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Slave Raids in Belgium

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SLAVE RAIDS IN BELGIUM

Facts about the Deportations



BY
J. VAN DEN HEUVEL

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The German Slave Raids in Belgium

The Facts. The Signal of Distress
of Cardinal Mercier. Protests of
the Belgian Authorities.

The Facts

Their Crying Injustice

Germany becomes daily more anxious about the result of the war. She sees herself called upon soon to meet a powerful offensive, and is now setting herself to increase her dwindling reserves by sending to the front all those who have been employed in her factories. She foresees that the first lines of her defence in the North of France will be broken, and is preparing a new line which follows approximately the Belgian frontier, from Lille through Aulnoye to Givet, formed of a system of trenches supported by a strategic railway. She perceives, in short, that her adversaries are about to distance her in the production of munitions, and she is feverishly working to augment the number of her workshops and factories.

In order to fill the places of those workmen who are being sent to the front, to construct the new defences and to provide for the increased supply of hands which the additional factories require, the German authorities have adopted two devices.

Against the first of these nothing can be said. It is a national movement, the organisation of the entire civil population.

The second is utterly indefensible. It consists in the forcible employment of the civil population of those districts which Germany has invaded and now occupies, their deportation into slavery and the compulsory use of their labour against their own country.

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It is Belgium, loyal and courageous Belgium, that has first been subjected to this usage—and through nearly the whole length and breadth of the land. The deportations began in the province of Hainault and in Flanders. Their operation was soon extended to the provinces of Antwerp, Brabant and the rest.

Everywhere the same heartbreaking scenes accompany the departure of those who are taken away. An instance is given below in *An Account by an Eyewitness of the Events at Nivelles*. (Document 5.)

These slave raids are made upon the country districts and the quietest of little towns, as upon the larger towns and the great centres of industry.

The German Staff has prepared its plan. It has decided upon the number that is required. For Belgium, it has been announced, this will amount to from 350,000 to 400,000 men. Since, then, the male population, between the ages of 17 and 55, which remains in the country numbers about 1,600,000, almost one man in four will be taken.

Belgium has seen her country invaded, many of her towns destroyed by fire, and numbers of her civilians and priests massacred. Since 1914 she has been the victim of a tyrannous occupation; she has been bled white. A great part of her crops have been taken from her; her machinery has been carried off; penalties are imposed everywhere and continually. A forced loan has been levied by Germany from the larger banks of all their paper money, amounting to, say, 600 millions. Beyond the ordinary taxes Belgium has had to pay a war tax of 40 millions per month. But the bitter cup has not yet been drained to the dregs. The Germans must now carry off the most vigorous part of the population.

Germany has perceived the vileness of her act.

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She has attempted to cloak her proceedings by asserting, with the most cynical effrontery, that she has taken no one but unemployed people and these at her own charges. She has even declared that the greater part of them have gone voluntarily.

The bitterest resentment must fill the heart of anyone who is acquainted, by personal experience, with the actual condition of affairs.

Many such people, with astonishing courage, have proclaimed the truth and protested against these things to the German Governor-General. Below will be found the *Signal of Distress of Cardinal Mercier* (Document 1) and the protests of the various Belgian authorities who have been witnesses of these outrages. (Documents 2, 3 and 4.)

Out of the resources of Germany, swelled as they are by the spoils of Belgium, not a centime is devoted to helping the wretched people whom the cessation of all work in the country has deprived of their living. And these unemployed are not the only people to be affected. Unemployed and men who are in work, labourers, shop-people, and factory hands alike are taken. The selection is made according to one principle only, to take none but those who are suitable for the employments which the German authorities intend them to undertake. Not one of those who are taken is permitted to decide between work in Belgium for the support of his own family and slavery abroad for the benefit of his enemies. They can not choose but go.

These men are carried away into all sorts of places, and for all sorts of work.

Some are sent to dig trenches or to work on the strategic railway between Lille and Givet. Others are at first placed for a time in concentration camps like the one which is at Soldau. After a second distribution

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they are forwarded to the factories or other "employments" where they are destined to take the places of the Germans who have gone to the front.

Can it be necessary to say that acts such as these are sanctioned neither by Humanity nor by Law?

Husbands, fathers and sons are being torn from their homes of which they are the support, a support only the more vital while the land is in this desperate condition.

Humanity forbids that the family should be crushed and scattered. This is also prohibited by the Regulations as to the Laws and Practices of War which were adopted by the Fourth Convention (the second Hague Peace Conference) and accepted by Germany.

(Art. 46. Family honour and rights . . . must be respected.

Dragged from their home surroundings, these men are led captive far from their country and put to forced labour!

Humanity forbids that decent and inoffensive citizens should be exposed to the moral and material tortures of which only convicts are worthy.

*The Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War** provide a double obstacle to such proceedings. The first is concerned with the services which the military authority may demand from people are living, or in the immediate neighbourhood of their homes, may any services be required of them. Where proof of conspiracy is lacking no general punishment may be proclaimed on account of the acts of individuals. How much less may any punishment of the kind be inflicted upon people not one of whom deserves

* Annex to Convention 4, of the Second Peace Conference.

the smallest blame and who can not be accused of the slightest approach to united action.

Art. 52. Requisition in kind and services shall not be demanded from local authorities or inhabitants except for the *needs of the army of occupation*.

Art. 50. No collective penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the *acts of individuals* for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible.

Set down upon foreign soil, these people find themselves faced with a dilemma: either to die of hunger or to work to the injury of their own country, either directly in the trenches or the munition factories, or, indirectly, in those businesses in which German workmen would otherwise remain.

Humanity forbids that citizens should be forced to join in a war against their country and their friends.

The Regulations of War expressly refer to this point, and in two places—as regards prisoners of war and as regards the inhabitants of occupied territory. Such work as may be required of these two classes of people must have no connection with the operations of war.

Art. 6. The State may employ the labour of prisoners of war. . . . The work shall not be excessive and shall have *no connection with the operations of the war*.

Art. 52. Requisitions in kind and services shall be of such a nature as not to involve the inhabitants in the obligation of taking part in *military operations against their own country*.

The proceedings in connection with these deportations may, then, be classified under three heads: removal from the home, slavery, and compulsion laid upon the workmen to take part, directly or indirectly, in the war against his own country: and all three are

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an outrage against Humanity and Law.

The handbook upon *The Laws of War*, published in 1903 by the German General Staff condemns in advance these detestable practices.

