JAMES WATSON GERARD - AMBASSADOR 1913-1917

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

As the subject of this paper once wrote, ". . . obviously some account of a man's forebears and backgorund is not only a proper part of his personal history, but also provides useful clews [sic] to his actions and attitudes."[1] Although some attention will be given to these factors as a part of his personal history, this study will show more concern for them as clues to his reactions to the problems with which he was confronted as ambassador.

Mr. Gerard's great-grandfather, William Gerard, was born in Bariff, Scotland, in 1746, the descendent of prominent fugitives from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the France of Louis XIV. No record of his early life survives, but it is known that he lived at Gibraltar for a time and that he emigrated to New York about 1780.[2] In 1781 he married Christiana Glass, daughter of a prominent New York merchant, setting a precedent for favorable marriage which his descendents have consistently followed. William Gerard was a loyalist during what remained of the American Revolution, and consequently was forced to

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[1] James W. Gerard, My First Eighty-three Years in America: The Memoirs of James W. Gerard (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1951), 1-2. Hereafter cited as Gerard, Memoirs.

[2] The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography (New York: James T. White & Company, 1898 - ----), XI, 333. Hereafter cited as National Cyclopaedia. Mr. Gerard's testimony varies from other sources by a matter of two or three years on some of the activities of his great-grandfather, Gerard, Memoirs, 2-3.

evacuate with the British troops in 1783. Apparently his property was not confiscated, however, as he had sufficient resources upon his return to New York to set up a mercantile establishment in partnership with his brother-in-law.[3] He met an "untimely" end in 1802, in death by drowning, leaving his widow and seven children.[4]

The first James Watson Gerard, third son of William and the man who established many of the precedents later followed by his descendents as tradition, was born about 1793. No record of his childhood is available, but he graduated from Columbia College in 1811 and went on to the study of law in the office of George Griffin. He was admitted to the New York bar and, as was the custom received his Master of Arts degree from Columbia simultaneously in 1816. He established a law firm and had a distinguished career until his retirement in 1869. In 1820 he followed the precedent set by his father and made a very favorable match, marrying Elizabeth Sumner, daughter of Increase Sumner of Massachusetts. This union produced four children. He died in New York City February 7, 1874.[5]

In addition to being a prominent lawyer, James W. Gerard I was a prominent citizen of his city. In 1823 he became a member of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism. In this connection he established a home for juvenile delinquents and was the first to publicly advocate the adoption of a standard uniform for the policemen of New York City. He also devoted much time to the cause of public education.[6]

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[3] Gerard, Memoirs, 3.
[4] National Cyclopaedia, XI, 333. Again Gerard's testimony varies-placing the date six years earlier. Gerard, Memoirs, 3.
[5] National Cyclopaedia, XI, 333.
[6] Ibid., and Gerard, Memoirs, 5-6, 7-8.

Mr. Gerard was not an abolitionist although he opposed slavery. He believed that the controversy could be settled peaceably and in this connection was one of the moving spirits in the National Union League, being in fact its first president.[7]

The second James Watson Gerard was born in New York City, June 20, 1823. He graduated from Columbia in 1843 as valedictorian of his class and was admitted to the bar in 1846. Although he married late in life he continued the family tradition by marrying Jennie Angel, daughter of Benjamin F. Angel, minister to Norway and Sweden under Buchanan, October 31, 1866. From this marriage came three sons. James Gerard II, like his father, was much interested and active in the development of the public schools. He was the first Gerard to enter actively into politics. In 1876-77 he was State Senator for the seventh district of New York, and in 1880 he ran for congressman but lost to Levi P. Morton. In 1893 Cleveland offered him the office of special commissioner to Hawaii but he turned it down because of ill health. His membership in the Union, Players, and Tuxedo clubs testify to his social prominence. He also was of some minor importance as an historian and writer. A member of the St. Nicholas and New York Historical Societies, he wrote many historical papers and delivered several adresses on the early colonial history of New York. He also wrote several works of satire in prose and verse, two legal works, and a historical work, The Peace of Utrecht(1885). He died in New York City on January 28, 1900.[8]

In the third James Watson Gerard, the subject of this study, born

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[7]Gerard, Memoirs, 6-7.
[8]National Cyclopaedia, XI, 333.

August 25, 1867, in his grandfather Angel's house in Genesco, New York, the traditions set by his forebears found their fulfillment.

His education was a heritage. His training began in the public schools, but, at an early age, he was transferred to a "preparatory" school in Southboro, Kent, England. This experiment lasted for less than a year, however, and, in 1879, he returned to the normal school at Genesco. Soon, however, his parents returned to New York City and, after having a number of tutors, he was enrolled in the Williamson and Kellog day school, a military academy. In 1881 his European education was resumed at a French day school at Biarritz but this too was short lived. In the fall of 1883 he was enrolled in St. Paul's boarding school in Garden City, Long Island, to complete his pre-college education.[9] With this varied background, he fulfilled the tradition by enrolling, after the manner of his father and grandfather, at Columbia University. After losing a year because of ill health, he received his B.A. in 1890. Staying on at Columbia, he took his master's degree in Political Science in the following year, and then, going on to the New York Law School, received his L.L.B. and was admitted to the bar in 1892.[10]

Using the doors opened to him by his forebears Mr. Gerard became more prominent socially than any of his predecessors. By 1913 he was a member of the Union, Tuxedo, University, New York Athletic, Riding, and Fencing clubs, and the Sons of the Revolution. He was fond of out-

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[9]Gerard, Memoirs, 22 ff.

[10]National Cyclopaedia, A, 168. New York Times, June 27, 1913. John T. Graves, "Democratic Aristocrat", Cosmopolitan, LV (October 1913), 642. "James W. Gerard as Man and Candidate", Literary Digest, LXV (April 17, 1920), 78.

door life and enjoyed some note as a hunter in England, Scotland, and the United States. Because it has some bearing on his later activities it may be noted that he served in the New York militia for some ten years rising from the rank of private in the seventh regiment to that of captain on the staff of the first brigade where he served under General McCosky Butt during the Spanish-American war. In 1900 he became quartermaster, with the rank of major, for the first brigade.[11]

In business too Mr. Gerard, using the resources supplied by his forebears and adding to them by various means, rose to much larger scale operations than those of his ancestors. The chief addition and the one which made most of his activities possible was also, in a manner of speaking, traditional with the family. This was his very advantageous marriage, in June 1901, to Mary A. Daly, daughter of Marcus Daly, the Westerncopper king.[12] Testimony is ample[13] that this move was probably the most important he ever made. Mrs. Gerard added, not only her personality and social grace, but also a keen advisory ability, and certainly not unimportant, her large fortune, to his store of social and business advantages. The largest single business interest in which he engaged grew directly from this marriage. This was the extensive mining interests, both in this country and in Mexico, which he held in partnership with his brother-in-law, Marcus Daly Jr.. He also held and operated his wife's Montana ranch for many years. In finance and banking

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[11] New York Times, June 27, 1913.

[12] Arriving in the United States in 1861 as a penniless immigrant, Daly worked his way west to Virginia City. There he became a mine superintendent and by 1878 had saved enough to buy a quarter interest in a silver mine being sunk at what is now Butte, Montana. This venture ultimately turned out to be the famous Anaconda copper mine and from it Daly made millions.

[13] Gerard, Memoirs, 83 f. and Graves, "Democratic Aristocrat", Cosmopolitan, LV, 643.

too he had some interest and influence. In 1907 he was one of the directors of the Knickerbocker Trust Company but not one of the executive committee. When the company collapsed in the panic of that year and a fund was raised to provide cash for its reorganization by the sale of stock, Mr. Gerard was one of the chief subscribers. In this connection the Attorney General of New York stated that the restoration of the company was largly due to his efforts.[14]

Mr. Gerard also continued the traditions set by his father and grandfather in regards to social responsibility. Carrying out the noblesse oblige concept, he gave consistently to various charities and was the chief benefactor of the summer resort for poor boys at Rockland Lake, New York, in connection with which he spent thousands annually.[15]

In the matter of a career too Mr. Gerard upheld the traditions by choosing the law and by entering the firm of Bowers and Sand, which had originally been established by his grandfather in 1812. He entered it in 1892 and became a partner in 1899. The practice of the firm was general and usually unnewsworthy. At times however newsworthy and relatively important cases were handled. For example, his firm, in representing the New York World, was involved in two famous franchise cases. The first of these and the one in which Mr. Gerard "won his spurs" was that of Gusthal v. William L. Strong, Mayor of New York, in which he was successful in thwarting the attempt to award a perpetual franchise, through graft and political wire pulling, to the Third Avenue Railroad Company for the Kingsbridge crossing. The second case, in which Mr. Gerard served as

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[14] "Man and Candidate", Literary Digest, LXV, 78-81.
[15] Ibid., 80.

counsel, was that of the successful attempt to block the awarding of a franchise for the use of the piers owned by the City of New York to the Ramampo Water and Ice Company- the "ice trust". Again graft and political wire pulling were involved. Another case of some fame in which he, along with William Hornblower, served as counsel was that of the murder and contested will of William H. Rice, the Texas millionaire. Their success in this case made possible the continued existence and growth of the Rice Institute of Texas.[16] Although not an illustrious career, Mr. Gerard's was certainly a creditable one. His position within the legal fraternity is illustrated to a degree by the fact that he held the post of president in the Lawyer's Advertising Company for many years.[17]

Shortly after James. W. Gerard III turned twenty-one his father told him that the greatest mistake of his life had been in not joining a political organization since it had been impossible for him to get anywhere politically without organized backing. Consequently he advised young James to join such a group and, on the eve of an election, took him to see Richard Croker, the boss of Tammany Hall. Young James handed Croker a two hundred dollar compaign contribution and shortly thereafter was admitted to the society. His first political assignment was that of poll watcher in the 1892 presidential election. From that time on Gerard was active in politics. Gerard later wrote that he

> used to go the Tombs police court or other courts to defend any good Tammany voters who had been accused of illegal or faulty registration. It is by being assiduous

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[16] Graves, "Democratic Aristocrat", Cosmopolitan, LV, 642-44. New York Times, June 27, 1913. National Cyclopaedia, A, 168-69. "Man and Candidate", Literary Digest, LXV, 78-81. Gerard, Memoirs, 50-82.

[17] New York Times, June 27, 1913.

mission to attend the Mexican independence celebration.[23] Probably the reason for this is to be found in his heavy Mexican mining interests.

After his trip to Mexico Gerard returned to New York and again took up the duties of the supreme bench where he remained until the change in the fortunes of his party in national politics took him into the service of the Federal government.

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[23] "Man and Candidate", Literay Digest, LXV, 79.

> in such political chores that a young lawyer attains merit in the eyes of a political organization.[18]

He did attain merit and by virtue of it rose in the organization until, in 1903, he became chariman of the Democratic Campaign Committee for New York County, a position which he held until his elevation to the state supreme court in 1907. During this period he was consistently mentioned for high office but never accepted a nomination.[19]

In 1907, with the staunch support of Tammany Hall, Gerard was elected to the Supreme Court of New York. "His conduct and wisdom as Justice made him nationally famous."[20] Part of this praiseworthy conduct was his action, which seemingly was detrimental to the forces which had backed him in the election, in deciding in favor of the Independent Democrats, Hearst's organization, on their petition for a place for their ticket on the state ballot. J. T. Graves, when writing of this decision,said,

> Gerard on the bench has been . . . fine, frank, generous, and fearless of criticism when he knew he was right . . . . Nothing could better illustrate the integrity, the fairness, and the courage of Justice Gerard than the point blank decision against Tammany Hall which had presented his name for nomination.[21]

However, there was another angle to this decision which many writers failed to see. It caused a momentary break between Gerard and Charles F. Murphy, the leader of Tammany, but when Gerard explained that he would have been pulled off the bench and thus have jeopardized Murphy's leadership had the decision been otherwise, the breach was closed.[22]

In 1910, while he was still on the court, Gerard was appointed by Taft to serve, with Harrison G. Otis and C. A. Rook, on a special com-

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[18]Gerard, Memoirs, 35.
[19]Graves, "Democratic Aristocrat", Cosmopolitan, LV, 642.
[20]"Man and Candidate", Literary Digest, LXV, 79.
[21]Graves, "Democfatic Aristocrat", Cosmopolitan, LV, 643.
[22]Gerard, Memoirs, 137.

CHAPTER II

THE APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING OF A FLEDGLING AMBASSADOR

As the presidential election of 1912 approached and the split in the Republican ranks grew more pronounced, it became increasingly apparent that the Democratic standard bearer would have more than an even chance to win. Tammany backed first Judson Harmon of Ohio and then "Champ" Clark of Missouri but when the scholarly Governor of New Jersey, Woodrow Wilson, finally got the nomination the organization swung into line. At this point Judge Gerard contributed $13,000 to the Democratic war chest.[1]

On March 4, 1913 the Democratic hordes descended on Washington to pick up the morsels of office that had been denied to them for so many long, lean years. Judge Gerard was not far behind the pack. On April seventeenth he was endorsed for ambassadorial honors by the New York Democratic delegation in the House, and Representatives John Fitzgerald and Joseph A. Goulden were named as a committee to present his case to Wilson.[2] Meanwhile Gerard himself took a more important step. On April twentieth Colonel Edward M. House, Wilson's "alter ego", entered in his diary the statement that,

> Justice Gerard came to see me about his chances for ambassadorial honors. I thought they were slight but they were better now than they had been. He laughed and said,

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[1] Rolla Wells, Report of the Treasurer of the Democratic National Committee (1913), as cited Arthur S. Link, Wilson: The Road to the White House (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 485.

[2] New York Times, April 18, 1913.

