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# GERMAN WAR PRACTICES



ISSUED BY  
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
THE SECRETARY OF WAR  
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
GEORGE CREEL

*Edition of January, 1918*

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# GERMAN

# WAR PRACTICES

PART I  
TREATMENT OF CIVILIANS

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EDITED BY

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Spec Call

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1918

EXECUTIVE ORDER.

I hereby create a Committee on Public Information, to be composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, and a civilian who shall be charged with the executive direction of the Committee. As civilian Chairman of the Committee I appoint Mr. George Creel.

The Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy are authorized each to detail an officer or officers to the work of the Committee.

WOODROW WILSON.

April 14, 1917.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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For many years leaders in every civilized nation have been trying to make warfare less brutal. The great landmarks in this movement are the Geneva and Hague Conventions. The former made rules as to the care of the sick and wounded and established the Red Cross. At the first meeting at Geneva, in 1864, it was agreed, and until the present war it has been taken for granted, that the wounded, and the doctors and nurses who cared for them, would be safe from all attacks by the enemy. The Hague Conventions, drawn up in 1899 and 1907, made additional rules to soften the usages of war and especially to protect noncombatants and conquered lands. Germany took a prominent part in these meetings and with the other nations solemnly pledged her faith to keep all the rules except one article in the Hague Regulations. This was article 44, which forbade the conqueror to force any of the conquered to give information. All the other rules and regulations she accepted in the most binding manner.

But Germany's military leaders had no intention of keeping these solemn promises. They had been trained along different lines. Their leading generals for many years had been urging a policy of frightfulness. In the middle of the nineteenth century von Clausewitz was looked upon as the greatest military authority, and the methods which he advocated were used by the Prussian army in its successful wars of 1866-1871. Consequently, because these wars had been successful, the wisdom of von Clausewitz's methods seemed to the Prussian army to be fully proven.

Now, the essence of von Clausewitz's teachings was that successful war involves the ruthless application of force. In the opening chapter of his master work, *Vom Kriege (On War)*, he says:

"Violence arms itself with the inventions of art and science. \* \* \* Self-imposed restrictions, almost im-

perceptible and hardly worth mentioning, termed usages of international law, accompany it without essentially impairing its power. \* \* \* Now, philanthropic souls might easily imagine that there is a skillful method of disarming or subduing an enemy without causing too much bloodshed, and that this is the true tendency of the art of war. However plausible this may appear, still it is an error which must be destroyed; for in such dangerous things as war, the errors which proceed from a spirit of 'good-naturedness' are precisely the worst. As the use of physical force to the utmost extent by no means excludes the co-operation of the intelligence, it follows that he who uses force ruthlessly, without regard to bloodshed, must obtain a superiority, if his enemy does not so use it."

In 1877-78, in the course of a series of articles upon "Military necessity and humanity," Gen. von Hartmann wrote, in the same spirit as von Clausewitz:

"The enemy State must not be spared the want and wretchedness of war; these are particularly **Frightfulness** useful in shattering its energy and subduing **advocated by Ger-** its will." "Individual persons may be harshly **man generals.** dealt with when an example is made of them, intended to serve as a warning. \* \* \* Whenever a national war breaks out, terrorism becomes a necessary military principle." "It is a gratuitous illusion to suppose that modern war does not demand far more brutality, far more violence, and an action far more general than was formerly the case." "When international war has burst upon us, terrorism becomes a principle made necessary by military considerations."

In 1881 von Moltke, who had been commander in chief of the Prussian army in the Franco-Prussian War, declared:

"Perpetual peace is a dream and not even a beautiful dream. War is an element in the order of the world established by God. By it the most noble virtues of man are developed, courage and renunciation, fidelity to duty and the spirit of sacrifice—the soldier gives his life. Without war, the world would degenerate and lose itself in materialism." "The soldier who endures suffering, privation, and fatigue, who courts dangers, can not take only 'in proportion to the resources of the country.' He must take all that is necessary to his existence. One has no right to demand of him anything superhuman." "The great good in war is that it should be ended quickly. In view of this, every means, except those which are positively condemnable,



must be permitted. I can not, in any way, agree with the Declaration of St. Petersburg when it pretends that 'the weakening of the military forces of the enemy constitutes the only legitimate method of procedure in war. No! One must attack all the resources of the enemy government, his finances, his railroads, his stock of provisions and even his prestige. \* \* \*'

Many other examples might be cited from the writings of German generals. The very best illustration <sup>Kaiser's</sup> of this attitude, however, is to be found in the "Hun" speech in 1900. Emperor's various speeches, and especially in his speech to his soldiers on the eve of their departure for China in 1900. On July 27 the Kaiser went to Bremerhaven to bid farewell to the German troops. As they were drawn up, ready to embark for China, he addressed to them a last official message from the Fatherland. The local newspaper reported his speech in full. In it appeared this advice and admonition from the Emperor, the commander in chief of the army, the head of all Germany.

"As soon as you come to blows with the enemy he will be beaten. No mercy will be shown! No prisoners will be taken! As the Huns, under King Attila, made a name for themselves, which is still mighty in traditions and legends to-day, may the name of German be so fixed in China by your deeds that no Chinese shall ever again dare even to look at a German askance. \* \* \* Open the way for *Kultur* once for all."

Even the imperial councillors seem to have been shocked at the Emperor's speech, and efforts were promptly made to suppress the circulation of his exact words. The efforts were only partly successful. A few weeks later, when letters from the German soldiers in China were being published in local German papers, the leading socialist newspaper, *Vorwärts*, excerpted from them reports of atrocities under the title "Letters of the Huns." Many of the leaders in the Reichstag felt very keenly the brutality of the Emperor's speech. The obnoxious word "Huns" had excited almost universal condemnation. When the Reichstag met, in November, the speech was openly discussed. Herr Lieber, of the Center (the Catholic party), after quoting the

“no mercy” portion of the speech, added, “There are, alas, in Germany groups enough who have regarded the atrocities told in the letters which have been published as the dutiful response of soldiers so addressed and encouraged.” The leader of the Social Democrats, Herr Bebel, spoke even more pointedly. Toward the end of a two-hour address on the atrocities committed by the German soldiers in China and on the speech of the Emperor he said:

“If Germany wishes to be the bearer of civilization to the world, we will follow without contradiction. But the ways and means in which this world policy has been carried on thus far, in which it has been defined by the Emperor \* \* \* are not, in our opinion, the way to preserve the world position of Germany, to gain for Germany the respect of the world.”

The consequences of the Emperor’s speech Bebel aptly described:

“By it a signal was given, garbed in the highest authority of the German Empire, which must have most weighty consequences, not only for the troops who went to China but also for those who stayed at home.” “An expedition of revenge so barbarous as this has never occurred in the last hundred years and not often in history; at least, nothing worse than this has happened in history, either done by the Huns, by the Vandals, by Genghis Khan, by Tamerlane, or even by Tilly when he sacked Magdeburg.”

These stories of atrocities in China or “Letters of the Huns” continued to be published in the *Vorwärts* for several years and appeared intermittently in the debates of the Reichstag as late as 1906. At that time the socialist, Herr Kunert, reviewing the procedure in a trial of which he had been the victim in the previous summer, stated that he had offered to prove “that German soldiers in China had engaged in wanton and brutal ravaging; that plunder, pillage, extortion, robbery, as well as rape and sexual abuses of the worst kind, had occurred on a very large scale and that German soldiers had participated in them.” He had not been given an opportunity to prove his allegations, but had been sentenced to prison for three months for assailing the honor of the “whole German Army.” The outrageousness of this sentence was made clear by the revelations, made in the

Reichstag shortly afterwards, of similar atrocities committed by German officials and soldiers in Africa in the campaign against the Hereros.

The teachings of Treitschke and Nietzsche and their evil influence upon the present generation in Germany are well known. The minds of the responsible officials were filled with ideas wholly different from those to which Germany had agreed at The Hague. The cult of might, and of war as its expression, found many disciples who flooded the press with pamphlets and panegyrics on war and its place in the natural and political development of a nation. Before the war the average number of volumes concerning war published each year in Germany was 700, and the vast majority of those written by the German Army officers advocated the ruthless policy of von Clausewitz, von Hartmann, and von Moltke.

These ideas, which have come to control the minds of the military class, are best shown in the *German War Book (Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege)*, published in 1902. The tone of this authoritative book may be judged from the following extracts:

“But since the tendency of thought in the last century was dominated essentially by humanitarian considerations which not infrequently degenerated into sentimentality and flabby emotion (*Sentimentalität und weichlicher Gefühlschwärmerei*), there have not been wanting attempts to influence the development of the usages of war in a way which was in fundamental contradiction with the nature of war and its object. Attempts of this kind will also not be wanting in the future, the more so as these agitations have found a kind of moral recognition in some provisions of the Geneva Convention and the Brussels and Hague Conferences.”

Teachings of  
the German War  
Book.

“By steeping himself in military history an officer will be able to guard himself against excessive humanitarian notions; it will teach him that certain severities are indispensable to war, nay more, that the only true humanity very often lies in a ruthless application of them.”

For the guidance of the officers in case the inhabitants of conquered territory should take up arms against the German Army, the *German War Book* quotes with approval the letter Napoleon sent to his brother Joseph, when the inhabitants of Italy were attempting to revolt against him:

“The security of your dominion depends on how you

behave in the conquered province. Burn down a dozen places which are not willing to submit themselves. Of course, not until you have first looted them; my soldiers must not be allowed to go away with their hands empty. Have three to six persons hanged in every village which has joined the revolt; pay no respect to the cassock" [that is, to members of the clergy.]

Some of the rules laid down in the *German War Book* are illustrated and their spirit made more definite in *L'Interprète Militaire. Zum Gebrauch im Feindesland* (Military Interpreter for Use in the Enemy's Country). This is a manual edited at Berlin in 1906. "It contains," says the introduction, "the French translation of the greater part of the documents, letters, and proclamations, and some orders of which it may be necessary to make use in time of war." Thus, eight years before this war began, the German military authorities were not only preparing their officers to wage war in a manner wholly contrary to the Hague regulations, but also were looking forward to the use of these proclamations in French or Belgian territory. Among its forms, ready for use by inserting names, date, and place, are the following:

German war  
proclamations in  
French transla-  
tions.

"A fine of 600,000 marks in consequence of an attempt made by ——— to assassinate a German soldier, is imposed on the town of O. By order of ———.

"Efforts have been made, without result, to obtain the withdrawal of the fine.

"The term fixed for payment expires to-morrow, Saturday, December 17, at noon ———.

"Bank notes, cash, or silver plate will be accepted."

"I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 7th of this month, in which you bring to my notice the great difficulty which you expect to meet in levying the contributions. \* \* \* I can but regret the explanations which you have thought proper to give me on this subject; the order in question which emanates from my Government is so clear and precise, and the instructions which I have received in the matter are so categorical that if the sum due by the town of R——— is not paid the town will be burned down without pity!"

"On account of the destruction of the bridge of F———, I order: The district shall pay a special contribution of

10,000,000 francs by way of amends. This is brought to the notice of the public who are informed that the method of assessment will be announced later and that the payment of the said sum will be enforced with the utmost severity. The village of F—— will be destroyed immediately by fire, with the exception of certain buildings occupied for the use of the troops.”

These forms have been of great use to the German commanders in Belgium and northern France. The closeness with which they have been followed in these conquered lands, during the present war, may be seen by reading the following proclamations and the other proclamations which are printed elsewhere in this pamphlet.

“The City of Brussels, exclusive of its suburbs, has been punished by an additional fine of 5,000,000 francs on account of the attack made upon a German soldier by Ryckere, one of its police officials.

“The Governor of Brussels,  
“BARON VON LUETTWITZ.

“November 1, 1914.”

Placard posted on the walls of Lunéville by order of the German authorities:

“Notice to the People.

“Some of the inhabitants of Lunéville made an attack from ambuscade on the German columns and wagons (*trains*). The same day [some of the] inhabitants shot at sanitary formations marked with the Red Cross. In addition, German wounded and the military hospital containing a German ambulance were fired upon.

“Because of these acts of hostility a fine of 650,000 francs is imposed upon the commune of Lunéville. The mayor is ordered to pay this sum in gold or silver up to 50,000 francs, September 6, 1914, at nine o'clock in the morning, to the representative of the German military authority. All protests will be considered null and void. No delay will be granted.

“If the commune does not punctually obey the order to pay the sum of 650,000 francs, all property that can be levied upon will be seized.

“In case of non-payment, visits from house to house will be made and all the inhabitants will be searched. If anyone knowingly has concealed money or attempted to hold back his goods from the seizure by the military authorities, or if anyone attempts to leave the city, he will be shot.

“The Mayor and the hostages taken by the military

authorities will be held responsible for the exact execution of the above orders.

"The Mayor is ordered to publish immediately this notice to the Commune.

"Hénaménil, Sept. 3, 1914.

"The General in Chief,  
"VON FASBENDER."

The German officers were provided with the forms to be used in terrorizing the conquered people. The common soldiers were provided with phrase books which would enable them to impose their will upon the terrified people. Minister Brand Whitlock in his report to the State Department on September 12, 1917, writes:

"The German soldiers were provided with phrase books giving alternate translations in German and French of such sentences as:

"'Hands up.' (It is the very first sentence in the book.)

"'Carry out all the furniture.

"'I am thirsty. Bring me some beer, gin, rum.

"'You have to supply a barrel of wine and a keg of beer.

"'If you lie to me, I will have you shot immediately.

"'Lead me to the wealthiest inhabitants of this village. I have orders to requisition several barrels of wine.

"'Show us the way to ———. If you lead us astray, you will be shot.'"

The quotations and proclamations printed above show clearly the attitude of mind of the German military authorities. The policy of frightfulness had been exalted into a system with every minute detail worked out in advance. The *German War Book* with its "cold-blooded doctrines of the nature of war and of the means which may be employed in prosecuting war," did its work in training the German military officials. Of this book it has been well said: "It is the first time in the history of mankind that a creed so revolting has been deliberately formulated by a great civilized State." The generals gave their sanction to this policy of frightfulness. Gen. von Bernhardi was quoted in an interview in the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, as follows:

"One cannot make war in a sentimental fashion. The more pitiless the conduct of the war, the more humane it is in reality, for it will run its course all the sooner. The

war which of all wars is and must be most humane is that which leads to peace with as little delay as possible."

This interview was reproduced in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of November 20, 1914.

Mr. F. C. Walcott, of the Belgian Relief Commission, tells, in the *Geographical Magazine* for May, 1917, of meeting Gen-von Bernhardi:

Interview with Bernhardi. "As I walked out, General von Bernhardi came into the room, an expert artillery-man, a professor in one of their war colleges. I met him the next morning, and he asked me if I had read his book, *Germany and the Next War*.

"I said I had. He said, 'Do you know, my friends nearly ran me out of the country for that.' They said, 'You have let the cat out of the bag.'" I said, "No, I have not, because nobody will believe it." "What did you think of it?"

"I said, 'General, I did not believe a word of it when I read it, but I now feel that you did not tell the whole truth;' and the old general looked actually pleased."

Speaking on August 29, 1914, at Münster, of the extreme measures which the Germans had felt obliged to take against the civil population of Belgium, Gen. von Bissing said:

Statement by von Bissing. "The innocent must suffer with the guilty. \* \* \* In the repression of infamy, human lives cannot be spared, and if isolated houses, flourishing villages, and even entire towns are annihilated, that is assuredly regrettable, but it must not excite ill-timed sentimentality. All this must not in our eyes weigh as much as the life of a single one of our brave soldiers—the rigorous accomplishment of duty is the emanation of a high *Kultur*, and in that, the population of the enemy countries can learn a lesson from our army."

Gen. von Bissing, after his appointment as governor general of Belgium, repeated in substance the above opinion to a Dutch journalist. The interview is published in the *Düsseldorfer Anzeiger* of December 8, 1914.

Irvin S. Cobb states his conclusions on the responsibility of the higher German command for the atrocities:

"But I was an eyewitness to crimes which, measured by the standards of humanity and civilization, impressed me as worse than any individual excess, any individual outrage, could ever have been or can ever be; because these crimes indubitably were instigated on a wholesale basis by order

of officers of rank, and must have been carried out under their personal supervision, direction, and approval. Briefly, what I saw was this: I saw wide areas of Belgium and France in which not a penny's worth of wanton destruction had been permitted to occur, in which the ripe pears hung untouched upon the garden walls; and I saw other wide areas where scarcely one stone had been left to stand upon another; where the fields were ravaged; where the male villagers had been shot in squads; where the miserable survivors had been left to den in holes, like wild beasts.

"Taking the physical evidence offered before our own eyes, and buttressing it with the statements made to us, not only by natives but by German soldiers and German officers, we could reach but one conclusion, which was that here, in such and such a place, those in command had said to the troops: 'Spare this town and these people.' And there they had said: 'Waste this town and shoot these people.' And here the troops had discriminately spared, and there they had indiscriminately wasted, in exact accordance with the word of their superiors." Irvin S. Cobb, *Speaking of Prussians*, New York, 1917, pp. 32-34.

These ideas, then, were systematically impressed upon the military and official classes. It was necessary, however, to work upon the minds of the German people, so that they might lend themselves to the inhuman policies advocated by the military leaders. To do this was difficult, for, as has been shown above, many of the civilian leaders of public opinion, time and again, expressed their horror of the new spirit which was animating the military authorities. The Reichstag debates give ample evidence of this, and the task of the military leaders would have been still more difficult if the Reichstag had had any real power. (See War Information Series, No. 3, *The Government of Germany*; see also Gerard's *My Four Years in Germany*, Chap. II.)

The military authorities and those in sympathy with them have done all in their power to stimulate a hatred of other peoples in the minds of the Germans. A campaign of education before the war was carried on with the object of impressing upon the minds of the Germans the treacherous nature

**Hatred against Belgians.** of the peoples against whom the military leaders were anxious to wage war. Not only were the Germans gradually led to believe that it was necessary to fight a defensive war against unscrupulous foes, but



also that these foes would violate every precept of humanity, and consequently must be crushed without mercy as a measure of self-defense. The fruits of this campaign of suspicion and hatred became evident when almost at the outbreak of the war many Germans became possessed with the belief that the whole population of Belgium, the first country to be invaded, had violated every rule of honorable warfare, that the *francs-tireurs* (guerillas) were everywhere present doing their deadly work in secrecy or under the cover of darkness; that women and even children were mutilating and killing the wounded or helpless prisoners.

The effect of the fables upon the popular mind may be seen in the following extracts from German letters:

Extract from a letter written by a German soldier to his brother. (This letter, now in the possession of the United States Government, was obtained for this pamphlet from Mr. J. C. Grew, formerly secretary to the United States Embassy at Berlin.)

“NOVEMBER 4, 1914.

“The battles are everywhere extremely tenacious and bloody. The Englishmen we hate most and we want to get even with them for once. While one now and then sees French prisoners, one hardly ever beholds French black troops or Englishmen. These good people are not overlooked by our infantrymen; that sort of people is mowed down without mercy. The losses of the Englishmen must be enormous. There is a desire to wipe them out, root and all.”

Extract from another letter to a brother:

“SCHLESWIG, 25, 8, 14 [Aug. 25, 1914].

“DEAR BROTHER, \* \* \* You will shortly go to Brussels with your regiment, as you know. Take care to protect yourself against these *Civilians*, especially in the villages. Do not let anyone of them come near you. *Fire without pity on everyone of them who comes too near.* They are very clever, cunning fellows, these Belgians; even the women and children are armed and fire their guns. Never go inside a house, especially alone. If you take anything to drink make the inhabitants drink first, and keep at a distance from them. *The newspapers relate numerous cases in which they have fired on our soldiers whilst they were drinking.* You soldiers must spread around so much fear of yourselves that no civilian will venture to come near you.

