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WAR IN PEACE TIME.

The Outrage of Armies of Occupation.

THE German people in the regions West of the Rhine and in certain areas at the bridge-heads East of the Rhine have endured Armies of Occupation since the autumn of 1918. For over four years, in time of so-called peace, French, Belgian, British, and American troops, to a number variously estimated but certainly exceeding the total German army at the time,* have encamped fully armed on German soil and have required the cost of their entertainment to be defrayed by the German people.

We hold that this is indeed not a condition of peace but a condition of war; one-sided war it is true, but not less bitter for that. We see that this prolonged occupation is causing a steady growth of resentment in the German people, reversing the hopes of international co-operation which had risen so high after the Revolution, making an atmosphere destructive to the League of Nations and burning into young people a sense of wrong which will bear its terrible consequences in the future.

We do not propose to enter upon the question of why the Allies sent their armies into the Rhineland nor the other question whether they have any prospect of getting reparations by these means. We are concerned for the moment only to show the disastrous effects, moral, economic, and political, of a prolonged occupation on a scale like this and to urge that Europe can never be settled and co-operation never be established until all the foreign troops are entirely withdrawn.

* In the Rhineland Germany used to maintain 70,000 men. In June, 1922, before the League of Nations, it was reported that France had 150,000 and Great Britain 17,800 men in the Rhineland, together with Belgium and the United States, probably well over 170,000. Since the invasion of the Ruhr it is commonly stated that the French have added 150,000 to the previous number. The whole German realm has now 100,000 men in its own army.

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A Penal Purpose.

Those who have never lived under the oppression of an Army of Occupation, or who have not witnessed such a life in their own persons, find it difficult to grasp fully what an outrage an occupation must be to a highly developed people. An army which occupies a foreign country in peace time does so for a definite penal purpose. It brings upon that country all the usual disadvantages of militarism from which it might suffer at the hands of its own army, together with the oppression of having daily and hourly in the streets, in the home, in the places of amusement, and even in the churches armed men who represent and must represent "the enemy." However kind and genial the individual soldier may feel, he is officially required not to become friendly. He often does, of course, because human nature is generally better than the institutions it sets up; kindness, even love, will occasionally break down the barriers which militarism tries to maintain; the most impressive protest against the blockade being maintained during the armistice came from the British soldier; the British army had not long been in occupation of Cologne before messages were sent to the British Government by one of the officers, saying that he would not answer for the contentment of his troops unless the German women and children were fed; when the American troops were recalled from Coblenz in January, 1923, it was found that a large number of the men had married German women.

But the fact remains that it is an unfriendly act for one State to occupy the territory of another, and that the influence and discipline of the officers is directed to keeping the relations between the soldiers and the populace unfriendly. When there is in the occupying army a strong infusion of old hatreds, of desire for revenge, of victorious arrogance, we may be certain that its domination will be painful and humiliating. When the conditions are such that greedy or luxurious or parsimonious persons have impunity in making exactions, we cannot doubt that they will exploit that impunity. When there is no hope of the withdrawal of the incubus within a reasonable time or through any practicable effort, despair may well enter the hearts of the people in the occupied areas, and despair is a highly dangerous passion.*

* The Treaty of Versailles contemplates fifteen years, but M. Poincaré said in the *Chambre des Députés*, on November 9th, 1922, that he did not consider it would terminate even then, "because by that time the conditions would not have been fulfilled."

Report of Eye-witnesses.

At the Conference for A New Peace organized at the Hague in December, 1922, by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, two delegates who had been in the occupied Rhineland, reported on the conditions there. These delegates were Miss Marion Fox, of the Society of Friends, and Mrs. Wägner Landquist, a Swedish member of the W.I.L.P.F.