> 'I do not believe that until right recently I had any chances at all.' That, I replied was true. I told him furthermore if McCombs and Morgenthau were given foreign appointments that five out of the nineteen major places would have gone to New York, which was out of all proportion to her share. He saw the point. He did not believe McCombs would accept.[3]

Soon after this visit rumors as to Gerard's possible appointment began to appear. On June sixth it was reported that he would be made envoy to Spain, and, on the same day, it was reported that Senator Augustus O. Bacon's bill to raise that post to the rank of Embassy had been reported from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.[4] It was also rumored at one time that he would be Ambassador to Mexico. The appointment to Germany came largely as a surpise. On June twenty-seventh, when the appointment was made public, the New York Times published an explanation in which it said that Wilson had decided on Spain and that, since Gerard wanted an Embassy, the Bacon Bill had been introduced to provide it. This explanation also stated that there had been reports that Gerard had practically declined the offer. Why the change had been made had not been explained. This report also pointed out that the post had been offered to Professor Henry B. Fine of Princeton, who had turned it down because of lack of means, and to Rudolph Spreckels, who had refused to consider it, before it was given to Gerard.[5]

Judge Gerard, aboard the Imperator and on his way to Europe for a vacation, received the news by radiogram from a friend in New York on

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[3]Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926), I, 183-184.

[4]New York Times, June 6, 1913.

[5]Ibid., June 27, 1913.

June twenty-seventh. At that time he told a reporter that he had no intimation that the Berlin post would be offered him when he left New York.[6] On June twenty-ninth Colonel George Harvey and Clarence H. Mackay gave a dinner in his honor in the Ritz-Carlton Restaurant on the Imperator, attended by twenty-four guests and followed by a reception.[7] Mr. Gerard knew no German whatsoever and, in order that he might appear in a good light, Henry Morgenthau translated a speech into German for him and he committed it to memory for delivery at the dinner.[8] On June thirtieth the Kaiser approved the appointment and on July twenty-eighth the Senate also confirmed it.[9] Sending Gerard to Berlin seems to have followed the pattern of casualness apparent in most of Wilson's appointments to foreign posts. It appears that neither Wilson nor House ever gave any reason for this choice of positions.

Press comment was almost entirely favorable to the selection of Judge Gerard. James T. Graves, writing in Cosmopolitan, after referring to Walter Hines Page, Thomas Nelson Page, and others, said of Gerard, " . . . The Metropolis is willing to guarantee that none of these will bring back from European courts a better record of service and more gracious memories than Ambassador James Watson Gerard."[10] An editorial writer of the New York Times was, if possible, even more complimentary when he wrote that,

> . . . Judge Gerard will be persona grata at the Kaiser's Court. He has the qualities best appreciated in an American Ambassador these days, social distinction, suavity of manner, knowledge of the world. His long legal training, also, should be of service. While he may not see fit to live up to the

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[6] New York Times, June 6, 1913.
[7] Ibid., July 1, 1913.
[8] James W. Gerard, My Four Years in Germany (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1917), 18.
[9] New York Times, July 1, 29, 1913.
[10] Graves, "Democratic Aristocrat", Cosmopolitan, LV, 644.

> tradition established by some of his predecessors, socially speaking, the appointment will certainly be satisfactory to the large number of Americans who believe that our representatives to foreign capitals should be pecuniarilly able to entertain in the manner of the diplomats of European countries.
>
> Whatever international complications may arise we may feel sure that the interests of the United States will be well looked after in Berlin while Judge Gerard is Ambassador. He is a man of tact, and particularly one accustomed to discretion in speech.[11]

Meanwhile Gerard went on with his vacation plans. He remained in Paris for the entire month of July, but, when word of his confirmation by the Senate was received, departed for Berlin to survey his new post.[12]

Gerard's first task was to find a building for his headquarters, since the United States did not, at that time, own or maintain its Embassy buildings. He spent two days looking for something suitable and apparently was quite upset by the fact that he found nothing to his taste. Berlin newspapers reported that he had said he would resign his post if he couldn't represent his country in the proper way with the proper Embassy. These reports also stated that he had drafted a bill to tax expatriates for the cost of building and maintaining an Embassy there and in other foreign capitals.[13] Probably worried by the publicity which these reports were getting, he cabled Jospeh P. Tumulty, Wilson's secretary, that he was only joking on the resignation question and that Berlin had taken him too seriously. On August sixth he left Berlin for Hamburg to embark for the United States on the Amerika, but the housing question did not die. Before he left he had found two houses both of which rented for $19,000. yearly. The salary of an Ambassador at that time was $17,000. On August tenth a cable from Berlin reported that he might put

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[11] New York Times, June 28, 1913.
[12] Ibid., August 3, 1913.
[13] Ibid., August 4, 1913.

the question before the State Department.[14]

Gerard spent the remainder of August settling his affairs in New York and left for Washington September fifth to confer with Wilson and William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State. On September sixth he took the oath of office, returned to New York, and resigned from the court at Albany.[15] On the evening of September eighth a farewell dinner was given for Gerard by thirty members of Tammany Hall. The dinner was highlighted by a poetic eulogy which closed with the lines,

> So here's to you, Mr. Justice, and good luck in all you do;
> We'll hope you'll miss the fellows, for we know we'll miss you;
> And pray you tell the Kaiser if he asks you who you am
> That in New York the Tiger claims you, but you're sent by Uncle Sam.[16]

Gerard asked reporters to forget about this rhyme, possibly because it implied obligations to Tammany Hall, a favor which obviously they refused to grant. On September ninth he embarked for Europe on the Kronprinzerein Cecilie.[17]

The new Ambassador arrived in Berlin on October sixth, and was received on the same day by Gottlieb von Jagow, the Foreign Minister, who arranged an audience with the Kaiser. He established temporary headquarters in the Hotel Esplanade and continued his house hunting. The Imperial Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, received him on October fifteenth, and his first audience with the Kaiser took place

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[14] Ibid., August 6, 7, 10, 1913. When Gerard arrived home reporters interviewed him on the reported resignation threat but he declined to comment. Later, however, he told friends that he had been interviewed by a German reporter who knew little English and Gerard knew little German. Gerard told the reporter that he intended to resign but he meant from the Supreme Court of New York not from the Ambassadorship. The reporter did not undefstand and reported the resignation story, which an American reporter saw and cabled home. Ibid., August 17, 1913.

[15] New York Times, September 7, 1913.

[16] Ibid., September 9, 1913.

[17] Ibid.

a few days later. His formal debut was completed, on October thirty-first, when the Kaiserin received him.[18]

Mrs. Gerard arrived in Berlin in late October and, with her advice, the Ambassador rented the Von Schwabach Palace in Wilhelm Platz to serve as the Embassy. His staff included Lanier Winslow, his private secretary, Embassy secretaries Joseph C. Grew, Willing Spencer, and Albert R. Ruddock, and Naval Attache Captain Walter Gherardi.[19]

The Ambassador early took up the social pursuits required of one in his position. He wrote Colonel House that he was

> taking an active part in the American Benevolent Society, the American Church (where Lanier and I sit every Sunday in the front pew), the American Institute, and the American Lunch Club, the American Association of Commerce and Traders, etc., and my wife will become President of the American Woman Club, . . .[20]

Gerard made his diplomatic debut in late November, at which time he received some two hundred guests, including the representatives of all the major countries. From that time on he entered the social swirl and the period of his Ambassadorship from then until July of 1914, is largely a record, unimportant for the purposes of this study, of the social life of the diplomatic corps in Berlin.[21]

Although most of Gerard's first year in Berlin was taken up by social events, he did, on occasion, conduct diplomatic business of one sort or another. For example, on November eighth he called at the Foreign Office and conferred with Dr. Alfred Zimmerman, Undersecretary

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[18] New York Times, October 7, 16, 30, November 1, 1913.
[19] Ibid., October 12, 26, 1913.
[20] Seymour, op. cit., I, 187.
[21] New York Times, November 19, 1913, Gerard, My Four Years, 20-57.

of State for Foreign Affairs, in fegards to the Mexican situation.[22] No information as to exactly what was said or what conclusions were reached, if any, has been found.

That Mr. Gerard had a year of relative inactivity to learn the channels of diplomacy before the World War broke out is perhaps very fortunate. He did not confine himself to ordinary channels. For example, since the German Government had refused to take part in the San Francisco Exposition, which was to take place in 1914, the Ambassador apparently attempted to appeal to the German people over the heads of their rulers when, in his Chirstmas greeting to them, published in the Berlin Lokal Anzeiger, he inserted the statement that,

> America's Christmas celebration is a little darkened by the fact that our German cousins do not wish to participate in the San Francisco Exposition, but I sincerely hope the incident will in no way effect the hearty relations between Germany and the United States.[23]

Gerard had excellent methods of gathering information and the ability to assess the facts and draw valid conclusions. This is illustrated by the report of his activities in connection with the attempt to get Germany to sign one of Bryan's "Treaties for the advancement of the General Peace."[24] Gerard reported:

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[22] Ibid., November 8, 1913. Both the United States and Germany, as well as most other large countries, had large property interests in Mexico which, beginning in 1911, had gone through a series of revolutions. These disturbances had caused great loss to many investors and, because of the unstable condition of the government, there was constant fear that more losses would be incured.

[23] Ibid., December 25, 1913.

[24] These treaties provided that, in any dispute between the signatories, a twelve months "cooling off period" would be observed before hostilities would be undertaken.

> Have not only tried regular authorities but have made other repeated efforts and talked with professors, members of parliament, etc. Find public opinion here against the treaty, not on the ground that they are unfriendly to the United States but because if they signed with us they might be asked to sign by some European nation and if they refused that nation refusal would seem hostile and to sign would be to throw away the advantage Germany has as the result of great sacrifice in being European nation readiest for immediate and decisive blow in war.[25]

Of course Mr. Gerard also had a considerable amount of official leg-work to do. For example, in early May, 1914, he was instructed to deliver the official thanks of the United States Government to the German Government for the aid of her warships in assisting Americans to reach United States warships at Tampico in one of the many disturbances incident to the Mexican Revolution which was going on at that time. This chore was carried out immediately.[26]

Thus Gerard continued to perform his duties and suddenly found himself faced, in July 1914, with a task so large and one that required such a vast amount of ingenuity as to tax the capacities of a man trained from birth in the ways of statescraft and diplomacy.

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[25] Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914 War Supplement, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1928), 3n.

[26] For. Rel., 1914, 682-683, New York Times, May 7, 1914.

CHAPTER III

THE BURDENS OF WAR

Ambassador Gerard was at the annual Kiel Regatta, in company with the diplomatic corps and the Kaiser, enjoying the social life of the German upper class, when the first of the immediate events leading up to the first World War occurred. The assasination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Austrian throne occurred on June 28, 1914, and the news reached Kiel on the same day. This created a flurry of activity and the Kaiser left on his yacht, leaving strict orders that the regatta was to go on as planned. The diplomatic corps was undisturbed by the assassination and saw in it no danger to the peace of Europe.[1]

Gerard left the affair shortly thereafter and returned to Berlin. In a letter to Colonel House, on July seventh, he described the reaction to the news when it was received at Keil and ended with the statement, interesting in the light of later events, that, "Berlin is as quiet as the grave. . . . "[2]

The American Ambassador, along with most of the other diplomats in Europe, saw no danger to peace in the assassination and proceeded with his plans as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred.[3] The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was delivered on July twenty-third, but Gerard was not alarmed, for four days later he cabled the State Department that,

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[1] Gerard, My Four Years, 104-106.
[2] Seymour, op. cit., I, 270.
[3] Gerard, My Four Years, 106-107.

"I have reason to believe matters will be arranged without general European war."[4] However, the situation, as it developed in the next few days, caused him to change his opinion and, on July thirtieth, he cabled, "Think Germany's efforts toward peace fruitless and general European war certain."[5] The next day he cabled, "In my opinion Russia's mobilization makes war inevitable."[6] Austria's declaration of war on Serbia, July twenty eighth, began a chain reaction which led to a general European war. Germany declared war on Russia on August first and on August third she declared war on France. She invaded Belgium on August fourth and England declared war on Germany the same day. England claimed that she entered the war solely to save Belgium, but Gerard knew that England would enter three days before the invasion. He cabled the State Department on August first that, "My opinion, based on preparation of British Embassy to leave and other information, England will be in war."[7] And early on August fourth he cabled, "I think war with England question of hours."[8]

Ambassador Gerard, as the representative of the most important neutral country, found himself faced with many problems. One of the first and most important questions raised was, which countries would have the status of neutrals, which would be belligerents, and in which areas of the world the war would be conducted. Gerard was instructed by the State Department, on August eleventh, to ascertain whether or not the German Government would assent to have the Far East considered a neutral area.

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[4] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 16.
[5] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 21.
[6] Ibid., 21.
[7] Ibid., 27.
[8] Ibid., 42.

He transmitted the German reply a few days later. Germany agreed to maintain the status quo in the Far East if the other belligerents would also agree.[9] Gerard indirectly answered the question thus raised two days later, when he notified the State Department that, "Many Japanese [are] getting money and leaving. Twelve Japanese officers left in one party yesterday."[10]

Germany agreed to the neutrality of Liberia on August eighth. Gerard notified the State Department, on August twenty-second, that Germany requested the good offices of the United States in obtaining the assent of the interested powers to Article XI of the Congo Act of 1885 relative to the colonies lying within the conventional free trade zone of Africa.[11] This included German East Africa. In the same cable he reported that Germany alleged that Great Britain had already committed two hostile acts there in the bombardment of the Dar-es-salaam and the seizure of the steamer Wissman on Lake Nyassa. The State Department replied that, since the United States had not ratified the act, it was not in a position to take any action.[12] In reply to this Gerard pointed out that Germany had merely asked for good offices and the fact that the United States had not ratified the act was irrelevant. Even then, the State Department requested an explanation of the position which Germany wanted the United States to take, and, on September twentieth, Gerard cabled that all she wanted was for the United States to act as messenger. By this time however it was too late for

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[9] For. Rel., 167, 169-170.

[10] Ibid., 1914 Suppl., 170. Japan declared war on Germany on August 23, 1914.