Remain always in the company of others. *I hope that you have read the newspapers and that you know how to behave. Above all have no compassion for these cut-throats. Make for them without pity with the butt-end of your rifle and the bayonet.* \* \* \*

"Your brother,

"WILLI."

The Emperor gave his sanction to the reports of the brutal acts of the Belgians in a telegram to President Wilson.

"BERLIN, VIA COPENHAGEN, *Sept. 7, 1914.*

"SECRETARY OF STATE,

"*Washington.*

"Number 53. September 7. I am requested to forward the following telegram from the Emperor to the President:

Emperor's tele-gram. "I feel it my duty, Mr. President, to inform you as the most prominent representative of principles of humanity, that after taking the French fortress of Longwy, my troops discovered there thousands of dum-dum cartridges made by special government machinery. The same kind of ammunition was found on killed and wounded troops and prisoners, also on the British troops. You know what terrible wounds and suffering these bullets inflict and that their use is strictly forbidden by the established rules of international law. I therefore address a solemn protest to you against this kind of warfare, which, owing to the methods of our adversaries has become one of the most barbarous known in history. Not only have they employed these atrocious weapons, but the Belgian Government has openly encouraged and since long carefully prepared the participation of the Belgian civil population in the fighting. The atrocities committed even by women and priests in this guerilla warfare, also on wounded soldiers, medical staff and nurses, doctors killed, hospitals attacked by rifle fire, were such that my generals finally were compelled to take the most drastic measures in order to punish the guilty and to frighten the blood-thirsty population from continuing their work of vile murder and horror. Some villages and even the old town of Loewen [Louvain], excepting the fine hôtel de ville, had to be destroyed in self-defense and for the protection of my troops. My heart bleeds when I see that such measures have become unavoidable and when I think of the numerous innocent people who lose their home and property as a consequence of the barbarous behavior of those criminals. Signed. William, Emperor and King."

"GERARD. *Berlin.*"

Lorenz Müller in the German Catholic review, *Der Fels*, February, 1915, made the following statement in regard to the Emperor's telegram:

Refutation by a German. "Officially no instance has been proven of persons having fired with the help of priests from the towers of churches. All that has been made known up to the present, and that has been made the object of inquiry, concerning alleged atrocities attributed to Catholic priests during this war, has been shown to be false and altogether imaginary, without any exception. Our Emperor telegraphed to the President of the United States of America that even women and priests had committed atrocities during this guerilla warfare on wounded soldiers, doctors and nurses attached to the field ambulances. How this telegram can be reconciled with the fact stated above we shall not be able to learn until after the war."

The *Vorwärts*, of Berlin, October 22, 1914, said:

Refutation by Vorwärts. "We have already been able to establish the falseness of a great number of assertions which have been made with great precision and published everywhere in the press, concerning alleged cruelties committed, by the populations of the countries with which Germany is at war, upon German soldiers and civilians. We are now in a position to silence two others of these fantastic stories.

"The War Correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* spoke a few weeks ago of cigars and cigarettes filled with powder alleged to have been given out or sold to our soldiers with diabolical intent. He even pretended that he had seen with his own eyes hundreds of this kind of cigarettes. We learn from an authentic source that this story of cigars and cigarettes is nothing but a brazen invention. Stories of soldiers whose eyes are alleged to have been torn out by francs-tireurs are circulated throughout Germany. Not a single case of this kind has been officially established. In every instance where it has been possible to test the story its inaccuracy has been demonstrated.

"It matters little that reports of this nature bear an appearance of positive certitude, or are even vouched for by eye-witnesses. The desire for notoriety, the absence of criticism, and personal error play an unfortunate part in the days in which we are living. Every nose shot off or simply bound up, every eye removed, is immediately transformed into a nose or eye torn away by the francs-tireurs. Already the *Volkszeitung* of Cologne has been able, contrary to the very categorical assertions from Aix-la-Chapelle,

to prove that there was no soldier with his eyes torn out in the field ambulance of this town. It was said, also, that people wounded in this way were under treatment in the neighborhood of Berlin, but whenever enquiries have been made in regard to these reports, their absolute falsity has been demonstrated. At length these reports were concentrated at Gross Lichterfelde. A newspaper published at noon and widely circulated in Berlin printed a few days ago in large type the news that at the Lazaretto of Lichterfelde alone there were 'ten German soldiers, only slightly wounded, whose eyes had been wickedly torn out.' But to a request for information by comrade Liebknecht the following written reply was sent by the chief medical officer of the above-mentioned field hospital, dated the 18th of the month:

"SIR,

'Happily there is no truth whatever in these stories.

'Yours obediently,

'PROFESSOR RAUTENBERG.' "

Thus the teachings of the *German War Book* and of the German apostles of frightfulness, suspicion, and hatred, had now begun to bear their natural fruit. But the voice of protest was not entirely silent. A considerable number of letters by German soldiers who were shocked by the German atrocities were sent to Ambassador Gerard, because he was the representative of the United States, the leading neutral nation. The three letters which follow, in translation, were received by the American ambassador from German soldiers. They were obtained for this pamphlet from Secretary Grew; they illustrate both the system and the horror of it, which the writers felt.

Here is the protest of a German soldier, an eye-witness of the slaughter of Russian soldiers in the Masurian lakes and swamps:

"It was frightful, heart-rending, as these masses of human beings were driven to destruction. Above the terrible thunder of the cannon could be heard the heart-rending cries of the Russians: 'O Prussians! O Prussians!'—but there was no mercy. Our Captain had ordered: 'The whole lot must die; so rapid fire.' As I have heard, five men and one officer on our side went mad from those heart-rending cries. But most of my comrades and the officers joked as the unarmed and helpless Russians shrieked for mercy while they were being suffocated in the swamps and shot down. The order was: 'Close up and at it harder!' For days afterwards those heart-rending yells followed me

German soldiers protest against atrocities.

and I dare not think of them or I shall go mad. There is no God, there is no morality and no ethics any more. There are no human beings any more, but only beasts. Down with militarism.

"This was the experience of a Prussian soldier. At present wounded; Berlin, October 22, 1914.

"If you are a truth-loving man, please receive these lines from a common Prussian soldier."

Here is the testimony of another German soldier on the Eastern front.

"RUSSIAN POLAND, *December 18, '14.*

"In the name of Christianity I send you these words.

"My conscience forces me as a Christian German soldier to inform you of these lines.

"Wounded Russians are killed with the bayonet according to orders.

"And Russians who have surrendered are often shot down in masses according to orders, in spite of their heart-rending prayers.

"In hope that you, as the representative of a Christian State will protest against this, I sign myself,

"A GERMAN SOLDIER AND CHRISTIAN.

"I would give my name and regiment, but these words could get me court-martialed for divulging military secrets."

The third letter, from the Western front, shows the same horror of the system of which the writer was a witness.

"To the

"AMERICAN GOVERNMENT,

"*Washington, U. S. A.*

"Englishmen who have surrendered are shot down in small groups. With the French one is more considerate. I ask whether men let themselves be taken prisoner in order to be disarmed and shot down afterwards? Is that chivalry in battle? It is no longer a secret among the people; one hears everywhere that few prisoners are taken; they are shot down in small groups. They say naively: 'We don't want any unnecessary mouths to feed. Where there is no one to enter complaint, there is no judge.' Is there then no power in the world which can put an end to these murders and rescue the victims? Where is Christianity? Where is right? Might is right.

"A SOLDIER AND MAN WHO IS NO BARBARIAN."

Many of the Germans, as has been already indicated, do not believe the reports of the atrocities committed by the Belgian civilians and refuse to accept the system of frightfulness. The *Vorwärts*, the leading socialistic paper, which has a very wide circle of readers, has opposed the policy of frightfulness. All honor to its editors who have so courageously opposed powerful military authority! Its editorial, entitled "Our Foes," published August 23, 1914, reads as follows:

"We wish to show ourselves humane and friendly towards those whom the fortune of war has played into our hands as prisoners. But we wish also to be humane towards our foes on the field. We must fight them. \* \* \* But fighting does not mean murdering. It does not mean being barbarous. \* \* \*

"What should one say when even such an organ as the *Deutsches Offizier-Blatt* expresses its sympathy with a demand that 'the beasts' who are taken as franc-tireurs should not be killed but only wounded so that they may then be left to a fate 'which makes any help impossible?' Or what should we say when the *Deutsches Offizier-Blatt* states that 'a punitive destruction even of whole regions' cannot 'afford full recompense for the bones of a single murdered Pomeranian grenadier? Those are the desires of blood-thirsty fanatics and we are thoroughly ashamed of ourselves because it is possible that there are people among us who urge such things. Such disclosures in themselves, even if they are not followed out, are likely to place our fighting quite in the wrong before all the world. \* \* \* Let us show knightliness even though we are of the proletariat. Let us take such pains that when the fight has finally been fought it will also not be so difficult again to work in common as brothers with our class associates on the other side of the border."

On the following day, August 24, 1914, the *Vorwärts* returned to the attack in an editorial "Against Barbarism."

\* \* \* "One might, in the first place, possibly believe that such a demand for a bloody vengeance [against alleged Belgian outrages] emanates from a single disease-racked brain; but it appears that whole groups among certain classes who represent German *Kultur* want to indulge in orgies of barbarism and to devise a whole system for the purpose of organizing 'a war of revenge.'

"What of law and custom! Such thoughts do not stir a 'great nation'. Thus in a leading article of the *Berliner*

Some Germans demand "orgies of barbarism."

*Neueste Nachrichten*, the demand is made that all the authorities in Brussels—one, the second Burgomaster, is generously excepted—should be immediately seized and subjected to trial in order to expiate the wrongs which, according to fragmentary and highly uncertain reports, were said to have been committed by the people. They demand that the captured city should immediately pay a fine of 500,000,000 marks; that all stores of the conquered territory be requisitioned without paying the inhabitants a single penny for them."

Three years later, August 26, 1917, the *Vorwärts* quoted the following passage from the *Deutsche Tagezeitung*:

"We have a ring of politicians who hold that might makes right (*Machtpolitiker*) who despise the forces of the inner life and believe that they must eliminate all ethical points of view \* \* \* from foreign and social politics. For them, Germany of the present and of the future is the country of the Krupps and Borsigs, of the Zeppelins and the U-boats. Any idea of a connection between politics and morals is rejected and any reference to the right of a moral method of consideration is ridiculed as delusion and sentimentality."

Naturally the reports of the atrocities committed by the Germans and the Emperor's declaration that the war would henceforth assume a terrible character (*grausamen Charakter*) caused grave anxiety among the Belgians. In order to avoid the danger of reprisals, the Belgian Government, at the beginning of the invasion, had every Belgian newspaper publish each day the following notice on its first page, in large print:

Still hold same opinions.  
Belgian warning of danger.

"TO CIVILIANS.

"The Minister of the Interior advises civilians in case the enemy should show himself in their district:

"Not to fight;

"To utter no insulting or threatening words;

"To remain within their houses and close the windows; so that it will be impossible to allege that there was any provocation;

"To evacuate any houses or isolated hamlet which the soldiers may occupy in order to defend themselves, so that it cannot be alleged that civilians have fired;

"An act of violence committed by a single civilian would be a crime for which the law provides arrest and punishment. It is all the more reprehensible in that it might serve as a pretext for measures of oppression, resulting in bloodshed

or pillage, or the massacre of the innocent population with the women and children."

In the hope of arousing the sympathy and securing the aid of the neutral nations, the Belgian Government appointed a committee to ascertain the facts about the German practices. The evidence collected by the Belgian commissioners is detailed and explicit, and their reports give names, places, and dates. It is not possible, however, to include in this pamphlet more than the following summary of the charges they make against the Germans:

"1. That thousands of unoffending civilians, including women and children, were murdered by the Germans.

"2. That women had been outraged.

"3. That the custom of the German soldiers immediately on entering a town was to break into wineshops and the cellars of private houses and madden themselves with drink.

"4. That German officers and soldiers looted on a gigantic and systematic scale, and, with the connivance of the German authorities, sent back a large part of the booty to Germany.

"5. That the pillage had been accompanied by wanton destruction and by bestial and sacrilegious practices.

"6. That cities, towns, villages, and isolated buildings were destroyed.

"7. That in the course of such destruction human beings were burnt alive.

"8. That there was a uniform practice of taking hostages and thereby rendering great numbers of admittedly innocent people responsible for the alleged wrongdoings of others.

"9. That large numbers of civilian men and women had been virtually enslaved by the Germans, being forced against their will to work for the enemies of their country, or had been carried off like cattle into Germany, where all trace of them had been lost.

"10. That cities, towns, and villages had been fined and their inhabitants maltreated because of the success gained by the Belgian over the German soldiers.

"11. That public monuments and works of art had been wantonly destroyed by the invaders.

"12. And that generally the Regulations of the Hague Conference and the customs of civilized warfare had been ignored by the Germans, and that amongst other breaches of such regulations and customs, the Germans had adopted a new and inhuman practice of driving Belgian men, women, and children in front of them as a screen between them and the allied soldiers."



The German authorities undertook to defend themselves against the terrible indictment in the report published by the Belgian Government and appointed a German commission, which collected a huge mass of materials designed to show that their acts of cruelty were merely acts of reprisal necessitated by the deeds of the Belgians. This mass of testimony was published in a *German White Book* with the title *Die völkerrechtswidrige Führung des Belgischen Volkskriegs*.

The German commission declared in its findings that the German soldiers had acted with humanity, restraint, and Christian forbearance. But the sworn statements of German soldiers, which the commission published, show the reverse to be true.

It has been well said that the publication of this *German White Book* was "an amazing official blunder." The neutral world, whose good opinion Germany sought, was not convinced by it that the Belgians had committed the atrocities with which the Germans charged them. On the other hand, this *White Book*, published by the German Government, will be accepted by everyone as conclusive evidence of the massacres and other brutal deeds which were carried out as "reprisals" by the orders of the German military authorities in Belgium. The names of the German officers who gave the terrible orders are published officially, and "frequently the very men themselves come forward and depose coldly and callously to acts which have degraded the German Army and left a stain upon its banners that [future] generations of chivalry will not efface."

Indeed, in the light of the admissions of the *German White Book*, it is not too much to say that the time has already come which was spoken of by President Wilson in his dispatch to President Poincaré, September 19, 1914, when he said (speaking for "a nation which abhors inhuman practices in the conduct of a war"):

"The time will come when this great conflict is over and when the truth can be impartially determined. When that time arrives those responsible for violations of the rules of civilized warfare, if such violations have occurred, and for false charges against their adversaries, must of course bear the burden of the judgment of the world."

## CHARACTER OF THE MATERIAL USED IN THIS PAMPHLET.

In this pamphlet throughout, as in the preceding pages, the evidence is drawn mainly from German and American sources. The German sources include official proclamations and other official utterances, letters and diaries of German soldiers, and quotations from German newspapers. The diaries which are so frequently quoted form a unique source. The *Rules for Field Service* of the German Army advises each soldier to keep such a diary while on active service. Very many German soldiers who have been taken prisoner had kept such diaries, and these have been confiscated by the captors. Many have been published, frequently with facsimile reproductions to guarantee their authenticity. The best known collection was made by Bédier, whom Prof. Hollmann, of the University of Berlin, properly described as "the distinguished Prof. Joseph Bédier of the Collège de France." Of Bédier's publication Prof. Nyrop, of the University of Copenhagen, says:

"He has translated the diaries and commented upon them just as one does with all old historical documents, and, in order that everyone may be in a position to check up his work, he has also accompanied the account with facsimile copies of the documents he used. Here, accordingly, at the outset every proof of the evidence which he has employed is provided. No falsification is possible. The accounts are those of eyewitnesses, and these eyewitnesses are Germans. They tell what they themselves or their comrades have done, and Bédier accompanies their remarks with running comments which show that not only have common law and the Hague Conventions been violated, but sins have also been committed against the most elementary laws of humanity. Both the material and the presentation are unassailable. The details which are provided by the German soldiers in regard to their own violent acts are horror-striking."

Prof. Hollmann attempted to prove that Bédier had made mistakes in translating and interpreting, but he did not deny the genuineness of the diaries. "These notebooks," he says, "may

well be authentic and I accept this without further comment for all those which are provided with the name of their authors and whose authenticity can in any case be established after the war."

The American evidence is drawn mainly from material in the archives of the State Department. In addition, **American sources.** statements from our ambassadors and ministers and other well-known officials and authors are given. Messrs. Hoover, Kellogg, and Walcott have written statements especially for this pamphlet. All of this material is essentially the testimony of neutrals, for it is based wholly on observations made before the United States entered the war. Occasionally official documents and well authenticated facts from foreign sources are used.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to show that the system of **Frightfulness as a system.** frightfulness, which is itself the greatest atrocity, is the definite policy of the German Government, against which more humane German soldiers themselves revolted at times. For this reason it has not seemed necessary to set forth the individual acts of cruelty; such acts are cited only when necessary to illustrate the system. Anyone who wishes to read chapters of horrors can find them in the *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages*, presided over by the former British Ambassador to this country and therefore generally known as "the Bryce report;" in the official reports by the Belgian *Commission d'Enquête*; in the official French reports compiled under the auspices of the French minister for foreign affairs; in many other publications, and especially in the conclusive admissions of the official *German White Book* cited above. The last, published by the German Government, is the most damning testimony concerning the system of frightfulness.

## TREATMENT OF CIVILIANS.

### I. MASSACRES.

In the wars waged in ancient times it was taken for granted that conquered peoples might be either killed, tortured, or held as slaves; that their property would be taken and that their lands would be devastated. "*Vae victis!*—woe to the conquered!" For two centuries or more there has been a steady advance in introducing ideas of humanity and especially in confining the evils of warfare to the combatants. The ideal seemed to have become so thoroughly established as a part of international law that the powers at The Hague thought it sufficient merely to state the general principles in Article XLVI of the regulations: "Family honors and rights, the lives of persons and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Private property can not be confiscated." Germany, in common with the other powers, solemnly pledged her faith to keep this article, but her military leaders had no intention of doing so. They had been trained in the ideas voiced by Gen. von Hartmann 40 years ago: "Terrorism is seen to be a relatively gentle procedure, useful to keep the masses of the people in a state of obedience." This had been Bismarck's policy, too. According to Moritz Busch, Bismarck's biographer, Bismarck, exasperated by the French resistance, which was still continuing in January, 1871, said:

"If in the territory which we occupy, we can not supply everything for our troops, from time to time we shall send a flying column into the localities which are recalcitrant. We shall shoot, hang, and burn. After that has happened a few times, the inhabitants will finally come to their senses."

**Bismarck's idea in 1871.**

The frightfulness taught by the German leaders had held full sway in Belgium. This is best seen in the entries in the diaries of the individual German soldiers.

## EXTRACTS FROM GERMAN WAR DIARIES.

“During the night of August 15-16 Engineer Gr—— gave the alarm in the town of Visé. Everyone was shot or taken prisoner, and the houses were burnt. The prisoners were made to march and keep up with the troops.” (From the diary of non-commissioned officer Reinhold Koehn of the Second Battalion of Engineers, Third Army Corps.)

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“A horrible bath of blood. The whole village burnt, the French thrown into the blazing houses, civilians with the rest.” (From the diary of Private Hassemmer, of the Eighth Army Corps.)

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“In the night of August 18-19 the village of Saint-Maurice was punished for having fired on German soldiers by being burnt to the ground by the German troops (two regiments, the 12th Landwehr and the 17th). The village was surrounded, men posted about a yard from one another, so that no one could get out. Then the Uhlans set fire to it, house by house. Neither man, woman, nor child could escape; only the greater part of the live stock was carried off, as that could be used. Anyone who ventured to come out was shot down. All the inhabitants left in the village were burnt with the houses.” (From the diary of Private Karl Scheufele, of the Third Bavarian Regiment of Landwehr Infantry.)

