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Sections and Nation

We are apt to think of the United States as we might think of some one of the nations of the Old World, but the area of the Union is almost that of all Europe, and this vast country is gradually becoming aware that its problems and its difficulties are not altogether unlike those of Europe as a whole.

It may readily be admitted that bigness is not greatness. But room for population and ample resources for development are important in the life of all nations. England, France, and Italy could be placed within the boundaries of the old thirteen states along the Atlantic Coast, with which this nation began. The Middle West (the North Central States) could find room for all the European powers which joined Germany in the World War in her efforts to conquer Europe.

So considered, the American section takes on a new importance and a new dignity. The various sections of which this country is composed, are thus seen as potential nations. We are led to wonder why the United States did not in fact become another Europe, by what processes we retain our national unity. The imagination stirs at the possibilities of the future, when these sections shall be fully matured and populated to the extent of the nations of the Old World.

We must also remember that each of the sections of this continental nation—New England, the Middle States, the Southeast, the Southwest, the Middle West, the Great Plains, the Mountain States, the Pacific Coast—has its own special geographical qual-

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ities, its own resources and economic capacities, and its own rival interests, partly determined in the days when the geological foundations were laid down.

In some ways, in respect to problems of common action, we are like what a United States of Europe would be. It is true that the differences are not by any manner of means so marked here as in Europe. There are not in the United States the historic memories of so many national wrongs and wars, nor what Gilbert Murray calls the "Satanic spirit" of reliance upon force. There is not here the variety of language and race nor the sharp contrast in cultural types; there has not been the same bitterness of class conflicts; nor the same pressure of economic need, inducing the various regions to seek by arms to acquire the means of subsistence, the control of natural resources. The burden of history does not so weigh upon America. The section does not embody the racial and national feeling of the European state, its impulse to preserve its identity by aggression conceived of as self-defense. But there is, nevertheless, a faint resemblance.

The American section may be likened to the shadowy image of the European nation, to the European state denatured of its toxic qualities. In the relations of European nations with each other, making due allowance for the deep differences, we may find means of understanding some of our own problems. Perhaps even, we may find, in our handling of such problems, suggestions of a better way for Europe.

The geographer Ratzel once remarked, with a characteristic German accent, that "Europe and Australia really have room enough for but one great power." He did not sufficiently consider that the one great power might be like the United States of America—a federative power. Nor is it certain that the leagues of Europe may not grow into a United States of Europe—certainly a more hopeful outlook for liberty and civilization than the triumph of a state like Imperial Germany or Russia.

In a recent book on the *Geography of History*, Brunhes and Vallaux, arguing against the League of Nations, reached the conclusion that Europe must organize in groups of leagues. "In order to form an organism as strong and rich as possible," say these French geographers, "the countries must coöperate in groups to the end that they may include within their federated territories the

whole range of natural resources and manufactured products demanded by the growing complexity of social life."

The United States of America has reached a similar result, for its continental spaces, by the peaceful process of settlement of new geographic provinces in the West—a process which in Europe would be called "colonization." We have organized these new lands as territories and then admitted them as equal states in a common Union. We have no regional customs-boundaries to check interstate commerce. We have a system of free trade over an area as large as all Europe. We regulate interstate commerce from a single center, while we recognize separate sectional interests and needs. We legislate instead of going to war.

A leading French statesman, M. Tardieu, said not long ago in the French Chamber of Deputies that "it was immensely difficult for America to understand the psychological state of Europe, its national passions and the moral force of the memories which centuries of bloody struggle had left behind." "But France," he added, "knew these things." Over a century ago a French Minister to the United States said to his government, "An American is the born enemy of all European peoples."

Of course, this is not true. But it is true that an American is the born enemy of the European system of international relationships, and that he does sometimes find it hard to understand the European psychology. No small portion of the American people fled to the New World to escape the European system, and the explanation of our lack of sympathy with the methods and the fundamental assumptions of continental Europe, lies in large measure in the different course which the sections of the Union ran as compared with the nations of Europe. We substituted the system of a sectional union and legislative adjustment, for the settlement by the sword. We learned how to discuss, how to concede, and how to adjust differences, how to combine a loyalty to parties which ran across sectional lines, with loyalty to local interests. Like an elastic band, the common national feeling and party ties draw sections together, but at the same time yield in some measure to sectional interests when these are gravely threatened.

