

THE IMPRISONMENT OF
THE GHENT PROFESSORS

KR. NYROP

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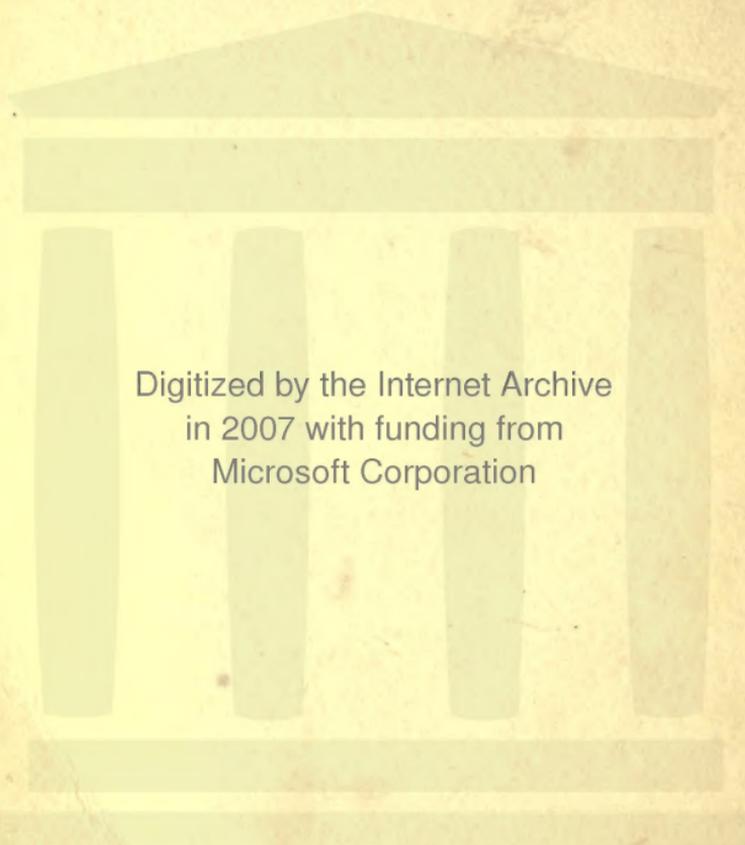


Humphrey Wickes



1919

IMPRISONMENT OF THE
GHENT PROFESSORS



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THE
IMPRISONMENT OF THE
GHENT PROFESSORS

A QUESTION OF MIGHT AND RIGHT

MY REPLY TO THE GERMAN
LEGATION IN STOCKHOLM

WITH APPENDIXES

BY

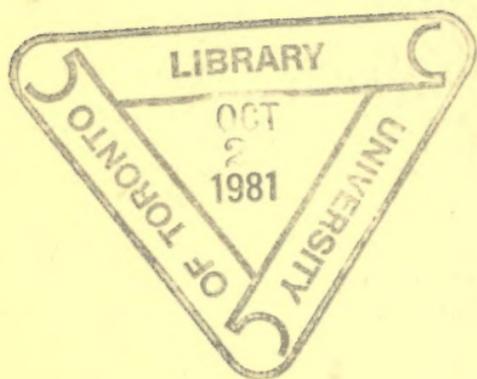
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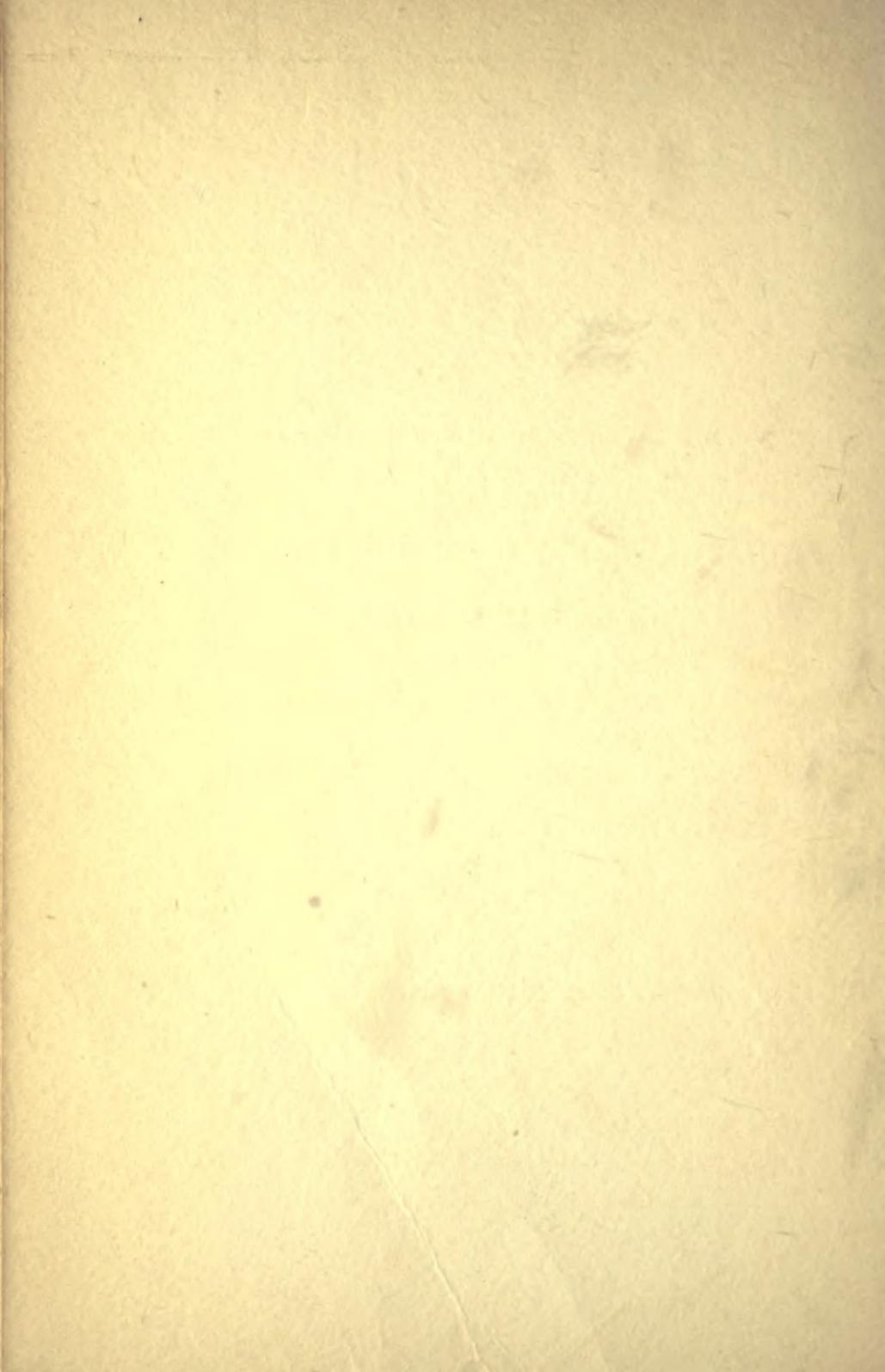


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DEDICATED TO PROFESSORS
PAUL FRÉDÉRICQ AND HENRI PIRENNE
WITH BROTHERLY AFFECTION

KR. N.

Copenhagen, October 24, 1916



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I

THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF THE QUESTION

ON March 18th, 1916, the military authorities in Belgium arrested two of the professors attached to the University of Ghent, namely the historians Paul Frédéricq and Henri Pirenne. These two European celebrities having been sent to Germany were provisionally interned in an officers' camp. Some time afterwards, however, they were transferred to the prisoners' camps at Holzminden and Gütersloh, where they had to associate with other civil prisoners of every social grade. They were lodged in barracks, and had numbers and badges like ordinary prisoners. It was not until after a long time had elapsed that they were treated with the consideration which was due to their fame, their social standing, and their age.

The arrest and deportation of the two professors caused a most painful impression throughout Europe, amongst other reasons, because their

only guilt appeared to have consisted in the fact that they were unwilling to help General von Bissing, the Governor-General, in his efforts to transform the hitherto French University of Ghent into a Flemish University. Outside Belgium itself, however, people had only the most obscure notions with regard to the importance and scope of these efforts, and as the whole question of the establishment of a Flemish College in Ghent is most complicated, I published in the *Berlingske Tidende* of May 27th and 29th, under the heading "The Arrest of the Belgian Professors," two articles,¹ in which I gave an historical survey, dealing partly with the linguistic conditions of Belgium which originated the idea of establishing a Flemish University, and partly with the efforts made by the Governor-General to transform the University of Ghent into a Flemish Alma Mater, and with the very decisive protest with which these efforts were met, not only by the professors of the University itself, but also by the Flemish population and the leading "Flamingants" in and outside the occupied territory.

A Swedish translation of my articles was simultaneously published in the *Stockholms Tid-*

¹ Reprinted in my book *Is War Culture?* pp. 102-11.

ningen (the issue of May 28th), and after three months had elapsed the German Legation in Stockholm gave its official reply. This reply, which was published in extenso in the *Stockholms Tidningen* of August 26th, and in a translation in the *Berlingske Tidende* of Copenhagen of September 11th, is given below in an English translation (Appendix I). This reply does not, of course, affect my exposition of the conditions which obtained before 1914, as, for obvious reasons, opinions could not possibly differ on this point.

The reply exclusively deals with the conditions obtaining after the occupation, and maintains that my exposition of the matter is wrongly presented.