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“At 10 o'clock in the evening the first battalion of the 178th marched down the steep incline into the burning village to the north of Dinant. A terrific spectacle of ghastly beauty. At the entrance to the village lay about fifty dead civilians, shot for having fired upon our troops from ambush. In the course of the night many others were also shot, so that we counted over 200. Women and children, lamp in hand, were forced to look on at the horrible scene. We ate our rice later in the midst of the corpses, for we had had nothing since morning. When we searched the houses we found plenty of wine and spirit, but no eatables. Captain Hamann was drunk.” (This last phrase in shorthand.)

(From the diary of Private Philipp, of the One Hundred and Seventy-eighth Regiment of Infantry, Twelfth Army Corps.)

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“Aug. 6th crossed frontier. Inhabitants on border very good to us and give us many things. There is no difference noticeable.

“Aug. 23rd, Sunday (between Birnal and Dinant, village of Disonge). At 11 o'clock the order comes to advance after the artillery has thoroughly prepared the ground ahead. The Pioneers and Infantry Regiment 178 were marching in front of us. Near a small village the latter were fired on by the inhabitants. About 220 inhabitants were shot and the village was burnt—artillery is continuously shooting—the village lies in a large ravine. Just now, 6 o'clock in the afternoon, the crossing of the Maas begins near Dinant \* \* \* All villages, châteaux, and houses are burnt down during this night. It was a beautiful sight to see the fires all round us in the distance.

“Aug. 24th. In every village one finds only heaps of ruins and many dead. (From the diary of Matbern, Fourth Company, Eleventh Jäger Battalion, Marburg.)

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“A shell burst near the 11th Company, and wounded seven men, three very severely. At 5 o'clock we were ordered by the officer in command of the regiment to shoot all the male inhabitants of Nomény, because the population was foolishly attempting to stay the advance of the German troops by force of arms. We broke into the houses, and seized all who resisted, in order to execute them according to martial law. The houses which had not been already destroyed by the French artillery and our own were set on fire by us, so that nearly the whole town was reduced to ashes. It is a terrible sight when helpless women and children, utterly destitute, are herded together and driven into France.” (From the diary of Private Fischer, Eighth Bavarian Regiment of Infantry, Thirty-third Reserve Division.)

Other German soldiers, too, we are glad to see, show their horror at the foul deeds.

"The inhabitants have fled in the village. It was horrible. There was clotted blood on all the beards, and what faces one saw, terrible to behold! The dead, sixty in all, were at once buried. Among them were many old women, some old men, and a half-delivered woman, awful to see; three children had clasped each other, and died thus. The altar and the vaults of the church are shattered. They had a telephone there to communicate with the enemy. This morning, September 2, all the survivors were expelled, and I saw four little boys carrying a cradle, with a baby five or six months old in it, on two sticks. All this was terrible to see. Shot after shot! Thunderbolt after thunderbolt! Everything is given over to pillage; fowls and the rest all killed. I saw a mother, too, with her two children; one had a great wound on the head and had lost an eye." (From the diary of Lance-Corporal Paul Spielmann, of the Ersatz, First Brigade of Infantry of the Guard.)

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\* \* \* In the night the inhabitants of Liège became mutinous. Forty persons were shot and 15 houses demolished, 10 soldiers shot. The sights here make you cry.

"On the 23rd August everything quiet. The inhabitants have so far given in. Seventy students were shot, 200 kept prisoners. Inhabitants returning to Liège.

"Aug. 24th. At noon with 36 men on sentry duty. Sentry duty is A 1, no post allocated to me. Our occupation, apart from bathing, is eating and drinking. We live like God in Belgium." (From the diary of Joh. van der Schoot, reservist of the Tenth Company, Thirty-ninth Reserve Infantry Regiment, Seventh Reserve Army Corps.)

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"August 17th. In the afternoon I had a look at the little château belonging to one of the King's secretaries (not at home). Our men had behaved like regular vandals. They had looted the cellar first, and then they had turned their attention to the bedrooms and thrown things about all over the place. They had even made fruitless efforts to smash the safe open. Everything was topsy-turvy—magnificent furniture, silk, and even china. That's what happens when the men are allowed to requisition

for themselves. I am sure they must have taken away a heap of useless stuff simply for the pleasure of looting."

"Aug. 23rd. \* \* \* Our men came back and said that at the point where the valley joined the Meuse we could not get on any further as the villagers were shooting at us from every house. We shot the whole lot—16 of them. They were drawn up in three ranks; the same shot did for three at a time.

" \* \* \* The men had already shown their brutal instincts; \* \* \*

"The sight of the bodies of all the inhabitants who had been shot was indescribable. Every house in the whole village was destroyed. We dragged the villagers one after another out of the most unlikely corners. The men were shot as well as the women and children who were in the convent, since shots had been fired from the convent windows; and we burnt it afterwards.

"The inhabitants might have escaped the penalty by handing over the guilty and paying 15,000 francs.

"The inhabitants fired on our men again. The division took drastic steps to stop the villages being burnt and the inhabitants being shot. The pretty little village of Gue d'Ossus, however, was apparently set on fire without cause. A cyclist fell off his machine and his rifle went off. He immediately said he had been shot at. All the inhabitants were burnt in the houses. I hope there will be no more such horrors.

"At Leppe apparently 200 men were shot. There must have been some innocent men among them. In future we shall have to hold an inquiry as to their guilt instead of shooting them.

"In the evening we marched to Maubert-Fontaine. Just as we were having our meal the alarm was sounded—everyone is very jumpy.

"September 3rd. Still at Rethel, on guard over prisoners. \* \* \* The houses are charming inside. The middle class in France has magnificent furniture. We found stylish pieces everywhere and beautiful silk, but in what a state \* \* \* Good God! \* \* \* Every bit of furniture broken, mirrors smashed. The Vandals themselves could not have done more damage. This place is a disgrace to our army. The inhabitants who fled could not have expected, of course, that all their goods would have been left intact after so many troops had



passed. But the column commanders are responsible for the greater part of the damage, as they could have prevented the looting and destruction. The damage amounts to millions of marks; even the safes have been attacked.

"In a solicitor's house, in which, as luck would have it, all was in excellent taste, including a collection of old lace and Eastern works of art, everything was smashed to bits.

"I could not resist taking a little memento myself here and there. \* \* \* One house was particularly elegant, everything in the best taste. The hall was of light oak; I found a splendid raincoat under the staircase and a camera for Felix." (From the diary of an officer in the One Hundred Seventy-eighth Regiment, Twelfth Saxon Corps.)

But this horror apparently was not shared by the German commander in chief, as is evident from the following:

"ORDER.

*"To the People of Liège.*

"The population of Andenne, after making a display of peaceful intentions towards our troops, attacked them in the most treacherous manner. With my authorisation, the General commanding these troops has reduced the town to ashes and has had 110 persons shot.

"I bring this fact to the knowledge of the people of Liège in order that they may know what fate to expect should they adopt a similar attitude.

"Liège, 22nd August, 1914.

"GENERAL VON BÜLOW."

The following "Order of the Day" shows how the town of Huy escaped a like fate. Drunken German soldiers were frightened and began to shoot men and burn houses. The commanding officer condemned this because it was not done by his order and because two German soldiers were wounded. It is evident that massacres and arson were permitted only when commanded by the officers.

"Last night a shooting affray took place. There is no evidence that the inhabitants of the towns had any arms in their houses, nor is there evidence that the people took part in the shooting; on the contrary, it seems that the soldiers were under the

influence of alcohol, and began to shoot in a senseless fear of a hostile attack.

"The behavior of the soldiers during the night, with very few exceptions, makes a scandalous impression.

"It is highly deplorable when officers or noncommissioned officers set houses on fire without permission or order of the commanding, or, as the case may be, the senior officer, or when by their attitude they encourage the rank and file to burn and plunder.

"I require that everywhere strict instructions shall be given with regard to the treatment of the life and property of the civilian population.

"I prohibit all shooting in the towns without the order of an officer.

"The miserable behaviour of the men caused a noncommissioned officer and a private to be seriously wounded by German bullets.

"The Commanding Officer,

"MAJOR VON BASSEWITZ."

In his report of September 12, 1917, to the Secretary of State, Minister Whitlock has much to tell of the policy of frightfulness. The following passages refer to the subject of massacres:

"Summary executions took place [at Dinant] without the least semblance of judgment. The names and number of the victims are not known, but they must be numerous. I have been unable to obtain precise details in this respect and the number of persons who have fled is unknown. Among the persons who were shot are: Mr. Defoin, mayor of Dinant; Sasserath, first alderman; Nimmer, aged 70; consul for the Argentine Republic, Victor Poncelet, who was executed in the presence of his wife and seven children; Wasseige and his two sons; Messrs. Gustave and Léon Nicaise, two very old men; Jules Monin and others were shot in the cellar of their brewery. Mr. Camille Pistte and son, aged 17; Phillippart, Piedfort, his wife and daughter; Miss Marsigny. During the execution of about forty inhabitants

Germans force  
wives to witness  
husbands' execu-  
tions.

of Dinant, the Germans placed before the condemned their wives and children. It is thus that Madame Albin who had just given birth to a child, three days previously, was brought on a mattress by German soldiers to witness the execution of her husband; her cries and supplications were so pressing that her husband's life was spared."

"On the 26th of August German soldiers entered various streets [of Louvain] and ordered the inhabitants of the houses to proceed to the Place de la Station, where the bodies of nearly a dozen assassinated persons were lying. Women and children

were separated from the men and forced to remain on the Place de la Station during the whole day. They had to witness the execution of many of their fellow-citizens, who were for the most part shot at the side of the square, near the house of Mr. Hemaide. The women and children, after having remained on the square for more than 15 hours, were allowed to depart. The Gardes Civiques of Louvain were also taken prisoners and sent to Germany, to the camp of Münster, where they were held for several weeks.

“On Thursday, August 27th, order was given to the inhabitants to leave Louvain because the city was to be bombarded. Old men, women, children, the sick, priests, nuns, were driven on the roads like cattle. More than 10,000 of the inhabitants were driven as far as Tirlemont, 18 kilometers from Louvain.”

“One of the most sorely tried communities was that of the little village of Tamines, down in what is known as the Borinage, the coal fields near Charleroi. Tamines is a mining village in the Sambre; it is a collection of small cottages sheltering about 5,000 inhabitants, mostly all poor laborers.

“The little graveyard in which the church stands bears its mute testimony to the horror of the event. **Massacres in Tamines.** There are hundreds of new-made graves, each with its small wooden cross and its bit of flowers; the crosses are so closely huddled that there is scarcely room to walk between them. The crosses are alike and all bear the same date, the sinister date of August 22d, 1914.”

“But whether their hands were cut off or not, whether they were impaled on bayonets or not, children were shot down, by military order, in cold blood. In the awful crime of the Rock of Bayard, there overlooking the Meuse below Dinant, infants in their mother's arms were shot down without mercy. The deed, never surpassed in cruelty by any band of savages, is described by the Bishop of Namur himself:

“One scene surpasses in horror all others; it is the fusillade of the Rocher Bayard near Dinant. It appears to have been ordered by Colonel Meister. This fusillade made many victims among the nearby parishes, especially those of des Rivages and Neffe. It caused the death of nearly 90 persons, without distinction of age or sex. Among the victims were babies in arms, boys and girls, fathers and mothers of families, even old men.

“It was there that 12 children under the age of 6 perished from the fire of the executioners, 6 of them as they lay in their mothers' arms:

“The child Fiévet, 3 weeks old.

“Maurice Bétemps, 11 months old.

“Nelly Pollet, 11 months old.

"Gilda Genon, 18 months old.

"Gilda Marchot, 2 years old.

"Clara Struvay, 2 years and 6 months.

"The pile of bodies comprised also many children from 6 to 14 years. Eight large families have entirely disappeared. Four have but one survivor. Those men that escaped death—and many of whom were riddled with bullets—were obliged to bury in a summary and hasty fashion their fathers, mothers, brothers, or sisters; then after having been relieved of their money and being placed in chains they were sent to Cassel [Prussia]."

Mr. Hugh Gibson, the secretary of our legation in Belgium, visited Louvain during its systematic destruction by the Germans. In *A Journal from our Legation in Belgium*, New York, 1917, pages 164-165, he relates what the German officers told him:

"It was a story of clearing out civilians from a large part of the town, a systematic routing out of men from cellars and garrets, wholesale shootings, the generous use of machine guns, and the free application of the torch—the whole story enough to make one see red. And for our guidance it was impressed on us that this would make people *respect* Germany and think twice about resisting her."

German pastors and professors far from the excitement of the firing have defended this policy of frightfulness, e. g.:

"We are not only compelled to accept the war that is forced upon us \* \* \* but are even compelled to carry on this war with a cruelty, a ruthlessness, an employment of every imaginable device, unknown in any previous war." Pastor D. Baumgarten, in *Deutsche Reden in schwerer Zeit*, "German Speeches in Difficult Days."

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"The fate that Belgium has called down upon herself is hard for the individual, but not too hard for this political structure (*Staatsgebilde*), for the destinies of the immortal great nations stand so high that they cannot but have the right, in case of need, to stride over existences that cannot defend themselves, but live, as parasites, upon the rivalries of the great." Prof. H. Oncken, in *Süddeutsche Monatsheft*, "South German Monthly."

Would they have dared to defend such a policy if they could have seen the announcement sent out by the parish of St. Hadelin with its silent eloquence?

This is an invitation to a service in memory of 60 men and women from one parish, of whom all but two were killed by the Germans in the massacre of August 5 and 6, 1914. The closing sentences are:

PRAY TO GOD FOR THE REPOSE OF THEIR SOULS.

Gentle Heart of Mary, be my refuge.  
 Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.  
 St. Joseph, patron of Belgium, pray for us.  
 St. Hadelin, patron of the parish, pray for us.  
 Sainte Barbe, patroness of kindly death, pray for us.

After reading such ghastly accounts, many of them written by German eyewitnesses, and knowing that similar tales were published widely in the German newspapers, it is difficult to read with patience such words as these:

"The German Army (in which I of course include the Navy) is to-day the greatest institute for moral education in the world."

"The German soldiers alone are thoroughly disciplined, and have never so much as hurt a hair of a single innocent human being." Houston Stewart Chamberlain, in *Kriegsaufsätze*, "War Essays", 1914.

"We see everywhere how our soldiers respect the sacred defencelessness of woman and child." Prof. G. Roethe, in *Deutsche Reden in Schwerer Zeit*, "German Speeches in Difficult Days."

## II. HOSTAGES AND SCREENS.

The massacres described above were a part of the German system of frightfulness. Another feature of this system was the use of civilians as hostages and for screens.

In discussing the use of hostages the *German War Book* (*Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*) says:

"By hostages are understood those persons who, as security or bail for the fulfillment of treaties, promises, or other claims, are taken or detained by the opposing State or its army. Their provision has been less usual in recent wars, as a result of which some professors of the law of nations have wrongly

Views of the  
 German General  
 Staff.

decided that the taking of hostages has disappeared from the practice of civilized nations. \* \* \*

“A new application of ‘hostage right’ was practiced by the German Staff in the war of 1870, when it compelled leading citizens from French towns and villages to accompany trains and locomotives in order to protect the railway communications which were threatened by the people. Since the lives of peaceable inhabitants were, without any fault on their part, thereby exposed to grave danger, every writer outside Germany has stigmatised this measure as contrary to the law of nations and as unjustified towards the inhabitants of the country.”

Although their deeds in the Franco-Prussian war had been universally condemned, as they themselves admitted, the leaders did not intend to abandon such a useful measure of frightfulness. In *L'Interprète Militaire* the forms were provided for such acts in the next war. Both in Belgium and in France the Germans have constantly used hostages. The evidence is contained in the proclamations of the governing authorities and also in the diaries of the German soldiers. A few examples from these will illustrate the system which was employed.

A specimen of the arbitrariness and cruelty is furnished by the proclamation of Maj. Dieckmann, from which the following sections are presented:

FROM A PROCLAMATION BY MAJ. DIECKMANN, SEPTEMBER, 1914.

“4. After 9 a. m. on the 7th September, I will permit the houses in Beyne-Heusay, Grivegnée, and Bois-de-Breux to be inhabited by the persons who lived in them formerly, as long as these persons are not forbidden to frequent these localities by official prohibition.

“5. In order to be sure that the above-mentioned permit will not be abused, the Burgomasters of Beyne-Heusay and of Grivegnée must immediately prepare lists of prominent persons who will be held as hostages for 24 hours each at Fort Fléron. September 6th, 1914, for the first time [the period of detention shall be] from 6 p. m. until September 7th at midday.

“The life of these hostages depends on the population of the above-mentioned Communes remaining quiet under all circumstances.

“During the night it is severely forbidden to show any luminous signals. Bicycles are permitted only between 7 a. m. and 5 p. m. (German time).

"6. From the list which is submitted to me I shall designate prominent persons who shall be hostages from noon of one day until the following midday. If the substitute is not there in due time, the hostage must remain another 24 hours at the fort. After these 24 hours the hostage will incur the penalty of death, if the substitute fails to appear.

"7. Priests, burgomasters, and the other members of the Council are to be taken first as hostages.

"8. I insist that all civilians who move about in my district \* \* \* show their respect to the German officers by taking off their hats, or lifting their hands to their heads in military salute. In case of doubt, every German soldier must be saluted. Anyone who does not do this must expect the German military to make themselves respected by every means."

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A PROCLAMATION BY VON BÜLOW, IN NAMUR, AUGUST, 1914.

"1. The Belgian and French soldiers must be delivered as prisoners of war before 4 o'clock in front of the prison. Citizens who do not obey will be condemned to hard labor for life in Germany.

"The rigorous inspection of houses will commence at 4 o'clock. Every soldier found will be immediately shot.

"2. Arms, powder, and dynamite must be given up at 4 o'clock. Penalty, being shot.

"Citizens who know of a store of the above must inform the burgomaster, under penalty of hard labor for life.

"3. Every street will be occupied by a German guard, who will take ten hostages from each street, whom they will keep under surveillance. If there is any rising in the street, the ten hostages will be shot.

"4. Doors may not be locked, and at night after 8 o'clock there must be lights at three windows in every house.

"5. It is forbidden to be in the street after 8 o'clock. The inhabitants of Namur must understand that there is no greater and more horrible crime than to compromise the existence of the town and the life of its citizens by risings against the German Army.

"The Commander of the Town,  
"VON BÜLOW.

"NAMUR, 25th August, 1914. (Printed by Chantraine)."

PROCLAMATION POSTED AT BRUSSELS AND ELSEWHERE,  
OCTOBER 5, 1914.

"September 25th, in the evening, the railroad track and telegraph were destroyed on the line Lovenjoul-Vertryck. \* \* \*

"Henceforth the villages situated nearest the spot where such events take place—it is of no consequence whether they are guilty or not—will be punished without mercy. For this purpose hostages have been taken from all places in the vicinity of railways in danger of similar attacks; and at the first attempt to destroy any railway, telegraph, or telephone line they will be immediately shot.

"Furthermore, all troops entrusted with the protection of railways have received orders to shoot anyone approaching railways or telegraph or telephone lines in a suspicious manner.

"The Governor General of Belgium,

"BARON VON DER GOLTZ,  
"Field-Marshal."

PROCLAMATION TO THE POPULATION OF RHEIMS.

"In order to insure sufficiently the safety of our troops and the tranquility of the population of Rheims, the persons mentioned have been seized as hostages by the Commander of the German Army. These hostages will be shot if there is the least disorder. On the other hand, if the town remains perfectly calm and quiet these hostages and inhabitants will be placed under the protection of the German Army.