The one tragic exception in America to the unifying influence of parties and a common legislative body, lies in the Civil War, when parties did become sectional. But perhaps no more difficult

test of peaceful methods of adjustment could arise than that between a slave society and a free society. After that war, peaceful sectional relationships returned, even though an almost solid, but patriotic, South has persisted for over half a century. Nor is it certain that the Civil War was inevitable. Probably the majority of Americans, North as well as South, preferred a different solution and were astonished when secession was followed by war instead of by a reconciliation of differences.

By comparing the relations of the different nations of Europe with each other, we have the means of examining both the European and the American situation and of better understanding the real meaning of what has been in progress and what appears to be likely to influence the development of the United States.

If, for example, we describe the way in which the sections of the Atlantic seaboard have dealt with those of the interior of the United States, in such terms as "colonization," "spheres of influence," "hinterlands," American history takes on a new meaning. The formation of our great zones of population by interstate migration to the West, such as the New York-New England zone, and the Southern zone, extending from the Atlantic across the Mississippi, stands out in a clearer light. When we think of the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, as steps in the marking off of spheres of influence and the assignment of mandates, we find a new meaning in the rivalry between the slaveholding and nonslaveholding sections of the United States. We see a resemblance to what has gone on in the Old World. If we express sectional contests, in national party conventions and in the federal House and Senate, in such European phrases as "diplomatic congresses," "ententes," "alliances," and attempts at "balance of power," we shall not go altogether wrong in the description of what actually occurs, and we shall find that the rival sections of the United States have played parts not entirely different from those played by European states. But there was a common legislative body, as well as national parties, which brought sections together.

Is it not clear that if Europe could have followed a similar course, substituting for wars and sinister combinations between nations the American device of continental parties and legislation, "woeful Europe," as William Penn called it, would have run a

course better suited to the preservation of civilization and the peace of the world? If it be said that such a solution is inconceivable in Europe, we must recall that, in spite of the sharp contrast between the American section and the European nation, there have been diplomatic congresses which attempted to deal with Europe as a whole, there have been great gatherings at The Hague to impose a system of international law, there are European international labor congresses. There is actually the League of Nations which, however imperfect, has in it the possibilities of development.

The results of the Great War have burned deeply into European consciousness the need of some better way of conducting the common enterprise of Europe than by the appeal to the sword. In spite of all the fundamnetal difficulties which the conferences at Genoa and The Hague have revealed, we can see in these gatherings the hopeful beginnings of a new age as well as the discouraging persistence of an old order of things. Europe might at least form an assembly, representing the people rather than the diplomats, and empowered to pass resolutions expressive of public opinion. Such recommendations and resolutions might ultimately take the form of law. However this may be, the difficulties which exhibit themselves in Europe, only emphasize the good fortune of the United States in dealing with its similar area. They help us to understand ourselves and our problems.

Bertrand Russell, in a contemporaneous article, insists that the small states of Europe will have to be forced, if necessary, to concede free trade and freedom of intercourse between one another and between neighboring great powers. "Gradually, if Europe is to survive," he says, "it will have to develop a central government controlling its international relations. If it cannot do this, it will become, and will deserve to become, the slave of the United States. . . . The time when the history of the world was made in Europe is past. America and Russia are the great independent powers of the present day." These words are, of course, the utterance of a socialist and internationalist and of a writer who, with a strange European blindness, is alarmed at the prospect of America's becoming the next great imperialistic power and mistress of the world. But they show the contrast between European and American experience.

We in America are in reality a federation of sections rather than of states. State sovereignty was never influential except as a constitutional shield for the section. In political matters the states act in groups rather than as individual members of the Union. They act in sections and are responsive to the respective interests and ideals of these sections. They have their sectional leaders, who, in Congress and in party conventions, voice the attitude of the section and confer and compromise their differences, or form sectional combinations to achieve a national policy and position. Party policy and congressional legislation emerge from a process of sectional contests and sectional bargainings. Legislation is almost never the result of purely national or purely sectional considerations. It is the result of sectional adjustments to meet national needs. For the most part, such adjustments take place in the formative stages of bills, in the committee rooms, and in the process of framing the measures by amendments. It is in these stages that the bill is most easily affected by sectional interests. The vote on the third reading of the bill affords opportunity for dissent; but after the completion of the measure, party discipline and party loyalty assert themselves and, in spite of discontent, usually furnish the necessary votes to pass the measure.

