Wilson adjusted this theory to include Lincoln’s dominance in the Civil War.
55. Of course, Roosevelt’s decision in 1912 to break with his party and lead many enemies of partisanship in the Bull Moose movement would throw an ironic light on Wilson’s praise, but it was genuine when initially bestowed; “Why Office Seeks Roosevelt,” Chicago Daily Tribune, May 6, 1903, in PWW, 14:454–55. For similar remarks, see Wilson, speech on patriotism in Worcester, Massachusetts, January 30, 1902, ibid., 12:262–63.
59. It should be noted here that despite the impact of the Spanish-American War on Wilson’s thinking, he devoted surprisingly little attention to McKinley, apparently subscribing to the traditional view of him, i.e., a president who was essentially beholden to the Republican barons in Congress. See Wilson, A History of the American People, 10 vols. (New York: Harper, 1918), 10:158, and “Leaderless Government,” August 5, 1897, PWW, 10:295. For a different view, see Lewis Gould, The Presidency of William McKinley (Lawrence, Kans.: Regents Press, 1980).
3: CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT AND PRESIDENTIAL POWER


7. See, for example, Wilson, Constitutional Government, pp. 188, 191, 207–9; Wilson to J. Calloway, October 30, 1907, PWW, 17:461; J. M. Taylor to W. Wilson, November 23, 1909, PWW, 19:532–33; an address on political reform to the City Club of Philadelphia, November 18, 1909, PWW, 19:511. Wilson was a prominent advocate of one progressive reform in this period, the short ballot, but only because he believed that this measure would concentrate, instead of bypassing or undermining, the competition between the parties, therefore making it more responsible; Constitutional Government, pp. 221–22; R. S. Child to Wilson, October 25, 1909, PWW, 19:446–47; “Hide and Seek Politics,” PWW, 20:192–207; Arthur Link, Wilson, 5 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947–1965), 1:124–26.

8. PWW, 18:384.


21. *PWW*, 17:76. The quotation comes from a revealing tribute that Wilson delivered (during the same period in which he was lecturing at Columbia) at a seventieth birthday celebration for Grover Cleveland.


23. Ibid., p. 71.

24. Ibid., pp. 60–66, quotation from p. 66.

25. Ibid., pp. 70–72. Here Wilson’s whig theory reads very much like (but should not be confused with) the whig theory of the presidency as it was formulated by Andrew Jackson’s opponents in the Whig Party and that had predominated in Whig and Republican circles throughout the nineteenth century. The traditional whig theory, it should be noted, in response to the vetoes of Jackson and Tyler, called for even more presidential restraint vis-à-vis Congress than did Wilson’s. See Wilfred Binkley, *President and Congress*, 3d ed. (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 106–7, 117–21.


27. These passages, which I have transposed, are from the same sentence in ibid., p. 70.


4: PROGRESSIVISM AND POLITICS IN NEW JERSEY AND THE NATION


2. Ibid., 18:535.


5. Ibid., 17:500.


30. There are some perils in attempting to understand and evaluate Wilson’s gubernatorial experience as a trial of his program for responsible government—a program that was, as Wilson conceived it, national in character. See, e.g., “Toast Wilson as President,” *Newark Evening News*, April 27, 1911, in *PWW*, 22:588–89. Nevertheless, because Wilson self-consciously sought to use his program in New Jersey, and because the results he met with are revealing, his attempt to do so will be analyzed here.


33. See, for example, Wilson’s speeches during January and February 1911, which are compiled in Hirst, *Reform Governor*, pp. 165–87.


36. Record interview, Baker Papers, Library of Congress; Kerney, *Political Educa-


58. Ibid., 24:480. No such plank on party organization, it should be noted, appeared in the Democratic platform. See also, e.g., Wilson, address to the General Assembly of Virginia and the city council of Richmond, February 1, 1912, ibid., 24:110; address to the General Assembly of Maryland, March 7, 1912, ibid., 24:232–34.