"THE GENERAL COMMANDING.

"RHEIMS, 12th September, 1914."

Beneath this proclamation there were posted the names of 81 hostages and a statement that others had also been seized as hostages. The lives of all these men depended in reality upon the interpretation which the German military authorities might give to the elastic phrase, "the least disorder," in the proclamation.

Hugh Gibson, in *A Journal from our Legation in Belgium*, page 184, explains what was likely to happen:

"Another thing is, that on entering a town, they hold the burgomaster, the procureur du roi, and other authorities as hostages to insure good behavior by the population. Of course, the hoodlum class would like nothing better than to see their natural enemies, the defenders of law and order, ignominiously



shot, and they do not restrain themselves a bit on account of the hostages."

## STATEMENT FROM DIARY OF BOMBARDIER WETZEL.

"Aug. 8th. First fight and set fire to several villages.

"Aug. 9th. Returned to old quarters; there we searched all the houses and shot the mayor and shot one man down from the chimney pot, and then we again set fire to the village.

"On the 18th August Letalle (?) captured 10 men with three priests because they have shot down from the church tower. They were brought to the village of Ste. Marie.

"Oct. 5th. We were in quarters in the evening at Willekamm. Lieut. Radfels was quartered in the mayor's house and there had two prisoners (tied together) on a short whip, and in case anything happened they were to be killed.

"Oct. 11th. We had no fight, but we caught about 20 men and shot them." (From the diary of Bombardier Wetzel, Second Mounted Battery, First Kurhessian Field Artillery, Regiment No. 11.)

The Germans also found it convenient on many occasions to secure civilians, both men and women, who could be forced to march or stand in front of the troops, so that the countrymen of the civilians would be compelled first to kill their own people if they resisted the Germans. This usage is illustrated in the following:

## LETTER OF LIEUT. EBERLEIN.

"OCTOBER 7, 1914.

"But we arrested three other civilians, and then I had a brilliant idea. We gave them chairs, and we then ordered them to go and sit out in the middle of the street. On their part, pitiful entreaties; on ours, a few blows from the butt end of the rifle. Little by little one becomes terribly callous at this business. At last they were all seated outside in the street. I do not know what anguished prayers they may have said but I noticed that their hands were convulsively clasped the whole time. I pitied these fellows, but the method was immediately effective.

"The flank fire from the houses quickly diminished, so that we were able to occupy the opposite house and thus to dominate the principal street. Every living being who showed himself in the street was shot. The artillery on its side had done good work all this time, and when, toward 7 o'clock in the evening,

the brigade advanced to the assault to relieve us I was in a position to report that Saint Dié had been cleared of the enemy.

"Later on I learned that the regiment of reserve which entered Saint Dié further to the north had tried the same experiment. The four civilians whom they had compelled in the same way to sit out in the street were killed by French bullets. I myself saw them lying in the middle of the street near the hospital."

"A. EBERLEIN,  
"First-Lieutenant."

Letter published on the 7th October, 1914, in the "Vorabendblatt" of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*.

Minister Whitlock, in his report of September 12, 1917, to the Secretary of State, gives an instance of this German practice of seeking protection.

"The Germans attacked Hougaerde on the 18th August; the Belgian troops were holding the Gette Bridge in the village. The Germans forced the parish priest of Autgaerden to walk in front of them as a shield. As they neared the barricade the Belgian soldiers fired and the priest was killed. After the retreat of the Belgians the Germans shot 4 men, burned 50 houses, and looted 100."

Hugh Gibson, in *A Journal from our Legation in Belgium*, page 155, gives another incident:

"Two old priests have staggered into the ——— legation more dead than alive after having been compelled to walk ahead of the German troops for miles as a sort of protecting screen. One of them is ill, and it is said that he may die as a result of what he has gone through."

#### STATEMENTS OF CARDINAL MERCIER AND HIS FELLOW BISHOPS.

"At the time of the invasion Belgian civilians, in twenty places, were made to take part in operations of war against their own country. At Termonde, Lebbeke, Dinant, and elsewhere in many places, peaceable citizens, women, and children were forced to march in front of German regiments or to make a screen before them.

"The system of hostages was carried out with a fierce cruelty. The proclamation of August 4th, quoted above, declared, without circumlocution: 'Hostages will be freely taken.'

Cardinal Mercier's judgment on the system of hostages. "An official proclamation, posted at Liège, in the early days of August, ran thus: 'Every aggression com-

mitted against the German troops by any persons other than soldiers in uniform not only exposes the guilty person to be immediately shot, but will also entail the severest reprisals against all the inhabitants, and especially against those natives of Liège who have been detained as hostages in the citadel of Liège by the commandant of the German troops.'

"These hostages are Monsignor Rutten, Bishop of Liège; M. Kleyer, burgomaster of Liège; the senators, representatives, and the permanent deputy and sheriff of Liège."

The above quotation is taken from *An Appeal to Truth*, addressed Nov. 24, 1915, by Cardinal Mercier and the other bishops of Belgium to the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Will Irwin on brutality of German drive through Belgium. "Some ten or a dozen American correspondents, of whom I was one, witnessed the First German drive through Belgium. Most of us were so appalled and horrified by what we saw as to become anti-German for life." Will Irwin, in *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 6, 1917, p. 41.

### III. FINES.

The contracting nations, including Germany, who signed the Conventions of the Second Peace Conference at The Hague, 1907, pledged themselves to the following:

"Article L. No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they can not be regarded as jointly and severally responsible."

Germany's promises in Hague conventions.

"Article LII. Requisitions in kind and services shall not be demanded from municipalities or inhabitants except for the deeds of the army of occupation. They shall be in proportion to the resources of the country, and of such a nature as not to involve the inhabitants in the obligation of taking part in military operations against their own country."

The German authorities have violated these articles from the very beginning. As soon as they invaded Belgium, heavy fines were laid upon individual communities as reprisals for some act against the German Army or its regulations which was committed within their boundaries. In *An Appeal to Truth* Cardinal Mercier cites the following cases:

German violations of Hague conventions.

“Malines, a working-class town, without resources, has had a fine of 20,000 marks inflicted on it because the burgomaster did not inform the military authority of a journey which the Cardinal, deprived of the use of his motor car, had been obliged to make on foot. In fact, upon the flimsiest pretexts heavy fines are inflicted on communes. The commune of Puers was subjected to a fine of 3,000 marks because a telegraph wire was broken, although the inquiry showed that it had given way through wear.”

In addition to such arbitrary, sporadic exactions, in December, 1914, the Germans demanded 40,000,000 francs (\$8,000,000) a month to be paid by the Belgian Provinces jointly.

Concerning this enormous imposition Cardinal Mercier says, in the *Appeal to Truth*:

“The essential condition of the legality of a contribution of this kind, according to the Hague Convention, is that it should bear *relation to the resources of the country*, article 52.

“Now, in December, 1914, Belgium was devastated. Contributions of war imposed on the towns and innumerable requisitions in kind had exhausted her. The greater part of the factories were idle, and in those, which were still at work, raw materials were, contrary to all law, being freely commandeered.

“It was on this impoverished Belgium, living on foreign charity, that a contribution of nearly 500,000,000 francs was imposed.”

The German authorities were not satisfied with this impoverishing levy. In November, 1915, one month before the expiration of the twelve-month period fixed for the levy, they decreed that this contribution of 40,000,000 francs a month should be paid for an indefinite period. In November, 1916, they increased the levy to 50,000,000 francs a month, in May, 1917, to 60,000,000 francs a month. In addition, the German authorities have continued to levy fines upon towns and villages for acts committed in their neighborhood, although they had no proof that these acts had been committed by any inhabitant of the city or village thus fined. (Compare taking of hostages, noted above.)

The German military rulers have also made the families responsible for acts committed by or charged against members as is shown in the following examples, which are quoted from the *Appeal to Truth*, cited above.

"The Belgian Government has sent orders to rejoin the army to the militiamen of several classes. Family made \* \* \* All those who receive these orders responsible. \* \* \* are strictly forbidden to act upon them. \* \* \* *In case of disobedience the family of the militiaman will be held equally responsible.*"

"A warning of the Governor General, dated January 26th, 1915, renders the *members of the family* responsible if a Belgian fit for military service, between the ages of 16 and 40, goes to Holland."

The Commander in Chief of the German army in Belgium posted a proclamation declaring:

"The villages where acts of hostility shall be committed by the inhabitants against our troops *will be burned.* Villages made responsible.

"For all destruction of roads, railways, bridges, etc., *the villages in the neighborhood of the destruction will be held responsible.*

"The punishments announced above will be carried out severely and without mercy. *The whole community will be held responsible.* Hostages will be taken in large numbers. The heaviest war taxes will be levied."

At the end of the *Appeal to Truth* Cardinal Mercier says:

"But we can not say all here, nor quote all.

"If, however, our readers wish for the proof of the accusations \* \* \* we shall be glad to furnish them. There is not in our letter, nor in the Cardinal Mercier has proofs. four annexes [to the *Appeal to Truth*], one allegation of which we have not the proofs in our records."

A striking illustration of the German methods is contained in the archives of the State Department, because the Prince of Monaco appealed to President Wilson against the injustice of a fine imposed upon a small and impoverished village. The following documents from the State Department archives tell the story. They need no comments.

"PARIS, Oct. 27, 1914.

"SECRETARY OF STATE,

"Washington.

"Prince of Monaco called this morning and asked that the following case be submitted to the President:

"Prince states that General von Bülow for weeks has been inhabiting Prince's ancestral chateau near Rheims, historical monument, containing works of art and family heirlooms; that von Bülow  
The case of  
Sissonne

has imposed fine of five hundred thousand francs on village of Sissonne some miles distant from chateau, because broken glass found on road near village. Sissonne being unable alone to pay has raised with a number of other neighboring villages one hundred twenty-five thousand francs but von Bülow has sent two messengers from Sissonne to Prince that unless latter pays fine for Sissonne the chateau and adjoining village, as well as Sissonne, will be destroyed on November first. Prince has answered refusing to pay sum now but willing to give his word to German Emperor that amount would be paid after removal of danger of fresh war incidents. Prince now fearful lest returning messengers, as well as male employees on his estate, be shot because of refusal to pay.

"I have arranged meeting this afternoon between Spanish Ambassador and Prince, to whom I have suggested that matter be presented to German Government through Spanish Ambassador at Berlin inasmuch as Prince's threatened property is in France.

"HERRICK."

"ARMY HEADQUARTERS,  
"Warmériville, Sept. 19th, 1914.

"To the MAYOR OF THE COMMUNE OF SISSONNE,  
"Sissonne.

"It has been conclusively proven that the road between Sissonne and the railway station of Montaigu was, on September 18th, strewn with broken glass along a distance of one kilometre and at intervals of 50 metres, for the purpose, no doubt, of impeding automobile traffic.

Von Bülow's  
levy on Sissonne.

"I hold the commune of Sissonne responsible for this act of hostility on the part of its inhabitants and I punish the said commune by levying upon it a contribution of 500,000 francs (five hundred thousand francs).

"This sum must be entirely paid into the Treasury of the Etape by October 15th.

"The Inspection of the Etape now at Montcornet has been directed to enforce execution of this order.

"The General Commander in Chief of the Army.

"VON BÜLOW."

LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE GERMAN EMPEROR.

"MONACO, Oct. 22nd, 1914.

"SIRE:

"I forward to Your Majesty several documents relating to a very grave and urgent matter.

“The General von Bülow has caused to be occupied since one month and a half my residence of Marchais, situated at five kilometres from the village of Sissonne. The general has levied upon the fifteen hundred inhabitants of this poor ruined village a war contribution of five hundred thousand francs, of which they are unable to pay more than one-quarter. Moreover, he has sent to me two emissaries bearing a document in which he threatens to destroy my property and the village of Marchais, over and above that of Sissonne, in the event of my not disbursing myself the sum in question before the end of the month of October.

“That is how a Prussian general treats a reigning Prince who for 45 years has been a friend to Germany, and who in all the countries of the world is surrounded with respect and gratitude for his work.

“In reply to the summons of the General von Bülow I have given my word of honor to complete the above contribution in order to avert a horrible action accomplished in cold blood, but adding that as a sovereign Prince I submit this matter to the judgment of the Emperor by declaring that the said sum shall be paid when the Château de Marchais will be free from the danger of intentional destruction.

“I am, with great respect, Your Majesty’s devoted servant and cousin,

“ALBERT, *Prince of Monaco.*”

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LETTER ADDRESSED TO GEN. VON BÜLOW.

“MONACO, Oct. 22nd, 1914.

“GENERAL.

“To avert from the Commune of Sissonne and that of Marchais the rigorous treatment with which you have threatened them, I give my word of honor to remit to His Majesty the Emperor William, should the war come to an end without intentional damage being caused to my residence or to these two communes, the necessary sum to complete the amount of five hundred thousand francs imposed by you upon Sissonne.

“As a Sovereign Prince, I wish to deal in this matter with the Sovereign who, during fifteen years, called me his friend and has decorated me with the Order of the Knight of the Black Eagle.

“My conscience and my dignity place me above fear, as also my personal will shall elevate me above regret; but should you destroy the Château de Marchais which is one of the centers of universal science and charity, should you reserve to this archeological and historical gem the treatment you have given to the Cathedral of Rheims—when no reprehensible action has been committed there—the whole world will judge between you and myself.

“I tender to Your Excellency the expression of my high regard.

“ALBERT, *Sovereign Prince of Monaco.*”

#### IV. DEPORTATIONS AND FORCED LABOR.

Until the present war the whole civilized world has boasted of its advance in humanity. This advance had been marked in many fields, and in none had greater progress been made than in the protection to be given to the private citizen in an invaded country. As far back as 1863, in the *Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, the United States declared:

“22. Nevertheless, as civilization has advanced during the last centuries, so has likewise steadily advanced, especially in war on land, the distinction between the private individual belonging to a hostile country and the hostile country itself, with its men in arms. The principle has been more and more acknowledged that the unarmed citizen is to be spared in person, property, and honor as much as the exigencies of war will admit.

“23. Private citizens are no longer murdered, enslaved, or carried off to distant parts, and the inoffensive individual is as little disturbed in his private relations as the commander of the hostile troops can afford to grant in the overruling demands of a vigorous war.

“24. The almost universal rule in remote times was, and continues to be with barbarous armies, that the private individual of the hostile country is destined to suffer every privation of liberty and protection, and every disruption of family ties. Protection was, and still is with uncivilized people, the exception.”

Prince comments on German treatment of monuments.

Advance in humanity—until August, 1914.

United States treatment of civilians, 1863.



These declarations were made in the midst of our Civil War—  
 one of the world's fiercest conflicts. A half-century later, after more than 50 years of progress, the German Government has gone back to the methods used by "barbarous armies" and "uncivilized people." It has deliberately adopted the policy of deporting men and women, boys and girls, and of forcing them to work for their captors; it has even compelled them to make arms and munitions for use against their allies and their own flesh and blood.

No other act of the German Government has aroused such horror and detestation throughout the civilized world. Thousands of helpless men and women, boys and girls, have been enslaved. Families have been broken up. Girls have been carried off to work—or worse—in a strange land, and their relatives have not known where they have been taken, or what their fate has been.

This system of forced labor and deportation embraced the whole of Belgium, Poland, and the occupied lands of France.

The plan for setting forth the essential facts of the deportations and forced labor is as follows: the documents, that is to say, a small fraction of those which could be cited, will be allowed to tell the story, and only such comments will be added as are needed to enable the reader easily to grasp the connection of events.

## BELGIUM.

"The deportations \* \* \* were the most vivid, shocking, convincing, single happening in all our enforced observation and experience of German disregard of human suffering and human rights in Belgium." Vernon Kellogg, in *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1917.

A summary of the whole situation, down to January, 1917, can be obtained by reading continuously the report of Minister Whitlock, taken from the files of the State Department, which is given in italics on pages 48-49, 53, 54-55, 67-68, 74-75, 78. The insertion of his report at appropriate points has made it possible to avoid all but a minimum of repetition.

*“Legation of the United States of America,*

*“Brussels, January 16th, 1917.*

*“The Honorable the Secretary of State,*

*“Washington.*

*“Sir: I have had it in mind, and I might say, on my conscience, since the Germans began to deport Belgian workmen early in November, to prepare for the Department a detailed report on this latest instance of brutality, but there have been so many obstacles in the way of obtaining evidence on which a calm and judicious opinion could be based, and one is so overwhelmed with the horror of the thing itself, that it has been, and even now is, difficult to write calmly and justly about it. I have had to content myself with the fragmentary despatches I have from time to time sent to the Department and with doing what I could, little as that can be, to alleviate the distress that this gratuitous cruelty has caused the population of this unhappy land.*

*“In order to understand fully the situation it is necessary to go back to the autumn of 1914. At the time we were organizing the relief work, the Comité National—the Belgian relief organization that collaborates with the Commission for Relief in Belgium—proposed an arrangement by which the Belgian Government should pay to its own employees left in Belgium, and other unemployed men besides, the wages they had been accustomed to receive. The Belgians wished to do this both for humanitarian and patriotic purposes; they wished to provide the unemployed with the means of livelihood, and, at the same time, to prevent their working for the Germans. I refused to be connected in any way with this plan, and told the Belgian committee that it had many possibilities of danger; that not only would it place a premium on idleness, but that it would ultimately exasperate the Germans. However, the policy was adopted, and has been continued in practice, and on the rolls of the Comité National have been borne the names of hundreds of thousands—some 700,000, I believe—of idle men receiving this dole, distributed through the communes.*

*“The presence of these unemployed, however, was a constant temptation to German cupidity. Many times they sought to obtain the lists of the chômeurs, but were always foiled by the claim that under the guarantees covering the relief work, the records of the Comité National and its various suborganizations were immune. Rather than risk any interruption of the ravitaillement, for which, while loath to own any obligation to America, the Germans have always been grateful, since it has had the effect of keeping the population calm, the authorities never pressed the point, other than with the burgomasters of the communes. Finally, however, the military*

**Horrifying behavior of the Germans in Belgium.**

**Belgian Government wished to support unemployed Belgians.**

**German cupidity excited.**

party, always brutal, and with an astounding ignorance of public opinion and of moral sentiment, determined to put these idle men to work.

"General von Bissing and the civil portion of his entourage had always been and even now are opposed to this policy and I think have sincerely done what they could, first, to prevent its adoption, and secondly, to lighten the rigors of its application." (Continued on page 53.)

In the early days of the German advance into Belgium, the people had learned to fear the worst. This was particularly true in Antwerp. In order to alleviate their fears and to obtain guarantees which might hasten the restoration of settled conditions, Cardinal Mercier secured from the German governor of Antwerp promises, and in a circular letter dated October 16th, 1914, asked the clergy of the Province of Antwerp to communicate them to the people:

"The governor of Antwerp, Baron von Hoiningen, General von Huene, has authorized me to inform you in his name and to communicate by your obliging intermediary to our populations the three following declarations:

Solemn promises of Germans not to exploit Belgians.

"(1) The young men need not fear being taken to Germany, either to be enrolled into the army or to be employed at forced labors.

"(2) If individual infractions of police regulations are committed, the authorities will institute a search for the responsible authors and will punish them, without placing the responsibility on the entire population.

"(3) The German and Belgian authorities will neglect nothing to see that food is assured to the population."

These promises were not kept, as Cardinal Mercier and his colleagues show by abundant evidence in the *Appeal to Truth*.

"On March 23rd, at the arsenal at Luttre the German authority posted a notice demanding return to work. On April 21st, 200 workmen were called for. On April 27th soldiers went to fetch the workmen from their homes and take them to the arsenal. In the absence of a workman, a member of the family was arrested.