I wrote my articles in order to protest against a statement, to my mind quite misleading, which was published in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, and of which a translation appeared in the Danish newspapers. I am glad that the German Legation in Stockholm, by means of its protest, has given me the opportunity of reconsidering this question, which has gradually roused all Europe to take such a great interest in the matter, and the great moral importance of which must not be underestimated. I have constantly followed the development of the question with

intense attention, and I will state below a few new and convincing facts in addition to those which I gave in May 1916. These facts will, I hope, clearly demonstrate that my previous exposition of the matter was in all essentials exactly in accordance with the admitted facts, and is entirely confirmed by the subsequent development of the matter since last spring.

If I oppose the reply given in the German note in such an emphatic manner, I do so not only to protest against its criticism of my exposition, but also because I believe that a treatment of the whole matter, seen from a point of view differing from that taken up by the Governor-General, may be of interest even to the German authorities, and more particularly because I attach very far-reaching importance to the matter with which I am dealing. This subject contributes in a peculiar manner to clear up the question which is occupying the minds of men all over the world, *i.e.* the question of the autonomy of nations, upon which the war to a very great extent turns. The conflict over the reform of the University of Ghent is to my mind a symbol of the present great struggle as to the relation between might and right, as to State coercion and spiritual freedom.

II

THE TWO LANGUAGES

IN order that the many complicated questions connected with the efforts of the Governor-General to transform the University of Ghent into an entirely Flemish institution should be correctly understood, I must begin with a few brief historical remarks.

Belgium is a country where two languages are spoken, French and Flemish. French always played the predominant part, but since the Renaissance period the Flemings have eagerly stood up for the practice and recognition of their language apart from French. In recent times, more particularly, the champions of the Flemish language, the so-called Flamingants, displayed a very considerable activity, which in many spheres has already brought about great results.¹

¹ Cf. further with regard to this subject my treatise, "The Two Languages," in the recently published important work, *Belgium*, pp. 108-33.

At the Belgian Universities French was the only language used for teaching, except in Ghent, where in 1911, 248 courses of lectures were given, in 24 of which Flemish was used. But this proportion far from satisfied the Flamings; they had for a long time paid attention to the great difficulties which might arise from the almost exclusive adoption of French at a University, where the majority of the students were Flemish, and they have, therefore, repeatedly set forth definite demands regarding the establishment of a purely Flemish University. A zealous agitation was carried on for the furtherance of this scheme, and the idea was ventilated of establishing a new and exclusively Flemish University at Antwerp, which, as we know, is in all respects the centre of Flemish culture. This plan, however, would have required very large financial means to carry through; it was stranded at the first discussion of its details, and has not since been revived.

The Flamings, after this, looked exclusively to their former favourite idea of transforming the University of Ghent into a purely Flemish University, and in March 1911 they presented to the Chamber a Bill, the first clause of which reads: "At the University of Ghent all the

lectures must be given in Flemish." This Bill caused a violent agitation, and was the subject of very heated discussions. The majority held aloof from it owing to its radical nature, and, on the other hand, in the month of April a new Bill was presented, proposing that the two languages were to be recognised as being on a par with each other and having the same rights, and that the staff of professors was—where it was required—to be doubled. The French lectures were to be maintained, but independently of these, lectures in Flemish were to be given to the extent which might be desired by the students. This proposal also, which would be very expensive to carry through, met with opposition, and a new plan was set forth having as its object the gradual transformation of the University into a Flemish institution. The transformation was to be gradually effected by change extending over a series of years, all possible regard being had to the interests of the students. This proposal seemed to gain the favour of a majority in the Chambers, when the war broke out.

These very few main features indicate the development of the questions connected with the work of establishing a Flemish University,

and which resulted in the scheme of transforming the University of Ghent into a purely Flemish University.

With regard to these historical facts there is, as already pointed out, no discrepancy between the views of the German Legation and mine. Our difference of opinion only begins when I proceed to discuss what happened with regard to the question I am here dealing with, after the occupation of Belgium.

III

THE FLAMINGANTS AND THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

WHAT happened after the occupation with regard to the University question is as follows :

On December 31st, 1915, the Governor-General issued a decree providing that Flemish should be the language used for teaching at the University of Ghent. This decree was received with great enthusiasm by the local German press, which informed the world that the Flemish population was delighted with the Government meeting its wishes in this manner.

On April 5th the German Chancellor also expressed himself in the Reichstag in full agreement with this plan in a well-considered speech, in which he promised the Flemish population, on behalf of the Imperial Government, that all possible assistance would be given in its struggle against the preponderance of French culture in Belgium.

It might, therefore, look apparently as if

everything were in the best order. For a long time past the Flemings had cherished a burning desire for the establishment of a Flemish University. Now the occupying power itself had nobly realised this desire, which the previous national Government had hesitated to satisfy.

In this manner the Germans tried to the best of their ability to help their "liberated Flemish brethren" to rid themselves of Walloon tyranny, and they expected without a doubt that the Flemings would receive their extended hand with pleasure.

Now I have maintained in my article that the Flemings look at the matter from quite a different point of view to that of the Germans; that they consider the intervention of the Germans in the Flemish question as an attempt to divide the Belgians by energetically accentuating the differences between the Flemings and the Walloons, and thereby driving a wedge between them in order to dissolve the Belgian State; they have therefore scouted the German attempt towards a *rapprochement*. I think I have produced abundant proofs of this interpretation of mine. The German Legation, however, maintains that my presentment does not correspond with the actual facts. The German note says on this point :

“When Professor Nyrop in his article maintains that all the Flemings have decidedly refused to receive anything from the enemy’s hand, and that the most zealous Flamingants under present conditions are also opposed to the establishment of a Flemish University, we have to point out that this assertion is absolutely contradicted by the facts.”

The position is as follows :

A short time after the issue of von Bissing’s decree, a most energetic protest, signed by many Flemings, was raised against it. This protest contains the following remarks :

“How would History judge our Flemish compatriots if, at a time when our soldiers are still fighting against the foe in the trenches, we received any gift whatever from the conquerors’ hands, even though the gift might appear to remedy an injustice of former times? We belong to a people that always wished to arrange its own affairs in its own country.”

And further on :

“However difficult the circumstances may be, it is best that the present rulers should have no

doubt whatever as to our opinion, and that they should not entertain the idea that there exists the least difference of opinion between the Flemings and the Walloons as to our international position. As one of our partisans recently said at a public meeting, the independence of the Belgian nation is the only point of view from which the Flemings and the Flamings can regard the matter."

Now the reply of the German note in a most peculiar manner tries to minimise the importance of this protest, and adds superciliously that it is largely signed by non-political artists, musicians, and public functionaries, who are described—it is difficult to understand why—as "harmless." Should Flemish artists, musicians, and public functionaries really be unable to have any reasoned opinion with regard to a question which for years has been passionately discussed in the Flemish press? The German Legation will find it difficult to make any one believe this. And what other reason than their own serious conviction could have induced them to sign a protest against the occupying power? And has not this protest even greater weight because it is signed among others by "non-political" Flemish citizens?

The plain truth, which cannot be explained away, is that the signatories belong to all possible social grades, and fully represent the whole party which before 1914 struggled for the honour and recognition of Flemish culture alongside of French. Among the signatories of the protest there are not only the presidents of the two large Flemish funds which are intended for the furtherance of Flemish culture, but also several members of the former Commission for the establishment of a Flemish University. This fact alone must carry conviction to everyone, and I cannot but express my astonishment at the superficiality with which the author of the German note has read my article, and at the strange method of which he has availed himself in order to evade the facts!

After the Flamingants' protest there came a no less energetic protest from all the professors of the University, and after the Chancellor's speech of April 5th, which revived the question anew, the whole free Belgian press protested, both the Flemish and the French.

The German reply points out that several Flemish associations and two Deputies from Antwerp have now expressed themselves in favour of the Flemish University. Circum-

stances, therefore, appear to have altered since the spring of 1916, when I wrote my article; but no great importance need, in advance, be attached to these declarations of sympathy, as they were not made in a free country, but in a country ruled by a military dictator, where all liberty of meeting is suspended, and where all the opinions expressed are censored. Let us now subject the new information to a further test.

When the reply of the German note maintains that the "really leading men" among the Flamingants are favourably disposed towards the German reform scheme, this remark has a most astonishing effect, and betrays considerable ignorance of the real facts.

The note mentions the names of two Deputies from Antwerp, Augusteyns and Hendrikx, as two zealous adherents of the German University reform. Any one who is familiar with the circumstances obtaining in Antwerp, and with the Flamingants movement, will know that Mr. Augusteyns plays only a subordinate part in it, and that he never was a leading Flamingant; Mr. Hendrikx, on the other hand, is much more important, but he is generally regarded as the *enfant terrible* of the movement, whose unwelcome services would gladly be dispensed with.

He cannot in any way be compared with Louis Franck. The latter was always unanimously recognised as the real soul of the movement; and it is he who was the principal originator of the above-mentioned sharp protest against the Governor-General's reform scheme, and the most prominent representatives of the Flemish cause gathered round him.

The reply also points out that several Flemish associations have agreed to the Governor-General's scheme.

I note this fact, which I will consider later on. It is impossible to say what importance should be attributed to it until the detailed circumstances under which the aforesaid associations gave their adherence are known. These associations cannot, however, in any way be regarded as representative of the position taken up by the Flemings in the matter, for the simple reason that a good many Flemings are at the present moment living in exile. And these Flemings, among whom there are several very prominent Flamingants, have repeatedly, in the most unequivocal manner, disclosed their opinions. As they are living outside the occupied country, and therefore are restrained by no censorship, we have *a priori* a guarantee that their words

exactly express their feelings and thoughts. Only quite recently they expressed themselves with all the frankness which is needed.

