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CHAPTER 3

The New Freedom and the Progressive Movement, 1913-16

THE UNSUCCESSFUL struggle of the progressives to achieve a reserve banking and currency system owned and operated exclusively by the government underscored the dilemma in which the American progressive movement found itself during the years immediately preceding the First World War. The great impulses of the several movements for social and economic justice were now pulsating more strongly than before; diverse groups were in the field, campaigning for stringent regulation of industry, woman suffrage, federal child labor legislation, and advanced governmental aid to labor, farmers, tenant farmers, and the unemployed. It was inevitable that these progressives¹ should sooner or later coalesce to put their program across. The important question was whether the New Freedom philosophy was sufficiently dynamic to accommodate the advanced pro-

¹ Diverse though they were, the several parts of advanced progressivism were clearly distinguishable by 1913. The more radical progressives included, first, the several important organized groups dedicated to the cause of social justice—the American Association for Labor Legislation, the Consumers' League, the organized social workers, the National Child Labor Committee, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The leaders of organized labor should also be included, even though they generally refused to associate themselves with the professional students of labor problems. Finally, there were the farm organizations, like the National Farmers' Union, and shortly afterward the Non-Partisan League, that were now demanding a dynamic program of governmental intervention in their behalf, especially the establishment of a governmental system of long-term rural credits.

gressive concepts; whether Wilson himself could abandon his liberal, *laissez-faire* rationale and become a progressive statesman; whether, in brief, there was room in the Democratic party for progressivism of this type.

Evaluating the New Freedom at the end of the first ten months of Wilson's incumbency, advanced progressives would have disagreed in their answer to that vital question. Most of them conceded that the Underwood tariff was a step in the right direction, even though it was in part based on *laissez-faire* assumptions. They viewed the Federal Reserve Act, however, with mixed reactions. Uncompromising progressives, like La Follette, and the irreconcilable agrarians denounced it because of the large measure of private control that it allowed,² while middle-of-the-road progressives approved it as beginning a new experiment in public regulation. Even so, they must have suspected that Wilson's concessions to the progressive concept had been made under duress and were not the result of any genuine convictions on his part.

That this suspicion was well founded was demonstrated time and again from 1913 to 1916, by the manner in which the President either obstructed or refused to encourage the fulfillment of a large part of the progressive platform. There was, for example, the way in which he maneuvered on the important question of the application of the anti-trust law to labor unions. Since 1906 the American Federation of Labor had waged a relentless campaign to obtain immunity from the application of the Sherman Law to its methods of industrial warfare, particularly the secondary boycott.³ The Democratic platforms of 1908 and 1912 had endorsed labor's demands, and Democratic leaders in Congress from 1911 to March, 1913, had tried conscientiously, if unsuccessfully, to redeem their party's pledges.

Failing to get their contempt and injunction bills past the Republican opposition, the Democratic leaders had attached a rider to the Sundry Civil bill of 1913, prohibiting the Justice Department from using any funds therein appropriated in the prosecution of labor unions or farm organizations. President Taft promptly vetoed the bill, de-

² E.g., R. M. La Follette, "Legalizing the 'Money Power,'" *La Follette's Weekly*, V (Dec. 27, 1913), 1; Daniel T. Cushing, *The Betrayal of the People in the Aldrich-Wilson Federal Reserve Act and the Rural Credits Act* (Washington, 1916).

³ For a brief account of this campaign see "The Twenty-Year Struggle for Adequate Eight-Hour Legislation," *American Federationist*, XX (Aug., 1913), 590-616.

nouncing the rider as "class legislation of the most vicious sort." When the same measure came up again in the special session in April, Wilson intimated to Congressional leaders that he would not oppose the exemption. News of Wilson's apparent approval and passage of the bill with the rider attached evoked a flood of petitions and appeals to the President from practically every spokesman of organized capital in the country, and from many of his personal friends as well. "The most vicious bill ever enacted by a Congress of the United States now awaits your approval or your dissent," exclaimed George Harvey, perhaps the most authoritative conservative spokesman in the country.⁴

Under such pressure Wilson weakened and then reversed his position. He signed the bill on June 23 but at the same time issued a statement explaining that the rider was merely an expression of Congressional opinion and that he would find money in the general funds of the Justice Department for the prosecution of any groups that broke the antitrust law. The explanation was not convincing, either to conservatives or to labor leaders. "He attempts to retain the support of those who insist upon this special privilege . . . by signing the bill," Taft commented, "and at the same time to mitigate the indignation of those who have regarded this as a test of his political character by condemning the rider in a memorandum and excusing his signature."⁵ On the other hand, Samuel Gompers, president of the A.F. of L., had tried to make it plain that labor demanded nothing less than class legislation in its behalf; he later added that his union would not be satisfied until the principles embodied in the rider had been written into substantive law.

In this first critical test, however, Wilson had signified that he would adhere to the New Freedom doctrine of "special privileges to none," that he would no more approve special legislation on labor's behalf than such legislation in the interest of any other class. Using the New Freedom doctrine to thwart the demands of the farm groups was somewhat more difficult, however, as the agrarian spokesmen constituted perhaps a majority of the Democratic membership in Congress. Under heavy pressure, Wilson had consented to the addition of the short-term

⁴ "An Appeal to the President," *Harper's Weekly*, LVII (May 17, 1913), 3-4; also "Six Months of Wilson," *North American Review*, CXCVIII (Nov., 1913), 576-587.

⁵ W. H. Taft to Gus J. Karger, June 25, 1913, the Papers of William Howard Taft, in the Library of Congress.

agricultural credit amendment to the Glass bill; but this had not involved federal subvention to farmers, nor did it satisfy farm groups throughout the country. Their chief objective was the establishment, underwriting, and operation by the federal government of a system of long-term credits. The question had been under discussion for many years; all three major parties promised some form of federal aid in their platforms of 1912. By 1913 the movement was so powerful that no one expected the new administration to resist it.

Indeed, at the beginning of the serious discussions of the rural credits question it appeared that no occasion for controversy would arise. In the spring of 1913 Congress authorized the appointment by the President of a Rural Credits Commission to study the problem and bring in a recommendation. The Commission studied rural credits systems in Europe during the summer; then its chairman, Senator Duncan U. Fletcher of Florida, framed a bill that would establish a system of privately controlled land banks, operating under federal charter.⁶ Secretary of Agriculture Houston endorsed the bill and Wilson added his warm approval. In fact, he conferred with the joint subcommittee of the House and Senate banking committees that had charge of the legislation and urged prompt passage of the Fletcher bill.

Encouraged by the President's friendly attitude, the joint subcommittee at once set to work and came up, around May 1, 1914, with a bill that adopted more or less the framework of the system proposed in the Fletcher plan but added a provision requiring the government to furnish the capital of the land banks, to purchase their bonds if private investors did not, and to operate the system. It was practically the same rural credit bill that was finally passed in 1916. The reporting of this, the so-called Hollis-Bulkley bill, set off a significant controversy in the administration, significant because it pointed up Wilson's limited view of the proper function of government. The root of the difficulty was that the farm spokesmen were convinced a rural credits system without governmental support and sponsorship would never succeed in making farmers independent of private moneylenders, while Wilson and Houston were just as strongly convinced this was no kind of business for the federal government to engage in.

Houston cogently expressed this sentiment in a speech before the National Grange at Manchester, New Hampshire, in November, 1913. "I am not impressed," he said, "with the wisdom and the justice of

⁶ Introduced on August 9, 1913.

proposals that would take the money of all the people, through bonds or other devices, and lend it to the farmers or to any other class at a rate of interest lower than the economic conditions would normally require and lower than that at which other classes are securing their capital. This would be special legislation of a particularly odious type, and no new excursions in this direction would be palatable when we are engaged in the gigantic task of restoring the simple rule of equity."⁷

The controversy came to a head when Representative Robert J. Bulkley insisted on introducing the joint subcommittee's bill, in spite of the indignant protests of Carter Glass and other administration leaders. To head off the revolt, Majority Leader Underwood called a caucus of the House Democrats. To the assembled throng Glass read a fervent appeal from the President declaring he would gladly approve the Hollis-Bulkley bill without the governmental aid feature. But, Wilson added, "I have a very deep conviction that it is unwise and unjustifiable to extend the credit of the Government to a single class of the community." This, he continued, was a clear and permanent conviction, one that had come to him, as it were, "out of fire."⁸ Obviously threatening a veto of the Hollis-Bulkley bill, Wilson's letter angered the agrarian spokesman, who avowed there would be no rural credits legislation at all until the President changed his mind. Nor was there any such legislation, until new political circumstances prevailed in 1916 and Wilson abruptly reversed his position.

Wilson's momentary defeat of the rural credits measure pleased the private investors, but it generated a good deal of bitterness among the rural leaders of the country. Efforts of Democrats like Glass and Bryan to justify the President's stand in terms of "sound Democratic doctrine"⁹ made little sense to editors of farm papers and presidents of granges and farmers' unions. When Congress reconvened in December, 1914, Senator Henry F. Hollis warned the President that he and Bulkley planned to renew their campaign, even though Wilson's Annual Message had relegated rural credits legislation to the scrap heap.¹⁰ Pressure from the rural sections mounted during the following

⁷ Quoted in *Commercial West*, XXIV (Nov. 22, 1913), 7-8.

⁸ Wilson to Glass, May 12, 1914, the Woodrow Wilson Papers, in the Library of Congress.

⁹ Glass to D. C. Pryer, July 9, 1914, the Papers of Carter Glass, in the Library of the University of Virginia; Glass to Herbert Myrick, May 18, 1914, *ibid.*; "Rural Credits Legislation," *The Commoner*, June, 1914.

¹⁰ Hollis to Wilson, Dec. 11, 1914, Wilson Papers. In his Annual Message of

months. Without warning to administration leaders, the Senate on February 25, 1915, adopted an amendment to the agricultural appropriation bill providing for the establishment of a rural credits system in the Treasury Department. A few days later, on March 2, the House approved the Hollis-Bulkley bill, but the session expired before the conference committee could agree, and the President was spared the embarrassment of vetoing a bill that had overwhelming support in Congress and among the farmers of the country.

Thus Wilson successfully stood off the movements designed to swing the influence and financial support of the federal government to labor unions and farmers in their struggle for advancement. His strong conviction that there were definite limits beyond which the federal authority should not be extended was demonstrated, again, in the manner in which he thwarted the campaign of the social justice groups to commit the administration to a positive program of social legislation.

One of the chief objectives of the reformers, for example, was a federal child labor law. A model bill, drafted by the National Child Labor Committee, was introduced in the House by Representative A. Mitchell Palmer on January 26, 1914. It would be incorrect to say Wilson opposed it; he simply refused to support it because he thought it was unconstitutional.¹¹ And so long as he withheld his aggressive support the bill would never get past the Senate.

Another social justice objective was woman suffrage. Here, again, Wilson did not openly fight the cause but rather refused to aid it. And Southern opposition in Congress was so strong that without Wilson's most determined effort applied in its behalf a suffrage amendment could never obtain the necessary two-thirds vote. Wilson probably did

December 8, 1914, Wilson had declared: "The great subject of rural credits still remains to be dealt with, and it is a matter of deep regret that the difficulties of the subject have seemed to render it impossible to complete a bill for passage at this session. But it can not be perfected yet, and therefore there are no other constructive measures the necessity for which I will at this time call your attention to." Ray S. Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (6 vols., New York, 1925-27), *The New Democracy*, I, 220.

¹¹ In early January, 1914, a delegation of leaders in the child labor reform movement requested an interview with the President. "Glad to see these gentlemen," Wilson replied, in a note to Tumulty, "but they ought to know, in all frankness, that no child labor law yet proposed has seemed to me constitutional." Wilson to Tumulty, inscribed at the bottom of Tumulty to Wilson, Jan. 24, 1914, Wilson Papers.

not believe it was proper for a lady to vote, but the excuse he always gave the delegations of suffragettes who visited him was that he was bound hand and foot in the matter because the Democratic platform had not approved a suffrage amendment.¹² Some of the interviews were not pleasant affairs, as the ladies could be brutally frank. For example, Mrs. Glendower Evans of Boston, who had escorted a large delegation of working women to the White House on February 2, 1915, reminded the President that in 1912 he had led her to believe he would support woman suffrage. Wilson replied that he had then spoken as an individual, but that he was now speaking as a representative of his party. "Of course," Mrs. Evans shot back, "you were gunning for votes then." Wilson's face turned red, but he managed a weak smile. On the occasion of the sixth visitation by petitioning females, however, he finally confessed that he was "tied to a conviction" that the states alone should control the suffrage.

A third item of the program supported by many leaders of the social justice movement was the imposition of some restriction on the enormous numbers of immigrants then coming to American shores. Restriction or, if possible, putting an end altogether to immigration had long been a prime objective of the A.F. of L. and other labor groups, whose spokesmen claimed unrestricted immigration operated to depress wages in the United States. Appalled by the dire effects of unrestrained immigration on American institutions, a number of leading sociologists and social workers supported the movement.¹³ Moreover, the restrictionists were also strongly supported by anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish elements.

The device favored by the restrictionists and exclusionists of that day, the literacy test, was embodied in the Burnett general immigration bill, which the House approved on February 4, 1914, and the Senate on January 2, 1915. From the beginning of the debates in the House, Wilson had intimated he would veto the immigration bill if it included the literacy test. After the House passed the bill, he frankly warned Senate leaders that he would veto the measure if they did not strike

¹² *The New York Times*, Dec. 9, 1914; Elizabeth Glendower Evans, "An Audience at the White House," *La Follette's Weekly*, VI (Feb. 14, 1914), 5, 15.

¹³ Among them were Henry P. Fairchild of Yale, Edward A. Ross of Wisconsin, Jeremiah W. Jenks of New York University, Thomas N. Carver of Harvard, Dean Leon C. Marshall of the University of Chicago, and Robert A. Woods of South End House, Boston. See H. P. Fairchild to Wilson, Mar. 17, 1914, Wilson Papers.

out the disputed provision.¹⁴ Whether he thus acted out of conviction or for reasons of expediency, it is impossible to say,¹⁵ but when the Senate approved the Burnett bill *in toto* he replied with a ringing veto. "Those who come seeking opportunity are not to be admitted unless they have already had one of the chief of the opportunities they seek, the opportunity of education," he asserted. "The object of such provisions is restriction, not selection."¹⁶ Two years later, in January, 1917, Congress re-enacted the Burnett bill. Wilson replied again with a stirring veto, but this time the forces of restriction were not to be denied victory, and the House on February 1 and the Senate on February 5 overrode the veto.

One great measure of social justice, the Seamen's bill, had the President's approval in the beginning, as its purpose was only to free American sailors from the bondage of their contracts and to strengthen maritime safety requirements. Any recital of how this measure was passed should begin by taking account of the devotion and twenty years' unrequited labor of the president of the Seamen's Union, Andrew Furuseth—"one of the heroes of the world, who . . . forfeited money, position, comfort and everything else to fight the battle of the common sailor."¹⁷ Furuseth finally found sponsors for his bill

¹⁴ Wilson to Senator E. D. Smith, Mar. 5, 1914, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Senator John Sharp Williams urged Wilson not to veto the Burnett bill. Wilson's reply indicated that political considerations were uppermost in his mind. He wrote: "I find myself in a very embarrassing situation about that bill. Nothing is more distasteful to me than to set my judgment against so many of my friends and associates in public life, but frankly stated the situation is this: I myself personally made the most explicit statements at the time of the presidential election about this subject to groups of our fellow-citizens of foreign extraction whom I wished to treat with perfect frankness and for whom I had entire respect. In view of what I said to them, I do not see how it will be possible for me to give my assent to the bill. I know that you will appreciate the scruple upon which I act." Wilson to Williams, Jan. 7, 1915, *ibid.*

¹⁶ *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, I, 254.

It should be pointed out here that during this long controversy a number of the social justice leaders strongly opposed any form of restriction. See, e.g., Jane Addams to Wilson, Jan. 29, 1915, Wilson Papers; Stephen S. Wise to Wilson, Jan. 29, 1915, *ibid.*; *The Public*, XVIII (Feb. 5, 1915), 121.

The large employers of labor and their spokesmen, the spokesmen of the Italian-, Polish-, Hungarian-, and Russian-American societies, and the representatives of the Jewish community in the United States, however, were the real leaders in the fight against any form of restriction. The author could find no evidence that the Catholic Church entered the controversy on the political level.

¹⁷ William Kent to Norman Hapgood, June 16, 1914, the Papers of William Kent, in the Library of Yale University.

in the Sixty-Second Congress, Representative William B. Wilson and Senator La Follette. It passed the House in 1912 and the Senate in 1913, only to receive a pocket veto from President Taft in the closing days of his administration.

Had the Seamen's bill been merely a matter of domestic concern it would probably have been promptly re-enacted by the Sixty-Third Congress and signed by the President. Before the international ramifications of the measure were brought home to him, for example, Wilson was cordially disposed and promised to support the bill. Trouble arose, however, because the measure in effect abrogated the contractual obligations of alien seamen on foreign ships in American ports, thus violating treaties with all the maritime powers.¹⁸ Moreover, the United States had consented to send delegates to an international conference on safety at sea in London in November, 1913; it seemed hardly courteous for the nation that had taken the initiative in calling the conference to act unilaterally before it could meet.

The envoys of several of the great powers expressed these objections emphatically to the Secretary of State, but Wilson was not disturbed until John Bassett Moore, Counselor of the State Department, called his attention to them on October 16, 1913. By this time it was too late to stop action by the Senate, which on October 23 adopted the Furuseth bill sponsored by La Follette. The administration blocked action by the House, however, and the American delegates, Furuseth among them, went to the London conference unembarrassed by any prior action by their government. Furuseth resigned and came home when the conference adopted safety requirements that did not meet the standards of his own bill. The rest of the American delegates stayed on, however, and helped draft a Convention that imposed uniform and generally rigid safety standards on the vessels of all maritime powers.

The administration was now in another dilemma. Should the United States ratify the Convention on Safety at Sea unconditionally, which would mean abandoning the Furuseth bill, or should it ratify with a reservation that would leave room for the passage of that measure? Wilson let the State and Commerce departments, which in-

¹⁸ The United States had entered into treaties with the maritime powers providing for the arrest of foreign seamen who deserted while their ships were in American ports. The Seamen's bill would have unilaterally abrogated these treaties.

sisted on unconditional ratification, make the decision; and he reversed his own support of the Furuseth bill and applied administration pressure toward speedy ratification of the Convention. Thus a bitter controversy ensued between the administration and some of the progressive leaders in Congress. In the end the progressives won. The House passed a modified version of the Furuseth bill on August 27, 1914; the Senate in December ratified the Convention with a sweeping reservation; and three months later both houses ratified the conference report.

Events now moved swiftly to a conclusion. Bryan urged the President to give the bill a pocket veto,¹⁹ and the newspapers on March 1, 1915, predicted that this would be the measure's fate. Furuseth appealed in a moving letter, begging Wilson to approve the legislation for which he had fought so long, and Wilson replied in words indicating he had no alternative but to follow the advice of the State Department. The same day, March 2, La Follette, Furuseth, and Senator Owen called on Bryan. Bryan had never heard of Furuseth, but he was so shaken by the old sailor's plea that he at once reversed his position.²⁰ La Follette added his personal promise that Congress would give the State Department ample time in which to abrogate old treaties and negotiate new ones. Wilson signed the Furuseth bill on March 4, but apparently not without considerable soul searching. "I debated the matter of signing the bill very earnestly indeed . . ." he explained, "and finally determined to sign it because it seemed the only chance to get something like justice done to a class of workmen who have been too much neglected by our laws."²¹

The dearth in administration circles of any impelling passion for social justice was nowhere better illustrated than in the government's policy toward Negroes during Wilson's magistracy. During the campaign of 1912 Wilson had appealed for Negro support, and spokesmen for the cause of racial democracy, among them being Oswald Garrison Villard, William E. B. Du Bois, and William Monroe Trotter, had

¹⁹ On the grounds that passage of the bill would require the United States to denounce unilaterally some twenty-two treaties with maritime nations. Bryan to Wilson, Feb. 27, 1915, the Papers of William Jennings Bryan, in the National Archives. See also Bryan to Wilson, Mar. 1, 1915, Wilson Papers, and Robert Lansing to Bryan, Mar. 1, 1915, *ibid.*

²⁰ Bryan also urged the President to suggest that the Seamen's bill be amended so as to give the State Department time in which to abrogate the treaties. Bryan to Wilson, Mar. 2, 1915, *ibid.*

²¹ Wilson to Newton D. Baker, Mar. 5, 1915, *ibid.*

accepted his promises and worked for his election. Soon after Wilson's inauguration, Oswald Garrison Villard, one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and publisher of the New York *Evening Post* and the *Nation*, called at the White House and presented a plan for the appointment of a National Race Commission to study the whole problem of race relations in the United States. Wilson seemed "wholly sympathetic" to the suggestion, and Villard left for a visit to Europe, confident Wilson would soon be ready to appoint the Commission.²² He returned in July and tried several times to see the President, but Wilson refused to grant him an interview. Finally, when Villard appealed in personal terms, Wilson had to tell him that the political situation was too delicate for any such action, that the appointment of the Commission would incite the resentment of Southerners in Congress, whose votes he needed for the success of his legislative program.²³

Villard's disappointment over Wilson's abandonment of the Race Commission was nothing, however, as compared with his consternation at the way in which Southern race concepts had gained ascendancy in Congress and in the administration. Southerners were riding high in Washington for the first time since the Civil War, demanding segregation in the government departments and public services and the dismissal or down-grading of Negro civil servants.

Throughout his incumbency, Wilson stood firm against the cruder demands of the white supremacists, but he and probably all of his Cabinet believed in segregation, social and official. The issue first arose on April 11, 1913, when Burleson suggested segregating all Negroes in the federal services. If there were any defenders of the Negro or any foes of segregation in the Cabinet they did not then or afterward raise their voice.²⁴ Shortly afterward the Bureau of the Census, the Post Office Department, and the Bureau of Printing and Engraving quietly began to segregate workers in offices, shops, rest rooms, and res-

²² O. G. Villard to R. H. Leavell, May 15, 1913, the Papers of Oswald Garrison Villard, in Houghton Library, Harvard University. Villard's plan was explained in *A Proposal for a National Race Commission to be appointed by the President of the United States, Suggested by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (n.p., n.d.).

²³ Villard to Wilson, Aug. 18, 1913, Villard Papers; Wilson to Villard, Aug. 21, 1913, *ibid.* Wilson made this point even clearer in a conversation with John Palmer Gavit on October 1, 1913, for an account of which see Gavit to Villard, Oct. 1, 1913, *ibid.*

²⁴ The Diary of Josephus Daniels, in the Library of Congress, Apr. 11, 1913.

taurants. Employees who objected were discharged.²⁵ Moreover, federal Post Office and Treasury officials in the South were given free rein to discharge and down-grade Negro employees. The postmaster of Atlanta, for example, discharged thirty-five Negroes. "There are no Government positions for Negroes in the South," the Collector of Internal Revenue in Georgia announced. "A Negro's place is in the cornfield."²⁶

There had been segregation in the government departments before, to be sure, but it had been informal and unofficial. Now it seemed that for the first time since the Civil War the federal government had placed its approval on the Southern caste system. Needless to say, Negroes throughout the country were shocked and confused by this action of an administration that promised a new freedom for all the people. "I have recently spent several days in Washington, and I have never seen the colored people so discouraged and bitter as they are at the present time," the great leader of the Negroes wrote.²⁷ "We had looked forward in the hope that under your guidance all this would be changed," another Negro leader wrote the President, "but the cold facts presented to us show that these cherished hopes are to be dashed to the ground and that for a while longer we must continue to drink from this bitter cup."²⁸

The anger of the Negro leaders at the new segregation policies was the natural reaction of a group who had hopefully supported the man they were sure would deal with them compassionately. More surprising, however, was the manner in which a large part of the progressive leadership of the North and Middle West rose in fervent protest. Villard and his *Nation* and New York *Evening Post* and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People first sounded the alarm, and the storm of protests from editors, clergymen, and civic leaders that followed gave ample proof that the old spirit of equalitarianism was not dead.

Wilson was visibly surprised and greatly disturbed by the furor his

²⁵ May Childs Nerney to Oswald G. Villard, Sept. 30, 1913, Wilson Papers, is the report by an investigator for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. For other analyses see J. P. Gavit in New York *Evening Post*, Oct. 21, 1913, and William Monroe Trotter, "Federal Segregation Under Pres. Wilson," Boston *Guardian*, Oct. 25, 1913.

²⁶ Atlanta *Georgian and News*, Oct. 7, 1913.

²⁷ Booker T. Washington to O. G. Villard, Aug. 10, 1913, Wilson Papers.

²⁸ W. F. Powell to Wilson, Aug. 25, 1913, *ibid.*

subordinates had provoked. From the beginning of the controversy, however, he contended that segregation was being instituted in the interest of the Negroes, and throughout he stoutly maintained this position. "I would say that I do approve of the segregation that is being attempted in several of the departments," he wrote, for example, to the editor of the influential *Congregationalist*.²⁹ Moreover, when the militant Boston Negro spokesman, William Monroe Trotter, headed a delegation to carry a protest to the White House and spoke rashly, the President virtually ordered him out.

In every respect the whole affair was tragic and unfortunate—one of the worst blots on the administration's record. It was more than even Wilson's staunchest editorial supporter, Frank Cobb, could stomach. "It is a small, mean, petty discrimination," he cried in protest, "and Mr. Wilson ought to have set his heel upon this presumptuous Jim-Crow government the moment it was established. He ought to set his heel upon it now. It is a reproach to his Administration and to the great political principles which he represents."³⁰

Although the President never set his heel upon Jim Crow, the forthright protests of the liberal North had some effect. The Treasury Department reversed its policy and began quietly to eliminate segregation. But more important was the fact that the segregation movement in other departments was entirely checked. Jim Crowism was not rooted out of the federal government, to be sure, but at least the white supremacists were less bold and far less successful after 1913.

The segregation affair caused many progressives to wonder what kind of progressive Wilson was. Their confusion was compounded, moreover, by the perplexing reversals that Wilson executed when he proceeded to complete his legislative program by fulfilling his pledges to strengthen the antitrust laws.

Wilson had fabricated the New Freedom program in 1912 largely out of promises to destroy monopoly and restore free competition. He had, moreover, evolved a fairly definite remedy, which was to rewrite the rules of business practice so clearly that there could be no doubt as to their meaning, and to enforce these rules by the normal processes of prosecution and adjudication. Not until the middle of November, 1913, however, when the Underwood bill was passed and the Federal Reserve bill was safely on its way to passage in the Senate, did Wilson

²⁹ Wilson to Rev. H. A. Bridgman, Sept. 8, 1913, *ibid*.

³⁰ New York World, Nov. 13, 1914.

give any thought to details. On November 20 he began a long series of conferences with Democratic leaders in Congress, seeking their views and requesting them to submit their recommendations. The news that the President was determined to carry through with antitrust legislation also provoked the introduction of a bewildering variety of bills when Congress convened in December.

By the middle of December most of the recommendations were in, and it was evident that progressive opinion was divided over the remedy. The main body of Democrats desired merely an interpretative amendment of the Sherman Act, to define precisely the prohibitions against restraint of trade, to outlaw interlocking directorates of all kinds, and to narrow and clarify the "rule of reason," promulgated by the Supreme Court in 1911.³¹ A minority of Democrats and practically all progressive Republicans, on the other hand, agreed with Theodore Roosevelt that this was a naïve solution, that it would be impossible to define by statute every conceivable restraint of trade. They wanted instead a powerful, independent trade commission armed with broad authority and capable of suppressing unfair competition whenever it arose and under whatever guise.³²

Wilson had to choose, therefore, between what he called the "two ways open to us"—in brief, to choose between the solution he had offered in 1912 and the program that Roosevelt and his friends championed. He pondered this question during his vacation at Pass Christian, Mississippi, over the Christmas holidays, and if there was any doubt in his mind it was quickly resolved. He would press ahead for legislation along New Freedom lines, in spite of the great pressure that was being brought to bear upon him by personal friends and spokesmen of the great business interests to abandon his efforts, in spite of the seeming surrender of the House of Morgan, when it announced on

³¹ The rule of reason, first promulgated by the Supreme Court in the Standard Oil case in May, 1911 (221 U.S. 1) and shortly afterward reaffirmed in the American Tobacco case (221 U.S. 106), represented a triumph for Chief Justice Edward D. White, who, since 1897, had contended that the framers of the Sherman Act had intended to outlaw only unreasonable, or direct, restraints of trade, not reasonable restraints that were normally ancillary to most contracts.

Some Democrats, notably John Sharp Williams and Bryan, wanted to abolish the rule of reason altogether and outlaw every restraint of trade, whether direct or ancillary. See J. S. Williams to Wilson, Jan. 13, 1914, Wilson Papers.

³² For an analysis of such proposals see J. E. Davies to Wilson, Dec. 27, 1913, and "Memorandum of Recommendations as to Trust Legislation by Joseph E. Davies, Commissioner of Corporations," both in *ibid*.

January 2, 1914, its withdrawal from thirty directorships in banks, railroads, and industrial firms.³³

Soon after his return to Washington, Wilson had full-dress conferences with Congressional leaders, who agreed to support the program the administration had formulated. Then, appearing for the fifth time before a joint session, the President explained in unusual detail the kind of legislation he had in mind. He brandished no flaming sword against business, however, but offered an olive branch of peace and the hope of permanent accommodation. "The antagonism between business and Government is over," he said several times, as if to emphasize that he was speaking for the best business thought of the country.³⁴

Wilson's program was embodied in three bills, originally drawn by Chairman Henry D. Clayton of the House Judiciary Committee, which were soon combined into one measure, known as the Clayton bill. It enumerated and prohibited a series of unfair trade practices, outlawed in unqualified terms interlocking directorates and stockholdings, and gave private parties benefit of decisions in suits that the government had originated. A fourth bill, prepared by Representatives Clayton, James H. Covington, and William C. Adamson and Senator Francis G. Newlands, created an interstate trade commission to supplant the Bureau of Corporations. The new commission would be no independent arbiter of business practices, however, but would serve merely as the right arm of the Justice Department in antitrust matters. Actually, it was the Bureau of Corporations, under a new name and with a little more power—as Wilson said, no "dangerous experiment," but a "safe and sensible" agency that all Democrats could approve. A final feature of the program was the bill prepared by Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas and Louis D. Brandeis, to give the Interstate Commerce Commission control over the issuance of new securities by the railroads.³⁵

This, therefore, was the substance of the original Wilson program for

³³ *The New York Times*, Jan. 3, 1914.

³⁴ *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, I, 81-88.