Although in ancient times it was held that to lay waste the land of the enemy, to destroy his property, and in certain cases to carry away his people into slavery or captivity was the perfectly natural accompaniment of war, the opinion which prevails to-day does not regard the inhabitants of invaded territory as enemies. They are considered to be possessed of their usual rights; they are permitted to go about their business unmolested and as much under the protection of the law as in time of peace. (Page 102, Edit. Carpentier.)

Farther on the question is treated with even greater particularity, being considered from the point of view of a power that is in occupation of and is engaged in administering enemy territory.

The provisional Government may require no service of the inhabitants which may seem to be an offence against their own country, or any participation, direct or indirect, in the war. (Page 146.)

After the fall of Antwerp the German authorities sought to induce to return to their own country those Belgians who had taken refuge from the atrocities in Holland. These poor people were suspicious. It was rumoured that no sooner would they have returned than they would be deported. Governor Von Huene wrote to Cardinal Mercier:

The young men have no cause to fear that they will be carried into Germany, either to be placed in the army or to be set to forced labour.

To-day the humane provisions of the General Staff Manual are forgotten and the guarantees given by the Governors are ignored.

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We now look on at "the carrying away of the people into slavery and captivity." Every day witnesses afresh some deportation of men who are "to be set to forced labour" against their country.

This new crime against the Belgian people is one of quite exceptional gravity, and its injustice is flagrant. It positively demands that a Note of Protest should be addressed by the Belgian Government to all the civilized nations. (Document 6.)

Rome. 29 November, 1916.

J. VAN DEN HEUVEL.

An Extract from the Papal Allocution to the Consistory of the 4th December, 1916

In his address to the Consistory which was held on the 4th December, 1916, on the day after the present collection of documents was published, the Sovereign Pontiff spoke of the infringements of private rights which have taken place owing to the war, and particularly of the deportations.

The material passages of this address are as follows :

“ Whenever it happens that the authority of Law is ignored or despised, discord and passion have the mastery and chaos takes the place of order. If this truth required any confirmation, it would be furnished by the present course of events.

“ Does not the hideous madness of this war which is laying Europe waste demonstrate to every sense how surely ruin and disaster must follow when contempt is shown to those sovereign laws which govern the mutual dealings of nations? In this immense struggle of the peoples, we perceive that the most holy things are subjected to outrage, as are the ministers of God, even those of a high station, in spite of the sacred character which Law, both Divine and human, confers upon them; that great numbers of peaceable folk are torn from their homes amidst the tears of their mothers, their wives and their children, and carried away out of their country; that open towns and their helpless populations are the special victims of aerial attack; and that

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on both sea and land such crimes are committed that our hearts are filled with sorrow and detestation.

“We lament these ever-increasing horrors, and we condemn once again all those abominations which this war is bringing forth, no matter where they take place or by whose hand.

“We have made a vow—and may God fulfil it!—that with the publication of the Canonical Code an era of peace and new growth shall reign for the Church. In the same way, we trust that for civil society, brought again into order through a revived respect for justice and law, shall quickly brighten the dawn of that peace, so earnestly desired, which shall once again bring an abundance of mercies to the reconciled peoples of the Earth.”

MECHLIN,

November 7, 1916.

A SIGNAL OF DISTRESS FROM THE BELGIAN BISHOPS TO PUBLIC OPINION.

Every day the military authorities deport thousands of inoffensive citizens from Belgium to Germany, and there condemn them to forced labour.

As early as the 19th of October, we addressed a protest to the Governor-General, a copy of which was handed to the representatives in Brussels of the Holy See, Spain, the United States, and Holland; the Governor-General, however, replied with a refusal to entertain our cause.

At the date of our protest, the decrees of the occupying Power threatened only the unemployed; but at present, all able-bodied men are being carried off indiscriminately, packed into open trucks, and sent away, we know not where, like a gang of slaves.

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The enemy is taking the districts in turn. We had heard vague rumours of arrests having been made in the zone of the Depôts, at Tournai, at Ghent, and at Alost, but we did not know under what conditions. Between October 24 and November 2 raids were carried out in the district of Mons, Quiévrain, Saint Ghislain and Jemappes, from 800 to 1,200 men a day being seized. To-morrow, and on succeeding days, the blow is to fall upon the district of Nivelles. The following is a sample of the proclamations posted to announce the outrage:—

“By order of the Kreischef, all persons of the male sex over 17 years of age are called upon to present themselves at the Place Saint Paul, at Nivelles, on November 8, 1916, at 8 o'clock (Belgian time), 9 o'clock (German time), bringing their identity cards, and, in case of necessity their cards from the Meldeamt.

“The only luggage allowed will be small hand-baggage. Any person who fails to present himself will be forcibly deported to Germany, and will further be liable to a heavy fine and a long term of imprisonment.

“Priests, doctors, lawyers and schoolmasters are not to present themselves.

“Burgomasters will be held responsible for due execution of this order, which must be immediately brought to the knowledge of the inhabitants.”

An interval of 24 hours is allowed to elapse between the posting of the placard and deportation.

Under the pretext of public works to be carried out on Belgian soil, the occupying Power had made an attempt to obtain from the Communes lists of unemployed workmen. The majority of the Communes proudly refused to furnish these.

Three Orders of the Governor-General's were de-

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signed to prepare the way for the blow that falls upon us to-day.

On August 15, 1915, a first Order imposed forced labour on the unemployed, under penalty of imprisonment and fine; but it declared that the labour in question was only to be applied to works on Belgian soil, and that any refusal to obey would be tried in the Belgian Courts.

A second Order, dated May 2, 1916, reserves to the German authorities the right of giving work to the unemployed, and threatens any person causing work to be executed without the sanction of the Governor-General, with three years' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 marks.

By virtue of this same Order, the jurisdiction which had been conceded to the Belgian Courts passes into the hands of the German authorities. A third Order, dated May 13, 1916, "authorises Governors, military commandants, and heads of districts to order the unemployed to be removed by force to the places where they are to work." Thus forced labour was already introduced, but it was in Belgium.

To-day, it is no longer a question of forced labour in Belgium, but in Germany, and for the benefit of the Germans.

To give an appearance of plausibility to these violent measures, the occupying Power insisted in the German press, both in Germany and Belgium, on these two pretexts: The unemployed constitute a danger to public order, and a burden on official benevolence.

The letter we addressed to the Governor-General and to the head of his political department on October 16, replied to these contentions as follows:—

"You are well aware that public order is in no wise

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threatened, and that all influences, moral and civil, would support you spontaneously were it in danger. The unemployed are not a burden on official benevolence; it is not from your funds that they receive assistance."