Miss Fox said that the situation was much worse than in August, 1922. It was like going down into a dark place where there was no hope. People who had believed in striving for peace were beginning to ask: "Is it the right way, after all?" The difference between the well-fed conquerors and the starving and houseless people was being accentuated. Houses were being taken for the armies, for brothels, as well as land for bombing practice. The children were suffering from want of milk; 45 per cent. were tuberculous, and in Speyer and Coblenz the Armies of Occupation were given preference for milk, only what was left over going to the children. Everywhere there was increase in prostitution and in venereal diseases. There was always the haunting fear of the coloured troops. She drew a vivid picture of the contrast in one common kitchen between the woman of the victor nation, well fed and with every luxury at her command, while the woman of the vanquished nation upon whom she was billeted did not know where to turn for the necessities with which to feed her family. The poverty of the women, in face of the wealth of the soldiers, was a tremendous temptation. Owing to the exchange, the pocket-money of the American soldier in one day equalled the total weekly wage of the German workman. She had visited the Palatinate, Mainz, Trier, Köln, Wiesbaden, and she could say that better understanding had not grown up between the armies and the people; the humiliation had gone too deep.

Mrs. Wägner Landquist said that the horrors of war had been replaced by the horrors of peace, and some were inclined to say that war was preferable because it ended some time, but this peace did not. At the time of the Revolution, Germany was a deeply ploughed field and anything you had sown then would have grown quickly. Hate had been sown by the Treaties, and it had grown. Now, when you speak to the people, they say "See where our moral weapons have led us!" Despair had entered their hearts. They had no more hope for their children. She asked, was the occupation at least bringing reparations to France? No, it ate up all

that the Germans had paid, and more, and the longer it went on the more French suspicion increased. There was a horrible geometrical progression in retaliation.

Housing.

We will take a few facts from the official report* published for the Reichstag in May, 1922. From this we find (p. 34) that on December 1st, 1921, at least 9,700 dwellings with 38,000 rooms, together with 13,000 single rooms (that is 51,000 rooms in all) had been requisitioned in the Rhineland in addition to barrack accommodation.

On November 1st, 1921, in the whole of the occupied area, 60 schools had been requisitioned, this affecting 386 classes, and a total of 16,450 children. In the British zone of occupation alone, 6,650 children were affected (p. 35).

In one town of only 14,200 inhabitants, mostly industrial, the French troops, largely composed of Moroccans, requisitioned one elementary school of 12 classes, 1 continuation school with 10 classes, one half of the Provincial Deaf and Dumb Asylum with 33 rooms, parts of the rural council offices and of a sugar factory, three restaurants with the two largest halls in the town, a Casino belonging to a private firm, one shop and appurtenances, the two largest cellars of the malt factories, and the railway warehouse storage of five firms. For the officers alone, 118 houses were requisitioned with 408 rooms (p. 39).

In Cologne where the population, including the suburbs, is 671,500, there were in December, 1921, 1,678 families of the British Army of Occupation, of which 1,573 were in private quarters and 105 in barracks. Besides this, there were 1,169 in private billets (p. 34).

The housing famine in Germany is no less than here; it does not take much imagination to appreciate what the added burden, the injury to health, the misery and exasperation must be when 51,000 rooms are withdrawn from the population in an area so restricted and so densely populated as the Rhineland.†

* Zweite Denkschrift über die Kosten der Rheinlandbesetzung. Berlin, 1st May, 1922, No. 4339.

† The population of the occupied Rhineland is about ten millions.

Luxury.

It is not only the necessities of the armies that weigh heavily on the people. The extravagant luxury of some of the demands is oppressive.

In Wiesbaden, for instance, in the Hotel Metropol, the officers requisitioned the Carlton Restaurant, a large and a small ballroom, a large and a small winter garden, a large terrace, a summer-house, and a reading-room, all for one officers' club, and provision had to be made for the entertainment not only of officers, but of their families and camp-followers (p. 19).

One official in the British zone required furniture, at a cost of 464,116 marks (roughly, at that time (Jan. 1919) worth £6,000). This gentleman's bill for damask alone was 9,282 marks (p. 15).* The general in command at Bonn took the Crown Prince's palace, and had it furnished, at a cost of 824,522 marks (£10,500). The commanding officer at Mainz did not like the floor in one of the apartments of the palace where he lived. It was covered with a handsome carpet, but it creaked in places; so he had a parquet floor made to a special pattern, which being uncommon was expensive; the cost was 20,000 marks. In the end the palace was not used by him, as he was ordered elsewhere (p. 36). In Wiesbaden the general commanding an army corps requisitioned the castle, and demanded that it should be arranged as for the Emperor. He was told that the Emperor had used it only in the summer, that the heating and lighting were inadequate, and there were no carpets, as these had always been sent from Berlin. The general gave orders that in four days electric light must be installed, expensive carpets bought, and the huge vestibule decorated with plants and flowers (p. 37). In the same town the Paulinenschlösschen was requisitioned by the French for an art exhibition, although it was the only place suitable for the many visitors who come to Wiesbaden for health. The costs of adapting it for the French demand were 672,627 marks, and the rent was put at 60,000 marks (p. 21), a total of 732,627 marks for the first year (about £9,200).