As the German Legation has cast quite unjustified doubts on the correctness of my presentment of the facts, I am compelled to call its attention to some declarations which were made last summer by a prominent leader of the Flamings. These declarations are exceedingly violent, and I should not have presented them here but for the fact that the Legation, by trying to present the matter in an *ex-parte* manner, has compelled me to bring them forward.

On July 21st, 1916, the national day of Belgium, a large meeting was held at the Albert Hall in London by exiled Belgians. The meeting was also attended by many English people. Standaert, the well-known member of the Belgian Chamber, who represents the Flemish division of Bruges, made a speech in Flemish, in which he with great vigour explained the feelings and complete unanimity of the Flemish population.

Standaert in particular discussed the *rapprochements* towards the Flemings which the German Chancellor tried to make in his speech in the Reichstag, and the transformation of the University of Ghent, a reform which the Flem-

ings had demanded long before the war, and which the occupying power now wished to force through for the purpose of dividing the Belgians. I quote an extract from the end of the speech made by the Member of the Belgian Chamber :

“Everybody should know that we Flemings with deep indignation, reject this gift of the enemy; that we kick at it . . .

“The Flemish citizen asks for no guardianship. He is capable of managing his own affairs; he is sufficiently adult to defend himself and to put his demands forward. The Flemings, nowadays, as in the Middle Ages, are free citizens, about whom it was said :

‘Die wilden, wat was recht,
En wonnen, wat ze wilden.’

(They willed what was right, and secured what they willed.)

“Moreover, Germany’s promises, its plighted troth, its oath, its signature, all these things have no more value in our eyes than a scrap of paper.

“The Flemings, moreover, are only too well acquainted with Germany’s offences against the just demands of various nationalities and lan-

guages, against the Poles in Poland, against the Danes in South Jutland, and against the French in Alsace-Lorraine. How could we, therefore, have any confidence whatever in them ?

“When I lived in South Africa, I saw with my own eyes how the pro-German Boers, when they heard about the cruelties which were committed in Flanders, turned their backs with horror on these barbarians and joined the British in order at their side to fight the Germans. And should we, who have been the victims of these horrors, should we Belgians, we Flemings, make overtures to our executioners ? The graves of our martyrs would open and the corpses of our soldiers who fell fighting for their country would quiver with wrath, and the ruins of Louvain, Termonde, Aerschot, and Ypres would stone us to death if we held out our hands to these barbarians who have destroyed the famous masterpieces of Flemish art, who have tortured our old men, violated our women, and murdered our small children.

“Between the Flemings and Germany there will in the future be a wall, the wall which their barbarism has raised. Germany has crucified us, flesh of our flesh, and blood of our blood.

“And from generation to generation Flemish

mothers will teach their children to pray this prayer: Free us, O Lord, from the rage of the Teutons.

“The Belgium of the future must be a Belgium without any yoke and without any guardianship, where all the citizens, united in the same thought, will work for the regeneration of a new and greater Belgium.

“From Liége to the Yser Walloons and Flemings have strengthened and sanctified their native soil with their own blood.”

This weighty evidence, given by a free leader of the Flamingants who spoke on behalf of thousands and thousands of Flemings, sufficiently shows that I did not incorrectly present the feelings obtaining towards the attempt of the occupying power to win the Flemings by means of a University reform. I add that I can easily quote a whole series of similar declarations, made by men like Stijn Streuvels, and Frans van Cauwelaert, and from editorial articles published in the most important censor-free Belgian newspapers, which, it must be observed, are not French and pro-French, but Flemish papers, and which under other circumstances would fight for the Flamingants' cause, newspapers like

Het Belgische Dagblad, Het Vaderland, Belgische Standaard, De Stem uit Belgie, etc. All these articles have the same tendency: We did not ask the occupying power for anything, and do not wish to receive any gift from the enemy's hands; to offer gifts under the present circumstances unmistakably discloses the intention of compromising those who were first offended by making them an offer.

I can even refer to a Flemish newspaper which is published in the occupied country itself. It is called *De Vlaamsche Leeuw*, and forms an excellent pendant of *La Libre Belgique*.¹ Nobody knows who writes it, no one knows where it is printed, no one knows who spreads it. And it is nevertheless spread everywhere. It protests against the German régime, and rejects all approaches; and at the head of each number the following paragraph is to be read: "In these times of sorrow and trials we Flemings place ourselves without reservation beside our brethren, the Walloons, around our Belgian tricolor, and we share the same misery and the same dangers with them. We are convinced that on the day when the final victory is won we shall also participate in the same rights." I am sorry to

¹ As to this newspaper, see my book, *Is War Culture?* p. 40.

say I possess no original copy of *De Vlaamsche Leeuw*, which only on exceedingly rare occasions reaches any one outside Belgium. I have given a translation of an excellent facsimile-reprint of the number of June 15th, 1916. Its editor's address is indicated in the following original manner: The Commander of Brussels' office right opposite the printing works of *La libre Belgique*.

After having thoroughly examined the arguments of the German note and the Flemish evidence, I must now maintain that the manner in which I presented the disposition of the Flemings in May, 1916, was and is exactly in accordance with the real facts. The author of the German note will have learnt that the politico-military and diplomatic way of looking at a matter is one thing, and that the purely scientific point of view is quite another; the latter first examines the sources of the evidence and tests their value, and then on the basis of the *collected* evidence, without regard to what is opportune at the moment, throws as full a light as possible on the matter.

IV

THE ARRESTED PROFESSORS AND THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

IN my article I connected the arrest and deportation of the two Belgian historians with their scouting the reform scheme of the University of Ghent, and I commenced the article by quoting the story told by *l'Indépendance Belge* that Pirenne is said to have declared at an audience with von Bissing that he was only willing to accept the position as Rector of the Flemish University if his appointment were signed by His Majesty Albert I, King of Belgium.

Now the reply of the German note states that Pirenne never had an audience of von Bissing, and that the two professors' opposition to the University reform was not the only reason of their arrest; with regard to this point, the note accuses me of having presented "the facts in an entirely incorrect manner."

I protest most energetically, not only against the accusation made, but also against the kind

of polemics employed towards me as to the first point.

The German Legation writes :

“ In the first instance, as regards the deportation of the two professors to Germany, we beg to point out that Professor Nyrop adopts the fable which has already several times been stigmatised as incorrect, viz. that Baron von Bissing, the Governor-General, is said to have called Professor Frédéricq—others say Professor Pirenne—to him in order to induce him by splendid offers to accept the position of Rector at the new University of Ghent.”

This is exactly what I did *not* do. I did not say that this fable was true. I have had so much to do with these kind of rumours that I fully understand their average unreliableness. I therefore wrote literally as follows : “ Whether this statement is correct or not, no one knows. It is very possible that it is a fancy, and the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* has denied it in the most decisive manner.”

Either, therefore, the German Legation in Stockholm does not know Swedish, or we have here a *lapsus linguæ* of a most peculiar nature

before us, which for international reasons of courtesy I will not stigmatise as strongly as it deserves to be. As everyone can see, so far from my having recognised this tale as true, I was prepared in the first instance to consider it a fancy, and I loyally stated that a German newspaper had denied it.

I had, however, no absolute confidence in the disavowal of the German newspaper, as other statements made by the paper in the same article proved to be incorrect, and I was therefore justified in saying that no decisive proof had so far been produced as to whether the tale was true or not. Now, on the contrary, I know that the tale is apocryphal, and I know it from the very best source, the Governor-General himself having denied it in a letter to one of my Swedish colleagues.

Professor Pirenne is a foreign member of the "Royal Academy of Belles Lettres, History, and Antiquities," and in order to obtain authentic information regarding his fate a Swedish member of the aforesaid Academy, in view of my article, wrote to the Governor-General direct. He replied in a letter dated July 9th, a translation of which was published in the *Stockholms Dagblad* on August 6th and in the *Berlingske Tidende* on

September 11th. In this book the letter is communicated as under Appendix II.

In this letter Mr. von Bissing categorically declares that he never spoke with any of the two aforesaid professors. This question is therefore disposed of. A new "historical" anecdote has proved to be a pure product of the imagination, and if a third edition of my book, *Is War Culture?* should be published, I will correct my statement that no one knows whether the anecdote is true or not.

Why, then, were the two professors, who are not combatants, sent to Germany as prisoners of war? The Governor-General says with regard to this point, as follows :

"Both of them were sent to Germany by the commanding authority of the Army zone to which Ghent belongs, because they influenced their colleagues in a prohibited manner with the object of preventing them from carrying out their official duties, and for this purpose they availed themselves of unlawful orders which reached the Consistory of Ghent from the Belgian Government by way of secret channels via Holland. By doing so, they infringed the declaration of loyalty which the Belgian public

officials, as well as the University professors, made to the occupying power in accordance with the Hague Convention."

The highest German authority in Belgium has now informed the world why the two historians were deported, and this information will everywhere attract the greatest attention, both in learned circles and elsewhere. It is now established that the two professors were sent to Germany because, with regard to the University question, they tried to influence their colleagues as agitators; consequently their arrest is very closely connected with the attempted University reform, as I have maintained. It cannot, however, even under a military dictatorship, be considered as a punishable act for a person to deliberate with his colleagues regarding joint action in such a serious matter, and it is therefore accentuated in the German note that the two professors acted in accordance with instructions received from their Government. This argument, the military validity of which I shall not discuss, fully shows how the present circumstances have turned everything upside down. They throw a glaring, dazzling, and fitful light on the difficult circumstances engendered by war,

occupation, and annexation. Patriotism, loyalty, and faithfulness, become treason. Is it not as the witches sing in *Macbeth*, during their dance on the heath : “ *Fair is foul, and foul is fair* ” ?