In his reply, the Governor-General no longer urges these two considerations, but he alleges that doles to the unemployed, from wherever they may come at present, must finally be a charge upon our finances, and that it is the duty of a good administrator to lighten such charges; he adds "that prolonged unemployment would cause our workmen to lose their technical proficiency, and that, in the time of peace to come, they would be useless to industry."

True, there were other ways in which our finances might have been protected. We might have been spared those war-levies which have now reached the sum of a thousand million francs, and are still mounting up at the rate of forty millions a month; we might have been spared those requisitions in kind which represent several thousands of millions, and are exhausting us.

There were other ways of providing for the maintenance of professional skill among our workpeople, such as leaving to Belgian industry its machinery and accessories, its raw materials and its manufactured goods, which have passed from Belgium into Germany. And it is not to the quarries and lime-kilns, to which the Germans themselves declare they will send our unemployed, that our specialists would think of going to complete their professional education.

The naked truth is that every deported workman is another soldier for the German army. He will take the place of a German workman who will be made into a soldier. Thus the situation which we denounce to the civilised world may be reduced to these terms:

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Four hundred thousand workmen have been thrown out of work by no fault of their own, and largely on account of the *régime* of the occupation. Sons, husbands, and fathers of families, they bear their unhappy lot without murmuring, respectful of public order; national solidarity provides for their most pressing wants; by dint of a generous parsimony and self-denial, they escape extreme destitution; and they await with dignity, and in a mutual affection which our national mourning intensifies, the end of our common ordeal.

Bands of soldiers break into their peaceful homes, snatch youths from their parents, the husband from his wife, the father from his children, guard with fixed bayonets the doors through which wives and mothers attempt to bid a last farewell to those who are leaving them; marshal their captives in groups of forty or fifty, and hoist them forcibly into open trucks; the engine stands ready under full steam; as soon as the train is full a superior officer gives the signal for departure. Here we have another thousand Belgians reduced to slavery; condemned, without previous trial, to the severest penalty in the penal code save the death-penalty—deportation. They know not where they are going, nor for how long. All they know is that their work will benefit no one but their enemies. From some of them, by bribes or threats, an engagement has been extorted which is shamelessly called "voluntary."

Moreover, though the unemployed are certainly enrolled, a very large number of those recruited—one-fourth in the district of Mons—are men who have never been out of work, men of a great variety of callings; butchers, bakers, master-tailors, brewers' assistants, electricians and agriculturalists; even quite young lads have been taken, students at university colleges or other higher schools.

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And yet two high authorities of the German Empire formally guaranteed the liberty of our compatriots to us. After the capitulation of Antwerp, the distracted population was asking what would happen to Belgians of military age, or such as would reach that age before the occupation had ended. Baron von Huene, the Military Governor of Antwerp, authorised me to reassure the distressed parents in his name. However, as there were rumours in Antwerp that at Liège, Namur, and Charleroi, youths had been seized and forcibly carried off to Germany, I begged Governor von Huene to be so good as to confirm in writing the oral assurances he had given me. He replied that the rumours of deportations were baseless, and gave me, without hesitation, the following written declaration, which was read aloud on Sunday, October 18, 1914, in all the parish churches of the Province of Antwerp: "Young men need have no fear of being carried off to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army, or to be subjected to forced labour."

Immediately after the arrival of Baron von der Goltz in the capacity of Governor-General at Brussels, I went to ask him to ratify the guarantees given by Governor von Huene to the Province of Antwerp, extending them to the whole country, without any time limit. The Governor-General retained my petition, in order to consider it at his leisure. The following day he was good enough to come in person to Mechlin to express his approval, and, in the presence of two aides-de-camp and of my private secretary, to confirm the promise that the liberty of Belgian citizens would be respected.

In my letter of October 16 last to Baron von Bissing, after reminding him of the undertaking given by his predecessor, I concluded: "Your Excellency will understand how painful would have been the burden of respon-

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sibility I should have incurred towards families, if the confidence they placed in you through me and at my earnest entreaty should be so lamentably disappointed."

The Governor-General replied: "The employment of the Belgian unemployed in Germany, which has only been initiated after two years of war, differs essentially from the captivity of men fit for military service. Moreover, the measure is not related to the conduct of war properly speaking, but is determined by social and economic causes."

As if the word of an honest man could be cancelled at the end of a year or two years like a lease!

As if the declaration confirmed in 1914 did not explicitly exclude both military operations and forced labour!

Finally, as if every Belgian workman who takes the place of a German workman did not enable the latter to fill a gap in the German army!

We, the shepherds of these sheep who are torn from us by brutal force, full of anguish at the thought of the moral and religious isolation in which they are about to languish, impotent witnesses of the grief and terror in the numerous homes shattered or threatened, turn to souls, believing or unbelieving, in Allied countries, in neutral countries, and even in enemy countries, who have a respect for human dignity.

When Cardinal Lavigerie embarked on his anti-slavery campaign, Pope Leo XIII., as he blessed his mission, said: "Opinion is more than ever the queen of the world; it is on this you must work. You will only conquer by means of opinion."

May divine Providence deign to inspire all who have any authority, all who are masters of speech and pen, to rally round our humble Belgian flag for the abolition of European slavery!

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May human conscience triumph over all sophistries,
and remain steadfastly faithful to the great precept of
Saint Ambrose: Honour above everything! *Nihil
præferendum honestati!*

In the name of the Belgian Bishops.*

(Signed)

D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Mechlin.

* We have been unable to communicate with the
Bishop of Bruges.

A Protest from the Deputies and Senators in Brussels

TO THE MINISTERS AND REPRESENTATIVES IN BRUSSELS
OF THE FOREIGN POWERS.

Your Excellency,

The undersigned Senators and Deputies of Belgium now in Brussels have the honour to present to your Excellency the text of the protest which they have felt it their duty to offer to his Excellency the Governor-General of Belgium.

Your Excellency cannot be unaware of the proceedings which have been the cause of this protest, and which, there can be no questions, will call forth that of the public authorities which are still in existence throughout the country. Your Excellency will not have failed already to have informed his Government of the outrage which is at present being committed against the non-combatant population of Belgium.

On several recent occasions the civilised Powers have intervened on behalf of oppressed nations, extending their protection to those races which have been persecuted and driven from their homes. Yet not even these peoples have been carried off into slavery. It was reserved for this terrible war, of which we were the earliest victims, to present a spectacle of this nature to the gaze of the world.

Convinced that Belgium cannot vainly apply to your Government for protection against this pitiless measure

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which violates at once the common rights of mankind, the Fourth Convention of the Hague Conference, and every Law of Humanity, we beg Your Excellency to accept this expression of our deep respect.