³⁵ This measure passed the House on June 5, 1914, but later died in the Senate, in part a casualty of the panic that the war evoked. During the early months of the war the American security markets were in a chaotic condition; the New York Stock Exchange was closed; and the railroads were in a state approaching insolvency. Administration leaders decided, therefore, to drop the Rayburn bill entirely.

trust reform. No sooner was it proposed, however, than there arose a storm of confusing dissent and criticism. The "Money Trust" expert, Samuel Untermyer, rushed to Washington and pointed to many weaknesses in the Clayton bill. Brandeis, who was now spending most of his time in Washington, was evolving an entirely new solution, the cornerstone of which was the strengthening of small business by fair-trade price laws. Progressives and the representatives of small business were up in arms in protest against the plan for a weak interstate trade commission. And to compound the difficulty, Democratic leaders in Congress began to quarrel among themselves over jurisdiction and details. It seemed no one knew what to do or how to do it.

The most serious controversy of all, however, was that which occurred when the labor leaders and spokesmen in Congress read the Clayton bill and found nothing in it to give labor unions exemption from the application of the antitrust laws. Gompers and his colleagues in the A.F. of L. had supported Wilson in 1912 and had confidently expected the administration to stand by the Democratic platform pledges to exempt labor and farm organizations from the penalties of the Sherman law. They were now up in arms, threatening the Democrats with loss of labor's vote if these demands were not conceded. "Without further delay," Gompers declared, "the citizens of the United States must decide whether they wish to outlaw organized labor."³⁶

In this bitter controversy Wilson and his Congressional leaders stood absolutely firm. The most they would concede was a compromise amendment providing for jury trials in cases of criminal contempt, circumscribing the issuance of injunctions in labor disputes, and declaring that neither farm nor labor unions should be considered as illegal combinations in restraint of trade when they lawfully sought to obtain legitimate objectives.³⁷ This did not go far enough to suit the

³⁶ *New York World*, Mar. 1, 1914.

³⁷ Wilson was emphatic in declaring that the provision did not authorize labor unions to use methods of industrial warfare that had previously been condemned by the courts. *The New York Times*, June 2, 1914; *New York World*, June 2, 1914.

Representative E. Y. Webb of North Carolina, who framed the compromise provision, further explained:

"The framers of the Sherman law never intended to place labor organizations and farmers' organizations under the ban of that law. The existence of a labor of farmers' union never has been unlawful, and is not unlawful today, but it was decided to place in the statutory law of the country a recognition of the rights of those organizations to exist and carry out their lawful purposes.

labor leaders, whose spokesmen in Congress³⁸ went to the White House on April 30 and threatened to join the Republicans in defeating the administration's antitrust program if labor's demand for complete immunity were not granted. Wilson would not budge, however, and the labor congressmen and union officials had to accept the compromise, which was better than nothing.

With the compromise labor provision included, the House passed the Clayton bill, along with the interstate trade commission and railroad securities bills, by overwhelming majorities on June 5, 1914. The House's action brought to an end the New Freedom phase of antitrust legislation, that is, of legislation based upon the assumption that all that was required was merely to make more specific the prohibitions against restraint of trade. From this point forward, progress away from this concept was uninterrupted, until in the end Wilson accepted almost entirely the New Nationalism's solution for the regulation of business by a powerful trade commission. The metamorphosis in administration policy was gradual, and the story of how it evolved is complicated; but the major reasons for the change are clear.

To begin with, there is much evidence that Wilson was growing uncertain as to the manner in which the broad objectives of his program should be accomplished. His attitude toward the industrial problem was conditioned by his belief that the vast majority of businessmen were honest and desired only the public good. Thus his objective was chiefly to strengthen the altruistic tendencies in the business community; and he began to wonder whether this could be done by rigid, inflexible laws that might only further alienate and confuse the honest businessman.

On the other hand, a large minority of the Democrats—the Southern agrarians and the Bryan followers—proposed legislation to destroy the oligarchical economic structure: stringent federal regulation of stock exchanges;³⁹ a graduated corporation tax that would bear so heavily

³⁸ "After the original Section 7 of the Anti-trust bill was drawn, certain representatives of labor contended that the section did not give labor all it was entitled to and demanded that we should make the section provide that the anti-trust laws should not apply to labor organizations. The acceptance of this amendment would have placed labor organizations beyond the pale of the anti-trust law entirely, which neither the president nor the members of the [Judiciary] committee would agree to." *The New York Times*, June 14, 1914.

³⁹ Representatives David J. Lewis of Maryland, Edward Keating of Colorado, Isaac R. Sherwood of Ohio, and John J. Casey of Pennsylvania.

⁴⁰ This was one of the recommendations of the Pujo Committee and was strongly supported by Samuel Untermyer and Senator Robert L. Owen of

on the great combinations as to put them out of business; limiting a corporation or holding company usually to about one-third the total product of any given industry;⁴⁰ abolition of the "rule of reason"; and the complete destruction of the complicated network of interlocking relationships among banks, railroads, corporations, and insurance companies.⁴¹ This program went far beyond anything Wilson envisaged at any time. For example, he did not object to bigness per se; he only wanted to prevent the great interests from using their power to stifle new growth and competition. And he was beginning to doubt that the Clayton bill and the weak interstate trade commission bill offered an effective remedy.

In the second place, the spokesmen of the business community, particularly the United States Chamber of Commerce, had embraced the ideal of the "self-regulation" of business. What they desired most was legislation prohibiting unfair trade practices, with a trade commission to pass upon the legality of practices and to serve as a friendly adviser to businessmen. The suggestion found strong support in the Senate and among progressives generally, as it seemed to offer a simple solution to a perplexing difficulty.

Just at the moment when Wilson seemed most confused and uncertain, Louis D. Brandeis took up the strong trade commission idea and persuaded the President to adopt it also. Since October, 1913, Brandeis had been hard at work, in Boston and Washington, on the antitrust question. His close friend and associate, George L. Rublee of New York, had joined the "people's lawyer," and together the two men drafted a Federal Trade Commission bill that was introduced by Representative Raymond B. Stevens, Democrat of New Hampshire. The Stevens bill in general terms outlawed unfair trade practices and established a trade commission endowed with plenary authority to oversee business activity and by the issuance of cease and desist orders to prevent the illegal suppression of competition.

Oklahoma. Early in the Congressional discussions of antitrust legislation the President let it be known he did not favor the stock exchange bill. *The New York Times*, Jan. 23, 1914.

⁴⁰ The report of the House committee, headed by A. O. Stanley of Kentucky, which investigated United States Steel in 1911-12, proposed that there should be a presumption of restraint of trade when a single corporation or holding company controlled at least 30 per cent of the output of a single industry. *House Report*, No. 1127, 62d Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, 1912), p. 214.

⁴¹ This was the desire and determination, often voiced, of practically all the so-called radical Democrats in the House of Representatives.

Wilson and Congressional leaders first learned the details of the Brandeis-Rublee plan in the latter part of April, 1914. The chairman of the House Commerce Committee, William C. Adamson of Georgia, was aghast at the proposal, declaring it proposed giving an administrative agency power to make law. Wilson said nothing at first, but after the antitrust bills were safely through the House he called Brandeis, Rublee, and Stevens to the White House on June 10 and told them he had decided to make the Stevens bill the cornerstone of his antitrust program. How the President was won over to the idea of a strong trade commission is nowhere evident. In any event, three days after the White House conference the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee reported the Federal Trade Commission bill with the Stevens bill as an amendment. There then followed several weeks of debate in the Senate, during which time Wilson, Brandeis, and Rublee worked feverishly to overcome old-line Democratic and conservative opposition to Section 5, empowering the Commission to issue cease and desist orders. After adopting amendments guaranteeing broad court review of the Commission's orders, the Senate passed the bill on August 5 by a bipartisan vote of fifty-three to sixteen. The House agreed a month later, and the measure became law on September 10. "If the bill is wrong I shall be much to blame," Rublee wrote. "I drafted the conference report which was agreed to. Section 5 is exactly as I wanted it to be."⁴²

Meanwhile, after he espoused the Brandeis-Rublee plan, Wilson seemed to lose all interest in the Clayton bill. It was cut adrift in the Senate, with the result that one after another of its strong provisions was so weakened as to make it in many particulars almost innocuous. For example, instead of forbidding exclusive selling contracts, interlocking directorates, or interlocking stockholdings outright, the words "where the effect may be to substantially lessen competition or tend to create a monopoly in any line of commerce," or words of similar purport, were inserted after all the prohibitions.⁴³

"When the Clayton bill was first written," Senator James A. Reed of Missouri exclaimed, "it was a raging lion with a mouth full of teeth. It has degenerated to a tabby cat with soft gums, a plaintive mew, and

⁴² Rublee to Brandeis, Oct. 6, 1914, the Papers of Louis D. Brandeis, in the Law School Library of the University of Louisville.

⁴³ For a good analysis of the weakening of the Clayton bill see Henry R. Seager and Charles A. Gulick, Jr., *Trust and Corporation Problems* (New York, 1929), pp. 420-422.

an anaemic appearance. It is a sort of legislative apology to the trusts, delivered hat in hand, and accompanied by assurances that no discourtesy is intended."⁴⁴ Wilson, too, complained that Senator Culberson, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, had made the bill "so weak that you cannot tell it from water."⁴⁵ Of course this was largely true, but it was true because the administration had put all faith in the trade commission plan and had given up its effort to prohibit restraints of trade by statutory action.

Farm and labor leaders, meanwhile, had been striving mightily with the Senate to win the concessions the President and House of Representatives had denied them. On July 30, Gompers, Frank Morrison, secretary-treasurer of the A.F. of L., the legislative representatives of the railroad brotherhoods, the general counsel of the Farmers' Union, and the secretary of the Farmers' National Congress addressed an important appeal to the Senate Judiciary Committee. The letter reviewed the labor provisions of the Clayton bill, as it had passed the House, and pointed out specifically the changes that were necessary to satisfy labor and farm demands. The effect of the suggested changes would have been to give to labor and farm organizations the immunity from the penalties of the Sherman law they were seeking.

A comparison of the labor-farm demands with the labor provisions of the Clayton bill as it passed the Senate and conference committee reveals that the Senate, like the President and the House of Representatives, stood absolutely firm in resisting these demands. The Senate made one change that became famous but was not important. At the suggestion of Senator Albert B. Cummins, it amended the provision to read, "The labor of human beings is not a commodity or article of commerce," which phrase was nothing more than a pious expression of senatorial opinion and did not change labor's standing before the law.⁴⁶

In any event, the labor provisions of the act apparently pleased everyone. Gompers hailed them as labor's "Magna Carta"⁴⁷ and after-

⁴⁴ *The New York Times*, Sept. 29, 1914.

⁴⁵ The Diary of Edward M. House, in the Papers of Edward M. House, in the Library of Yale University, Oct. 2, 1914.

⁴⁶ That the labor provisions of the Clayton Act did not confer immunity from prosecution on farm and labor unions was the opinion of practically every responsible contemporary observer. See, e.g., the cogent essay, "Labor Is Not a Commodity," *New Republic*, IX (Dec. 2, 1916), 112-114, or W. H. Taft to G. W. Wickersham, Oct. 31, Nov. 8, 1914, Taft Papers.

⁴⁷ "Labor's Magna Carta—Demand It," *American Federationist*, XXI (July, 1914), 553-557; *ibid.* (Oct., 1914), 866-867.

ward tried desperately to convince himself and the country that labor was freed from the restraints of the antitrust laws. On the other extreme, the general counsel of the American Anti-Boycott Association was also entirely satisfied with the legislation. "The bill makes few changes in existing laws relating to labor unions, injunctions and contempts of court," he observed, "and those are of slight practical importance."⁴⁸

With the appointment of the Federal Trade Commission on February 22, 1915, the administration launched its experiment in the regulation of business enterprise. It is well, however, to understand the spirit in which the experiment was conceived and the purposes that Wilson and his colleagues hoped to accomplish. They were chiefly purposes friendly to business. As Redfield later put it, Wilson hoped to "create in the Federal Trade Commission a counsellor and friend to the business world. . . . It was no large part of his purpose that the Federal Trade Commission should be primarily a policeman to wield a club over the head of the business community. Rather the reverse was true and the restraining powers of the Commission were thought a necessary adjunct which he hoped and expected to be of minor rather than of major use."⁴⁹

Progressives like Brandeis and Rublee, who hoped the Commission would become a dynamic factor in American economic life, were bitterly disappointed when it failed to do anything constructive during the first years of its life. Brandeis later correctly observed that Wilson had ruined the Commission by his choice of commissioners. "It was a stupid administration," he recalled.⁵⁰ The chairman, Joseph E. Davies of Wisconsin, lacked force and judgment. In fact, the only really competent appointee, Rublee, was prevented from serving because the Senate refused to confirm his nomination.⁵¹ Davies proved so incompetent that in June, 1916, the majority of the Commission deposed him and made Edward N. Hurley, a Chicago industrialist, chairman. Hurley

⁴⁸ Daniel Davenport, in *Springfield Republican*, Oct. 11, 1914.

⁴⁹ W. C. Redfield, "Woodrow Wilson: An Appreciation," in the Ray Stannard Baker Collection, in the Library of Congress; see also A. W. Shaw, MS of interview on Jan. 4, 1915, with Wilson, in Wilson Papers.

⁵⁰ R. S. Baker, interview with L. D. Brandeis, Mar. 23, 1929, Baker Collection.

⁵¹ Jacob H. Gallinger of New Hampshire, minority leader in the Senate, objected to the appointment on personal grounds and the Senate refused to confirm Rublee, in spite of the President's strenuous efforts to obtain confirmation.

was certainly abler than Davies; but he devoted his talents to making the Commission useful to businessmen and to preaching the doctrine of co-operation between government and business. And under his leadership, the Commission practically abandoned its role as watchdog of business practices. It was little wonder, therefore, that, on reviewing the situation on the eve of America's entry into the war, Rublee concluded that the Commission was on the rocks.⁵²

The weakening of the administration's antitrust program was only the first sign of a general reaction that began to set in around the beginning of 1914 and increasingly affected the administration and the President. The chief cause of the ebbing of the reform impulse was the insidious depression that began during the fall of 1913 and mounted in severity during the late winter and spring of 1914. It was a world-wide phenomenon, the result of the tightening of credit in Europe because of the Balkan Wars and the fear of a general war.⁵³ But in the United States the Republicans blamed the Underwood tariff and Wilson's antitrust measures. Business failures increased, production sagged, and unemployment was widespread and especially acute in the large cities.⁵⁴ Wilson and administration leaders like McAdoo tried to persuade themselves and the public that no real depression existed. Actually, however, they were seriously alarmed, and their concern inevitably evidenced itself in administration policies.

To begin with, in the spring of 1914 the President embarked upon a campaign calculated to win the friendship of businessmen and bankers and to ease the tension that had existed between the administration and the business community. The accommodation of the antitrust program to the desires of the business world was the first step, along with Wilson's repeated expressions of confidence in and friendship for businessmen. Next the President began to welcome bankers

⁵² George Rublee to E. M. House, Jan. 26, 1917, Wilson Papers.

⁵³ See the excellent analysis by S. S. Fontaine, in *New York World*, Jan. 3, 1915.

⁵⁴ Incomplete surveys revealed that in New York 23.7 per cent of 115,960 families investigated in January-February, 1915, had members unemployed. The Bureau of Statistics of Massachusetts reported that returns received from labor organizations in the state, representing 66 per cent of the total trade-union members, showed 18.3 per cent unemployed on December 31, 1914. See Mayor's Committee on Unemployment, New York City, *Report of the Mayor's Committee on Unemployment* (New York, 1916), and Bureau of Statistics, Labor Division, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Thirtieth Quarterly Report on Unemployment in Massachusetts, Quarter Ending June 30, 1915* (Boston, 1915).

and business leaders to the White House. In the palmy days of 1913 he had not wanted their advice; now he welcomed J. P. Morgan, delegations of businessmen and bankers from Illinois, and Henry Ford. Thirdly, Wilson let it be known in the financial circles of New York and Boston that he had never really been an enemy of big business, but only of business that grew "big by methods which unrighteously crushed those who were smaller."⁵⁵

It was about this time, also, that Attorney General McReynolds, with Wilson's approval, began to use a new method in dealing with alleged combinations in restraint of trade. He announced that any large corporation that felt doubtful of the legality of its corporate structure might seek the friendly advice and help of the Justice Department in rearranging its affairs. Several great combinations, notably the American Telephone & Telegraph Company and the New Haven Railroad, came to terms with the administration and received its blessing.⁵⁶ Whether such policy was wise or foolish depended upon one's point of view; in any event, there was no trust-busting ardor in the Wilson administration.

Wilson climaxed his little campaign to win the friendship of the business classes by turning over control of the Federal Reserve Board, in effect, to their representatives, as if he were trying to prove the sincerity of his recent professions. For several months McAdoo and House had engaged in a tug-of-war over the selection of the Board, McAdoo arguing that the appointees should be men in sympathy with the ad-

⁵⁵ Wilson to A. S. Burleson, July 27, 1914, Wilson Papers. See also Wilson to H. L. Higginson, Oct. 23, 1914, *ibid.*; E. M. House to J. C. McReynolds, Jan. 7, 1914, House Papers.

⁵⁶ For details and consequences of the A. T. & T. settlement, see *The New York Times*, Dec. 20, 21, 1913.

The New Haven settlement was reached only after long and bitter negotiations. There was first a thorough investigation into the affairs of the railroad by Joseph W. Folk, special prosecutor for the Interstate Commerce Commission. This was followed by an agreement for the dissolution of the vast New Haven empire, the terms of which were agreed to by railroad and Justice Department officials on January 10, 1914. *Ibid.*, Jan. 11, 1914. The New Haven officers objected, however, to the government's demand that they dispose of the Boston & Maine Railroad at once. *Ibid.*, July 21, 22, 23, 1914. The government replied by instituting a suit to compel dissolution, whereupon the railroad officials surrendered and accepted the Justice Department's terms. *Ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1914.

It should be added that when officials of the United States Steel Corporation, notably Henry C. Frick, endeavored to reach agreement with McReynolds, the Attorney General refused to approve the proposed settlement on the ground that it would not restore genuine competition in the industry. House Diary, Mar. 22, 24, 26, Sept. 30, 1913.

ministration's broad policies, House advising that the President choose leading bankers and businessmen. Actually, there never was much doubt in Wilson's mind as to the wise course to follow; and when the membership of the Board was announced it evoked almost unanimous approval from bankers and business leaders. Progressives, on the other hand, were shocked and astonished. "Why, it looks as if Mr. Vanderlip [president of the National City Bank of New York] has selected them," one progressive Republican senator exclaimed.⁵⁷

The degree to which Wilson had outraged progressive sentiment, however, did not become apparent until the President sent the nominations to the Senate on June 15. Insurgent anger in the upper house centered on two of the nominees—Thomas D. Jones of Chicago and Paul M. Warburg. A former trustee of Princeton University and a close friend of Wilson, Jones was one of the owners of the so-called Zinc Trust and a director of the International Harvester Company, then under state and federal indictment for being an illegal combination. Warburg was a partner in Kuhn, Loeb & Company, one of the great Wall Street banking houses.

In reply to attacks on his friend Jones, Wilson addressed a public letter to the Senate Banking Committee, defending him and explaining that he had become a director of the Harvester Trust to help bring that corporation into conformity with the law. Jones came before the Committee, however, and affirmed that he had not gone on the board of the corporation to reform it and approved everything the Trust had done since he became a director. The upshot was that the Banking Committee refused to approve Jones' nomination and Wilson had to ask him to withdraw from the contest. The Warburg affair, on the other hand, developed differently, and with certain comic aspects. Much insulted by the senatorial opposition, Warburg at first refused to appear before the Committee. Finally the President persuaded him to swallow his pride and the Senate confirmed his appointment.

The startling aspect of the Jones-Warburg affair, however, was Wilson's own reaction to it and the manner in which he came forward as the champion and defender of big business. "It would be particularly unfair to the Democratic Party and the Senate itself to regard it as the enemy of business, big or little," he declared, while the fight was in progress.⁵⁸ When it became obvious that the Senate would re-

⁵⁷ *Boston Advertiser*, May 6, 1914.

⁵⁸ *The New York Times*, July 9, 1914.

fuse to confirm Jones, Wilson's anger became intense. In a commiserating letter to Jones, he lashed out at the Senate insurgents, and at progressives in general. "I believe that the judgment and desire of the whole country cry out for a new temper in affairs," he wrote. ". . . We have breathed already too long the air of suspicion and distrust." In short, there was no room in this year of New Freedom grace for "class antagonism," for the very dynamic quality that had given impetus and force to the American progressive movement.⁵⁹

Wilson's temper soon cooled, and a week later the attention of the country was diverted to other matters by the outbreak of the war in Europe. Then followed a period of political confusion, during which partisan passions subsided. As it turned out, these developments at home and abroad were a godsend to the Democrats during the ensuing Congressional campaign. The Republicans did not wage a vigorous fight, and there seemed to be a general disposition to stand by the President during a time of peril. The most important Democratic asset, however, was the continued disruption of the Republican party, with Roosevelt and the Progressives making one last and futile effort to establish themselves as a major party.⁶⁰

In spite of all these advantages, the Democrats made such a poor showing in the state and Congressional elections on November 3 that their defeat in 1916 seemed almost certain. The Democratic majority in the House was reduced from seventy-three to twenty-five; there was no change of voting strength in the Senate; but the Republicans swept back into or stayed in power in states like New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kansas, New Jersey, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and South Dakota. It seemed as if the progressive tide was beginning to recede, and everywhere progressive leaders were disheartened. "The cataclysm was just about what I expected," Roosevelt lamented.⁶¹ "We are saddened by many defeats," Brandeis added.⁶² Wilson, too, was heartsick and wondered whether all the effort of the preceding two years had been worth while. "People are not so stupid not to know," he declared, "that to vote against a Democratic ticket is to vote indirectly against

⁵⁹ Wilson to T. D. Jones, July 23, 1914, printed in *ibid.*, July 24, 1914.

⁶⁰ George E. Mowry, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* (Madison, Wis., 1946), pp. 300-303.

⁶¹ Roosevelt to Archie B. Roosevelt, Nov. 7, 1914, the Papers of Theodore Roosevelt, in the Library of Congress.

⁶² L. D. Brandeis to Gifford Pinchot, Nov. 4, 1914, Brandeis Papers.

me."⁶³ He changed his mind soon, however, and boasted that the Democrats had won a great victory.

In the autumn of 1914 Wilson, moreover, thought his program to effect a fundamental reorganization of American economic life was complete and that the progressive movement had fulfilled its mission. "We have only to look back ten years or so to realize the deep perplexities and dangerous ill-humors out of which we have at last issued, as if from a bewildering fog, a noxious miasma," he wrote in a public letter to McAdoo in November, 1914, announcing the consummation of the New Freedom program. "Ten or twelve years ago the country was torn and excited by an agitation which shook the very foundations of her political life, brought her business ideals into question, condemned her social standards, denied the honesty of her men of affairs, the integrity of her economic processes, the morality and good faith of many of the things which her law sustained." And so things stood until the Democrats came to power and the New Freedom legislation righted fundamental wrongs. The nightmare of the past years was over now, and the future would be a time of co-operation, of new understanding, of common purpose, "a time of healing because a time of just dealing."⁶⁴

Advanced progressives were puzzled by Wilson's remarkable letter. Did the President mean what he had said? Was the progressive movement over? If so, then where could the social justice element go? Herbert Croly, chief editor of the *New Republic*, which had just begun its distinguished career, voiced the apprehensions that many progressives felt when he wrote:

How can a man of . . . [Wilson's] shrewd and masculine intelligence possibly delude himself into believing the extravagant claims which he makes on behalf of the Democratic legislative achievement? . . . How many sincere progressives follow him in believing that this legislation has made the future clear and bright with the promise of best things? . . .

President Wilson could not have written his letter unless he had utterly misconceived the meaning and the task of American progressivism. After every allowance has been made for his justifiable pride . . . , there remains an ominous residue of sheer misunderstanding. Any man of President Wilson's intellectual equipment who seriously asserts that the fundamental wrongs of

⁶³ House Diary, Nov. 4, 1914.

⁶⁴ Wilson to W. G. McAdoo, Nov. 17, 1914, printed in *The New York Times*, Nov. 18, 1914. See also Wilson to Powell Evans, Oct. 20, 1914, Wilson Papers.

a modern society can be easily and quickly righted as a consequence of a few laws . . . casts suspicion either upon his own sincerity or upon his grasp of the realities of modern social and industrial life. Mr. Wilson's sincerity is above suspicion, but he is a dangerous and unsound thinker upon contemporary political and social problems. He has not only . . . "a single-track mind," but a mind which is fully convinced of the everlasting righteousness of its own performances and which surrounds this conviction with a halo of shimmering rhetoric. He deceives himself with these phrases, but he should not be allowed to deceive progressive popular opinion.⁶⁵

Croly's analysis of the superficial character of Wilson's progressivism was essentially correct. There is little evidence that Wilson had any deep comprehension of the far-reaching social and economic tensions of the time. As Croly said, Wilson was intelligent and sincere. But that did not make him a prophet or a pioneer, or even a progressive of the advanced persuasion. He had not taken office to carry out a program of federal social reform. He had promised to lower the tariff, reorganize the currency and banking system, and strengthen the antitrust laws, in order to free the nation's energies and unleash the competitive urges of the people. He had done these things, and with a minimum of concession to advanced progressive concepts. He had, moreover, turned over control of the public agencies established by the new legislation—the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Trade Commission—to cautious men. To try to portray such a man as an ardent social reformer is to defy the plain record.

This, however, is only one chapter in the history of the journey of the Democratic party on the road leading to the New Deal and the Fair Deal. Events and circumstances sometimes cause men to change their minds or to adopt policies they have previously opposed. The process of reform was but temporarily halted in 1914, only to be reactivated by 1916. But before we tell this story we must first give some account of other events more portentous for the immediate future of the American people.

⁶⁵ "Presidential Complacency," *New Republic*, I (Nov. 21, 1914), 7.

CHAPTER 4

Missionary Diplomacy

"IT WOULD be the irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs," Wilson remarked to a Princeton friend just before he went to Washington.¹ As it turned out, fate was not only ironical, but in a sense also cruel, for the new administration had to cope with foreign problems of such magnitude as had not confronted the nation since the early years of the nineteenth century. With the outbreak of the war in Europe, the difficulty became almost more than the administration could handle; but even from the first months of his presidency, Wilson was perplexed by one crisis after another in foreign relations.

Wilson and Bryan shared with most of their predecessors ignorance of and indifference to foreign affairs. To a remarkable degree, however, they also shared certain assumptions and ideals, which provided the dynamic for their foreign policy. They were both moralists, who thought of foreign policy in terms of the eternal verities, rather than in terms of the expedient. They were both dedicated to the democratic ideal, at least theoretically, and obsessed with the concept of America's mission in the world. Finally, they were both fundamentally missionaries, evangelists, confident that they comprehended the peace and well-being of other countries better than the leaders of those countries themselves. This urge to do good, to render disinterested service, was so compelling that it motivated interference in the internal affairs of

¹ To E. G. Conklin, cited in Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters* (8 vols., Garden City, N.Y., 1927-39), IV, 55.

the necessity for vastly increased revenues as the occasion for putting their advanced tax theories into effect. The new income and inheritance taxes constituted, for that day, a powerful equalitarian attack on great property, unrivaled even by Lloyd George's "Tax on Wealth" of 1909.

Nor did the progressives fail to derive satisfaction from the way in which they had seemingly turned the tables on the preparedness-big business element. "What has become of the dollar patriots?" Bailey taunted. "Where are the members of the Preparedness league and the Navy league? In the counting room hollering loud and long because they find that incomes must bear a portion of the burden they had hoped to unload upon the farmer and the steel worker."⁴⁰ This was the progressives' economic interpretation of the movement to make America strong enough to defend herself.

By the autumn of 1916 the administration's preparedness program was fairly well accomplished. Looking back over the enormous obstacles that the President had faced, both from pacifists and from ardent preparationists, it was clear his accomplishment was considerable indeed. It was a program designed, not to meet the immediate needs of diplomacy, but rather to afford some measure of security to the United States in a troubled postwar era. It did not satisfy the National Security League any more than it pleased the extreme pacifists. But opinion in the country as a whole agreed that the administration's program provided "reasonable" preparedness for the uncertain years ahead. Still doggedly noninterventionist, the rank and file were thinking in terms, not of preparedness for war, but of preparedness for peace.

⁴⁰ Johnstown *Democrat*, July 15, 1916.

CHAPTER 8

Devious Diplomacy, 1915-16

→ THE FAVORABLE settlement of the nation's most urgent controversies with Germany and Britain in the autumn of 1915 brought relief to a people distraught at the thought of active intervention. Yet the calm that settled upon the country with the exacting of the *Arabic* pledge was not shared by the few men who controlled the foreign policy of the United States. Obviously, the great majority of Americans wanted peace, yet the maintenance of peace depended upon German observance of the *Arabic* promise, which was beyond Wilson's power to control. Nor was a break with Britain an impossibility, although it seemed unlikely at the time.

With his usual perspicacity, Colonel House saw that the surest way to end the dilemma and create a situation subject to American direction was to inaugurate a movement for peace under President Wilson's leadership. His earlier efforts to persuade the Germans to agree to the *status quo ante* as a basis for peace talks having been rebuffed,¹ House was by the late summer of 1915 convinced that the triumph of unbridled German militarism in Europe would gravely imperil future American security. He concluded, moreover, that the only chance for peace lay in coming to firm agreement with the Allies and in co-operating with them in a drive for peace, based on the *status quo ante*, so powerful the Germans could not resist it.²

Although mediation had been much in House's thought since the

¹ See above, pp. 160-162.

² House to Edward Grey, Sept. 3, 1915, the Papers of Edward M. House, in the Library of Yale University. House later explained the objectives of his peace plan in a letter to George S. Viereck, Feb. 13, 1932, *ibid.*, written in connection with Viereck's *Strangest Friendship in History*.

failure of his first peace mission, it was probably Sir Edward Grey's suggestion that the United States intervene to bring the war to an end that prompted House's action soon afterward. During a brief conference in New York City on October 8 he first presented to Wilson a daring plan that had been taking shape in his mind: either to compel a peace settlement or else to bring the United States into the war on the Allied side. The President was startled but seemingly acquiesced by silence.³ A few days later House received letters from Grey intimating that the Allies might be willing to consider a negotiated and reasonable peace if the United States were prepared to join a postwar League of Nations to prevent aggressive war in the future.⁴

House went at once to Washington where, with Grey's letters in hand, he and Wilson collaborated on a reply. The time might soon come, House advised Grey, when the United States should demand a peace conference upon the basis of the elimination of militarism and navalism. "What I want you to know is that whenever you consider the time propitious for this intervention I will propose it to the President." After conferring with the British government, House added, he would go to Berlin and tell the German leaders that the President intended to stop the war. He would not, however, tell the Germans of his prior understanding with the Allies. "If the Central Powers were still obdurate, it would probably⁵ be necessary for us to join the Allies and force the issue."⁶

³ Specifically, House proposed that he ask the Allies whether they would accept the President's mediation. He thought they would accept. If the Central Powers accepted also, all would be well. If the Central Powers refused, however, "we could then push our insistence to a point where diplomatic relations would first be broken off, and later the whole force of our Government . . . might be brought against them." The Diary of Edward M. House, in House Papers, Oct. 8, 1915.

