

GERMAN WAR PRACTICES

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(Introduction Continued.)

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

German War Proclamations in French Translations.

Some rules laid down in the German War Book are illustrated and their spirit made more definite in L'Interprete Militaire zum Gebrauch im Feindesland (Military Interpreter for Use in the Enemy's Country). This is a manual edited at Berlin in 1906.

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

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

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

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

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

"On account of the destruction of F—, I order: The district shall pay a special contribution of 10,000,000 francs by way of amends. This is brought to the notice of the public who are informed that the method of assessment will be announced later and that the payment of the said sum will be enforced with the utmost severity. The village of F— will be destroyed immediately by fire, with the exception of certain buildings occupied for the use of the troops."

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

"The City of Brussels, exclusive of its suburbs, has been punished by an additional fine of 5,000,000 francs on account of the attack made upon a German soldier by Ryckere, one of its police officials. "The Governor of Brussels, "BARON VON LUETTITZ, November 1, 1914.

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

"Notice to the People. "Some of the inhabitants of Luneville made an attack from ambuscade on the German column and wagons (trains). The same (some of the) inhabitants shot at sanitary formations marked with the Red Cross. In addition German wounded and the military hospital containing a German ambulance were fired upon.

"Because of these acts of hostility a fine of 650,000 francs is imposed upon the commune of Luneville. The mayor is ordered to pay this sum in gold or silver up to 50,000 francs, September 6, 1914, at nine o'clock in the morning, to the representative of the German military authority. All protests will be considered null and void. No delay will be granted. "If the commune does not punctually obey the order to pay the sum of 650,000 francs, all property that can be levied upon will be seized.

"In case of non-payment, visits from house to house will be made and all the inhabitants will be searched. If anyone knowingly has

concealed money or attempted to hold back his goods from the seizure by the military authorities, or if anyone attempts to leave the city, he will be shot.

"The Mayor and the hostages taken by the military authorities will be held responsible for the exact execution of the above orders.

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

"Henenenil, Sept. 3, 1914. "The General in Chief "VON FASBENDER,"

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

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

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

"Carry out all the furniture.

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

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

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

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

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

The System of Frightfulness.

The quotations and the proclamations printed above show clearly the attitude of mind of the German military authorities. The policy of frightfulness had been exalted into a system with every minute detail worked out in advance. The German War Book with its "cold-blooded doctrines of the nature of war and the means which may be employed in prosecuting war" did its work in training the German officials. Of this book it has been well said: "It is the first time in the history of mankind that a creed so revolting has been deliberately formulated by a great civilized State."

The generals gave their sanction to this policy of frightfulness. Gen von Bernhardt was quoted in an interview in the Neue Freie Presse of Vienna as follows:

"One cannot make war in a sentimental fashion. The more pitiless the conduct of the war, the more humane it is in reality, for it will run its course all the sooner. The war which of all wars is and must be most humane is that which leads to peace with as little delay as possible."

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

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

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

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

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

Statement by von Bissing. Belgium, Gen. von Bissing said:

Speaking on August 29, 1914, at Munster, the extreme measures which the Germans had felt obliged to take against the civil population of "The innocent must suffer with the guilty. . . . In the repression of infamy, human lives cannot be spared, and if isolated houses, flourishing villages, and even entire towns are annihilated, that is assuredly regrettable, but it must not excite ill-timed sentimentality. All this must not in our eyes weigh as much as the life of a single one of our brave soldiers—the rigorous accomplishment of duty is the emanation of a high Kultur, and in that, the population of the enemy countries can learn a lesson from our army."

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

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

"But I was an eyewitness to crimes which, measured by the standards of humanity and civilization, impressed

me as worse than any individual excess, any individual outrage, could ever have been or can ever be; because these crimes indubitably were instigated on a wholesale basis by order of officers of rank, and must have been carried out under their personal supervision, direction and approval. Briefly, what I saw was this: I saw wide areas of Belgium and France in which not a penny's worth of wanton destruction had been permitted to occur, in which the ripe pears hung untouched upon the garden walls; and I saw other wide areas where scarcely one stone had been left to stand upon another; where the fields were ravaged; where the male villagers had been shot in squads; where the miserable survivors had been left to den in holes, like wild beasts.

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

(To be continued.)

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