* * *

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor-General of Belgium.—Brussels.

Brussels. 9 November, 1916.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

It would seem that no misfortune could be added to the number of those with which, since the occupation of our country, we have been overwhelmed. The destruction of our liberties, the annihilation of our industries and commerce, the exportation of our raw materials and our machinery, the ruin of our finances, the misery which has replaced comfort in homes that were but lately so prosperous, want, fear, sorrow, all these we have suffered without any further protest than the dumb indignation of our hearts and without the smallest appearance of public disorder. A vast sentiment of mutual sympathy united all classes of our society. We suffered together, and this community of suffering lightened for us the burden of individual misfortune.

But to-day a new blow has fallen upon our homes to rend them in pieces. Suddenly, by the hundred, by the thousand, our peaceful citizens, of every age, of every class—a whole civil population—see themselves torn brutally from those they love and deported into Germany. Whither? To what part of the Empire? No one knows. What is to happen to them? To what kind of work are they to be condemned? There is no answer. And so hundreds, thousands of women and children and helpless old men find themselves abandoned, robbed

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of all support, and delivered over to the terrors of a separation whose end no one can foresee. And such is their distress that, to spare themselves the pain of witnessing it, the very agents of the deportation deny to these weeping wives and despairing families the last consolation of a farewell.

Is it necessary to insist upon these scenes which for several weeks now have been enacted in the military zone, and during the past few days have increased in number throughout the territory of the General Government, where the plague threatens to spread from place to place until its victims are counted by the hundred thousand? The notices posted on the walls and published in the newspapers suffice to tell the story. Everywhere is found the same procedure, as summary as it is wretched. General arrests; men registered arbitrarily as unemployed, penned together, sorted, despatched into the unknown.

Only to mention the notices posted yesterday at Nivelles, Virginal, Ittre, Haut-Ittre, Lillois, Baulers, Monstreux, Bernival, Thines, Braine-l'Alleud, Orphain, Wauthier-Braine, Waterloo, Plancenoit, these summon *indiscriminately*, simply warning them to provide themselves with some small hand-baggage, "every male person above 17 years of age, with the exception only of ecclesiastics, doctors, lawyers, and schoolmasters." The levy is no longer confined to the unemployed: for the pretence of employing our people abroad who are out of work no longer deceives anyone.

Would not the surest way of finding them employment in the country be to leave them their tools, their machinery, their workshops, their stocks of raw material, their channels of communication, their freedom to work. Certain philanthropic people had proposed to employ these idle hands upon works of public utility;

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their efforts were first hampered and then crushed.

Others had done their utmost to organise, for the benefit of the unemployed, an immense system of technical education, which should increase their value as workmen, but this scheme was not accepted; nor was another, to provide bureaux throughout the country which should supply information and procure work for those who needed it.

The authorities prefer to provide them with work in Germany where they are promised by the Department of Labour a good salary if they are willing to enroll themselves "voluntarily" and where, in case they refuse to do this, a starvation wage awaits them. To force their hands, on what physical and moral misery do the authorities not rely!

It has certainly been asserted that the work on which they are offered employment will be in no way connected with the war. But from every hand comes the answer: By taking the place of a German workman the Belgian workman allows Germany to increase the number of her soldiers. *No work is more hateful than that which results in injury to a man's own country.* To work for Germany is to fight against our home-land. To force our workmen to do this is nothing but an outrage, that violates both the rights of the citizens which Your Excellency has himself endorsed in his proclamation of 15th August, 1915, and the spirit, if not the letter, of the Fourth Hague Convention,* 1907.

"A scheme, such as this, for removing the non-combatant population," writes M. Ernest Nys, Professor of International Law, in a letter to the Mayor of Brussels, "*is absolutely opposed to the whole idea of Occupation.*" This has taken the place of the former

* See above.

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theory of Conquest, under which the conqueror became the sovereign of the vanquished country. *It is the duty of the conqueror to respect the rights of peaceful inhabitants.*"

It is in the name of these sacred rights, which have been openly violated, that the undersigned senators and deputies, living in Brussels, representatives of the Belgian people, address to Your Excellency the solemn protest of innumerable families who are affected by that cruel decree at which, to-day, the whole country burns with indignation, and which cannot fail to meet with the condemnation of the whole civilised world.

They implore Your Excellency to use with the military authorities the great influence which his position confers upon him, that a crime without precedent in the history of modern war be not brought to pass.

And they beg him to accept the assurance of their deepest respect.

CABINET MINISTERS.

Baron de Favereau, President of the Senate.

Comte Woestere, Representative of Alost.

Jules Vandenpeereboom, Provincial Senator for Western Flanders.

Joseph Devolder, Senator for Arlon-Marche-Bastogne.

SENATORS.

Braun, Alexandre, Senator for Brussels.

Brunard, Edouard, Senator for Nivelles.

De Becker-Remy, Senator for Louvain.

De Blicq, Senator for Alost.

De Ro Georges, Senator for Brussels.

Dubost, Edouard, Senator for Brussels.

Dumont de Chassart, Senator for Nivelles.

Dupret, George, Senator for Brussels.

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- Hallet, Max, Senator for Brussels.
Hanrez, Prosper, Senator for Brussels.
Baron de Kerchove d'Exaerde, Senator for Alost.
Lekeu, Jules, Provincial Senator for Hainaut.
Mesens, Edmond, Provincial Senator for Brussels.
Baron de Mévius, Senator for Namur-Dinant-Philippeville.
Baron Alfred Orban de Xivry, Senator for Arlon-Marche-Bastogne.
Poelaert, Albert, Senator for Brussels.
Vicomte Simonis, Senator for Verviers, former President of the Senate.
Speyer, Herbert, Senator for Arlon-Marche-Bastogne.
Vinck, Emile, Provincial Senator for Brabant.
On behalf of the Permanent Deputation of Brabant:
Janssen, Charles.

MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES.

- Levie, Michel, former Minister, Representative of Charleroi.
Bertrand, Louis, Representative of Brussels.
Boël, Pol, Representative of Soignies.
Buïsseret, Emile, Representative of Charleroi.
Buyl, Representative of Ostend-Furnes-Dixmude.
Cocq, Fernand, Representative of Brussels.
De Bue, Navier, Representative of Brussels.
Delporte, Antoine, Representative of Brussels.
Baron Drion, Representative of Charleroi.
Elbers, François, Representative of Brussels.
Hanssens, Eugène, Representative of Brussels.
Baron Albert d'Huart, Representative of Dinant-Philippeville.
Janson, Paul Emile, Representative of Tournai-Ath.
Jourez, Léon, Representative of Nivelles.