Many other examples can be found in Signor Nitti's book, "The Decadence of Europe."

* It is manifestly difficult, when exchanges have fluctuated as prodigiously as they have since the armistice, to give any satisfactory estimate of the value of paper marks in British currency. We can only render the value *at the time* and it must always be remembered that a sum in paper marks is of higher value to the Germans (estimated in internal purchasing power) than to us (estimated in British currency).

Brothels and Coloured Troops.

Only in the French zone have new brothels been required. There were 19 existing, and 12 more were demanded, at a cost (up to October, 1921) of 802,000 marks. It must be understood that many of the soldiers requiring these brothels are non-European. Signor Nitti says that in March, 1920, there were 55,000 coloured men on the Rhine. These were Central African negroes, yellow and negroid men from Madagascar, Indo-Chinese Mongols, Arabs and Cabils. When the French invaded Frankfurt they occupied Goethe's house with black troops; at Wiesbaden African negroes replaced German musicians in the open squares; at Ems the French authorities insisted on requisitioning for a brothel a restaurant with the name, "The German Flag."*

There are people who declare their opinion that sexual assaults on white women are not worse when made by coloured than they are when made by white men. The only reply to this is that the women themselves know their own feelings, and the overwhelming majority of German women would feel that such assaults are worse, both at the time and in their consequences. Europe has seen invasions of barbarians before. Never before on such a scale, and in time of so-called peace has a "civilized" Government inundated a neighbouring country with barbarians.

Flying and Artillery Practice Grounds.

The flying grounds made by the German Air Force in the Rhineland numbered 9; there are now 33 (p. 24 Official Report). The grounds for artillery practice numbered 7; there are now 24 (p. 27 id.). In the first case 5, in the second 12 square miles of the best arable land were commandeered, a very serious matter when one considers the poverty of the soil in northern Germany.

There are in hand numerous further plans for parade grounds, flying grounds, barracks, stables, garages, &c.

Over Twenty Billiards of Marks Paid.

The total expense to Germany of the Armies of Occupation up to the end of March, 1922, is stated in the Official Report (p. 48), to have been 5,536,954,542 gold marks (*i.e.* 5½ milliard), together with 14,000,000,000 paper marks (*i.e.* 14 milliard).

* Besatzungswahnsinn am Deutschen Rhein, p. 18.

The expense by January 1923 must have come to well over twenty milliard of marks. The total indemnity imposed on France by Germany in 1870 was 5 milliard of francs.*

What Good Can Come of It?

No one who reflects for five minutes can believe that the continuation of the outrage of Armies of Occupation, four years after the Armistice, can produce any good. It does not even produce any reparations, because the armies and commissions eat up more than Germany can pay. The German people have the intense exasperation of seeing that all their efforts benefit no one and bring no nearer the day of their liberation.

The German constitution, drawn up in August, 1919, after the revolution, begins with these words: "The German people, united in its races and inspired by the will to renew and strengthen its realm, *to serve Peace both within and without*, and to further social progress, has adopted this Constitution." Further on, when dealing with Education, it is stated in Article 148: "In all schools the aim shall be, in the spirit of the German people and of *the reconciliation of all peoples* to strive after ethical culture, the development of civic conscience and personal and vocational ability."

How is it possible to hope that the Germans will be able to bring up their children in the spirit of reconciliation when their streets are full of foreign uniforms, when the music of foreign drums and bugles assails their ears, when foreign military air-planes fly overhead, when foreign soldiers drive them into the gutter and buy up their milk, and occupy their best rooms? Every German

* One milliard is 1,000 millions. Normally one may say one milliard of francs or marks is worth 40 millions of pounds sterling. The total French indemnity in 1870 was 5 milliard of francs (*i.e.* £200 millions), and it was paid off in three years. It must be remembered, however, that neither the short war nor the peace terms had seriously damaged France's economic condition. The Germans have paid *in gold marks alone* more than the whole French indemnity of 1870. The normal value of their *total money payment* is £800 millions.