"However, the men maintained their refusal to work, 'because they were unwilling to co-operate in acts of war against their country.'

Violation of German promises.

"On April 30th, the requisitioned workmen were not released, but shut up in the railway carriages.

"On May 4th, 24 workmen detained in prison at Nivelles were tried at Mons by a court-martial, 'on the charge of being members of a secret society, having for its aim to thwart the carrying out of German military measures.' They were condemned to imprisonment.

"On May 8th, 1915, 48 workmen were shut up in a freight car and taken to Germany.

Early deportations. "On May 14th, 45 men were deported to Germany.

"On May 18th a fresh proclamation announced that the prisoners would receive only dry bread and water, and hot food only every four days. On May 22nd three cars with 104 workmen were sent towards Charleroi."

"A similar course was adopted at *Malines*, where, by various methods of intimidation, the German authorities attempted to force the workers at the arsenal to work on material for the railways, as if it were not plain that this material would become war material sooner or later.

"On May 30th, 1915, the Governor General announced that he 'would be obliged to punish the town of Malines and its suburbs by stopping all commercial traffic if by 10 a. m. on Wednesday, June 2nd, 500 workmen had not presented themselves for work at the arsenal.'

"On Wednesday, June 2nd, not a single man appeared. Accordingly, a complete stoppage took place of every vehicle within a radius of several kilometres of the town."

"Several workmen were taken by force and kept two or three days at the arsenal."

"The commune of *Sweveghem* (Western Flanders) was punished in June, 1915, because the 350 workmen at the Belgians asked to make barbed wire. private factory of M. Bekaert refused to make barbed wire for the German Army.

"The following notice was placarded at *Menin* in July-August, 1915: 'By order: From to-day the town will no longer afford aid of any description—including assistance to their families, wives, and children—to any operatives except those who work regularly at military work, and other tasks assigned to them. All other operatives and their families can henceforward not be helped in any fashion.'

"Similar measures were taken in October, 1915, at Harlebekelez-Courtrai, Bisseghem, Lokeren and Mons. From Harlebeke 29 inhabitants were transported to Germany. At Mons, in M. Lenoir's factory, the directors, foremen, and 81 workmen were imprisoned for having refused to work in the service of the German Army. M. Lenoir was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, the five directors to a year each, 6 foremen to 6 months, and the 81 workmen to eight weeks.

“The General Government had recourse also to *indirect* methods of compulsion. It seized the Belgian Red Cross, confiscated its property, and changed its purpose arbitrarily. It attempted to make itself master of the public charities and to control the National Aid and Food Committee.

**Interference with Red Cross.**

“If we were to cite *in extenso* the decree of the Governor General of August 4th, 1915, concerning measures intended to assure the carrying out of works of public usefulness, and that of

**Trickiness of German rulers of Belgium.**

August 15th, 1915, ‘concerning the unemployed, who, through idleness, refrain from work,’ it would be seen by what tortuous means the occupying Power attempts to attack at once the masters and the men.”

October 12th, 1915, the German authorities took a long step in the development of their policy of forcing the Belgians to aid them in prosecuting the war. The decree of that date reveals the matter and openly discloses a contempt for international law.

#### DECREE OF OCTOBER 12, 1915.

“Article 1. Whoever, without reason, refuses to undertake or to continue work suitable to his occupation, and in the execution of which the military administration is interested, such work being ordered by one or more of the military commanders, will be liable to imprisonment not exceeding one year. He may also be transported to Germany.

“Invoking Belgian laws or even international conventions to the contrary, can, in no case, justify the refusal to work.

**Germans flout international law and order Belgians to work for them.**

“On the subject of the lawfulness of the work exacted, the military commandant has the sole right of forming a decision.

“Article 2. Any person who by force, threats, persuasion, or other means attempts to influence another to refuse work as pointed out in Article 1, is liable to the punishment of imprisonment not exceeding five years.

“Article 3. Whoever knowingly by means of aid given or in any other way abets a punishable refusal to work, will be liable to a maximum fine of 10,000 marks, and in addition may be condemned to a year’s imprisonment.

“If communes or associations have rendered themselves guilty of such offence the heads of the communes will be punished.

“Article 4. In addition to the penalties stated in Articles 1 and 3, the German authorities may, in case of need, impose

on communes, where, without reason, work has been refused, a fine or other coercive police measures.

"This present decree comes into force immediately.

"Der Etappeinspekteur,

"VON UNGER,

"Generalleutnant.

"GHENT, October 12th, 1915."

Cardinal Mercier's brief comment is as follows: "The injustice and arbitrariness of this decree exceed all that could be imagined. Forced labor, collective penalties and arbitrary punishments, all are there. It is slavery, neither more nor less."

Cardinal Mercier was in error, for the German authorities were able to imagine a much more terrible measure. In October, 1916, when the need for an additional labor supply *in Germany* had become urgent, the German government established the system of forced labor and *deportation* which has aroused the detestation of Christendom. The reader will not be misled by the clumsy effort of the German authorities to mask the real purpose of the decree.

October 3,  
1916, German  
Government  
inaugurates  
wholesale depor-  
tations.

#### THE DECREE OF OCTOBER 3, 1916.

##### "DECREE CONCERNING THE LIMITING OF THE BURDENS ON PUBLIC CHARITY . . . ."

"I. People able to work may be compelled to work even outside the place where they live, in case they have to apply to the charity of others for the support of themselves or their dependents on account of gambling, drunkenness, loafing, unemployment, or idleness.

German verbal  
camouflage.

"II. Every inhabitant of the country is bound to render assistance in case of accident or general danger, and also to give help in case of public calamities as far as he can, even outside the place where he lives; in case of refusal he may be compelled by force.

"III. Anyone called upon to work, under Articles I or II, who shall refuse the work, or to continue at the work assigned him, will incur the penalty of imprisonment up to three years and of a fine up to 10,000 marks, or one or other of these penalties, unless a severer penalty is provided for by the laws in force.

"If the refusal to work has been made in concert or in agree-

ment with several persons, each accomplice will be sentenced, as if he were a ringleader, to at least a week's imprisonment.

"IV. The German military authorities and Military Courts will enforce the proper execution of this decree.

"The Quartermaster General, SAUBERZWEIG.

"GREAT HEADQUARTERS, 3d October, 1916."

The responsibility for this atrocious program rests upon the military rulers of Germany, who had labored so zealously to infect the army and the people with the principles of ruthlessness. It is significant that the decree of October 3, 1916, followed hard upon the elevation of Hindenburg to the supreme command with Ludendorf as his chief of staff. In his long report of January 16, 1917, Minister Whitlock says:

Hindenburg's  
responsibility for  
deportations.

#### REPORT OF MINISTER WHITLOCK (continued)

"Then, in August, von Hindenburg was appointed to the supreme command. He is said to have criticized von Bissing's policy as too mild; there was a quarrel; von Bissing went to Berlin to protest, threatened to resign, but did not. He returned, and a German official here said that Belgium would now be subjected to a more terrible régime—would learn what war was. The prophecy has been vindicated. Recently I was told that the drastic measures are really of Ludendorf's inspiration; I do not know. Many German officers say so." (Continued on p. 54.)

Was Bissing  
against deporta-  
tions?

If von Bissing had opposed the policy of deportation when his own judgment was overruled, he consented to become the "devil's advocate" and defended the system in public. Especially instructive is the following conversation reported by Mr. F. C. Walcott:

#### VON BISSING'S CONVERSATION WITH MR. WALCOTT.

"I went to Belgium to investigate conditions, and while there I had opportunity \* \* \* to talk one day with Governor General von Bissing, who died three or four weeks ago, a man 72 or 73 years old, a man steeped in the 'system,' born and bred to the hardening of the heart which that philosophy develops. There ought to be some new word coined for the process that a man's heart undergoes when it becomes steeped in that system.

"I said to him, 'Governor, what are you going to do if England and France stop giving these people money to purchase food?'

"He said, 'We have got that all worked out and have had it worked out for weeks, because we have expected this system to break down at any time.'

"He went on to say, 'Starvation will grip these people in 30 to 60 days. Starvation is a compelling force, and we would use that force to compel the Belgian workingmen, many of them very skilled, to go into Germany to replace the Germans, so that they could go to the front and fight against the English and the French.'

Bissing says deportation plans were carefully prepared.

"As fast as our railway transportation could carry them, we would transport thousands of others that would be fit for agricultural work, across Europe down into southeastern Europe, into Mesopotamia, where we have huge, splendid irrigation works. All that land needs is water and it will blossom like the rose.'

"The weak remaining, the old and the young, we would concentrate opposite the firing line, and put firing squads back of them, and force them through that line, so that the English and French could take care of their own people.'

"It was a perfectly simple, direct, frank reasoning. It meant that the German Government would use any force in the destruction of any people not its own to further its own ends." (Frederic C. Walcott, in *The National Geographic Magazine*, May, 1917.)

A brief general view of the character of the deportations can perhaps be gained best from the report of Minister Whitlock.

#### REPORT OF MINISTER WHITLOCK (continued).

*"The deportations began in October in the Étape, at Ghent, and at Bruges, as my brief telegrams indicated. The policy spread; the rich industrial districts of Hainaut, the mines and steel works about Charleroi were next attacked; now they are seizing men in Brabant, even in Brussels, despite some indications and even predictions of the civil authorities that the policy was about to be abandoned.*

[The étapes were the parts of Belgium under martial law, and included the province of western Flanders, part of eastern Flanders, and the region of Tournai. The remainder of the occupied part of Belgium was under civil government.]

*"During the last fortnight men have been impressed here in Brussels, but their seizures here are made evidently with much greater care than in the provinces, with more regard for the appearances. There was no public announcement of the intention to deport, but suddenly*

The deportations begin.



about ten days ago certain men in towns whose names are on the list of *chômeurs* received summons notifying them to report at one of the railway stations on a given day; penalties were fixed for failure to respond to the summons and there was printed on the card an offer of employment by the German Government either in Germany or Belgium. On the first day out of about 1,500 men ordered to present themselves at the Gare du Midi about 750 responded. These were examined by German physicians and 300 were taken. There was no disorder, a large force of mounted Uhlans keeping back the crowds and barring access to the station to all but those who had been summoned to appear. The Commission for Relief in Belgium had secured permission to give to each deported man a loaf of bread, and some of the communes provided warm clothing for those who had none and in addition a small financial allowance. As by one of the ironies of life the winter has been more excessively cold than Belgium has ever known it, and while many of those who presented themselves were adequately protected against the cold, many of them were without overcoats. The men shivering from cold and fear, the parting from weeping wives and children, the barriers of brutal Uhlans, all this made the scene a pitiable and distressing one.

Pitiable scenes. "It was understood that the seizures would continue here in Brussels, but on Thursday last, a bitter cold day, those that had been convoked were sent home without examination. It is supposed that the severe weather has moved the Germans to postpone the deportations." (Continued on page 67.)

Cardinal Mercier attempted to persuade the German authorities to abandon their terrible plans, reminding them of their solemn promises in the past:

"MALINES, 19th October, 1916.

"Mr. GOVERNOR GENERAL:

"The day after the surrender of Antwerp the frightened population asked itself what would become of the Belgians of age to bear arms or who would reach that age before the end of the occupation. The entreaties of the fathers and mothers of families determined me to question the governor of Antwerp, Baron von Huene, who had the kindness to reassure me and to authorize me in his name to reassure the agonized parents. The rumor had spread at Antwerp, nevertheless, that at Liège, Namur, and Charleroi young men had been seized and taken by force to Germany. I therefore begged Governor von Huene to be good enough to confirm to me in writing the guarantee which he had given to me orally, to the effect that nothing similar would happen at Antwerp. He said to me immediately that the rumors concerning deportations were without basis, and unhesitatingly

A n o t h e r  
"Scrap of Paper"

he sent me in writing, among other statements, the following: 'Young men have no reason to fear that they will be taken to Germany, either to be there enrolled in the army or employed for forced labor.'

"This declaration, written and signed, was publicly transmitted to the clergy and to those of the Faith of the province of Antwerp, as Your Excellency can see from the document enclosed herewith, dated October 16th, 1914, which was read in all the churches. [Printed on preceding pages.]

"Upon the arrival of your predecessor, the late Baron von der Goltz, at Brussels I had the honor of presenting myself at his house and requested him to be good enough to ratify for the entire country, without time limit, the guarantees which General von Huene had given me for the province of Antwerp. The Governor General retained this request in his possession in order to examine it at his leisure. The following day he was good enough to come in person to Malines to bring me his approval, and confirmed to me, in the presence of two aides-de-camp and of my private secretary, the promise that the liberty of Belgian citizens would be respected.

"To doubt the authority of such undertakings would have been to reflect upon the persons who had made them, and I therefore took steps to allay, by all the means of persuasion in my power, the anxieties which persisted in the interested families.

"Notwithstanding all this, your Government now tears from their homes workmen reduced in spite of their efforts to a state of unemployment, separates them by force from their wives and children and deports them to enemy territory. Numerous workmen have already undergone this unhappy lot; more numerous are those who are threatened with the same acts of violence.

"In the name of the liberty of domicile and the liberty of work of Belgian citizens; in the name of the inviolability of families; in the name of moral interests which the measures of deportation would gravely compromise; in the name of the word given by the Governor of the Province of Antwerp and by the Governor General, the immediate representative of the highest authority of the German Empire, I respectfully beg Your Excellency to be good enough to withdraw the measures of forced labor and of deportation announced to the Belgian workmen, and to be good enough to reinstate in their homes those who have already been deported.

"Your Excellency will appreciate how painful for me would be the weight of the responsibility that I would have to bear as regards these families, if the confidence which they have given you through my agency and at my request were lamentably deceived.

Mercier's moving appeal.

"I persist in believing that this will not be the case.

"Accept, Mr. Governor General; the assurance of my very high consideration.

"D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,  
*"Arch. of Malines."*

Municipal governments in Belgium appealed to the German authorities to observe their solemn promises. The two documents which follow illustrate Belgian appeals and German answers.

RESOLUTION OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF TOURNAI,  
 OCTOBER 20, 1916.

"In the matter of the requisition made by the German authorities on October 20, 1916 (requisition of a list of workmen to be drawn up by the municipality) \* \* \*

"The municipal council resolves to maintain its attitude of refusal.

"It further feels it its duty to place on record the following:

"The city of Tournai is prepared to submit unreservedly to all the exigencies authorized by the laws and customs of war. Its sincerity can not be questioned. For more than two years it has submitted to the German occupation, during which time it has lodged and lived at close quarters with the German troops, yet it has displayed perfect composure and has refrained from any act of hostility, proving thereby that it is animated by no idle spirit of bravado.

"But the city could not bring itself to provide arms for use against its own children, knowing well that natural law and the law of nations (which is the expression of natural law) both forbid such action.

**Council of  
 Tournai refuses  
 immoral and ille-  
 gal demands.**

"In his declaration dated September 2, 1914, the German Governor General of Belgium declared: 'I ask none to renounce his patriotic sentiments.'

"The city of Tournai reposes confidence in this declaration, which it is bound to consider as the sentiment of the German Emperor, in whose name the Governor General was speaking. In accepting the inspiration of honor and patriotism, the city is loyal to a fundamental duty, the loftiness of which must be apparent to any German officer.

"The city is confident that the straightforwardness and clearness of this attitude will prevent any misunderstanding arising between itself and the German Army."

GERMAN REPLY TO THE RESOLUTION OF THE MUNICIPAL  
COUNCIL OF TOURNAI.

“TOURNAI, 23rd October, 1916.

“In permitting itself, through the medium of municipal resolutions, to oppose the orders of the German military authorities in the occupied territory, the city is guilty of an unexampled arrogance and of a complete misunderstanding of the situation created by the state of war.

And is roundly  
lectured and  
fined.

“The ‘clear and simple situation’ is in reality the following:

“The military authorities order the city to obey. Otherwise the city must bear the heavy consequences, as I have pointed out in my previous explanations.

“The General Commanding the Army has inflicted on the city—on account of its refusal, up to date, to furnish the lists demanded—a punitive contribution of 200,000 marks which must be paid within the next six days, beginning with to-day. The General also adds that until such time as all the lists demanded are in his hands, for every day in arrears, beginning with December 31, 1916, a sum of 20,000 marks will be paid by the city.

“HOPFER, Major General,

“*Etappen-Kommandant.*”

The Commission Syndicale of Belgian workingmen also attempted to induce the German authorities to abandon their terrible plans.

“COMMISSION SYNDICALE OF BELGIUM,

“*Brussels, 30th Oct., 1916.*

[To the GOVERNOR GENERAL OF BELGIUM.]

“EXCELLENCY: The measures which are being planned by your administration to force the unemployed to work for the invading power, the deportation of our unhappy comrades which has begun in the region of the étapes, move most profoundly the entire working class in Belgium.

“The undersigned, members and representatives of the great central socialist and independent syndicates of Belgium, would consider that they had not fulfilled their duty did they not express to you the painful sentiments which agitate the laborers and convey to you the echo of their touching complaints.

“They have seen the machinery taken from their factories, the most diverse kind of raw materials requisitioned, the accumulation of obstacles to prevent the resumption of regular work, the disappearance one by one of every public liberty of which they were proud.

“For more than two years the laboring class more than any other has been forced to undergo the most bitter trials, experiencing misery and often hunger, while its children far away fight and die, and the parents of these children can never convey to them the affection with which their hearts are overflowing.

Workmen re-  
cite their wrongs  
at German hands.

“Our laboring class has endured everything with the utmost calm and the most impressive dignity, repressing its sufferings, its complaints and heavy trials, sacrificing everything to its ideal of liberty and independence. But the measures which have been announced will make the population drain the dregs [of the cup] of human sorrow; the proletariat, *the poor upon whom unemployment has been forced*, citizens of a modern state, are to be condemned to forced labor without having disobeyed any regulation or order.

“In the name of the families of workmen among which the most painful anxiety reigns at present, whose mothers, whose fiancées, and whose little children are destined to shed so many more tears, we beg Your Excellency to prevent the accomplishment of this painful act, contrary to international law, contrary to the dignity of the working classes, contrary to everything which makes for worth and greatness in human nature.

And appeal for  
decent treatment.

“We beg Your Excellency to pardon our emotion and we offer you the homage of our distinguished consideration.

“(Appended are signatures of members of the National Committee and the Commission Syndicale.)”

Von Bissing in his reply, November 3rd, practically admitted the truth of the complaint by attempting to justify the measures protested against. The arguments which he used are taken up and refuted in the letter of the Commission Syndicale, November 14, which follows:

“COMMISSION SYNDICALE OF BELGIUM,

“Brussels, 14th Nov., 1916.

“To His Excellency BARON VON BISSING,

“Governor General in Belgium.

“EXCELLENCY: The Secretaries and representatives of the socialistic and independent labor Unions of Belgium have, with a painful disappointment, taken cognizance of the answer which you were good enough to make to their petition of October 30th, concerning the deportation of laborers to Germany, and it is in the name of the working classes as a united whole that we are making a final effort to prevent the consummation of an act, without precedent, directed against its liberty, its sentiments, and its dignity.

“You say that many industrial works have been closed on account of the lack of raw materials brought about by the blockade by the enemy. Permit us, Excellency, to remind you that the allied powers manifested very clearly their intention to permit the importation into Belgium of raw materials required by our industries, provided, with a very natural provision, that no requisitions should be made, except those mentioned in Article 52 of the Hague Convention, that is to say those necessary to the ‘occupying army,’ and that an international commission, the Commission for Relief in Belgium, should have the right to supervise the destination of the manufactured products.