59. Ibid., 25:144–45.


64. See note 14 in the Introduction.


70. PWW, 27:148.


72. David Sarasohn marshals impressive evidence supporting this point in Party of Reform, pp. 142–54. He contrasts the high degree of unity among the leading Democrats—such as William Jennings Bryan, Wilson, Champ Clark, and Oscar Underwood—on matters of policy with the divisions among the Republicans and progressives. He also notes that in five states where the Taft and Roosevelt supporters jointly nominated a candidate for governor, the Democratic candidate for governor received a significantly higher percentage of the vote than did Wilson, indicating that many Republican and progressive voters were more ready to vote for a Democrat than to join in a cooperative effort with the rival faction. See also Louis H. Bean, How to Predict Elections (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948), pp. 68–69. On the fundamental differences between the progressives and the GOP regulars and the crucial respects in which the former were not simply a vehicle for Roosevelt, see Milks and Tichenor, “The Progressive Party Campaign of 1912.”


5: WILSON’S PROGRAM AND THE NEW FREEDOM


17. Wilson to T. W. Hardwick, March 15, 1915, *PWW*, 32:375–76. See also Wilson to J. R. Thorton, July 15, 1913, ibid., 28:35. Caucus rule among the Democrats worked essentially as follows. Meeting in private, the delegations debated the measures then pending on the floor and voted to determine whether they, as party members, should be required to vote in a particular way. If two-thirds of those present and voting agreed that party discipline should be enforced, then all members were so bound (provided that the two-thirds vote among those present in the caucus
amounted to a majority of the entire delegation). The only exceptions were if the measure hinged on matters of constitutional interpretation or if legislators had pledged before the election, or been formally instructed by their electors, to support the defeated position. If members otherwise defied the caucus, an observer remarked in 1915, they ran the risk of being read out of the party and denied the “three necessities of congressional existence—perquisites, patronage, and ‘pork’” (Wilder Haines, “The Congressional Caucus of Today,” *American Political Science Review* 9 [November 1915]: 696–706, quotation on p. 701). The caucus rules of the House Democrats, adopted in 1909, are reprinted in George B. Galloway, *The Legislative Process in Congress* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953), pp. 328–29. The Senate Democrats had adopted a similar two-thirds binding rule back in 1903; Randall B. Ripley, *Majority Party Leadership in Congress* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 65.


20. Wilson to J. R. Thornton, July 15, 1913, *PWW*, 28:35; F. M. Simmons to Wilson, September 4, 1913, ibid., 28:253; Wilson to F. M. Simmons, September 4, 1913, ibid., 28:254. Carter Glass gave an example of Wilson’s doubts in his memoir of the passage of the Federal Reserve Act. Glass recalled that when the bill was reported out to the Senate in late November 1914, Wilson “was disposed to assert vigorously his established aversion to ‘rule by caucus’ . . . [but] the practical politicians finally convinced the President that there must be a caucus or an abandonment of all hope for legislation” (*An Adventure in Constructive Finance* [New York: Doubleday, Page, 1927], p. 195).


25. Remarks in Trenton to the New Jersey electors, January 13, 1913, *PWW*, 32:40; Ray Stannard Baker interview with Albert Burleson, March 17, 1927, Ray Stannard Baker Papers, Library of Congress. This section is adapted from Daniel


28. Burleson interview, Baker Papers, Library of Congress; Link, *Wilson*, 2:158–59; Skowronek, *New American State*, p. 194 (citing Link); August Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1991), p. 286. Burleson’s oft repeated story has aged well, not least because of the teller’s efforts to establish his place in the historical record as the tough-minded politician who cleared the way for the many accomplishments of Wilson’s administration. Burleson was a notorious self-promoter. One cabinet colleague, after having dinner with him, recounted, “I spent most of the evening hearing the Postmaster General tell of the great burden that it was to have a Congress on his hands. Bernard Shaw writes of the Superman, and so does, I believe, the crazy Philosopher of Germany. I was convinced last night that I had met one in the flesh” (Franklin Knight Lane to his wife, February 5, 1916, in *The Letters of Franklin Knight Lane*, ed. Anne Winternut Lane and Louise Herrick [New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1922], p. 201).


