

Abduction, espionage, propaganda and the encouragement of traitors—these are some of the activities of Nazi agents inside the borders of Germany's helpless and fearful little neighbors.

Terror *on the Frontiers*

I. THE SHADOW OVER BELGIUM

By ÉLIE RICHARD

Translated from *Ce Soir*, Paris Extreme Leftist Daily

WE GOT OUT of the car and walked toward Eupen, along the road which was soft with snow. On top of the hillside we could see a boundary mark—where the frontier ran in 1914. Looking across the bronze mass of the forest and almost flush with the curly tops of the pines, we saw a small brown cone—the observatory tower at Aix-la-Chapelle, or Aachen, as most of the Eupeners still call it. Over there, behind those woods, is the new boundary line.

The town of Eupen itself stands in the valley, but some of it straggles up the mountainside which it faces. It's like one of the little cities on the Rhine—but to say that its style is sometimes that of Liège is not at all a contradiction. It is a city of solid stone buildings, heavy and ornate. There

are large, silent monasteries and massive churches with bulbous steeples. Twenty or more factories are smoking and humming as we pass by. I like this region, which seems so forthright and industrious.

Hans, my guide, is an extremely cautious man. He was once arrested on suspicion at Aachen and spent some time in prison before his release was secured through diplomatic intervention. That taught him reserve. Before he speaks he looks around him. When I speak too loudly he lays his hand on my arm. What is he afraid of? His furtive air is disquieting, but I was to find it a characteristic of Eupen, whose people live always under the thrall of a silent terror.

Aachen is the principal source of this terror, which inhabitants of

Eupen share with those of Malmedy. There is no doubt that Aachen, which used to be the metropolis for these regions, covets the 70,000 souls that were taken from under its jurisdiction by the Treaty of Versailles. Particularly is it irked by the fact that the two cantons have grown prosperous under the Belgian flag. A Belgian financier said to me: 'If the new Belgians would bother to figure things out, they would never wish to return to Germany. Within Belgium, Eupen and Malmedy have grown to be important cities—at the expense of Aix-la-Chapelle.'

But Aachen has by no means been supplanted in the minds of the new Belgian citizens. It still imposes its outlook in politics, literature, sports, fashions and amusements. Because of its theaters, moving picture halls and shops, the new Belgian citizens would much rather go there than to Liège, the nearest large Belgian city, which is two hours away by train—practically at the end of the world. And Aachen has taken on an aura of martyrdom in Germany; it is seen as a meeting-place of the 'lost brothers,' who are to be redeemed some day. It is the headquarters of all the pro-German elements. Old veterans from Eupen and Malmedy go there to drink with their cronies to the Fatherland's victories. Often one sees these 'lost brothers' marching through Aachen in their local and regional costumes shouting as they go: 'German Alsace! German Danzig! German Malmedy! German Eupen!'

Aachen is also the headquarters from which the Gestapo sends out its emissaries into Eupen, Malmedy, St. Vith, Ligneuville, etc., just as if these regions were still under its jurisdiction.

Several times an automobile with a German license plate was pointed out to me. One man whom I saw riding about in Eupen later became head of the Gestapo bureau in Aachen. I asked: 'Aren't those people ever arrested?'

'What for?' was the answer. 'Their papers are in order. They are supposed to be here on business, or to look after family affairs.'

I wanted to interview some refugees, who are said to cross the frontier into Belgium every day. My friend Hans was ready to help me. 'There is an ex-German here who runs a rooming house. I wouldn't be at all surprised if he would help to put you on the trail of one of his victims. . . .'

'Victims?'

'Yes. You'll see.'

On our way over, my companion nudged me with his elbow. I turned around and saw M. Fauxius, president of the Glider Club, about to enter a café. An automobile drew up to him and its occupant said: '*Morgen*.'

'*Morgen*,' M. Fauxius responded, and the driver asked, 'Are we to expect you tonight?' The automobile bore a German license plate. Hans whispered, 'The Glider Club, my friend, is synonymous here with the Nazi group. Under the pretext of flying kites they spread propaganda. But let's go on.'