Making an approximate calculation in terms of the exchanges at the time, we find that the 5½ milliard of gold marks were worth £275 millions sterling and the 14 milliard of paper marks (at an average price of 400 marks to the pound sterling between the years 1920-21-22) were worth £35 millions sterling; *an actual value of £310 millions.*

We may note here that the cost of the Armies of Occupation was revised in May 1922 and the sums to be paid by Germany were fixed at 102 million Belgian francs for Belgium; £2 million sterling for England; 460 million French francs for France. At the end of February, the French were spending 700,000 francs a day, in addition, on the Ruhr invasion and were proposing to make that a first charge on reparations (see *The Times*, March 1st); this would add something like £3½ millions to the yearly cost. But there is no finality in such calculations, and, if one tries to estimate them in terms of present German currency, the sum is almost unstateable.

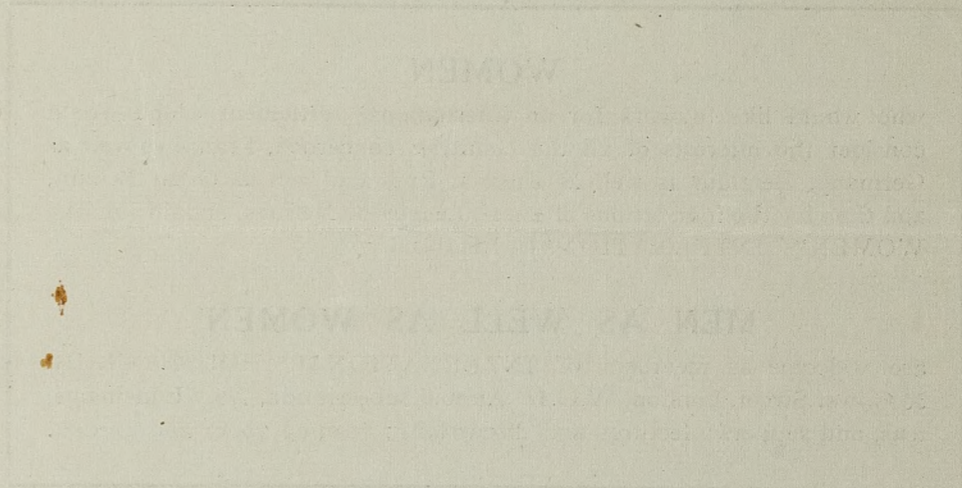
mother, every German nurse has ready to hand stories of shames and humiliations wherewith to familiarize the children ; it is too much to expect that these will not be used in the old traditional ways to store up future revenge. Perhaps the German people might have reconciled themselves in time to the loss of their colonies and the nibblings of German territory all round their realm, but the tales of the Armies of Occupation are such as will go down to legend. There can be no peace and no growth of peaceful feeling while they remain. It is our duty to bend our energies to finding means whereby they may be withdrawn as speedily as possible and to the last man.

What Should We Do ?

It is possible that, even before these words are published, the British Army may have been withdrawn. This would not absolve us from our responsibility. So long as one armed foreign soldier remains in Germany on account of the Treaty of Versailles, so long we British, who allowed that odious treaty to be imposed on the vanquished, bear our heavy load of shame for the outrage. By diplomatic representations, by abandoning all reparations, by forgiveness of France's debts, by concerted action with other Powers, and lastly by an earnest effort to secure the Franco-German frontier against armed aggression from either side, this country must do its utmost to make amends for its share in the crime of the Treaty of Versailles and the breach of the terms of the armistice under which the enemy surrendered.

H. M. SWANWICK.

March, 1923.



WOMEN

who would like to work for an international settlement which would consider the interests of all the countries concerned, France as well as Germany, Belgium as well as Austria, Russia as well as Great Britain, and thus lay the foundations of a true League of Nations, should join the WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE.

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