6: TOWARD PARTY REFORM AND REALIGNMENT


tably Robert Owen. It was Owen who brought home to Wilson the political and policy arguments for a tariff commission, the legislation for which was drafted in the administration at the request of Majority Leader Claude Kitchin; Link, *Wilson*, 4:342–45. Then, in June 1916, again on the advice of Owen, Wilson endorsed the principle of the eight-hour-day clause that was central to the Adamson Act in the draft platform that he sent out to the Democratic Convention. Later, at the behest of congressional leaders, Wilson considerably shortened the list of what he was prepared to ask Congress to do to avert a railroad strike. In this case the bill was drafted by Representative William Adamson and Majority Leader Claude Kitchin; Link, *Wilson*, 5:88–90.


36. Because of this predicament Wilson initially had vetoed and in 1916 was holding off a bill that proposed a literacy test to restrict immigration. Wilson admitted to John Sharp Williams, a supporter of restriction, that he was opposing the provision in order to appease the leadership of the various ethnic groups; *PWW*, 32:26; Lawrence Chamberlain, *The President, Congress, and Legislation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), pp. 364–65.


45. Toy diary, *PWW*, 32:9–10; Ray Stannard Baker, memorandum of a conver-

46. Toy diary, ibid., 32:9-10.


48. Ibid.

7: DIPLOMACY, WAR, AND EXECUTIVE POWER


11. Ibid., 35:171.


20. PWW, 36:231–32.


26. PWW, 41:285–86. For Wilson's attitude toward his Senate opponents at this point, see an unpublished statement, February 26, 1917, ibid., 41:287.

27. Link, Wilson, 5:354, 359; Congressional Record, 64th Cong., 2d sess., March 3, 1917, p. 4912; Thomas W. Ryley, A Little Group of Willful Men (Port Washington, N.Y.:

29. R. Lansing to Wilson, March 6, 1917, ibid., 41:341–44; Daniels diary, March 6, 1917, ibid., 41:346; R. Lansing to Wilson, March 8, 1917, ibid., 41:360–61; Daniels diary, March 8, 1917, ibid., 41:364.


36. Ibid., 41:521.

37. Ibid., 41:522.


45. Republican Senator John Weeks of Massachusetts was the first to propose such a committee, which he did on April 9, 1917, but it was quickly tabled. The more serious initiatives, sponsored by Democrats, would come later. See *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st sess., April 9, 1917, p. 459; Baker, *Life and Letters*, 7:24; Seward Livermore, *Woodrow Wilson and the War Congress, 1916–18* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 15–16, 53–57, 91–94.


53. *Congressional Record*, 65th Cong., 1st sess., July 21, 1917, p. 5364. After serving as the point man in the Senate on preparedness, Chamberlain had gone on to be the leading Democratic proponent of conscription (when virtually all of the Democratic leaders were set against the draft) and had taken over Senate sponsorship of the food bill when T. P. Gore, the Agriculture Committee Chair, refused to accept it.

54. Even after Wilson had issued his attack on Chamberlain and begun his lobbying of the Democratic senators, forcing at least ten of them to turn against the plan, four of the eight Democratic members of the Military Affairs Committee
were reported as being prepared to defy the president and support the bill. “Moves for a War Cabinet,” *New York Times*, January 19, 1918; “Senate Ready for War Cabinet Fight,” *New York Times*, January 23, 1918; Livermore, *War Congress*, p. 100.


60. For an astute analysis of the situation Wilson faced, see Colonel House’s diary entry for January 17, 1917, *PWW*, 46:23.


68. For the GOP responses, see “Not Wilson’s War, Republicans Say,” *New York Times*, October 26, 1918; William Howard Taft, “President’s Stand Autocratic,” ibid. For the calls of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and party chair Will Hays for a GOP Congress in 1918, see the reports of the New York State Republican
Convention in ibid., July 19–20, 1918. Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge had made similar appeals on behalf of their party and President McKinley in 1898; "World Peace Plan Chief Issue Now," ibid., October 27, 1918.