II

The German landlord turned out to be a powerful fellow—a full-blooded Aryan, to judge by the color of his hair and his round skull. He asked, none too amiably, what we wanted. My friend, who speaks German like Wotan, and with a bit of the Aachen

accent to boot, came back with a little speech that must have sounded like music in the German's ear, to judge by its effects.

'We are looking for a refugee who has had some trouble here. Naturally we want to help him. . . .'

He said this with such a knowing air and such a sly wink that the German immediately caught on and fairly outdid himself in trying to supply us with the information we wanted. Yes, of course he knew several men of that sort. There was one Müller who seemed to be exactly the man we wanted.

'Just imagine it,' said the German, 'he actually criticized General Ludendorff once. He objected to his creating a new religion. Now he is working in a garage in Upper Eupen, washing cars.'

We went in search of the contradictor of Ludendorff. But our appearance in the garage where he worked had a curious effect. Two men looking for a third! In Eupen it is always a cause for alarm. Immediately eyes open wide, mouths close in a thin pinched line. We were sent to another address, where we were met with the same signs of apprehension. We were told that Müller had gone to meet us.

So we went back to the garage and found the former writer among the automobiles which now provide him with his only means of livelihood. A tall, powerful young man who was standing some distance away exchanged a knowing glance with him. We told Müller who we were and he burst into a laugh of sheer relief. He explained that we had been taken for Gestapo men and that his doughty companion had been assigned to him

as a bodyguard and to be a witness if any attempt were made to abduct him. Such precautions are not unjustified. There are many cases of kidnapping in Eupen. Only recently the German police had become so bold as to cross the border to arrest a Eupen man on Belgian territory. Now he lies in the Aachen prison.

We went to interview a family of refugees and were told that they had rented a car and departed for the interior or perhaps for Amsterdam. Yes, that's it! They went to Amsterdam. I could not restrain a smile. Here, too, they had taken us for Gestapo agents and were trying to throw us off the trail of our supposed victims. I am telling all this to show the dismay that seizes the citizens of Eupen whenever the question of refugees arises. A taint of danger clings to the unfortunate exiles. It is as if they are carriers of some dread disease. People avoid them, repulse them, and if they do risk helping them, it is not without a great deal of apprehension.

III

I spoke to the Dean of Eupen. He was a tall, rather stout man of about fifty, with a frank face and an exuberant shock of brown hair slightly touched with gray. His large honest eyes regarded me with some surprise as I made my request, which was to be given the opportunity of seeing some of the men who had been forced to flee Germany because of religious persecution.

'This is a rather embarrassing request,' he said slowly. 'You see, I am in a rather difficult position here. The men who flee here—and I don't mean only the priests—do not tell us every-

thing about themselves, and even if they should reveal their identity, do you think we would betray them to you and endanger the friends and relatives they left behind them?’

Again the same apprehensive caution. Underneath the honest glance of the priest I sensed the secret terror from which the whole region was suffering, a terror which nobody in it knew how to combat. He went on, as though reading my thoughts: ‘I am not being cautious for myself alone. You must realize that my house is under constant surveillance. I live in a stifling atmosphere of treachery and espionage. From time to time I receive visits from refugees who may be spies, but who certainly are not refugees. They ask me questions. They want to know what I think. Right now they know in Germany that you are with me. Perhaps they even know who you are. I never confide in anyone. Anyone, you understand!’

There was a short but eloquent silence, for we understood each other. Then the Dean went on in a changed voice: ‘I can tell you one story because it deals with me personally, and because the man in question is already in Holland. One night, at three o’clock in the morning, there was a knock at my door. I opened it. A priest was outside. He was exhausted, having spent the whole night in the woods. He hesitated before entering, for we recognized each other and there was one thing between us that neither of us had forgotten. But what was there to do? He stayed with me for three days and then went away. I have received a letter from him since, thanking me for having taken him in and for having been silent about our secret.