[11] This act was the agreement reached at an international congress in Berlin in 1884, in which the European powers agreed upon the boundaries and government of the Congo Basin.

[12] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 77-78, 80.

any effective action. France turned the proposal down on October fifth charging that Germany had started the hostilities in Africa.[13]

Gerard again demonstrated his astuteness at observation when he correctly predicted the entrance of Turkey into the conflict. That country abolished the capitulations[14] early in the war. The Entente powers attempted to lay the blame for this on Germany, but Gerard's cable of September twelfth indicated that he believed the German story that the Entente had offered to trade the capitulations for Turkish neutrality, but that she had refused and gone ahead and abolished them anyway.[15] Gerard reported, September nineteenth, that the "Turkish fleet [is] being remanned by Germans and [I] think [she] will soon be in war."[16] And on October twelfth he cabled, "On authority think hostilities between Turkey and Russia will commence soon and that ex-German ships . . . with rest of Turkish fleet will attack Russian Fleet in the Black Sea."[17] The surprise bombardment of the Russian city of Odessa took place on October twenty-ninth.

When the war broke out there were thousands of Americans, in Germany and many of them were short of funds. The repatriation of these people was one of Gerard's chief problems. In the cable in which he declared war inevitable, sent on July thirty-first, the Ambassador asked for dispatch boats to bring food and gold to aid in getting these Americans home. He also suggested the use of German passenger ships, under international agreement, to transport Americans to the United

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[13] For. Rel, 1914 Suppl., 106, 107, 11-112, 117.
[14] The Turkish form of extraterritoriallity.
[15] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 104.
[16] Ibid., 111.
[17] Ibid., 118.

States. On the next day he repeated his requests. On August second he was still cabling these requests and stated that Americans were not being permitted to cash checks.[18] The State Department made no specific acknowledgment of Gerard's requests but, on August first, did dispatch a circular telegram to diplomatic officers in belligerent countries instructing them to do everything possible to aid Americans.[19]

The above circumstance may account for the fact that, on August third, the New York Times published an appeal from Gerard for funds for stranded Americans. In this appeal he stated that the Embassy had been swamped by people seeking passports, advice, and financial aid. Two days later he received assurances that the U. S. S. Tennesee was on her way to help in the task of repatriation.[20] He assembled a staff of volunteer helpers and, on August ninth issued orders for all Americans desiring to leave Germany to enroll at the Embassy.

On August thirteenth the first train of refugees, under Gerard's supervision, arrived in Holland. In addition to these tasks he pressed vigorously cases in which American citizens were mistaken for Englishmen and arrested as spies. For example, F. W. Wile, a New York Times correspondent was arrested as an English spy. Gerard was able to obtain almost instant release for him, as well as for others similarly charged.[21] Mr. Wile felt that he was expressing the sentiments of many in like circumstances when he said, "I cannot speak too gratefully of the promptness and vigor with which Ambassador Gerard intervened."[22]

Certain banks began to cash checks for Americans when they bore the stamp of the Embassy and this relieved the financial straits of some of

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[18] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 26-27, 30.
[19] Ibid., 721.
[20] Ibid., 93, New York Times, August 3, 1914.
[21] New York Times, August 9, 12, 13, 14, 1914.
[22] Ibid., August 9, 1914.

those seeking passage home.[23]

Mr. Gerard requested the State Department to make arrangements for German liners stranded in New York Harbor to come to Germany, under the American flag, pick up Americans, and return to the United States to stay for the duration of the war. The Department agreed to take the matter up with France and England but France refused to agree to the arrangements. The State Department made an attempt to charter them for the trip but both France and England objected to that, and Gerard was forced to utilize only neutral shipping.[24] In at least one case Gerard found it necessary to repatriate a person against his will. This was the case of Karl Nickerson Llewellyn, a twenty-one year old American student who had enlisted in the German army. The boy's father notified the Ambassador of this and Gerard immediately contacted Kaiser Wilhelm, who ordered the boy's dismissal.[25] This is illustrative of another of the many methods which Gerard used to accomplish his ends. By mid-October the press of repatriation had slackened and ceased to be a major Embassy activity.

An important phase of the Ambassador's work throughout the period of American neutrality, was that of the handling of the affaird of countries which were at war with Germany. On August 1, 1914, the day that Germany declared war on Russia, he cabled that he would probably be asked to take over some embassies at Berlin and that he would do so unless he was instructed to the contrary. Receiving no reply from the State Department, the next day he again asked for instruction on this point.

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[23] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 96.
[24] Ibid., 479-480, 484-485, 492.
[25] New York Times, November 19, 1914.

With no answer to his questions forthcoming, he proceeded, on August fifth, to take over the English Embassy.[26] Thus he became the representative of British interests in Germany. His first problem in this capacity was the repatriation of British subjects caught in Germany, and in this connection he proceeded to use the tactics he was already beginning to find highly successful with Americans. He made a public appeal to the British people for funds to aid in this enterprise much in the same way that he had with Americans.[27] The State Department, on August seventh, took cognizance of the fact the war had imposed new responsibilities on many of its representatives and issued a telegram of general instructions. They were instructed to use only their unofficial good offices, but at the same time were fully empowered to make representations on complaints made by people under their protection.[28] The Ambassador in Berlin proceeded to exceed the spirit of these instructions, at least in the eyes of the Department. On August eighteenth Walter Hines Page, the American Ambassador to England, cabled that he had received the following message from Gerard:

> Please inform British Government that I advise them to allow no Germans to leave England or any British Dominions until I obtain leave British subjects to leave Germany.[29]

Page stated that he considered such a message too important to act on without instructions. The Department proceeded to praise Mr. Page and to reprimand Mr. Gerard.[30] Gerard immediatly answered the reprimand in a

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[26] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 26-27, 30, 94.

[27] New York Times, August 8, 1914. No information has been obtained as to the response.

[28] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 740-741.

[29] Ibid., 739.

[30] Ibid. The Department told Page that he was right and informed Gerard that "such an exchange of communications should not be made through the good offices of the United States."

statement which illustrates both his methods and his concept of his duties. He said,

> My telegram to our Embassy at London was based on supposition that I was to safeguard British interests in Germany to the best of my ability and also on the ground of common humanity. As British Government was allowing Germans to leave England and as British subjects were without grounds being held here, many under conditions of hardship, and as hundreds had appealed to me for release, the advisability of an early understanding regarding mutual exchange was transmitted. My hope was that our Embassy at London would be able to communicate my suggestions to the British Foreign Office in an informal and confidential manner. Nevertheless, in order to avoid any possible indiscretion, I frankly told Foreign Office here that since British interests were confided to my charge I felt it my duty to make such a recomendation. My action has undoubtedly hastened action here as Germany has now consented to redeem all British subjects if England takes reciprocal measures, and I have informed our London Embassy to this effect.[31]

The State Department did not mention the incident again. Though his own government was displeased at Gerard's actions, the British Government conveyed its official thanks to the United States, for Gerard's activities on behalf of British subjects.[32]

Gerard continued to have occasional "brushes" with Walter Hines Page. For example, on September twenty-eighth, Page cabled the Department that Gerard was communicating directly with the Mayors of Folkstone and Harwich and the Lord Mayor of London rather than sending messages on returning Englishmen through his Embassy. Gerard was promptly reprimanded for these actions and out of this, at least in part, came the circular telegram of October fifth instructing representatives

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[31] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 740.
[32] New York Times, August 30, 31, 1914.

of the interests of a belligerent country to send information as to prisoners or other subjects through the American representative in the country concerned and all other communications through the Department. However, an escape clause providing for other means at the discretion of the representative was included, so that actions of the nature of the above cited were not entirely forbidden.[33]

Proceeding through the ruffled feelings raised by such incidents, Gerard managed to accomplish much in the way of carrying out his objective of repatriating as many Englishmen as was possible.[34]

As the representative of British interests in Germany, Gerard was required to make periodical inspections of German prison camps where Englishmen were held. The performance of this duty provided the Ambassador with many of his most knotty problems and hottest controversies. Robert Lansing, the Acting Secretary of State, cabled Gerard, on October 26, 1914, that the suggestion had been made that a certain Chandler Anderson be allowed to inspect conditions in the prison camps in Germany and also that he report on conditions in prison camps in England. Gerard apparently considered this a good idea but when he received Anderson's report on conditions in England, which was made prior to the proposed trip to Germany, the Ambassador objected that the report did not contain sufficient information. The German Government would allow Anderson to come to Germany only if reciprocal inspections of the camps in England were allowed. These conditions were agreed to and

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[33] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 743, 744.
[34] New York Times, October 21, 1914.

Anderson proceeded to inspect the camps in Germany.[35]

The German Government now expected reciprocity on the agreement and apparently expected Page to do the job. Ambassador Page objected strenuously to this. At the same time he defended his neutrality against charges that he was pro-British which Anderson had heard in Berlin. In the latter connection he said,

> I need not say that this Embassy has acted with as rigid neutrality as the Government at Washington itself, and has served the German interests within your instructions with utmost zeal and care.[36]

Apparently because of the rumors referred to by Page and because it felt that it was the inspections which were giving rise to them, the State Department, on November twentieth, ordered the inspections suspended.[37] In answer to this order Gerard sent a long cable to the Department in which he cited the negotiations and arrangements step by step and then said,

> . . . . The whole object of allowing Anderson to come into my jurisdiction was to allow the British to see that prisoners were well treated in Germany but he came on condition that someone named by me from here should visit the camps in England. I must respectfully urge that if it was necessary for Anderson to come here to convince the British, it is just as necessary that someone from here should go to England to convince the Germans; and besides Anderson having been admitted under an understanding, the other side of the understanding should be carried out. The German Government feels, to put it mildly, that the issue of the order under these circumstances was not quite fair . . . . I assure you this matter is of the utmost importance.[38]

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[35] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 751-753.

[36] Ibid., 753. This manifesto is interesting in view of the latter evaluations of Page which gave rise to the well know anonymous saying, "Walter Hines Page was the best Ambassador the British ever had."

[37] Ibid., 754.

[38] Ibid., 754-755. That Gerard had an inkling of Page's part in the affair is illustrated in a question asked in a letter to Colonel House in which he inquired whether the order had anything to do with a possible aversion on the part of Page to the inspection of camps. Seymour, op. cit., I, 346.

The Department then declared that its intent had been only to avoid the charge of unneutrality and that, under the circumstances, a request would be made of England that the inspections be permitted. This was duly made and, on January 2, 1915, granted.[39]

Gerard continued to make inspections of the camps and reported both to his government and to the governments directly concerned. Through the Spring and Summer of 1915 he reported generally favorable conditions.[40] However, in late November the British Government published correspondence from Gerard which indicated that conditions at the prison camp at Wittenberg, Prussia, were very bad. Robert Lansing, now Secretary of State, objected to this publication and the New York Times agreed with him. On December twentieth the German Government published a statement which accused the British Government of distortion by omission in that it had published only the bad report even after Gerard had stipulated that it publish all or none.[41]

As the war progressed and as the British blockade tightened, conditions like those found at Wittenberg became more prevalent, by mid-1916 Gerard was reporting that,

> The prisoner question on all sides is growing acute . . . .
> The prison food now is a starvation ration.
> Two Irishmen were shot recently at Limberg.[42]

And three weeks later he again reported,

> The treatment of prisoners is going from bad to worse.
> The Chancellor and Foreign Office can do nothing . . . [43]

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[39] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 756.

[40] Ibid., 1011-1012, 1018; New York Times, May 1, 5, June 30, July 22, August 10, 1915.

[41] New York Times, November 21, 22, December 1, 21, 1915.

[42] Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: The Lansing Papers 1914-1920 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1939-1940), I, 690.

[43] Ibid., I, 692.

The American Ambassador struggled constantly to get better treatment for the prisoners in so far as it was possible. That his work in this phase of his activities was relatively successful is certified by Lord Robert Cecil, British Minister of War Trade, who in transferring prisoner affairs to other hands, said that he wished to express,

> . . . in the strongest language at my command the deep debt of gratitude which this country owes to Ambassador Gerard in securing better conditions for British prisoners . . . . This relative decency [of treatment] is due almost entirely to the exertions of the American Embassy.[44]

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[44]New York Times, October 1, 1916.

CHAPTER IV

THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF NEUTRALS

As has been previously pointed out the American Ambassador to Berlin, as the representative of the most important neutral nations, was faced with many problems some of which have already been treated in the consideration of the early phases of the war. These include repatriation, and the handling of belligerent business.

These, however, were only a few of the considerations which governed his activities. To further illustrate the diversity of his responsibilities many minor problems incidental to neutrality but bearing more directly on it may be noted.

On August 7, 1914 he notified his government that the German Foreign Office had advised him that mines were being strewn in various ports and sea lanes and that shippers should be warned of it. It may be noted that Gerard was guilty of inaccuracy in his transmittal of this note. His summary construed the note to mean that German ports were strewn with mines when the actual note, not received by the State Department until the archives of the Embassy were reopened in 1920, referred only to enemy ports which might serve as points of departure for attacks on Germany and for the shipment of troops.[1]

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[1] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 454, 454n.

The German-American cable was cut in the first days of the war and the German Government asked permission to use the wireless station at Tuckerton, New Jersey, for the transmittal of messages to Germany and for the receipt of them from that country. After ascertaining, through Gerad, that the German Government had no connection with the station, the United States Government agreed to the use of this method under strict rules of censorship. This arrangement was accepted by the German Government.[2]

In early September of 1914 Gerard found himself faced with the ticklish problem of passing judgment on allegations of the use by the Entente powers of dum-dum bullets.[3] Specimens were turned over to him and he forwarded them to the Department of State. With them he sent a message in which he said that he thought it best to stay out of such a controversy as any judgment would arouse bitter feeling. The Department approved his point of view.[4]

Illustrative of the many minor details which required the attention of the Ambassador is a dispatch, of October 27, 1914, in which letters from various antiquarian societies in the United States asking the German Government to preserve old buildings and historical landmarks were enclosed. Gerard transmitted these very unrealistic documents to the Foreign Office without comment.[5]

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[2] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 673-674, 676-677.