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- Lamborelle, Representative of Malines.
Lemonnier, Maurice, Representative of Brussels.
Comte de Limburg Stirum, Representative of Arlon-
Marche-Bastogne.
Polet, Hyacinthe, Representative of Liège.
Poncelet, Jules, Representative of Neuf-Château-
Virton.
Rens, Representative of Alost.
Tibbaut, Emile, Representative of Termonde.
Wauters, Representative of Huy-Waremme.
Wauwermans, Paul, Representative of Brussels.

PROTEST OF THE DEPUTIES AND SENATORS OF ANTWERP.

Antwerp, November 7th, 1916.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Under an Order of the Military Governor of Antwerp, issued in pursuance of the instructions of the German Governor-General in Belgium, and dated November 2nd, 1916, our fellow-citizens who are out of work and whose names are on the list of the Meldeamt, are at this moment under summons to present themselves at the Southern Station. They will be transported thence, if necessary by force, to Germany, to be there compelled to take up whatever work may be assigned to them.

The same measures have been taken in the rest of the country.

Without sentence, without having committed any crime, thousands of free citizens are thus deported against their will into enemy territory, far from their homes, far from their wives and children, to undergo there the most rigorous treatment to which a free man can be condemned—work under coercion.

We, Deputies, Senators, and Notables of Antwerp

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and its urban area, should consider that we utterly failed in our duty if we allowed such action to take place before our eyes without availing ourselves of the right we possess to address ourselves under all circumstances to the Executive Power, in order to present our complaints, reservations, or protests.

By what right has forced labour, accompanied by deportation, been introduced into our unhappy country? That is the question to which we are vainly demanding an answer.

The law of nations condemns such measures. There is not one modern authority who justifies them. The text of the Hague Convention, which limits the right of requisitions to the needs of the Army of Occupation, is in direct contradiction to them. The constitutional law of all European countries, including Germany, is in equal opposition to them. The most illustrious of your rulers, Frederick II., gave the sanctity of a dogma to individual liberty, and to the right of every citizen to employ his capacities and his labour as he may think good. The Occupying Power must respect these essential principles, which for centuries have been incorporated in the common patrimony of humanity.

It is incontestable that Belgian Labour, deported in pursuance of the measures of which we write, releases a proportionate number of German workmen, and leaves them free to go and fight against the brothers and sons of the workmen who are being obtained by force. This patently involves co-operation in the war against our country, which is forbidden in terms by Article 52 of the Hague Convention.

This is not all. Immediately after the occupation of Antwerp, hundreds of thousands of our fellow-citizens had left the country and taken refuge in Holland in the districts along the frontier. The most reassuring

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declarations were made to them by the German Authorities.

On October 9th, 1914, General von Beseler, in supreme command of the besieging army, submitted to the envoys sent to Contich a declaration to the effect that "Civic Guards who have been disarmed will not be treated as prisoners of war."

On the same date, Lieutenant-General von Schütz, appointed to the command of the fortress of Antwerp, issued the following declaration:—

"The undersigned, being Commandant of the fortress of Antwerp, declares that there is nothing to prevent the return of the inhabitants to their homes. *None of them will be molested.*

"Members of the Civic Guard, if they have been disarmed, *can return in complete security.*"

On October 16th, 1914, Cardinal Mercier communicated to the population a declaration signed by Baron von Huene, Military Governor of Antwerp, in which he definitely stated, and with a view to publication:—

"Young men need have no fear of *being carried off to Germany*, either to be enrolled in the army *or to be subjected to forced labour.*"

Shortly afterwards, His Eminence the Primate of Belgium requested Baron von der Goltz, Governor-General of Belgium, to ratify for the whole country, and without any limit of time, the pledges given him by General von Huene for the Province of Antwerp. *His request was satisfied.*

Finally, on October 18th, 1914, the German Military Authorities at Antwerp transmitted to the representatives of General van Terwisga, commanding the Dutch Army in the field, a signed declaration not only confirming the promise that young men and Civic Guards who had been disarmed might return to Belgium

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“without anxiety,” but adding further that “the rumour to the effect that *young Belgians will betaken to Germany . . . is entirely without foundation.*”

It was on the faith of these solemn public declarations that numbers of citizens, not only of Antwerp but of all parts of Belgium, re-crossed the frontier and returned to their homes.

These men who returned to Belgium after such explicit pledges are to be sent to-morrow to Germany, to be compelled there to that forced labour from which they had been promised immunity. Under these circumstances, we feel ourselves justified in demanding the repeal of the measure.

We wish to add that the Treaty of Contich explicitly stipulates that the Civic Guards shall not be treated as prisoners of war. *There can, therefore, be no question of transporting them to Germany to undergo a more rigorous treatment still.* The preamble of the Order with which we are concerned seems to take our workmen to task for their inactivity; it appeals to solicitude for public order, and is disturbed by the growing burden upon public charity.

We shall permit ourselves to point out to Your Excellency that at the time of the German invasion there were in Belgium considerable reserves of raw material, which it would have taken innumerable workmen a long time to work up. These stocks have been removed and transported to Germany. There were factories, completely equipped, which could have manufactured for export to neutral countries. The machine-tools and other portions of the plant were removed in large quantities and sent to Germany.

It is certainly a fact that our workmen have refused work offered by the Occupying Power, because this

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work was of a nature to assist that Power in its military operations. They have preferred privations to high wages earned at this price. But what patriot or what man of feeling would not admire these poor people for the dignity and courage displayed in such a choice?

Our working classes cannot, then, be reproached for inactivity. In their love of work they are second to none.

The Order also appeals to solicitude for public order, and concerns itself with leaving as few unemployed as possible to be a burden on public charity.

Public order has not been disturbed. As for social assistance, it is true that millions have been spent in relief for the unemployed since the beginning of the war in Belgium. But in aid of this immense effort of national solidarity, *nothing has been asked of the German Government*, or even of the Belgian Treasury, which is administered under your supervision and maintained by our contributions.

Germany need not be disturbed by solicitude for money which does not come out of her pocket, and Your Excellency is well aware that it is not public charity but the National Committee which provides the funds for this supremely necessary work, and will continue to provide them in the future as it has done in the past.

None of the motives appealed to in support of this new policy appears to us to be well founded. In the history of war during the last two centuries one would search in vain for a precedent. Neither in the wars of the Revolution nor in those of the Empire, nor in those which have desolated Europe since then, has anyone ever tampered with the sacred principle of individual liberty, which is the right of peaceful and unoffending populations.