But even final votes in the Congress of the United States, both in the Senate and the House, upon important matters are, as President Lowell has demonstrated, far less frequently by parties than is ordinarily supposed. If we proceed a step further and, instead of taking account of congressional majorities by totals and reckoning the votes by party affiliation, we arrange those votes by sections and place the result on a map of the United States, we shall be astonished at how much is concealed by the mere alphabetical or party record. Under the drawing pen, as vote after vote by congressional districts is recorded on the map, they gradually arrange themselves to show the outlines of contending sections. The areas of great geographic provinces are revealed by the map of votes.

Of course, in the maps it will often be shown that some single party dominates a whole section, as so often occurs in the case of New England or the South. But again and again, in the construction of bills and in elections, party ties are broken, and the Republicans, for example, divide into sectional wings, composed of a conservative New England and Middle State area, a divided and

mediating Old Northwest (lying between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River), and a radical trans-Mississippi Middle West, voting in exact opposition to the Northeast and sometimes in alliance with the Democratic South.

From colonial days to the Civil War, the conscious and avowed policies of the leading statesmen rested on the necessity of considering the conflicting interests of the various sections and sectional wings and adjusting them by bargains, compromises, and arrangements for balance of power in congressional legislation. It is, however, impossible here even to sketch the evidences of the persistent sectionalism in party contests and congressional legislation in American history. The more the reader will probe into the distribution of votes and the utterances of statesmen and editors, the more he will see that sectionalism was the dominant influence in shaping our political history upon all important measures —not the sectionalism of North and South alone, but a much more complex thing, a sectionalism also of East and West, and of East North Central and West North Central states, shifting as economic and social conditions changed, but persistently different from the East.

Since the Civil War, although by the march of settlement to the West new sections have been added, all the important political contests have revealed the same interplay of section with section. The sectional wings of the Republican party in the seventies exhibited a New England ultraconservative; a Middle Atlantic transitional and divided; a North Central for free silver. In the later eighties the East North Central division divided and finally joined the North Atlantic States against free silver, but swung to the side of the West North Central group on the question of terminating the Silver Purchase Act. It was a mediating section with a balance of power, but responsive to party discipline.

Problems of trust regulation, free silver, banking, tariff, and devices to secure popular government have led to sectional contests. Roosevelt's "square deal" held the Eastern and Western wings of the Republicans together for a time, but when President Taft after hesitation turned to the conservative Eastern wing, insurgency followed, and the Middle West became, in his words, "enemy country." The Western programme of primary elections, popular election of United States senators, initiative, referendum, re-

call—all the devices for direct popular participation in government —resulted in a party rebellion which broke the power of the speakership and overthrew the rule of the elder statesmen in the Senate. All these are familiar examples of the new forces. They found their strength in the Middle West and Pacific Coast, and finally made a split in the Republican party, resulting in the formation of the Progressives under Roosevelt. It is idle to think of these events in terms of rival leaders like La Follette, Cummins, Roosevelt, and Aldrich; Bryan, Cleveland, Hill, and Parker. Such leaders really led, and some of them deeply influenced the strategy and tactics of the fighting; but their power to lead was based upon the rival sectional interests. It was not a "fight of the captains." It cannot be explained in terms of personality alone, nor even primarily.

Economic changes and the results of the Civil War had decreased the importance of the state in the nation and turned all interests toward the federal government. Some fifteen years ago, one of the most distinguished of American publicists, Elihu Root, warned the states that "our whole life was crystallizing about national centers." State sovereignty, upon which the political philosopher John Taylor had once relied to avoid the collision of geographical interests, proved a broken reed. Congress was, in fact, becoming almost unconsciously "an assembly of geographical envoys," but an assembly which operated under American conceptions of the need of compromise.

Mr. Root spoke at a time when Roosevelt's strenuous assertion of national power was at its height. Little seemed to intervene between individuals and the stark power of the nation, unless it were in that twilight zone, between state and federal governments, wherein the trusts flourished. National legislation has steadily diminished the area of this "no man's land." The Great War increased the energy and scope of the federal government. But today it may fairly be asked whether all these forces of centralization of power in Washington have promoted national unity and consolidation, or on the other hand have increased sectional expression.