[3] These were bullets with a soft lead core, partially encased in steel, which expand on striking. Although much used in big-game hunting, these bullets were generally agreed to be inhuman when used in hunting men.

[4] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 794, 796-798.

[5] Ibid., 805.

Another problem which appeared from time to time was that of censorship and interference with news and mail. On November 14, 1914, he reported to the Department that, since German regulations required consular mail to go unsealed, he had instructed consular officials to use the Embassy pouches. His action was approved in the form of rules for the transmittal of consular mail issued by the Department soon after.[6] On December fourth of the same year Gerard registered a protest to the fact that, in the view of the German Government, Great Britain was responsible for non-delivery of telegrams from neutral countries to New Orleans and Memphis relative to cotton shipments. This it was felt was an attempt by Britain to make inoperative her agreement that cotton was non-contraband.[7] The censorship issue appeared again in late August of 1916 when American reporters in Berlin addressed a protest to Gerard on the British censorship of news which was, necessarily, sent from Berlin via England to the United States. He transmitted the protest without comment on the grounds that he could not endorse it unless Germany lifted her censorship.[8]

Gerard also found himself involved from time to time almost throughout his stay in Berlin in the problems arising out of the attempts to provide relief to civilians living within the area overrun by the German Army. The chief areas for which these attempts were made were Belgium

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[6] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 541-542.

[7] Ibid., 521.

[8] "A Misunderstood Ambassador", Literary Digest LIII (September 6, 1916), 633; New York Times, August 19, 20, 1916. Gerard failed to differentiate between Germany as the source of the information and Great Britain as the relay point.

and Poland. Negotiations for the relief of Belgium began on October 7, 1914, with a request from the State Department to Gerard to sound out the German Government on the proposal that neutrals ship food and clothing to Belgium for distribution, under the supervision of American commissioners, to the civilian population. Ten days later he cabled that Germany assented to the plan. Negotiations on details connected with this continued through October and November, and on December fourth it was announced that the program had been approved by all parties concerned and that operations would start immediately. Gerard, in recognition for his work in effecting the approval of these measures, was made an Honorary Chairman of the Committee for Belgian Relief, the administrative establishment for this undertaking.[9] The question of Polish relief did not come up until 1916, and, though negotiations of one sort or another continued throughout the year, there was no concrete result. The only effect from the viewpoint of Mr. Gerard was to load him down with additional work.[10]

Gerard was also faced with many problems of relief growing out of the British blockade established November 3, 1914.[11] The commissioning of Red Cross ships and the getting of medical supplies to the Central Powers were problems of late 1914.[12] From December 27, 1915 to October 13, 1916 a controversy, in which Gerard acted as a go-between, raged over whether or not it was necessary to supply milk from outside sources for German babies. American doctors conducted surveys and the final decision

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[9] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 809-810, 819; New York Times, December 4, 23, 1914.

[10] Ibid., 895-913, New York Times, May 23, August 9, 1916.

[11] See above, p. 33.

[12] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 828, 831.

was that there was no need to take relief measures.[13] And early in 1916 Gerard attempted to get England to allow rubber gloves for medical use to be imported to Germany. He kept on trying throughout the year but with no success.[14]

The United States as a large trading neutral was from the first vitally interested in keeping as many of the avenues of world trade open as was possible, and on August 6, 1914 Wilson asked the belligerent powers to observe the rules provided in the Declaration of London of 1909, a set of rules for naval warfare which had been signed by the major powers but which had never been ratified. On August tenth Gerard transmitted to the State Department the assurance of the German Government that she would adhere to the prize ordinances of the Declaration with respect to contraband of war, on condition that the other powers also adhered. The State Department, on August ninteenth, repeated its request for the position of Germany relative to the Declaration and Gerard reiterated his cable of August tenth. On August twenty-eight he asked the Department for information on the British and French attitude on the Declaration and transmitted citations of a series of incidents in which they had not adhered to it. England agreed, on September eighth, to observe the Declaration, subject to a long series of reservations and, as time passed, she added constantly to the contraband list. So many conditions were imposed as to make dependence on the Declaration valueless, and by late October the United States was forced to fall back on international law.[15]

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[13] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 957-971.
[14] Ibid., 914.
[15] Ibid., 216, 217, 220, 223.

In the three decades prior to 1914 Germany had gone through a revolution both in the manufacturing and in the extractive industries. With this change the United States had come to depend upon her for supplies of certain materials, the most important of which were dyestuffs, cotton prints, cyanide, potash, pharmaceutical supplies, and certain synthetic products. With the beginning of the war and the establishment and tightening of the British blockade these supplies were in danger of being cut off. Thus, on August 20, 1914, the State Department asked Gerard to obtain information as to the availability of these products. A week later he answered that several firms were ready to ship large quantities of them but awaited assurances that they would not be seized if shipped under the Dutch flag. There was a particular need for cyanide, a necessary material in the mining of gold, and on September seventh the State Department authorized Gerard to give assurances that none would be reexported if shipped to the United States. However, Germany, still fearing seizure by the British, would not allow shipment unless it was done in American bottoms.[16] Gerard in an attempt to explain this attitude cabled the Department that,

> I think this is the fact, that England has threatened Holland that she will declare war if Holland ships carry goods to or from Germany, and that Germany does not force the situation to keep Holland neutral at all events. This is confirmed by a conversation which must remain confidential which I had with the Dutch Minister here. He told me that because of informal threats from England, Dutch vessels sailing from New York were compelled to refuse cargoes of flour or anything that might benefit Germany.[17]

On September twenty-fifth Germany agreed to the shipment of these

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[16] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 406, 409, 410.
[17] Ibid., 411.

materials on Dutch, Italian, and American ships if the United States would guarantee them against reexport and would agree to rpotest any seizure under international law. On October fifth Gerard expressed his belief to the State Department that Germany wanted American ships to be used so that they would bring cotton for use in Germany and said that he thought that any American ships coming in ballast would not be allowed to load. However, before this message reached the attention of the Department an American ship, the Matanzas, for which it had made the necessary arragements, had already left New York in ballast. The State Department immediately informed Gerard that future ships would carry raw cotton. Private guarantees had been given that the goods would not be reexported but, on October fourteenth, Gerard cabled that these were insufficient. Five days later the Department agreed to have the importers execute bond and gave full assurances of the Federal Government that no reexports would be allowed. Germany accepted these assurances and dyestuffs and other materials were shipped.[18] On October twenty-eight the German embargo on potash was also lifted. And on the same date the Department informed Gerard that England would not consider cotton contraband and asked the attitude of the German Government on this point. On November eleventh Gerard replied that Germany would consider it non-contraban as long as the other powers did.[19] Thus by late 1914 trade between the United States and Germany, which had been frozen by the outbreak of the war, was revived to a desultory exchange, but, as the war progressed and the belligerents became more desperate, even this was to shrink to a trickle and all but disappear.

In the first months of the war Gerard's dispatches indicated that he accepted the German point of view on the principal problems that

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[18] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 411-417.
[19] Ibid., 290-291, New York Times, October 29, 1914.

arose. However, as the months passed he began to veer in the direction of the Allied point of view on the controversies arising out of the munitions trade and unrestricted submarine warfare, though he continued to urge his government to take steps toward peace until early 1917.

Early in the war munitions makers in the United States began selling their products to any of the belligerents who would buy them, but, since the Entente powers controlled the sea for the most part, they were the only ones to benefit from this trade. Gerard cabled the State Department on November 29, 1914 that there were rumors that the German Government was displeased by this sale of American war materials to England and France.[20] And again on December fourth he informed the State Department that there was, "Universal, very bitter, and increasing feeling in Germany because of reported sale by Americans of munitions of war, etc., to Allies. Boycotting of American goods already beginning."[21] Gerard, in an interview with German reporters, on January 13, 1915 when asked to reconcile the rumored shipment of munitions with neutrality, stated the position of the United States was that these shipments did not constitute a violation of international law since they were made by private individuals who stood ready to fill the same type of orders for Germany. However, he conceded the "difficulty" of the British bockade.[22] As January passed the pressure on Gerard apparently became greater. On January twentieth he wrote Colonel House that the only way to satisfy the Germans with respect to the munitions question was to join them in the war.[23] Perhaps the

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[20] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 417.
[21] Ibid., 578.
[22] New York Times, January 13, 1915.
[23] Seymour, op. cit., I, 345-346.

attitude of the American Ambassador was changing from one of exasperation to one of worry for, on January twnety-foruth, he wrote Wilson that,

> I do not think that the people in America realize how excited the Germans have become on the question of selling munitions of war by Americans to the Allies. A veritable campaign of hate has been commenced against America and Americans . . . .
> Zimmerman showed me a long list, . . . of orders placed with American concerns by the Allies. He said that perhaps it was as well to have the whole world against Germany, and that in case of trouble there were five hundred thousand trained Germans in America who would join the Irish and start a revolution.[24]

By mid-February Gerard was reporting that the "hate campaign" had assumed grave proportions and that the reported use by the British liner Lusitania, of the American flag when in the Irish Channel was adding immeasurably to it. He was convinced that the campaign was at least approved by the German Government.[25]

The State Department, on February twentieth, sent identical notes to the powers in which it proposed that food be allowed to enter Germany, under the supervision of American officials, for the use of the civilian population. Four days later Gerard cabled that he thought Germany was inclied to accept the proposition but probably would want raw materials too for non-military uses. On the twenty-sixth he reiterated this belief.[26] In a cable to the Department on the next day Gerard suggested the use of neutral supervisors and advised

> . . . that you then say that if Germany accepts the proposition contained [in] the identical note the United States will put an embargo on the export of arms unless England and her allies agree to accept the same proposition.[27]

The Department informed Gerard, on March second, that it "regretted" that it could not accept his suggestion and this attempt to reopen German

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[24]Seymour, op. cit., I, 355. This statement of Zimmerman's was the occasion for Mr. Gerard's reported rejoinder that there were five hundred thousand and one lampposts in American to hang them from. National Cyclopaedia, A, 169.

[25]Seymour, op. cit., I, 123, 126. See below pp. 52-53.

[26]For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 101, 103.

[27]Ibid., 126.

markets to American agricultural products fell through.[28]

The "hate campaign" was revived again in mid-March. Gerard cabled that official accounts of the fighting in France stated that the French were using large quantities of American made amunition.

> This can only have been published with the express desire of the Government to stir up hatred against America and I therefore expect the hate campaign will commence again. Three weeks ago, although it is hard for you in America to realize it, Germany was on the edge of war with the United States and the Government here seems bent upon again stirring up trouble . . .[29]

On March fifteenth he began to change the view he had taken on the identical note of February twentieth by stating,

> . . . The hate against the United States persists. Even if an embargo should be placed on the export of arms, this would not do away with the hatred against the United States which existed prior to the war and is based on more far reaching causes.[30]

The submarine controversy[31] came to overshadow other problems in the ensuing months but the munitions question was not far in the background. The German people were very vocal in their criticism of the United States and its policy, and Gerard bore the brunt of their irritation. In July of 1915 he wrote House:

> . . . Perhaps it is worth a war to have it decided that the United States of America is not to be run from Berlin. The people here are firmly convinced that we can be slapped, insulted, and murdered with absolute impunity, and refer to our notes [on the submarine war] as things worse than waste paper . . . .
>
> I hope the President never gives in on the arms (export) question; if he ever gives in on that, we might as well hoist the German Eagle on the Capitol.[32]

The Ambassador felt the "hate campaign" keenly, and it may have been one

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[28] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 129.
[29] Ibid., 138.
[30] Ibid., 19.
[31] See below, ch. VI.
[32] Seymour, op. cit., II, 23.

influence in his growing anti-German bias. On July twenty-seventh, he informed House that, "It is not pleasant to be the object of the hate of so many millions, as the Germans naturally find in poor me a present object for concentrated hate."[33]

Gerard still protested to some of the acts in the United States in aid of the Allies in late 1915, but the idea that his country was next on the list should Germany win the war in Europe was rapidly gaining ground. He wrote Lansing, on October twenty-fifth:

> The Germans are very bitter against our Embassy at Petrograd [David R. Francis]. Also at the loan [to the Allies] in America, and especially at the attendant banquets to the loan commissioners - must say these banquets are not very neutral.
>
> I hope were are getting ready for defense - if these people win we are next on the list - in some part of South or Central America which is the same thing.[34]

On November second he wrote House, "I am really afraid of war against us after this war - if Germany wins."[35] He continued to sow the seeds of alarm in 1916 with such statements as: "Every night fifty million Germans cry themselves to sleep because all Mexico has not risen against us."[36] And again, "The Widespread sentiment of the German people, especially the ruling class, is that Germany is only waiting until the end of this war to be revenged on the United States . . . . "[37]

While Gerard was on his trip to the United States in the Fall of 1916,[38] he talked with General Leonar Wood at some length. In describing

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[33] Seymour, op. cit., II. 26.
[34] Lansing Papers, I, 664-665.
[35] Seymour, op. cit., II, 81.
[36] Ibid., II, 246.
[37] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 264.
[38] See below, pp. 49-50.

this conversation in his diary, Wood wrote,

> He is very bitter against the administration and its policy . . . . [he] states that the Germans hate us and will come after us at the first opportunity. They are especially bitter over the U-boat protest, and above all, because of our shipping ammunition in large quantities . . . . He says that the weakness of our policy is enouraging aggression on the part of Germany . . . . Gerard feels that the Germans are laying for us and that we have trouble ahead. . . .
> Gerard seems thoroughly disgusted and discouraged . . . . [39]

Perhaps as early as July of 1915 and certainly by October of 1917 Gerard had apparently become convinced that the Allies were fighting the battle for the United States.