69. The Outlook also explored this implication of Wilson's appeal: "In the other self-governing countries with which we allied not only is the action of the executive subject to the control of the legislative body, but its continued existence depends upon the will of the legislative body. . . . It is curious, possibly alarming, that at the very time when Germany is loudly proclaiming her purpose to abandon a Constitution in which the legislative body is subject to the control of the executive, our President should propose that we abandon a policy in which the Executive is subject to the control of the legislative" ("The President Re-Enters Politics," November 6, 1918, p. 338).

70. PWW, 53:364–65.

8: PARTY AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN WORLD WAR I


15. For a friendly account of Kitchin’s stance regarding the war, which nevertheless establishes the extent of his opposition to the administration, as well as the reaction that Kitchin generated, see Alex Arnett, *Claude Kitchin and the Wilson War Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1937). See also Claude Kitchin, “Who Will Pay the New Taxes?” *Forum*, August 1918, pp. 149–54.


24. *Nation*, August 24, 1918, p. 189; Wilson to F. Glass, July 31, 1918, *PWW*, 49:138; Wilson to F. Glass, August 9, 1918, *PWW*, 49:224. In the Texas case, again at Postmaster General Burleson’s request, an unwitting Wilson signed a letter denouncing James Slayden, an eleven-term representative from Texas, who promptly dropped out of the race. Slayden’s biggest mistake appears not to have been his record of support for the administration’s war policies, which was no worse than that of many other Democrats in the House, but rather that he was running against one Carlos Bee—


27. An appeal for a Democratic Congress, October 19, 1918, *PWW*, 51:381.

28. Ibid., 51:381–82.


35. *New Republic*, November 9, 1918, p. 26; G. Creel to Wilson, November 8, 1918, *PWW*, 51:645–46; O. Villard to J. Tumulty, November 8, 1918, ibid., 51:646. For a persuasive and well buttressed restatement of this view, see Knock, *To End All War*, pp. 185–87.


9: \textsc{Wilson, Lodge, and the Treaty Controversy}


15. Ibid., 62:343, 403.


18. Ibid., 62:343.

19. Ibid., 62:353-56, 360-64.


22. See, e.g., the interchange between Senator McCumber and Wilson on a reservation to Article 10 in ibid., 62:355-56. Wilson drew up a list of interpretations just before leaving on his tour and gave it to his spokesperson in the Senate, Gilbert Hitchcock, with the instructions that the senator was not to attribute authorship to Wilson but was otherwise free to use the list as he saw fit to reach an agreement. A comparison of Wilson's interpretations with the reservations that the mild reservationists proposed in early August is particularly revealing on the gap between the president and the senators who were the least opposed to the league. Wilson's list is described by George and George as being virtually identical to that of the mild reservationists and thus as evidence that Wilson was only, and unreasonably, splitting hairs (*Woodrow Wilson*, pp. 292-93, 350). In fact, there were key differences in the respective documents; for one thing, the Republicans proposed that their reservations “be made a part of the treaty by the instrument of ratification,” while Wilson proposed that the president would only “communicate these interpretations to the several States signatory to said treaty at the same time that he deposits the formal instrument of ratification.” More important, the senators’ reservations included the following specific affirmation vis-à-vis Article 10: “That any undertaking under the provisions of article 10, the execution of which may require the use of American military or naval forces or economic measures can under the constitution be carried out only by the action of the Congress, and that the failure of the Congress to adopt
the suggestions of the council of the league, or to provide such military or naval forces or economic measures, shall not constitute a violation of the treaty.” In contrast, Wilson’s interpretation of Article 10 read: “The advice of the Council of the League with regard to the employment of armed force contemplated in Article Ten of the Covenant of the League is to be regarded only as advice and leaves each Member State free to exercise its own judgment as to whether it is wise or practicable to act upon that advice or not.” From the standpoint of constitutional interpretation, the terms of which framed the treaty fight, the assertion of the Senate’s treaty power and the affirmation of Congress’s war power that were manifested in the mild reservationist program posed a fundamental challenge to Wilson’s policy and prerogatives. See Wilson, a memorandum, September 3, 1919, PWW, 62:621, and Margulies, Mild Reservationists, pp. 88. For the mild reservationists’ proposals, see a news report, Washington Post, August 2, 1919, in PWW, 62:112–14.