“Instead of agreeing to such a proposal, we have seen the occupying authorities systematically remove the machinery, implements, machines of all kinds, the engines and raw materials, metals, leather, and wool, limit production, aggravate continually the difficulties of transactions. When communes or committees have desired to employ workmen without employment on works of public utility, obstacles have been thrown in their way and finally in many cases their undertakings have been stopped and broken. In a word, as fast as the most tireless efforts were strained to employ as many hands as possible, other men were constantly thrown out of work.

“You state also that unemployment is caused by the laborers’ hostility to work. The whole past of our working class protests against this accusation with every bit of energy that still remains in them. Where is there to be found in the whole world a working class which has made of such a small country such a great industrial and commercial power? And we, who for the last 25 years have been the enthusiastic witnesses of the magnificent efforts of our brother workmen, in the matter of their material and moral betterment, we proudly affirm that it is not among their ranks that one can find men so degraded as to prefer to receive a charitable assistance which barely furnishes them with sufficient food to an honest wage given in remuneration for free and fruitful work.

“What is true, however, is that the Belgian workmen, conforming to the same article 52 of the Hague Convention which only admits requisitions of labor ‘for the needs of the army of occupation and in case these requisitions do not imply an obligation to take part in the war against their country,’ have refused the most tempting offers, not wishing to build trenches nor to repair forts nor to work in factories which manufacture war materials. This was their right and their duty. Their attitude deserved respect and not the most humiliating of punishments.

“You refer to your decrees of August 15th, 1915, and of May

Socialists re-  
fute Bissing's  
arguments.

And proudly  
praise the Bel-  
gian workman.

15th, 1916, in which are mentioned the possible punishment of any workmen who receive support and refuse work suited to their capacities and carrying with it a proper wage. Those who know with what care and with what minute detail the conditions, under which the unemployed have the right to receive assistance, have been established might perhaps think that these menaces were, to say the least, useless. But as you yourself say, these decrees declare in their article 2 that every motive of refusal to work will be considered valid if it is admitted by international law.

“For these cases of refusal, the German Authorities reserved the right to cause these recalcitrants to appear before Belgian tribunals and later before German military tribunals. It is therefore certain that the unemployed have the right to refuse to work for any motive approved by international law. When summoned before the tribunal they have the right to employ counsel in their defense and to state clearly their reasons for refusal. One might, of course, say that it is not a question obliging the workmen to participate in military enterprise;

but it is only too evident that every Belgian Laborers see through the German scheme. deported to Germany will take the place there of a man who to-morrow will go to reinforce the ranks of the enemy. We should like to know, Excellency, whether these tribunals carry on their functions.

“You fear that continued unemployment may depreciate the physical and moral status of the workmen. We, who know them, have more confidence in them. We have seen them suffer with a stoicism which exists only in proud and high souls. Did not the splendid idea come from them, of organizing throughout the entire country a vast chain of educational work for the unemployed in order to develop their technical knowledge and to increase their professional value? The *Comité National* was not, alas, authorized to undertake this magnificent enterprise. Is it the idea that it is through forced labor, performed with black despair, like slaves, that our unhappy brothers will keep up their physical and moral energy?

“You fear also that ‘the assistance which they receive will at length weigh down Belgian economic life.’ We can with difficulty believe that Belgians, as you say, have had the smallness of soul to grudge in that form the bitter piece of bread and the little soup which have formed the food of so many working families for so many months; and what, after all, do the twelve million francs amount to that are distributed each month to from 500,000 to 600,000 unem-

The Germans have no right to talk about unemployment of Belgians.

ployed, in comparison with the destruction, beyond reckoning, of goods and lives which the horrors of a war in which it has not the slightest responsibility have cost and still cost our country? With the most unshakable faith in our destinies; we, the most nearly interested, know that in the near future Flanders and *Wallonie* will rise again, glorious, in history.

“Excellency, our heart and our reason refuse, then, to believe that it is for the good of our class and to avoid an additional calamity to our country, that thousands of workers are suddenly torn from their families and transported to Germany.

All Belgians understand the German scheme.

Public sentiment has not been deceived and in reply to the grievous complaints of the victims, there echo the indignant protests of the entire population, as expressed by its representatives, its communal magistrates, and those persons who constitute the highest incarnation of law in our country.

“Furthermore, the arbitrary and brutal manner employed in the execution of these sad measures has raised all kinds of doubts regarding the object in view: the need, above all, is to obtain workmen in Germany, for Germany’s profit, and for the success of its arms.

“While at Antwerp they did not take any young men from 17 to 31 years who were under the régime of control, in the Borinage they call all the men from 17 to 50 years of age; in Walloon Brabant all men over 17 years, without making any distinction between the employed and unemployed. Men of all professions and of all conditions have been taken—bakers, who have never ceased to work in our co-operatives of the Borinage, for example; mechanics, who always had employment; agricultural workmen, merchants \* \* \*. At Lessines on the 6th instant, 2,100 persons were taken away, all workmen up to 50 years of age. Several cases are cited where old men with five or six of their sons have been exiled thus by force.

“Distressing scenes occur everywhere. The unhappy ones gathered together in the public squares are rapidly divided into gangs. They had been directed to bring a small amount of baggage; they are taken at once to the railway station and loaded in cattle cars. They are not allowed to say good-bye to their families. No opportunity is given to them to put their affairs in order, even the most pressing ones. They do not know where they are going, nor for what work, nor for how long. Taken away at the beginning of the winter, after two years of privations, having no further resources and no means to provide themselves with warm clothing or with other indispensable articles, what privations are they going to endure? How will they live there? In what state will they return? This mystery and this anxiety are the cause of the ceaseless tears of the mothers

The tears of the mothers and the children.



and little children. Distress and despair reign in the homes.

"Listen, Excellency, to these tears and these sobs. Do not permit our past of liberty and independence to be ruined. Do not permit human rights to be violated in its holy of holies. Do not permit the dignity of our working classes, which has been acquired after so many centuries of effort, to be trodden under foot.

"It is to law and humanity that we appeal, solemnly and with the hope of being heard, for we have the profound conviction that by our voice, at this tragic hour, the great voice of the working class of the entire civilized world expresses its sorrow and its protest.

"Accept, Excellency, the homage of our most distinguished consideration."

(Here follow the signatures of the Members of the *Comité Nationale* and of the *Commission Syndicale*.)

"We transmit this letter and previous correspondence to the Ministers and representatives of Foreign powers at Brussels, as well as to our comrades of the *Commission Syndicale des Syndicats* in Holland."

The files of the State Department contain authentic copies of very many such moving protests. The foregoing ones are taken from this pathetic collection, and from it may be cited, by way of further illustration, some passages from two others:

#### PROTEST OF BELGIAN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

"BRUSSELS, 9th November, 1916.

"To his Excellency, BARON VON BISSING,

*"Governor General in Belgium.*

"EXCELLENCY: It seemed that no suffering could be added to those under which we have already been weighed down since the occupation of our country. Our banished liberty, our destroyed industry and commerce, our raw products and instruments of work taken out of the country, the public fortune ruined, want succeeding to wealth in families formerly most prosperous, privations, anxieties, and mourning. \* \* \*

"Is there need to relate the scenes which the region of the *étape* has been the theater of for several weeks, and which are now being reenacted, during the past days, in the territory of the *Gouvernement Général*, where this scourge threatens to extend from commune to commune until its victims are counted

by hundreds of thousands? The notices posted on the walls and reproduced in the papers tell sufficiently what it is. Everywhere the same procedure, summary and sorrowful: arrests in mass, men classified arbitrarily among the unemployed, herded together, divided into groups, sent toward the unknown. \* \* \*

The "summary and sorrowful" procedure of the Germans.

"The authorities prefer to give them work in Germany, where the representatives of the [German] Industrial Bureau promise them 'good wages,' if they consent to work there 'voluntarily,' and where they may expect, in case of refusal, famine wages. What physical and moral depression is counted on in order to force their hand?"

"True, it has been asserted that the work which is offered to them will be nonmilitary in character; but everyone knows what Germany wants Belgian workers for. voices have replied on every side: 'in taking the place of a German workman, the Belgian workman permits Germany to increase the numerical forces of its armies.' The most odious work is that whose results are used against the fatherland. To serve Germany is to fight against their own country. To compel our workmen to do this is nothing else than an act of force contrary to international law (referred to by Your Excellency in your proclamation of August 15th, 1915), and contrary also to the spirit, if not to the text, of the Fourth Convention of the Hague of 1907. \* \* \*

"They adjure Your Excellency to employ with the military authorities the high prerogatives which are yours from your position to prevent the consummation of an act without precedent in the history of modern wars, and they beg you to accept the assurance of their most distinguished consideration."

[Signatures of Belgian Senators and Deputies.]

#### PROTEST OF CARDINAL MERCIER.

"ARCHBISHOPRIC OF MALINES,

*Malines, 10th November, 1916.*

"MR. GOVERNOR GENERAL:

"I refrain from expressing to Your Excellency the sentiments which have been evoked in me by your letter of reply to the letter which I had the honor to address to you on October 19th, relative to the deportation of the unemployed.

"I have recalled with melancholy the words which Your Excellency, dwelling upon each syllable, pronounced in my presence, after your arrival at Brussels: 'I hope that our relations will be loyal German perfidy. \* \* \* I have received the mission of dressing the wounds of Belgium.'

“My letter of October 19th recalled to Your Excellency the engagement taken by Baron von Huene, military governor of Antwerp, and ratified a few days later by Baron von der Goltz, your predecessor as Governor General at Brussels. The engagement was explicit, absolute, unlimited as to time: ‘The young men need not fear being taken to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army or to be employed at forced labor.’

“This engagement is being violated every day—thousands of times in the last fortnight.

“Baron von Huene and the late Baron von der Goltz did not say conditionally, as your despatch of the 26th of October would seek to imply: ‘If the occupation does not last longer than two years men fit for military duty shall not be taken into captivity;’ they said categorically: ‘Young men, and with greater reason, men who have reached an advanced age, shall not at any moment of the occupation, either be made prisoners or employed at forced labor.’ \* \* \*

“The decrees, posters, and comments of the press, which were intended to prepare public opinion for the measures now being taken, pleaded especially two considerations: The unemployed, so they declared, are a danger to public security; they are a charge upon governmental charity.

“It is not true, I said in my letter of October 19th, that our workmen have troubled, or even anywhere threatened the public peace. Five million Belgians and hundreds of Americans are the astonished witnesses of the dignity and the flawless patience of our working class. It is not true that the workmen deprived of work are a charge upon the occupying power for the charity which is dispensed by their administration. The *Comité National*, in which the occupying government has no active part, is the sole purveyor of subsistence to the victims of enforced idleness. \* \* \*

“Each Belgian workman will liberate a German workman who will add one more soldier to the German army. There, in all its simplicity, is the fact which dominates the situation. The author of the letter himself feels this burning fact, for he writes: ‘nor is the measure one which affects the conduct of war *properly speaking* (*proprement dite*). It is, then, connected with the war *improperly speaking* (*improprement dite*); which can only mean that the Belgian workman, although he does not bear arms, will free the hands of a German workman who will take up the arms. The Belgian workman is forced to co-operate, in an indirect but evident manner, in the war against his country. This is manifestly contrary to the spirit of the Hague Conventions.

“Here is another statement: *unemployment is not caused either*

The Belgians have got no charity from the Germans.

The German plan makes Belgians war against their own country.

by the Belgian workman or by England; it is brought about by the régime of the German Occupation.

"The occupying government has seized considerable supplies of raw material intended for our national industry; it has seized and shipped to Germany the machinery, tools, and metals of our factories and our workshops. The possibility of national labor being thus suppressed, there remained one alternative to the workman: to work for the German Empire, either here or in Germany; or to remain idle. Some thousands of workmen, under the pressure of fright or of hunger, accepted, with regret for the most part, work for the enemy; but four hundred thousand workmen and workwomen preferred to resign themselves to unemployment, with its privations, rather than injure the interests of the fatherland; they lived in poverty, with the aid of a meager relief allowed them by the *Comité national de secours et d'alimentation*, under the supervision of the protecting ministers of Spain, America, and Holland. Calm, dignified, they bore without a murmur their painful lot. In no part of the country was there a

No disorder is caused by Belgians.

revolt or even the semblance of one. Employers and employees awaited with patience the end of our long martyrdom. Meanwhile, the communal administrations and private initiative en-

deavored to alleviate the undoubted inconveniences of unemployment. But the occupying power paralyzed their efforts. The *Comité National* attempted to organize a professional school for the use of the unemployed. This practical instruction, respectful of the dignity of our workmen, was meant to keep up their skill, increase their capacity for work, and prepare for the restoration of the country. Who opposed this noble movement, the plan of which had been elaborated by our large manufacturers? Who? The occupying government.

Communes not allowed to furnish work for unemployed.

"Notwithstanding all this, the communes made every effort to give work to the unemployed upon undertakings of public utility; but the governor general made these enterprises depend upon permission which, as a general rule, he refused.

There are numerous cases, I am assured, where the General Government authorized undertakings of this kind upon the express condition that they should not be undertaken by unemployed.

"They were seeking to create unemployment. They were recruiting the army of the unemployed. \* \* \*

"The letter of October 26th says that the first responsibility for the unemployment of our workmen rests upon England, because she has not allowed raw materials to enter Belgium.

"England generously allows foodstuffs to enter Belgium for the revictualling [of the country], under the control of neutral States—Spain, the United States, and Holland. She would allow raw

England not to blame.

materials necessary for industry to enter the country under the same control if Germany were willing to agree to leave them to us, and not to seize the finished products of our industrial work.

“But Germany, by various proceedings, notably by the organization of its *Centrales*, over which neither the Belgians nor our protecting ministers can exercise any efficacious control, absorbs a considerable portion of the products of agriculture and of the industry of our country. The result is a considerable increase in the cost of living, which causes painful privations for those who have no savings. \* \* \*

“Deportation is slavery, and the heaviest penalty of the penal code after that of death. Has Belgium, who never did you any wrong, deserved at your hands this treatment which cries to heaven for vengeance?”

“Mr. Governor General, in the beginning of my letter I recalled the noble words of Your Excellency: ‘I have come into Belgium with the mission of dressing the wounds of your country.’”

“If Your Excellency could penetrate into the homes of workmen, as we priests do, and hear the lamentations of wives and mothers whom your orders cast into mourning and into dismay, you would realize far better that the wound of the Belgian people is gaping.

“Two years ago, we hear people say, it was death, pillage, fires, but it was war! To-day it is no longer war, it is cold calculation, intentional destruction, the victory of force over right, the debasement of human personality, a cry of defiance to humanity.

“It depends upon you, Excellency, to silence these cries of a revolted conscience; may the good God, whom we call upon with all the ardor of our soul for our oppressed people, inspire you with the pity of the good Samaritan!

“Accept, Mr. Governor General, the homage of my highest consideration.

“D. J. CARD. MERCIER,  
“*Arch. of Malines.*”

In less moving phrases, but in deadly corroboration, the continuation of the report of Minister Whitlock says:

REPORT OF MINISTER WHITLOCK (continued).

“*The rage, the terror, and despair excited by this measure all over Belgium were beyond anything we had witnessed since the day the Germans poured into Brussels. The delegates of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, returning to Brussels, told the most distressing*

stories of the scenes of cruelty and sorrow attending the seizures. And daily, hourly almost, since that time appalling stories have been related by Belgians coming to the Legation. It is impossible for us to verify them, first, because it is necessary for us to exercise all possible tact in dealing with the subject at all, and secondly because there is no means of communication between the Occupations-Gebiet and the Etappen-Gebiet. Transportation everywhere in Belgium is difficult, the vicinal railways scarcely operating any more because of the lack of oil, while all the horses have been taken. The people who are forced to go from one village to another must do so on foot or in vans drawn by the few miserable horses that are left. The wagons of the breweries, the one institution that the Germans have scrupulously respected, are hauled by oxen.

"The well-known tendency of sensational reports to exaggerate themselves, especially in time of war, and in a situation like that existing here, with no newspapers to serve as a daily clearing house for all the rumours that are as avidly believed as they are eagerly repeated, should of course be considered; but even if a modicum of all that is told is true there still remains enough to stamp this deed as one of the foulest that history records.

**A foul deed.**

"I am constantly in receipt of reports from all over Belgium that tend to bear out the stories one constantly hears of brutality and cruelty. A number of men sent back to Mons are said to be in a dying condition, many of them tubercular. At Malines and at Antwerp returned men have died, their friends asserting that they have been victims of neglect and cruelty, of cold, of exposure, of hunger." (Continued on page 74.)

A vivid sketch of the deportations from Mons, drawn by a participant, may well be cited here:

"I will take the 18th of November of last year [1916]. A week or so before that a placard was placed on the walls telling my capital city of Mons that in seven days all the men of that city who were not clergymen, who were not priests, who did not belong to the city council, would be deported.

"At half past five, in the gray of the morning on the 18th of November, they walked out, six thousand two hundred men at Mons, myself and another leading them down the cobblestones of the street and out where the rioting would be less than in the great city, with the soldiers on each side, with bayonets fixed, with the women held back.

"The degradation of it! The degradation of it as they walked into this great market square, where the pens were erected, exactly as if they were cattle—all the great men of that province

**Appalling stories of German behavior.**

**"The woes of slavery."**

—the lawyers, the statesmen, the heads of the trades, the men that had made the capital of Hainaut glorious during the last twenty years.

“There they were collected; no question of who they were, whether they were busy or what they were doing, or what their position in life. ‘Go to the right! Go to the left! Go to the right!’ So they were turned to the one side or the other.

“Trains were standing there ready, steaming, to take them to Germany. You saw on the one side the one brother taken, the other brother left. A hasty embrace and they were separated and gone. You had here a man on his knees before a German officer, pleading and begging to take his old father’s place; that was all. The father went and the son stayed. They were packed in those trains that were waiting there.

“You saw the women in hundreds, with bundles in their hands, beseeching to be permitted to approach the trains, to give their men the last that they had in life between themselves and starvation—a small bundle of clothing to keep them warm on their way to Germany. You saw women approach with a bundle that had been purchased by the sale of the last of their household effects. Not one was allowed to approach to give her man the warm pair of stockings or the warm jacket, so there might be some chance of his reaching there. Off they went!” John H. Gade, in *The National Geographic Magazine*, May, 1917.

The Belgian women sent a touching appeal to Minister Whitlock:

#### THE APPEAL OF THE BELGIAN WOMEN.

“BRUSSELS,

“November 18, 1916, 46 Rue de la Madeleine.

“His Excellency Mr. BRAND WHITLOCK,

“*Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America.*

“MR. MINISTER:

“From the depths of our well of misery our supplication rises to you.

“In addressing ourselves to you, we denounce to your Government, as well as to our sisters, the women of the nation which you represent in our midst, the criminal abuse of force of which our unhappy and defenseless people is a victim.

“Since the beginning of this atrocious war we have looked on impotently and with our hearts torn with every sorrow at terrible events which put our civilization back into the ages of the barbarian hordes.

“Mr. Minister, the crime which is now being committed under your eyes, namely, the deportation of thousands of men compelled to work on enemy soil against the interests of their country, can not find any shadow of excuse on the ground of military

No shadow of  
excuse for depor-  
tations.

necessity, for it constitutes a violation by force of a sacred right of human conscience.

"Whatever may be the motive it can not be admitted that citizens may be compelled to work directly or indirectly *for* the enemy *against* their brothers who are fighting.

"The Convention of The Hague has consecrated this principle.

"Nevertheless, the occupying power is forcing thousands of men to this monstrous extremity, which is contrary to morals and international law, both these men who have already been taken to Germany and those who to-morrow will undergo the same fate, if from the outside, from neutral Europe and the United States, no help is offered.

"Oh! The Belgian women have also known how to carry out their duty in the hour of danger; they have not weakened the courage of the soldiers of honor by kept back their tears.

"They have bravely given to their country those whom they loved. \* \* \* The blood of mothers is flowing on the battle-fields.