⁴ Grey to House, Sept. 22, 1915, two letters, House Papers; also Spring Rice to House, Oct. 15, 1915, *ibid.* "I cannot say which Governments would be prepared to accept such a proposal, but I am sure that the Government of the United States is the only Government that could make it with effect," Grey wrote. Perhaps the most significant part of Grey's communication, however, was his intimation that, although the Allies would like to see Alsace-Lorraine returned to France and the Dardanelles given to Russia, the British government might be willing to negotiate on a basis of the restoration of Belgium and the evacuation of France.

⁵ The word "probably" was inserted by Wilson. "I do not want to make it inevitable quite, that we should take part to force terms on Germany, because the exact circumstances of such a crisis are impossible to determine," he wrote. Wilson to House, Oct. 18, 1915, the Ray Stannard Baker Collection, in the Library of Congress.

⁶ House to Grey, Oct. 17, 1915, House Papers.

Because the ship that carried House's letter to England was delayed, it was not until November 9 that Grey replied, asking what House meant by "elimination of militarism and navalism" and whether House agreed that the peace of the world could be secured only by the United States' joining a League of Nations and guaranteeing the peace settlement. In relaying Grey's message to the President, House begged him to come out forthrightly behind Grey's proposal. "This is the part I think you are destined to play in this world tragedy," he urged, "and it is the noblest part that has ever come to a son of man. This country will follow you along such a path, no matter what the cost may be."⁷ Wilson agreed, and House at once replied affirmatively to the Foreign Secretary.

In a long conference in New York City with Wilson on November 28, House again pressed his proposal for an Anglo-American *entente*. There was an irrepressible conflict between German autocracy and American democracy, he declared, and the United States could not permit a military autocracy to dominate the world. The President, moreover, should make these convictions known to the Allied leaders. Wilson agreed and suggested that House go to London to begin secret talks.⁸ Two weeks later the momentous decision was made. House would go to London and Berlin to sound out the possibilities of peace on the basis of military and naval disarmament and a League of Nations to prevent aggression and maintain the "absolute" freedom of the seas. "If either party to the present war will let us say to the other that they are willing to discuss peace on such terms," the President's confidential instructions read, "it will clearly be our duty to use our utmost *moral* force to oblige the other to parley, and I do not see how they could stand in the opinion of the world if they refused."⁹

⁷ House to Wilson, Nov. 10, 1915, the Woodrow Wilson Papers, in the Library of Congress.

⁸ House Diary, Nov. 28, 1915. By now Wilson was convinced that Walter Page was thoroughly unreliable and totally ineffective, because of his partiality to the British cause. The President, moreover, had no confidence in the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, that "highly excitable invalid," Wilson called him. Like his successor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Wilson seemed obsessed with a desire to circumvent diplomatic channels and to establish direct, personal communication with the British leaders.

⁹ Wilson to House, Dec. 24, 1915, Baker Collection; italics mine. Wilson's use of the term "moral force" did not necessarily imply a qualification of his statement. He meant, actually, diplomatic force, which in the then existing circumstances could have been a powerful weapon of coercion. Diplomatic force used strongly against Germany, for example, might have led to a rupture in relations and war.

In order to understand the reasons for the profoundly significant change in policy implied in Wilson's determination to intervene decisively for peace, it is necessary to review briefly the troubled state of German-American relations from October through December, 1915, during the time when Wilson and House agreed to embark upon the new course. Too often it has been assumed that the President simply decided upon a policy of intervention, diplomatic if possible, military if necessary, on general moral grounds. The fact was, however, that Wilson's and House's willingness to think boldly was conditioned by the knowledge that German-American relations, already extremely tense, might worsen at any moment to the point of an open rupture.

The giving of the *Arabic* pledge by the Germans had prevented a break in relations without effecting a comprehensive settlement of outstanding grievances and without convincing the Washington government that a friendly understanding was possible. To begin with, this, the fall of 1915, was the time when German agents in the United States and Mexico were most active and stimulated genuine alarm among the administration. As early as August 4 Wilson was convinced the country was "honeycombed with German intrigue and infested with German spies." As evidence of German espionage began to unfold on all sides,¹⁰

¹⁰ The most important case that developed during the summer of 1915 involved the head of the powerful German secret-service organization in the United States, Franz Rintelen von Kleist, who came to America in April, 1915. News of Rintelen's activities came to Lansing in July. Investigation by American agents revealed that Rintelen was head of the German intriguers, had engaged in a number of schemes to stop the export of munitions to the Allies, and had intrigued with Villa and Huerta to provoke a war between the United States and Mexico. The Diary of Chandler P. Anderson, in the Library of Congress, July 22, 1915, summarizing report by Charles Warren, Assistant Attorney General.

Later and more comprehensive reports by United States secret-service agents established that Rintelen and the German military and naval attachés, Franz von Papen and Karl Boy-Ed, had spent at least \$27 million before December, 1915, as follows: (1) \$12 million to promote a Huerta-Villa counterrevolution against Carranza in Mexico; (2) \$5 million for the Bridgeport Projectile Company, which the Germans bought in order to tie up Allied war orders; (3) \$3 million for secret-service and detective work; (4) \$3 million for lecturers, press bureaus, and foreign language publications; (5) \$2½ million to supply German warships; and (6) \$1½ million for miscellaneous expenses.

The reports of the United States agents were given to the press and were summarized in *The New York Times*, Dec. 5, 8, 1915, and the *New York World*, Dec. 8, 1915. See also Lansing to Wilson, Sept. 27, 1915, enclosing Page to Lansing, Sept. 25, 1915, Wilson Papers, for another interesting case. Attorney General Gregory reviewed the work of the German Embassy among Ameri-

Wilson grew indignant and threatened to send Bernstorff home.¹¹ The Department of Justice, heretofore almost criminally negligent, turned in full force on the German intriguers, while the Attorney General issued an unprecedented appeal for assistance to state authorities. The climax of the government's campaign came early in December, when Lansing demanded the recall of Von Papen and Boy-Ed, German military and naval attachés, for their proved complicity in plots against American neutrality. Soon afterward Bernstorff disavowed Rintelen, but he could not so easily repudiate his two attachés.

It was at this time, also, that Lansing began his diplomatic campaign to wrest from the Imperial government an apology and disavowal for the destruction of American lives on board the *Lusitania*. This was still the most rankling wound of all, and until it was healed cordial relations between the two governments were impossible. From the voluminous correspondence on the matter that passed among Wilson, Lansing, Bernstorff, and the German Foreign Office, it is clear the Washington administration were resolved to obtain full satisfaction or else to break diplomatic relations, and that the Foreign Office would surrender only if that were necessary to avoid a rupture.¹² During the first weeks of the negotiation, however, the Foreign Office stubbornly refused to concede the illegality of the destruction of the *Lusitania*. The result was that, at the very time Wilson and House were making

can organizations in a letter to Vance McCormick, Sept. 30, 1916, copy in House Papers.

George S. Viereck, who was a key figure in the German propaganda agency in New York City, gives the best description of how that organization functioned in *Spreading Germs of Hate* (New York, 1930), pp. 43-118. H. C. Peterson, *Propaganda for War* (Norman, Okla., 1939), pp. 134-158, is a brief account of German sabotage and propaganda activities.

¹¹ House Diary, Oct. 8, 1915. Bernstorff protested piously that he had absolutely no connection with the various intrigues. The fact was, however, that he knew everything about and was a key figure in them. See, for example, Foreign Office to Bernstorff, Jan. 13, 1916, "Bernstorff Wireless Messages—1916," in the Papers of Walter H. Page, in Houghton Library, Harvard University; Bernstorff to Foreign Office, Mar. 21, 1916, *ibid.*; Wolf von Igel to War Office, May 10, 1916, *ibid.*; Bernstorff to Foreign Office, Aug. 26, 1916, *ibid.*

Lansing, however, was never fooled by Bernstorff's protestations of innocence. See the Diary of Robert Lansing, in the Library of Congress, "Count von Bernstorff," entry in Notes, dated May, 1916.

¹² The documents covering the first phase of the negotiation are printed in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920* (2 vols., Washington, 1939-40), I, 488-497.

plans for the second peace mission, a break in relations with Germany seemed likely almost any day.

Finally a break between the United States and Austria impended over the sinking of the Italian liner *Ancona* in the Mediterranean on November 7, with the loss of twenty-seven lives, by a German submarine flying the Hapsburg ensign. Only a few days before Wilson and House made plans for their peace move, the State Department had dispatched a virtual ultimatum to Vienna. Although the Austrian government later yielded completely to the American demands for disavowal and reparation, it was not certain at the height of the crisis that the outcome would be a happy one.

Obviously, then, House's peace plan was not conceived in a vacuum, or even as a means of needlessly hastening American intervention. Wilson and House knew a break with Germany might become necessary if the *Lusitania* negotiations failed, and they realized it would be difficult to arouse popular approval for war over this somewhat stale issue. It is clear, therefore, that they hoped to avert such a break by compelling a reasonable peace settlement that would benefit all mankind. But if this effort failed because of German unreasonableness, then the President could appeal in the name of humanity for the support of the American people in a drive to end the war.

These thoughts were much in House's mind when he arrived in London on January 6, 1916. It seemed a propitious time to begin serious peace talks. Russia was wounded beyond hope of recovery, while the prospect of the Allies' breaking through the German lines in the West was at best remote. In fact, it seemed the situation would get worse, not better, for the Allies in the coming months of 1916.¹³ During his two-weeks stay in London, before leaving for the Continent, House talked with every official of consequence in the government. Although he, Grey, and Balfour, head of the Admiralty, discussed only the major aspects of the President's plan and the British leaders did not make any commitments, House was so encouraged by the prospects for successful mediation that he begged Wilson not to break relations with Germany over the *Lusitania* issue, as that would wreck the entire project.

From London House went to Berlin where, from January 26 to 29, he conferred with the chief civilian leaders. As he had already led

¹³ As Sir Edward Grey later pointed out in *Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916* (2 vols., New York, 1925), II, 128-129.

Bernstorff to believe he was as friendly to Germany as to the Allies, House received a cordial welcome. To the Colonial Secretary he declared that the moderate elements in Britain and Germany could and should come to agreement. With the Imperial Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary, House pleaded movingly the cause of understanding and peace, pointing to the impending danger of a collapse of Western civilization and the futility of the war. Disclaiming any responsibility for the tragedy, Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg agreed; but he made it clear Germany would entertain no peace offer that did not include indemnities from Britain and France and German control of Belgium and Poland.

By the end of his stay in Berlin, therefore, House was convinced neither side was yet ready to begin serious peace discussions. "Hell will break loose in Europe this spring and summer as never before," he advised the President; but he was certain Wilson could intervene after the summer campaigns were over.¹⁴ This conviction was strengthened in Paris where, from February 2 to 8, House had a series of confidential talks with the French Premier and Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand and Jules Cambon. Grey had been reluctant to broach the subject of peace with the French government. Convinced of the urgency of a complete understanding with the French, House revealed the President's plan and on February 7 made an important agreement with Briand and Cambon. "*In the event the Allies are successful during the next few months,*" House related, "*I promised that the President would not intervene. In the event they were losing ground, I promised the President would intervene.*" He declared, moreover, that the lower the fortunes of the Allies ebbed, the closer the United States would stand by them. Briand and Cambon, in turn, "agreed not to let the fortunes of the Allies recede beyond a point where our intervention could save them."¹⁵

In reporting this conference to the President, House for the only time in the writer's knowledge failed to convey a faithful account of what he did and said. Omitting any reference to his sweeping promise of American support for the Allies in his letter to Wilson, House merely reported: "It was finally understood that in the event the Allies had some notable victories during the spring and summer, you would

¹⁴ House to Wilson, Feb. 3, 1916, Wilson Papers.

¹⁵ House Diary, Feb. 7, 1916.

[not]¹⁶ intervene; and in the event that the tide of war went against them or remained stationary, you would intervene."¹⁷ The important point, of course, was House's sweeping assurances of American intervention under certain conditions and support under almost all conditions. These assurances led the French Cabinet to believe they could expect the military support of the United States if their prospects darkened. Yet House was probably thinking, as Wilson assuredly was, only in terms of diplomatic intervention. House later claimed Briand and Cambon misinterpreted and exaggerated his promises to them.¹⁸ There is no evidence in his Diary or letters to Wilson, however, that he sought to make clear to the French leaders the important distinction in his mind between military intervention and diplomatic intervention.

In London again on February 9, House moved swiftly to bring Grey to some agreement. At a conference the following morning, the Foreign Secretary made it clear he preferred American military intervention to mediation, but he finally agreed that the President might demand that the war be ended and a peace conference be held.¹⁹ Next came the more difficult task of winning the approval of the other Cabinet members. The decisive conference was held on February 14, with House, Grey, Balfour, Asquith, Lloyd George, and Lord Reading, the Chief Justice, present. House promised that Wilson would preside at the peace conference, and he wanted to know specifically when the President should issue his peace demand. The British conferees agreed that early fall would be the best time. Lloyd George insisted that the Allies and the United States come to agreement on terms before the conference was called, but House refused to make any such promise. What would Wilson do if the Allies insisted on terms he considered unjust?

¹⁶ Professor Seymour, in *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* (4 vols., Boston, 1926-28), II, 164, made this sentence read as follows: "It was finally understood that in the event the Allies had some notable victories during the spring and summer, you would not intervene. . . ." It seems reasonable to assume that House's omission of this important "not" in his letter to Wilson was an inadvertence.

¹⁷ House to Wilson, Feb. 9, 1916, Wilson Papers.

¹⁸ "The Memoirs of Colonel House," in the Papers of George Sylvester Viereck, in the Library of Yale University.

¹⁹ "I argued the matter earnestly and convinced him," House wrote in his Diary Feb. 10, 1916, "that for the good of all it would be best for us to smooth over the Lusitania incident, and intervene by demanding a conference of the belligerents for the purpose of discussing peace terms. We finally agreed it was best for the President not to set any conditions whatever, but merely to demand that war cease, and a conference be held."

Asquith asked. "I replied that he would probably withdraw from the conference and leave them to their own devices." But what would Wilson do if the Germans insisted on unreasonable terms? "In these circumstances, I thought the President would throw the weight of the United States on the side of the Allies. In other words, he would throw the weight of the United States on the side of those wanting a just settlement—a settlement which would make another such war impossible."²⁰

Three days after this epochal meeting, on February 17, Grey and House drafted a memorandum embodying the Anglo-French-American understanding.²¹ Grey was now anxious that the President intervene quickly. "History will lay a grave charge against those of us who refuse to accept your proffered services at this time," he declared with obvious feeling.²² House sailed from Falmouth on February 25, therefore, confident the day was not far distant when the President might perform the greatest service ever given man to render: to end the most destructive war in history and to lay the foundations of a secure, just, and lasting peace.

In the meantime, however, while House was in Europe, Wilson and Lansing had embarked upon an independent diplomatic campaign that nearly wrecked House's negotiations, threatened to draw the United States and Germany together against the Allies, and backfired in a most spectacular way in Congress. It was the controversy over armed ships, provoked by the administration's drive to disarm

²⁰ House Diary, Feb. 14, 1916. The writer believes that on this supremely important occasion House faithfully reflected the President's position. House also revealed the true purpose behind Wilson's plan of mediation, which was a purpose chiefly to bring peace to Europe, not to involve the United States in the war. To be sure, the risk of war with Germany was inherent in the plan, but that risk would be even more serious if the mediation effort failed. And Wilson undoubtedly believed that, once an armistice had been effectuated and a peace conference actually held, there was little chance the people of Europe would allow their governments to resume hostilities.

²¹ Initialed by Grey on February 22, 1916, the memorandum began:

"Colonel House told me that President Wilson was ready, on hearing from France and England that the moment was opportune, to propose that a Conference should be summoned to put an end to the war. Should the Allies accept this proposal, and should Germany refuse it, the United States would probably enter the war against Germany." The full text is printed in *Intimate Papers*, II, 201-202.

²² House Diary, Feb. 17, 1916. Grey confessed, however, that the Cabinet would have to be guided by military judgment in deciding upon the best time for the President's mediation. *Ibid.*, Feb. 21, 1916.

Allied merchantmen. One of the most maladroit blunders in American diplomatic history, it revealed the immaturity and inherent confusion of the President's policies.

The immediate background of the episode was the nearly successful conclusion of the *Lusitania* negotiations and the generous guarantees the German government gave regarding submarine operations in the Mediterranean. All during January the *Lusitania* negotiations proceeded, the Imperial government refusing to admit the illegality of the sinking and insisting on arbitration, the United States just as stubbornly demanding an explicit admission of wrongdoing. Finally, on January 25 the President threatened to break diplomatic relations unless Germany gave in.

Then, moved by House's pleading to avoid a break, Wilson backed down and indicated he would accept a "handsome apology" without explicit disavowal. For their part, the Germans were ready to go to any length except to admit the illegality of the destruction of the *Lusitania*. The final German proposal, handed to Lansing on February 4, expressed regret at the loss of American lives, for which the Imperial government assumed liability and offered to pay indemnity. It was the maximum Germany could concede, Bethmann-Hollweg declared in an unprecedented direct appeal to the American people. "I cannot concede a humiliation of Germany and the German people, or the wrenching of the submarine weapon from our hands."²³

And it was enough. As Lansing pointed out, the German concessions came so close to meeting the American demand that the Imperial government had surrendered in spirit if not in explicit language. Moreover, it was evident Congressional sentiment would never sanction a rupture of relations over a semantic disagreement. On February 11, therefore, Lansing, Vice-President Thomas R. Marshall, the chairman of the House and Senate Foreign Relations committees, and Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia answered Bethmann-Hollweg by assuring the German people the United States sought only honorable friendship.

In this manner was a severe crisis settled, or would have been settled had not the armed ship controversy arisen to revive old animosities and create new tensions. During the first months of the war, long before the submarine issue was raised, the State Department had issued regulations classifying defensively armed merchant ships as peaceful vessels. For almost a year the question of the status of armed ships was

²³ New York *World*, Feb. 9, 1916.

quiescent, mainly because the British Admiralty did not begin arming ships in the American trade until the late summer of 1915. The issue was first raised in September, 1915, when an armed British steamer entered the port of Norfolk and Lansing, for reasons that are not clear, suggested changing the regulations.²⁴ This case was settled when the



Harper's Weekly, October 2, 1915

So sorry!

ship's guns were removed. In the following months, however, the issue assumed larger proportions as the British and Italians began to arm even passenger liners.

²⁴ Lansing to Wilson, Sept. 12, 1915, *Lansing Papers*, I, 330-331. Lansing's position was revealed to the British Cabinet, whose members became much agitated lest the United States attempt to change international law during the progress of the war. A. J. Balfour to House, Sept. 12, 1915, House Papers; Horace Plunkett to House, Sept. 17, 1915, *ibid.* After reading the letters from Balfour and Plunkett, Wilson commented: "The matter of armed merchantmen is not so simple as Balfour would make it. It is hardly fair to ask Submarine commanders to give warning by summons if, when they approach as near as they must for that purpose they are to be fired upon. It is a question of many sides and is giving Lansing and me some perplexed moments." Wilson to House, Oct. 4, 1915, Baker Collection.

The matter came to a head when the *Persia*, an armed British liner, was torpedoed in the Mediterranean on December 30, 1915, and when armed Italian liners began to enter the port of New York. Lansing, whose sense of fairness sometimes outran his strategic thinking, laid the matter before the President on January 2, 1916. Since so-called defensively armed merchant ships could destroy submarines, and since many of them were under orders to attack submarines on sight, how could the United States expect submarines to surface and give warning before they attacked? Lansing asked. Moreover, should not armed merchant ships entering American ports be dealt with as warships? On the other hand, Lansing suggested a few days later, would it not be possible to settle the whole submarine question if the Allies agreed to disarm their merchant ships and the Germans, in turn, agreed to observe the rules of cruiser warfare in all submarine operations against merchant vessels?

Agreeing that Lansing's proposal was "reasonable, and thoroughly worth trying," Wilson authorized the Secretary of State to undertake a diplomatic campaign to obtain a revision of the rules. On January 18, 1916, therefore, Lansing issued to the Allied governments his proposal for a new *modus vivendi* to govern maritime warfare. Repeating the German argument that under modern conditions any armed merchant ship was offensively armed, Lansing warned the Allies that the United States was seriously considering treating armed merchantmen as auxiliary cruisers and suggested that all merchant ships be disarmed.

In London Lansing's *modus vivendi* caused dismay and confusion. Grey must have been sorely puzzled for, as he cabled Spring Rice on January 25, the American government had proposed nothing less than that "sinking of merchant vessels shall be the rule and not the exception." In short, the *modus vivendi* envisaged a change in international law, during the course of the war, that would profoundly benefit Germany. "It confronts us with a most serious situation," Grey added, "which must of course be considered in consultation with our Allies."²⁵ On the same day, Grey called Ambassador Page to the Foreign Office. "I have only once before seen Sir Edward so grave and disappointed," Page reported, "and that was when he informed me that the British had sent the German Government an ultimatum."²⁶ House, too, at

²⁵ Grey to Spring Rice, Jan. 25, 1916, handed to Lansing by Spring Rice, Jan. 27, 1916, enclosed in Lansing to Wilson, Jan. 27, 1916, Wilson Papers; also Grey to Spring Rice, Feb. 3, 1916, *ibid.*

²⁶ Page added: "Then he asked me for House's address because, as I gath-

once realized the disastrous consequences the *modus vivendi* was bound to have and on February 14 cabled Lansing that it was extremely urgent the proposal be held in abeyance.²⁷

Grey's and House's alarm at the *modus vivendi* was well founded. Had the State Department insisted upon the proposed arrangement, the British would have faced the fatal choice of either allowing their vast merchant fleet to be sunk or defying the American government and running the risk of an Anglo-American rupture. Moreover, House's efforts looking toward the President's mediation would assuredly have been blasted. No one realized these facts better than the Germans, who must have been gleeful over this turn of events. On January 26 Lansing saw the Austrian Chargé, Baron Erich Zwiedinek, and told him confidentially about the proposal of January 18. Zwiedinek replied that the German and Austrian governments were contemplating issuing a declaration of unrestricted warfare against armed ships; he wondered if it would be wise to do this. Lansing replied that he thought the sooner it were done the better the situation would be.²⁸

This, then, was the involved background of the armed ship controversy that exploded soon afterward. Taking Lansing at his word, the German government on February 10, 1916, announced that its submarines would soon receive orders, to go into effect February 29, to attack armed merchant ships without warning.²⁹ For several days

ered, he had talked with him at my table so frankly and freely about the relations of our two Governments that he thought he ought to inform House that he [did not] then know that this proposal would come. He spoke as one speaks of a great calamity. He said that he would not mention the subject in his speech in the House of Commons to-morrow because the announcement that such a proposal had been made by the United States would cause a storm that would drive every other subject out of the mind of the House and of the country." *Paper Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916, Supplement* (Washington, 1929), p. 151.

²⁷ House to Lansing, Feb. 14, 1916, *Lansing Papers*, I, 342. Sir Horace Plunkett presented the British view forcibly in talks with House on February 12, 13, and 14, 1916. The Diary of Horace Plunkett, microfilm copy in possession of Herbert Brayer, Evanston, Ill., Feb. 12-14, 1916.

²⁸ The Desk Diary of Robert Lansing, in the Library of Congress, Jan. 26, 1916; "Memorandum by the Secretary of State . . . February 9, 1916," *Lansing Papers*, I, 341. Zwiedinek of course at once cabled this information to Vienna and Berlin, except that he reported Lansing had said he would "welcome" the Austro-German declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare against armed merchant ships.

²⁹ Gerard to Secretary of State, Feb. 10, 1916, *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, p. 163; memorandum of the German government dated Feb. 8,

American newspapers predicted the State Department would approve the new decree and warn Americans against traveling on armed ships. Then, on February 15, Lansing startled the country by telling reporters that although the Department believed the interests of humanity would best be served by the disarming of merchant ships, none the less, should the Allies reject the *modus vivendi* the United States would not insist upon a change in the conventional rules. Nor would the United States warn its citizens against traveling on ships armed defensively. Moreover, on February 17 Lansing called Bernstorff to the Department and informed him that, in view of the new submarine policy, the American government could not accept the *Lusitania* note of February 16.

By this startling reversal the administration set off a new dispute with Germany and an explosion in Congress. Although Wilson and Lansing nowhere set in writing the explicit reasons for their abrupt change of policy, those reasons can easily be inferred from other evidence and from the circumstances. In the first place, Wilson and Lansing had blundered in proposing the *modus vivendi* because they were desperately trying to avoid another showdown with Germany over the submarine issue.³⁰ Wilson later admitted he had made a serious mistake. Secondly, insistence upon the disarming of merchant ships would have driven a deep wedge between the United States and Great Britain and would have wrecked Wilson's mediation plan. Wilson obviously did not consider these consequences when he allowed Lansing to launch his bolt on January 18; but Grey and House made them ominously apparent. Thirdly, the President executed his sudden change of policy in order to restore his standing among the Allies as neutral mediator. It was no mere coincidence the British leaders consented to the possibility of Wilson's mediation on the same day the President abandoned the ill-fated *modus vivendi*.

Although the reasons for the reversal were sound, the administration's action had tragic consequences in Congress and the country at

1916, *ibid.*, pp. 163-166. The Austrian government followed suit on February 10, 1916.

³⁰ House recorded in his Diary, Mar. 7, 1916: "Spring-Rice told me what Lansing said to the Italian Ambassador, an indiscretion of which I am sorry Lansing was guilty. He told him that his purpose in proposing the disarming of Allied merchantmen was to please Germany and get a favorable settlement of the *Lusitania* controversy. This is exactly what Lansing and the President have been charged with."

large. Completely ignorant of the President's peace move and of the necessity for abandoning the *modus vivendi*, Congressional leaders began for the first time to suspect Wilson was maneuvering to involve the country in the war. Troubled and perplexed, Senate Majority Leader John W. Kern, Chairman William J. Stone of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Chairman Hal D. Flood of the House Foreign Affairs Committee went to the White House on February 21, 1916. The Congressional leaders wanted to know what would happen if a submarine without warning sank an armed ship upon which Americans were traveling. Wilson replied that he would hold Germany to strict account and that he would not compel the Allies to disarm their merchantmen. At this Senator Stone, heretofore Wilson's most loyal and admiring friend in the upper house, lost his temper. Banging his fist on the table, he shouted: "Mr. President, would you draw a shutter over my eyes and my intellect? You have no right to ask me to follow such a course. It may mean war for my country."³¹

News of the President's position was at once taken back to Congress. "Flood told me today," a Texan wrote, "that Stone & Kern (& he also) were afraid of an immediate break, & the two former thought the President was almost determined on war."³² At almost the same time the Imperial Foreign Secretary announced publicly that Germany would not recede from her new position. The result of the simultaneous declarations was to provoke an unprecedented panic in Congress on February 23. Veteran congressmen said that not for many years had they seen a situation so dramatic and sensational. The Democratic members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee met and agreed unanimously to demand prompt action on a resolution already offered by Representative Jeff: McLemore of Texas, warning Americans against traveling on armed belligerent ships. Although they

³¹ W. J. Stone to Wilson, Feb. 24, 1916, Wilson Papers, repeats the gist of the conversation. The quotation is from *The New York Times*, Feb. 24, 1916. Senator Thomas P. Gore told the Senate on March 2 that he "had it on good authority" that Wilson had said war with Germany might not necessarily be undesirable, as American intervention might operate to bring the war to a speedy conclusion. Charles C. Tansill, *America Goes to War* (Boston, 1938), pp. 465-466, uses Gore's statement (saying Gore got his information from Stone) to reinforce the dubious thesis that Wilson was at this point seeking to promote full-scale American intervention. Yet Wilson, Stone, and Flood all denied emphatically that the President had in any way intimated he desired American intervention. *The New York Times*, Mar. 3, 1916.

³² J. L. Slayden to O. G. Villard, Feb. 23, 1916, the Papers of Oswald Garrison Villard, in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

strongly favored the resolution, Speaker Clark and Majority Leader Kitchin pleaded with their colleagues to take no action until they had consulted with the President. Senator Stone, also, worked diligently to prevent the impending revolt in the House.

Confronted with an uprising that threatened to wrest control of foreign policy from his hands, the President struck back at his critics in Congress. In an open letter to Stone, Wilson declared that of course he would do his utmost to keep the country out of war. Even so, he could not consent to the abridgment of the rights of American citizens, and to bow to the German threat against armed ships would be a "deliberate abdication of our hitherto proud position as spokesmen, even amidst the turmoil of war, for the law and the right." Once accept a single abatement of the right and "the whole fine fabric of international law might crumble under our hands piece by piece."³³

The hysteria rapidly subsided after the publication of Wilson's letter. At nine in the morning of February 25 the Democratic leaders in the House, Clark, Kitchin, and Flood, visited the President to inform him of sentiment in Congress. The McLemore resolution would carry two to one, the Speaker announced, if members were allowed to vote on it. He intended to stand by his announced policy, Wilson replied, in spite of Congressional resolutions. But what if an armed ship were torpedoed with the loss of American lives? the congressmen asked. He would break relations with the Central Powers, the President declared. What then? He had been told this might lead to war, Wilson replied. What would be the effect of American intervention? one of the congressmen asked. American participation might have the effect of bringing the war to an end sooner than would otherwise be the case, Wilson countered. But why should any man think he wanted war? he added. His policies were the policies of peace, not of war. "In

³³ Wilson to Stone, Feb. 24, 1916, printed in Ray S. Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (6 vols., New York, 1925-27), *The New Democracy*, II, 122-124.

During the early evening of February 24 Tumulty wrote to Wilson suggesting he write an identic letter to Chairmen Flood and Stone. This was necessary, Tumulty added, because he had talked with Speaker Clark, Senator Key Pittman, and Representative T. W. Sims, who had all warned that action on the McLemore resolution could not be delayed much longer. Tumulty went on to suggest what the President should say in the letter, and the phrases "the whole fabric of international law" and "What we are contending for in this matter is of the very essence of the things that have made America a sovereign nation" were Tumulty's. Tumulty to Wilson, Feb. 24, 1916, Wilson Papers.