The arrest of the two professors raises moral questions of the most serious and difficult nature. The decision of the military power in this sphere, where the noblest and deepest feelings of man are set in motion, is of course without importance from a purely ethical point of view. Moreover, in order to form an absolutely impartial opinion as to the alleged offence of the two professors, one must see the matter from both sides. *Audiat et altera pars* is the simple basis on which all human justice rests. And the matter looks quite different when seen from the other side. In the application to the Governor-General from all the lecturers of the University, it is said : “ The professors Frédéricq and Pirenne both live for their learning, both of them are lecturers of the University who carry out their duties faithfully, and they are both State citizens of unquestionable integrity. As regards the obligations of the University professors towards the occupying State power, and as to how these obligations can be reconciled with the duties which patriotism imposes, the

opinion maintained by these two hard-hit colleagues is in full agreement with ours."

This weighty evidence must be compared with von Bissing's declarations in order to form a just estimate of the whole matter; and, finally, we are short of a document of the greatest importance, the explanation of the matter made by the two arrested professors themselves, which, however, will not be available until after the war; and before this explanation is forthcoming there will not be sufficient material available for a final judgment as to the relations between the professors and the Governor-General.

Baron von Bissing also states in his letter that the two professors infringed the declaration of loyalty which they, as public functionaries in an occupied land, signed, in accordance with the Hague Convention.

I honestly admit that I am somewhat surprised at this reference to the Hague Convention, but for obvious reasons I will not deal any further with it. On the other hand, I want to comment on the reference to the signed declaration of loyalty by the following information which I have from a source, the trustworthiness of which must be considered as above suspicion.

At the commencement of the month of July,

the Germans evacuated the University of Liège and placed all the lecture rooms at the disposal of the staff of teachers. But it appears that they could not be used owing to the devastations of the soldiers.

The Civil President of the Province, acting according to instructions from the German "Commander's Office," used the opportunity to summon the Rector of the University, Mr. Lepaige, and very eagerly insisted that all the University lecturers should sign a declaration that they were willing to resume their lectures. "This declaration does not really bind them to anything," he said. "That I certainly know," Mr. Lepaige replied, "but the professors do not believe it. They say that their colleagues in Ghent, who immediately signed in good faith, were sent to Germany because they refused to resume their lectures, and nothing will induce them to sign."

The relations between the Governor-General and the University professors in certain ways is a reflection of the relations between the Governor-General and the whole Belgian people. In this connection I will refer to a few words by Bishop Heylen, which are to be found in his reply to the Governor-General's letter of June 4th.

Baron von Bissing had invoked the Hague Convention towards the Bishop. In his reply the Bishop also referred to this Convention, and added :

“The Hague Convention was not established merely to provide for the interests of the intruding enemy, it also protects the occupied country, and it secures to the occupied country respect for the highest and noblest feelings of the human soul—patriotism ; and it imposes on the occupying army the duty of avoiding any violation of the patriotic feelings of the people. On this very point we are the object of acts of violence which fill us with pain, and this is the one side of the German occupation which causes most bitterness. It seems as if the feeling of patriotism is everywhere counteracted, quelled, and suppressed ; nevertheless, its maintenance is a right, and, moreover, it is indispensable for the peace of the people.”

I will close my analysis of the Governor-General's letter by referring to a statement which recently came into my possession, and which does not harmonise with the charges he advances against the two professors :

A foreigner, living in Holland, who claims to be very well informed, stated to me that the German authorities in Brussels and Berlin replied to the ambassador of a neutral power, who asked for the reason of the arrest of the two professors, that they were not accused of any offence, but that their presence in Belgium was considered undesirable.

Here, consequently, one statement contradicts another. The future will show which of the two statements is correct. I do not of course cast doubt on the Governor-General's words; but indeed he himself points out that it is not he who caused the two professors to be arrested. The matter was settled by another authority, and it would certainly be quite impossible for the Governor-General to make himself thoroughly familiar with all the "matters" which at the present moment are pending in Belgium.

Moreover, as regards the matter here under review, I do not believe there can be any doubt that the Governor-General was insufficiently informed on one single point. His own letter shows it with all the plainness which can be desired.

The Governor-General points out that the

two professors were taken to an officers' camp in Germany ; and he adds :

“ Immediately after their deportation, I submitted to the competent military authority that it should permit them to stay in a German University town in order that they might have the opportunity of moving about freely and of resuming their studies at their pleasure. If this request has not been finally complied with, it is mainly due to the circumstance that Frédéricq expressed a positive wish to remain in his officers' camp.”

The General therefore gives us to understand that the two professors who live in Jena, since October, according to order were staying at an officers' camp in the month of August. He has no idea of the treatment to which Professor Pirenne was subjected ; he does not know that the professor was interned in an officers' camp for a short time only ; that on May 15th he was transferred to a civil prisoners' camp, where he was compelled to associate with prisoners many of whom belonged to the lowest grades of society.

Here I must remind you of the remarks I made above with regard to the note from the German

Legation, and I must again in particular call attention to the immense difference obtaining between the politico-military view of the matter and the purely objective and scientific one. The Governor-General partly overlooked this difference on the day on which he signed his letter to the Swedish philologist. This document was to inform the world of what really took place in the case of the two professors, but it has not been able to stand the test before the critical tribunal of historical research.

When an ungentle fate has allotted to a person the unenviable, or, more correctly expressed, the immensely sad task of being Governor-General in a country occupied with injustice and violence, he should take good care not voluntarily to make his position still more unfortunate.

The Governor-General would certainly have acted wisely if he had not written the letter here analysed.

V

THE PRO-GERMAN FLEMINGS AND THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

I HAVE above called attention to the exceedingly rich documentary material bearing testimony to the vigorous opposition made by the Flamingants against the University reform. At the same time I pointed out that lately voices were also raised among the Flemings who were *in favour* of the Governor-General's scheme, and I will here go into the details of the most recent document dealing with the matter, viz. a vote of confidence published on Friday, September 1st, in the Belgian newspapers issued in the occupied part of Belgium. This vote afterwards appeared in the *Nieuwe Courant* of the Hague, the text of which I am using.

The vote thanks the Governor-General for having co-operated in carrying out the Flemish popular ideal, the Flemish University, and for granting the necessary funds for this purpose. Moreover, the vote is a very subtle defence of

the Governor-General's scheme, but it brings forward nothing new or interesting.

The vote accentuates that a Flemish University is an absolute necessity for Flemish culture, and that a Flemish University was in fact for a long time the great goal of the Flemish population; the Governor-General's scheme has, therefore, a justification recognised by the Flemings; it is purely an act of justice, having the future of the Flemish people in view. The vote also refers to the fact that if the war had not intervened, the Chambers would perhaps already by now have carried out the scheme of a Flemish University. The vote therefore maintains "that the arrangement made by the German authority consequently is not to be considered as a favour obtained by supplication, or as a present, but as reparation long demanded, but too long deferred, and therefore welcome."

By means of great juridical art of interpretation the vote recalls that the use of the French language at the University is based on a Royal Ordinance of 1849, that the Governor-General consequently may adopt Flemish as the language of teaching without violating the laws of the country, and that it is his duty to do so, as, in accordance with the Hague Convention, he is to

take all possible steps for re-establishing public order and public life, and "public life in our country is unthinkable without well-organised instruction"; for which reason a Flemish University in Ghent is an imperious social demand. The vote, finally, points out that it would be a misfortune for the students—if the University were closed any longer.

This new Flemish manifesto was issued by the "Vlaamsche Hoogeschool-Bond," an association which was formed after the occupation of Belgium. The two previously mentioned members of the Belgian Chamber, Leo Augusteyns and Adelfons Hendriks, who are stigmatised as traitors by all the Belgian newspapers, sit on the governing body of the association.

The manifesto is provided with about one hundred signatures, and the Dutch correspondent points out that some prominent personalities of the Flamingant movement are to be found among the signatories, personalities belonging to the three great political parties. Let us look a little farther into the matter to see who these signatories are; all their names were, as we know, published by various newspapers.

Most of them are, in fact, what in French would be called "unknown celebrities"—un-

employed engineers, veterinary surgeons, lawyers without clients, dentists, store dealers, etc.— whose names were never before mentioned in any newspaper. Only a score of the signatories are known people, but most of them were already long ago regarded as German emissaries. I mention Dr. Keersmacker, Dr. Claus, Auguste Borms, L. Brulez, Dr. Jacob, W. Thelen, etc. These people should therefore be the true representatives of the feelings of the Flemings towards the Governor-General's University. That, however, looks a little too grotesque.

And now let us make a counter test. It is, in fact, of interest to see not only who signed the manifesto; it may, on the other hand, also be instructive to see who did *not* sign it. I assert that none of the many politicians, men of learning, and artists, who before 1914 supported the application to the Chambers regarding the establishment of a Flemish University, that not a single prominent leader of the Flamingants, that only one member of the Belgian clergy who previously was active for the Flemish cause signed the manifesto, and this only priest, Dr. van Cock, quickly withdrew his signature.

If we now compare this sad manifesto, this vote of confidence in and sympathy with the

Governor-General, with the above-mentioned protest, which was signed by all those who are of repute in the Flemish world, every impartial observer must admit that the result of almost two years' intense belabouring of the Flemings is more than meagre.

When it is a question of estimating the value of a vote of confidence brought forward in an occupied country for the purpose of approving the proceedings of the occupying power, a clear-minded historian will always be very cautious. In the present case, moreover, we must take into account the particular circumstance that the contents and wording of the vote are in several places peculiarly similar to the reply of the German Legation. The arguments of the Flemish vote are to a considerable extent those of the German Government itself. It is a wonder the Flemings were not able to find words of their own to express their sympathy.