As the states have declined, sectional self-consciousness has risen. All those factors which were relied on to destroy sectionalism, such as the development of means of transportation, expanding domestic commerce, increase of population, have in Europe been among the most important of the forces to bring about national rivalries.

If this is the result in Europe, it is certainly not clear that the opposite result must follow in the United States.

Although political sectionalism is still a term of reproach, implying unfairness and a disregard of national interests, the section reproved is seldom conscious that its action is adverse to the common good. We are so large and diversified a nation that it is almost impossible to see the situation except through sectional spectacles. The section either conceives of itself as an aggrieved and oppressed minority, suffering from the injustice of the other sections of the nation, or it thinks of its own culture, its economic policies, and well-being as best for all the nation. It thinks, in other words, of the nation in terms of itself. "I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills," runs our American anthem. It was written by a New Englander and its scene is that of New England, not of the snow-capped mountains, the far stretches of Great Plains, or Arid America. We think sectionally and do not fully understand one another.

Underneath the party sectionalism there is, of course, a sectionalism of material interests—of business, manufacturing, mining, agriculture, transportation. To illustrate this economic sectionalism, I may point out that, of the capital invested in manufactures in the United States, nearly one-half is in the North Atlantic division, composed of New England and the Middle States; while on the other hand the great bulk of the wheat and corn, cattle and swine—the food supply for labor and the great cities—comes from the North Central States of the upper Mississippi Valley. Over half the federal income and profits tax in 1920 was paid by the North Atlantic section of the United States, which has less than one-third the population of the Union, though the appropriation of these revenues was made for the nation considered as a unit. Obviously these differences between sections in economic interests mean also differences in political interests.

Significant facts appear in the relations between sectional material interests and sectional forms of society. The group of states which has the highest ratio of automobiles to population is the region of the great wheat states west of the Mississippi—the area of the Republican wing of the "Farmers' *Bloc*." This indicates that there is in that section a more general diffusion of prosperity. The sections which have the lowest ratio are the South and the Middle

States of the Atlantic seaboard—the regions, respectively, of the negro and of the great industries. The American conscription statistics in the World War show that the regions which had the best record for physical fitness were those of the West North Central and the Mountain sections, while the lowest is again the industrial Northeast. On the other hand, a map of the reading habit, as shown by the number of books in circulation proportioned to population, reveals that the old Federalist section—New England, New York, and New Jersey—has a distinct preëminence. The statistics in the American *Who's Who* for 1916-17 show that over half of those who achieved the necessary distinction to be included in that volume, lived in the Northeastern section of the United States, and that nearly the same number were born there. In other words, while preëminence in physical fitness and the more even distribution of wealth belong to the agricultural West, more men of talent and a larger concentration of great wealth are to be found in the Northeast. Recent inquiries show that there is a sectionalism of "wet" and "dry" areas, in pubic opinion on the Volstead Act. The most emphatic support of Prohibition comes from the West North Central and the South Central states—the area of the Farmers' *Bloc.*

There is a sectionalism of culture. School-teachers, historians, scientists, church associations, meet increasingly in sectional gatherings. This is in part due to the high railroad fares; but it is also due to a real consciousness of sectional solidarity. We are all aware that Kansas is not New York; nor South Carolina, New Hampshire. We have in mind a certain quality when we speak of the South, or New England, or the Pacific Coast, or the Middle West—there is in each a special flavor, social, psychological, literary, even religious.

Popular speech, likewise, reveals our sectionalism, not only in matters of pronunciation, idioms, and so on, but also in the mental attitude that underlies the expressions. When we hear that "no man in the wrong can stand up against the fellow that's in the right and keeps on a-comin'," we know that we aren't in New England, in spite of the moral flavor, and we suspect that we may be in Texas. When told that "high class swine are unknown and impossible among a low class people," that the hog of a certain state "in his sphere typifies the good, the true, and the beautiful

. . . like the State that lends him as a solace to humanity," or that still another state produces the "most perfect cow that ever was by sea or land," we have little difficulty in getting our sectional bearings. It is not necessary to examine the Agricultural Atlas, for we recognize a Middle Western spiritual as well as material attitude. When we read, "We don't have to pray for rain out here, we open the irrigation ditch and stop worrying about Providence; we don't have to ask for health, we got it when we bought our railroad ticket," it is not alone the reference to the irrigation ditch that carries our thought to the exhilarating high altitudes of the Far West —the land of optimism, determination, and exaggeration. One doesn't weigh words, or cultivate restraint and the niceties, when nature is big and rough and lavish.

