

# THE NATIONS AT WAR

## I—A FORTNIGHT IN GERMANY

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*Having studied political science in both Germany and France not only at universities but also by personal investigations, and speaking French, German, Italian, and Flemish, Mr. Griffith has had the sort of experience that fits him for such observations as are here recorded. During the past year he has had privileges accorded to few, if any, others for an intimate view of certain aspects of the war.—THE EDITORS.*

WE entered Berlin the night of the fall of Wilna. From Hanover soldiers clambered aboard the train at every station along the way. As the train pulled out men half out of the windows waved farewell to their women and children until they disappeared, small black groups in the distance. The numbers of military increased to a point at which the platforms were practically given over to them.

Streets were brilliantly lighted. Taxis bumped along on their rims—tires are *hors-de-prix*—but taxis there were. What horses there had been were either dead or dying. In a twenty-minute walk that evening I saw three of them down on the street.

At the Rheingold it took us ten minutes to find a table, half an hour to be served. An orchestra struggled valiantly with "Tannhäuser," but the music was lost in that crowd. The menu was of the usual bulkiness. There was no check on either wine or champagne. As the waiter deposited a diminutive roll at the plate he asked in a perfunctory way for a bread ticket. As I had none, he pulled out several from his pocket and detached a number.

Wherever we dined in Berlin they asked for the bread cards. In other parts of Germany, although we were occasionally given the cards, I do not recall that we ever made use of them. The Mayor of Berlin, in speaking of the municipal grain supply, explained that last year there was only just enough, and that by use of the cards the daily apportionment did not exceed the allowance. "This year," he said, "with Bulgaria coming into the war"—this was several weeks before the event happened—"and our own large harvest, we are assured of more than enough."

Outside the war zone it is possible that there are parts of Germany which suffered from the shortage in grain; but speaking for

one or two villages outside of Berlin and a number of villages along the Rhine, the poorer classes have fared better than the Berlin proletariat.

The morning after the fall of Wilna flags, including frequently the flag of Bulgaria, were hung from all of the principal buildings. There was no particular jubilation. Those with whom I spoke seemed to take Wilna and victory as a matter of course. One of the illustrated papers came out that day with a cartoon of the Czar being led *Unter den Linden* by a very Teuton-faced Angel of Peace, while Poincaré and George V, sitting on a bench at one side, looked on in consternation. Popular opinion about Russia is that after she has been made to suffer enough there will be no difficulty in buying her off.

Are the people well informed? This was a question I frequently asked. "In what are we not?" was the invariable rejoinder. "You will find the French official bulletins in our papers. Our casualty lists are complete. And you can buy the London 'Times' or your iniquitous New York 'Herald' every morning at your hotel."

Gaps cut by the censor's scissors are usually filled in the German paper. There is an apparent freedom combined with the most rigid censorship. Hard experience has taught most papers to suffer with docility, and some of the papers, like mediæval saints, seemed to take a morbid pleasure in effacing themselves. The people, who know now that foreign press agencies circulate nothing but lies, are, as a whole, content that "war expediency" should deprive them of much of the news. For months Herr Fleischmann, over a hearty *Hindenburger Schnitzel mit Kartoffeln*, has laughed complacently at reports—scrupulously culled and republished from the foreign press—"Starvation forces Germany to her knees," or "People on the

verge of hunger riots." "You see we get our foreign news daily, and we know just what it is worth," he explains. Foreign papers are not read, and the more favorable a foreign report the more convinced—and this includes otherwise well-informed readers—they are of its insincerity. "They take the official reports as the Bible," a German publicist remarked to me.

This deadened critical sense was to me the most unwholesome phenomenon in Germany to-day. To discuss any political question the only points of departure were these two assertions: the infallibility of the official bulletin, and the fact that the war had been forced upon Germany; that it was due largely to the perfidy of Sir Edward Grey, with the connivance of such arch-chauvinists as Delcassé and Millerand.

Three of the six most widely read books in Germany on the war are by foreigners. Two are from the pen of the Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain,<sup>1</sup> recently decorated with the highest civilian order of the Iron Cross: "Justification for War" (*Kriegsaufsätze*) and "A New Justification," of which over two hundred thousand have already been sold; and another of his books "Confidence" (*Zuversicht*) is already past three hundred thousand. The other book of foreign authorship is by Sven Hedin, the Swedish explorer; it contains a journal of his year with the German armies at the front. Other much-quoted books, taken at random, are "Germany as a World Leader," "Belgium's Guilt," "The Vampire of the Continent" (England), and "Problems for Favorable Peace."

As compared with other countries, the amount of literature on the war published in Germany is very great. There is at least three times as much as in France, and as much again of a serious sort as in England. Unfortunately much of the value of the popular literature is lost in pure propaganda.

Just a year ago, when the German drive toward Calais was at its height, I accompanied in a cattle car a convoy of German prisoners pulled out of the mud near Ypres. There was a sub-lieutenant among them, a young, timid chap with a strong South German accent. Recalling not infrequent friction between the genial Bavarian and a certain type of Prussian officer, I asked him about the

sentiment in South Germany. He replied, promptly:

"I am instructor in a school in Munich. Before the war there was always a northern caste snobbishness disagreeable to us, and there was, of course, jealousy. But since the war we are all united—an *einziges Volk*. If we win, we can thank Prussia for her organization and discipline. If we lose, we will realize once and for all that the Prussian ideal was not pushed far enough."