As I have already pointed out, the vote is signed by about one hundred persons, and that is certainly all the Germans have been able to collect. The vote even calls attention to the well-known fact that a previous vote, which was submitted to the Chambers before the war, had a hundred thousand signatures. As I am not

quite familiar with the circumstances under which the two votes were taken, I shall not be tempted to draw any conclusion from the two figures as possible expressions of the position taken up by Flemings towards the Flemish University before and after the occupation.

The whole vote would surely have been more convincing if it had been signed by some of the prominent Flamings who previously adhered to Louis Franck's protest, and if it had contained more feeling, more patriotic enthusiasm, fewer generally known historical reviews, and fewer lawyers' tricks.

The vote is not really a spontaneous expression of a general popular feeling; it is a document dry as a bone, inspired by German-opportunist, bureaucratic considerations, and written in the most preposterous Chancellery style.

Nor is it difficult to refute the arguments set forth in the vote, which, for example, state that it is a misfortune that the University has already been closed for twenty-two months! But the Germans might indeed simply have reopened it and let the teaching go on as before August 1914. At that time life at the University was very prosperous, and it might easily have flourished again. It is as a matter of fact the Governor-

General's desperate scheme which has stopped everything and destroyed the teaching.

The signatories of the vote request all the Flemings to support the Governor-General's reform scheme, and add :

“ We do this penetrated by the idea that our brethren in the field and in the trenches have sealed with their blood the complete reparation of the Flemish tribe, and that the ideal which inspires them, namely the rights of the small nations, in their thoughts is indissolubly connected with the wish and will to raise their own Flemish people.”

Understand these lines whoever can! They appear to be quite obscure and confused to an ordinary reader. It seems evident, however, that this obscurity is intentional, and one can easily understand its motives ; but I shall abstain from any further personal comment. Any one knowing how the free Flemings really regard the matter could foresee that these lines in particular would meet with protests quivering with the deepest anger. And such protests have not been long in coming. I am in a position to quote a number of very vigorous protests which

appeared in Belgian newspapers, both French and Flemish. A long article about the manifesto, to be found in *Les Nouvelles* (Maestricht)—issue of September 22nd—concluded by stating that the signatories are considered as traitors even by Flemings in the occupied country, and added: “They are not saluted in the street; they are shunned like the plague, or people spit in their faces, as has occurred in several towns.” A Flemish newspaper remarked that the signatories have no claim whatever to be called Flemings; they are only “individuals living in Flanders.”

Finally, I will recall that Mr. Colaert also, the former Mayor of Ypres, and van Cauwelaert, Member of the Belgian Chamber for Antwerp, in two interviews, in the most decisive manner, kept aloof from the signatories of the manifesto and their declarations.

The manifesto of the Hundred, moreover, called forth a very vigorous counter-manifesto from Walloons and Flemings in fraternal unison. They maintain that the establishment of a Flemish University is an absolute necessity—after the occupation of Belgium has come to an end. As long as the enemy still remains in the country, the whole question must necessarily remain in abeyance, and the proposal of

University reform is considered unlawful pursuant to Article 43 of the fourth Hague Convention of October 18th, 1907, which makes it the duty of the occupying power to respect all the laws in force in the occupied country. Reference is also made to a German manual about war practice issued to the German General Staff itself, and containing the following passage: "As the occupying power only takes the place of the real sovereign, it shall carry on the administration of the country by means of the existing laws and ordinances. It must avoid promulgating new laws, suspending or altering previous laws, and all similar acts, unless they can be justified by the inexorable requirements of the war, which alone give the occupying power a right to legislate, apart from what the provisional administration of the country demands."

But the establishment of a Flemish University has absolutely nothing to do with the requirements of the war. Under the pretext of meeting the Flemings, the University reform endeavours to divide the Belgians in order to take advantage of their disagreement. This perfidious scheme on the part of the occupying power, on which the manifesto of the Hundred is entirely silent, is sufficient to justify a firm refusal of the gift.

Reference is also made to the absolutely improper idea that the Flemings should be willing to work for a Flemish University as long as two of the most famous professors of Ghent are living in German captivity because they were unwilling to be the Germans' accomplices ; it is maintained that the Flemish students should postpone the resumption of their studies until the return of their colleagues, who now for two years have served their fatherland. It is finally pointed out that the persons who signed the manifesto do not speak on behalf of the Flemish people ; all those who are authorised to do so, many of whom signed the first protest against von Bissing, refused to sign an address of which they disapprove. The letter concludes by expressing the hope that the Flemings will know how to counteract a scheme which has the double object of dividing the Belgians and bringing them under the German yoke, and it entirely approves the conduct of the Professors Frédéricq and Pirenne, for whom it expresses admiration and sympathy.

Since the appearance of this manifesto there can be no doubt that the feeling towards the Governor-General's University has not appreciably changed.

VI

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S UNIVERSITY

I WROTE in my article that the Flemish University, the establishment of which the Governor-General decreed, was not able to work, as it had neither professors nor students.

The reply of the German note did not of course contest this fact: the University had not in fact worked during the first half-year; but it pointed out that the arrangement concerning the Flemish University would very soon be fully carried out according to the regulations laid down, that in the autumn there would be a sufficient number of lecturers available, and that a great many Flemish students were only waiting for the opening of the lectures.

It is of course by no means impossible that the occupying power will be able to provide a sufficient number of professors to lecture and to induce Flemish students to attend the lectures;

but up to the present the result does not seem very promising.

In the spring of 1916 the rumour was spread that various professors in Ghent had promised to lecture in Flemish, but this proved to be a very great exaggeration. Four—no more than four—offered their services, and among these there was only one Belgian, G. de Vreese, who already before 1914 supported the separatist movement and was closely connected with the pro-German press. The three others were foreigners: Stöber was born in Germany, Hoffmann in Luxemburg, and Hogemann in Holland.

During the autumn of 1916 there was greater success in obtaining lecturers for the Governor-General's University. At the commencement of September an official list, with the names of fifteen men was issued who had accepted von Bissing's offer.

The fifteen new University professors are the following: Dr. J. de Decker (Classical Philology); Dr. Lucien Brulez (Philosophy); Dr. Peiter Lodewijk Tack (Dutch Philology); Dr. Baehrens, unsalaried lecturer in Groningen (Classical Philology); Dr. E. C. Godée-Molsbergen, lecturer at the University of Amsterdam (Political Economy); Dr. F. Stöber (Botany); Dr. Cesar

de Bruijker (Botany); Dr. Jan Versluys, unsalaried lecturer in Amsterdam (Zoology and Anatomy); Dr. A. van den Berghe of Ghent (Chemistry); Dr. J. J. Ph. Valetton (Chemistry); Dr. M. G. J. Minnaert of Ghent (Physics); Dr. Adr. Martens (Pathology); Dr. Joseph de Keersmaecker (Urology); A. Fournier of Ghent (Technology).

The result cannot be said to be brilliant. Among the new University professors there are only a couple who were previously attached to the University of Ghent; the Belgian Government treats them as renegades, and provisionally struck their names off the list of Knights of the Order of Leopold. Moreover, the Governor-General has enlisted a couple of Dutch unsalaried lecturers—we shall soon see what their own countrymen think of them—and various Belgian assistant teachers.

Furthermore, as regards the Dutchmen, the Dutch newspapers, with the *Nieuwe Courant* at their head, pointed out that none of them can be considered as genuine Dutchmen; they belong to naturalised German families or were engaged in German service. Thus, for example, Dr. Versluys was an unsalaried lecturer in Giessen; Dr. Valetton studied at Leipzig, where

he lived for a number of years; and Godée-Molsbergen was lecturer at Stellenbosch in South Africa.

Under these circumstances one will understand that several foreign newspapers do not any longer speak of the transformation of the University of Ghent into a Flemish, but into a German University. In this connection it is, moreover, interesting to compare with the above various statements made recently, which seem to indicate that at first it was really intended to transform the University of Ghent into a German University. I am alluding to the letter which Harald A. Graevell sent to von der Goltz at the commencement of the occupation of Belgium, and in which he maintained that the establishment of a Flemish University would be the best means of Germanising Belgium, demanding at the same time that the German language should be used to the widest extent possible as the administrative language in Flanders. This entirely coincides with the points of view previously expressed as regards Holland by Pan-Germans. In various political writings since the commencement of the nineties the point of view was ventilated that Holland ought to become a member of Greater Germany, Dutch being at the same time

gradually superseded by High-German. The Pan-German dreams—as set forth, for example, by Fritz Bley in his two books, *Die Weltstellung Deutschlands* (1896) (*The Position of Germany in the World*) and *Die alldeutsche Bewegung und die Niederlande* (1897) (*The Pan-German Movement and the Netherlands*)—not embraced Holland only, but also Luxemburg and Flanders.

Reverting to the list of the newly appointed professors, many newspapers ridiculed it, and the *Echo Belge* ironically asked where the Governor-General's new University professors got the titles with which they decorate themselves; they call themselves Dr. med., Dr. jur., Dr. phil. These titles are German, the paper adds, and they never existed at any Belgian University during the eighty-five years Belgium was a free and independent country.

Another list was issued on September 30th by the *Groot-Nederlandsch Persbureau*. It comprises nine names: J. A. Jolles, E. J. Kossmann, A. Vlaminck, J. L. M. Eggen, T. Vernieuwe, F. Brulez, A. Claus, R. Speleers, E. van Bockstaele. It is interesting to observe that Dr. Jolles was previously an unsalaried lecturer at the University of Berlin, that he is a naturalised German, and took part in the war on the German

side. Most of the others are barristers and doctors in Ghent. Nothing is known with regard to their scientific qualifications.