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What halting-place would there be on this road if such treatment could be justified by reasons of State? Even in the Colonies forced labour has disappeared in our times.

Consequently, we beg Your Excellency to take into consideration the facts which we have submitted to Your Excellency, and to restore to their homes those of our fellow-citizens who have been deported to Germany as a result of the Order of November 2nd, 1916.

(Signed by the Deputies, Senators and a great number of Notables residing in Antwerp).

PROTEST OF THE MAGISTRATES AND BARRISTERS OF BRUSSELS.

Brussels, 11 November, 1916.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

The undersigned, inspired by a unanimous desire for the defence of the Law, believe it to be their duty to bring to Your Excellency's knowledge the deplorable impression which has been made upon the Legal Profession of the whole world by the measures taken recently against a section of the Belgian people.

Peaceful citizens, belonging to every class of society and from every part of the country, are being dragged, in contempt of all Law, natural, established, and international, from their homes and their families, to be employed, in Germany or elsewhere, upon work which will assist, indirectly at the very least, the military operations of their country's enemy.

This is to disregard that great principle of individual liberty, which is accepted by all civilised nations.

It is also to disregard the most incontestable principles of that Military Law which insures to non-combatants the free exercise of their rights.

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It is to disregard, lastly, the assurances which Your Excellency gave to the population of Belgium, when he promised security and protection to those citizens who remained in the country.

These measures carry us back to the times when the conqueror was wont to carry off the populations of vanquished territory to be his slaves.

Man is master of his person, his strength and his will. Forced labour is a punishment reserved for only the gravest crimes. Of this, the undersigned venture to remind Your Excellency. They hope that Your Excellency will constitute himself, before the Imperial Government, the defender of Belgium, whose welfare has been entrusted to his vigilant care.

They offer to Your Excellency the assurance of their profoundest esteem.

To His Excellency
Baron von Bissing,
Governor-General of Belgium.

Note. Here follow about 500 signatures:—

The High Court of Appeal and its Bar.

The Court of Appeal of Brussels.

The Civil Court and Commercial Court of Brussels.

The Justices of the Peace and Council of Experts of Brussels.

* * *

THE STORY OF AN EYE-WITNESS AT NIVELLES.

On Wednesday, the 8th of November, at 8 o'clock in the morning, the whole male population of Nivelles, over 17 years of age, was collected in the Place Saint Paul. One after the other, at intervals of a few minutes, there arrived in the square, accompanied by their Mayors, the men of Lillois, Tines, Monstreux, Baulers, Bornival, Ittre, Haut-Ittre, and Virginal, who had also been summoned.

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About a quarter past eight the levy began. Certain officers conducted it in German and their orders were translated by an interpreter. The town of Nivelles came first. The old men over 75 years were called, then those over 70, and so by steps of five years down to those over 55.

Under the pouring rain we saw the old men from the almshouses pass in sad review before the officers, who placed seals upon their cards of identification. Many could only walk with the help of crutches or leaning on the arms of their relatives, others, suffering from every kind of infirmity, literally dragged themselves along. This group was at once set free.

After this handful of men the entire male population of Nivelles, marshalled according to age, began to move forward, in ranks of three, crowded closely together by the German soldiers. The melancholy procession took its way by the *Rue du palais de Justice*, the *Faubourg* and *Chaussée de Bruxelles*, as far as the immense Delcroix paper mills.

Every approach to this route was carefully guarded.

The foremost ranks walked quietly, but the last, where were the young men, marched along vigorously, singing the *Marseillaise* and the *Brabançonne*, nor did the soldiers dare to prevent this.

The women and children, running to their doorways, wept wildly, believing that all their men were already on their way to the railway station, and from thence God knew where.

It was at the Delcroix works that the selections were made.

At the porter's lodge a German soldier was posted, who continually repeated: "Those who are ill or wounded are to go before the doctor." And two doctors were there, Messrs. Lavaud'homme and Froment,

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to give evidence before the German officers, themselves, no doubt, medical men, as to those for whom their attendance had been required. The sick were placed on one side.

Now a first group of 25 men was brought into a room where three officers were seated before a table. These officers, after demanding his card of identification, examined each man upon his qualifications. As it seemed good to them, so he must take his place on one side of them or the other. To anyone who was considered unlikely to be useful to the Germans, his card was returned with a seal stamped upon it. Then he was taken to the door. Outside a picket of soldiers conducted each little group of those who had been set free to where another picket could take them over, and this was repeated until they had been brought to those streets which were not barricaded.

Very different was the fate of those who had been kept back. Their cards of identification were taken from them and each was given a number. The poor fellows who had been thus classified were commonly quite in the dark as to what was to be done with them. Some of them, who were neither unemployed nor workmen, applied for assistance to Monsieur Delcroix, who was acting as Mayor and who devoted himself to their defence in the most admirable way.

As soon as a certain number of men had been furnished with numbers and classified, they were taken into a neighbouring room. Now began their temptation. Officers approached them, smiling, and asked: "Will you work for us? You are a fitter, or a carpenter, or a stove-maker. We will give you big wages. So many marks a day. You will have food so long as the war lasts. You and your wife and children have suffered long enough. Come, you're an intelligent fellow. Sign

this agreement, and you are free to go home at once to get your things together. You will not be required to leave for some days. You will not even have to go out of Belgium."

Then came the sturdy refusals.

The men turned pale a moment, but answered resolutely: "I will not sign. I will not work against my country." Many protested passionately against the wrong which was being done them, proving clearly that they were neither unemployed nor workmen. It was in vain.

During this time the few persons who were privileged by their position to go about among the groups, did their best to save a man, here and there, from being carried off. But the Germans too often turned a deaf ear to their claims. For instance, thirteen clerks of the district railways were taken, in spite of the protests of their superiors. So again, Monsieur Chantrenne, the Director of the well-known "*Ateliers métallurgiques*" at Nivelles, was taken, and only avoided deportation with the greatest difficulty, and after endless discussions. Many have gone who have never been out of work; many also who were not workmen.

It is to be seen from the list which follows, that *small manufacturers, traders, employers, farmers, students, people of private means*, nay, even a person of feeble mind, have been carried away. No consideration has hindered the Germans. They were actually not ashamed to take Monsieur Gobert, a master painter, and father of eleven children, and later on, his two eldest sons.

