

My Four Years in Germany (The Bestsellers of 1918) by James W. Gerard



ISBN: 0742613119

ISBN13: 978-0742613119

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Book title: My Four Years in Germany (The Bestsellers of 1918)

Publisher: Classic Books (May 2000)

Category: Travelers and Explorers

Size PDF version: 1849 kb

Size ePUB version: 1683 kb

Size FB2 version: 1110 kb

Other formats: mobi lrf lrf azw

0742613119



Reviews of the **My Four Years in Germany (The Bestsellers of 1918)** by James W. Gerard

Vishura

James W. Gerard was a former New York Supreme Court justice appointed U.S. Ambassador to Germany in October, 1913, which position he held until U.S. diplomatic relations were broken off in February, 1917. His wife was the daughter of the copper magnate that was head of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company.

Gerard's work increased enormously when the war started in August, 1914, because the American embassy then took over the interests of Britain, France and other nations that had broken diplomatic relations with Germany. A great deal of his work was dealing with the welfare of prisoners of war held in Germany, plus business interests of combatant nations.

The author doesn't deal with the military aspects of the War, at all, excepting the enormous diplomatic effect of Germany's submarine warfare.

Gerard met regularly with the highest men in the German political leadership, and had several long private conversations with the Kaiser.

Of great value, to me, at least, are Gerard's capsule histories of Germany's social and military conditions in the decades leading up to World War I.

The book has numerous small but excellent photos, including facsimile photos of social and diplomatic communications, and the Emperor's 6-page hand-written telegram to U.S. President Wilson (written in English, by the way).

I bought the 1917 hardback and, although it wasn't in perfect condition, I would be reluctant to buy a paperback reprint because product descriptions don't state that the photos are also reproduced. I had to learn the hard way about poor quality print-on-demand books and therefore only buy reprints from reputable publishers, like Penguin.

The original 1917 hardback is dark green in color, with large gold lettering on the front cover and spine. The book was bought from Motor_City_Books for \$0.01 plus \$3.99 shipping. Delivery was quick.

Granijurus

First, it's a great book which covers this period of 1913 to 1917, when the writer...the US Ambassador was there on the scene. It gives you the inside view of how Prussian military-style leadership....the Junkers....and the aristocratic nature of Germany....ran the German government. Few sit down and read over the 1800s period, the wars with Denmark, France and the Habsburgs....and come to grasp the difference nature of Germany compared to what came in the 1920s, 1930s, and later in the 1950s (the Federal Republic of Germany).

Some people want to think of Germany today....as the right visionary vehicle understand German culture and society. Sadly, Gerard's book really does put down the different issues that existed, and how a regular German had no real say in his government, his life, or his successes. Everything depended on the Kaiser, and the Prussian-style military.

For the essential historian of the period....a must-read. It would have been interesting to have Gerard return in the 1930s and note the changes that came....and how things just fell apart.

Nidor

Forget everything you thought you knew about WW1. This is our ambassador's first-hand account of the events leading up to that war, lots of pictures and memorabilia in this volume. HIGHLY recommend it for anyone interested in that era!

Silverbrew

I found this book to be an extremely informative period piece covering a very important time in European and American history. It is the memoirs of the American ambassador to Germany before and during WWI. The description of court life, the political scene and the lives of normal people during the last years of royal rule in Europe is exceptional. Additionally because of his position as the main negotiator between President Wilson and the Kaiser's government the book allows us to see the reactions and counterreactions to events like the sinking of the Luisitania. The author's background as a former justice of the New York Supreme Court provides great insight into the grand international debate on the legality of unconditional submarine warfare that Germany introduced during the war.

The true root cause of WWI is still a subject to debate. The author's view is the need of the Kaiser and the ruling Junker aristocracy needed the war. The Kaiser to capture the glory his father garnered in the wars of 1870's and the Junkers to maintain control of the populous against trade unions and socialism.

The actions of Americans living in Germany before America's entry into the conflict and the reaction of the US Government are also interesting. If an American criticized our government publicly in Germany he would revoke their passport. On the theory that if you don't agree with the government you should not have her protection. I wonder what he would have done to Jane Fonda when she posed on anti-aircraft guns in North Vietnam!

The author covers various topics chapter by chapter and because of the inconnection of events there is some repetition but he acknowledges this and points the reader to the other significant chapter. In all an excellent work!

Malanim

Gives an excellent view of what was going in Germany during his tenure as ambassador 1913 -- 1917 -- useful for those studying cause of U.S. entry into WW One

Gorisar

The book was good and you can't beat the free price tag ... ha ha so I recommend it to readers of nonfiction

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