No one can make a sectional list of the men and women who have achieved distinction in literature, and fail to see that, whether in prose or poetry, fiction or essay, there is a special sectional quality in each, a reflection of the region's common interests and soul. Our American literature is not a single thing. It is a choral song of many sections.

We may better understand how far sectional consciousness has gone in the United States if, by way of example, we consider one of the most avowedly sectional portions of the Union—namely, New England. Her restraint, her respect for established order, for vested rights and steady habits, are traditional. As many of her discontented and disturbing elements left the section and migrated to the West, and as the interests of manufacturing and capitalism increased in sectional importance, this inheritance passed easily into an economic conservatism. Even now, when two-thirds of her population is either foreign-born or descended from one or both parents foreign-born, the fundamental economic attitude of New England is still unchanged.

Historically respectful of the rights of property, this section has been, and is, the stronghold against attacks upon banking interests, "sound money," and the protective tariff. It opposed the federal income tax, and is alarmed over national appropriations for roads, bills for national educational control, and similar measures which take from the section more than they return to it. To New England this seems like draining the wealthier region of its property in order to spend it in distant and less prosperous lands—like expropria-

tion under the plea of national unity. There is a striking analogy between its attitude in this respect and the views of the ante-bellum South as voiced by Calhoun.

Particular reasons exist for New England's sectional discontent and alarm. She finds that the protective tariff is so shaped by Western and Southern agricultural interests that it increases the cost of the raw material of her manufacture and the food for her labor population. Dependent upon transportation for the food, the fuel, and the raw material which she uses but does not produce in her own midst, and also dependent upon transportation for access to her markets, she is concerned over the differential railroad rates of the Interstate Commerce Commission which work to the advantage of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and the Southern ports. In the grand strategy of railroad wars, she has reason to apprehend the transfer of control over her own lines, to New York, even to fear that her roads will go into bankruptcy. She is discussing the question of unifying and controlling the railroads of her section. Attempting to build up the port of Boston, New England is more than reluctant to see the federal government undertake the deep waterway from the Great Lakes by the St. Lawrence to the sea—a measure pressed by the North Central States. The Mayor of Boston, with a Celtic lack of restraint, recently protested that this "would obliterate New England absolutely." Evidently he forgot that Boston is not a place.

By her well-united group of twelve senators, and with the large number of votes cast in the House by New York and parts of Pennsylvania and New Jersey acting in concert with her, New England has not only had in the past a direct influence upon legislation but a preponderating position in the councils of the Republican party. As the Middle West grew in strength, this power finally brought about a reaction. A prominent congressman broke out in 1908 with the interesting suggestion that "if New England could be ceded to Canada, the legislative difficulties of this country would be cut in half." "Let us not forget," remarked a leading Boston newspaper in 1912, "that the influence long exercised by New England in both Houses of Congress, to the great advantage of this section, has resulted in powerful combinations against us in business as well as in politics." The Boston editors denounced what they called a "Southern-Western alliance against the industrial Northeast." The

Western sections in their turn demanded larger popular participation in government. Western insurgency and progressivism broke the traditional control of the Republican organization and divided the party. The victory of the Democrats under President Wilson transferred the ascendency in Congress to the South, "where once," said a Boston editor regretfully, "it belonged to New England."

Under the stress of these events and the more recent combination of the agricultural South and West, New England is becoming a little pessimistic and self-conscious. It is taking measures for more effective sectional organization. Under the heading, "All New England, the Six States Should Act as a Unit on the Issues Which Concern their Similar Interests," the *Boston Transcript* last spring voiced this conception of sectional organization, saying: "The New England States have different governments and are separate and distinct political organizations, but they are bound together by geographic, historic, political, and industrial interests. What helps one New England State in the shape of legislation originating in Washington, helps all the New England States. What injures one New England State in the shape of legislation originating at Washington, will hurt all New England States." Recently the Governor of Massachusetts said to the Vermont Press Association: "Other parts of the country regard New England as a unit and treat it accordingly. We being all one stock [!], should regard ourselves in the same light and act as a body, work towards one end." Various Boston editors endorsed the Governor's view, one of them saying that "while certain artificial limitations exist between the New England States, there are no real barriers between them; essentially they are one." Senator Lodge advanced a step farther, looking to a combination of North Atlantic states—a Northeastern *Bloc* to counteract the Farmers' *Bloc*. "The great empire State of New York," he said, "has almost identically the same interests as New England. Well, New York has forty-three members of Congress while New England has thirty-two members of Congress and twelve Senators." He added that they would make a formidable *"bloc,"* if put together. The suggestion recalls the ultra-Federalist proposals in the days of Jefferson and Madison.