An officer in the Military College put tersely what I heard repeated over and over again in the Rhineland as well as at Berlin:

"We are in this war fighting reactionary Russia, the savage hordes and mercenaries of our enemies. Without victory the very existence of our Empire is at stake, and every German knows it."

I heard the same in the little German-Dutch border town of Elten from the mother of three sons in a Rhine regiment. She asserted proudly that the Rhine regiments had fought and suffered as much as those from any other part of Prussia.

There is no unity of opinion about Belgium. It is known that Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg is opposed to annexation. The Kaiser keeps Bethmann in office, and therefore, it is argued, the Kaiser would be opposed to annexation there.

"And the invasion of Belgium?" I asked of an officer acquaintance.

"A people who regret their rash move. France, who was to help them, came too late. The English made a ridiculous display before Antwerp, and are alone responsible for the damage done there. We do not care to annex Belgium, but, if we did, it would be a good thing for the country. Our efficient administration, '*streng aber recht*,' has done great things for Belgium during the first year of our occupation. We are establishing normal conditions in the coal regions, and are applying for the first time an age limit in the mines. We have introduced compulsory education and will reduce illiteracy of a degree to which no European nation, except perhaps such backward ones as England and Russia, would care to confess without blushing."

I drove one morning from Elten to Emmerich with a dealer who sells horses which stray across the Dutch frontier. He too knew Belgium: "Belgium received what was jolly well coming to her. If the world thinks we are going to give up what we have conquered

<sup>1</sup> Though an Englishman by birth, he has lived for some time in Germany. He married the daughter of the composer, Richard Wagner.—THE EDITORS.

with such loss of life, it is more gullible than the Belgians are themselves." Frankness was his virtue. There is an echo of this same sentiment among the people, though a very considerable faction of the Social-Democratic party is combating the idea.

Germany will not forgive America for a long time for selling munitions to the Allies. A friend with whom I was traveling was seated in the restaurant of the Hotel Ernst at Cologne. The head waiter stepped over to him and, without further introduction, exclaimed, "The English be damned!" As my friend was not prompt in giving the expected echo to this sentiment, the waiter asked his nationality. "American," was too much for him. "England is responsible for this war. You are supplying her with munitions. Are you coming into it? I wish you would. We are giving England her due, and your turn comes next."

Personally I met no discourtesy, though on several occasions I was obliged to speak English loudly enough in theaters and restaurants to give ample provocation. It was apparent, however, that Americans were not loved.

After the director had courteously showed us about the large military hospital at Buch, he took us to the storerooms. Here in one place were American canned goods—Prince

Henry peaches—piled to the ceiling. The strain was too much for the amiable director. "These are not the only canned goods you have been sending us lately," and he waved his arm toward a soldier with a couple of bad shrapnel scars across the face who was paring potatoes in the next room.

The general in command of the camp for interned French prisoners at Darmstadt received us in his office very amiably. He explained the organization of the camp, but just before our departure took down from the wall one of the new French anti-shrapnel helmets, and with some bitterness added, "Made in America."

These are a few casual impressions. Like a great factory completely installed with emergency machinery, Germany at war has set in motion forces that had been carefully prepared for years. There are the usual phenomena of war: high prices, women at heavy work, at the plow—I have even seen them with pickaxes in gangs along the railways and on the trucks of Berlin. The country, as a whole, however, gives an overwhelming impression of unity. Germany seems an overworked example of an overworked word—"efficiency." Perhaps nothing more nearly expresses it than to say, Germany is normally at war.

## II—RUSSIA'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

BY GREGORY MASON

"WHEN the Germans win, papa cries; and when the Russians win, mamma cries."

This remark, imputed to the Czarevitch, the heir apparent to the Russian throne, may or may not have been made by him. That is a question of no importance in the face of the fact that hundreds of thousands of Russians believe that he made it and in view of the greater fact that millions of them know that there exists the state of affairs which such a remark would indicate. The Russian royal house, the entire Russian Court, in fact, is a house divided against itself.

In an interview with Sergius Sazonoff, published in *The Outlook* last week, I told how the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs said to me:

"The attempts from without and *from within* to bring Russia to a separate peace with Germany have been stronger than the

world dreams." Sazonoff thereby confirmed what I heard from the lips of officers, waiters, nobles, cab-drivers, merchants, merchants' wives, society ladies, and chambermaids from the time I entered Russia through freezing Archangel until I left it through frozen Finland. The peril of the treachery of German sympathizers in Russia is a peril which every real Russian sees clearly and is striving mightily to circumvent. Russia would have been led into a traitorous peace with Germany long ago but for the unceasing vigilance and unimpeachable honesty of millions of such true Russians, from the soldiers in the ranks to men like Paul Milyoukov, leader of the Constitutional Democratic party, Sazonoff, and the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievitch. It may seem strange to bracket men like Milyoukov and the Grand Duke, but they have one important trait in common: both are *Russian* to the