

## Editor's Note

Rosanne Currarino

This issue takes on the vast Progressive Era, offering new looks at reform, empire, and citizenship. Daniel Burge reconsiders a staple of Progressive Era history: the oft-repeated claim that the yellow press pushed McKinley, and thus the United States, to war with Spain in 1898. Such assertions, Burge shows, overlook over forty years of newspaper calls to intervene in Cuba, ostensibly to revenge the supposed martyrdom of William Crittendon. Ignoring this long history, Burge argues, overstates the power of the press and minimize Americans' long-standing appetite for hemispheric empire.

Dustin Meier looks at women settlement house workers' environmental philosophy as they enacted it in summer camp programs for urban children. These camps, designed to give children two weeks of rest and play in nature, were a scathing critique of the industrial city. The polluted and filthy environment exacerbated social and economic inequality while also stunting individual children's moral growth. Reformers' environmental agenda show an "intimate connection" between their calls for systemic and individual reform.

Progressive women reformers, shows Megan Threlkeld, did not only work close to home, they also turned to foreign policy in their efforts to create a more nearly equal and just society. A wide range of women reformers and reform organizations, including the WCTU, NAWSA, and the NCW, were deeply interested in international arbitration and advocated strongly for an international court of arbitration. Their commitment to that process propelled them into public debates over American foreign policy, including U.S. involvement in the War of 1898 and World War I.

In "Sound Citizenship," Evan Sullivan examines the U.S. Army Section of Defects of Hearing and Speech's efforts to rehabilitate soldiers with hearing and speech disabilities after World War I. The U.S. Army classified returning veterans' disabilities as "defects" and was determined to remove or minimize them. The highly publicized rehabilitation program linked hearing and speaking with full citizenship, thus strongly implying that disabilities, including those acquired through wartime service, were not compatible with being an American citizen.

Comparisons between our contemporary global pandemic of COVID-19 and the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic have proliferated since 2020. Some economic historians have noted the lack of significant economic depression in 1918–1919 and suggested that is evidence that Americans were less affected by the early pandemic because they just kept spending money. No, argues Max Ehrenfreund. American spending shows the opposite. Americans understood themselves as consumer citizens, and as such they had a duty to limit consumption to state-defined "essential businesses." But the state recognized that citizens had a right to enjoy a good standard of living and defined

“essential” capaciously. Comparison of the two pandemics, Ehrenfreund suggests, reveals differences in attitudes towards wages, production and consumption not to death and disease. We conclude the issue, as always, with a wide-ranging collection of book reviews.