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[39] Hermann Hagedom, Leonard Wood: A Biography (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), II, 198.

CHAPTER V

ATTEMPTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACE

Although Wilson offered the good offices of the United States to the belligerents on August 4, 1941,[1] he did not again make a concrete peace move until December of 1916. The President was often pressed by Gerard but the desired action never materialized.

Colonel House, in a letter dated August 17, 1914, told Gerard to sound out the German Government unofficially as to the possibilities for peace, and, on September seventh, the State Department issued a similar order. Five days later Gerard cabled the Department that he had presented the matter but felt that the time was not yet ripe. However, on September fourteenth he transmitted a verbal message from the Chancellor which he felt was a possible opening for mediation.[2] Four days later President Wilson announced that he did not consider that the message had contained anything tangible and decided to desist in his peace attempts until the situation was more stabilized.[3]

This policy was followed until, on February 11, 1915, Gerard sent the following cable to the State Department:

> It is my conviction from knowledge secured here from a variety of sources but naturally not from official circles

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[1] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 42.
[2] Seymour op. cit., I, 319-320; For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 98, 102, 104.
[3] New York Times, September 18, 19, 1914.

> as it could not be permitted by official circles that an understanding of this sort should emanate from them, that if a reasonable peace proposition were offered Germany very many men of influence would be inclined to use their efforts to induce Germany to accept the proposition. The terms would naturally develop from general discussion once negotiations were begun by the parties and the Allies should be the first to put forth the intimation, which should take the form of a secret intimation elicited by our ambassadors and then conveyed here informally . . . It is my belief that if you seize the present opportunity you will be the instrument of bringing about the greatest peace which has ever been signed, but it will be fatal to hesitate or wait a moment, success is dependent on immediate action. I hope you grasp the idea of this proposition naturally not elaborated in a cable and my great hopes of success.
>
> . . . I assume the establishment of peace is in our interest.[4]

On the following day he suggested that House might serve as intermediary in the proposals and would be especially useful in England. On February thirteenth he cabled that,

> I did not send my long cipher telegram of yesterday /?/ without having good reason.[5]

Still no acknowledgment from the Department, he wrote to House on February fifteenth that,

> . . . I am sure if a reasonable peace is proposed now (a matter of days, even hours) it would be accepted (This on my authority.)
>
> . . . This peace matter is a question almost of hours. . . . If you can get such an intimation from the Allies and then come here, it will go, to the best of my belief. I do not think the Kaiser ever actually wanted war.[6]

In its answer to his cable of the eleventh, sent February sixteenth, the Department instructed Gerard to get in touch with House and to proceed only on his instructions. He immediately acknowledged receipt

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[4] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 9-10.

[5] Ibid., 9. The fact that these three cables were received in reverse order by the State Department might provide evidence that Great Britain may have broken our diplomatic code by that time.

[6] Seymour, op. cit., I, 376-377.

of these instructions and informed the Department that the favorable moment was passing as the Germans had won a great victory over the Russians.[7]

Even though House had pressed for peace early in the war, it is quite probable that by February of 1915, with the military situation as it then stood, he did not desire to see the type of peace concluded which would necessarily have to be made at that time. Because the Central Powers were in a generally favorable military position, any peace would have been favorable to them. When Gerard's urgent messages reached him, House was in London basking in the sun of British hospitality, especially that of Sir Edward Grey, and there is much evidence to show that the Colonel was already accepting the view that any peace would have to be one which was advantageous to the Allies.[8] Whatever hopes for peace Gerard might have had were dashed by a letter which Colonel House wrote him from London on March first, in which he said, "These are slow moving people [the British], and when I undertook to tell them of your opinion that quick action was necessary . . . I saw that it was hopeless."[9] House did make a trip to Berlin in late March but nothing of value was accomplished, and, on April twenty-fifth, Gerard cabled a report of a semi-official statement appearing in the German press to the effect that there would be no peace until Germany's war

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[7] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 15, 16, 108. The victory referred to was the capture of Nadworna, the driving of the Russians in the Lotzen district back over the boundary, and other gains in northern Poland.

[8] Seymour, op. cit., I, 364-373, 379; Burton J. Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924), I, 431.

[9] Seymour, op. cit., I, 377.

aims were fulfilled as his final admission that peace was out of the question for the time being.[10]

The State Department, by mid-1915, was under the leadership of a man who predicated his whole policy on the necessary victory of the Allies. Secretary of State Bryan resigned, in early June, in protest to the sending of the second Lusitania note,[11] and his post was given to Robert Lansing, Counselor of the State Department, on June twentieth. By this time Lansing had come to the conclusion that the policy of the Department should always be based on the assumption that the United States would enter the war on the side of the Allies.[12]

There is also evidence that Woodrow Wilson, by September of 1915, had reached the point where he felt that a German victory would be a catastrophe. House wrote in his diary that "one evening in September" Wilson told him ". . . . he had never been sure that we ought not to take part in the conflict and, if it seemed evident that Germany and her militaristic ideas were to win, the obligation upon us was greater than ever."[13]

While these leaders of United States policy were taking their positions, Gerard, in early December 1915, again saw a chance for peace. He sent a report of a peace demonstration in Berlin to the Department,[14] and wrote House that peace talk was being resumed among the members of

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[10] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 29-30.

[11] See below, Ch. V, p. 55.

[12] Robert Lansing, The War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1935), 19-21, a memorandum entitled "Consideration and Outline of Policies."

[13] Seymour, op. cit., II, 84; see also Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1927-1939), V, 375-376.

[14] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 78.

the Reichstag.[15] Nothing came of this agitation, however, and when House left for Europe in late December the Department sent a circular telegram cautioning its representatives to "impress on Foreign Office that Colonel House is not on a peace mission."[16]

On this second trip to Europe House was trying to find a way to help the Allies. He visited England in January and again in February. During the second visit he and Grey initialed an agreement whereby the United States was to propose a peace which would be favorable to the Allies, and on the probable refusal of the Central Powers to accept, was to join the Allies in the war. When House returned to the United States with the agreement, Wilson inserted the qualification that the United States would probably enter the war on the side of the Allies, and praised House highly for his work.[17]

Almost to a man the other high officials in Wilson's Cabinet were convinced as were Lansing, House, and Wilson, that the Allied cause was the right one, and that part of the American public which was vocal with its convictions was probably more pro-Ally than pro-German.[18] Wilson, Congress, and the vocal public did get very much exasperated at British measures from time to time, but when it came to doing something which might hurt the Allied cause, they always stopped. By May of 1916 even this tendency was gone and the coming presidential election was more important to Wilson and to the public

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[15] Seymour, op. cit., II, 104.
[16] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 85.
[17] Seymour, op. cit., II, 122-131, 166-204.
[18] Walter Millis, Road to War: America 1913-1917 (New York: Houghton Mufflin Company, 1935), especially 44, 62, 180-184, and passim; Oswald Garrison Villard, Fighting Years: Memoirs of a Liberal Editor (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), 267.

than the British blockade and even, perhaps, the desire to bring about peace.[19] During the summer of 1916 apparently all moves for intervention and peace took a secondary place to the presidential race.

The idea that Wilson might act as a mediator in the war and, by so doing, bring about peace had been in the air for quite some time, but by early 1916 the German Foreign Office decided that at least some sort of invitation to peace by Wilson would be desirable. It seems quite clear that actual mediation was not desired but that the convening of a peace conference was wanted. Feelers were put out in an unofficial manner and Bernstoff in particular was given instruction to work for getting Wilson to convene a peace conference.[20]

Gerard apparently became aware of these feelers early for, on May second, he reported to the State Department: "Have best reason to believe Germany will welcome mediation of presentments [President ?] and any steps he may take looking to peace."[21] And on May seventeenth he wrote Lansing that ". . . the psychological moment for a peace proposal as far as this country is concerned is here."[22] He released an interview to a Munich newspaper on May twenty-sixth in which he stated that "Nothing can shake my confidence that peace is on its way . . . . I am very optimistic regarding the progress already made of the idea that the war

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[19] Millis, op. cit., 315-353; Seymour, op. cit., II, 339-386; Lansing War Memoirs, 158-173.

[20] Johann von Bernstoff, Memoirs of Count Bernstoff (New York: Random House, 1936), 150-156; Johann von Bernstoff, My Three Years in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 270-284.

[21] For. Rel, 1916 Suppl, 27.

[22] Lansing Papers, I, 685.

should be ended, even among belligerent nations."[23] However, on May thirty-first he cabled the Department that most parties in Germany were opposed to mediation by Wilson.[24] On the latter date Polo de Barnabe, the Spanish Ambassador, and Dr. Luis B. Molina, the Argentine Minister, called on Gerard to inquire as to Wilson's intentions for mediation. No information was given out. Gerard was quoted by the Act Uhr Abenblatt, on June third, as having reiterated his belief that peace would come soon. This interview was quoted by Count von Westrap, conservative leader in the Reichstag, in a speech against Wilson's mediation. Gerard denied the interview on June ninth and on the same day Von Westrap retracted his speech.[25] Meanwhile,on June seventh, Gerard had written to Lansing that,

> I do not think that either Austria or Germany wishes President Wilson to lay down any peace conditions, there may possibly be a Congress after the Peace Congress but meanwhile all parties here feel that America has nothing to do with peace negotiations . . . . I think that generally there is a big change in public opinion and the Germans are beginning to realize that the President is for peace with Germany . . . [26]

Wilson received a message from Gerard, via House, on June twenty-eighth, that, in spite of intemperate remarks in the Reichstag, he should not consider himself unwelcome as a "mediator".[27] Still Wilson did not act.

Gerard made still another try on September twenty-fifth by cabling the State Department that,

> Germany anxious to make peace. I can state on best authority that if the President will make offer of good offices in general terms . . . that Germany will accept in general terms immediately and state readiness to send

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[23] New York Times, May 28, 1916.
[24] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 32, 33.
[25] New York Times, June 2, 5, 10, 11, 1916.
[26] Lansing Papers, I, 688. The reference to a "Congress after the Peace Congress" is obscure.
[27] Baker, op. cit., VI, 229m.

> delegates to proposed peace conference . . . . Of course utmost secrecy desirable as, if any hint augurs that suggestion comes from here and not as spontaneous act of the President, whole matter will fail and be denied.[28]

Three days later Gerard left Copenhagen for the United States on a secret mission. Von Jagow had asked him to go home to do something about getting Wilson to send a peace note. The Foreign Secfetary had warned that if Wilson didn't do something soon public sentiment would force the German Government to accede to the demands for a return to unrestricted submarine warfare.[29] Other aspects of Gerard's stay in the United States are discussed elsewhere in this study.[30] Suffice it to say here that he arrived home on October eleventh and did not see Wilson until the twenty-fourth. He saw him again on the twenty-ninth and departed for Germany in December.[31] Before Gerard was able to obtain an interview with the President, Colonel House received a memorandum for the Ambassador from the German Government. He showed it to Gerard and sent it to Wilson. It said,

> Your Excellency hinted to His Majesty in your last conversation at Charleville in April that President Wilson possibly would try towards the end of the Summer to offer his good services to the belligerents for the promotion of peace. The German Government has no information as to whether the President adheres to this idea and as to the eventual date at which his step would take place. Meanwhile the constellation of war has taken such a form that the German Government foresees the time at which it will be forced to regain the freedom of action that it has preserved to itself in the note of May 4 last [use of submarines in self defense] and thus the President's steps may be jeop-

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[28] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 55.

[29] Memorandum, Gerard to Baker, undated, in Baker, op. cit., VI, 355-356.

[30] See below, chapter 6 p. 61.

[31] Baker, op. cit., 362-363, 373, New York Times, October 11, 25, 1916, Gerard Memoirs, 244, Joseph Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, c. 1921), 248.

> ardized. The German Government thinks it its duty to communicate this fact to your Excellency in case you should find that the date of the intended action of the President should be so far advanced towards the end of the season.[32]

Gerard had apparently, with the help of this note, pressed the need for haste on Wilson who, in memorandum to House dated December third, said,

> The situation is developing very fast and if we are going to do the proposed thing effectively we must do it very soon . . . .
> Gerard hopes that I will do what we discussed and do it at once, and thinks, with us, that it is not what Germany wishes and not what either side could object to or decently decline if done in the terms I suggested,- as a neutral demand.[33]

Still Wilson did not act. It seems beyond doubt from his memorandum to House that he was desirious of taking the proposed step now that the election was over. Wilson began to draft the peace note on November twenty-first and handed the draft to House on November twenty eighth. House proceeded to soften it up and to hold it back in every way possible.[34] He succeeded. Germany had become desperate[35] and on December twelfth, transmitted, through Wilson, a proposal for peace negotiations. Now, after it was too late, because the German and American moves had become linked in the eyes of the Allies or at least were open to that charge, Wilson, on December eighteenth, made his long deferred move and asked the belligerents to state their terms for peace.[36] Germany replied on December twenty-sixth and asked for a peace conference. The Allies rejected any attempt at negotiations on the ground that no lasting peace could be made

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[32] Baker, op. cit., VI, 361-362. See also Seymour, op. cit., II, 389-390.
[33] Baker, op. cit., VI, 391.
[34] Seymour, op. cit., II, 393-404; Bernstoff, My Three Years, 303-315; see Millis, op. cit., 363-364, for a summary of the situation.
[35] Bernstoff, My Three Years, 312-313.
[36] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 97-98.

under the circumstances because no satisfactory settlement of the war had been reached and the attitude of the Central Powers was a menace to civilization.[37] The peace move had failed.