God's name," he exclaimed, "could any one have done more than I to show a desire for peace?"³⁴

Meanwhile, the McLemore resolution, warning Americans against traveling on armed belligerent ships, was hanging like a sword over Wilson's head, while Senator Thomas P. Gore of Oklahoma introduced a similar resolution of warning in the upper house on February 25. It was an intolerable situation, for so long as these resolutions hung fire no one knew who controlled the foreign policy of the United States. With Burleson in command and brandishing the patronage stick, administration leaders worked desperately to bring the Democratic members into line. On February 29, when he was certain of a favorable vote, the President demanded that the Rules Committee allow the House to vote on the McLemore resolution. Newspapers and journals of opinion rushed to the President's defense, one of them de-

³⁴ This was the celebrated "Sunrise Conference." The above is based upon full accounts of the conference printed in *The New York Times*, Feb. 26 and Mar. 3, 1916.

Five years after this meeting, Kitchin wrote an account for the journalist, Gilson Gardner, that placed the date of the conference in early April, 1916. Kitchin also recalled that Wilson had declared the time had come to put the United States in the war and that Wilson desired Congressional co-operation in achieving this objective. Gilson Gardner, "Why We Delayed Entering the War," *McNaught's Monthly*, III (June, 1925), 171-173.

Alex M. Arnett, *Claude Kitchin and the Wilson War Policies* (Boston, 1937), pp. 183-192, accepts Kitchin's version of the affair. C. C. Tansill, *America Goes to War*, pp. 467, 485-486, disagrees with Kitchin and Arnett as to the date of the conference; but Tansill quotes with seeming approval Kitchin's statement that Wilson requested support for American intervention.

The time has come to clear away the misunderstanding about this important event created by Professors Arnett and Tansill. As Ray S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters* (8 vols., Garden City, N.Y., 1927-39), VI, 169, points out, the date of the conference was February 25, 1916, not February 22, as Tansill asserts. The meeting was no secret and was reported in some detail by the newspapers on the following day, February 26. Moreover, there is not a shred of reliable evidence that the President in any way intimated he desired American participation in the war. Kitchin's memorandum is, therefore, entirely untrustworthy. Tansill points out that at the time he wrote his memorandum Kitchin was suffering from a severe stroke. Tansill asserts that Kitchin was mistaken as to the date of the conference and admits that Kitchin's memory might have been affected by the stroke. Yet Professor Tansill proceeds to quote Kitchin's memorandum, in order to prove his own impossible thesis that Wilson was actually maneuvering to get the country into the war.

It is remarkable that in his correspondence at the time, Kitchin never once mentioned the President's alleged request. One thing, at least, is certain: if Wilson had been moving to get a war resolution from Congress he would not have divulged his plans to his bitter critics, Clark and Kitchin.

claring, "Whoever defends these resolutions defends German lawlessness against American rights and American honor."³⁵ The *New York World*, moreover, published a series of documents, which were widely reprinted, revealing that the German-American Alliance had been conducting a powerful lobby to apply pressure on congressmen in behalf of a foreign policy partial to the "Fatherland."³⁶

So overwhelming, in fact, was the apparent popular and editorial support for the President that the wonder was his opposition did not collapse entirely. The Senate, where Wilson had strong support among Eastern Republicans like Lodge, voted first, on March 3, to table the Gore resolution.³⁷ After more than a week's delay, during which time Bryan rushed to the capital to bolster his discouraged followers, the House came to the showdown. On March 7 ninety-three Republicans joined with most of the Democrats in an emphatic vote, 276 to 142, to stand by the President.³⁸ Wilson's support came chiefly from the Atlantic states and the South. In contrast, the Middle West recorded a majority against Wilson, with the delegations from Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Wisconsin solidly arrayed.

In the meantime, the German government refused to rescind its warfare against armed merchantmen, claiming it had in no manner violated the *Arabic* pledge, as was true. The Foreign Office, moreover, assured the State Department on February 28 that no armed liner would be sunk "unless such armament is proved." None the less, Lansing pressed for a break and urged Wilson to accuse the Imperial government of violating its pledges. The President, however, apparently refused to force a break over a dubious point and after the tabling of the Gore and McLemore resolutions simply waited to see what events would bring.

³⁵ *New York World*, Mar. 3, 1916; also *The New York Times*, Mar. 7, 1916, and *Outlook*, CXII (Mar. 8, 1916), 545-546.

³⁶ *New York World*, Mar. 7, 1916.

³⁷ By a last-minute maneuver Gore reversed his resolution, which originally warned Americans against traveling on armed belligerent ships, to read that the destruction of American lives on such ships would constitute a cause for war. In this form the resolution was tabled sixty-eight to fourteen, although the parliamentary situation was so confused many senators did not know what they were voting for. *The New York Times*, Mar. 4, 1916.

³⁸ The vote for and against tabling the resolution was as follows: in favor of tabling, 182 Democrats, 93 Republicans, 1 Progressive; against tabling, 33 Democrats, 102 Republicans, 5 Progressives, 1 Independent, and 1 Socialist. *Ibid.*, Mar. 8, 1916.

The opportunity to force a final showdown with Germany over all aspects of the submarine question soon came, with the torpedoing without warning of the unarmed French Channel steamer *Sussex* on March 24, with eighty casualties. Lansing was ready to break relations at once, but Wilson moved with customary deliberateness. After first denying a submarine had attacked the *Sussex*, on April 10 Von Jagow admitted that a U-boat commander had sunk what he thought was a warship in the English Channel on March 24, at the same spot where the *Sussex* had been hit.

For days the President fought an agonizing struggle for the right course to follow. Pressed by his wife, Lansing, and House either to break relations immediately or else to issue an ultimatum,³⁹ he held firm against warlike moves and drafted a note that left wide room for future negotiation. In the end, however, Wilson gave in and followed the counsel of his close advisers. The note that he drafted on April 16 and sent to Berlin two days later was an unequivocal denunciation of the ruthless German campaign against all shipping, whether belligerent or neutral, armed or unarmed. The United States had waited with extraordinary patience; it was now painfully evident that the use of submarines against merchant ships was "utterly incompatible with the principles of humanity, the long-established and incontrovertible rights of neutrals, and the sacred immunities of non-combatants." Unless the Imperial government abandoned its relentless warfare against merchant and passenger ships, therefore, the United States had no alternative but to sever relations with the German Empire. The following day, April 19, 1916, Wilson went before a joint session and reiterated his ultimatum.⁴⁰

Published in the German press on April 22-23, Wilson's note caused a wave of hot anger to sweep over the German people, most of whom now believed the President was seeking to wrest from their government's hands the one weapon that could bring the war to a speedy and victorious conclusion. "We can no longer retreat," declared a Berlin

³⁹ Lansing drafted a note denouncing Germany's "brutal," "inhuman," and "lawless" submarine warfare, which Wilson rejected on the ground that it was tantamount to a declaration of war. See Lansing's "Draft Instructions . . ." and "Suggested Insertion . . .," *Lansing Papers*, I, 540-543; House Diary, Apr. 11, 1916, gives an account of House's and Mrs. Wilson's talks with the President.

⁴⁰ Lansing to Gerard, Apr. 18, 1916, *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, pp. 232-234; *The New York Times*, Apr. 20, 1916.

newspaper, "but rather must use the freedom which the enemy has given us to conduct unlimited submarine warfare, with consideration for no one."⁴¹ The moderate editors were angry, too, but they continued to urge calmness and to deprecate the idea of war with the United States.

Wilson's ultimatum also sharpened the struggle over submarine policy then going on between the military and naval leaders and the civilian heads of government in Germany. Since the beginning of the year, the heads of the War and Navy departments had been pressing hard for unrestricted submarine warfare, even at the cost of war with the United States.⁴² Arguing that such policy would inevitably bring America into the war, Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg had steadfastly resisted this strong pressure and had brought the Emperor to his side.⁴³ One concession, however, had been made to the navy, that hereafter all belligerent merchant ships in the war zone, whether armed or unarmed, should be sunk without warning.⁴⁴ Thinking the *Sussex* was either a troopship or a merchantman, and acting under the new orders, the commander of the U-29 had torpedoed the *Sussex*.

Wilson's demands, therefore, compelled the German rulers to calculate whether American friendship was worth an abandonment, not only of the campaign against armed ships, but also of the unrestricted campaign against belligerent merchantmen in the war zone. Bethmann-Hollweg and the Foreign Office were still desperately anxious to avert war. In spite of the mounting pressure applied by his military and naval chieftains, on May 1 the Emperor announced his submission to the President's demands, even if that meant abandoning submarine activity altogether in the war zone.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Tägliche Rundschau*, morning ed., Apr. 23, 1916; also *Morgenpost* (Berlin), Apr. 23, 1916; *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, morning ed., Apr. 23, 1916; *Germania* (Berlin), Apr. 23, 1916; *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin), morning ed., Apr. 23, 1916; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 2d morning ed., Apr. 23, 1916; *Kölnische Zeitung*, 2d morning ed., Apr. 23, 1916.

⁴² "Report . . . of Imperial Chancellor v. Bethmann-Hollweg," Jan. 4, 1916; Chief of Admiralty Staff, Von Holtzendorff, to Bethmann-Hollweg, Jan. 7, 1916; Von Tirpitz to Bethmann-Hollweg, Feb. 13, 1916; Chief of General Staff, Von Falkenhayn, to Bethmann-Hollweg, Feb. 13, 1916, all printed in *Official German Documents Relating to the World War* (2 vols., New York, 1923), II, 1116-1130.

⁴³ Bethmann-Hollweg to Von Jagow, Mar. 5, 1916, *ibid.*, pp. 1139-1142.

⁴⁴ Admiralty Order of Mar. 13, 1916, cited in Tansill, *America Goes to War*, p. 491.

⁴⁵ Arno Spindler, *La Guerre Sous-Marine* (René Jouan, trans., 3 vols., Paris,

Dated May 4, the German reply admitted that U-boat commanders had recently been waging unrestricted warfare against belligerent merchant ships in the war zone. But it conceded Wilson's minimum demand by announcing that hereafter submarines would observe the rules of visit and search before sinking merchant vessels, both within and outside the war zone. The note, however, was truculent, almost insolent, in tone and ended with the threat that if the United States did not compel the British to observe international law, "the German Government would then be facing a new situation in which it must reserve itself complete liberty of decision." German editors agreed their government had gone the extreme limit, and that it was now incumbent upon the United States to bring Britain to book.⁴⁶

In America reaction to the German reply was sharply divided. A few bellicose editors suggested rejecting it altogether,⁴⁷ while many moderate journals resented its accusatory tone. However, the rank and file, especially in the Middle West and South and among the German-Americans, hailed the German note with unalloyed relief as a victory for the United States that precluded even the possibility of a war they desperately wanted to avoid. As the President shared this desire for peace, he, too, regarded the German reply as a welcome surrender to his long-standing demand. When Lansing tried to warn him that the note had all the appearances of a "gold brick" swindle, with a decidedly insolent tone," he at first ignored the admonition and drafted a reply expressing gratification and accepting the German promises. Wilson finally eliminated the paragraph expressing gratification, however. His note, sent to Berlin May 8, simply accepted the German concessions, warned that friendly relations would depend upon a scrupulous observance of them, and declared the United States could not

1933-35), III, 191-197, is the best account of the German deliberations during the *Sussex* crisis. The Emperor still believed the navy was not strong enough to institute an effective blockade. Only two months before he had declared that the U-boat forces "were insufficient to overcome England; that as a matter of fact England could not be overcome." Bethmann-Hollweg to Von Jagow, Mar. 5, 1916, *Official German Documents*, II, 1142.

⁴⁶ E.g., *Kölnische Zeitung*, evening ed., May 5, 1916; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, evening ed., May 5, 1916; *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin), evening ed., May 5, 1916.

⁴⁷ The *New York Tribune*, quoted in *New York World*, May 6, 1916, for example, declared the President had no choice left but to sever relations immediately. See also *Providence Evening Journal*, *Louisville Courier-Journal*, *Louisville Times*, *Atlanta Journal*, *Philadelphia Record*, *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, all cited in *New York World*, May 6, 1916.

accept the conditions upon which the German concessions had been made.⁴⁸

The passing of this great crisis marked a major turning point in American attitudes and policies toward the war. As the months passed and no incident occurred to mar German-American relations, American opinion toward Germany softened perceptibly. This changing attitude was reflected on all sides—in the press and in the comments of public leaders. It was reflected even more significantly, however, in the consequent hardening of American attitudes toward the British and the nearly disastrous worsening of official Anglo-American relations that occurred during the spring and summer of 1916.

A hardening of popular attitudes toward Great Britain was inevitable after the *Sussex* settlement focused attention on alleged British wrongdoing. Thus, no sooner had the *Sussex* notes been exchanged than there arose demands for stern action, now against the British. This was, however, only the beginning, for events following hard upon the *Sussex* settlement provoked hostility against the British government and widened the gulf between the two countries. First came the Irish Rebellion of April 24, 1916, which the British authorities suppressed so ruthlessly that even Anglophiles in America were shocked.⁴⁹ Next occurred the trial and execution of the leaders of the Rebellion, including the Irish nationalist, Sir Roger Casement, who had come from Germany to lead the revolt. The Senate of the United States formally petitioned the British government to spare the Irish prisoners, but the appeal merely exacerbated mutual bitterness. As the best American journal of opinion put it, "The Dublin executions have done more to drive America back to isolation than any other event since the war began."⁵⁰ Finally, as the British intensified further their economic warfare, the movement in the United States for outright retaliation grew stronger than at any time since the beginning of the war.

The worsening of official Anglo-American relations was, if anything, even more evident than the change in popular attitudes. Certainly it had more serious consequences, for the President's heart so hardened against the British that before the year had ended he regarded the

⁴⁸ Secretary of State to Gerard, May 8, 1916, *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, p. 263.

⁴⁹ For a moving protest by a shocked Anglophile, see William Dean Howells to the Editor, May 6, 1916, *New York Evening Post*, May 8, 1916.

⁵⁰ *New Republic*, VII (July 29, 1916), 321-322.

Allies with suspicion, almost contempt, and was contemplating the possibility of a sympathetic alliance with Germany.⁵¹

This momentous change in Wilson's attitude had many causes, but the most important was probably Sir Edward Grey's refusal to allow the President to set the machinery of mediation in motion. The House-Grey memorandum of February 22, 1916, to be sure, had made it plain that the final decision rested with the British Cabinet. But Grey had given House rather definite verbal assurances that Wilson's mediation would be welcomed in the late summer or early autumn. During April and months following, House pleaded with Grey to consent to mediation on the basis of the memorandum of February 22. House warned explicitly that dire consequences would follow an Allied rejection, but each time Grey evaded the request. Emboldened by the failure of the German attack on the French fortress of Verdun and the apparent success of the great British offensive beginning July 1, 1916, the Allies grew more and more confident of their ability to defeat Germany on the battlefield.⁵² Moreover, it was evident that Grey sincerely doubted the President's ability to bring the United States into the war if the proposed peace conference should fail. In late August, therefore, Sir Edward had to come out flatly and tell House a peace conference could not yet be held.⁵³

As it became evident that the British and French leaders would allow the President's mediation only if their hopes of victory were shattered beyond recall, the attitude of Wilson and House became increasingly recriminatory, even hostile. Wilson made it plain that

⁵¹ See below, pp. 252-253, 255-257.

⁵² As Grey pointed out in a memorandum for the Cabinet in the autumn of 1916, "Nothing but the defeat of Germany can make a satisfactory end to this war and secure future peace." However, he added, if an absolute victory could not be won, then Wilson's mediation would be desirable. Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, II, 131-133. The British military leaders were confident they could deliver a decisive blow against the German lines in 1916. Wilson's mediation, therefore, would not be considered until the success or failure of this impending British offensive was demonstrated.

⁵³ For the important correspondence between House and Grey see House to Grey, Apr. 7, May 10, 11, 19, 23, 27, June 8, July 15, 1916; Grey to House, Apr. 7, 8, May 12, 29, June 28, Aug. 28, 1916, all in House Papers.

Looking back over these events, Grey concluded that the Germans had made a fatal mistake in not joining with the President in a drive for a reasonable peace. He also acknowledged that the Allies, by rejecting Wilson's leadership, had missed a great opportunity to save the Western community from the dire consequences of a prolongation of the war. Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, II, 135-137.

Britain would have to either consent to mediation or else expect stern efforts by the United States to protect its maritime rights. Later he resolved to cut loose from the Allies altogether and to issue his own peace demand at the right time. For his part, House began to criticize Allied "selfishness" and "ingratitude"; to tell himself, and probably the President also, that the trouble was the Allies did not want a reasonable settlement; and even to advise Wilson that he might have to appeal directly to the British and French peoples, over the heads of their governments.

The really dangerous tension in official Anglo-American relations came, however, when the British tightened their economic warfare and moved directly and indirectly to bring all neutral trade and shipping under their control. When the British and French seized and examined parcels in the American mails, for example, Lansing objected in language that betrayed the administration's growing anger. "The Government of the United States . . . can no longer tolerate the wrongs which citizens of the United States have suffered and continue to suffer through these methods," the note concluded. "To submit to a lawless practice of this character would open the door to repeated violations of international law by the belligerent powers."⁵⁴ The mails dispute was never settled and continued to rankle. But the event that had spectacular consequences was the British government's attempt to extend its economic warfare directly to the United States and Latin America—by the publication on July 19, 1916, of a "blacklist" of 87 American and some 350 Latin American firms, with whom British subjects were forbidden to deal in any way.⁵⁵

To Wilson, the publication of the "blacklist" came as the culmination of a series of British indignities. "I am seriously considering asking Congress to authorize me to prohibit loans and restrict exportations to the Allies," he advised House. ". . . Polk [Counselor of the State Department] and I are compounding a very sharp note. I may feel obliged to make it as sharp and final as the one to Germany on the

⁵⁴ Lansing to Spring Rice and Jusserand, May 24, 1916, *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, pp. 604-608.

⁵⁵ British spokesmen correctly claimed that the "blacklist" was a lawful attempt to forbid British subjects to give aid to the enemy. On the other hand, American officials asserted that the practical effect of the measure was to put the proscribed firms entirely out of business, because British shipping would be denied them and because the balance of American and other neutral firms would refuse to do business with them, for fear of being put on the "blacklist" themselves. See *The New York Times*, July 19, 20, 22, 24, 1916; *New York World*, July 21, 23, 1916.

submarines." Publicly the President declared that the "blacklist" had "got on his nerves"; privately he called the British leaders "poor boobs."⁵⁶ Although the note of protest that Wilson and Frank L. Polk, Counselor of the State Department, sent to London on July 26 was not the ultimatum Wilson had threatened, it was ominous in tone and harsh in language, forecasting grave consequences if the British government persisted in their attacks on American commerce.⁵⁷

That the President's wrath was mounting was evidenced in a way that threatened to bring the United States and Britain to a parting of the ways. At the beginning of the "blacklist" dispute, Acting Secretary of State Polk had warned the British Ambassador that Wilson was considering retaliatory measures. And when the British refused to withdraw the "blacklist" and the Foreign Office failed to reply promptly to the American note of July 26,⁵⁸ Wilson moved swiftly to obtain from Congress a means of redress.⁵⁹ An amendment to the Shipping Act of September 7 empowered the President to refuse clearance to any vessel refusing to carry the freight of a blacklisted American citizen. More important, however, were amendments to the Revenue Act adopted the following day, which authorized the President to deny clearance and port facilities to ships of any nation that discriminated unfairly against American commerce, and to use the armed forces to enforce these provisions.

There was, of course, a vast difference between enacting such legislation and using it, but the significant fact was that the administration had taken leadership in providing retaliatory recourses which, if used, might deal the Allied cause a death blow. Indeed, friends of the Allies were shocked by the hardening of Wilson's attitude and by the concomitant severity with which the British were being dealt. Lansing sensed the danger that the President's resentment would lead him to retaliation and shuddered at the prospect of his government's aligning itself on the German side.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Wilson to House, July 23, 1916, Baker Collection; *The New York Times*, July 25, 1916; Wilson to House, July 27, 1916, Baker Collection.

⁵⁷ Polk to Page, July 26, 1916, *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, pp. 421-422.

⁵⁸ The British reply was not sent until October 12, 1916. *Ibid.*, pp. 461-465.

⁵⁹ The fact that Wilson took the initiative in obtaining retaliatory legislation is evidenced in the Diary of Frank L. Polk in the Library of Yale University, July 26, 1916; Lansing to Wilson, Aug. 26, 1916, the Papers of Albert S. Burleson, in the Library of Congress; Lansing Desk Diary, Aug. 29, 30, 31, Sept. 6, 7, 8, 1916.

⁶⁰ "The President's Attitude Toward Great Britain and Its Dangers," Lansing Diary, Sept., 1916.

Wilson's change of attitude was a crushing blow, however, to Walter Page, who came to Washington in August, 1916, to have full-dress conferences, he thought, on the British situation. Nothing better illustrated the changed atmosphere in Washington than the reception accorded this distinguished champion of Anglo-American friendship. From August 17 to September 25 Page had five conferences with Lansing; but Lansing was mindful of Wilson's hostility to Page and would talk of nothing but complaints against the British government. "I have tried in vain to inform the Secretary of the larger view of the subject," Page recorded in his Diary; "he changes the topic of conversation and discusses some technicality or some 'case.'"⁶¹ Wilson invited the Ambassador to lunch the day after he arrived and on August 29, but on both occasions other guests were present and Wilson refused to talk about the war. On September 22, five weeks after he had arrived in the United States, Page finally obtained a private interview with the President. What Wilson told him only deepened Page's despair. "The P[resident] said to me that when the war began he and all the men he met were in hearty sympathy with the Allies; but that now the sentiment toward England had greatly changed. He saw no one who was not vexed and irritated at the arbitrary English course."⁶²

To such a state had Anglo-American relations come, therefore, by the autumn of 1916. The favorable settlement of the submarine controversy had practically eliminated the German-American tension and focused American resentment on the British maritime system. This resentment had hardened into bitterness and near hostility as a result of the rejection of Wilson's offer of mediation, the ruthless suppression of the Irish Rebellion, and the intensification of Britain's economic warfare. The fact that the nation was in the throes of a presidential campaign prevented Wilson either from using his new retaliatory powers or from launching an independent peace campaign. But he stood ready, if sustained by the people, to embark upon a bold policy, portentous for the United States and the world—a policy of genuinely neutral mediation.

⁶¹ The Diary of Walter H. Page, in Houghton Library, Harvard University, n.d.

⁶² *Ibid.*, n.d. For an extended discussion see Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* (3 vols., Garden City, N.Y., 1924-26), II, 148-188.

CHAPTER 9

Progressivism and Peace:

The Campaign of 1916

NOT SINCE 1910 had the American political scene seemed so confused as at the beginning of 1916, when both major parties began to lay plans for the coming presidential election. The Republicans were slowly recovering from the great rupture of four years before. Theodore Roosevelt was now back in the G.O.P. in all but name, but no one could predict whether the great body of Progressives would follow their erstwhile leader. Nor could any man forecast the policies the Republican party might unite upon, for Republicans were, if anything, more divided than their opponents on the great issues of the day.

The Democrats, too, were rent by factionalism and conflict over policies. The President's preparedness program had antagonized a large body of progressives and rural voters, and there were rumors of an impending revolt of the pacifist element, under Champ Clark's leadership.¹ More important, Bryan was in a rebellious mood, angered by Wilson's stand on preparedness and the armed ship issue, and threatening to disrupt the party if the President made further warlike moves. "I have been amazed at the slush he [Wilson] has been pouring out upon the West," Bryan wrote at the time of Wilson's preparedness tour. ". . . It is disturbing to see our party's chances of success de-

¹ *The New York Times*, Jan. 26, 1916; especially *Chicago Herald*, Feb. 28, 1916. Clark, however, hotly denied these charges. See Clark to Wilson, Mar. 10, 1916, the Woodrow Wilson Papers, in the Library of Congress.

stroyed and the country's peace menaced by one in whom we had such great hope. If I find that his purpose is to drag this nation into this war I may feel it my duty to oppose his nomination."²

As it turned out, however, these were momentary alarms that quickly vanished once the *Sussex* crisis and the controversies over the defense bills were settled. All Democrats knew they could win only under Wilson's leadership and that revolt would merely insure a Republican victory. Looking at the election returns of 1912, moreover, Wilson and his party leaders realized they could convert the Democratic minority of 1912 into a majority in 1916 only if they won over a large number of former Progressives.

But how could these Progressives be lured into the Democratic camp? The answer was so obvious most commentators took it for granted. The administration would have to convince Progressives that the Democratic party was an acceptable vehicle of reform of the kind they wanted; that it had, once and for all, cast off the doctrines of *laissez-faire* and state rights that had heretofore shackled it. Thus far Wilson had either thwarted or failed to support the advanced progressive objectives, like rural credits and child labor legislation, woman suffrage, and other economic and social legislation. Could he now reverse himself and sponsor such dynamic measures of domestic reform?

Those observers who predicted the President would adhere stubbornly to New Freedom concepts did not well understand Woodrow Wilson. He had broad political principles, to be sure; but he was no inflexible dogmatist on methods or details. As he thought the Democratic party offered the only hope of constructive, progressive change, he believed his party's most important task was to stay in power. Nowhere did he come out and say that his desire to maintain the Democrats in power was responsible for the commitment he made to advanced progressivism in 1916. Yet he became almost a new political creature, and under his leadership a Democratic Congress enacted the

² Bryan to Josephus Daniels, Feb. 4, 1916, the Papers of Josephus Daniels, in the Library of Congress. See also Bryan to Claude Kitchin, c. Feb. 5, 1916, the Papers of Claude Kitchin, in the Library of the University of North Carolina; Bryan to Burleson, Mar. 8, 1916, the Papers of Albert S. Burleson, in the Library of Congress; David Lawrence, in *New York Evening Post*, Feb. 15, 1916; the Diary of Edward M. House, in the Papers of Edward M. House, in the Library of Yale University, Mar. 7, 1916, in which House recorded Wilson's fear that Bryan would bolt.

most sweeping and significant progressive legislation in the history of the country up to that time. ✓

The first public sign of the new departure was Wilson's nomination, on January 28, of Louis D. Brandeis to the Supreme Court.³ It was an open defiance of and a personal affront to the masters of capital as well as to conservative Republicans like Taft. Nor was the significance of the appointment lost upon rejoicing progressives and labor leaders. "The appointment . . . tends to restore faith in President Wilson," the single-tax oracle declared,⁴ while Senator La Follette gladly acknowledged the people's debt to the President for a courageous act.⁵ As the forces of privilege mustered all their resources to prevent Brandeis' confirmation, and as the President took up the gage, publicly defending the champion of social justice and throwing the whole force of the administration behind the nominee, the battle became a test of strength between conservatives and progressives. After a grueling struggle the administration won on June 1.⁶ "The confirmation of Mr. Brandeis is an important mile-stone in the progress of the republic," one progressive asserted. "For the first time within my knowledge the vested interests have gone out to defeat an important nomination, and after using every possible source have been soundly beaten."⁷

A second major test of the President's attitude involved the much controverted rural credits bill, which he had blocked in 1914 and 1915 and which seemed certain to become an important issue in the impending campaign.⁸ The sponsors of the Hollis-Bulkley bill, Senator Henry F. Hollis and Representative A. F. Lever, decided to make one last appeal to Wilson to support the provision for federal underwriting

³ Attorney General Thomas W. Gregory strongly urged Brandeis' nomination, as did certain independent progressive leaders.

⁴ *The Public*, XIX (Feb. 4, 1916), 97.

⁵ R. M. La Follette, "Brandeis," *La Follette's Magazine*, VIII (Feb., 1916), 1-2; also Amos Pinchot to Norman Hapgood, c. Jan. 29, 1916, Wilson Papers; several hundred letters of approval from civic and labor leaders in Box 522, File VI, *ibid.*; "A Secret!" *Harper's Weekly*, LXII (Feb. 12, 1916), 145; *Collier's*, LVI (Feb. 26, 1916), 14; *Springfield Republican*, Apr. 4, 1916.

⁶ There is a splendid account of this battle in Alpheus T. Mason, *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life* (New York, 1946), pp. 465-508.

⁷ H. F. Hollis to E. F. McClennen, June 7, 1916, the Papers of Louis D. Brandeis, in the Law School Library of the University of Louisville.

⁸ As the secretary of the American Rural Credits Association, Frank G. Odell, warned on January 9, 1916: "The support of the farmers, which would be engaged by rural credit legislation, is necessary to the Democratic Party in the Middle West." *The New York Times*, Jan. 10, 1916.

of the proposed system. They were willing, Lever told Wilson and Secretary Houston at a White House conference in late January, 1916, to reduce the amount of federal farm bonds the government might have to buy to \$250,000 for each of the proposed twelve federal farm loan banks. "I have only one criticism of Lever's proposition," the President replied, "and that is that he is too modest in the amount." Then and there it was agreed the government should establish and operate the farm loan banks and provide an initial capital of \$500,000 for each of them.

From that day on, the rural credits bill had the full support of the administration. Denounced by radicals because it did not go far enough, castigated by conservatives as a dangerous socialistic measure and as "class legislation, using the public resources to do for some what is not done for others," it none the less passed the Senate on May 4 and the House on May 15 almost unanimously and became law on July 17.⁹ Thus the Democratic campaigners had ample opportunity to appear as friends of the farmer in the presidential campaign of this year.

The great social justice movement also came to its first legislative culmination, on the national level, in this year of the new progressive dispensation, but not before the President virtually bludgeoned his party leaders into allowing the necessary measures to pass.¹⁰ Then suddenly the log jam was broken. Under administration pressure, the Kern-McGillicuddy bill, a model workmen's compensation measure for federal employees drafted by the American Association for Labor Legislation, was resurrected and passed by Congress on August 19 and quickly signed. Even more astonishing was the manner in which Wilson forced the passage of the Keating-Owen child labor bill. This measure, the special project of the National Child Labor Committee, passed the House on February 2, with only a few dissenting votes from Southern textile states. Then the bill languished in the Senate, where

⁹ Only a handful of urban votes were cast against the bill. The vote in the Senate was 58 to 5, in the House, 295 to 10.