Responding to these ideas, New England has developed a semi-governmental machinery for the section by means of conferences of the governors of the New England States, to consider matters

reaching from railroad regulation and rates to the fuel supply and the milk question. A New England States Council, "the voice of the section," has been organized, made up of mercantile, manufacturing, financial, transportation, and agricultural (but not labor) organizations, which send delegates or reply to questionnaires from the different cities or states of the section. New England's congressional delegations consult and dine together in Washington in order to foster common action. A New England Bureau at the seat of government is a further development. From all these things it would not be a long step to the creation of a common legislative assembly and executive for the section as a whole.

I have dwelt upon the situation in New England because it shows so clearly the tendency of the time to a sectional organization of interests, to sectional feeling, and to sectional action. But New England is by no means alone. The South has long been known (somewhat inaccurately) as the "Solid South," dominated by the Democratic party, as New England is usually by the Republican party. Naturally, when the Democratic party comes into power, its leadership falls to the South, just as, when the Republican party comes into power, its leadership is in the North and particularly, in the past at least, in the Northeast. The Middle West has also a sectionalism of its own, changing as conditions change. But on the whole its eastern half reflects its diverse economic and social interests and origins, and constitutes a divided buffer region holding the balance of power—an umpire between sections.

Leaders are reluctant to think in sectional terms. President Wilson was in origin a Southern man, proud of the political talent of the South and anxious to reveal it to the nation; but he reprobated sectionalism as such, saying in a speech in Indianapolis in 1916: "Any man who revives the issue of sectionalism in this country, is unworthy of the government of the nation; he shows himself a provincial; he shows that he himself does not know the various sections of his own country; he shows that he has shut his heart up in a little province and that those who do not see the special interests of that province are to him sectional, while he alone is national. That is the depth of unpatriotic feeling."

This is good doctrine, to be taken to heart by all Americans. But if, in Mr. Wilson's phrase, we "uncover realities," we are obliged to face the fact that sections are among these realities. Adjustments

are in fact made, not between individuals in the nation, nor between states, but between sections. The whole period of Mr. Wilson's presidency emphasizes this fact, for the tariff was shaped by Southern and Western interests to the discontent of Northeastern manufacturing interests, just as the reverse had occurred when the Northeast was in power. The central-bank plan of the Northeast was replaced by the regional-bank reserve system which gives a sectional organization to credit; and before President Wilson left the White House, a plan was under way for regional administration and regional consolidation of the railroad systems. He found, moreover, that as President he was obliged to take note of the fact that the Republican agricultural West was in distinct opposition to that degree of preparedness which he supported as the World War developed. It furnished the bulk of the votes in favor of the McLemore resolution abandoning American rights on the high seas, and against the declaration of war. He had to use his party leadership to the full in order to procure the adhesion of a hesitant South to his national programme. Mr. Wilson's policy took account of the need of convincing reluctant sections, while North Atlantic leaders, in particular, were impatient and would have him proceed as though that section was itself the nation.

President Harding, in his turn, about a year ago voiced his belief that "state lines have well-nigh ceased to have more than geographical significance." "We have had," he said, "the test of disunion, the triumph of reunion, and now the end of sectionalism." But his wish was father to his thought. He illustrated the tendency of all administrations, from whatever sections they derive their power, to deny or to decry as unpatriotic any sectional dissent from the national measures of the party in power. In a few months after this funeral sermon over sectionalism, President Harding found it necessary to urge that "there is vastly greater security, immensely more of the national point of view, much larger and prompter accomplishment, where our divisions are along party lines in the broader and loftier sense, than to divide geographically or according to pursuits or personal following." The occasion for this utterance, in spirit so like that of Mr. Wilson, was the organization of the Agricultural *Bloc* in Congress, made up of Western Republicans and Southern Democrats, to secure legislation favorable to their interests. Again and again this sectional combination re-

jected his recommendations as the head of the Republican party and imposed its own programme in spite of the organization centered in the Northeast. The revolting Middle West conceives of the Northeast as selfishly sectional, and it thinks of the South and West, combined, as representing the really national interests. New England, on the other hand, denounces the Agricultural *Bloc* as sectional.