The publication of the new list, with Dr. Jolles' name at the head of it, called forth a violent protest from Dr. Cock, one of the signatories of the manifesto of the Hundred, who was previously connected with the University of Louvain. In an open declaration first published in the *Tijd*, he wrote among other things: "A Flemish University in Ghent seems to me to be desirable at any time; but it must be entirely Flemish, or at any rate Dutch. It cannot have on its staff persons whose hands are still stained with the blood of our brethren." And on the basis of this argument, which could not in any respect be misunderstood, he loyally withdrew his signature.

The most recent and the most scandalous of all the appointments took place in October 1916, when Dr. J. H. Labberton, a Dutchman, was called to Ghent as Professor of International Law and Moral Philosophy. Mr. Labberton is the author of a notorious pamphlet called *De Belgische neutraliteit geschonden* (*The Violation of the Neutrality of Belgium*) (Amsterdam, 1915), which is also available in a German translation under the title of *Die sittliche Berechtigung der*

Verletzung der belgischen Neutralität (*The Moral Justification of the Violation of the Neutrality of Belgium*) (published by Karl Curtius, Berlin, 1916), to which Dr. K. D. Bülbring, professor at the University of Bonn, was not ashamed of writing a foreword. Dr. Labberton regards the violation of the neutrality of Belgium as a new ethical creation (*nieuw-schepping*), as a proof of ethical ingenuity, as he takes it for granted that Prussia is the healthy moral kernel of Europe, from which finally the moral regeneration of our moribund world will originate. And for this reason everybody will have to "learn to think and feel in accordance with the higher morals which Germany, in fact, inaugurated by its epoch-making action." Dr. Labberton maintains, as a matter of fact, that by the comparison of right and injustice the appreciation of the moral value of a people is of decisive importance; and as the Germans undoubtedly tower high above all other nations, their mode of action must be the expression of the highest morality. One can easily understand that a German Governor-General must consider a man who philosophises in such a manner as fit to be teacher of Moral Philosophy and International Law at the University of Ghent.

As the above statements show, the Belgian University professors have held together splendidly. As regards the students, their power of resistance will doubtless be far more easily broken. Influenced by Catholic circles in Germany, the occupying power has carried on an active propaganda among the Flemish students, and an appeal was made to the students requesting them to join the University reform and to demand administrative separation between Flemings and Walloons. I do not know at all what position the majority of the Flemish students have taken up with regard to this appeal; I only know that in many instances it met with fierce opposition, and that members of the Belgian Catholic clergy admonished the Flemish youths not to forsake their duty towards their fatherland in the hour of need. The most zealous among the protesting Catholics, Father Schmidt, is now unable any longer to influence the young students, as he has been imprisoned owing to his utterances.

I draw attention to the interesting fact that this "Oproep aan alle Vlaamsche Katholieke Studenten" (Appeal to all Flemish Catholic Students) contends for Flanders to be absolutely free and autonomously governed, and complains that their

country has for eighty-five years been under oppression. Unfortunately it does not transpire who and how many persons supported this peculiar appeal, which was without signatures. It was issued by "Een Groep Katholick-Vlaamsche Studenten" (a group of Catholic Flemish students). If really Flemish students drafted this appeal, it is very easy to understand that they did not dare to sign their names, but preferred to conceal themselves under anonymity.

After, as already stated, a fairly presentable number of University professors had been provided, and after the students had been influenced in various ways, the new German-Flemish University in Ghent was opened on October 24th. The Governor-General commenced by making a long statement in German, after which P. Hoffmann, a native of Luxemburg educated in Germany, and who has undertaken the duty of rector, made the opening speech at this ceremony, about which the judgment of the future may perhaps be more severe than that of the present.

The Governor-General said at the end of his statement :

"Thus Germans and Flemings have joined in co-operation, in mutual confidence, and com-

Postkarte

Kriegsgefangenen-
Sendung.

Dieses Feld bleibt für die Stempelung frei

Absender

Adressat

Prof. Dr. H. Pirenne

Thom. H. L. Pirenne

Nationalität Belgier

Lehrer Bonn

N^o 10826

Lager Holzminde

22 Chemin de la Bergerie

Baracke No.

Genève (France)

ANSICHT GUT BEACHTEN!

Holzminde, 28. Mai 1916

Mein lieber Sohn, heute habe ich deine Postkarte erhalten

Freue mich sehr über sie

Beliebige Kriegsgefangenen n^o 10826

Gefangenenlager Holzminde

Baracke n^o 10

Im Auftrag deiner Mutter

H. Pirenne

POSTCARD FROM PROFESSOR PIRENNE TO HIS SON

plete understanding. Raet chose as motto of his first work in the Flemish University the following words: 'Two Valkyries, two heroic sisters, rule the world: thought and the sword.' A wonderful decision of Providence has willed that this thought, written in 1892, has in a peculiar manner become realised at the new University of Ghent. This is a result of the thought entertained by many men who were anxious about the fate of Flanders during the long years of struggle and adversity. The God of War has held it over the baptismal font with a drawn sword."

It was indeed the God of War who with a drawn sword ruled in Ghent on October 24th, and he ruled both within and without the University.

A Flemish College, intended to be an expression of Flemish civilisation and spiritual life, was opened against the wish of the Flemish population. And it was opened with speeches in German by a German enemy general and a semi-German rector.

But this was not all. By the cruel irony of fate the population of Ghent cared only little about what occurred on that day within the

walls of the University. No demonstration took place; there was neither enthusiasm nor indignation. The mind of the population was exclusively occupied with the newest German administrative measures, and their being put into force was awaited with anxiety and fear.

On the same day as the Governor-General inaugurated his magnanimous gift to the Flemish population and spoke high-flown words about mutual confidence and understanding between the Germans and the Flemings, he caused five thousand of the working population of Ghent to be deported to Germany. Five thousand honest Flemings were taken away against their will from house and home; they were taken under military escort to the railway station, from whence they were transmitted further.

It is difficult to imagine a better illustration of the real conditions. Not even Germany's worst enemies could have devised a more effective background for the inauguration of the Flemish University than the mass deportation of Flemings carried out by the Governor-General himself.

Baron von Bissing was right in reminding his hearers of the two heroic sisters, thought and the

sword, ruling the world. But it was hardly wise of him on October 24th to so vigorously accentuate the fact that it was the sword which had the supreme command, and that he had put thought out of action.

VII

THE DUTCH PROFESSORS AND THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

I WILL continue my analysis of the German reply. With regard to the future work of the Flemish University, the following most remarkable information was given: "The appointment of a considerable number of Flemings, and also of some Dutchmen, as professors, is imminent."

The appointments announced have now in fact taken place, but I cannot fail to see that the author of the reply in the above passage gave himself away.

Every reader will certainly ask with surprise: But if there are so many Flemings to be found who are willing to lecture at the University, why should it then be necessary to have recourse to Dutchmen? This, however, can only be done because the supply is scarce, because the Flemish University established by the German Government, after all, is not so entirely welcomed by the Flemings.

Another question which, owing to the incautious admission, must be addressed to the author of the note is, whether he is aware of the point of view Dutch men of learning take with regard to the Governor-General's University reform? Is he unacquainted with the very serious protest which one hundred and seventy-nine Dutch savants addressed to German Universities, scientific associations, and academies at the commencement of May, owing to the arrest of the Belgian professors? And does he not know how honourable men of learning in Holland view the Germans' attempt to obtain professors for their Flemish University?

I am almost compelled to assume that it is a case of pure ignorance regarding the facts of the case, and I therefore gladly use the opportunity of making the following detailed statement.

Not only did professors in Holland absolutely scout the tempting offers from Germany, they even, in the most unequivocal terms, expressed their indignation that under the present circumstances such an offer should be made at all.

In the Dutch magazine *De Amsterdammer*—issue of August 5th—Van Hamel, professor of law, expressed himself fully regarding the question now under review. He commenced by

maintaining that, according to his conviction, the establishment of a Flemish University is of the very greatest importance for the Flemish population; but he protested most energetically against the establishment of such a University by the Germans. He also protested on the ground of his dignity as a Dutch citizen against the attempts made by the Germans in Holland to engage men of learning willing to lecture at the University of Ghent in its new Flemish shape, forced on it by the occupying foreign power. His arguments were exceedingly clear and straightforward, and are of great interest. Here is a literal translation of his article :

“The general view in Holland is to the effect that any Dutchman who would consent to such an arrangement would thereby render service to one of the belligerent powers in an important war question, and act as a combatant in the spiritual sphere of culture by working in favour of the German schemes, having the object of weakening the Belgian State and to incite Belgians against their Government.

“When Belgium was a free country, we energetically advocated the transformation of the University, and we will do so again, and with still greater vigour, as soon as Belgium is again

liberated. But as the transformation of the University into a Flemish College is initiated by the occupying German power, we have to do with a purely political manœuvre, which does not inspire us with any confidence.

“The enlistment of scientists taking place in this country at the present moment is not essentially different from the military enlistment which is prohibited in neutral countries, and, in any case, the Dutchmen rendering service in this scientific form with a foreign power must necessarily thereby forfeit their rights as Dutchmen.

“It is unthinkable that our Government should approve of it, and it is certain that these agents in the pay of Germany will forfeit all sympathy from the majority of their own countrymen.”