¹⁰ Stymied time and again by the administration's refusal to support their measures, the leaders of this important segment of independent opinion were growing restive by the spring of 1916. John B. Andrews to L. D. Brandeis, May 17, June 1, 1916, Brandeis Papers; A. O. Lovejoy to C. Kitchin, June 3, 1916, Kitchin Papers. Their suspicion that the administration was not sincere in its professions of support seemed borne out when Wilson and Congressional leaders agreed, on March 24, 1916, on a legislative schedule that made no provision for the social justice bills. *The New York Times*, Mar. 25, 1916.

it would have died had not political exigencies demanded decisive presidential action. Before July 17 Wilson had said not a word in support of the bill. On July 17 the Democratic liaison with the social workers warned the President that the independent progressives considered the Keating-Owen bill a test of the administration's progressivism and that the Democrats might stand or fall on this issue. The following day, July 18, Wilson went to the Capitol, pleaded with the Democratic Senate leaders to allow the measure to come to a vote, and warned that the fortunes of their party depended upon prompt and favorable action. After much grumbling, the obstructive Southerners gave in and the measure was adopted on August 8 and signed by the President on September 1, "with real emotion," he said.

Nor was this all, though it represented perhaps the high peak of Wilsonian progressivism.¹¹ The movement to give the Filipinos a larger measure of autonomy, perhaps independence, the product of years of anti-imperialistic, progressive agitation, also came to fruition in 1916. Wilson had early endorsed the bill sponsored by Representative William A. Jones of Virginia to give self-government at once and full independence within a short time to the Philippines. Then, under pressure from Republicans, Catholics, and the War Department, the President had reversed himself on the question of independence and had helped to shape a new Jones bill drafted by the Bureau of Insular Affairs, which gave legislative autonomy and a larger measure of administrative control to the Filipinos, but reserved final sovereignty to the United States and made no definite promises about independence.

¹¹ The child labor law forbade the shipment in interstate commerce of goods manufactured in whole or in part by children under fourteen, of products of mines and quarries involving the labor of children under sixteen, and of any products manufactured by children under sixteen employed more than eight hours a day. Many Southerners opposed the measure out of the conviction, until recently shared by Wilson, that the bill represented an unconstitutional invasion of the police power of the states. The National Association of Manufacturers also opposed the bill, not because they favored child labor, but because they realized the bill was merely the beginning of a new federal regulation under the commerce clause, as the spokesman in Washington of the N.A.M. wrote, "of any commodity produced in whole or part by the labor of men or women who work more than eight hours, receive less than a minimum wage, or have not certain educational qualifications." James A. Emery to W. H. Taft, Apr. 4, 1916, the Papers of William Howard Taft, in the Library of Congress.

In 1918 the Supreme Court, in *Hammer v. Dagenhart*, 274 U.S., 251, declared this child labor law unconstitutional. The Court declared that the purpose of the law was not to regulate commerce, but to regulate the labor of children, which fell solely within the competence of the states.

This revised Jones bill passed the House on October 14, 1914, but Republicans easily blocked it in the Senate during the hectic short session of 1914-15. The measure could not be delayed for long, however. In complete control of the Senate, the anti-imperialists on February 4, 1916, adopted the Jones bill with the so-called Clarke amendment, promising independence to the Filipinos by March 4, 1921. The country expected an automatic approval by the House. But the Catholic hierarchy in the United States, fearful that an independent Philippines might confiscate church property,¹² brought enormous pressure to bear upon the Catholic membership of the House against the Clarke amendment.¹³ On May 1, therefore, thirty Catholic Democrats joined with the Republicans and defeated the amendment, and the bill as passed and signed by Wilson lacked any definite promise of independence, although it did greatly enlarge the liberties of the Philippine peoples.

Finally, as if to make his new program complete and his bid for support all inclusive, Wilson capitulated also to the mounting demands of business organizations for a tariff commission,¹⁴ antidumping legislation,¹⁵ and legislation allowing Americans engaged in the export

¹² The Catholic position was ably and candidly set forth by the representatives of the Philippine hierarchy in Washington, in W. N. Kinkaid to Wilson, Feb. 11, 1916, Wilson Papers.

¹³ William H. Taft, who had been on intimate terms with American Catholic leaders since the time when he was Governor General of the Philippines, was a key figure in marshaling Catholic opposition to the Clarke amendment. For his negotiations with Cardinals Gibbons and O'Connell, see Taft to J. Cardinal Gibbons, Jan. 11, 16, 1916, and Gibbons to Taft, Jan. 12, 1916, all in Taft Papers; also *The New York Times*, Apr. 27, 28, 1916; *New York World*, Apr. 29, 1916.

¹⁴ As late as August 27, 1915, Wilson had steadfastly opposed the establishment of a tariff commission, which Roosevelt and the Progressives had advocated in 1912. But the demands of the business groups were so overwhelming that Wilson finally gave in and on January 24, 1916, came out in favor of a strong, independent, and nonpartisan commission, which would allegedly work to remove the tariff issue from politics. Wilson to C. Kitchin, Jan. 24, 26, 1916, printed in *The New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1916. Because it represented such a radical departure from traditional Democratic policies, Kitchin refused to sponsor the tariff commission bill in the House. Leadership in putting the bill through fell, therefore, to Representative Henry T. Rainey of Illinois. The measure was incorporated as a part of the Revenue Act of 1916.

¹⁵ Especially alarmed were American chemical and dye manufacturers, who feared the German chemical trust would resume its destructive competition once the war had ended. On January 4, 1916, Secretary Redfield presented an antidumping measure (Redfield to Wilson, Jan. 4, 1916, Wilson Papers) that McAdoo roundly condemned as a Republican device (W. G. McAdoo, "Confi-

trade to combine.¹⁶ In making these concessions to the business community, Wilson in effect reversed the historic Democratic policy¹⁷ and put the government at the service of American businessmen.¹⁸ There was no reason why he should not have done this, to be sure, but the point was he had espoused the very program of co-operation between business and government that Theodore Roosevelt had proposed in 1912 and that he, Wilson, had then strongly condemned. A few Democratic leaders, who prized the old Democratic tariff principles, rebelled and uttered futile protests, but most Democrats followed the President.

The significance of the astonishing metamorphosis in Democratic policies that occurred during the summer of 1916 was apparent to all observers. Regardless of the motivation behind Wilson's commitment to advanced doctrines, the fact was the Democratic Congressional majority had, by the fall of 1916, enacted almost every important plank in the Progressive platform of 1912. Wilson, therefore, could affirm that Democrats were also Progressives, and Democratic cam-

dential Memorandum for the President," Jan. 14, 1916, *ibid.*). Soon afterward a representative of the dye manufacturers conferred with the President and urged the importance of sizable tariff protection for the infant dye industry (Andrew C. Imbrie, "Memorandum of talk with President Wilson, March 8th, 1916," the Ray Stannard Baker Collection, in the Library of Congress), and this was the instrumentality finally agreed upon and included in the Revenue Act of September, 1916.

¹⁶ Wilson and the administration strongly supported the Webb bill to amend the antitrust laws so as to allow manufacturers engaged in the export trade to combine for purposes of selling abroad. The bill was not passed, however, until 1918.

¹⁷ That the President had gone over to the protectionist principle was publicly evidenced when he wrote the president of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association: "It ought to be possible by such [nonpartisan] means to make the question of duties merely a question of progress and development, a question of adapting means to ends, of facilitating and helping business and employing to the utmost the resources of the country in a vast development of our business and enterprise." Wilson to S. M. Hastings, July 28, 1916, Wilson Papers.

¹⁸ Wilson proposed, among other things, to use the resources of the government to gather information and statistics, to help businessmen find new markets abroad, and to assist trade associations in standardizing products and eliminating cut-throat competition. He outlined this program in an address before the United States Chamber of Commerce, February 10, 1916, *The New York Times*, Feb. 11, 1916; see also L. Ames Brown, "Preparedness for Peace, an Authorized Statement of President Wilson's Plans," *Collier's*, LVIII (Sept. 16, 1916), 12-13, and Wilson to Edward N. Hurley, May 12, 1916, printed in Ray S. Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (6 vols., New York, 1925-27), *The New Democracy*, II, 167-168.

paigners could espouse the cause of social justice with mounting fervor. Whether this acceptance of the New Nationalism signified a fundamental change in Democratic philosophy, or whether it was executed solely for expediency's sake, no man could tell. In any event, on the surface, at least, progressivism had come momentarily to fruition and had found acceptance by one of the major parties. And the future of American politics would be profoundly altered by this fact.¹⁹

While the Democrats were writing into legislation the nationalistic, progressive program of 1916, their opponents were floundering in a sea of confusion and conflicting counsels. For months Theodore Roosevelt had waged a strenuous campaign for strong action against Mexico and Germany; and when Elihu Root and Henry Cabot Lodge took up the theme in important political speeches in February and March, it seemed almost certain the Republicans would make Wilson's Mexican policy, his failure to protest the violation of Belgium, and his weak and futile defense of American rights on the seas their chief points of attack during the presidential campaign.²⁰

Or so it seemed at the beginning of the preconvention campaign. But Republican leaders like Taft protested that the G.O.P. was heading straight for disaster if it nominated Roosevelt on a war platform. A series of startling developments soon demonstrated, moreover, that the Eastern interventionists did not speak for the Republican rank and file, even of their own section. The action of a majority of the Republican representatives and of an almost solid Midwestern contingent in voting to warn American citizens off armed merchant ships was the first sign that the Republican masses, especially in the Midwest, valued peace more highly than a heroic assertion of technical rights. The defeat of Robert Bacon, an avowed interventionist, for the Republican senatorial nomination in New York by William M. Calder, who had the support of the German-Americans and the peace element, signified that interventionism could not command a majority among Republicans even in Root's and Roosevelt's own state. More important, however, was the success of Henry Ford, a pacifist leader of dubious wis-

¹⁹ For incisive comments on the triumph of the New Nationalism in the Democratic party, see *New Republic*, VII (June 24, 1916), 185-187; VIII (Sept. 2, 9, 1916), 103-104, 128-129; also *Collier's*, LVIII (Sept. 16, 1916), 14.

²⁰ Root spoke before the New York Republican state convention in New York City on February 15, 1916, Lodge before the Republican Club of Lynn, Massachusetts, on March 16, 1916. Their speeches are printed in *The New York Times*, Feb. 16, 1916, and the *Boston Evening Transcript*, Mar. 17, 1916.

dom, in the Republican presidential primaries in Michigan and Nebraska, despite the fact that he was not a candidate and had tried to take his name off the ballots in these states. Obviously, Midwestern Republican leaders were using the Ford candidacy as a warning to the national leaders. Finally, German-American spokesmen gave early notice they would enter the presidential campaign and bitterly oppose any interventionist candidate. As they were for the most part Republicans, the significance of their admonition was not lost upon the men who controlled the G.O.P.

After minor booms for Root and former Governor Myron T. Herlick of Ohio had fizzled, the Republican preconvention contest settled into a test of strength between Roosevelt and Charles Evans Hughes, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. The party managers liked Hughes little better than Roosevelt, but he was their best hope of heading off the alleged destroyer of the party. Outwardly, at least, Hughes bore many resemblances to Wilson. Like the President, he had integrity, independence, great power of leadership, and, above all, intellectual depth. Hughes had come first into public notice in 1905, when he conducted investigations of the New York utilities ring and the great insurance companies. His methods were so relentless and his disclosures were so startling that at once he was catapulted into leadership of the progressive wing of the Republican party in New York. Elected Governor in 1906 and 1908, Hughes, like Wilson a few years later, electrified the country by his defiance of the bosses and his magnificent battles for reform legislation. He might have been elected President in 1908, but he spurned Theodore Roosevelt's overtures. Appointed to the Supreme Court in 1910 by President Taft, Hughes by 1916 had won a place of leadership among the liberal minority of that tribunal. In 1912 he flatly refused to accept the Republican presidential nomination, but four years later the draft was so strong that he could not refuse duty's command.²¹

For his part, Theodore Roosevelt worked strenuously for the nomination and apparently thought his chances were good,²² but the bosses knew better. They went to the national convention at Chicago on June 8 to prevent Roosevelt's triumph, even if that meant nominating the

²¹ This paragraph is a brief summary of Merlo J. Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes* (2 vols., New York, 1951), I, 132-324.

²² So did the professional odds makers. Roosevelt was the favorite in the betting in St. Louis on June 1, when his supporters offered two to one odds in his favor. *The New York Times*, June 2, 1916.

independent and progressive Hughes. The leaders of the nearly defunct Progressive party also gathered in Chicago at the same time. Die-hard Progressives insisted that their rump convention nominate Roosevelt and make a hopeless campaign, rather than surrender abjectly to the enemy, the Old Guard. Most Progressives did not know it, but Roosevelt was using them to bludgeon the Republicans into nominating him. The strategy, of course, failed, and Hughes was nominated easily on June 10. Having failed to win a single important concession from the Republican managers, the rebellious Progressives proceeded in sheer anger and desperation to nominate Roosevelt anyway. Roosevelt declined the dubious honor at once and suggested that the Progressives and Republicans unite behind Henry Cabot Lodge—one of the “staunchest fighters for different measures of economic reform in the direction of justice,” Roosevelt said. Two weeks later the Progressive National Committee followed their leader’s instructions and disbanded the party that had been launched with such hope and enthusiasm in 1912.²³

The nomination of Hughes on a platform that carefully avoided any denunciation of hyphenism and the extreme German-American element and that called for “a straight and honest” neutrality was, therefore, an implicit repudiation of the Rooseveltian interventionists.²⁴ As Roosevelt wrote soon after the convention, “the country wasn’t in a heroic mood.” The selection of Hughes was also a signal victory for the German-American element of the party, for, whether he liked it or not, Hughes had become the German-American candidate.

Meanwhile, Wilson, House, and other Democratic leaders had been

²³ George E. Mowry, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* (Madison, Wis., 1946), pp. 345–360. A minority of the Progressives, led by John M. Parker, Matthew Hale, and Bainbridge Colby, held a new Progressive convention in Indianapolis in early August, repudiated Roosevelt, and came out for Wilson. As will be shown, they were an important factor in accomplishing Wilson’s re-election in November.

²⁴ The Republican platform, among other things, demanded protection of American rights, “by land and sea,” but also called for an “honest neutrality.” It condemned the administration’s interference in Mexico and blamed it for much of the alleged chaos prevailing in that country. On the preparedness issue, the Republicans equivocated by simply demanding “adequate” land and naval forces. Finally, they reaffirmed their allegiance to the principle of tariff protection, condemned the Democrats for attempting to abandon the Philippines, and pledged themselves to support effective rural credits and federal child labor legislation. *Republican Campaign Text-Book* (New York, 1916), pp. 48–52.

laying their own plans for the coming campaign. The party machinery was reorganized and the erratic and ineffective national chairman, William F. McCombs, was eased out and replaced by the young and progressive Vance C. McCormick of Pennsylvania. After the happy settlement of the armed ship and *Sussex* crises the President was once again in undisputed control of party policies. In consultation with party leaders,²⁵ he wrote the Democratic platform, which contained an open bid for Progressive support in the form of a plank approving an advanced program of social legislation, promised a neutral foreign policy, endorsed reasonable preparedness, commended the cause of woman suffrage to the states, and denounced groups that placed the interests of foreign countries above the interests of the United States. Finally, the platform committed the party to support entrance by the United States into a postwar League of Nations pledged to enforce peace by collective security measures against aggressors.²⁶

When delegates began to assemble for the national convention in St. Louis on June 11, the Democratic situation seemed so firmly under presidential control that the vanguard of party leaders on the scene expected a dull affair. Irritated by the Republicans’ claim to a monopoly on patriotism, the President sent instructions that “Americanism” should be the keynote of the convention and that frequent demonstrations should attest to Democratic loyalty to the flag. When former Governor Martin H. Glynn of New York gave the keynote address at the opening session on June 14, however, he failed to evoke more than dutiful enthusiasm for the President, preparedness, and 100 per cent Americanism. Glynn then moved on to the war and American

²⁵ Senators W. J. Stone, Henry F. Hollis, F. M. Simmons, O. W. Underwood, and T. J. Walsh all submitted suggestions for the platform. These suggestions were sent to Wilson by Burleson on June 7, 1916, and are in the Wilson Papers.

²⁶ In fact, Wilson had already personally committed the country to this project in a significant address at Washington on May 27 before the League to Enforce Peace, a nonpartisan organization formed in 1915 to propagate the League plan. It is interesting that in preparing this address, which alleged America’s willingness to depart from its historic policy of isolation, Wilson consulted only Colonel House and Secretary Lansing. In spite of his failure to confer with Democratic Congressional leaders on the matter, the Democrats willingly accepted a plank embodying the far-reaching proposal. It was a significant commentary on Wilson’s mastery over the party leaders. The League to Enforce Peace speech is printed in *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, II, 184–188. The Democratic platform of 1916 is printed in *The Democratic Text Book*, 1916 (New York, 1916), pp. 3–26, and in many other contemporary sources.

neutrality, invoking historical parallels to prove that Wilson's diplomacy of note writing had good precedent in the American past. But this would be a dull recital, he averred; and he was about to pass over that portion of his address when the immense crowd were on their feet, shouting, "No! No! Go on!" This was an unexpected development, but Glynn sensed the electrical quality of the situation and at once launched into his historical exposition. As he cited one case after another in which the United States had refused under provocation to go to war, the mighty throng would chant, "What did we do? What did we do?" And Glynn would roar back, "We didn't go to war, we didn't go to war!" On and on he went, while the convention indulged in one frenzied demonstration after another. It was as if the delegates had just discovered that pacifism, jeered at and derided, was the cornerstone upon which American foreign policy had been built.

Events of the following day gave even more spectacular evidence of the passion for peace that consumed the delegates and deafened their ears to any other appeals. The permanent chairman, Senator Ollie M. James of Kentucky, was a veteran of many campaigns with a sharp understanding of crowd psychology. He appealed stirringly to the delegates' desire for peace, and with the famous peroration, "Without orphaning a single American child, without widowing a single American mother, without firing a single gun or shedding a drop of blood, he [Wilson] wrung from the most militant spirit that ever brooded over a battlefield the concession of American demands and American rights," James provoked a nearly riotous demonstration that lasted twenty-one minutes.

At the night session of June 15 the cries for Bryan grew so loud that The Commoner had to speak. Cast out of party councils and castigated by the Democratic press, Bryan had even been refused election as a delegate from Nebraska and had come to the convention as a reporter.²⁷ He it was who became the hero of the convention, when he urged the delegates to renominate Wilson and thanked God the country had a President who did not want war. A few hours later Wilson was named by one mighty acclamation, and the convention adjourned the following day after adopting the platform.²⁸

The meaning of the peace demonstration at St. Louis was unmistak-

²⁷ Bryan's letters to the newspapers from the convention are printed in *The Commoner*, June, 1916.

²⁸ *The New York Times*, June 16, 17, 1916.

ably clear to Wilson and his campaign managers. Irresistibly they were drawn into the ground swell for peace, and, as will be shown, the Democratic campaign that followed became in many respects a prolonged demonstration for peace. But while the managers in both camps were busy constructing their organizations and raising their funds, another development occurred that had a profound impact on the course of the contest. It was the near occurrence of a general railroad strike and the President's method of averting it.

Storm clouds had gathered on the horizon in early spring, when the presidents of the four railroad brotherhoods presented demands for an eight-hour day, with no reduction in wages, and time and a half for overtime work. On June 15 the railroad managers rejected these demands, although they offered to submit them to arbitration, and a weary conference broke up. When the United States Board of Mediation failed to bring agreement and 94 per cent of the nation's 400,000 engineers, firemen, conductors, and trainmen approved a general strike call, Wilson decided the time for decisive action had come. On August 13 he invited the brotherhood chiefs and the railroad managers to the White House and reminded them of the catastrophic consequences of a general strike—suffering, even starvation, in the great cities, disruption of the nation's economic life, and a setting back of the preparedness effort. The following morning the contending parties presented their cases, and Wilson appealed solemnly for compromise in the national interest. When both sides refused to budge he then and there resolved to impose his own settlement. The workers' demand for the eight-hour day was right, he declared; but they must abandon their demand for punitive overtime pay, and a federal commission should be appointed to study the entire railroad labor problem.²⁹

The brotherhood chiefs accepted the President's proposal on August 18, but the managers had rejected it the day before. At once Wilson summoned the presidents of the great railroad systems to the White House and set Congressional leaders at work on legislation to be rushed through if his last-ditch efforts failed. Thirty-one railroad presidents appeared at the White House on August 18, but they were unmoved by the President's pleading.³⁰ Then Wilson issued a public

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 14, 15, 16, 17, 1916. Wilson's solution was embodied in "Proposal. R. R. Conference," memorandum prepared by Wilson c. Aug. 16-17, 1916, Wilson Papers.

³⁰ *The New York Times*, Aug. 19, 1916. There were indications that some of the railroad presidents welcomed the prospect of a general strike, which they

appeal for support and summoned twelve more railroad presidents to Washington. To the railroad executives assembled and sweating in 100 degrees of heat in the East Room on August 21, Wilson appealed in the name of humanity that they accept his compromise. When they refused he exclaimed bitterly, "I pray God to forgive you, I never can," and left the room.³¹

Further futile negotiations between executives and union leaders only highlighted the hopelessness of the deadlock. On August 27 the brotherhood local chairman left Washington with orders to call a nation-wide strike on September 4. The railroad presidents' committee gave Wilson their final refusal to accept his plan. Wilson went to the Capitol, where he was closeted with Senate Democratic leaders during the afternoon of August 28, and before a joint session the following day he outlined legislation to prevent a strike and guarantee that the country would never again be threatened by such a catastrophe.³² More important for the long future, however, was his sweeping endorsement of the eight-hour day, as a cause so vital to the health and happiness of the people that its fate could not be arbitrated.

The next few days were extraordinarily hectic. For a while it seemed Congress might refuse to act and, thinking he had failed, the President called fifteen thousand national guardsmen from the Mexican border to preserve order. Meanwhile, however, Chairman William C. Adamson of the House Interstate Commerce Committee and Majority Leader Kitchin drafted a bill imposing the eight-hour day, beginning

were sure they could break and which they thought would destroy the brotherhoods. "President Ripley of the Santa Fe road believes that if a violent strike should occur, it can be broken in thirty days," wrote the publisher of the reactionary *Los Angeles Times*. "In that case the organized railroad men would be the losers by a tremendous majority, and the outcome would be the ultimate non-unionizing of the railway service." Harrison Gray Otis to H. L. Scott, Aug. 24, 1916, the Papers of Hugh L. Scott, in the Library of Congress; also *The New York Times*, Aug. 29, 1916.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Aug. 22, 1916; C. W. Eliot to J. P. Tumulty, Sept. 11, 1916; Wilson to Tumulty, c. Sept. 21, 1916, Wilson Papers.

³² Wilson proposed (1) the eight-hour day for railroad workers engaged in interstate commerce, which, in the absence of punitive overtime, meant ten hours' pay for eight hours' work; (2) compulsory suspension of railroad strikes pending investigation by a federal commission; (3) that the Interstate Commerce Commission be enlarged and directed to study the cost of the eight-hour day, with a view to allowing the railroads to increase rates; and (4) that the President be authorized to compel railroad officials and workers to operate trains for military purposes. His address is printed in *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, II, 267-274.

January 1, 1917, and providing for a commission to study the railroad problem. As it was the only measure that could be passed quickly, it was approved August 31 by Wilson, Burleson, and the Congressional leaders. The House approved the following day, 239 to 56; and after a day of acrimonious debate the Senate accepted the bill on September 2 and the President signed it in his private car in the Union Station the next morning, just before he left for Hodgenville, Kentucky, for an address at Lincoln's birthplace.³³

Passage of the Adamson Act prevented the railroad strike, to be sure, but it also injected a new issue, which Hughes gladly seized upon to bolster his sagging campaign. For it was now plain that he was not doing well. He had entered the contest with the respect and admiration of most independent and many Democratic journals. The four leading independent organs of opinion, the *New Republic*, the *Nation*, the *New York Times*, and the *New York Evening Post*, stood predisposed to support him. But his acceptance speech at Carnegie Hall on July 31 had been a bitter disappointment, reflecting mainly the advice of Henry Lane Wilson on the Mexican question.³⁴ Soon afterward Hughes had set out on a long tour of the Middle West and Far West, and everywhere he spoke he made votes for Wilson by his petty criticisms and failure to offer any constructive alternatives.³⁵ The great

³³ *The New York Times*, Sept. 2, 3, 4, 1916. There is a dénouement to this story that should not be overlooked. The railroad managers refused to accept the Adamson settlement and immediately instituted proceedings to test the act's constitutionality. When the railroads refused to abide by the law after January 1, 1917, the brotherhoods, on March 15, issued a general strike order. As the nation was on the verge of war with Germany, Wilson and the Council of National Defense appealed to both sides to remember that the country was already in dire peril. On March 17 the brotherhoods postponed the strike forty-eight hours; and the following day, after German submarines sank three American ships, the railroad managers gave in and conceded the eight-hour day. Then, on March 19, the Supreme Court, in a five-to-four decision, upheld the constitutionality of the Adamson Act. This important decision, rendered in *Wilson v. New*, 243 U.S., 332, affirmed that Congress' control over transportation facilities operating in interstate commerce was absolute.

³⁴ It was a significant commentary on Hughes' campaign that he should have chosen the discredited former Ambassador as his chief adviser on Mexico. See H. L. Wilson to Taft, June 23, 1916, Taft Papers; H. L. Wilson, "Memorandum on Mexico," undated, sent to Hughes, copy in *ibid.*; *The New York Times*, July 23, 28, 1916. For comment on Hughes' acceptance speech see *Denver Post*, Aug. 1, 1916; *The New York Times*, Aug. 1, 1916; *Springfield Republican*, Aug. 1, 1916; *New York Evening Post*, Aug. 1, 1916; *New York World*, Aug. 1, 1916; *New Republic*, VIII (Aug. 5, 1916), 4-5.

³⁵ See, for example, his speeches at Detroit, Aug. 7, in *New York Evening*

Eastern journals, which had hailed Hughes' candidacy with real enthusiasm, were baffled and searched about for an explanation, for, as one editor put it, "No other candidate for President within the memory of living man ever ran downhill so rapidly."³⁶

The triumph of the brotherhoods in the epochal struggle for the eight-hour day, however, breathed life into the corpse of the Hughes campaign. For one thing, it aroused the business community to frantic anger and overwhelming support of the Republican ticket and sent a cold chill down the spines of the Democratic managers. For another, Hughes finally had an issue and launched a vigorous attack on Wilson for betraying the cause of arbitration and knuckling under to the railroad workers—"the most shameful proceeding," he said, "that has come to my attention since I have observed public life."³⁷

For his part, Wilson stayed at his post until the threat of a railroad strike was past. He made a few short speeches in the capital, important only as portents of the course he would later follow; and he wrote a long letter to Representative Lever, reviewing the agricultural legislation of his administration.³⁸ His first important pronouncement, however, he saved for his acceptance speech at Shadow Lawn, New Jersey, his temporary summer home, on September 2. It was more a scholarly summary of recent Democratic achievements than a rousing campaign address.³⁹ Then, on September 23, the President began a series of hard-hitting speeches that got his campaign into high gear and left his opponents dazed. Instead of apologizing for the Adamson Act, he

Post, Aug. 8, 1916; at Chicago, Aug. 8, in *The New York Times*, Aug. 9, 1916; at St. Paul, Aug. 9, *ibid.*, Aug. 10, 1916; at Fargo, N.D., Aug. 10, *ibid.*, Aug. 11, 1916; at Butte, Mont., Aug. 12, *ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1916.

³⁶ *New York World*, Aug. 17, 1916; for similar comments see *The New York Times*, Aug. 17, Sept. 8, 1916; *Independent*, LXXXVII (Aug. 28, 1916), 289-290; *The Nation*, CIII (Sept. 14, 1916), 251; Oswald G. Villard to William L. Phelps, July 21, 1916, the Papers of Oswald Garrison Villard, in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Although Merlo J. Pusey, Hughes' biographer, makes out the best possible case for his subject, he nowhere answers the baffling question of why Hughes failed to wage a positive, constructive type of campaign. Nor, it might be added, is Mr. Pusey fair to Wilson, whom he accuses of using the peace issue at a time when the President knew war with Germany was likely. Pusey, *Hughes*, II, 356-357. The evidence Mr. Pusey uses to substantiate this charge is totally unreliable.

³⁷ C. E. Hughes to Taft, Sept. 16, 1916, Taft Papers.

³⁸ *The New York Times*, July 5, 14, 1916; the letter to Lever is printed in *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, II, 260-263.

³⁹ Printed in *ibid.*, pp. 275-291.

boldly defended it and the principle of the eight-hour day. In October he campaigned into the Middle West, defending his Mexican policy, reiterating the blessings his administration had brought the farmers, and in general magnifying his and the Democratic party's devotion to the great cause of progressive reform.⁴⁰

Wilson's bold championship of labor's supreme objective and of the cause of social justice stood out in vivid contrast to the equivocation of the Republican platform and Hughes' evasive declarations. The result, therefore, was such a division on domestic issues as the country had not seen since 1896. The left wing of the progressive movement, including many Socialists and most single taxers, did not like Wilson's advocacy of preparedness and of measures calculated to appease the business community, but they never once seemed to doubt they had no alternative but to support the President.⁴¹ Even more astonishing, however, was the way in which independent progressives—the social workers, sociologists, and articulate intellectuals—moved en masse into the Wilson camp. To name them is to name practically the entire leadership of the advanced wing of the progressive movement in the United States.⁴² If this did not suffice to prove that the Democratic party was being transformed and re-created, then the wholesale movement of the former leaders of the Progressive party into the Democracy must have convinced the most cynical observer. One by one, the men and women who had gone into the Roosevelt party in 1912 to fight for principles and social regeneration, rather than to follow a hero, came out for Wilson—Jane Addams of Illinois, Francis J. Heney of California, John M. Parker of Louisiana, Edgar C. Snyder, chairman of the state committee in Washington, Bainbridge Colby of New York, Victor Mur-

⁴⁰ Addresses at Chicago, Oct. 4, 1916, *The New York Times*, Oct. 5, 1916; at Omaha, Oct. 5, 1916, printed in *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, II, 344-355; at Indianapolis, Oct. 12, 1916, *ibid.*, pp. 356-363; at Cincinnati, Oct. 26, 1916, *ibid.*, pp. 376-382; at Buffalo, Nov. 1, 1916, *New York World*, Nov. 2, 1916.

⁴¹ On this point, see the significant articles: Victor S. Yarros, "Hughes, Wilson and the Radicals," *The Public*, XIX (June 16, 1916), 559-560, and Louis F. Post, "A Campaign Talk to Old Friends," *ibid.*, XIX (Oct. 20-27, 1916), 992-995, 1016-1019.