"Those who are taken away to-day do not go to perform a glorious duty. They are slaves in chains who, in a dark exile, threatened by hunger, prison, death, will be called upon to perform the most odious work—service to the enemy against the fatherland.

"The mothers can not stand by while such an abomination is taking place without making their voices heard in protest.

"They are not thinking of their own sufferings, their own moral torture, the abandonment and the misery in which they are to be placed with their children

"They address you in the name of the inalterable rights of honor and conscience.

"It has been said that women are 'all powerful suppliants.'

"We have felt authorized by this saying, Mr. Minister, to extend our hands to you and to address to your country a last appeal.

"We trust that in reading these lines you will feel at each word the unhappy heartbeats of the Belgian women and will find in your broad and humane sympathy imperative reasons for intervention.

"Only the united will of the neutral peoples energetically expressed can counterbalance that of the German authorities.

"This assistance which the neutral nations can and, therefore, ought to lend us, will it be refused to the oppressed Belgians?

"Be good enough to accept, Mr. Minister, the homage of our most distinguished consideration."

(Signed by a number of Belgian women and 24 societies.)

The United States Government did not fail to respond to this



touching appeal and to others of a similar nature. The American Embassy at Berlin promptly took up the burning question of the deportations with the Chancellor and other representatives of the German Government. In an interview with the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Grew was handed an official statement of the German plans, which is, in translation, as follows:

THE GERMAN MEMORANDUM ON BELGIAN "UNEMPLOYMENT."

"Against the unemployed in Belgium, who are a burden to public charity, in order to avoid friction arising therefrom, compulsory measures are to be adopted to make them work so far as they are not voluntarily inclined to work, in accordance with the regulation issued May 15, 1916, by the Governor General. In order to ascertain such persons the assistance of the municipal authorities is required for the district of the Governor General in Brussels, while in the districts outside of the General Government, i. e., in the provinces of Flanders, lists were demanded from the presidents of the local relief committees containing the names of persons receiving relief. For the sake of establishing uniform procedure the competent authorities have, in the meantime, been instructed to make the necessary investigations regarding such persons also in Flanders through the municipal authorities; furthermore, presidents of local relief committees who may be detained for having refused to furnish such lists will be released."

Mr. Grew pointed out that the deportations were a breach of faith and would injure the German cause abroad. In his official summary of the negotiations which he carried on he says:

"I then discussed in detail with the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the unfortunate impression which this decision would make abroad, reminding him that the measures were in principle contrary to the assurances given to the Ambassador by the Chancellor at General Headquarters last spring and dwelling on the effect which the policy might have on England's attitude towards relief work in Belgium. I said I understood that the measures had been promulgated solely by the military government in Belgium and that I thought the matter ought at least to be brought to the Chancellor's personal attention in the light of the consequences which the new policy would entail. Herr Zimmermann intimated in reply that the Foreign Office had very little influence with the military authorities and that it was unlikely that the new policy in Belgium could be revoked. He stated, however, in answer to my inquiry,

Mr. Grew points out that Germany excites public opinion against her.

that he would not disapprove of my seeing the Chancellor about the matter."

Mr. Grew accordingly took up the whole question with the Chancellor, and among other arguments urged the promises which the German Government had solemnly made to the Belgian civilians through Baron von Huene and Baron von der Goltz. [These pledges are set forth in detail in Cardinal Mercier's letter of October 19th, 1916, quoted in full on preceding pages.] Mr. Grew found it impossible to persuade the Chancellor to secure the abandonment of the policy of deportations, and thereupon urged that the policy should be modified. His formal statement of this phase of the negotiations is as follows:

"The points of amelioration which I then suggested as a concession to Belgian national feeling and foreign opinion were as follows:

"1. Only actual unemployed to be taken, involving a more deliberate and careful selection.

"2. Married men or heads of families not to be taken.

"3. Employees of the *Comité National* not to be taken.

"4. The lists of the unemployed not to be required of the Belgian authorities, but to be determined by the German authorities themselves, as a concession to Belgian national feeling, and the Belgians, who had already been imprisoned for refusing to supply these lists, released.

"5. Deported persons to be permitted to correspond with their families in Belgium.

"6. Places of work or concentration camps of deported persons to be voluntarily opened by the German Government to inspection by neutral representatives.

\* \* \* \* \*

"A few days later Count Zech, the Chancellor's adjutant, called on me and communicated to me informally and orally the following replies to the various suggestions which I had made for concessions and points of amelioration:

"1. Only actual unemployed were to be taken. The selections but with slight would be made in a careful and deliberate manner.

"2. Married men or heads of families could not in principle be exempted, but each case would be considered carefully on its merits.

"3. Employees of the *Comité National* are regarded as actually employed and therefore exempt.

"4. It was essential that the Belgian authorities should cooperate with the German authorities in furnishing lists of unemployed, in order to avoid mistakes. Only one Belgian had been

imprisoned for refusing to give such lists, and orders had now been given for his release.

"5. Deported persons would be permitted to correspond with their families in Belgium.

"6. Places of work and concentration camps would in principle be open to inspection by Spanish diplomatic representatives.

"American inspection might also be informally arranged if desired.

\* \* \* \* \*

"On December 2nd, the Minister at Brussels communicated to me the text of a telegram which he had sent to the Department on November 28th, stating that he had been encouraged by the report of the results of my interview with the Chancellor. \* \* \*

The telegram to which Mr. Grew refers was the following:

MINISTER WHITLOCK'S TELEGRAM OF NOVEMBER 28, 1916.

"BRUSSELS, VIA THE HAGUE, *November 28, 1916.*

"SECRETARY OF STATE,  
"Washington.

"We are naturally encouraged by Grew's telegrams concerning his conversations with the Chancellor. It is probable that the orders [for softening the rigors of the deportations] have not yet been put into effect, as the recruiting of Belgian workmen continues without distinction as between the employed and unemployed. I have received creditable information that choice is made with great rapidity, which allows no time for examination. Mayor in the Province of Namur had given a list of unemployed as one hundred. Practically none of the persons in this list were taken by the Germans, but from the same district hundreds of employed were taken. Apparently the choice is based entirely on the skill and physical fitness of the workmen. There is a great demand for blacksmiths and iron workers. The identification cards from the Commission for Relief in Belgium issued to men working for the *Comité National* were respected in Antwerp; nine men holding them were taken at Mons; over thirty at Namur, and a few each day in various parts of the country. Over forty thousand are engaged in various departments of relief work, however, and this is but a small percentage. It is reliably reported that very bad conditions exist in the Province of Valenciennes, and that many men have been taken there. They have been without food for sixty-three hours and have no blankets. Apparently they have been deprived of food in order to oblige them to work for the Germans.

"WHITLOCK,  
"American Minister."

The American minister and the representatives of other powers were able to secure some lessening of the severity of the deportations. Minister Whitlock says:

REPORT OF MINISTER WHITLOCK (continued).

*"We have, of course, done all that was in our power to ameliorate the conditions without in any way seeming officially to intervene. I have already reported to the Department the conversations I have had with the officials. Recently I induced the Political Department to request that we bring to their attention any case of flagrant injustice, and on the basis of this admission we have been sending from time to time to the German authorities the names of certain deported Belgians who were working at the time of their seizure and therefore did not come within the purview of the rule laid down by the German Government that the unemployed should be deported. Other neutral Legations in Brussels have done the same, and the work has assumed proportions that are so large that I fear they may defeat its ends. The Legations of Spain and Holland have organized similar bureaus, and so many requests for repatriation are received that I have been compelled to rent rooms in a vacant house, across the street from the Legation in the rue Belliard, to carry on the work. The necessary staff and supplies for the work have been furnished by the Comité National, which has organized a central bureau that investigates all reports received by the Legations in order to determine whether or not the persons mentioned have received financial assistance since the war, and, as well, to avoid duplication in representations. Inasmuch as it is difficult to make exceptions, I fear, as I said before, that the very mass of these requests will prevent their being examined with any care. So far as we are able to determine, about 100,000 have been deported, and of those less than 2,000 have returned.*

**They run into high figures.**

*"The Spanish Legation which, because of the fact that Spain is charged with the protection of Belgian interests in Germany, claims precedence in this matter, \* \* \* makes a demand for the return of each and every one who applies, and sends in about two hundred names each day. The Dutch Legation \* \* \* forwards each request that is presented, and, owing to the fact that after the fall of Antwerp, assurances were given by the German Authorities through the Dutch Government to Belgian refugees in Holland that they would not be deported should they return to Belgium, they are receiving a great many. I am told that they submit over fifteen hundred each day. \* \* \**

*"We have a great many requests, and although we try not to discriminate we attempt to pick out the most deserving cases, though now that I have written that phrase I feel a certain shame in it because all the cases are deserving.*

"I have had requests from the burgomasters of ten communes from La Louvière, asking that permission be obtained to send to the deported men in Germany packages of food similar to those that are being sent to prisoners of war. Thus far the German authorities have refused to permit this except in special instances, and returning Belgians claim that even when such packages are received they are used by the camp authorities only as another means of coercing them to sign the agreements to work.

"It is said that, in spite of the liberal salary promised those who would sign voluntarily, no money has as yet been received in Belgium from workmen in Germany." (Concluded on p. 78.)

The American Government was not content with informal recommendations to the German Government, and on December 5, 1916, the American representative at Berlin laid this formal protest before the German chancellor:

#### FORMAL PROTEST OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT.

"The Government of the United States has learned with the greatest concern and regret of the policy of the German Government to deport from Belgium a portion of the civilian population with the result of forcing them to labor in Germany, and is constrained to protest in a friendly spirit but most solemnly against this action which is in contravention of all precedent and those humane principles of international practice which have long been accepted and followed by civilized nations in their treatment of non-combatants in conquered territory. Furthermore, the Government of the United States is convinced that the effect of this policy if pursued will in all probability be fatal to the Belgian relief work so humanely planned and so successfully carried out, a result which would be generally deplored and which, it is assumed, would seriously embarrass the German Government."

This protest was followed by those of the Pope, the King of Spain, the Government of Switzerland, and other neutrals. They were of no avail, except, perhaps, to lead the German authorities to draw a tighter veil over their detestable proceedings. But the evidence has in some measure come through, although the full facts will not be known until the liberation of heroic Belgium.

In the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of December 2, 1916, the following protests appeared, made, respectively, by Socialist Deputy Haase and Deputy Dittmann, members of the Reichstag:

## PROTESTS AGAINST DEPORTATIONS HEARD IN REICHSTAG.

"Thousands of workmen in the occupied territory have been compelled to forced labor; we earnestly ask the government to restore to these workmen their liberty, especially in Belgium. In truth, we [the Germans] find no sympathy in neutral countries; even the Pope has made a protest against this procedure, and several neutral states have done the same. Common sense itself demands that we abandon this procedure which moreover is in opposition to the Hague Convention to which we have agreed."

"In opposition to the Secretary of State, I must recall that when formerly the Belgian workmen who had fled to Holland returned to Belgium, Governor General von Bissing promised that these Belgian workmen would under no circumstances be deported to Germany. This reassuring promise has not been kept."

Ambassador Gerard's interesting testimony appears in his recent book:

## AMBASSADOR GERARD'S EVIDENCE.

"The President [during my visit to America in 1916] impressed upon me his great interest in the Belgians deported to Germany. The action of Germany in thus carrying a great part of the male population of Belgium into virtual slavery had roused great indignation in America. As the revered Cardinal Farley said to me a few days before my departure, 'You have to go back to the times of the Medes and the Persians to find a like example of a whole people carried into bondage.'

"Mr. Grew had made representations about this to the Chancellor and, on my return, I immediately took up the question.

"I was informed that it was a military measure, that Ludendorf had feared that the British would break through and overrun Belgium and that the military did not propose to have a hostile population at their backs who might cut the rail lines of communication, telephones and telegraphs, and that for this reason the deportation had been decided on. I was, however, told I would be given permission to visit these Belgians. The passes, nevertheless, which alone made such visiting possible were not delivered until a few days before I left Germany.

"Several of these Belgians who were put to work in Berlin managed to get away and come to see me. They gave me a harrowing account of how they had been seized in Belgium and made to work in

American indignation at deportations.

Gerard not permitted to visit deported Belgians.

Some of them call on him.

Germany at making munitions to be used probably against their own friends.

"I said to the Chancellor, 'There are Belgians employed in making shells contrary to all rules of war and the Hague Conventions.' He said, 'I do not believe it.' I said, 'My automobile is at the door. I can take you, in four minutes, to where thirty Belgians are working on the manufacture of shells.' But he did not find time to go.

"Americans must understand that the Germans will stop at nothing to win this war, and that the only thing they respect is force." James W. Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, 1917, pp. 351-52.

A similar point of view is expressed in an article entitled "Vae Victis" from the Hungarian newspaper *Nepszawa* of Budapest (quoted in K. G. Ossianilsson, *Militarism at Work in Belgium and Germany*, 1917, pp. 53-54).

#### HUNGARIAN OPINION ON DEPORTATIONS.

"Mechanical skill, and especially qualified mechanical skill, is for the moment a more important factor than usual, and as it must be obtained where it can be obtained, Belgium has had to suffer in accordance with the old saying which always holds good: *Vae victis* (woe to the vanquished). In Poland, mechanical skill and the arms which exist there are mobilized under 'the glorious and fortunate banners of Poland'; in Belgium under 'the banner of necessity.' "

" \* \* \* The question remains: for what kind of work will the Germans use the Belgians? \* \* \*

The Germans are using the Belgians for war work. Every kind of work in Germany is war work, whether it is called agricultural or industrial work. As the deported Belgians have not given their consent, their use is contrary to international law, and the policy of the Germans in Belgium and Poland is equally to be deplored. Instead of aiming at bringing us nearer peace, it serves to embitter our opponents and to rouse more hatred towards us amongst the neutrals. Many times and more and more we have had occasion to observe that the neutrals show more sympathy for Belgium than for any other belligerent."

The news dispatches indicate that the deportation and forced labor of Belgians still continue. In a dispatch from Havre (New York *Evening Post*, September 13, 1917) it is stated: "The removal of the civilian population of Belgium continues, according to advices received here. The town of Roulers, immedi-

Belgians still being deported, September, 1917.

ately behind the battle line in Flanders, has been evacuated completely. Ostend is being emptied gradually, and two thousand persons already have been sent from Courtrai." In another dispatch from Havre (*Washington Post*, September 24, 1917) it is stated that "the German military authorities at Bruges, Belgium, are conscripting forcibly all the boys and men of that city between the ages of 14 and 60 to work in munition factories and shipyards. The rich and poor, shopkeepers and workmen, all are being taken, only the school-teachers, doctors, and priests escaping."

REPORT OF MINISTER WHITLOCK (concluded).

*"One interesting result of the deportations remains to be noted, a result that once more places in relief the German capacity for blundering, almost as great as the German capacity for cruelty. Until the deportations were begun there was no intense hatred on the part of the lower classes, i. e., the workingmen and the peasants. The old Germans of the Landsturm had been quartered in Flemish homes; they and the inmates spoke nearly the same language; they got along fairly well; they helped the women with the work, the poor and the humble having none of those hatreds of patriotism that are among the privileges of the upper classes. It is conceivable that the Flemish population might have existed under German rule; it was Teutonic in its origin and anti-French always. But now the Germans have changed all that.*

*"They have dealt a mortal blow to any prospect they may ever have had of being tolerated by the population of Flanders; in tearing away from nearly every humble home in the land a husband and a father or a son and brother they have lighted a fire of hatred that will never go out; they have brought home to every heart in the land, in a way that will impress its horror indelibly on the memory of three generations, a realization of what German methods mean, not, as with the early atrocities, in the heat of passion and the first lust of war, but by one of those deeds that make one despair of the future of the human race, a deed coldly planned, studiously matured, and deliberately and systematically executed, a deed so cruel that German soldiers are said to have wept in its execution, and so monstrous that even German officers are now said to be ashamed.*

"WHITLOCK."

Mr. Hoover's mature conclusions on the German practices in Belgium, which he has written for this pamphlet, reinforce the detailed evidence already presented.



## MR. HOOVER'S CONCLUSIONS.

SEPTEMBER, 1917.

I have been often called upon for a statement of my observation of German rule in Belgium and Northern France.

I have neither the desire nor the adequate pen to picture the scenes which have heated my blood through the two and a half years that I have spent in work for the relief of these 10,000,000 people.

The sight of the destroyed homes and cities, the widowed and fatherless, the destitute, the physical misery of a people but partially nourished at best, the deportation of men by tens of thousands to slavery in German mines and factories, the execution of men and women for paltry effusions of their loyalty to their country, the sacking of every resource through financial robbery, the battening of armies on the slender produce of the country, the denudation of the country of cattle, horses and textiles; all these things we had to witness, dumb to help other than by protest and sympathy, during this long and terrible time—and still these are not the events of battle heat, but the effects of a grinding heel of a race demanding the mastership of the world.

All these things are well known to the world—but what can never be known is the dumb agony of the people, the expressionless faces of millions whose souls have passed the whole gamut of emotions. And why? Because these, a free and democratic people, dared plunge their bodies before the march of autocracy.

I myself believe that if we do not fight and fight now, all these things are possible to us—but even should the broad Atlantic prove our present defender, there is still Belgium. Is it worth while for us to live in a world where this free and unoffending people is to be trampled into the earth and to raise no sword in protest?

HERBERT HOOVER.

## FRANCE.

In France the German system of forced labor and deportations, with its attendant callousness, brutalities, and horrors, was the same as in Belgium. Inasmuch as the German system in action has been adequately illustrated in the foregoing pages on Belgium, it will suffice in this part simply to show the real identity of German practice in the two occupied regions. This can be done from the official documents and from a summary by Ambassador Gerard. The harrowing details may

Belgian atrocities are the result of the "system."

German practices were the same in all occupied regions.

be gathered from the scores of depositions which accompany the note addressed by the French Government to the Governments of the neutral powers July 25, 1916. These are on file in the State Department, and have also been translated, along with the official documents, in *The Deportation of Women and Girls from Lille*, New York, Doran.

PROCLAMATION OF THE GERMAN MILITARY COMMANDANT OF  
LILLE.

"The attitude of England makes the provisioning of the population more and more difficult.

"To reduce the misery, the German authorities have recently asked for volunteers to go and work in the country. This offer has not had the success that was expected.

"In consequence of this the inhabitants will be deported by order and removed into the country. Persons German proclamation at Lille, April, 1916. deported will be sent to the interior of the occupied territory in France, far behind the front, where they will be employed in agricultural labor, and not on any military work whatever. By this measure they will be given the opportunity of providing better for their subsistence.

"In case of necessity, provisions can be obtained through the German depots. Every person deported will be allowed to take with him 30 kilograms of baggage (household utensils, clothes, etc.), which it will be well to make ready at once.

"I therefore order that no one, until further orders, shall change his place of residence. No one may absent himself from his declared legal residence from 9 p. m. to 6 a. m. (German time), unless he is in possession of a permit in due form.

"Inasmuch as this is an irrevocable measure, it is in the interest of the population itself to remain calm and obedient.

"COMMANDANT.

"LILLE, April, 1916."

NOTICE DISTRIBUTED TO HOUSES IN LILLE.

"All the inhabitants of the house, with the exception of children under fourteen and their mothers, and also of old people, must prepare themselves for transportation in an hour and a half's time.

"An officer will decide definitely what persons will be taken to the concentration camps. For this purpose all the inhabitants of the house must assemble in front of it; in case of bad weather they may remain in the passage. The door of the house must remain open. All protests will be useless.

Inhabitants of Lille given 90 minutes to get ready to depart.

No inmate of the house, even those who are not to be transported, may leave the house before 8 a. m. (German time).

