

Document B: Schenck Pamphlet (Modified)

Charles Schenck was a Socialist who in 1917-1918 printed and distributed more than 15,000 anti-war pamphlets, including some to drafted American men. The excerpt below comes from one of his pamphlets.

ASSERT YOUR RIGHTS

The Socialist Party says that any officers of the law entrusted with the administration of **conscription** . . . violate the provisions of the United States Constitution when they refuse to recognize your right to assert your opposition to the draft. . . .

To draw this country into the horrors of the present war in Europe, to force the youth of our land into the . . . bloody trenches of war-crazy nations, would be a crime the **magnitude** of which defies description. . . .

No **specious** or plausible . . . pleas about a "war for democracy" can cloud the issue. Democracy can not be shot into a nation. It must come spontaneously and purely from within.

To advocate the persecution of other peoples through the fighting of a war is an insult to every good and wholesome American tradition.

You are responsible. You must do your share to maintain, support, and uphold the rights of the people of this country.

In this world crisis where do you stand? Are you with the forces of liberty and light or war and darkness?

Source: "Assert Your Rights," Charles Schenck, 1917-1918.

Vocabulary

conscription: military draft

magnitude: hugeness

specious: misleading