As appears from a very brief remark in the last annual of the University of Amsterdam, even the principal of this University considers it an improper act to accept the offer of the German Government, and thus helping the occupying power in carrying out its scheme. The principal's statement, couched in the most diplomatic words, called forth a protest from Professor Bodenstern, but the principal maintained his point of view in a short and pointed reply ending

with the words: "Anyone committing the 'sensational' act of taking office under the German Government in occupied Belgium must understand that he exposes himself to be criticised."

All over the world, all scientists will deeply rejoice at this fine expression of the *esprit de corps* animating the Dutch professors, and leading them to share good and ill luck with their unhappy colleagues in Belgium.

As stated above, it is a fact that several Dutchmen accepted engagements at the Governor-General's University; but it is also a fact that their conduct has met with very sharp criticism in their own country. The great socialist newspaper, *Het Volk*, on September 14th, under the ironical heading of "The Illustrious Trio," pilloried the three new University professors, and at the same time gave vent to the severest reproaches against the Germans for their conduct in Belgium. The following is a translated extract from the article: "The German rule of violence is continuing its oppressive and extortionate course in unfortunate Belgium. Priests, politicians, men of science, simple burghers, trying to serve their country, are deported, imprisoned, sentenced to hard labour or shot

under the pretext of being guilty of treason, and on the graves of the victims is placed the inscription, 'Here rests a spy,' as an expression of a powerless attempt at dishonouring the dead."

The newspaper continued in the same tone, adding that if it does not daily protest against the German encroachments, there are many reasons for not doing so, amongst others in order not to incite too much hatred; but it cannot be silent when it sees Dutchmen running the conquerors' errands. The following is another translated extract from the same article: "The ruins of the University of Louvain are still smouldering, and under the false pretence of furthering science, the incendiaries are already prepared to light a new fire, and this time amid the solidarity of the Belgian victims. Many Belgian men of learning worthily rejected the 'distinction' of undertaking such professorships." The newspaper then expressed its indignation at the fact that the Germans could find three Dutchmen willing to work at the Governor-General's University. The paper published their names, and continued: "This illustrious trio, who certainly never would have attained such a promotion in their own country, by this oppor-

tunity acquire a fame from which they would have been excluded in normal times. This trio must be considered as knights of the most lamentable description, and they may be convinced that among almost all their countrymen they will enjoy a minimum of respect."

A similar view of the situation was also taken by one of Holland's largest daily papers, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, which is otherwise very sympathetic towards the Flemish movement. The paper expressed the opinion that all men of learning in Holland agree that as long as Belgium is under a foreign yoke, no Dutchman must accept any public appointment in the country.

I closed my article by saying that the occupying power was running its head against Belgian solidarity; after the upright conduct of the Dutch men of learning, I can now add that it has also run its head against the solidarity between the Belgian and foreign scientists.

The remark in the German note stating that they are trying to engage Dutch men of learning for the University of Ghent, clearly shows that the Governor-General's University reform is not only intended as a humane act in order to make good an injustice of the past against the Flem-

ings, but that it also pursues a purely political purpose. It was repeatedly pointed out that the Germans frankly admitted that they worked with the object of driving a wedge between the Walloons and the Flemings in order thereby to make division in the Belgian State. The German reply showed that this object is being pursued by simultaneously supporting the so-called "Greater Netherland" movement, contemplating the inclusion of Holland, Flanders, and South Africa. A direct proof of this tendency was afforded by the German note itself, which began by mentioning the Governor-General's transformation of the University of Ghent into a Flemish-Dutch College. This expression is of great interest; in other passages of the note it is only a question of a Flemish College.

VIII

MIGHT AND RIGHT

THE German Legation in Stockholm, in its reply, threw down the gauntlet; I have taken it up, and reply to the challenge.

The German Legation protested against my representation of the circumstances connected with the University reform in Ghent, and maintained that I was misinformed. I hope that the large range of evidence which I collect and set forth in this pamphlet will convince any impartial reader that it is not I who was incompletely and incorrectly informed.

In the preceding chapters I tried by means of a series of detailed investigations to throw light on the University reform from various points of view. As a conclusion, I will now make a few general remarks with regard to the question under review and its scope.

The question regarding the establishment of a Flemish University was before the war only an

internal Belgian matter, which certainly very few persons outside Belgium knew anything about, and which still fewer understood correctly. It has now become a matter of considerable importance, the development of which is closely followed in a great many countries, and which is everywhere taken up with keen interest.

During the war the entire thorny question ought of course to have been in abeyance, but Germany's diplomatists willed it otherwise. The University reform was to be used for political purposes, and on December 31st, 1915, Baron von Bissing issued his decree.

As any expert will know, University reform is a very complicated and serious matter, in particular when it is of such a radical nature as that of Ghent. It requires not only an understanding of a great many scientific, pedagogical, and social questions, but also quiet comprehensive and capable handling, if it is to have any chance of being carried out in a satisfactory manner.

That Baron von Bissing as Governor-General had the power and the authority to enforce University reform, is granted; whether he, as General, had the necessary qualifications, is quite another matter. It is clear to everybody that

up to the present he has not had any good luck.

The University reform was to be a generous gift from the victor to the vanquished Flemings. It was to bring reconciliation and to be a high-minded expression of the Germans' real feelings towards the liberated brother nation; at the same time it was to deepen the chasm between the Flemings and the Walloons and to aid in definitely interrupting the cultural and political relations subsisting between the Teutonic and Romance populations of Belgium.

At first sight this scheme might seem to be a stroke of genius; it suffered, however, from one fault, and that a very essential one. In all their considerations and calculations the Germans forgot to take into account the altered disposition which arose in Belgium after the violation of its neutrality and after the horrors of August and September 1914. The Flemings shed their blood with the Walloons on the battlefields of Liége, Dinant, Malines, and Ypres. In fighting for the liberty of their common fatherland, a new spirit developed, the Flemings and the Walloons feeling like one people; they were Belgians, and stood together, united in their fight against the Germans.

I will add one further statement to all those made in the preceding chapters regarding the complete amalgamation of the Belgian people during the war, and this statement is due to Stijn Streuvels, the prominent Fleming leader. He wrote that it is certainly true that the Flemings, previous to 1914, often felt like strangers in their own country, but this feeling was entirely changed during the war. A strong common national feeling has now suddenly been exhibited by the whole Flemish population. "I have myself been able to verify it," he said; "I have seen the new feeling coming into existence and grow successively as the events developed. Whatever the result of the war may be, it will have created a new Belgium, which will be united, even though the old disputes should again be ventilated."

Moreover, Streuvels indulged in speculations as to how Flanders would fare if annexed by Germany: "Those who cherish pronounced pro-German feelings may certainly believe that it would bring us fortune and advantage in social and economic respects if we were received into the great German federation. But I am convinced that if this should occur, and even though we should retain all our rights and liberties, our

Flemish independence would nevertheless be lost for ever." Streuvels had a strong presentiment that there existed a "German danger," and he saw the German danger in the German "Kultur" which by virtue of its development, strength, and methodical proceedings would at last undoubtedly swallow and transform all that still remained of Flemish culture. He added that the war has now opened the eyes of those who were unable to see the German danger; they believed that it was good policy to oppose French civilisation in favour of the German, and they did not understand that this was like jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. The war has formed a connecting link between the Flemings and the Walloons.

Cardinal Mercier expressed himself in an entirely similar manner. The Flemings and the Walloons found each other on the day when German guns bombarded Liège and Antwerp; on that day the common danger taught them what a common fatherland meant to them all; on that day all the Belgians united in true love to their common fatherland; and the memory of this day may easily become fatal for the work of the great but encroaching German "Kultur."

The Governor-General's University reform consequently met with very strong and certainly quite unexpected opposition. The leading men in Belgium opposed it, and also the general public did the same. As the Belgian University professors firmly refused to participate in the new University, the Germans sought assistance in Holland, where owing to the close kinship of language and race between the Dutch and the Flemings, they hoped to find a sympathetic appreciation of their scheme. But if in Belgium they met with unforeseen and strong national solidarity, in Holland they encountered equally strong international solidarity; leading Dutch professors expressed their contempt of the German offers, and even went so far as to stigmatise them as attempts at violating the neutrality of the country.

From scientists all over the world—and certainly from all other grades of society—warm thanks and admiring homage will flow to the University professors and popular leaders in Belgium and Holland who did not bend their knees to the tempting promises. They faithfully defended their common and precious interests, they manfully opposed the dread teachings of the Iron Evangel that might is right, and they

enthusiastically displayed their belief in the ideals of liberty, in the free right of decision of free-born men. By their brilliant example they have once more proved the powerlessness of might.

APPENDIX I

REPLY FROM THE GERMAN LEGATION AT STOCKHOLM

At the end of August the German Legation at Stockholm sent the following reply to the editor of the *Stockholms Tidningen* requesting him to publish same. The reply was published in the paper on Saturday, August 26th. It is given below in an English translation.

In an article in the *Stockholms Tidningen* some time ago, Dr. Nyrop, the Danish professor, dealt with the matter relating to the University of Ghent and its transformation into a Flemish-Dutch College, as decided by the German Governor-General. The author commenced with the case of Frédéricq-Pirenne, in connection with which he made statements conveying an absolutely wrong impression. In the first instance, as regards the deportation of the two aforesaid College professors of Ghent, Nyrop adopts the fable which has been repeatedly denied, that Baron von Bissing, the Governor-General, was said to have called Professor Frédéricq before him—others say Professor Pirenne—in order by brilliant offers to induce him to accept the

post of Principal at the new University of Ghent. Both were said to have refused, with the remark that they would only be willing to accept office from King Albert. The punishment for this heroic reply was said to have been immediate deportation to Germany.