"Each person will be permitted to take 30 kilograms of baggage; if anyone's baggage exceeds that weight, it will all be rejected without further consideration. Packages must be separately made up for each person and must bear an address legibly written and firmly affixed. This address must contain the surname and the Christian name and the number of the identity card.

"It is absolutely necessary that each person should, in his own interest, provide himself with eating and drinking utensils, as well as with a woolen blanket, good shoes, and body linen. Everyone must carry his identity card on his person.

Anyone attempting to evade transportation will be punished without mercy.

"ETAPPEN-KOMMANDANTUR."

[LILLE, April, 1916.]

PROTEST OF BISHOP CHAROST, OF LILLE, ADDRESSED TO GENERAL VON GRAEVENITZ.

"MONSIEUR LE GÉNÉRAL: It is my duty to bring to your notice the fact that a very agitated state of mind exists among the population.

"Numerous removals of women and girls, certain transfers of men and youth, and even of children, have been carried out in the districts of Tourcoing and Roubaix without judicial procedure or trial.

"The unfortunate people have been sent to unknown places. Measures equally extreme and on a larger scale are contemplated at Lille. You will not be surprised, Monsieur le Général, that I intercede with you in the name of the religious mission confided to me. That mission lays on me the burden of defending with respect but with courage, the Law of Nations, which the law of war must never infringe, and that eternal morality whose rules nothing can suspend. It makes it my duty to protect the feeble and the unarmed, who are as my family to me and whose burdens and sorrows are mine.

"You are a father; you know that there is not in the order of humanity a right more honorable or more holy than that of the family. For every Christian the inviolability of God, who created the family, attaches to it. The German officers who have been billeted for a long time in our homes know how deep in our hearts we of the North hold family affection and that it is the sweetest thing in life to us. Thus to dismember the family by tearing youths and girls from their homes is not war; it is for us tortures and the worst of tortures—unlimited moral torture.

The Bishop protests against deportations.

Appeals to the humanity of the commander.

The violation of family rights is doubled by a violation of the sacred demands of morality. Morality is exposed to perils, the mere idea of which is revolting to every honest man, from the

The methods of deportation a danger to morals. promiscuity which inevitably accompanies removals *en masse*, involving mixture of the sexes, or, at all events, of persons of very unequal moral standing. Young girls of irreproachable life,

who have never committed any worse offense than that of trying to pick up some bread or a few potatoes to feed a numerous family, and who have besides paid the light penalty for such trespass, have been carried off. Their mothers, who have watched so closely over them and had no other joy than that of keeping their daughters beside them, in the absence of father and sons fighting or killed at the front—these mothers are now alone. They bring to me their despair and their anguish. I am speaking of what I have seen and heard. I know that you have no part in these harsh measures. You are by nature inclined toward justice; that is why I venture to turn to you; I beg you to be good enough to forward without delay to the German High Military Command this letter from a Bishop, whose deep grief they will easily imagine. We have suffered much for the last twenty months, but no stroke of fortune could be comparable to this; it would be as undeserved as it is cruel and would produce in all France an indelible impres-

Hopes for restoration of the deported. sion. I cannot believe that the blow will fall. I have faith in the human conscience and I preserve the hope that the young men and girls of respectable families will be restored to their homes in answer to the demand for their return and that sentiments of justice and honor will prevail over all lower considerations.

“ALEXIS ARMAND,  
“Bishop.”

ADDRESS OF PROMINENT CITIZENS OF ROUBAIX AND TOURCOING TO THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE.

“To Monsieur RAYMOND POINCARÉ,  
“*President of the French Republic, Paris.*”

“SIR: We have the honor to express again our most sincere gratitude to you for your most kind reception, a few days ago, of the deputation which went with feelings of legitimate emotion to inform you of the deportation of lads and girls, which the German authorities have just carried out in the invaded districts.

“We have collected some details on the subject from the lips of an honorable and trustworthy person, who succeeded in leaving Tourcoing about ten days ago; we think it our duty to bring these details to your notice by reproducing textually the declarations which have been made to us:

““These deportations began towards Easter. The Germans

announced that the inhabitants of Roubaix, Tourcoing, Lille, etc., were going to be transported into French districts where their provisioning would be easier.

“At night, at about 2 o’clock in the morning, a whole district of the town was invested by the troops of occupation. To each house was distributed a printed notice, of which we give below an exact reproduction, preserving the style and spelling. [See second document, above.]

“The inhabitants so warned were to hold themselves ready to depart an hour and a half after the distribution of the proclamation.

“Each family, drawn up outside the house, was examined by an officer, who pointed out haphazard the persons who were to go. No words can express the barbarity of this proceeding nor describe the heartrending scenes which occurred; young men and girls took a hasty farewell of their parents—a farewell hurried by the German soldiers who were executing the infamous task—rejoined the group of those who were going, and found themselves in the middle of the street, surrounded by other soldiers with fixed bayonets.

“Tears of despair on the part of parents and children so ruthlessly separated did not soften the hearts of the brutal Germans. Sometimes, however, a more kind-hearted officer yielded to too great a despair, and did not choose all the persons whom he should—by the terms of his instructions—have separated.

“These girls and lads were taken in street cars to factories, where they were numbered and labelled like cattle and grouped to form convoys. In these factories they remained twelve, twenty-four, or thirty-six hours until a train was ready to remove them.

“The deportation began with the villages of Roneq, Halluin, etc., then Tourcoing and Roubaix. In towns the Germans proceeded by districts.

“In all about 30,000 persons are said to have been carried off up to the present. This monstrous operation has taken eight to ten days to accomplish. It is feared, unfortunately, that it may begin again soon. The departures took place in freight cars to the sound of the “Marseillaise.”

“The reason given by the German authorities is a humanitarian (?) one. They have put forward the following pretexts: provisioning is going to break down in the large towns in the north and their suburbs, whereas in the Ardennes the feeding is easy and cheap.

“It is known from the young men and girls, since sent back to their families for reasons of health, that in the Department of the Ardennes the victims are lodged in a terrible manner, in disgraceful promiscuity; they are compelled to work in the fields. It is unnecessary to say that the inhabitants of our towns are not trained to such work. The Germans pay them 1.50 m. But there are complaints of insufficient food.

“They were very badly received in the Ardennes. The Germans had told the Ardennais that these were “volunteers” who were coming to work, and the Ardennais proceeded to receive them with many insults, which only ceased when the forcible deportation, of which they were the victims, became known.

“Feeling ran especially high in our towns. Never has so iniquitous a measure been carried out. The Germans have shown all the barbarity of slave drivers.

“The families so scattered are in despair and the morale of the whole population is gravely affected. Boys of 14, schoolboys in knickerbockers, young girls of 15 to 16 have been carried off, and the despairing protests of their parents failed to touch the hearts of the German officers or rather executioners.

“One last detail: The persons so deported are allowed to write home once a month; that is to say, even less often than military prisoners.”

“Such are the declarations which we have collected and which, without commentary, confirm in an even more striking way the facts which we took the liberty of laying before you.

“We do not wish here to enter into the question of provisioning in the invaded districts; others, better qualified than ourselves, give you, as we know, frequent information. It is enough for us to describe in a few words the situation from this aspect:

“The provisioning is very difficult; food, apart from that supplied by the Spanish-American Committee, is very scarce and terribly dear. \* \* \* People are hungry and the provisioning is inadequate by at least a half; our population is suffering constant privations and is growing noticeably weaker. The death rate, too, has increased considerably.

“Sometimes inhabitants of the invaded territories speak with a note of discouragement, crying apparently: ‘We are forsaken by everyone.’ We, on the other hand, are hopeful, Monsieur le Président, that the energetic intervention on the part of Neutrals, which the French Government is sure to evoke, will soon bring to an end these measures which rouse the wrath of all to whom humanity is not an empty word. \* \* \*

“With all confidence in the sympathy of the Government we venture to address a new and pressing appeal to your generous

Young men and girls lodged in “disgraceful promiscuity.”

People rely on the neutral powers.

kindness and far-reaching influence in the name of those who are suffering on behalf of the whole country."

(Signed on behalf of various specified organizations by Toulemonde, Charles Droulers, Léon Hatine-Dazin, and Louis Lorthiois.)

"PARIS, 15th June, 1916, 3, rue Taitbout."

#### AMBASSADOR GERARD'S STATEMENT.

Barbarity of  
deportations. "It seems that the Germans had endeavored to get volunteers from the great industrial towns of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing to work these fields; that after the posting of the notices calling for volunteers only fourteen had appeared. The Germans then gave orders to seize a certain number of inhabitants and send them out to farms in the outlying districts to engage in agricultural work. The Americans told me that this order was carried out with the greatest barbarity; that a man would come home at night and find that his wife or children had disappeared and no one could tell him where they had gone except that the neighbours would relate that German non-commissioned officers and a file of soldiers had carried them off. For instance, in a house of a well-to-do merchant who had perhaps two daughters of fifteen and seventeen and a man servant, the two daughters and the servant would be seized and sent off together to work for the Germans in some little farm house whose location was not disclosed to the parents. The Americans told me that this sort of thing was causing such indignation among the population of these towns that they feared a great uprising and a consequent slaughter and burning by the Germans.

Chancellor says  
that the military  
authorities  
ordered the de-  
portations. "That night at dinner I spoke to the Chancellor about this and told him that it seemed to me absolutely outrageous; and that, without consulting with my government, I was prepared to protest in the name of humanity against a continuance of this treatment of the civil population of occupied France. The Chancellor told me that he had not known of it, that it was the result of orders given by the military, that he would speak to the Emperor about it, and that he hoped to be able to stop further deportations. I believe that they were stopped, but twenty thousand or more who had been taken from their homes were not returned until months afterwards. I said in a speech that I made in May on my return to America that it required the joint efforts of the Pope, the King of Spain, and our President to cause the return of these people to their homes; and I then saw that some German press agency had come out with an article that I had made false statements about this matter because these people were not returned to their

homes as a result of the representations of the Pope, the King of Spain, and our President, but were sent back because the Germans had no further use for them. It seems to me that this denial makes the case rather worse than before." James W. Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, 1917, pp. 333-335.

## POLAND.

The systematic exploitation of human misery by the German authorities in Poland followed the general plan with which the reader has become only too familiar. In order to prove the identity of procedure it will be enough to present the detailed report specially written for this pamphlet by Mr. Frederic C. Walcott. A fuller and in some ways more touching treatment is given in his article, "Devastated Poland," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for May, 1917.

### POLAND AND THE PRUSSIAN SYSTEM.

SEPTEMBER, 1917.

Poland—Russian Poland—is perishing. And the German high command, imbued with the Prussian system, is coolly reckoning on the necessities of a starving people to promote its imperial ends.

West Poland, which has been Prussian territory more than a hundred years, is a disappointment to Germany; its people obstinately remain Poles. This time they propose swifter measures. In two or three years, by grace of starvation and frightfulness, they calculate East Poland will be thoroughly made over into a German province.

In the great Hindenburg drive one year ago, the country was completely devastated by the retreating Russian army and the oncoming Germans. A million people were driven from their homes. Half of them perished by the roadside. For miles and miles, when I saw the country, the way was littered with mudsoaked garments and bones picked clean by the crows—though the larger bones had been gathered by the thrifty Germans to be ground into fertilizer. Wicker baskets—the little basket in which the baby swings from the rafters in every peasant home—were scattered along the way, hundreds and hundreds, until one could not count them, each one telling a death.

Warsaw, which had not been destroyed—once a proud city of a million people—was utterly stricken. Poor folks by thousands lined the streets, leaning against the buildings, shivering in



snow and rain, too weak to lift a hand, dying of cold and hunger. Though the rich gave all they had, and the poor shared their last crust, they were starving there in the streets in droves.

In the stricken city, the German governor of Warsaw issued a proclamation. All able-bodied Poles were bidden to go to Germany to work. If any refused, let no other Pole give him to eat, not so much as a mouthful, under penalty of German military law.

It was more than the mind could grasp. To the husband and father of broken families, the high command gave this decree: Leave your families to starve; if you stay, we shall see that you do starve—this to a high-strung, sensitive, highly organized people, this from the authorities of a nation professing civilization and religion to millions of fellow Christians captive and starving.

General von Kries, the governor, was kind enough to explain. Country to be restocked with Germans. Candidly, they preferred not quite so much starvation; it might get on the nerves of the German soldiers. But, starvation being present, it must work for German purpose. Taking advantage of this wretchedness, the working men of Poland were to be removed; the country was to be restocked with Germans. It was country Germany needed—rich alluvial soil—better suited to German expansion than distant possessions. If the POLAND that was had to perish, so much the better for Germany.

Remove the men, let the young and weak die, graft German stock on the women. See how simple it is: with a crafty smile, General von Kries concluded, "By and by we must give back freedom to Poland. Very good; it will reappear as a German province."

Slowly, I came to realize that this monstrous, incredible thing was the PRUSSIAN SYSTEM, deliberately chosen by the circle around the all-highest, and kneaded into the German people till it became part of their mind.

German people are material for building the State—of no other account. Other people are for Germany's will to work upon. Humanity, liberty, equality, the rights of others—all foolish talk. Democracy, an idle dream. The true Prussian lives only for this, that the German State may be mighty and great.

All the woes in the long count against Germany are part of the Prussian system: The invasion of Belgium, the deportations, the starving of subject people, the Armenian massacres, atrocities, frightfulness, sinking the Lusitania, the submarine horrors, the enslavement of women—all piece into the monstrous view. The rights of nations, the rights of men, the lives and liberties of all people are subordinate to the German aim of dominion over all the world.

FREDERICK C. WALCOTT.

## CONCLUSION.

STATEMENT OF MR. VERNON KELLOGG, SEPTEMBER, 1917.

(Prepared for this pamphlet.)

It was my privilege—and necessity—in connection with the work of the Commission for Relief in Belgium to spend several months at the Great Headquarters of the German armies in the west, and later to spend more months at Brussels as the Commission's director for Belgium and occupied France. It was an enforced opportunity to see something of German practice in the treatment of a conquered people, part of whom (the French and the inhabitants of the Belgian provinces of East and West Flanders) were under the direct control of the German General Staff and the several German armies of the west, and part, the inhabitants of the seven other Belgian provinces, under the quasi-civil government of Governor General von Bissing. I did not enter the occupied territories until June, 1915, and so, of course, saw none of the actual invasion and overrunning of the land. I saw only the graves of the massacred and the ruins of their towns. But I saw through the long, hard months much too much for my peace of mind of how the Germans treated the unfortunates under their control after the occupation.

The graves of the massacred.

It would be an unnecessary repetition to describe again the scenes in Louvain, Dinant, Visé, Andenne, Tamines, Aerschot, and the rest of the familiar long list of the ruined Belgian towns. But too little has been said of the many, many ruined villages all over the extent of the occupied French territory from Lille in the north to Longwy in the south, and from the eastern boundary of France to the fatal trench lines of the extreme western front.

As chief representative for the Commission, it was my duty to cover this whole territory repeatedly in long motor journeys in company with the German officer assigned for my protection—and for the protection of the German army against any too much seeing. As I had opportunity also to cover most of Belgium in repeated trips from Brussels into the various provinces, I necessarily had opportunity to compare the destruction wrought in the two regions.

I could understand why certain towns and villages along the Meuse and along the lines of the French and English retreat were badly shot to pieces. There had been fighting in these towns

and the artillery of first one side and then the other had worked their havoc among the houses of the inhabitants. **Towns untouched by war but ruined.** But there were many towns in which there had been no fighting and yet all too many of these towns also were in ruins. It was not ruin by shells, but ruin by fire and explosions. There were the famous "punished" towns. Either a citizen or perhaps two or three citizens had fired from a window on the invaders—or were alleged to have. Thereupon a block, or two or three blocks, or half the town was methodically and effectively burned or blown to pieces. There are many of these "punished" towns in occupied France. And between these towns and along the roadways are innumerable isolated single farm houses that are also in ruins. It is not claimed that there was any sniping from these farmhouses. They were just destroyed along the way—and by the way, one may say. When the roll of destroyed villages and destroyed farmhouses in occupied France is made known, the world will be shocked again by this evidence of German thoroughness.

The rigor of the control over the inhabitants of the occupied French territory is almost inconceivable. The lines delimiting the regions occupied by the various distinct German armies are lines of impassable steel for the inhabitants. **Heartlessness of German rule.** If a member of the family in one town was visiting friends or relatives in another town a few kilometers away at the time of the outbreak of the war that family has remained separated through all the long months that have since elapsed. No messages can pass except by dangerous subterranean ways from town to town.

The requisitioning of everything from food to furniture, from farm animals to the blankets and mattresses from the beds, has been carried to such an extent that the people live on nothing, amid nothing. These requisitions in the earlier days had a more or less official seeming in that quartermaster's *bons* were given for the things taken. Even then the German sense of humor too often made the *bon* a crude jest. **False receipts for requisitioned property.** The *bons* were written in the German language in German script, illegible and beyond the understanding of the simple natives. A *bon* might be given for a chicken when it was a pair of horses that was taken. But later, when these jests palled on the German soldiers, the requisitioning was simplified by the omission of *bon*-giving. Where the villagers and peasants had tried to save something that could be buried or concealed, the searching out of these pitiful hiding places became a great game with the German soldiers. One ingenious Frenchman had secreted a few choice bottles of wine in a famous tomb on heights above the Meuse. But these

bottles found their way to special tables at the Great Headquarters.

In the spring of 1916 the army authorities devised the plan of deporting a number of men and women from Lille and the industrial towns near it to the agricultural regions further south. These French were to work in the fields and help produce food for the German army. As a matter of fact this plan had at bottom something to recommend it. The congestion in the industrialized northern region made the food problem there very difficult. Our Commission had more trials in connection with the provisioning of the great city of Lille and the lesser but crowded towns of Valenciennes, Roubaix, and Tourcoing than with all the rest of the occupied territory. Also these people had no work to do, as the great factories were still. To come south and work in the open air in the fields and be allowed a fair ration would have been a real advantage to these people. It would also have helped in the whole food supply situation.

But the horrible methods of that deportation were such that we, although trying to hold steadfast to a rigorous neutrality, could not but protest. Mr. Gerard, our Ambassador to Berlin, happened at the very time of this protest to make a visit to the Great Headquarters in the west and the matter was brought to the attention of certain high officers at Headquarters on the very day of Mr. Gerard's visit and in his hearing. So that he added his own protest to that of Mr. Poland, our director at the time, and further deportations were stopped. But a terrible mischief had already been done. Husbands and fathers had been taken from their families without a word of good-bye; sons and daughters on whom perhaps aged parents relied for support were taken without pity or apparent thought of the terrible consequences. The great deportations of Belgium have shocked the world. But these lesser deportations—that is, lesser in extent, but not less brutal in their carrying out—are hardly known.

I went into Belgium and occupied France a neutral and I maintained while there a steadfastly neutral behavior. But I came out no neutral. I can not conceive that any American enjoying an experience similar to mine could have come out a neutral. He would come out, as I came, with the ineradicable conviction that a people or a government which can do what the Germans did and are doing in Belgium and France to-day must not be allowed, if there is power on earth to prevent it, to do this a moment longer than can be helped. And they must not be allowed ever to do it again.

**Horrors of deportations.**

**No American can fail to oppose Prussianism.**

I went in also a hater of war, and I came out a more ardent hater of war. But, also, I came out with the ineradicable conviction, again, that the only way in which Germany under its present rule and in its present state of mind can be kept from doing what it had done is by force of arms. It can not be prevented by appeal, concession, or treaties. Hence, ardently as I hope that all war may cease, I hope that this war may not cease until Germany realizes that the civilized world simply will not allow such horrors as those for which Germany is responsible in Belgium and France to be any longer possible.

VERNON KELLOGG.



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