Last year the *Chicago Tribune* published an editorial under the title, "A Square Deal in Congress for the Middle West." This influential newspaper alleged that the Middle West had not enjoyed this square deal in the past and demanded that the section's congressmen, whom it significantly called "our Middle Western agents," should act with more effectiveness for the promotion of the interests of the section as a whole. "We have been paying long enough to enhance the prosperity of the coasts to our own disadvantage," cried the editor.

Middle Western political revolts usually occur in periods of agricultural depression, and in such times temporary third parties have formed, with their strength in the discontented sections. It is not necessary to enumerate the many illustrations of this, from the days of the Grangers, the Populists, the Insurgents, to the Progressives, the Non-Partisan League, the Farm Bureau Federation, the Farmers' *Bloc*, and the contemporary opposition by senators from the North Central States to high protection in the textile schedules of the tariff. All of them are successive stages of the protest of the agricultural sections against the industrial North Atlantic States. They are also reflections of different social conditions and ideals.

What is the logic of all this? Does it mean the ultimate political organization of the different groups of states into sectional units for representation and administration—the formal recognition of a new federation, a replacement of the feeble states by powerful sections, each with its special economic interest? Does it mean that in the last analysis men shape their political action according to their material advantage?

This last question is not radically different from the question of the interpretation of history in general. No single factor is determinative. Men are not absolutely dictated to by climate, geography, soils, or economic interests. The influence of the stock from which they sprang, the inherited ideals, the spiritual factors, often

triumph over the material interests. There is also the influence of personality. Men do follow leaders, and sometimes into paths inconsistent with the section's material interests. But in the long run the statesman must speak the language of his people on fundamentals, both of interests and ideals. Not seldom the ideals grow out of the interests. It is the statesman's duty and his great opportunity to lift his section to a higher and broader, a more far-seeing, conception of its interests as a part of the Union, to induce his section to accept the compromises and adjustments which he arranges with the leaders of other sections in the spirit of reconciliation of interests in the nation as a whole. He must be at once the section's spokesman, its negotiator, and its enlightened guide, loyal to the nation as a whole.

At the same time that we realize the danger of provincialism and sectional selfishness, we must also recognize that the sections serve as restraints upon a deadly uniformity. They are breakwaters against overwhelming surges of national emotion. They are fields for experiment in the growth of different types of society, political institutions, and ideals. They constitute an impelling force for progress along the diagonal of contending varieties; they issue a challenge to each section to prove the virtue of its own culture; and they cross-fertilize each other. They promote that reasonable competition and coöperation which is the way of a richer life. A national vision must take account of the existence of these varied sections; otherwise the national vision will be only a sectional mirage.

As the case stands, sections still, as in the past, reflect the distances and the differences of the American continent. Improvements in communication, such as the automobile, the telephone, radio, and moving pictures, have diminished localism rather than sectionalism. Class conflict and sectional conflict often coincide. The triumph of Bolshevism or of capitalism would still leave a contest of sections. But in countless ways the power of the section is conditioned largely upon its moderation. Every section is in unstable equilibrium; public opinion is often closely divided and responds to national ideals.

For, underneath all, there is a common historical inheritance, a common set of institutions, a common law, and a common language. There is an American spirit. There are American ideals. We are members of one body, though it is a varied body. It is inconceiv-

able that we should follow the evil path of Europe and place our reliance upon triumphant force. We shall not become cynical, and convinced that sections, like European nations, must dominate their neighbors and strike first and hardest. However profound the economic changes, we shall not give up our American ideals and our hopes for man, which had their origin in our own pioneering experience, in favor of any mechanical solution offered by doctrinaires educated in Old World grievances. Rather, we shall find strength to build from our past a nobler structure, in which each section will find its place as a fit room in a worthy house. We shall courageously maintain the American system expressed by nation-wide parties, acting under sectional and class compromises. We shall continue to present to our sister continent of Europe the underlying ideas of America as a better way of solving difficulties. We shall point to the *Pax Americana*, and seek the path of peace on earth to men of good will.