⁴² A partial list would include William Kent, Norman Hapgood, Francis J. Heney, Frederic C. Howe, E. W. Scripps, A. J. McKelway; a host of journalists, including John Reed, Ray S. Baker, Lincoln Steffens, Ida M. Tarbell, Irvin S. Cobb, Walter Lippmann, Herbert Croly, and George Creel; Ben B. Lindsey, Jane Addams, Lillian D. Wald, David Lubin, Amos Pinchot, John Dewey, Max Eastman, Washington Gladden, and Bishop Francis J. McConnell of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

dock of Kansas, Edward P. Costigan of Colorado, Matthew Hale of Massachusetts, acting chairman of the national committee, and many others. Finally, a week before the election, eleven out of the nineteen members of the Progressive platform committee at the Chicago convention joined in a public appeal for Wilson, on the ground that the Democrats had redeemed the Progressive promises of 1912.

Obviously, Wilson's strategy of building a new coalition and drawing large accessions to his party had succeeded brilliantly. But there were other and as important additions to Democratic strength. The railway brotherhoods, the American Federation of Labor, and other organized labor groups were profoundly grateful to the administration and abandoned all pretense of neutrality during the campaign.⁴³ So vigorous was their support of the Democratic ticket, in fact, that at least two Old Guard bosses demanded that Hughes drop the eight-hour issue at once.⁴⁴ There were also many signs that Wilson's appeal for farm support was paying large dividends. The distinguished farm editor, Herbert Quick, traveled with the Federal Farm Loan Board through the Middle West in September and noted that everywhere the Board went Republican farmers were going in droves into the Wilson ranks. The Non-Partisan League, which was spreading like wildfire in the region, came out officially for Wilson because of the adoption of the rural credits act. Everywhere, in practically every state of the Middle West, farm groups endorsed Wilson.

Finally, the accession to the Democratic ranks of practically all independent newspapers and periodicals completed the great progressive coalition and added powerful support to Wilson's candidacy. "I shall vote not for the Wilson who has uttered a few too many noble sentiments," one independent declared, "but for the Wilson who is evolving under experience and is remaking his philosophy in the light of it, for the Wilson who is temporarily at least creating, out of the reactionary, parochial fragments of the Democracy, the only party which at this moment is national in scope, liberal in purpose, and

⁴³ Statements of Samuel Gompers, Andrew Furuseth, *et al.*, in *Wilson and Labor* (Democratic National Committee, 1916); Samuel Gompers *et al.*, "To the Officers of All Organized Labor," Oct. 14, 1916, copy in Wilson Papers; appeal of the presidents of the four brotherhoods, *The New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1916; *Locomotive Firemen's and Engineers' Magazine*, Nov., 1916; Samuel Gompers, "On Which Side Are You?" *American Federationist*, XXIII (Nov., 1916), 1067-1068.

⁴⁴ W. Murray Crane to Taft, Sept. 5, 1916, Taft Papers; David Baird to Taft, Oct. 7, 1916, *ibid.*

effective in action."⁴⁵ Herbert Croly confessed that he would vote for Wilson because the President had reconstructed the Democratic party into a responsible instrument of progressive nationalism, but that a few years before he would not have believed such a miracle was possible.⁴⁶ Thus the *New Republic*, *The New York Times*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *Nation*, *Pearson's Magazine*, the Scripps newspapers, and other leaders of independent opinion came out, some of them reluctantly, for Wilson as the hope of the country.

It is clear, therefore, that the campaign witnessed an almost perfect alignment of progressives and conservatives into two opposing camps and that the issue of further advancement toward a dynamic social welfare democracy drew large numbers to Wilson's side. But to interpret the campaign solely within this framework would be to miss the most important phenomenon of the contest: the fusion of the peace cause with the ideal of progressive democracy that the President and his campaigners effected.

As he was profoundly impressed by the mounting manifestations of the deep peace longings of the people, and particularly by the developments at St. Louis, Wilson must have deliberately decided to make a direct appeal to what was obviously an overwhelming popular sentiment. Nor was he motivated by considerations of expediency alone. By September his efforts to co-operate with the Allies in ending the war had failed, and he was growing suspicious of British motives and was persuaded neither side should win. Thus his metamorphosis from the firm defender of American rights on the seas to a leading champion of nonintervention was facilitated by developments both at home and abroad.

In an address at Shadow Lawn on September 30, the President first sounded the new keynote of his campaign. He brought his audience to their feet by charging that the Republicans were a war party and that Hughes' election must mean intervention in Mexico and the European war.⁴⁷ It was as if he had finally found the one great issue, and time and again he expounded this theme, in the Midwest and in the East, until it became the staccato note of his addresses. Moreover, by implication he promised to keep the United States out of war if the

⁴⁵ Walter Lippmann, "The Case for Wilson," *New Republic*, VIII (Oct. 14, 1916), 263-264.

⁴⁶ Herbert Croly, "The Two Parties in 1916," *ibid.*, Oct. 21, 1916, pp. 286-291.

⁴⁷ *New York World*, Oct. 1, 1916.

people sustained him. "I am not expecting this country to get into war," he declared at Shadow Lawn on October 21, for example. "I know that the way in which we have preserved peace is objected to, and that certain gentlemen say that they would have taken some other way that would inevitably have resulted in war, but I am not expecting this country to get into war, partly because I am not expecting those gentlemen to have a chance to make a mess of it."⁴⁸ Or again, ten days later he wrote for publication in Western newspapers the following letter: "Thank you warmly for your letter of October twenty-third. The reason you give for supporting me touches me very deeply, that you should feel when you see 'the boys and mother' together in your home circle that I have preserved the peace and happiness of the home. Such a feeling on the part of my fellow-citizens is a sufficient reward for everything that I have done."⁴⁹

Wilson, moreover, shared with the people his great vision of a post-war community of nations co-operating to maintain the peace. There were times when he warned that the day might come when America must fight for the right. But he made it clear he was talking about the future, after the war, when the United States would use its strength in concert with other nations to prevent aggression. That was what he meant in his Cincinnati address of October 26, when he declared, "the business of neutrality is over."⁵⁰

As the Republican interventionists, led by Theodore Roosevelt, took up Wilson's peace challenge and increased the ferocity of their attacks on his alleged failure to defend American rights on the seas, the President indignantly denounced them for dragging questions of foreign policy into the campaign in a partisan way. The Democratic campaign committee and orators, however, were elated by Roosevelt's blasts and used the peace issue for all it was worth. They knew the slogan, "He kept us out of war,"⁵¹ had vast potentialities, and when

⁴⁸ *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, II, 371-372.

⁴⁹ Wilson to J. W. Wasson, Velva, N.D., Oct. 31, 1916, Wilson Papers.

⁵⁰ In this same address Wilson also denounced those persons who said the United States should now be at war. "Have you ever heard what started the present war?" he asked. "If you have, I wish you would publish it, because nobody else has, so far as I can gather. Nothing in particular started it, but everything in general." *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, II, 381.

⁵¹ Robert W. Woolley, publicity director for the Democratic National Committee in 1916, claims that he and Richard L. Metcalfe, his assistant, invented the phrase, "With honor, he has kept us out of war," and that it was used in all official literature. Woolley admitted, however, that the shorter "He kept us out of war" was used thousands of times by Democratic campaigners. Woolley

Wilson sounded the peace note on September 30 they were delighted and urged him on. So overwhelming was the popular response in the Midwest to Wilson's speech that Senator Thomas J. Walsh, in charge of Midwestern headquarters in Chicago, at once sent instructions to an army of orators in the region to adopt the peace issue as their main theme. Thus it was that "He kept us out of war" became the battle cry of peace that was thundered over the plains.

To lead the Democratic peace campaigners in the Middle and Far West the great apostle himself, Bryan, was chosen. No longer a pariah, up and down the West he went, carrying the good news of peace and progressivism to countless throngs. "Bryan's speeches at Pueblo last night and Colorado Springs tonight were masterpieces in argument and power," the former Governor of Colorado wrote.⁵² Democratic leaders in Wisconsin reported that The Commoner had never been so well received in their state.⁵³

It was in the millions of pamphlets and thousands of newspaper advertisements they published, however, that the campaign committee attained the maximum effectiveness. No matter what the subject of the written appeal happened to be, the peace issue was highlighted. Thus, a pamphlet entitled *Woodrow Wilson and Social Justice* concluded: "More than all, our country is at peace in a world at war," while an essay devoted to the child labor law reminded mothers that Wilson had saved their children from mines, mills, and sweatshops, as he had "saved their sons and their husbands from unrighteous battlefields!"⁵⁴ The climax of this propaganda came just before the election, when the Wilson Business Men's League on November 4 published the following advertisement in leading newspapers:

to R. S. Baker, Nov. 21, 1928, Baker Collection. Vance C. McCormick, Democratic national chairman in 1916, could not later remember who invented the slogan, although he well recalled how effectively it was used. R. S. Baker, interview with Vance C. McCormick, July 15, 1928, *ibid.* In so far as the present writer knows, Wilson never used the phrase.

⁵² Alva Adams to T. J. Walsh, Oct. 13, 1916, the Papers of Thomas J. Walsh, in the Library of Congress.

⁵³ Joseph Martin to T. J. Walsh, Oct. 27, 1916, the Papers of William Jennings Bryan, in the Library of Congress.

⁵⁴ *Children's Emancipation Day* (Democratic National Committee, 1916); also "Yes" or "No!" Mr. Hughes?, *Ten Reasons for Voting for Wilson*, by Dr. Irving Fisher, "Complete Accord with Roosevelt," *Wilson and Labor*, War Menace Masked by Republican Policy, *The Wilson Volunteers*, *Wilson Workers' Manual*, all issued by the Democratic National Committee, 1916.

You Are Working—*Not Fighting!*
 Alive and Happy;—*Not Cannon Fodder!*
 Wilson and Peace with Honor?

or

Hughes with Roosevelt and War?

Roosevelt says we should hang our heads in shame because we are not at *war* with Germany in behalf of Belgium! Roosevelt says that following the sinking of the *Lusitania* he would have foregone diplomacy and seized every ship in our ports flying the German flag. That would have meant *war*!

Hughes Says He and Roosevelt are in Complete Accord!

.

The Lesson is Plain:
 If You Want WAR, vote for HUGHES!
 If You Want Peace with Honor
 VOTE FOR WILSON!

While the Democrats were pressing a united and powerful campaign, Hughes and his managers fumbled from one issue to another, confused and continually embarrassed by feuds within their ranks. The Democrats kept pounding away, demanding that Hughes tell what he would have done. At Louisville on October 12 the former Justice finally shot back that he would have broken relations with Germany after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, although he said the tragedy would never have occurred if the Germans had believed Wilson meant what he had said about "strict accountability." Even more embarrassing to the Republicans than the Democratic gadflies, however, was Theodore Roosevelt, who barnstormed the country, denouncing the President for cowardly weakness abroad. Indeed, Roosevelt was a virtual millstone around Hughes' neck, for the hapless candidate was drawn into approving Roosevelt's declarations, which enabled the Democrats to charge that Hughes also harbored warlike designs.⁵⁵ Bernstorff was not far wrong when he wrote the Foreign Office, "If Hughes is defeated he has Roosevelt to thank for it."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ When Roosevelt made one of his usual addresses at Lewiston, Maine, Hughes telegraphed him from Kansas: "I heartily congratulate you on your speech at Lewiston, and warmly appreciate your effective support." *Outlook*, CXIV (Sept. 13, 1916), 63. For the way in which the Democrats used this incident, see "*Complete Accord with Roosevelt*."

⁵⁶ Oct. 19, 1916, "Bernstorff Wireless Messages—1916," in the Papers of Walter H. Page, in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Hughes' difficulties with the peace issue, his failure to attract wide independent and Progressive support, and Roosevelt's bellicose speeches were serious encumbrances to the Republican cause, to be sure, but in the showdown it was the bitter factionalism within the party that caused its undoing. For one thing, the Old Guard resented Hughes' approval of Roosevelt and the appointment of former Progressives to positions of leadership in the campaign organization. For another, in certain Western states the old-line bosses were more interested in preventing the Progressives from capturing the party than they were in electing Hughes. This was the situation, for example, in California, through which Hughes campaigned in August. The former Progressives were preparing to move back into the Republican party and to nominate Governor Hiram Johnson for the Senate on the G.O.P. ticket. From the day he entered the seething California campaign, Hughes went from one blunder to another. He allowed himself to be surrounded and his itinerary to be determined by the Old Guard leaders, who had declared open war on the Progressives. He followed the Republican state chairman across a picket line in San Francisco. Finally, he unwittingly failed to confer with Governor Johnson, when the two men were in a Long Beach hotel at the same time.

As if to compound Republican difficulties, Hughes was also embarrassed by the open support of organized German-American groups and practically the entire German-language press. It was a difficult situation, and Hughes tried to play both ends against the middle. On the one hand, he talked boldly of "straight Americanism" and applauded Roosevelt; on the other he conferred with the most extreme pro-German spokesmen in the country—the leaders of the German-financed American Independence Conference⁵⁷—and satisfied them he would pursue a policy of true neutrality.⁵⁸ Apparently to prove his sincerity, at Philadelphia on October 9 Hughes affirmed that he would take strong action against the British if he were elected. Unhappily for the luckless Hughes, the Democratic National Committee bought or stole the records of the American Independence Conference and published the details of the German- and Irish-American plot to defeat

⁵⁷ They were Jeremiah A. O'Leary, Carl E. Schmidt, Will R. McDonald, Frank Seiberlich, Jaspar T. Darling, St. John Gaffney, Joseph Frey, Victor Ridder, and Daniel F. Cohalan.

⁵⁸ The meeting took place around the middle of September, probably in New York City.



Kirby in the New York World
Berlin's candidate

Wilson and of Hughes' negotiations with the leaders of that movement.⁵⁹

The Democratic managers tried just as shamelessly to curry favor with the so-called hyphen vote,⁶⁰ but Wilson personally refused to

⁵⁹ The documents were printed in *The New York Times*, Oct. 23, 24, 25, 1916; *New York World*, Oct. 24, 25, 1916.

⁶⁰ For details of these negotiations see Kent E. Keller to N. Hapgood, Sept. 16, 1916, Wilson Papers; William J. Stone to J. P. Tumulty, Sept. 25, 1916,

engage in any such negotiations. Indeed, when the blatant president of the American Truth Society, Jeremiah A. O'Leary, tried to compel the President to state his views, Wilson shot back: "I would feel deeply mortified to have you or anybody like you vote for me: Since you have access to many disloyal Americans and I have not, I will ask you to convey this message to them."⁶¹ It was a telling blow that many voters remembered when the details of Hughes' conference with O'Leary and his brethren were later published.

In their effort to turn out what many of them sincerely thought was a disgraceful administration, the Republicans thundered and volleyed on Mexico, made a vain bid for women's votes in the Western states, accused Wilson and Bryan of adding a postscript to the first *Lusitania* note, telling the German government they did not mean what they had just said, and charged that Southerners in control of Congress were plundering the wealth of the North and Middle West to pay for preparedness. Finally, the Republicans organized vast whispering campaigns against the President, accusing him of all kinds of irregularities, but especially of numerous infidelities to his first wife.

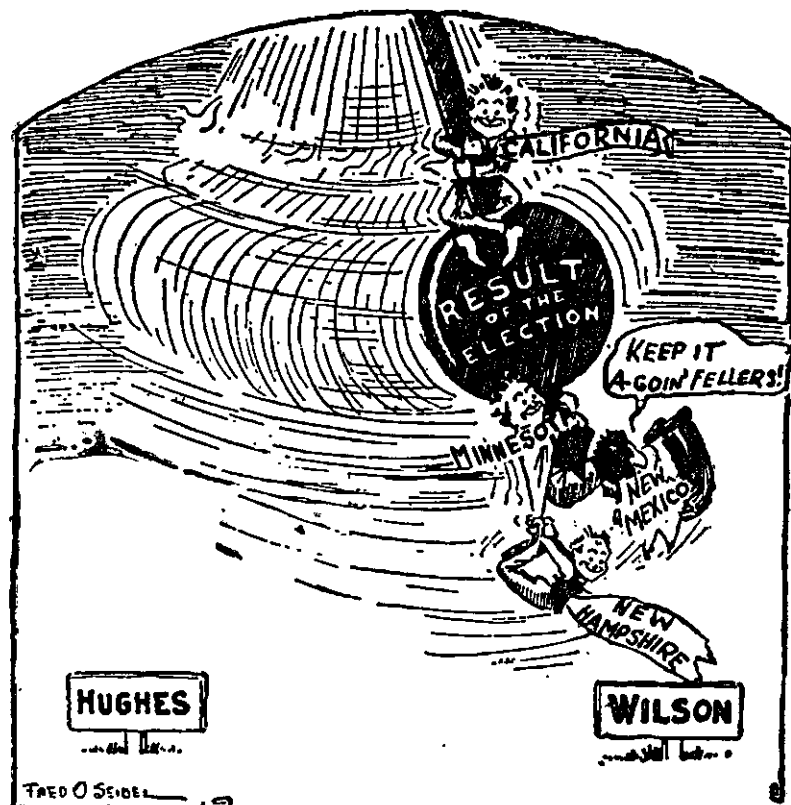
In spite of all the din and confusion, however, two issues—peace and progressivism—stood out above all the rest, and nothing the Republicans could do diverted attention from them. Even so, it seemed at first that the new Democratic-Progressive coalition had failed to convert the normal Democratic minority into a majority. Outside the South, the majority of farmers, businessmen, and professional people normally voted Republican. The great mass of laborers and minority groups were in that day politically illiterate and leaderless. In 1912 Taft and Roosevelt combined had received 1,311,484 more votes than Wilson; perhaps it was unreasonable to think Wilson could overcome such a preponderance against his party.

Early returns on Tuesday evening, November 7, revealed that Hughes had made almost a clean sweep of the East, except for Ohio and possibly New Hampshire, and the Democratic spokesman, the

ibid.; *The New York Times*, Oct. 11, 12, 13, 14, 1916; also "Complete Accord with Roosevelt," the most extraordinary document issued by the Democratic National Committee during the campaign. It accused Hughes of sympathizing with England and of desiring a war with the beloved Fatherland. "Such a bloody war," it declared, "would help crush a nation, millions of whose sons and daughters dwell in our land and love our flag; and help destroy a people who lead in art, poetry, music, philosophy, and science" and "drain our veins in order that Germany might bleed the more."

⁶¹ Wilson to O'Leary, Sept. 29, 1916, *The New York Times*, Sept. 30, 1916.

New York *World*, conceded defeat. Wilson went to bed at ten that evening and slept soundly in the knowledge that he could soon turn his thoughts to matters less pressing than affairs of state. But the Democratic managers kept their eyes on the West and refused to concede, and as one Western state after another recorded its vote for Wilson



(Courtesy, Knickerbocker News).

The suspense which followed the November, 1916, election depicted by a cartoonist for the Albany, N. Y., Knickerbocker Press.

the margin between the two candidates narrowed. In Delaware, New Hampshire, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Dakota, and California the contest was so close a handful of votes either way would have turned the tide. Wilson won all these doubtful states except Delaware

and Minnesota, which went to Hughes by pluralities of 1,258 and 392, respectively. With a total of 277 electoral votes, Wilson had a majority of twenty-three in the Electoral College.⁶² He received in all 9,129,606 votes, as against 8,538,221 for Hughes—a gain for the President of nearly three million votes over 1912. It was the best possible evidence that the progressive-peace issue had succeeded in drawing together a new coalition. The congressional and senatorial contests had been so close, however, that the Democratic majority in the Senate was reduced to eight, while control of the House of Representatives would rest with a handful of Progressives and Independents.⁶³

After the ballots in the hotly contested states had been recounted, analysts tried to discover the factors that had enabled Wilson to win. A close examination of the returns yielded many surprises and portents. To begin with, the vaunted German-American bloc had been so riddled by the Democratic peace appeal and Roosevelt's campaign blasts that the so-called hyphen vote almost vanished.⁶⁴ The labor vote, while not yet solidly organized, went largely to Wilson and was a factor in his success in New Hampshire, Ohio, Washington, and California. In the Middle and Far Western states the women's vote went disproportionately to Wilson.⁶⁵ Moreover, Socialists deserted their party by the

⁶² Wilson carried all the Southern states, including Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and Oklahoma, plus New Hampshire, Ohio, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, and California.

⁶³ The Sixty-Fifth Congress would contain, in the House, 213 Democrats, 217 Republicans, 2 Progressives, 1 Prohibitionist, 1 Socialist, and 1 Independent; in the Senate, 54 Democrats and 42 Republicans.

⁶⁴ The German-American vote went largely to Hughes in Oregon, Minnesota, and Illinois, and was apparently important in the Republican success in the first two states. On the other hand, in Maryland the German-Americans voted largely for Wilson and probably swung the state to him. Hamilton County, Ohio (Cincinnati), an important German-American center, returned a twelve thousand plurality for Hughes. On the other hand, Taft carried the county by 18,374 in 1908 and the combined Taft-Roosevelt vote exceeded Wilson's vote by 16,036 in 1912. With its large German-American population, Ohio gave Wilson a plurality of 89,503 in 1916, although Taft carried the state by 69,591 in 1908 and Taft and Roosevelt together in 1912 polled a vote that exceeded Wilson's by 83,341. In the six "German" wards of St. Louis, Hughes gained only two-tenths of one per cent over the combined Republican-Progressive percentage of the total vote four years before. Hughes gained 12,480 votes in twelve "German" counties in Wisconsin, but Wilson carried the most important of them, Milwaukee County, by seven thousand, although not another Democrat received a majority in the county. This note is based upon the excellent analysis in *The New York Times*, Nov. 12, 1916.

⁶⁵ Democratic and Republican leaders in Kansas estimated, for example, that

hundreds of thousands—the Socialist vote declined from 901,873 in 1912 to 585,113 in 1916—and it is a safe assumption that all the seceders went to Wilson. They, too, could claim a large share in determining the result.⁶⁶

So much for the voting behavior of the several important groups. As for the issues, all observers agreed the key factor in Democratic success was Wilson's and his party's promise of continued peace, prosperity, and progressive democracy.⁶⁷ These were the issues that won a majority of the women, a large minority of the Socialists, and a large enough number of former Progressives to put Wilson across.⁶⁸

What the election portended for the long future of American politics would in large measure depend upon the administration's success in holding the new coalition together, and this in turn might depend upon a redemption of the Democratic promises to keep the country out of war. The election's immediate significance, however, was apparent to all observers and especially to the President. "It is the South and West united," a distinguished historian wrote; "the farmers, small business men and perhaps a large sprinkle of Union labor against the larger industrial, transportation and commercial interests."⁶⁹ It was, indeed, the South and West united again in an emphatic mandate for progressivism and peace.⁷⁰ In short, Wilson had consummated the

70,000 women Republicans in the state, out of a total of 625,000 voters, voted for Wilson on the peace issue; it was estimated, moreover, that 90,000 out of 155,000 registered women voted for Wilson in Washington, where his plurality was only 16,594; and that women also helped carry California, Idaho, Utah, and Arizona for the President. These estimates were made by local politicians and newspaper correspondents. See *The New York Times*, Nov. 12, 1916.

⁶⁶ The Socialist losses were heaviest in the key states. Expressed in percentages, the losses were as follows: Ohio, 58 per cent; Pennsylvania, 50 per cent; Illinois, 50 per cent; California, 62 per cent; New York, 27 per cent; Washington, 47 per cent. In California the Socialist presidential vote in 1916 declined fifty thousand from the high point of 1912.

⁶⁷ William Allen White was the only contemporary observer who thought the peace issue was not important. He believed Midwestern and Western Progressives supported Wilson solely on the ground that the administration was committed to further progressive reforms. William A. White, "Who Killed Cock Robin?" *Collier's*, LVIII (Dec. 16, 1916), 5-6, 26-27.

⁶⁸ It was estimated that 20 per cent of the former Progressives voted for Wilson in 1916, but this was a national average and the percentage was much higher in the West.

⁶⁹ William E. Dodd to E. M. House, Nov. 10, 1916, House Papers.

⁷⁰ There were special reasons, which did not generally operate in the West, to account for Hughes' victory in the East and in the central Midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

union of most of the agricultural states, which Bryan had narrowly failed to do in 1896, and had added to the Democratic column two Eastern states and a large portion of the social justice element, who had heretofore followed Roosevelt.

No war clouds darkened the horizon. No convulsion threatened domestic tranquillity. To Democrats and progressives it was a time full of joy and hope for another four years of peace and an intensification of the drive for social justice.⁷¹ The poet Witter Bynner expressed this feeling:

The morning-sun arose, the evening star:
America renewed her light all day
And stood serene at evening, and from far
Freedom was visible with lifted ray . . .
Wilson!—humanity once more is true—
The light that shone on Lincoln shines on you.⁷²

Hughes carried Minnesota and Wisconsin, normally heavily Republican states, by greatly reduced Republican majorities, which fact was testimony to the power of the progressive-peace appeal. In Illinois and Iowa the reunion of the Republican party had resulted in a shift of control to former Progressives or progressive Republicans. Reunion had been accomplished in Indiana under Old Guard auspices, but without recrimination or bitterness. Thus Republican losses, by defection of former Progressives to Wilson, were small in these two states.

In Illinois, Indiana, and the Eastern states, moreover, other factors contributed to Hughes' success. Firstly, the Democratic city machines, especially in Boston, Chicago, and New York City, either knifed the national ticket or else made only halfhearted campaigns. Secondly, the Negro vote went almost solidly to Hughes. Thirdly, a part of the Catholic hierarchy and many priests and Catholic journals entered the campaign against Wilson. Catholics were particularly aroused against the President's Mexican policy. The opposition of the Catholic Church had its most profound impact upon the Irish-Americans, who were already angry because Wilson had refused to intervene in behalf of the Irish during the Rebellion of the preceding April and May. They left the Democratic party in droves, and Wilson did not carry a single state in which they were an important factor.

⁷¹ For significant comments on the meaning of the election, see the *New York World*, Nov. 9, 1916; R. M. La Follette, "Jingoism Rebuked," *La Follette's Magazine*, VIII (Nov., 1916), 1; W. J. Bryan, "The Election of 1916," *The Commoner*, Nov., 1916; *The New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1916; *New Republic*, IX (Nov. 11, 1916), 31-32; *The Public*, XIX (Nov. 17, 1916), 1092-1093.

⁷² "Wilson," printed in *The Public*, XIX. (Nov. 24, 1916), 1121.

From Peace Without Victory to War

WHILE Wilson, the Democratic campaigners, and a large segment of the American people displayed their deep desire for peace during the autumn of 1916, events in Europe were conspiring to make continued American neutrality difficult, if not impossible. After the failure of the German Verdun offensive in the spring and of the Allied Somme offensive in the summer and fall, both sides resolved to use their most desperate weapons to break the deadlock and end the awful slaughter.

For Great Britain, this decision involved an intensification of economic warfare, which would inevitably exacerbate Anglo-American tension. Thus, instead of yielding to American pressure on the "blacklist," the British extended their warfare against suspected American firms. "We have the rawest kind of cases all over the world," the Counselor of the State Department complained, "where British officials have threatened and browbeaten American merchants."¹ The British, moreover, devised a new scheme to obtain control of all neutral shipping: the so-called bunkering agreement, by which the neutral shipowner submitted to the regulations of the British Admiralty in return for the privilege of buying British coal in various ports of the world.²

¹ F. L. Polk to Irwin Laughlin, Dec. 8, 1916, the Papers of Frank L. Polk, in the Library of Yale University.

² When a neutral shipowner entered into this agreement, he promised to keep the British Admiralty informed of the names of all his vessels, not to charter ships to any person or country not approved by British authorities, not to trade with any country at war with Great Britain, to co-operate closely with British authorities in operations with Holland and Scandinavia, and to carry no goods

When the British trade representative in the United States, Sir Richard Crawford, frankly admitted the purpose of the bunkering agreement, the issue became to the American government even more serious than the "blacklist" dispute.

It is no exaggeration to say that official Anglo-American relations reached the point of highest tension during the critical period from November, 1916, through the following January. This was true, not only because of the tightening of British economic controls, but also because of the British refusal to co-operate in the German and American peace drives. It is perhaps conjectural to say the two countries were heading toward a break in relations, yet such a catastrophe was not impossible. On November 24, for example, Wilson asked Colonel House to tell Sir Edward Grey that Americans "were growing more and more impatient with the intolerable conditions of neutrality, their feeling as hot against Great Britain as it was at first against Germany and likely to grow hotter still against an indefinite continuation of the war."³ "I hate to feel that the two great democratic countries are drifting apart," Polk wrote, "but . . . I cannot persuade myself that the fault is entirely ours, or even half ours."⁴ Nor was all the exasperation on the American side. British nerves were on edge and British resentment at American efforts to enforce the rules of neutrality was noticeably increasing.⁵

consigned "to order." There is a copy of the bunkering agreement in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916, Supplement* (Washington, 1929), pp. 458-459.

³ Wilson to House, Nov. 24, 1916, the Ray Stannard Baker Collection, in the Library of Congress.

⁴ F. L. Polk to W. H. Page, Nov. 23, 1916, Polk Papers. "Confidentially," Polk wrote a short time later, "what I am afraid of is that Congress will get on to this [blacklist] abuse, call for a Congressional investigation of the way the blacklist is being administered, and then the lid will be off. . . . I have become a most violent believer in a large army and navy, because I see that we are fast arriving at a station, if we have not already reached it, where everyone hates us and we have got to be in a position to protect ourselves and ask no favors." Polk to Irwin Laughlin, Dec. 8, 1916, *ibid.* See also Polk to W. H. Page, Sept. 29, 1916, and to F. R. Coudert, Oct. 6, 1916, *ibid.*

⁵ Lansing relates the story of an extraordinary interview on January 18, 1917, with the British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, which illustrated the possibility of difficulties on other issues. The British Admiralty had placed a gun crew on a certain merchant vessel, which caused the State Department to protest and warn that such vessels would be regarded as warships. Spring Rice inquired if the protest were authentic. Lansing replied that it was. Spring Rice's "face twitched, his eyes blazed, and his hands clenched until the knuckles showed white." The two men stood facing each other about three feet apart.