About half-past nine the first batch of deported men was driven into a railway carriage that had been brought in front of the factory. Eight men were placed in each compartment and the doors were carefully locked. Many

of those who were thus about to set out for Germany had not believed that they would be taken, and were provided with nothing for the journey, neither food nor proper clothing. And so those who had been set free and who had foreseen this deportation *en masse* held out their bags and their bundles with brotherly solicitude, that these things might be taken to their friends who were already locked in. Some of them even stripped themselves of their overcoats and gave them to the unfortunate creatures.

Without pause, carriage was added to carriage, each crowded with its exiles.

In the town the excitement had reached its highest pitch.

The men who had returned to their homes brought to their families the news of the departure, here of the husband and father, there of the brothers or sons. In feverish haste the women put together packages of food and everything, as far as they could guess, with which the exiles would be unable to dispense. Then they rushed madly to the railway station, their hearts filled with deadly anxiety. There some of them were given permission to come up to the train, in groups of four and five, hand over their scanty luggage to their men and quickly say good-bye. Meanwhile, continually, from one carriage window or another, the song of the Brabançonne was heard.

Throughout the day people were hastening in the same way from the neighbouring villages, bringing comforts for those who had been exiled.

All the afternoon, a few true-hearted citizens, particularly the Mayors of the various communes, exerted themselves to save one or another of their fellow townsmen. Now and then, after actual fighting, they succeeded in dragging from the clutches of the Germans, who them-

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selves were worn out with their exertions, a few men the injustice of whose threatened fate was too obvious.

The generosity of Monsieur Tombeur, of Nivelles, was excited by so much distress to such a degree that he gave money to all those who had none, to some five and to others ten marks.

Thus confronting the tragedy which had overtaken them, the Belgians once again gloriously proclaimed their patriotism and their brotherhood.

Towards half-past five the train was at last made up. It had not less than 32 carriages. Nivelles alone was robbed of 1,000 men, taken at haphazard, most of whom must now abandon their families to that indigence from which up to that time they had succeeded in preserving them.

When the train moved out in the direction of Ottignies a tremendous shout arose: "Vive le Roi! Vive la Belgique! Vive la France!" And at once everyone was singing the Brabançonne and the Marseillaise. The women and children, everyone who had been able to creep along the embankment of the railway, all weeping desperately and with death at their hearts, saluted for the last time the valiant souls who were leaving them.

A body of Germans, on the other hand, were so proud of having made slaves of so many Belgians, that they marched through the streets of the town singing the "Gloria Victoria" at the top of their voices.

At the same moment the wives and mothers were going home to face their sorrow.

There follow :

- (1) A long list of workmen, not out of employment, who have been carried away.
- (2) A long list of deported people who are neither unemployed nor labourers.

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A NOTE FROM THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT UPON THE FORCED LABOUR AND DEPOR- TATION WHICH THE BELGIAN PEOPLE HAS SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES.

The Belgian Government has, on many occasions, denounced to the Neutral Powers those infractions of the laws of men and the principles of humanity of which the German Authorities in Belgium have been guilty.

The latest information obtained from the occupied portions of the country establishes the occurrence of new events, which the Government of the King had refused to credit. These events must painfully affect public sentiment in every country which has any regard for Law.

A proclamation dated, from the German Grand Headquarters, the 3rd of October last, has subjected to forced labour all those Belgians who are able to work, but who, through lack of employment or for any other reason, may have become a burden upon others.

Those to whom this measure applies may be forced to work away from their homes, that is to say, to be deported into Germany in a condition of semi-slavery.

The great difficulty of maintaining communication with that part of Belgium which is occupied has prevented the Government of the King from obtaining all the information which it desired relative to the manner in which this decree of the 3rd of October is being put into execution.

It knows, however, and from a sure source, that the deportation *en masse* of the robust portion of the population is being carried out. Rich or poor, if they are idle or unemployed, are being taken without mercy. By the 29th of October last, more than 15,000 men had

already been taken in Flanders alone. Complete trains have been seen, crowded with these unfortunate people travelling towards Germany. Others have been sent into the departments of France which have been invaded. These men, huddled together in open trucks, were exposed to every inclemency of the weather, and were in the most wretched condition imaginable. Their spirit, however, in spite of cold and privation, was in no way broken; for even while they were enduring this novel form of tyranny they were thundering forth their patriotic songs.

At Courtrai, Alost, Termonde, Bruges, Ghent, Mons, and in many rural and industrial localities every man has been swept into the net. They have been collected together, examined like cattle, and those who are robust have been despatched to places which remain unknown.

At Bruges the Mayor, a man eighty years old, who, ever since the beginning of the occupation, has offered an example of the most devoted patriotism, has been dismissed for refusing to help the German military authorities in their revolting task. A fine of 100,000 marks was imposed upon the town for every day's delay in the registration of the victims.

Up to the 24th of October the deportations were carried out principally in the *military zones*. In the rest of the country the Civil Government has no doubt hesitated to adopt a measure which violates not only the spirit and text of the Hague Convention, but also the solemn assurance, given to the population by the notice of the 25th of July, 1915, that no requirement would be made of them which should conflict with their patriotism.

The Government of the King, however, having learned that the registration of the unemployed is now

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being carried out over the whole of the occupied territory, has reason to fear that all the provinces may soon be exposed to the horrors of these deportations.

The "Cologne Gazette," in an article of which the newspapers now appearing in Belgium have been directed to publish a translation, has attempted to justify this iniquitous measure of which the Belgians are the victims. It pictures in the most obliging manner the danger of the idleness in which many of the workpeople are living, and casts the blame of the general unemployment upon England, who is preventing the importation of raw materials into Belgium. This mouthpiece of the German Government attempts also to justify the forced labour, affirming that the Belgians will only be employed in the quarries, lime-kilns and other places of the kind which are in no way connected with the war.

This last argument is worthless, since everyone is aware how necessary, to-day, are concrete and the other products of lime-kilns for the construction of trenches and other fortifications.

To Germany's attempt to deny all responsibility for the miserable condition of the working classes of Belgium, we reply that work would not be wanting to these people if the Invader, responsible, moreover, by the very fact of his aggression, for this state of affairs, had not disorganised our industries, robbed them of their raw materials and the oils and the metals which are necessary to them, and demanded delivery of a vast amount of machinery and tools. He will even find occasion, perhaps, to carry off the power belts, of which he has required a complete inventory. The Army in occupation would even seem to have resolved to bring about the ruin of Belgium's trade in metals and stained glass for the benefit of her German rivals by imposing pro-

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hibitive duties upon exports to Holland, the last market that remains open to her.

The energy and industry of the Belgian workman are proverbial. If during the last two years he has been idle, it has been because he has seen the prospect of no other work than that which his enemies have offered him. This he was forbidden by his patriotism to accept, since by doing so he would, indirectly, have been fighting against his own country.

