

Southern does point to those few moderate progressives who supported mild racial reforms, contrasting them with the more overt racist politicians such as Ben Tillman and James Vardaman. But it is clear that the "radical" racists controlled the law and the polity in the progressive era.

African-Americans are not held harmless. The social class split within the black community, between the more upscale black mulatto elite and the rest of the black community (also echoed in the split between DuBois and Washington, which Southern also notes), mitigated against a united black challenge to economic, political, and cultural inequality.

Throughout the book, Southern stresses how racial inequality was not simply a regional problem, but a northern and/or national issue in the progressive period. He duly notes the national ideological climate (literature and movies), national political leaders, and the Supreme Court, all of which embraced racial segregation and Jim Crow laws.

Southern ends on an optimistic note at the close of the First World War, discussing the Harlem Renaissance, the growth of jazz, and advancements in education. This becomes the base from which the "final and victorious assault on Jim Crow was launched in the wake of the next World War," he argues.

Perhaps, but the end of World War II also saw a rise in racist group membership, such as in the Klan and in the formation of new ones, such as the White Front or the Columbians. The southern economy remained split along racial lines. And it is worth noting the general unpopularity of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Only in the 1960s and the "Second Reconstruction," with strong support at the executive and legislative levels of the federal government, was there finally a link made between "progressive" ideas and racial equality.

Instructors of advanced undergraduate classes would find this book very useful in illuminating the ambiguities of race relations in U.S. history. The chapters could also be assigned as separate supplemental readings in graduate post-Civil War, race-relations, or twentieth-century U.S. classes. The book is also full of lecture material. The bibliographical essays at the end of the book are timely and flesh out an interesting chronology of the changing historiography of race relations in U.S. history.

Georgia Highlands College

Ralph Peters

Thomas Fleming. *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I.* New York: Basic Books, 2003. Pp. 543. Cloth, \$17.50; ISBN 0-465-02469-6.

Although the Great War of 1914-1918 has long been a popular topic for European historians, it has generally been ignored by American scholars. Consequently, few students know much about it, other than vague ideas that the "War to End All Wars" was caused by German submarines sinking the *Lusitania*, America "saving" France, and

a League of Nations that the United States did not join. This lack of factual awareness is unfortunate since it is exactly the kind of story our citizens need to understand. As students of the conflict know, the United States government, under ambiguous pretenses, chose sides in a bloody European quarrel. With no prior planning or preparation, it launched an ill-trained and ill-equipped expeditionary force across the Atlantic, which, after only six months of battle, lost over 320,000 of its soldiers dead or wounded. During the war German-Americans, union members, and other critics of the conflict found themselves behind bars. Other than helping the allies force Germany out of France, the army achieved few of President Woodrow Wilson's stated war aims. Many thoughtful Americans of the time believed that the United States entered the war solely to protect business investments in the allied cause. In retrospect, especially after the rise of Hitler's Germany and the resultant Second World War, one can argue that it was an American military, economic, and political failure.

In his *The Illusion of Victory*, well-known author Thomas Fleming presents a summary of the American war experience. Full of anecdotes, such as the ill-fated engagement of Quentin Roosevelt and the schemes of Edith Wilson to control the government during the president's last days, it is an engrossing book. The core of this book is Fleming's unrelenting attack on President Woodrow Wilson. According to the author, Wilson's idealism and his desire to support the British and protect American investments led to his asking for a declaration of war, promising to make the world "safe for democracy." Yet, Wilson failed to prepare the nation for the magnitude of the conflict; few soldiers or politicians realized that they would be forced to send an expeditionary force to Europe. Fleming takes Wilson to task for ignoring the cost of the war when presenting his Fourteen Points to his incredulous allies while encouraging the growth of worldwide nationalism. In addition, according to the author, Wilson was a racist and opponent of hyphenated-Americans, most notably German and Irish-Americans and alienated all by the end of the war. Those who dissented found themselves hounded by his Attorney General and thrown in jail. In the end, his stubbornness and lack of diplomatic and political skill caused him to lose the peace in Europe and the League of Nations at home.

Certainly, *The Illusion of Victory* is an interesting book. However, it has major flaws that detract from its suitability for readers of this journal. His reliability is sometimes suspect, such as in his discussion of German atrocities in Belgium where his interpretation is at odds with the best research on the topic. In other instances, he strays from his message with perplexing detours into European history, such as his description of the French Caillaux affair. In addition, his writing is extremely uneven, with well-written prose contrasting with unbalanced paragraphs and sub-chapters. Most significant, Fleming's almost hysterical attacks on Wilson and his cronies remove this book as a tool for all but the most sophisticated student. Instructors might use it to augment presentations on this era, but they should do so with caution.