At the same time, events on the seas and developments in the German government pointed to the grave danger that Germany would burst the bonds of the *Sussex* pledge and use her submarines in such a way as to imperil good relations with the United States. For one thing, a series of borderline U-boat sinkings during October and November raised the question whether the German government had not in fact already violated its pledges. There were a number of questionable sinkings, but the two important cases involved the British merchant ship *Marina*, sunk without warning October 28, and the British liner *Arabia*, torpedoed without warning November 6, 1916.⁶ Wilson was not willing to raise a serious issue over doubtful cases at this time because he planned to begin a peace campaign immediately after the election. Even within the limits of the *Sussex* pledge, however, the submarine campaign was being tremendously stepped up. German submarines, raiders, and mines sank on an average about 350,000 tons a month from October, 1916, through January, 1917, as compared with 185,800 tons sunk in August, 1915, 191,600 tons in April, 1916, and 230,400 in September of the same year. During the eight months that the Germans honored the *Sussex* pledge, from June, 1916, to February, 1917, their submarines and raiders accounted for an over-all total of 2,099,523 tons.⁷

The intensified submarine operations during the fall and early winter of 1916-17 had a profound impact upon the British, making them all the more determined to intensify their own economic warfare.⁸ But so long as the Germans remained reasonably within the bounds of the *Sussex* pledge, the Washington government would offer

The Ambassador leaned forward and "fairly hissed," "If you follow this course, sir, of doing nothing while helpless people are murdered or put in open boats three hundred miles from land, and at the same time of stopping our vessels from defending themselves, you will be held personally responsible, yes, you and the President will be personally responsible." "Memorandum of an Interview with the British Ambassador, Thursday, January 18, 1917," the Diary of Robert Lansing, in the Library of Congress.

⁶ Robert Lansing, "Memorandum. Vessels Sunk by German and Austrian Submarines, November 13, 1916," the Woodrow Wilson Papers, in the Library of Congress, and two memoranda by Lansing, entitled "Marina Case" and "Arabia Case," sent to the President Dec. 8, 1916, and in *ibid.*

⁷ These figures are taken from the tables in R. H. Gibson and Maurice Prendergast, *The German Submarine War, 1914-1918* (New York, 1931), pp. 380-381.

⁸ For a discussion of the impact of this warfare on the British economy before February, 1917, see *Official German Documents Relating to the World War* (2 vols., New York, 1923), II, 702-705.

no objections. Of serious consequence to the United States, however, were the increasing evidences that the Germans contemplated inaugurating unrestricted submarine warfare at an early date. The question entered an acute stage of discussion at a conference of all civilian and military chieftains at Pless Castle on August 31, 1916. The naval leaders pressed for immediate resumption of all-out, ruthless warfare, but Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the new masters of the army, agreed with Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg that the military situation was too unpromising to invite the certain intervention of the United States. Rumors of an impending all-out submarine campaign were alternately affirmed and denied by American representatives in Berlin, but the possibility hung like a sword over the President's head.

This, therefore, was the uncertain and dangerous situation confronting Wilson during the last weeks of the presidential campaign and immediately afterward. The two giants in Europe were obviously preparing for a desperate bid for victory, which would inevitably abridge further American neutral rights. To preserve neutrality in the face of such assaults would be nearly impossible at best. Yet that was obviously what the American people wanted the President to do. Even more, they apparently preferred to abandon their rights on the seas rather than go to war to defend them, and Wilson was so impressed by the peace manifestations that his will to maintain his submarine policy was profoundly shaken. "I do not believe the American people would wish to go to war no matter how many Americans were lost at sea," he told House and Vance McCormick. He was sorry this was true, but it was his firm opinion.⁹

The only course of peace and safety for the United States, was, therefore—so the President thought—to bring the war to an end. Yet the House-Grey understanding was dead, and British spokesmen, aware of the possibilities of an American mediation attempt, publicly announced that anyone who talked of peace was a friend of Germany.¹⁰ As the wisest British journalist warned, the mere suggestion of peace would make the British people "wild with fury." If Wilson

⁹ The Diary of Edward M. House, in the Papers of Edward M. House, in the Library of Yale University, Nov. 2, 1916.

¹⁰ Lloyd George, for example, on September 28 warned that Britain would "tolerate" no mediation by the United States and was determined to fight until "Prussian military despotism is broken beyond repair." *The New York Times*, Sept. 29, 1916. For the background of Lloyd George's statement see the Diary of Chandler P. Anderson, in the Library of Congress, Sept. 15, 1916.

could expect nothing but hostility to peace in British circles, then where could he turn? Obviously, there was no alternative left but to seek peace through diplomatic co-operation with the German government.

Since the happy settlement of the *Sussex* crisis, Colonel House had dangled the lure of Wilson's mediation before Bernstorff's eyes, and in turn the Ambassador had excited the hopes of his government. At first disdainful of the President's help, by autumn Bethmann-Hollweg and the Foreign Office had concluded that Wilson's mediation on terms favorable to Germany was the only hope of forestalling a resumption of unrestricted submarine operations. The Imperial Chancellor, therefore, began urgently to request that Wilson take an early initiative for peace.¹¹ And Bernstorff and Gerard made it abundantly plain what the consequences of the failure of the peace campaign would be.

In a pacific mood, the President welcomed the German overtures as the first ray of hope since the collapse of the House-Grey talks. Bernstorff talked with him around October 14 and made the following revealing report: "Wilson gave his remarks a particular weight through referring to the fact that the leaders of the opposition, Roosevelt, Lodge, *et al.*, wanted war with Germany, a desire which he could not understand. He stated that he had but the one wish, to remain neutral and to help bring the war to an end, since in his opinion a decision could not be reached by force of arms."¹² As soon as his re-election was beyond doubt, the President summoned House to Washington and on November 14 told him that, in order to avert the necessity of American intervention, he planned to demand that the war be ended. House protested that such a move would be highly prejudicial to the Allies. The following morning Wilson announced he had made up his mind to move for peace. But what if Germany agreed to a reasonable settlement and the Allies refused? House asked. In that case would not the United States drift into a sympathetic alliance with Germany? Might not France and Britain declare war on

¹¹ Bethmann-Hollweg to Bernstorff, Sept. 25, Oct. 9, 1916, *Official German Documents*, II, 984-986, 986-987. At the same time, Gerard left Berlin for Washington with Jagow's and Bethmann's request that he ask the President to move quickly for peace, in order to prevent resumption of ruthless submarine warfare. James W. Gerard, *My First Eighty-Three Years in America* (Garden City, N.Y., 1951), pp. 241-243.

¹² Bernstorff to Foreign Office, received Oct. 14, 1916, *Official German Documents*, II, 988.

the United States? If the Allies wanted war, Wilson replied, he would not shrink from it.¹³

The event that caused Wilson to pause was not House's opposition or the threat of a break with Great Britain, which he did not take seriously. It was the deportation by the German government of some 300,000 Belgians for forced labor in the Reich. This act, which the Germans justified on the ground of desperate necessity, provoked a wave of indignation in the United States that exceeded initial American anger at the violation of Belgian neutrality. At first Wilson thought he had no right to protest, but the rising popular wrath soon caused him to change his mind.

Even so, pressure from Germany and at home for daring presidential leadership in the peace movement was also heavy, and Wilson set to work on his note soon after his conference with House of November 14-15. By November 25 he had completed the first draft and read it to House on November 26. As the President for the first time since 1914 unburdened his most secret thoughts on the war and America's relation to it, the note was a document of extraordinary importance.¹⁴ He described the futility of the war and its baneful effects on civilization. Declaring that the causes of the war were obscure, he went on to point out that the position of neutrals was becoming intolerable, not only because of the conduct of the belligerents, but also because neutrals still did not know what the war was about.¹⁵ Future American

¹³ "He [Wilson] thought they would not dare resort to this and if they did, they could do this country no serious hurt. I disagreed with him again. I thought Great Britain might conceivably destroy our fleet and land troops from Japan in sufficient numbers to hold certain parts of the United States. He replied they might get a good distance but would have to stop somewhere, to which I agreed." House Diary, Nov. 15, 1916.

¹⁴ The original is in the Wilson Papers. R. S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters* (8 vols., Garden City, N.Y., 1927-39), VI, 381-386, reprints it in full.

¹⁵ "And yet the reasons for this upheaval of the world remain obscure, and the objects which would, if attained, satisfy the one group of belligerents or the other have never been definitely avowed. As it is not known what motives led to the war's sudden outbreak so it is not known, the world can still only conjecture what definitive results, what actual exchange of guarantees, what political readjustments or changes, what stage or degree of military success even, would bring it to an end. If any other nation now neutral should be drawn in, it would know only that it was forced drawn in by some force it could not resist, because it had been hurt and saw no remedy but to risk still greater, it might be even irreparable, injury, in order to make the weight in the one scale or the other decisive; and even as a participant it would not know

policy would depend upon the objectives for which the respective alliances were fighting, yet leaders on both sides had avowed the same objectives. He was clearly within his rights, therefore, in urging the belligerents to define their objectives, and to do this at an early conference.

Because the proposed note reflected a cool, neutral detachment, House did not like it and prophesied it would have dire consequences for Anglo-American relations. He urged delay, but Wilson was apparently unmoved. Lansing, too, was gravely troubled. "Suppose . . . Germany listens to the President and the Allies decline to do so, what will be our situation?" he asked. "How can we turn then to the Allies? This is causing me the gravest concern."¹⁶ Wilson agreed to delay action, but not for long; and when House tried to divert him by reviving the House-Grey understanding, Wilson answered flatly: "We cannot go back to those old plans. We must shape new ones."¹⁷

One of the new plans involved calling a halt to the partial financing of the Allied war effort by American bankers. The British were near the point of exhausting the securities they could use as collateral for loans, while their dependence upon American food, raw materials, and munitions was increasing daily. J. P. Morgan & Company proposed to solve the difficulty by taking the unsecured and renewable short-term bills of the British and French treasuries. A majority of the Federal Reserve Board, however, decided the time to call a halt had come, lest the American economy become too dependent upon the war trade. Their spokesman, W. P. G. Harding, conferred with Lansing on No-

how far the scales must tip before the end would come or what was being weighed in the balance!" The words italicized were crossed out by Wilson in his original draft.

¹⁶ The Diary of Robert Lansing, in the Library of Congress, Dec. 3, 1916. Lansing further outlined the danger in a letter to Wilson on December 10, 1916 (Wilson Papers):

"I think, among other questions, we should consider these: Unless the answers of both parties are made in the right spirit, will there be any other course than to declare in favor of the one most acceptable and abandon a neutrality which is becoming more and more difficult? But suppose that the unacceptable answer comes from the belligerents whom we could least afford to see defeated on account of our own national interest and on account of the future domination of the principles of liberty and democracy in the world—then what? Would we not be forced into an even worse state than that in which we are now? . . . Can we avoid the logic of our declarations? And if we act in accordance with that logic, would it not be a calamity for the nation and for all mankind?"

¹⁷ Wilson to House, Dec. 8, 1916, Baker Collection.

vember 20 and with Wilson on November 25 and proposed that the Board caution American bankers against accepting the short-term Treasury notes. Wilson, however, wanted a strong warning and was pleased when the Board, on November 27, advised bankers that it did not "regard it in the interest of the country at this time that they invest in foreign Treasury bills of this character." Although Wall Street grumbled and threatened to buy the Treasury notes anyway, the British discreetly decided not to issue them.

While Wilson was debating with Lansing and House the wisdom of launching his peace bolt, the civilian and military leaders of Germany agreed that events had finally created a situation favorable to a peace move. Poor harvests in the United States and Britain and the ravages of the submarines would make the British susceptible, while the spectacular success of the German campaign in Rumania had stabilized the military situation. Bethmann-Hollweg and Hindenburg reached accord on peace terms by November 7, and when Wilson did not act during November the Germans grew restive. Bucharest fell on December 6; two days later Hindenburg and the Emperor allowed Bethmann-Hollweg to launch an independent peace campaign. If it failed, unrestricted submarine warfare should be inaugurated in January, 1917.

On December 12, therefore, the Chancellor announced to an excited Reichstag that the Imperial government was ready to join with its enemies to end the war.¹⁸ He said nothing about the German terms, which, if they had been disclosed, would have shocked the world. They included, in the East, establishment of the Kingdom of Poland and German annexation of the Baltic provinces of Courland and Lithuania; in the West, "guarantees in Belgium" or the annexation of Liège and "corresponding areas," annexation of Luxemburg and the French territories of Briey and Longwy, which contained great iron deposits, strategic boundary adjustments in Alsace-Lorraine, and indemnities; overseas, the return of German colonies, except Kiaochow, the Carolines, and the Marianas, and acquisition of all or part of the Belgian Congo.¹⁹

¹⁸ For his speech, see *The New York Times*, Dec. 13, 1916. The German peace note is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, p. 90.

¹⁹ These were the terms agreed upon by the Emperor, Hindenburg, and Bethmann-Hollweg. See *Official German Documents*, II, 1059-1062, 1064. For an excellent discussion see Hans W. Gatzke, *Germany's Drive to the West* (Baltimore, 1950), pp. 139-144.

On December 5 the American Chargé in Berlin, Joseph C. Grew, had told Bethmann-Hollweg, "What the President now most earnestly desires is practical cooperation on part of German authorities in bringing about a favorable opportunity for early and affirmative action."²⁰ On the day he announced Germany's willingness to negotiate, the Chancellor dispatched an earnest appeal to Wilson: "It is my sincere hope that this formal and solemn offer to enter immediately into peace negotiations . . . will coincide with the wishes of the President of the United States."²¹ At first Wilson was depressed because he thought the Germans had acted hastily. Within a week, however, he was writing—and without any knowledge of the German terms—"We are just now . . . holding our breath for fear the overtures of the Central Powers with regard to peace will meet with a rebuff instead of an acceptance."²² Even Lansing admitted the Germans might sincerely desire peace and that, in any event, they had put the Allies in a difficult position.²³

On the day the German offer was announced, December 12, Wilson, House, and Lansing were debating the President's proposed peace message. Wilson at once revised his draft, which he submitted to Lansing on December 17. Lansing thought the revision "far superior, . . . much more forceful and convincing" than the original draft had been. Actually, the note as sent to all belligerents on December 18 had been vastly weakened by the force of House's and Lansing's advice and of recent circumstances. The warning that the future policies of the United States would depend upon a frank avowal by the belligerents of their war objectives was absent. Also eliminated was the President's virtual demand for a conference to discuss peace terms. In brief, the

²⁰ Quoted in Bernstorff to House, Dec. 12, 1916, House Papers.

²¹ Grew to Secretary of State, Dec. 12, 1916, *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, p. 87.

²² Wilson to P. A. Stovall, Dec. 19, 1916, Wilson Papers.

²³ Robert Lansing, "The German Proposal to Enter on Peace Negotiations," Dec. 14, 1916, *ibid.*

The Allies wasted no time in replying to the German offer. On December 15 the Russian Czar and Duma unanimously rejected the offer to negotiate, and four days later Lloyd George, the new British Prime Minister, gave answer for Britain and France. The Allies, Lloyd George declared, would be putting their heads into a noose, with Germany holding the end of the rope, if they agreed to enter a peace conference without knowing the German terms. The Prime Minister, however, left large loopholes for future negotiations. *The New York Times*, Dec. 16, 20, 1916. The official Allied reply was sent to the German government on December 30, 1916. *Ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1916.

note of December 18 simply called upon the belligerents to define the objectives for which they were fighting.²⁴

American reaction to Wilson's appeal, which was published on December 20, accurately reflected the commentator's attitude toward the war. The defenders of Germany, the peace element, and the great mass of noninterventionists hailed it as the beginning of the end of the war.²⁵ In contrast, American champions of the Allied cause denounced Wilson for playing Germany's game and approving Germany's attempt to impose a dictated peace settlement.²⁶ Many German editors naturally interpreted Wilson's move as co-operation with their own government, while a large segment of the English and French press were in a state of virtual frenzy.

Unperturbed by the violence of his critics at home and abroad, the President now proceeded to carry his peace campaign beyond the level of suggestion to direct negotiation with the German government. His negotiations were based upon the hope that the Germans, at least, would agree to the kind of reasonable peace he contemplated. The unhappy truth was, however, that the German leaders now had no intention of allowing Wilson to participate in the peace discussions. They would be glad to use him to force the Allies to negotiate directly with the German government, but their plans left small scope for the play of Wilsonian idealism, and they still suspected that Wilson was pro-British.

In order to head off any "meddling" by Wilson in the peace negotiations, the German Foreign Office answered the President's request for a definition of objectives by evading his query and suggesting the

²⁴ The note is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1916, Supplement*, pp. 97-99.

²⁵ There could be no doubt that an overwhelming majority of American newspapers, periodicals, and public spokesmen approved the move. For samples of this dominant opinion see the statements of Congressional leaders in *The New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1916; *New York World*, Dec. 21, 22, 1916; Herbert Croly to E. M. House, Dec. 26, 1916, House Papers; *New Republic*, IX (Dec. 30, 1916), 228-231; W. J. Bryan in *The Commoner*, Jan., 1917; *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, Dec. 21, 1916; *New Yorker Herald*, Dec. 21, 1916.

²⁶ E.g., H. C. Lodge to T. Roosevelt, Dec. 21, 1916, the Papers of Theodore Roosevelt, in the Library of Congress; T. Roosevelt to G. W. Perkins, Jan. 11, 1917, *ibid.*; T. Roosevelt, statement in *The New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1917; George Burton Adams to the Editor, Dec. 24, 1916, *ibid.*, Dec. 26, 1916; Rev. Dr. William T. Manning, cited in *ibid.*; Frank J. Mather, Jr., to the Editor, Dec. 24, 1916, *The Nation*, CIII (Dec. 28, 1916), 607; Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis *et al.*, "To the Christians of America," *The New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1917.

speedy assembling of a conference of the belligerents only. After the peace conference had accomplished its task, then the German government stood ready to co-operate with the United States in preventing future wars. Gravely disappointed by the Imperial government's refusal frankly to state its terms, House and Bernstorff at once began personal negotiations that they hoped would draw the Chancellor and the President into sympathetic co-operation.

On December 29 Bernstorff informed his government that House had invited him to take part in "absolutely confidential" negotiations. The President was not concerned with territorial adjustments, the Ambassador continued, but was anxious to obtain guarantees for the future. In reply, Secretary Zimmermann sent specific and important instructions. Germany positively did not desire American participation in the actual peace negotiations. However, Bernstorff might say Germany stood ready to sign an arbitration treaty with the United States and to join with it in establishing a League of Nations and setting general disarmament under way after the war. Moreover, Germany's terms were moderate and did not include the annexation of Belgium. On the other hand, Zimmermann concluded, only quick and decisive action by the President could forestall a resumption of unrestricted U-boat warfare.

On January 15 Bernstorff transmitted to House Zimmermann's assurances for the future and his offer to sign a treaty of arbitration. Bernstorff's message, House declared in astonishment, was the most important pronouncement he had received from any belligerent government since the war began. "In my opinion," he advised Wilson, "the best interests of the Allies and ourselves would be met by taking Germany at her word and concluding peace as speedily as possible." And if Bernstorff had expressed his government's views correctly, he added, Wilson would be justified in forcing the Allies to consider peace negotiations.²⁷

House's enthusiasm was soon dampened, however, when Bernstorff finally admitted that his government did not want the President's presence at the peace conference and that the German assurances applied only to the future, after the peace treaty had been signed. In short, while the Imperial government would be delighted to use Wilson to force the Allies to go to the peace table, at a time when the military situation greatly favored Germany, there would be no room at that

²⁷ House to Wilson, Jan. 18, 1917, Wilson Papers.

table for the President of the United States! The disclosure of this important fact caused Wilson to lay his cards on the table. Germany could have peace, he declared, if she were ready to state her terms frankly, propose a reasonable settlement, and confide in him. "It occurs to me that it would be well for you to see Bernstorff," Wilson wrote House, ". . . and tell him this is the time to accomplish something, if they really and truly want peace. . . . Feelings, exasperations are neither here nor there. Do they want me to help? I am entitled to know because I genuinely want to help and have now put myself in a position to help without favour to either side."²⁸

In other words, Wilson was not deceived by the evasive German promise to join a League of Nations and co-operate in a general disarmament—after the peace treaty had been signed. The first task was to build a righteous peace, and the Germans had to give him frank assurances that this was the kind of peace they desired. If they could give such assurances, however, then he would gladly join hands with them in compelling the Allies²⁹ to accept a settlement including, by and large, the *status quo ante*, disarmament, and the establishment of a new concert of power. Such a settlement did not offer victory to Germany. It offered only the promise of the friendship of the United States and a secure, peaceful, and prosperous future. Unfortunately for mankind, time had already run out on the House-Bernstorff negotiations. The men who governed Germany preferred victory, with annexations and indemnities, because they were confident they could win such a victory. The military and naval leaders, who had taken control out of the Chancellor's hands, had decided on January 8 to launch the all-out submarine campaign on February 1.

House did not know the secret, and Bernstorff kept it from him until the last moment.³⁰ Meanwhile, was there any chance the Allies would abandon their hope of victory and join with the United States

²⁸ Wilson to House, Jan. 24, 1917, Baker Collection.

²⁹ As will soon be shown, if Wilson had obtained such assurances from the German government at this time, the Allies would probably have consented to a negotiated settlement under Wilson's direction. But if the Allies had refused to mediate on this basis, Wilson would almost certainly have used strong diplomatic pressure to force them to the peace table.

³⁰ Bethmann-Hollweg informed Bernstorff of the decision on January 16, 1917. *Official German Documents*, II, 1017-1019. It should be added that Bernstorff urged his government to delay taking the fateful step until Wilson had had a chance to complete his peace plans. Bernstorff to Foreign Office, Jan. 19; 1917, *ibid.*, p. 1021.

and Germany in peace negotiations? To find an answer to this question, House had also been conducting secret talks with the Allied representatives, particularly with Sir William Wiseman, chief of British Intelligence in the United States. A few hours after Bernstorff made his remarkable pronouncement on January 15 about Germany's willingness to co-operate in peace plans, House told Wiseman Germany was willing to negotiate on liberal terms. Five days later House advised Wiseman that his government should agree immediately to enter a peace conference, as this alone would prevent Germany from inaugurating a submarine campaign that might soon bring Great Britain to her knees. On January 26, therefore, Wiseman gave to House his government's reply. After telling House what he already suspected, that he was in direct communication with the British Cabinet, Wiseman declared that Great Britain was ready to begin peace discussions, provided the Germans were willing to negotiate on a reasonable basis.³¹

In the meantime, however, the peace talks on the public level had collapsed. On December 30 the Allied governments with one voice indignantly rejected the German proposal of a peace conference. The German government replied in a note to the neutral powers on January 10, accusing the Allies of prolonging the war for conquest and answering the Allied aspersions. Two days later the Allied powers made formal answer to Wilson's request of December 18. Without specifying their objectives, they made it plain they intended to exact huge reparations from the Central Powers and to destroy German power in Europe.

In order to clarify the American position in the light of these developments, to strengthen House's hand, and to appeal directly to the peoples of the countries at war,³² Wilson decided to lay frankly before the world his concept of a peace settlement the United States would be willing to support in a League of Nations. Preliminary discussions with House on January 3 and 11 and a reading of the provocative suggestions outlined in the *New Republic*³³ helped to crystallize his

³¹ House to Wilson, Jan. 20, 26, 1917, Wilson Papers. The British already knew of the German decision to launch unrestricted submarine warfare, and it is possible this was an important factor in their willingness to talk of peace.

³² "The real people I was speaking to was neither the Senate nor foreign governments, as you will realize, but the *people* of the countries now at war." Wilson to J. P. Gavit, Jan. 29, 1917, *ibid.*

³³ In "Peace Without Victory," IX (Dec. 23, 1916), 201-202, "The Note as Americanism," IX (Dec. 30, 1916), 228-231, and "Beneath the Outcry," IX (Dec. 30, 1916), 231-232, the editors of the *New Republic* called for a

thought. By January 16 he had completed the address and discussed it with Lansing and Senator Stone; and on January 22, after the message had been secretly telegraphed to the American embassies, he delivered it before the Senate.

Wilson began by asserting the right of the United States to claim a share in laying the broad foundations of a lasting peace. While his government would have no voice in determining the specific details of settlement, he continued, the world should know what kind of arrangement the American people would help to guarantee. It must be a "peace without victory," without humiliation, for only a "peace among equals" could last. It must be a peace based upon the principle of the equality of all nations, upon the right of peoples now under alien domination to govern themselves, and upon the freedom of the seas and an end to huge armies. These were "American principles, American policies," approved by forward-looking men everywhere. "I would fain believe," the President concluded, "that I am speaking for the silent mass of mankind everywhere who have as yet had no place or opportunity to speak their real hearts out concerning the death and ruin they see to have come already upon the persons and the homes they hold most dear."³⁴

It was a clarion call to the Old World to shake off war's stupor before European civilization was destroyed, and many men of good will in all the Western nations were intoxicated by the President's vision of a postwar order founded upon the principle of Christian love, rather than upon the precepts of *Realpolitik*. But was it possible that the millennium could be conceived during such a war and given birth during a conference of mortal men? No one could answer this question, but the reaction of liberal groups among the Allied nations and in the British press seemed to offer hope that mankind was indeed ready to meet the President's challenge.³⁵ In any event, Wilson had high hopes

negotiated peace, based upon the *status quo ante*, and warned that the American people would not support a dictated settlement of the old imperialistic kind, involving annexations, indemnities, and attempts to construct a new imperialistic balance of power.

³⁴ Ray S. Baker and William E. Dodd (eds.), *The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (6 vols., New York, 1925-27), *The New Democracy*, II, 407-414.

³⁵ On January 26 the 89 Socialist members of the French Chamber of Deputies hailed Wilson's speech as "the charter of the civilized universe," while on the same day the British trades unions endorsed the League of Nations proposal. *The New York Times*, Jan. 27, 1917. Even the Russian Foreign Office affirmed its approval of the President's "broad humanitarian principles." *Ibid.*

and noble expectations. "I have said what everybody has been longing for but has thought impossible," he declared. "Now it appears to be possible."³⁶

Noble expressions, however, emphasize the tragic and abiding fact of history: that a wide gulf separates the ideal from the attainable. No one could sneer at Wilson's vision without abandoning his hope for the eventual redemption of human society. But to believe that his address embodied a practical solution would make cynics out of dreamers. Thus Wilson's effort had a tragic and ironic, as well as a noble, quality. He affirmed the necessity of a negotiated peace, a "peace without victory," and declared that no other kind of peace could last. In the next breath he depicted a settlement that could be imposed only when Germany's military power was broken and the Allies could dictate the terms.³⁷ And if this came to pass, the possibility of a reasonable and just peace, of a "peace without victory," was slight indeed.

On January 31 the German government finally gave its answer to Wilson's request for the terms upon which it would have been willing to negotiate. The German terms included territorial adjustments in the East, "which would protect Germany and Poland against Russia, strategically and economically"; additional colonies; the return of French territory occupied by Germany, but "under reservations concerning the establishment of strategic and economic boundaries, as well as financial compensation"; the restoration of Belgium, but "under certain guarantees assuring Germany's safety, which would have to be reached by negotiations with the Belgian Government"; indemnification of German corporations and individuals injured by the war; and freedom of the seas.³⁸

Bernstorff delivered this message at the same time he gave Germany's answer to the President's demand for a peace of justice and understanding. After February 1, the Imperial government announced,

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 23, 1917.

³⁷ For example, Wilson declared that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed and that peoples under alien domination should be given "inviolable security of life, of worship, and of industrial and social development"—in other words, complete autonomy, if not independence. This was also what the Allies had promised to give the subject peoples of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Certainly Germany and Austria would not have negotiated for the dissolution of their empires. Nor would the British, for that matter. It should be pointed out again, moreover, that the kind of peace the German leaders thought they could obtain was a far cry from a "peace without victory" among equals.

³⁸ *Official German Documents*, II, 1048-1050.

submarines would sink without warning all ships, belligerent and neutral, found in a zone around Great Britain, France, and Italy, and in the eastern Mediterranean. The German Admiralty, however, would allow one American passenger ship to sail between New York and Falmouth weekly, provided the ship were painted with red and white stripes and carried no contraband. The decision had been made deliberately, "in the certain consciousness that the commencement of an unrestricted U-boat warfare would inevitably be followed by war with America."³⁹

Thus it happened that the President found himself in the dilemma he had tried so desperately to avoid. Had the Germans declared unrestricted submarine warfare only against armed merchantmen, or even against all belligerent shipping, he might well have acquiesced and allowed the two giants to fight it out. But the Germans had quite deliberately promised to sink on sight all American ships found in the broad war zones, because destruction of neutral shipping was as much essential to their plan as was destruction of Allied shipping. Moreover, the strategists in the German Admiralty were confident they could bring England to her knees before American manpower and resources could be brought effectively to bear upon the conflict. "By entering into the war," the chief of the Admiralty predicted, "the United States Government will give up by a single move the sources of that commercial prosperity which has given it the towering political prominence which it now occupies. It stands face to face with the Japanese peril; it can neither inflict material damage upon us, nor can it be of material benefit to our enemies. . . . I guarantee that for its part the U-boat war will lead to victory."⁴⁰

Could Wilson view this wholesale assault upon American commerce with his customary philosophic detachment? He was indignant and bitterly disappointed, but not belligerent. Indeed, he was so persuaded that mankind's salvation depended upon a negotiated peace that he hesitated even to break diplomatic relations with Germany, as that might be the prelude to full-scale American participation. He revealed his mental agony during a two-hour conference with Lansing on the evening of January 31. Obsessed with the fear that American interven-

³⁹ From the "Report of the Second Subcommittee of the Committee of Inquiry," June 18, 1920, *ibid.*, I, 150.

⁴⁰ Chief of the Admiralty Staff Admiral von Holtzendorff to Chief of the General Staff General Field Marshal von Hindenburg, Dec. 22, 1916, *ibid.*, II, 1269-1270.

*tion would hasten the disintegration of "white" civilization, he wondered whether America could perform her duty only by bearing the German insult. None the less, he asked Lansing to prepare the note announcing severance of relations with the German Empire. The following morning Colonel House arrived at the White House. He believed an immediate break was necessary, and Wilson and Lansing agreed. Thus the decision was already made when the President presented Lansing's draft to the Cabinet on February 2 and discussed it with Democratic senators soon afterward.⁴¹

Even so, Wilson had not changed his opinion that the war should end without victory, and he continued to hope that somehow he would not have to drink the bitter cup. This hope he expressed movingly in his address to a joint session of Congress on February 3 announcing the break in relations he had just effected. The message was no such condemnation of German "barbarism" as Lansing had advised him to deliver, nor was it a stirring appeal to the American people to prepare for inevitable war. "We do not desire any hostile conflict with the Imperial German Government," Wilson declared. "We are the sincere friends of the German people and earnestly desire to remain at peace with the Government which speaks for them. We shall not believe that they are hostile to us unless and until we are obliged to believe it."⁴²

During the remainder of February the President and probably a large majority of people continued to hope for peace, while circumstances were developing that would soon force the nation to make a decision. Army leaders who suggested rapid preparation for war were abruptly told to mind their own business, but slowly and quietly the government laid its plans. The naval appropriations bill, then under discussion in the House, was immediately amended to provide increased construction and to empower the President to seize shipyards and munitions factories in the event of war or national emergency. The War College was set to work on a conscription bill. Even so, the administration acted as if war would not occur and precautions would suffice.⁴³

⁴¹ "Memorandum on the Severance of Diplomatic Relations with Germany," Lansing Diary, Feb. 4, 1917; Josephus Daniels to Wilson, Feb. 2, 1917, Wilson Papers, summarizing Wilson's views; *The New York Times*, Feb. 3, 1917.