‘During the World War,’ he continued, ‘I was a chaplain in the Belgian Army. The only way I had of keeping in touch with my family, which was then in the occupied part of the country, was to write to this priest, a cousin of mine, who was German. Unfortunately, his patriotism came first—he was more a German than a Christian and a Catholic. I believe that all the misfortunes of today come from the fact that nationalism is put before religion. This priest, to whom I sent the letters to my family, opened and censored them. One day he stopped sending them on to my father, and my family believed me dead. And this was the man who at three o’clock in the morning, panting with exhaustion, knocked at my door to ask for help. The country for which he had betrayed me had finally betrayed him.’

The Abbé Hutten rose from the table. He puffed on his cigar sharply and his eyes sparkled as he escorted me to the door.

‘You must excuse me. This is Saturday, the day of confessions, you know.’

IV

In addition to the new Belgians of Eupen, there are also newcomers from Aachen, particularly merchants and industrialists. With them have come the false refugees, the bloodhounds of the Gestapo and spies who have been ordered to secure the plans of the Belgian fortresses. Recently, two spies, one of them a Pole, were arrested at Verviers, midway between Eupen and Malmedy. The Pole confessed that he received two or three checks a month from the German Consulate in Liège.

'The German agents,' said Hans, 'often have other business. Whenever some unfortunate refugee arrives here, they get hold of him and tell him how dangerous and even immoral it is to leave the Fatherland. If he returns at once, the harm done will not be great, and he will be dealt with indulgently. By this time the refugee is already homesick and has been met with suspicion and even hostility in Belgium. He listens to these sympathetic and understanding men, and sometimes they persuade him to go back with them across the border. There, of course, he is arrested and sentenced to twelve years in prison.'

The leaders of the pro-German movement are well known but highly elusive. They have one foot in Aachen and one in Belgium and there seems to be no way to combat their activities. Nor do the pro-Germans take the trouble to hide their sympathies. Whenever there is a holiday at Eupen, they go to Aachen. They approve of Rexism (the Belgian Fascist movement) and decline to join any of the nationalist Walloon societies.

They are made very welcome on the German side. At Hauzet, a large hostel is maintained especially for them. It has forty-two beds, a tremendous kitchen and even a moving-picture hall. The charge for spending the night there is only 10 pfenning. Propagandist films are shown and the hostel library lends approved Nazi books to the visitors.

All along the frontier there is intense pro-German activity. Agents go from house to house, bringing to sympathizers the good news about the Saar and Austria. An efficient surveillance committee keeps a reference file which will be useful in determining

the political reliability of the 'lost brothers' when the cantons are finally brought back to the bosom of the Fatherland. These files are pretty complete. When King Leopold III and his unfortunate Queen Astrid visited Liège, the burgomasters and the aldermen of Eastern Belgium were all invited to be present. Not all of them came. It was learned later that the local Führers had drawn up, for future reference, a list of those burgomasters and aldermen who were imprudent enough to show their allegiance to the King of Belgium.

Many of the secret agents are recruited among the refugees themselves, who have been forced to serve the Gestapo in order to protect the relatives they left behind them. It is also probable that many inhabitants of Eupen, who believe that the canton will eventually be rejoined to Germany, assist the Gestapo as a precaution.

The German Government has often demanded the extradition of refugees on grounds that at first sight seemed valid. One German priest spent five weeks in the Liège prison because he had been accused by the German authorities of embezzling his parish funds. An inquiry proved his innocence.

Another man, who at one time was director of a railroad company at Aachen, was also accused of theft. But the German authorities were unable to submit proofs of their charge.

V

Labor camps have played an interesting rôle in the German penetration of the Belgian frontier. There was one at Runchen, near Eupen, in which 280

men were working. They were supposed to be making a road through the forest. But they were also engaged in military surveying and they diverted the course of the little Vesdre River away from the frontier. A Belgian police officer on one occasion surprised fifty of these workers, together with their supervisors, building a road on Belgian territory. Their leader said that he did not realize that they had passed the frontier.