By this time Gerard had taken the Allied point of view on peace as he had on munitions. On January 7, 1917 he wrote House:

> Germany wants a peace conference in order to make a separate peace, on good terms to them, with France and Russia. Then she hopes to finish England by submarines, then later take the scalps of Japan, Russia, and France separately. The Allies ought to remember when Ben Franklin said about hanging together or separately.[38]

And on January 19, 1917 he wrote Lansing, in praise of Wilson's action,

> The nearer I get to the situation the more I consider the President's peace note an exceedingly wise move. It has made it difficult for the terrorists here to start anything which will bring Germany in conflict with the U. S. The Chancellor, Zimmerman, Stumm; have all ridiculed the idea that Germany will go back on her Sussex pledges; but if she does [Gerard knew then that unrestricted submarine warfare was soon to recommence], then the peace note makes it easier for America to enter the war on the Allies side with a clear conscience and the knowledge on the part of the people at home that the President did everything possible to keep us out of the mess.[39]

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[37] Seymour, op. cit., II, 406.

[38] Ibid., The Pact of London, in which the Allies had agreed to make no separate peace, had been signed in September 1914.

[39] Lansing Papers, I, 699.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUBMARINE CONTROVERSY

The question of the use of the submarine by Germany was in many ways the most important problem that faced Gerard during his tenure as Ambassador, as it became the nub on which American policy toward Germany turned and ultimately served largely as the pretext for the break of diplomatic relations and the declaration of war.

England, on November 3, 1914, declared the entire North Sea a war area into which neutral shipping would go at its own risk except under Admiralty instructions. The United States did not see fit to protest this action.[1] Germany, on February 4, 1915, declared the waters around the British Isles, including the entire English Channel, a war zone in which all shipping would be liable to sinking after February eighteenth. The State Department warned Germany, on February tenth, that she must observe the neutrality of the United States and that she would be held to "strict accountability" for any sinking of American ships or loss of American lives.[2] Gerard cabled the Department, on February twelfth, that he was convinced the,

> . . . German proclamation will be withdrawn if England will adopt the Declaration of London or allow food to enter for the German civil population. Suggest you can help this

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[1] For. Rel., 1914 Suppl., 466.
[2] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 98.

> by suggesting that Congress will put an embargo on export of arms unless England consents.[3]

This idea never worked out. On February thirteenth and sixteenth Gerard prophesied that the German reply to the note of February tenth would suggest the use of convoys to avoid sinkings and in the latter dispatch went on to say, "These [terms] are fairer than those offered by England to American ships entering the waters declared dangerous by the British proclamation . . . ."[4] The German note, sent on February seventeenth, offered the terms which Gerard had indicated.[5] The State Department, on February twentieth, took Gerard's advice and made the proposition to England and Germany that food be allowed to enter Germany in return for a cessation of submarine warfare but it refused to apply his suggestion of an embargo and the negotiations were unsuccessful.[6]

Meanwhile, on February fourteenth, in an interview given to a German newspaper concerning the situation raised by the establishment of the war zone and the reaction of the United States to it, Gerard and two days later, in another interview, counseled calmness and stated the, "The public in the United States as well as in Germany should await developments quietly".[7]

On March fourth Gerard sent the first of a long series of dispatches by which he was to trace the rise and fall of political and military figures, in relation to submarine warfare, in Germany for the next two

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[3] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 102. For a more complete treatment of this proposal see above, pp. 52-53.

[4] Ibid., 110.

[5] See above, pp. 52-53.

[6] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 110.

[7] New York Times, February 15, 17, 1915.

years. In this dispatch he stated that he was,

> Informed on good authority that Zimmerman and Chancellor were in favor of accepting American proposal [food to be admitted to Germany if submarine warfare ceased] without change but that all matters now really in military and naval hands and that Admiral von Tirpitz did not want England to accept our proposal and therefore added condition of Declaration of London so as to make acceptance impossible. Chancellor not as popular or in such high favor with Emperor as Von Tirpitz who with Falkenhayn, Chief of General Staff, decides everything.[8]

The submarine blockade continued until, on May 7, 1915, the British liner Lusitania was sunk by a German submarine off Kinsale, Ireland. Over one hundred American citizens lost their lives and, on May thirteenth, Wilson sent a stern note of protest to the German Government in which he demanded reparation and insisted that attacks on ships carrying non-combatants be stopped.[9] Gerard, on May fifteenth, cabled the Department,

> . . . I am myself positive that Germany will continue this method of war and that it is only a question of a short time before other American ships or lives are destroyed, and if that happens you say that United States will not omit any act necessary to maintain the rights which you have claimed for the United States and its citizens.[10]

Thus did Gerard register his protest to the position taken by his government. The Ambassador, apparently upset by the position in which he felt the Lusitania note placed his government, cabled on May seventeenth that he felt that Germany would refuse to abandon its submarine warfare and suggested that he be authorized to advise Americans to leave Germany. The Department advised him to "sit tight" until further notice.[11]

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[8] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 132.
[9] Ibid., 393-396.
[10] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 396. Italics supplied.
[11] Ibid., 398.

Colonel House cabled Gerard, from London via the State Department, on May nineteenth, telling him to hold up the German answer to the American note and to try to induce the German Government to agree to discontinue the use of the submarine and poison gas if England would let foodstuffs go to neutral ports. Gerard replied that this proposal had already been turned down[12] and that it would be considered only if raw materials were added. House answered that since the Allies would never accept such a proposal there was no longer any need for delay.[13] A few days later Gerard told the Department that he could not see, " . . . why raw material proposal not accepted, it will benefit us. Germany has plenty of food and raw materials for war purposes. Needs raw material for industry."[14]

Germany replied to the first Lusitania note on May thirtieth by asking for more information and claimed that the ship was armed and carried ammunition and Canadian reservists. Gerard, on June fourth, suggested that Germany might agree to stop torpedoing without warning if ships were unarmed, didn't attempt to ram, flew a special flag, and were certified by the United States Government.[15] Gerard delivered the second Lusitania note, a much stiffer one asking for reparation and a pledge to stop torpedoing merchant ships, on June eleventh. On the same day he reiterated his proposal of June fourth but the Department replied that those methods could not "advantageously be brought up for discussion at this time."[16]

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[12] See above, pp. 54-55.
[13] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 400, 415; Seymour, op. cit., I, 452.
[14] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 433. Italics supplied.
[15] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 432-433.
[16] Ibid., 439.

In late June Gerard's reports chronicled the developments of the dispute which was raging within the German Government between the Chancellor and Von Jagow on the one hand and Von Tirpitz on the other.[17] Von Tirpitz was attempting to get an extension of submarine warfare to include the sinking without warning of all ships of the belligerent nations while the Chancellor was trying to obtain modifications of the methods used to include only the sinking of freight ships with ample warning for the crew to escape.

Through the first week in July Gerard attempted to get the State Department to agree to enter into preliminary negotiations on the answer to the second Lusitania note so that it would be sure to be satisfactory to the American Government.[18] While he was making this attempt Gerard sent a dispatch which must have convinced the Department that he had succumbed to German propaganda. This dispatch read in part:

> Anyway when Americans have reasonable opportunity to cross the ocean why should we enter a great war because some American wants to cross on a ship where he can have a private bathroom or because Americans may be hired to protect by their presence cargos of ammunition? On land no American sitting on an ammunition wagon could prevent its being fired on on its way to the front and England made land rules applicable to the sea when she set the example by declaring part of the open sea war territory; nor can English passenger ships sailing with orders to ram submarines and often armed be put quite in the catagory of altogether peaceful merchantmen.[19]

The Department refused to enter into preliminary negotiations and, on July eighth the German answer was dispatched. The Department, on July fourteenth, replied that the answer was unsatisfactory, and on the following day Gerard reported that Von Jagow and Zimmerman would have

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[17] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 441-442, 450, 453-454.
[18] Ibid., 456-459.
[19] Ibid., 461.

recognized the principles demanded by the United States if they had known through preliminary negotiations what was wanted. Four days later Lansing notified Gerard that no compromises of any kind would be made.[20]

Now Gerard, as he had on munitions, began to change his position. On July twenty-third he cabled the Department that,

> Although I have advocated concessions to preserve peace, I am now convinced that no concession that we make short of joining Germany in war will satisfy this extreme party which seems for the present in control.[21]

And, on August third, he wrote to House,

> I judge that Von Tirpitz has, through his press bureau, so egged on the people that this submarine war will keep on and the Germans will be utterly astonished when the war is on [with the United States?]. After all it is necessary . . . .
>
> No great news - we are simply waiting for the inevitable accident . . . .[22]

Through the rest of 1915, while German submarines continued to sink ships, Gerard again kept the American Government informed about the struggle within the German Government. In late August he expressed the belief that if the Chancellor succeeded some modifications might be made in the submarine war but that Germany would continue to torpedo freight ships. In late November he reported that the Chancellor and Von Jagow seemed to be in much better favor than previously but neither party seemed to be able to establish itself firmly enough to enforce its concepts completely.[23]

Meanwhile, on August nineteenth, the British liner Arabic was torpedoed with the loss of two American lives. The United States Govern-

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[20] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 469, 474, 477.
[21] Ibid., 485.
[22] Seymour, op. cit., II, 28.
[23] For. Rel., 1915 Suppl., 527-528, 529-530, 650; Lansing Papers, I, 665-666; Seymour, op. cit., II, 43.

ment protested and ultimately, on September first and fourth, Count Johann von Bernstoff, the German Ambassador to the United States, on his own responsibility, assured the State Department that unarmed passenger liners would not be torpedoed without warning unless they attacked the submarine or attempted to escape from it. Von Bernstoff was reprimanded by his government for this move but, by early October, the Chancellor's position was strong enough to make it possible for the Foreign Office to be able to force the issuance of orders to submarine commanders which followed the lines of the committment made by the German Ambassador. The submarine situation remained quiet until January 7, 1916 when the armed British liner Persica was sunk in Mediterranean waters and an American consular official was drowned. Though a series of notes were exchanged, it was impossible to identify the submarine and no charges were pressed. A month after this incident Gerard, in a letter to House, made it clear that the German Government did not consider that she had entered into any agreement in the Arabic case but that she had merely stated that certain orders had been issued and thus that she reserved the right to change those orders at any time.[24] Thus nothing was actually settled by this "agreement".

While these problems were being worked out and added to the list of unsettled issues between Germany and the United States the American Ambassador to Berlin continued to observe and report. On February first he described the German position as one of admitting liability for the lives lost but refusing to admit that the actual sinkings were illegal.

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[24] Seymour, op. cit., II, 209.

He went on to say,

> I think without doubt Germany will stand by this position. I have heard lately that the influence of von Tirpitz has been revived and that he and von Holtzendorff have lately come together. It will therefore be for the United States to decide whether the expression of regret, admission of liability, promises heretofore made about methods of conducting submarine warfare, and payment of indemnity are not enough. My own opinion is worth nothing . . . but I sincerely hope that we can keep out of this war, and I am convinced that a break of relations will mean war in a few months.[25]

Thus he had prophesied, in its essential parts, what was to happen a little more than a year later.

The question of whether or not an armed merchantman should be considered a warship had been one of some importance almost from the beginning of the war and was made particularly important by the extreme vulnerability of the submarine to fire from such ships. Secretary Lansing came to hold the view that these ships should be considered warships and, on January 18, 1916, asked the Allies to agree to disarm their merchant ships if Germany agreed not to torpedo without warning.[26] As a part of his strategy he suggested that Germany announce that all armed merchantmen would be sunk without warning.[27] Accordingly, on February tenth, the German Government made that announcement, to become effective March first. The Allies turned the proposal down on the ground that Germany could not be trusted.[28] This left Germany with a proclamation to be carried out. Gerard, fearful that some new crisis growing out of this new method of warfare would cause a break in relations, prepared to leave Berlin.[29]

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[25] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 156.

[26] Seymour, op. cit., II, 74; Lansing Papers, I, 330-352; For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 146-148.

[27] Lansing Papers, I, 337; For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 178.

[28] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 163-165, 174-175.

[29] Henry Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau's Story (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1918), 397. Morgenthau was in Berlin at that time.

In reference to Lansing's proposals on armed merchantmen, Gerard wrote to Colonel House, on February fifteenth, "I have always rather sympathized with the submarine on this."[30] And again, on February twenty second, he wrote,

> A submarine is a recognized weapon of war as far as the English go, because they use it themselves, and it seems to me to be an absurd proposition that a submarine must come to the surface, give warning, offer to put passengers and crew in safety, and constitute itself a target for merchant ships, that not only make a practice of firing at submarines at sight, but have undoubtedly received orders to do so.[31]

The new phase of the submarine war began as scheduled on March 1, 1916. No immediate crisis occured and Gerard stayed on at his post to report the political struggle in Germany as the moderates attempted to achieve modification in the methods used. On March fourteenth he predicted that Admiral von Tirpitz would resign because of "ill health" and two days later the prediction was verified.[32] With the moderates in control there was hope for modification but before anything could be done the French steamer Sussex was torpedoed with Americans being injured. A demand for an explanation was immediately made but Germany at first denied the sinking. On April eleventh Gerard expressed the opinion that Germany was now determined to keep the peace.[33] Nevertheless, on April twenty-eighth, at his request, he was sent instructions as to the procedures to follow in case of a break in diplomatic relations.[34] It was all unnecessary, however, since, on May fourth, Germany agreed to stop

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[30] Seymour, op. cit., II, 210.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., 222-223; Lansing Papers, I, 476-479.
[33] Lansing Papers, I, 683.
[34] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 349-350.

unrestricted submarine warfare but, it should be noted, reserved the right to resort to it in self defense if it became necessary. After this episode relations between Germany and the United States entered a period of calm which was to last until near the end of Gerard's stay in Berlin.