⁴² *The Public Papers, The New Democracy*, II, 422-426. The note announcing severance of relations was Lansing to Bernstorff, Feb. 3, 1917, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, Supplement 1* (Washington, 1931), pp. 106-108.

⁴³ Especially in so far as army preparations were concerned. The army bill

Thus it turned out that the three weeks following the break in relations were a time of waiting, wasted in the false hope that no overt act by the German government would compel abandonment of neutrality. As the days of waiting ripened into weeks, the deep peace longing of the people revived and the pacifist leaders had full opportunity to get a nation-wide campaign under way. New committees to keep the country out of war were hastily organized, while all the old ones, like the American Union Against Militarism, leaped into action.⁴⁴ As in 1915 and at the height of the *Sussex* crisis, monster rallies in the great cities demanded that Americans stay out of the war zone. Bryan made a fervent, last-ditch campaign. In their desperate search for any alternative to war, the peace groups demanded embargoes, a war referendum, or a general strike if war occurred. At the other extreme, the interventionists redoubled their propaganda, calling for a bold and heroic defense of American rights.⁴⁵ But before March 1, at least, they still represented only a small Eastern minority, and their appeals roused no response among the rank and file of the people.

Still, the German campaign of sea terror was obviously succeeding in one of its main objectives, the frightening of neutral shipping from the seas. When the administration on February 7 refused to use battle-ships to convoy ships through the war zone, the International Mercantile Marine Company of New York canceled the sailing of its passenger ships, the *Saint Louis* and *Saint Paul*. As more and more ships stayed at their berths and goods began to pile up on wharves and in warehouses, the demand for the arming and protection of American

passed by the House on February 22, 1917, for example, appropriated only a normal \$250 million for the coming fiscal year. As the Chief of Staff wrote, "The President does not want us to do anything which will give Germany an idea that we are getting ready for war, so we are not allowed to ask for any money or to get ready in a serious way, until the soft pedal is taken off." H. L. Scott to D. Hunter Scott, Feb. 15, 1917, the Papers of Hugh L. Scott, in the Library of Congress.

⁴⁴ For a comprehensive description of all the peace organizations and their activities, see the *New York World*, Mar. 4, 1917.

⁴⁵ American Rights Committee, appeal to the American people for a declaration of war, *The New York Times*, Feb. 12, 1917; American Rights Committee, "A CALL TO AMERICANS to assure the President that he will receive *The United Support of the American People* in taking effective action to UPHOLD AMERICAN RIGHTS and DEFEND THE NATIONAL HONOR," *ibid.*, Feb. 26, 1917. For the activities of the Committee see George H. Putnam to John G. Hibben, Feb. 2, 1917, the Papers of John Grier Hibben, in the Library of Princeton University; R. G. Monroe to J. G. Hibben, Feb. 21, 1917, *ibid.*; Paul D. Cravath to J. G. Hibben, Feb. 21, 1917, *ibid.*

ships grew on all sides. Discussion of the subject within the administration began on February 6 and continued through February 23. At Cabinet meetings on February 6 and 13 the President declared that, while ships might arm for defense, he would not ask Congress for



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authority to arm them. Continuing their demand that the government protect its sea-borne commerce, Houston, Lane, and McAdoo provoked a crisis in the Cabinet on February 23. Wilson bitterly reproached the champions of belligerency for appealing to the code duello and asserted that the country was not willing to run the risk of war.

Two events coming immediately on the heels of the Cabinet session of February 23 caused Wilson to change his mind. First, the Republican leaders in the Senate agreed on that day to filibuster the important appropriations bills, in order to force Wilson to call the next Congress into special session.⁴⁶ Secondly, on February 25 the President received a message from London so shocking as to end all doubts of German intentions. It was a dispatch from Page, transmitting a message from the German Foreign Secretary, Zimmermann, to the German Minister in Mexico City. In the event Germany and the United States went to war, the message read, the Minister should propose to the Mexican government an alliance by which Mexico would enter the war against the United States and receive in return "the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona." Moreover, President Carranza should be asked to invite Japan to join the coalition.⁴⁷

The day after the receipt in Washington of the Zimmermann note Wilson went before a joint session to ask Congress for authority, first, to arm American merchant ships, and second, to "employ any other instrumentalities or methods that may be necessary and adequate to protect our ships and our people in their legitimate and peaceful pursuits on the seas." It was not, however, a warlike speech. Wilson did not mention the Zimmermann note; he admitted that the "overt act" had not been committed, and he voiced a fervent desire for continued peace.⁴⁸ Except for a few interventionist newspapers, which protested that Wilson would not defend American commerce in any event,⁴⁹ the press of the country overwhelmingly endorsed the President's request.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ *The New York Times*, Feb. 24, 1917; *New York World*, Feb. 24, 1917. "I have also come to the conclusion that we must force an extra session," Lodge wrote to Theodore Roosevelt, February 27, 1917 (Roosevelt Papers). "Although I have not much faith in Congress we should be safer with Congress here than we would be with Wilson alone for nine months."

⁴⁷ Page to Secretary of State, Feb. 24, 1917, *Foreign Relations, 1917, Supplement 1*, pp. 147-148. The Zimmermann note had been sent to Bernstorff on January 19, with instructions that he relay it to Minister von Eckhardt in Mexico City. The British had intercepted the message and were able to decipher it because they had Bernstorff's code. For an exciting account of this episode see Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page* (3 vols., Garden City, N. Y., 1924-26), III, 331-348.

⁴⁸ *The Public Papers, New Democracy*, II, 428-432.

⁴⁹ *New York Sun*, Feb. 27, 1917; *Boston Herald*, Feb. 27, 1917; *Boston Advertiser*, Feb. 27, 1917.

⁵⁰ There is a comprehensive survey of press opinion in *The New York Times*, Feb. 27, 1917. Even the spokesmen of the peace element approved the idea of armed neutrality, as they saw in it a possible alternative to full-fledged war.

Indeed, there was little opposition in either house of Congress to giving the President authority simply to arm merchantmen. Extreme noninterventionists like La Follette would vote against such a bill, to be sure, but they were not prepared to block it by desperate obstruction. The entire controversy that developed revolved, therefore, around Wilson's additional request for broad authority to use "any other instrumentalities or methods" to protect American lives and commerce. Senate Republican leaders like Lodge did not object to giving the President authority to wage limited war, but they were determined that Congress should be in session. The extreme anti-interventionists in the Senate, however, so strongly opposed giving Wilson virtual blanket authority that they would fight an armed ship bill with such a provision to the point of a filibuster. When this fact became apparent, the Republican leaders quickly abandoned their own plans for a filibuster to force a special session and let the noninterventionists carry the burden of opposition and receive the opprobrium.

That the President would encounter bitter opposition was evident from the beginning. In spite of heavy administration pressure, the House Foreign Affairs Committee refused to empower the President to use "other instrumentalities or methods" and would only approve a bill authorizing the arming of merchant ships.⁵¹ Just at the moment, therefore, when it appeared neither house would grant the virtual war-making authority he desired, the President gave the Zimmermann note to the Associated Press, which published it on March 1. The bolt struck so suddenly that Congress and the country were stunned and confused. Could this fantastic news be true, or was the note, as George Sylvester Viereck, the leading Germanophile, claimed, "unquestionably a brazen forgery planted by British agents"?⁵² Most doubts were dis-

Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes of Columbia University first made the proposal, which was soon taken up by peace groups all over the country, for armed neutrality instead of war. See C. J. H. Hayes, "Memorandum on Constructive Action if Confronted by Alternative of War," sent by House to Wilson, Feb. 8, 1917, Wilson Papers; C. J. H. Hayes, "Which? War Without a Purpose? Or Armed Neutrality with a Purpose?" *The Survey*, XXXVII (Feb. 10, 1917), 535-538; *New York Evening Post*, Feb. 10, 1917; *The Nation*, CIV (Feb. 15, 1917), 178-179; Paul U. Kellogg, "The Fighting Issues," *The Survey*, XXXVII (Feb. 17, 1917), 572-577.

⁵¹ The House bill also prohibited the insuring by the War Risk Bureau of ships carrying munitions. A. S. Burleson, penciled note to Wilson, c. Feb. 27, 1917, the Papers of Albert S. Burleson, in the Library of Congress; Wilson to Burleson, c. Feb. 27, 1917, *ibid.*; *The New York Times*, Feb. 28, Mar. 1, 1917.

⁵² G. S. Viereck to A. S. Burleson, Mar. 1, 1917, Burleson Papers.

pelled at once⁵³ when Wilson, in reply to a pointed inquiry by the Foreign Relations Committee, affirmed the note's authenticity.⁵⁴

American incredulity now burst into anger that swept the country. Not since August, 1914, had the people been so aroused or so convinced of the hostile intentions of the German government. The House of Representatives quickly passed the armed ship bill on March 1, 403 to 13, but without giving the President broad authority.⁵⁵ In the Senate, however, administration leaders pressed a bill empowering the President to wage an undeclared naval war; and the Republican leaders were willing to agree, since the important appropriation bills could not be passed before March 5 and Wilson would have to call a special session in any event. But a group of eleven or twelve die-hard non-interventionists, including Senators La Follette and George W. Norris, refused to abdicate the war-making power to the Chief Executive and insisted on talking the bill to death.⁵⁶ The newspapers fiercely denounced the "dastardly moral treason" of these alleged "descendants of Benedict Arnold," but it remained for Wilson to coin the phrase to

⁵³ Not all, however. The defenders of Germany continued to charge that the note was a piece of British humbuggery, until Zimmermann himself admitted on March 3, 1917, that he had sent the note, pointing out that Eckhardt had been instructed to suggest an alliance to the Mexican government only in the event the United States declared war on Germany. Official statement, Mar. 3, 1917, *The New York Times*, Mar. 4, 1917. Zimmermann further defended himself in a speech before the Reichstag on March 29, 1917, *ibid.*, Mar. 31, 1917.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Mar. 2, 1917; H. C. Lodge to T. Roosevelt, Mar. 2, 1917, Roosevelt Papers.

⁵⁵ The House also prohibited the War Risk Bureau from insuring ships carrying munitions. *The New York Times*, Mar. 2, 1917. The anti-interventionists in the House had also tried to add an amendment forbidding any armed merchant ship from carrying munitions. This, the so-called Cooper amendment, received 125 votes. For significant comment see *New Republic*, X (Mar. 24, 1917), 218-219.

⁵⁶ The senators who prevented passage of the armed ship bill objected to giving extraordinary authority to the President and protection to ships carrying munitions. They charged that Wilson had brought the bill forward near the end of the session and then had sprung the Zimmermann note solely to stamper the country and coerce Congress into giving him dictatorial power. And, they argued, if the armed ship bill were vital to the country's safety, then Wilson could easily call Congress into special session and obtain passage of the measure in a short time.

Most of the so-called filibusterers later issued statements defending their action and claiming there had been no real filibuster. See R. M. La Follette, "The Armed Ship Bill Meant War," *La Follette's Magazine*, IX (Mar., 1917), 1-4; W. J. Stone to the Editor, March 4, 1917, *New York World*, Mar. 5, 1917; statements by Senators Vardaman, O'Gorman, Kenyon, Cummins, and Lane, March 6, 1917, in *The New York Times*, Mar. 7, 1917.

fit the crime. Immediately after the Senate adjourned he indignantly declared: "A little group of willful men, representing no opinion but their own, have rendered the great Government of the United States helpless and contemptible."⁵⁷

Thus the Sixty-Fourth Congress passed out of existence amid a display of bad temper on all sides and the country entered upon a month of increasing tension. After obtaining opinions from Lansing and Attorney General Gregory that arming merchant ships would not contravene the piracy statute of 1819, and after discussing the implications of such action with his naval advisers,⁵⁸ the President on March 9 announced he would forthwith put guns and naval crews on merchant ships and called Congress into special session for April 16. Soon afterward the work of arming the ships was begun and the crews were ordered to fire on any submarine that approached within striking range or acted suspiciously.

By this time, also, public opinion had reached a point of near alarm, and for the first time since the outbreak of the war the interventionists found a sympathetic audience. On March 18 submarines sank without warning and with heavy loss of life three American merchant vessels, the *City of Memphis*, *Illinois*, and *Vigilancia*. It was the "overt act" for which the President had been waiting, and Theodore Roosevelt issued a call for war, the echoes of which reverberated over the country, from New York to the plains of Kansas.⁵⁹ At this moment of

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Mar. 5, 1917.

⁵⁸ There is a group of documents in the Papers of Josephus Daniels, in the Library of Congress, relating to the armed ship question. The most important are Daniels to Wilson, Mar. 9, 1917, two letters; memorandum by Commander F. H. Schofield for the Secretary of the Navy, dated Mar. 9, 1917; an undated memorandum entitled "Rules for the Conduct of American Merchant Vessels"; draft of a proclamation announcing the arming of American merchant ships; and a memorandum in Daniels' handwriting of a conversation with P. A. S. Franklin, president of the International Mercantile Company.

⁵⁹ Roosevelt's statement is printed in *The New York Times*, Mar. 20, 1917. The Union League of New York demanded adoption of a war declaration on March 20. The following day the *New York World* seconded the demand. On March 22 a mass meeting of twelve thousand persons at Madison Square Garden cheered for Roosevelt and war. On March 23 a group of prominent Socialists, including William English Walling, Charles Edward Russell, Upton Sinclair, and William J. Ghent, condemned the antiwar resolution adopted by the Socialist National Executive Committee. On March 24 Governor Arthur Capper of Kansas, heretofore an antipreparedness and antiwar leader, declared the United States had to resist the "murderous assaults" of the German government. *The New York Times*, Mar. 21, 23, 24, 25, 1917; *New York World*, Mar. 21, 1917.

mounting tension occurred the first Russian Revolution, with the overthrow of the autocratic Czarist government and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. To Americans who had tried to convince themselves the Allies were fighting for democracy, the news from Petrograd ended all doubt as to the issues of the war. The fear of Russian despotism and future aggression, which all along had been the greatest single handicap to Allied spokesmen in the United States, was at once swept away.

It was also the hour of supreme crisis for the peace forces. If anything, their appeals during the last critical days were more fervent than before.⁶⁰ On the extreme left wing, the Socialist leader, Eugene V. Debs, demanded a general strike if Rockefeller, Morgan, and the rest of the Wall Street crowd succeeded in their insidious war campaign. The more moderate peace spokesmen continued to petition the President and to hope for a miracle. As for the great mass of citizenry, not during the height of the *Lusitania* and *Sussex* crises had there been such an outpouring of peace sentiment. The public opinion of a great nation during a period of crisis and stimulated hysteria cannot be measured with any precision, for the great mass of people have no means of expressing their sentiments, while spokesmen for organized groups are necessarily minorities. From such evidence as is available, however, one might hazard the guess that even as late as April 1, 1917, the majority of people were still firmly for peace.⁶¹

The week from about March 12 to 20 was also the time of Wilson's Gethsemane, when events on the seas compelled him to a reluctant decision for war. During the early part of this week of spiritual agony

⁶⁰ Committee for Democratic Control (Amos Pinchot, R. S. Bourne, Max Eastman, Winthrop D. Lane), "Do the People Want War?" *New Republic*, X (Mar. 3, 1917), 145; Emergency Peace Federation, "Mothers, Daughters and Wives of Men," *The New York Times*, Mar. 29, 1917; American Union Against Militarism, "To the People of New York," *ibid.*; W. J. Bryan, "To the Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives," Mar. 28, 1917, the Papers of Thomas J. Walsh, in the Library of Congress.

⁶¹ Evidence supporting this generalization abounds in the papers of Claude Kitchin, W. J. Bryan, Library of Congress, Warren Worth Bailey, George W. Norris, Thomas J. Walsh, Robert M. La Follette, Oswald G. Villard, and other such public leaders. The present writer knows how deceptive such evidence can be. Yet one cannot read through the thousands of letters, telegrams, and petitions from people in all walks of life and all sections of the country without being profoundly impressed by the depth of the popular desire for peace and the positive hostility to a war resolution in response to the German submarine challenge.

he remained secluded in the White House. From all sides he was bombarded with advice and pleadings for peace and for war. From Page came an appeal to bolster the credit of the British government, lest the whole system of international exchange collapse.⁶² For the first time came reports that the Allies were in a desperate military situation, that Allied morale was cracking, and that only American intervention could turn the tide. Finally, it was obvious the German campaign against sea-borne commerce was succeeding even beyond the expectations of the most ardent champions of the submarine. Nearly 600,000 tons of Allied and neutral shipping were sunk during March, 1917, and the toll reached nearly 900,000 tons the following month.

In spite of these appeals and warnings, the President still hesitated. On March 19, the day after the sinking of the three American ships, he conferred with Lansing and told him he opposed immediate action. The following afternoon Wilson called the Cabinet to consider the crisis and advise him on the course he should follow. McAdoo, Houston, Redfield, and Baker urged an immediate declaration of war. Lansing agreed, pointing out the ideological issues and the importance of speedy American aid to the Allies. Wilson replied that he did not see how he could speak of a war for democracy in addressing Congress. Secretary Wilson and Attorney General Gregory concurred with Lansing; his eyes filled with tears, Daniels admitted there was no other course. And so all of them declared. "The solemnity of the occasion as one after another spoke was increasingly impressive and showed in every man's face as he rose from the council table and prepared to leave the room."⁶³

The President gave his advisers no sign of his decision, but the next day he called Congress into special session for April 2, "to receive a communication concerning grave matters of national policy." Moreover, his action during the ten days that followed left no doubt that he had resolved to ask for a war resolution. On March 24, for example, he ordered the withdrawal of American diplomatic and relief officials

⁶² In an urgent telegram to Lansing on March 5, 1917, Page warned that the British government had absolutely reached the end of the resources it could use to obtain credit in the United States. If the United States government did not supply the credit or guarantee a large Allied loan, Page added, the great war trade would come to an end. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, Supplement 2* (2 vols., Washington, 1932), I, 516-518.

⁶³ "Memorandum of the Cabinet Meeting, 2:30-5 P.M. Tuesday, March 20, 1917," Lansing Diary.

from Belgium. On the same day he authorized Daniels to begin conversations with the British Admiralty for the co-ordination of the naval operations of the two countries. On March 25 and 26 he called the National Guard of the Eastern, Midwestern, and Far Western states into the federal service, and on March 25 he increased the enlisted strength of the navy to the statutory limit of 87,000.

Meanwhile, Wilson had begun writing his war message. Gethsemane was over; the decision was made. But the road ahead pointed straight to Golgotha, and in his turmoil he could find no sleep at night. Colonel House came to Washington on March 27 and tried to calm his spirit, but the anguish would not leave him and on April 1 he sent for Frank Cobb, editor of the *New York World*, and unburdened his soul.

He said he couldn't see any alternative, that he had tried every way he knew to avoid war [Cobb later recalled]. . . . He said war would overturn the world we had known; that so long as we remained out there was a preponderance of neutrality, but that if we joined with the Allies the world would be off the peace basis and onto a war basis. . . . He had the whole panorama in his mind. He went on to say that so far as he knew he had considered every loophole of escape and as fast as they were discovered Germany deliberately blocked them with some new outrage.

Then he began to talk about the consequences to the United States. He had no illusions about the fashion in which we were likely to fight the war. . . .

"Once lead this people into war," he said, "and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. To fight you must be brutal and ruthless, and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into the very fibre of our national life, infecting Congress, the courts, the policeman on the beat, the man in the street." . . .

He thought the Constitution would not survive it; that free speech and the right of assembly would go. He said a nation couldn't put its strength into a war and keep its head level; it had never been done.

"If there is any alternative, for God's sake, let's take it," he exclaimed.⁶⁴

At no time during this critical period did the President recognize the necessity for American intervention on idealistic grounds or because such intervention was necessary to protect the security of the United States. Indeed, had he been a free agent he would probably have adhered to the course of armed neutrality he had embarked upon on

⁶⁴ Quoted in Baker, *Wilson*, VI, 490, 506-507.

March 9.⁶⁵ Much of his despair stemmed from the fact that events beyond his control were impelling the nation blindly into a war it did not want. In brief, the country had now arrived at the situation Wilson had described so vividly in the first draft of his peace note of December 18, 1916: "If any other nation now neutral should be drawn in, it would know only that it was drawn in by some force it could not resist, because it had been hurt and saw no remedy but to risk still greater, it might be even irreparable, injury, in order to make the weight in the one scale or the other decisive; and even as a participant it would not know how far the scales must tip before the end would come or what was being weighed in the balance!"⁶⁶

What forces and events impelled a divided nation and a distraught President and Congress to do the thing they had fought so desperately to avoid?

The progressives, pacifists, and Socialists gave an answer in 1917 that was reiterated by the Nye Committee in 1934 and 1935. To these observers, the causes for American intervention were mainly economic and psychological. That was what Senator George W. Norris meant by his assertion, made during his speech against the war resolution, that the Senate would stamp the dollar mark on the American flag if it approved a declaration of belligerency. Before the United States entered the war American bankers had lent \$2,145 million to the Allied governments for war purposes. The economic masters of the United States had invested the savings of the American people in an Allied victory—a cause they could not now afford to abandon. Moreover—so the progressive-pacifist argument ran—by April, 1917, American pros-

⁶⁵ During the last days of March, Wilson received four letters of great significance, from J. P. Gavit, Senator Joseph I. France of Maryland, Matthew Hale, and Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock of Nebraska, all of them urging him to adhere to armed neutrality and a course of limited participation as the only sensible method of defending American rights on the seas and avoiding entanglement in the peace plans of the Allies. Gavit to Wilson, Mar. 25, 1917; France to Wilson, Mar. 28, 1917; Hale to Wilson, Mar. 28, 1917; Hitchcock to Wilson, Mar. 29, 1917, all in Wilson Papers. In his reply to Hale, Mar. 31, 1917, *ibid.*, Wilson declared he would be inclined to adhere to armed neutrality, but that such a course was no longer feasible. "To defend our rights upon the seas, we must fight submarines," he explained. "... Germany has intimated that she would regard the only sort of warfare that is possible against her submarines as an act of war and would treat any persons who fell into her hands from the ships that attacked her submarines as beyond the pale of law. Apparently, to make even the measures of defense legitimate we must obtain the status of belligerents."

⁶⁶ Baker, *Wilson*, VI, 382.

perity had become so dependent upon a continuation of the war trade that the country went to war also to protect it.⁶⁷ Munitions-makers, who sought a new market for their products, added their voices to the rising clamor for war. Finally, propagandists, voluntary and hired, had misled Americans into believing that the Allies were fighting for democracy and that Germany's triumph would spell the doom of Western civilization. These and other forces more subtle had caused the administration to pursue an unneutral course from the beginning—to enforce the rules against Germany, but not against Britain—and had compelled Germany to adopt desperate measures in 1917.

At the other extreme, Walter Lippmann, in a series of articles in the *New Republic* published in 1916–17 and later in *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*,⁶⁸ developed the thesis that the United States had followed a deliberate policy of unneutrality, had accepted British transgressions of international law and stood firm against German transgressions, because the American people condemned the objectives for which Germany was fighting. When German success seemed imminent, Lippmann continued, the United States had gone to war to preserve the supremacy of the Atlantic Community in Europe and to protect its vital stake in a peaceful and orderly world.

What is the truth? Does it lie somewhere in between these extremes? The events, forces, and developments from 1914 to 1917 were too complex to permit any simple generalizations on the causes of American intervention. There is no evidence that bankers or munitions-makers influenced the decision for war. On the contrary, because it furnished deadly ammunition to the progressives and pacifists, the support that bankers and munitions-makers gave the preparedness and intervention movements was a great obstacle to the success of those movements. The power of the propagandists has been vastly overrated, and it is doubtful if they played a major role.⁶⁹ Although Lansing and occasionally House shared Lippmann's views, they had only an incidental influence on Wilson.

⁶⁷ The foreign trade of the United States with the Allied countries increased from \$824,860,237 in 1914, to \$1,991,747,493 in 1915, to \$3,214,480,547 in 1916.

⁶⁸ The passage in *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston, 1943) is pp. 33–39; see also Walter Lippmann to Wilson, Mar. 11, 1917, Wilson Papers, enclosing "Memorandum" on the reasons for the American determination to resist the German bid for domination of Europe.

⁶⁹ See above, pp. 145–148.

In the final analysis, American policy was determined by the President and public opinion, which had a great, if unconscious, influence upon him. It was Wilson who decided to accept the British maritime system in the first instance, who set the American government against unrestricted use of the submarine, and who made the final decision for war instead of a continuance of armed neutrality.

Before the summer of 1916 the President's policies, on the whole, constituted a differential neutrality, favorable to the Allies. This was true because Wilson accepted the British sea measures and resisted the German, a course that seemed necessary in the light of a number of factors: German unfriendliness, as manifested by the network of intrigue and conspiracies against American neutrality, the invasion of Belgium and the deliberate killing of civilians on the high seas, and the fact that there seemed to be a hope for a reasonable settlement by working with Britain and France.

The policy of differential neutrality was, therefore, grounded upon Wilson's personal assessment of the situation, which in turn was determined by his moralistic judgment of events. When he became convinced the Allied governments did not want a reasonable peace, he began to change differential neutrality into impartiality. Moreover, he began to shift his personal moral condemnation from Germany to Great Britain. And in the process he came to the firm conviction that neither side was fighting for worthy objectives and that the hope of the world lay in a negotiated settlement and a future concert of all the powers.

These were the concepts paramount in Wilson's mind toward the end of 1916 and in early 1917. So long as the German government paid lip service, at least, to the *Sussex* pledge he would have pursued his neutral course relentlessly. Or, if the German leaders had at any time desired a genuinely reasonable settlement and evidenced a willingness to help build a peaceful and orderly postwar world, they would have found a friend in the White House eager to join with them in accomplishing these high goals.

Given the circumstances existing at the beginning of 1917, therefore, the Germans had three alternatives, which were carefully considered by them. Firstly, they could have accepted Wilson's leadership in the peace campaign, which would also have involved abandoning their hopes for winning on the fields of battle the ambitious program they had set for themselves. Secondly, they could have rejected Wilson's

mediation and continued their "legal," although devastating, submarine campaign in the hope of obtaining a draw. Or, thirdly, they could run the risks involved in American intervention by launching an overwhelming submarine campaign against all commerce. They took the third alternative because their strategists told them it would bring complete victory and a chance to establish German domination in Europe, if not in the world.⁷⁰

The German decision to gamble on all-out victory or complete ruin, therefore, alone compelled Wilson to break diplomatic relations, to adopt a policy of armed neutrality, and finally to ask for a declaration of war—because American ships were being sunk and American citizens were being killed on the high seas, and because armed neutrality seemed no longer possible. Considerations of America's alleged economic stake in an Allied victory did not influence Wilson's thought during the critical weeks from February 1 to April 2, 1917. Nor did considerations of the national interest, or of the great ideological issues at stake in the conflict.

In response to the President's call Congress assembled on the appointed day, April 2, and with the help of the independents the Democrats organized the House and elected Champ Clark Speaker again. At eight-thirty in the evening Wilson went before the joint session and read his message before the expectant throng. He reviewed the recent German warfare against commerce, which he termed "warfare against mankind." He declared that armed neutrality was no longer feasible and that there was no choice but to admit that the recent course of the Imperial German government was war against the United States. After enumerating the steps necessary to put the country on a war footing, Wilson abruptly turned to a discussion of the issues and objectives for which the nation would fight. The American people now knew the Imperial government, like all autocracies, was a natural foe of liberty. Therefore, "The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty." And then, with one great peroration, which has gone ringing down the years, the long ordeal of neutrality was over:

It is a distressing and oppressive duty, Gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months

⁷⁰ The sanest and most convincing opinion on German motivation yet written was offered by the majority of the Reichstag's committee of inquiry in its report dated June 18, 1920, *Official German Documents*, I, 128-150.

of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts,—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.⁷¹

From the halls of Congress the deafening thunder of applause reverberated round the world. Men in the trenches took hope, and the Allied peoples thanked God their cause was not lost. Even Wilson's bitterest critics, Lodge, Root, and Roosevelt, admitted the President had epitomized their own thoughts. But for Wilson it was not a day of triumph but of sadness and, one is tempted to believe, of doubt and soul searching. Tumulty recalled a scene in the White House after Wilson returned from the Capitol, when the President broke down and sobbed like a child.⁷² The story is probably fictional, but it conveys poetic truth.

In spite of the opposition in both houses of men like Claude Kitchin, George W. Norris, and Robert M. La Follette, the war resolution was quickly passed. On April 4 the Senate adopted the resolution, 82 to 6; at 3:12 A.M. on April 6 the House concurred, 373 to 50; and at 1:18 the following afternoon Wilson signed the resolution. Minutes later the news was sent by telegraph and wireless around the world. A new epoch in the history of the United States had begun.

⁷¹ *The Public Papers, War and Peace*, I, 6-16.

⁷² J. P. Tumulty, *Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him* (Garden City, N.Y., 1921), p. 259.

Essay on Sources

(Revised as of October, 1962)

The following essay does not include all works and sources on American history for the period 1910-1917. Even if it were susceptible of compilation, such a list would more than fill the present volume and would be a source of confusion rather than of help to students. The writer, however, has endeavored to include all significant and relevant works and sources and to arrange them in an orderly and purposeful manner.

Thus, the first seven sections include the general sources—manuscripts, newspapers, periodicals, published writings and memoirs, and the like—that relate in a broad way to the politics, personalities, and diplomacy of the period. In contrast, the last sections are arranged roughly to follow the chapters of the book and include monographs, articles, and other works that bear specifically upon the subjects under which they are listed.

Finally, the author has attempted to avoid repeating in this bibliography the references that he lists in the footnotes. It has not been possible to avoid such repetition entirely; generally, however, the footnotes cite letters, diaries, and newspaper and periodical articles and editorials, while the bibliographical essay attempts to survey works and sources in a more general and comprehensive manner.

MANUSCRIPTS

THE WILSON ADMINISTRATION

Of greatest importance for the period from 1912 to 1917 are the Papers of Woodrow Wilson in the Library of Congress, which are excellently arranged and, in spite of their huge volume, easily used, and the vast collection of Wilson materials in the Princeton University Library, gathered and catalogued by the editors of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. An important supplement to the Wilson Papers is the Ray Stannard Baker Collection, Library of Congress, which Baker gathered while writing the President's authorized