As these and similar stories are always cropping up, we wish to point out once more that the Governor-General never spoke with either of the two professors, that he never made them any offer at all, nor did the Governor-General inflict any punishment on them. They were both removed from Ghent by the *military authorities* of the army zone. It is incorrect to say that they were deported merely because they were opposed to a Flemish College, and because they were unwilling to resume their lectures. Dozens of University professors at Ghent and Liége are unmolested, although they refused to resume their lectures. Frédéricq and Pirenne, however, showed their unfriendly disposition towards the German power by their *actions*, as they jointly and secretly agitated against measures taken by the German authorities, and incited their colleagues to opposition, although they had signed the declaration of loyalty laid down for State officials in accordance with the Hague Convention.

By doing so, both professors acted on the basis of prohibited communication with the exiled Belgian Government, which passed directions to the staff of lecturers of the University of Ghent through prohibited channels. By such conduct they infringed the laws

of military security which are now in force in the army zone, and also apply to University professors. They consequently had to take the consequences of their line of action.

A short time ago both professors were permitted to proceed to Jena, in order there to carry on their studies on the same conditions as other persons attending lectures at the University.

In general, as to the transformation of the University of Ghent into a Flemish College, we may point out that it meets with an old demand of the entire Flemish people, which considers the fulfilment of this transformation an absolutely necessary condition of its spiritual, economic, and social revival. After a long struggle against the ruling Franco-Walloon population, the Flemings, shortly before the war, succeeded in inducing the Belgian Chambers to deal with a Bill having as its object the transformation of the University of Ghent, as the Flemish-speaking race in Belgium, which forms the majority of the population, has since 1830 had no College of its own at all. The war interrupted the further development of the matter. It was a duty and a necessity that the German Government, bearing rule according to international law, should again deal with this question when taking the general resumption of University teaching into consideration.

Any one acquainted with the question admits that it involves a vital interest of the Flemish people which

cannot be postponed, just as regards the laws relating to the use of the Flemish language in schools and administrative service, the carrying into effect of which was ordered by the German Governor-General, and which were certainly promulgated by the Belgians but never properly carried out. Both according to international and Belgian law the Governor-General, as holding the highest office in the country, was competent to make this new arrangement. The previous use of French as the language of instruction in Ghent is not based on any law, but only on an Ordinance of the year 1849, which could at any time be altered by a fresh decree on the part of the supreme authority of the country.

When Professor Nyrop maintains in his article that "all Flemings definitely refused to accept anything from the enemy's hands, and that even the most zealous 'Flamingants' opposed the establishment of a Flemish University under the present circumstances," it must be pointed out that this allegation directly contradicts the facts. It is true that Mr. Franck, a member of the Belgian Chamber for Antwerp, made an application to the Governor-General requesting him to abstain from his intention. As many as thirty-eight signatures were collected from the Flemish-speaking districts for this petition. Besides the signatures of some well-known party politicians, who must be considered as the originators of the application, the signatories were mostly harmless non-political artists, musicians, and

officials, who were artfully induced, by the aforesaid party politicians, to sign the application. On the other hand, *not one* of the prominent leaders of the great national Flemish organisation signed it. But strong protests were promptly made public against the step taken by Mr. Franck, member of the Belgian Chamber. His two colleagues in the Belgian Chamber from Antwerp, Mr. Augusteyns and Mr. Hendrikkx, together with the other leaders of the Flemish party in Antwerp, also most vigorously opposed him, and declared themselves in favour of the Governor-General's measure. They were supported by the "General Netherland Association" in Antwerp and Brussels, the "National Flemish Association," various large Flemish academic and students' Associations, the "Groeninger Wacht," etc.

When, therefore, Professor Nyrop maintains that Franck's opposition represents the whole party which before 1914 worked for Flemish culture, and that all the leading men of this movement were in agreement with him, his allegation shows that he is entirely unaware of the real facts, which he can at any time verify in Flanders.

A few days ago the most prominent of the old Flemish Associations, the "National Vlaamsch Verbond," made a great appeal to neutrals, which was also addressed to the Scandinavian States. The peoples of Sweden and Norway will see from this appeal what the leaders of the Flemish movement really think.

Now, as regards "the decisive and clear opposition" of the Belgian University professors, of which Mr. Nyrop speaks, there can be no doubt that the large majority of them, under the illegal pressure of their former Government, refused to participate in a Flemish University. And how could it be otherwise? By far the majority of professors, in fact, always opposed the establishment of a Flemish University, as they belong to the French-speaking race, or at any rate belonged to the opponents of the Flemish party. The Flemish people, however, think quite differently: they *want* their own College. The Flemish people also know that they are not receiving a "gift from German hands," but the just and lawful fulfilment of an imperative and well-founded demand. The justice of the demand is not in the least affected by the fact that the present holder of the supreme position in the country, who ordered the adoption of Flemish as vehicle of instruction, and who had the necessary funds for this purpose provided in the budget, is a German Governor-General. The carrying out of this decree will consequently take place in a regular manner with the due co-operation of the Belgian Ministry. The preparations for this purpose are already greatly advanced. The reappointment of a considerable number of Flemings, and of some Dutchmen, as professors is imminent, so that with the addition of those College professors of Ghent who have already promised to continue their lectures, a sufficient staff of professors will presumably be avail-

able by the autumn. A considerable number of students are awaiting the opening of the courses in order to attend the lectures. Mr. Nyrop will therefore see that there is no question at all of a German, but of the Flemish matter; and the great majority of the Flemings know that, particularly at the present position of their race, they need their College more than ever before as a bulwark of their Flemish nationality and for the security of their future, irrespective of how in other respects the fate of Belgium may be decided.

APPENDIX II

A LETTER FROM GENERAL VON BISSING

THE letter reproduced below was addressed to a very prominent Swedish philologist (*cf.* p. 34 above), who has the original in his possession. He firmly refused my request to lend it to me; but he sent me a Swedish translation of the letter, the reliability of which he guarantees. My Danish version follows the Swedish wording as closely as possible, but I of course greatly regret that I cannot here reproduce the German wording, and I avail myself of the opportunity to express my surprise at the conduct of my Swedish colleague, as he, in fact, himself considers the letter as an official document, having submitted it to the Swedish Academy, and, moreover, published a translation of the letter.

SIR,

BRUSSELS, *July 9th*, 1916.

I am pleased to comply with your wish for information regarding Pirenne's case, the more so as I shall be only too pleased if anyone abroad is willing to correct the inaccurate statements disseminated regarding the deportation of Professors Pirenne and

Frédéricq, in the manner in which you intend doing before the Swedish Academy of Science (should be the Academy of Belles-Lettres, History, and Antiquities).

Permit me then in the first instance to describe as an invention the following fable which has been spread in Sweden also by Anti-Germans: I was said to have called Professor Pirenne (others say Professor Frédéricq) before me in order by brilliant promises to try to induce him to accept the position of Principal of the new Flemish University. He was said to have refused the offer, and subsequently to have been punished by me by deportation to Germany.

Never did I, or my Administration, make this or any similar offer to either of the two gentlemen; never did I at any time speak with either of them. Nor did I inflict any punishment on them. On the other hand, both of them were deported to Germany by the military authorities in command of the army zone to which Ghent belongs, and they were deported because in an illegal manner they brought pressure to bear on their colleagues with the object of preventing them from carrying out their official duties, and by so doing they also availed themselves of unlawful orders which reached the Senate of the University of Ghent from the Belgian Government by secret means *via* Holland. In doing so they also violated the declaration of loyalty which Belgian State officials, including professors of Ghent, made towards the occupying power in accordance with the Hague Convention. The military commanding

authorities considered this conduct of theirs as a violation of the strict military laws which now apply in the army zone, and had the two professors deported to Germany.

It is therefore incorrect that Pirenne and Frédéricq were called to account by me and deported, merely for the reason that they are opposed to the establishment of a Flemish University in Ghent, and because they altogether refused to resume their lectures. None of the other professors who also refused were prosecuted; they continue to reside in Belgium.

Although, in view of the declarations of loyalty made by them in accordance with the laws of the country and in accordance with international principles of law, I, as the occupier of the highest office in the country, had a right to demand that they should resume their academic duties; and though I was entitled to reply to a refusal on their part with their dismissal from office and the stopping of their fees, I have permitted these professors to draw the usual two-thirds of their salaries as waiting allowance.

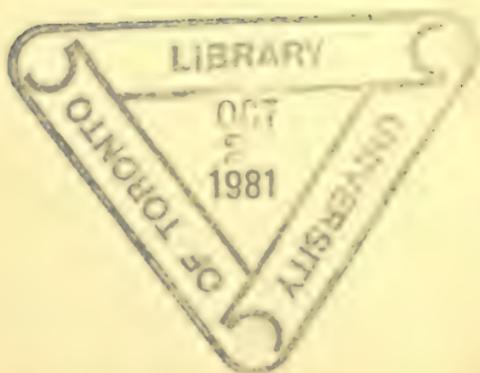
But for the reasons indicated above, Professors Pirenne and Frédéricq were deported to an officers' camp in Germany. Immediately after their deportation, I represented to the competent military authority that they should be transferred to a German University town in order that they might have the opportunity to move freely, and to resume their studies as they pleased. If this request of mine was not finally carried

out, it was mainly due to the fact that Frédéricq expressed the definite wish to remain in his officers' camp.

By making this statement I hope to have been of service to you, so that you may be in a position to give a satisfactory explanation to the Swedish Academy.

I thank you most cordially for kindly taking an interest in the matter, and for your willingness, in the interest of Germany, to work for the spread of the explanations in question.

Your obedient servant,
BARON VON BISSING,
Governor-General.



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