23. For Lodge’s attitudes toward Wilson, see the following, all in the Lodge Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society: Lodge to J. Bishop, December 23, 1918; A. Beveridge to Lodge, November 27, 1918; Lodge to A. Beveridge, December 3, 1918; Lodge to A. Beveridge, February 18, 1919.


25. Here we might recall the argument made in another context by Publius in Federalist 1: “My motives must remain in the depository of my own breast. My arguments will be open to all, and may be judged by all.” I am also grateful to Jeffrey Tulis for clarifying my thinking on this point.


27. Lodge to J. Bishop, October 26, 1918, Lodge Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.


29. Lodge to W. Bigelow, November 26, 1918, Lodge Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.


31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., pp. 724–28; Lodge to T. Roosevelt, December 23, 1918, Correspondence, 2:550.
34. The Round Robin is reprinted in Lodge, Senate and the League, p. 119.
37. Wilson, Constitutional Government, p. 139.
38. Ibid., pp. 139–40.
43. An address in Boston, February 24, 1919, PWW, 55:238–45; an address at the Metropolitan Opera House, March 4, 1919, ibid., 55:418.
44. Wilson and his entourage traveled through Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Des Moines, Iowa, Omaha, Sioux Falls, S.D., Minneapolis, Bismarck, N.D., Billings, Mont., Spokane, Wash., Tacoma, Wash., Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, Cheyenne, Wyo., Denver, and various points in between before Wilson collapsed on September 26; Bailey, Great Betrayal, pp. 102–114.
47. Wilson, Constitutional Government, p. 78.
48. Wilson’s comments were recorded by his brother-in-law; PWW, 67:605.
50. Another problem was that in several states the governors would have to make interim appointments to serve out the length of the resigned senators' terms; in still other states it was not clear how soon the elections could be held. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer pointed out these difficulties to the president's wife, who had asked him to investigate the scheme's feasibility; ibid., 64:214–15.

51. Ibid., 64:257–58.

52. Ibid., 64:267–69 (Lansing's emphasis).


57. J. Tumulty to Wilson, June 4, 1919, ibid., 60:154. For Tumulty’s recommendations on how to bring about this realignment, see J. Tumulty to Wilson, January 30, 1919, ibid., 54:390–93; J. Tumulty to Wilson, June 4, 1919, ibid., 60:145–53; Wilson to J. Tumulty, June 17, 1919, ibid., 60:644.

58. Address to a joint session of Congress, August 8, 1919, ibid., 62:210–12; in his meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on August 19, 1919, Wilson reiterated this argument, ibid., 62:340–41. Before he went before the Senate committee, Wilson requested that several of his department heads send him information on how the delayed ratification was hurting the economy in their sectors. See, e.g., C. Glass to Wilson, with enclosure, August 13, 1919, ibid., 62:266–67; D. Houston to Wilson, August 13, 1919, ibid., 62:268–70; R. Lansing to Wilson, August 15, 1919, ibid., 62:322–23.
60. Daniels diary, April 20, 1920, ibid., 65:212.

CONCLUSION

10. Ibid.


20. For incisive discussions of the political and cultural obstacles facing the Committee on the Constitutional System by two of its most thoughtful spokespersons, see Sundquist, Constitutional Reform, pp. 242–52, and the comments by Donald Robinson in two conferences cosponsored by the committee, the proceedings of


28. See note 45 in Chapter 7.


30. Milkis emphasizes the importance of government through administration in The President and the Parties, while Lowi focuses on the president’s plebiscitary appeals to the masses in The Personal President. Both scholars, however, see the New Deal as the critical juncture in the demise of parties.