The invader, through his barbarous scheme of deportation, seeks to gain a double end.

First to terrorise the nation by driving its people to despair and so to compel its workers to lend their assistance to the German occupation.

This plan is furthered by the announcement that forced labour will be imposed upon all to whom relief is given. Thus the workman who, from love of his country, refuses to work for the enemy, knows that he is condemning himself to exile and practical slavery.

The deportations, then, are a tyrannous method of forcing the working man to accept, against his conscience, the offers of work he has rejected.

The second aim of the German authorities is to substitute Belgians for those German workmen who, thus made available, will go to the front to fill the gaps in the German armies; for men must be obtained at any price. Were it otherwise, did they aim at nothing but relieving the idleness of our workpeople, why have they not employed them at home upon works of public utility, within reach of their own families and their own dwellings? Not only have they not done this, but there is trustworthy evidence that in many cases they have deported people who were actually in employment and have even intentionally thrown out of work people who had never been unemployed at all—and this in orde:

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to gain an excuse for appropriating their labour.

According to the German newspapers, a very reasonable wage is being offered to those who will agree to become "voluntary workers," but such people may be set to any kind of work. They propose, then, to induce these unfortunate men, through the hope of enjoying better conditions, to undertake work which may directly contribute to the military strength of Germany. The deported Belgian is offered the choice between starvation and treason.

The Government of the King calls upon all civilised nations to witness that it denounces these odious proceedings, which stultify alike the laws of Humanity and the conventional rules of warfare in so far as these relate to the occupation of conquered territory.

We protest, with our utmost force, against the existence of a system which the futile representations of the enemy cannot prevent us from stigmatising as slave trading, a scandal by which the cup of shame is filled for Germany, who claims to be so anxious to safeguard their rights and liberties to the people of Flanders.

* * *

OFFICIAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE EFFECT OF THE OCCUPATION UPON BELGIAN INDUSTRIES.

The Germans seek to justify their arbitrary acts and infringements of international law by alleging the danger of permitting the population to be idle. They have even the hardihood to maintain that it is to the economic interest of the country that forced labour should be instituted.

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In point of fact, if the number of the unemployed has been large, it is because the exactions and requisitions of the German Authorities have brought the greater part of the factories to a standstill. Not only has the invader seized upon raw materials, but, in many places, he has taken away machinery and sent it into Germany.

So, for example, the well-known metal business of Cockerill, near Liège, has been forced to give up part of its plant. About 300 of its machines have been ear-marked. Machinery and tools have been taken from the Boël workshops at La Louvière. The following metal works, most of which are among the most considerable of this country, have been sequestered after the great part of their machines had been requisitioned:—

The branch of the Steel Company of Angleur, entitled the Martin Furnaces and the Rolling-mills of Renory, near Ougrée.

The Foundries and Iron Plate Works of Jupille.

The St. Leonard Company (tools).

The La Meuee Company.

The Electrical Company of Liège, at Sclessin.

The Demonceau Rolling-mills at Méry, near Tilff.

The Orban Silk-works of Liège.

The Colette Silk-works of Sclessin.

The Company of Workshops of Thiriau.

The Company of Baume and Marpent.

The Forge and Foundry Company of Goldschmidt
at Haine St. Pierre.

The Power Company.

The Franco-Belgian Company of La Croyère.

The La Biesme Company of Bouffioulx.

The Hainault Company of Couillet.

The Wire-drawing Works of Dampremy.

The Tool Society of Manage.

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In the district of Charleroi the Germans are taking to pieces such machinery as they cannot use, and are selling it for old iron.

Everywhere they are making inventories of things which may prove of value, even to the power-belts, evidently with a view to further requisitions.

In Limbourg the André Dumont Coal Mine, which, in expectation of a speedy resumption of work, was employing several hundred workmen upon the sinking of shafts, has been placed under sequestration. No sooner was this work completed than the German Authorities closed the mine down, thus throwing out of employment an entire community of workpeople, which thus became available for deportation.

The District Railways Co. had, since the Occupation, proposed to build several new lines, and would thus have provided a large number of people with work; but the enemy, by requisitioning the stock of rails and sleepers, has made this project impossible of realisation.

Again, the cement industry, formerly so flourishing amongst us, is at a standstill, because the enemy has carried off the plaster which is essential to this manufacture, as well as the bags and barrels, without which the goods cannot be forwarded.

Other trades have been prevented from exporting their products into Holland or have been burdened with such heavy export duties that their market in the Netherlands has been closed to them.

But the enemy has not been satisfied to deprive the workmen of their work by forcing the factories where they gain their living to close their doors.

He has frequently dragged them away from occupations which they have found elsewhere, so that he may have an excuse for including them in the deportation lists.

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So, last summer, in the province of Luxembourg, the municipalities had undertaken, with the co-operation of the "Secours-travail," various public enterprises, which provided work for all the workmen in the district where, in August, there was not one man without employment.

But, in September the German Authorities ordered these undertakings to be discontinued, though all the permissions required for their commencement had been secured.

The workmen having then found employment with certain private businesses which were still in existence, the enemy discovered new methods. He forbade them to do any work outside the commune in which they resided. This was the last straw, for in Luxembourg the workmen have often to make long journeys to their work.

This method of procedure gives a flat contradiction to the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, which has attempted to justify the deportations by saying "that the Belgian population cannot be left to go to ruin through idleness."

If such is the motive underlying these barbarous proceedings, why drag from work those who have found means of employing themselves, why send them into slavery in Germany when there are, in Belgium, works of public utility and necessity which the Belgian municipalities are anxious to carry out?

The German press has gone so far as to assert that the harvest has had to be gathered by the army of occupation—because the Belgian population has persisted in remaining idle.

Here is another slander. The agricultural population, so industrious in Belgium, has alone gathered its

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harvest. The German troops have been employed only in taking possession of it.

As the German authorities aim at ruining the industries of Belgium by carrying off their machinery and stocks, so they threaten her agriculture with extinction by carrying off the horses, 70 per cent. of which have already been requisitioned.

The plan of Germany has been, to begin with, to bring about the unemployment of our workpeople in order to have an excuse for furnishing herself with men. But now she is dispensing with even this excuse. Every vigorous man in Belgium is threatened with deportation into Germany, there to take the place, in factory or workshop, of a man who will be sent to the front to fill a gap in the German ranks.

What can remain of Belgium, squeezed, sucked dry in this way by an enemy who seems to have devoted himself to the task of exhausting every source of her wealth and annihilating the results of centuries of her toil?

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