Early in July the storm clouds began to gather once more as Gerard reported that pressure was once again being applied to the German Government to force it to resort again to the unrestricted use of the submarine. However, the ambassador held the opinion that the question would not become acute for some time.[35] Throughout the remainder of July and through August he continued to report attacks on the Chancellor and other indications of a struggle within the Government.[36] On August twenty-eighth he reported to the Department that though there were many indications that Germany was again considering the unrestricted use of the submarine, "I do not think this question will become acute until after our elections and possibly not until Spring . . . . "[37], he stated. Shortly thereafter Gerard departed on his "peace mission"[38] but throughout his absence from Germany Joseph Grew, the Charge', sent reports of an internal struggle over the use of the submarine.[39]

While he was in the United States Gerard had the opportunity to report in great detail on the submarine situation to Wilson, Lansing and House, and the ambassador probably used his view of the situation as a lever to attempt to force them to make some move to bring about

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[35] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 279.
[36] Lansing Papers, I, 694-695, Seymour, op. cit., II, 330.
[37] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 286.
[38] See above, Chapter V pp. 56-57.
[39] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 291-298.

peace.[40]

Having had little success in his attempts to spur Wilson to action, Gerard returned, at the end of the year, to his post in Germany. Almost before he could get reorientated the situation began to develop rapidly toward an end. On January 10, 1917 he sent a dispatch to the Department which read,

> Confidential source, fair authority reports: German submarine warfare is soon to be extended to the attacking of all armed ships without warning, such ships being considered man-of-war. One official letter I saw stated that Germany would begin this submarine warfare extension, no doubt engendering trouble with the United States, but this could not be helped as such warfare was last resort of German Navy against England . . . . A number of officers declare that this extended method will go into effect soon. Please transmit copy to Naval Intelligence.[41]

On January eighteenth Gerard reported that all neutral correspondents had been called to the Foreign Office and had been begged to help in creating a favorable sentiment for the renewal of unrestricted submarine warfare in their respective countries.[42] In a dispatch three days later he again expressed the belief that Germany would renew her attacks on armed shipping.[43] On January twenty-ninth he sent his last warning, in which he said,

> . . . I get from many quarters fairly reliable information that orders have been given for reckless submarine warfare, probably to commence with a blockade of all English ports and sinking of all ships approaching them with possible exception of passenger ships carrying no contraband.[44]

On January thirty-first Germany announced the renewal of the submarine campaign and on that day Gerard, in a dispatch, told the Department that,

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[40] See above, ch. 6, p. 50.

[41] For. Rel., 1917 Suppl., 88. It is interesting to note, in view of the often heard contention that the announcement of Germany's action came as a complete surprise, that this dispatch was received a full twenty days before the announcement was made.

[42] Ibid., 91.

[43] Ibid., 91-92.

[44] Ibid., 95-96.

> There is no doubt but that Germany believes that Americans are a fat rich race without sense of honor and ready to stand for anything in order to keep out of war and Americans in Germany . . . . have encouraged them in this belief. The Germans think and the newspapers have published that the President's peace moves are inspired by fear only . . . . I think the reasons for the hasty decision: (1) the desire to torpedo ships carrying grain from Argentina, (2) food situation here, (3) threatened great Allied offensive, (4) public demand use of submarine and contempt and hate for America.[45]

Gerard was ordered to ask for his passports on February third but before he received the order he made his suggestions for negotiations. In this dispatch he said,

> Suggest if you decide make any threats threaten war. Germans not afraid of break of diplomatic relations which simply means they can go ahead and do what they please and attack us if they win. Chancellor spoke of great hatred the military and naval people have for America. Even if there is war German military calculate they can starve England before America can do anything. These people have only one God - Force.[46]

These two dispatches were the pronouncements of the Ambassador who had usually been and still was a good observer, but had been unable to resist the many influences on him,[47] throughout his tenure, to bring him to the conclusion that the Allies were fighting America's fight.

Ambassador Gerard notifed the Department on February fifth that he was not to be permitted to leave Germany until arrangements had been made for Bernstoff's safe return to Germany. The next cable was not sent until February twelfth, after his arrival in Berne, Switzerland. In this dispatch he reported that he thought the Germans had been surprised at the break; that he had been asked to sign a treaty allowing non-combatants

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[45] For. Rel., 1917 Suppl., 103-104.
[46] Ibid., 114.
[47] See above, ch. 6, p. 63.

to leave each country in case of war; that he had refused to sign because they would not let him send a cable in cipher and because he no longer represented the American Government; and that he was finally allowed to leave Berlin and had arrived in Berne on the eleventh.[48]

The ex-Ambassador made many detours on his trip home. He reached the United States in mid-March. As former Ambassador to Germany he was asked to make many public appearances and addresses. In these speeches he spoke of the great danger from Germany and urged immediate preparedness on the basis of universal military service. When the United States entered the war, in April, Gerard added writing to his activities and continued with his speaking. He had joined unreservedly in the wave of war hysteria which swept the country.[49]

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[48] For. Rel., 1917 Suppl., 586, 588-91.

[49] See Gerard, My Four Years in Germany; James W. Gerard, Face to Face With Kaiserism (New York: Geroge H. Doran Company, c. 1918); James W. Gerard, "What the German Women Have Done That the American Women Can Now Do," The Ladies Home Journal, XXXIV (August 1917), 15; James W. Gerard, "Why We Should Buy Liberty Bonds," The World's Work, XXXVI (October 1918), 597; "The Diplomats at the Author's Club," The Unpopular Review, IX (January 1918), 1-20; James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, Words That Won the War; The Story of the Committee on Public Information 1917-1919 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), 152-153; and New York Times, March 12, 17, 20, 28, 31, April 20, 27, 28, 29, June 7, August 24, November 6, 7, December 2, 1917, and January 9, February 12, March 11, June 7, September 29, 1918.

CHAPTER VII

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The personal relationships of an ambassador to his superiors, to the officials of the government of the country to which he is accredited, and to the people of that country would logically have much to do not only with his effectiveness as an ambassador but also with the views which he came to hold. Thus it would seem important that these aspects of Mr. Gerard's career be discussed.

Many of Ambassador Gerard's relations with the State Department have already been discussed incidentally throughout this study but two others require mention.

Count von Bernstoff has testified that Gerard, "felt offended because the most important negotiations were carried on in Washington and partly through House in Berlin."[1] That there was some truth in Bernstoff's statement can be seen when it is noted that Gerard, on September 20, 1915, wrote House that,

> Lansing does not let me know what is going on and von Jagow says he is also in the dark. Lansing very kindly sent me a copy of the note von Bernstoff wrote him [in the Arabic case], five days after it had appeared in the London Times. I really think the Ambassador on the job should be kept informed.[2]

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[1] Bernstoff, Memoirs, 148.
[2] Seymour, op. cit., II, 42.

And again, on May 10, 1916, he wrote to House,

> I wish the State Department would keep me better informed . . . . When I am getting Sussex admissions and changes in submarine war and keeping the peace, and cannot get even a pat on the head, while _____'s press agents advertise that all other ambassadors are lobsters, I might at least be kept up to date on information vitally affecting my work. This is a very small kick . . . .[3]

Part of this desire for information and reaction to the publicity given other ambassadors may well have been engendered by the feeling that he was being left out of the important negotiations.

A second hitherto untreated aspect of Gerard's relations with the Department is that of his objections to and its denial of leaks of information sent to it. For example, on March 26, 1916, in reference to a conversation with the Chancellor relative to mediation which he had reported a week before, he cabled that an account of it had appeared in the New York Evening Post and the London Times and asked,

> How do you expect me to be of any value here if my confidential conversations are given out by someone in Department? I have already had to complain of this [not printed in For. Rel.] I must request that a denial be given out stating that no peace propositions or feelers of any kind have come from the Chancellor. As von Jagow told me yesterday, how can the President expect to be asked to be mediator if every confidential conversation is to be given out in America.[4]

Two days later the Department replied that it was convinced that the Post article was not based on the dispatch and that the requested denial had been given out.[5]

Taking these and previously treated aspects of Gerard's relations with the Department into consideration, it would seem valid to hold

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[3] Seymour, op. cit., II, 246.
[4] For. Rel., 1916 Suppl., 20.
[5] Ibid., 21.

that Gerard, although he followed orders, was not a docile servant but rather an active objector when some policy or action did not please him.

Although Ray Stannard Baker has said that, "Several of the appointments of a political nature like that of James W. Gerard, a Tammany Democrat, to Germany, later gave Wilson considerable satisfaction,"[6] it would not appear that there was never a very friendly relationship between the two men. Leonard Wood, in his diary, records that Gerard, in late 1916, was very bitter against the administration and had said that no one in Washington would pay any attention to his views.[7] Oswald Garrison Villard states that Wilson did not respect Gerard.[8] One of the chief reasons for these attitudes would appear to be Wilson's view that Gerard did not supply him with adequate information. In this connection Colonel House recorded in his diary, in mid-December of 1915, that,

> I asked the President to again read to me what Gerard had sent in regards to his interview with the Kaiser [at Potsdam in October 1915]. He went to the safe and got it out and read it to Lansing and me. They both criticized Gerard seriously for not sending the full text of his conversation. However, I asked them if he had not epitomized it all in the few lines he had sent . . .[9]

In January of 1917 Wilson gave his judgment of Gerard's letters when he wrote Lansing,

> It is odd how his information seems never to point to any conclusions whatsoever[.]; but in spite of that his letters are worth reading and do leave a certain impression.[10]

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[6]Baker, op. cit., IV, 35.
[7]Hagedon, op. cit., II, 198.
[8]Villard, Fighting Years, 267.
[9]Seymour, op. cit., II, 102-103. Gerard had reported that the Kaiser had said that he would tend to America after the war, and that Wilson's attitude made him unacceptable as a mediator.
[10]Lansing Papers, I, 700.

On the other hand, Charles Seymour, after his study of the House papers, wrote,

> . . . . [Gerard's] war letters to House were pungent and prophetic, and through them President Wilson was to be informed accurately of the complicated forces that governed Germany. Nothing is further from fact than the legend that the President lacked available and authentic information of the political underworld on the continent of Europe.[11]

Ambassador Gerard's relationship to the German people, that is his popularity in Berlin, and the treatment which he received at their hands, with its changes as time passed, is probably one of the more important explanations in his change of attitude on various points as it has been chronicled in this study.

During the early part of the war he was considered by observers to be, "the most popular diplomat the United States has ever sent over to Berlin."[12] However, as time passed and the German people began to hear about munitions shipments and loans to the Allies, he became the target for all their fear and hate of the United States. Thus, on February 10, 1915, while Gerard was at the theatre, a man in the audience first protested at his speaking English and then, when he found out who it was, went into a tirade against him. The Kaiser himself agreed to apologize for this occurrence which was only one of many.[13] These occurrences all but ceased, however, so that by late 1915 another American observer could report that Gerard was "personally most popular in Berlin."[14]

As 1915 gave way to 1916 and the pressure on the German Empire became more acute, the press of Germany began a concentrated attack on

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[11] Seymour, op. cit., I, 185.
[12] New York Times, August 16, 1914.
[13] Ibid., February 11, 15, 18, 1915.
[14] Ibid., September 22, 1915.

Gerard. In late April the Kiel Neueste Nachrichten and other small city papers declared that he was in favor of and was in fact working for war between Germany and the United States.[15] Gerard, probably to counteract these stories and other accusations, gave an interview to the Wiener Journal of Vienna in which he said, in part,

> I have always done everything to help avert a conflict between the government to which I am accredited and my government. I do not wish for war between Germany and America, have not wished it, shall never wish it . . . .
>
> In an effort to malign me they even wrote to the crown prince that my wife had decorated her dog with the orders the Kaiser had conferred on her and that she had taken the dog, thus bedecked, for a walk in Unter Den Linden.
>
> I am exceedingly incensed at the maliciously false stories, which have gained wide circulation even in responsible circles in Berlin . . . . I am only my government's servant. I receive orders, carry them out and report as to their performance. I do not, however, play a decisive part therein.[16]

Apparently the German Government placed rigid restrictions on the discussion of Gerard and of America in order to stop these attacks, but similar stories, though unpublished, continued to circulate among journalists. These restrictions were debated in the Reichstag where the Government defended its policy on the grounds that it was the duty of Germany to protect the representatives of other countries.[17] The open attacks ceased for a time but when Gerard refused to endorse the protests of American reporters against censorship by the British[18] they flared up again. Many of the Berlin papers accused him of pro-English feelings and suggested that he go to that country where he belonged. These attacks continued unabated through August and September and ceased only when he

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[15] New York Times, April 29, 1916.
[16] Ibid., May 8, 1916.
[17] Ibid., August 30, 31, September 14, 24, 1916.
[18] See above, ch. VII, p. 69.

left for the United States on his "peace mission".[19] This type of pressure on a man of Mr. Gerard's background and character probably had its effect in helping to drive him to the views which he finally took.

An interesting situation which is illustrative, not only of the regard in which Gerard was held by the German Government but also of the reactions of his own superiors to him, is found in the real causes for his trip to the United States in 1916. According to Colonel House the suggestion that he be brought home first came from Bernstoff. House's reactions to the trip and the results of it were recorded in his diary, on October 20, 1916, when he wrote,

> I am of the opinion that Bernstoff and the German Government 'played us' in order to get Gerard home . . . . As a matter of fact they wished him here so as to press peace moves.[20]

Meanwhile, when Bernstoff heard about the expected arrival, he asked his government if they wanted Gerard back. The Foreign Office replied,

> Replacement, or at least further retention, of Gerard in America desired in Berlin, provided that it is possible without wounding his vanity and sensitiveness to our disadvantage, that it is certain that this hint from our side will not become known in America and that a suitable successor is available.[21]

A few days later Bernstoff told the Foreign Office that,

> House told me in strict confidence question of Mr. Gerard's return has been thoroughly discussed by him with Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lansing. Mr. Gerard's unpopularity in Berlin and his unfriendly manner were well known here. However, no satisfactory successor was available, and Mr. Gerard is at least straightforward and does exactly what he is told.[22]

An occurence which grew directly from this trip to the United

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[19] New York Times, August 30, 31 September 14, 24, 1916.
[20] Seymour, op. cit., II, 389-390. Italics supplied.
[21] Bernstoff, My Three Yers, 306-307.
[22] Ibid., 308-309.