The Belgians are indulgent. Until recently only five police officers were posted to guard the twenty-five kilometers of frontier before Eupen. On the German side, the frontier guards are numerous and implacable. They fire on the unfortunates who try to run the frontier. And they have a mania for questionnaires. I have in my possession one which men coming back to Germany are supposed to answer. Question 33 asks: 'Do you know any Germans who are carrying on activities against Germany abroad?' Question 34: 'What are their names?' Question 35: 'What are their addresses?'

It seems that the lives of the new Belgians are completely controlled from Aachen. Even the Storm Troop command keeps an eye on the Eupeners, for it has many members in the canton. Eupen's athletic organizations are closely affiliated with those across the frontier. Every Monday, for example, cars are waiting after the factories close to take members of the Eupen Swimming Club to Aachen, where they can swim with the Germans.

The children are not neglected. Last year, Madame Gieritz, wife of Eupen's Führer, took 115 children to Aachen for a month's free vacation

in Germany. The same thing was done in Malmedy, but there the propaganda was even more skillful. When the little travelers returned, each child had been given a present 'from Germany' to its mother.

In Malmedy I talked with the burgomaster, who knows the Germans well, having once served in their fleet. As a matter of fact, he was one of the leaders of the Kiel Rebellion, for which there is still a price on his head.

He is not particularly alarmed about the Nazi peril for he does not believe that in his canton the German propaganda and terrorism will get very far. Yet others told me that the Germans have been very busy even in Malmedy. There are always malcontents who provide rich soil for propaganda, and the Malmedy clergy continues to look toward Cologne and Aachen.

The countryside has proved much more susceptible to propaganda than the city. In one village I saw a group of peasants stop at the vicarage to bait the curé. The latter was a German who had rebelled against the militarism and persecution in the Third Reich and, after escaping, had been permitted to exercise his office in Belgium.

Later I heard one of the peasants say:—

'We want to be Germans because we want to belong to a great nation.'

I asked the curé what he thought about this.

'Naturally,' he said, 'the Reich gives everything to these men—while they still belong to Belgium. They are called "the lost brothers." They are flattered and are given favors, subsidies, receptions and are honored

in many ways. They do not experience the hardships and severity of life in the Reich. But if they should again belong to Germany, which God forbid, they will be told, like anybody else: "Keep quiet, you swine!"

II. SWISS FOREBODINGS

By J. B. RUSCH

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WE SWISS know very well that the Germany of today, which is more than ever Prussia, has a distinctive method of attack. We have seen this method used many times in recent years, but its most daring and overt employment was in the seizure and incorporation of Austria. Germany's neighbors will do well to inform themselves of this *Methode*, as it is being used even now against them, and will continue to be used again, and yet again.

Here is how the method works. Within the country which is to be attacked sometime in the future a group or party must be formed whose ideology and external customs resemble those of the State which is to attack. This group, or party, must be so developed as to resemble the ruling party of the latter State: it must have a uniform and a disciplined organization. It must be dependent upon subsidies from its sponsor and coöperate in every way with the headquarters in the Fatherland of the 'idea.' The party is expected to challenge all others and to foment domestic strife; it should also have at its disposal sufficient means to attract unemployed youth and malcontents, giving them what nobody else in their own country will grant. The poor devils in the smaller State must be assured that they will take over the positions of

those whom they envied for years—when the time comes. The group should behave so conspicuously and provocatively in the smaller State that the authorities are led by fear to oppose and suppress it. As a result, the 'persecuted' are drawn closer together, and the ties that bind them to the kindred principles of the powerful neighboring State are strengthened. Thus, there develops a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, a sense of common destiny, hence the 'duty' of the great State to protect its smaller and weaker 'brethren.'

The first step is interference in the domestic affairs of the defenseless neighbor. Demands are made for concessions to the vanguard. But that is not enough, for soon this vanguard will send out an appeal for help to its protector. It cries out that its very existence in its own country is threatened. And the father protector says: 'The people of my race, my fellow fighters, have called me; it is the desire of the dear little neighboring nation that we protect it.' Orders are thereupon given to march, and the neighboring country is conquered.

Three points, therefore, are to be remembered: 1. Through propaganda and organizers a party is founded in the neighboring country based upon the same slogans and gestures; 2. The party attempts a *putsch* and has to be