States and one which caused more controversy than any other act which Mr. Gerard performed during his tenure was the so-called "Adlon Dinner". This was a banquet given in honor of Gerard, on January 6, 1917, by the American Association of Commerce and Trade in Berlin. Among the guests were three ministers of the German Government, two ex-ministers, the Vice-Chancellor, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, heads of various financial institutions, and other leaders of German public life. In the course of the speaking Arthur von Gwinner, Director of the Deutsche Bank, compared Gerard to the peace dove of Noah's ark which had been sent out too early but had seen the rainbow.[23] Gerard, in his speech, said, in part,

> Never since the beginning of the war have the relations between Germany and the United States been so cordial as now. I have brought back an olive branch from the President or don't you consider the President's message [of December 18, 1916] an olive branch?
>
> I personally am convinced that as long as Germany's fate is directed by such men as my friend, the Chancellor, and [others named] . . . and last but not least my friend Zimmerman, the relations between the two countries are running no risks.[24]

Immediately a storm broke. Newspapers in the United States, England and Germany began to editorialize on the speech. The most frequent criticism, especially in the German papers, was that Gerard, by naming names and offices, was interfering with the internal affairs of Germany. However, papers in Germany favorable to the Chancellor commended Gerard on the speech. English papers were generally critical and some of them expressed the belief that Gerard had set the conditions for continued peace. In the United States opinion was divided. The New York papers

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[23] New York Times, January 8, 1917.
[24] Ibid.,.

supported the action but most others considered it, because he had made himself liable to attack for attempted interference in the internal affairs of Germany, at least a blunder on the part of the Ambassador.[25] On the other hand, there was another side to this incident which the writers who criticized Mr. Gerard so thoroughly, failed to see. Count von Bernstoff, in discussing the speech at a later date, said, "This speech was the keynote of his instructions."[26] And Gerard himself, in writing to Lansing, said,

> Pursuant to orders I have been jollying them here. Last Saturday the American Association of Commerce and Trade gave me a banquet at the Hotel Adlon. . . .
> Remarks, all I think 'safe' were made . . . .
> Yesterday the Chancellor sent for me to congratulate and thank me so you see orders are obeyed.
> . . . of course the pan-German and anti-Chancellor papers attacked the dinner. But it is my business to be with the Chancellor - whom I like anyway, . . .[27]

It is interesting to note that both Von Bernstoff and Von Jagow considered this dinner one of the psychological moments that embittered the atmosphere on one side or the other and led to war.[28]

After the break in diplomatic relations and Gerard's return to the United States, the German press attacked him at every opportunity and accused him of every possible sin.[29]

Thus it can be seen that the public pressure on Gerard was great, and that he was seldom popular in the country to which he was accredited

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[25]New York Times, January 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 1917. "Mr. Gerard's 'Olive Branch' Speech," Literary Digest, LIV (January 20, 1917), 111.

[26]Bernstoff, My Three Years, 309.

[27]Lansing Papers, I, 698-699. Italics supplied.

[28]Bernstoff, Memoirs, 153, 164-145. No explanation was given for this view but perhaps it was based on the unfavorable reaction of the German press to what they considered an attempt at interference on the part of the Ambassador with the internal affairs of Germany.

[29]New York Times, April 1, May 27, June 23, August 27, 29, September 1, 2, 1917.

after the United States began to be considered to be following a policy detrimental to the interests of Germany. Beyond that, his own superiors did not think highly of his achievements and consistently refused to consider his proposals, perhaps because they might have been detrimental to the cause of the Allies. All this pressure was probably the greatest factor in forcing him to move constantly around to the side of the Allies on each of the fundamental issues.

CHAPTER VIII

EVALUATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Gerard has been evaluated from time to time by various people and the conclusions drawn have been almost as diverse as the people making them.

In November of 1914, when Gerard, who had been nominated for the United States Senate on the Tammany ticket, went down in defeat with the entire Democratic slate in New York State, an editor of the New York Times, said

> The services of men of intellectual alertness, diplomatic experience, practical discretion, and a fair knowledge of international law are required in our foreign embassies and ministries. From this point of view, the assurance that Ambassador Gerard will remain at the post in Berlin which he has filled so satisfactorily, instead of takin a place in the United States Senate next March, is a matter of public congratulation. At present Mr. Gerard can serve his country better as Ambassador to Germany than he could in any other post, however high and exacting.[1]

When he came home in 1916 the New York Times, editorialized,

> He has served his country well. The men appointed to our missions and embassies abroad were named with no thought of the fearful situation of which they were soon to become a part. . . . None of them all has shouldered more

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[1]New York Times, November 10, 1914.

> cheerfully his great and un-looked-for task, or has labored more earnestly and conscientiously to discharge it than Ambassador Gerard. The country for which he has worked so unremittingly amid such difficulties- and they have been greater in his case than in that of most of his colleagues - welcomes him and honors him not only for his work but for the spirit in which it was done.[2]

When the Ambassador returned home for the final time, in 1917, the Times continued its praises of him. In an editorial dealing with his welcome it said,

> To the accomplished citizen of New York, to the tireless worker for Americans in Germany since the war began, the friendly helper, the suave man of business, the good democrat, unspoiled and unflunkeyized; to the ambassador on whom the stress of events laid so many difficulties and labors, so well discharged, a great and glorious welcome was paid.[3]

G. K. Davis, a war correspondent who had been in Berlin with Gerard, discribed him as a man who formed judgments promptly and with firmness, and was not easily disturbed in his conclusions. He went on to say that, since Gerard had been in such an excellent position for observation, his conclusions should be very valid. Davis concluded by saying that if these conclusions were not valid it was Gerard's "fault and the misfortune of his country. For it is to be assumed . . . that his views will have a material share in shaping the course of the Wilson administration regarding Germany."[4] From the record that has been presented here it would seem that past experience indicated that Mr. Davis was assuming too much.

However, all journalists did not share these opinions of Gerard. Edward Lyell Fox, an American correspondent in Berlin, wrote of him:

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[2]New York Times, October 12, 1916.
[3]Ibid., March 20, 1917.
[4]Ibid., March 12, 1917.

> It is my sincere conviction, and in behalf of many other American correspondents here, that the misunderstandings between our countries [Germany and the United States] are due to the poor advice and warped viewpoint of the American Embassy in Berlin.[5]

Magazine writers who discussed the subject took the same viewpoint as the New York Times and praised Gerard highly. Sidney Whitman said he "has deserved well of his country and of all humanity for the work he accomplished while United States representative to Berlin in the first three years of the war."[6] And Clarence H. Gaines wrote that Mr. Gerard was,

> a typical American, shrewd, straightforward, not easy to bluff, possessing the tact, firmness and humor that we like to think of as national characteristics. The man who was able to get on in the friendliest way with all the German officials with whom he dealt, who combined businesslike efficiency with perfect dignity and courtesy of behavior . . . .[7]

Oswald Garrison Villard, influential newspaper owner and editor and "professional" liberal, passing judgment in 1939, pointed out that neither Wilson or Bryan could forsee the World War when they made their appointments and did not consider diplomatic ability as such in fillingsthe posts. Villard also said that Wilson found himself very much dissatisfied with several of his ambassadors, among them Gerard, as soon as the war broke out. He went on to say that, "Opinions as to Gerard's worth are divided. There are some in the [Foreign] Service today [1939] who rate him highly."[8] In discussing Wilson's shift from

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[5]New York Times, February 8, 1916.

[6]Sidney Whitman, "An Ambassador's Revelations: Mr. Gerard's Book", The Fortnightly Review, CVIII (November 1917), 711.

[7]Clarence H. Gaines, "A Yankee at the Kaiser's Court," The North American Review, CCVI (December 1917), 935.

[8]Villard, Fighting Years, 232.

neutrality to war on Germany Villard pointed out that the majority of the cabinet was pro-Ally from the beginning; that Wilson's lack of knowledge of Europe and his Anglo-Saxon background made him susceptible to English propaganda; and went on to say that, "there was the great handicap of him not having in Berlin as our ambassador a man whom he respected, of a larger caliber and greater ability than Gerard."[9]

Published evaluations by people of diplomatic experience have been few. Henry White, Secretary of the Embassy at London for many years, Ambassador to Italy and Ambassador to France, Theodore Toosevelt's representative at Algerciras, and later to accompany Wilson to Versailles, visited the Embassy in Berlin during the crisis of 1914 and praised Mr. Gerard's work there very highly.[10] Brand Whitlock, American Ambassador to Belgium in this period, wrote, in February 1915, that, "From all accounts Gerard is a strong Man."[11] And one year later he wrote, "Poor Gerard; he has the hardest post in Europe, and has done splendidly. I am proud of him."[12]

Mr. Gerard's chief critic was Count Johann von Bernstoff, the German Ambassador to the United States. Bernstoff testified that one of the reasons for the displeasure of the Kaiser when his ambassador returned was that he had allowed Gerard to be sent to Berlin.[13] The Count also held that,

> . . . Mr. Gerard seemed to be imperfectly informed about the situation in Berlin. He was certainly right in his

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[9]Villard, Fighting Years, 267.
[10]New York Times, September 9, 1914.
[11]Allen Nevins, editor, The Letters and Journal of Brand Whitlock (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1936), II, 97.
[12]Ibid., II, 235.
[13]Bernstoff, My Three Years, 406-407.

> prediction of the unrestricted submarine campaign, but in this case the wish was father to the thought. It accorded with Mr. Gerard's anti-German feeling, to which he gave expression later in his gossipy literature . . . that he should welcome the submarine campaign, and with it the rupture with the United States, as well as our defeat . . . .[14]

And in his evaluation of Gerard's sentiments Bernstoff wrote,

> In any case, the Ambassador did not like Berlin, and he took too little pains to conceal the fact. Mr. Gerard was not the sort of a man to be able to swim against the tide of anti-German feeling, once it had become the proper thing in America to be pro-Ally. As to whether any other United States Ambassador would have shown less hostility to us, however, may be reasonably doubted.[15]

In fairness to Gerard it should be noted that Bernstoff's chief source of information on which to base these remarks had to be the "gossipy literature" which Gerard had written in the heat of war passion. His dispatches to the Department were not published until 1928-1931 — ten years after Bernstoff wrote.

Most historians of the period dismiss Gerard as a gesture to Tammany Hall and continue to mention him only in the capacity of a messenger-boy, treat him only as a go-between, or do not mention him at all.[16] Some, however, have discussed him at slightly greater length. Writing in 1926, Charles Seymour, after his intensive study of the House papers, wrote:

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[14]Bernstoff, My Three Years, 407-408. Italics supplied.

[15]Ibid., 310.

[16]For example, Millis, op. cit., 20, refers to him as "Judge 'Jimmy' Gerard - who had been sent to Berlin as a gesture to Tammany." And Fredrick L. Paxson, American Democracy and the World War: Pre-War Years 1913-1917 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936), 34, says, "James W. Gerard, a Tammany judge in New York, with marital connections among the bonanza millionaires, was sent to Berlin". Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1946), 629, mentions him once - by name only.

> Mr. Gerard was excelled by none in the dignity and capacity with which he maintained the interests and furthered the policy of his government in the most trying diplomatic situation in the war zone. He knew how to establish cordial relations with the Berlin Government, and gave thought to the details which make for friendliness. But he never forgot Bismark's aphorism: 'A Good Ambassador ought not to be too popular in the country to which he is accredited.'[17]

And Edwin Borchard and William Lage after their intensive study of the neutrality periods in the United States, wrote, in 1940, that,

> This entire group of 195 [American citizens who lost their lives on belligerent vessels] have certainly made a place for themselves in history. Not, however, because these deaths should have been made a reason for war. That was pointed out by Bryan, Gerard, Gore, Stone LaFollete, McLemore, and other members of a very select group in public life at that time. These men were gifted with the sense to perceive and the courage to proclaim, that the persistant refusals to caution American citizens against traveling on such belligerent ships could have but one outcome.[18]

Note should be taken of the fact that the historians quoted here are men who have studied thoroughly one particular phase of the period rather than attempting to cover the entire period of neutrality from all angles.

Certain conclusions may be drawn, from the material presented in this study, as to Gerard's characteristics and ability. First, apparently Gerard was a very precipitate individual who was likely to draw conclusions and to act upon them without much consideration of the possible outcome. When he thought that something should be done he was very likely to go ahead and do it without waiting for authorization or using official channels. These characteristics are especially well illustrated by his actions in connection with repatriation and with prisoner problems.

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[17] Seymour, op. cit., I, 185.
[18] Borchard and Lage, Neutrality, 220. Also see above, Ch. VIII, p.78.

Second, he was unable to bear up under the pressure of circumstances and to maintain his original pro-German or at least neutral sentiments. A man of his character and backgfound, as discussed in the first chapter of this study, would probably be highly irritated by the type of attack which the German people and press used upon him as the representative of the United States. It would appear probable that this had a great deal to do with his growing fear for the future of his country and the development of a conviction that the Allies were fighting the battle for the United States. Furthermore to all appearances the pressure, mostly of silence or non-committal acknowledgment of his proposals for a genuine neutrality, from his superiors had much to do with his shift of position. That this shift did take place is shown in the treatment of his connections and attitudes toward munitions shipments, peace moves, and the submarine controversy. Third, Gerard - Villard and Bernstoff, to the contrary was - generally speaking, a very competent observer and could and did draw valid conclusions from his observations. This is particularly well illustrated as he followed the rise and fall of the contending parties in the internal struggle over the methods of submarine warfare. It should also be noted that his methods of gaining information, whatever they were, were quite adequate as is shown by the many instances in which he correctly predicted an occurrence before if happened. And fourth, evidently his methods of diplomacy, though a bit "Wilsonian" as illustrated by his appeals over the heads of governments in the cases of the San Francisco Expostion and the appeals for funds in aiding repatriation, were, generally speaking, adequate. It was his own government, not that of Germany, the he could not deal with.

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