

Cardinal Mercier's Story of Belgium's Suffering in the War

Continued from preceding page

rior General of Belgium, in which he expresses his wish to have an interview with your Eminence. I desire to second his request as warmly as possible. This interview will assuredly be of great use, for the General, whom I have had the honor of knowing for a long time, is an intelligent, discreet, just and benevolent man, who sincerely feels that he has written in his letter, and whose heart's desire will be to respond to the wishes of the bishops.

On my part, I have begged him earnestly to lay to heart the following points:

- (1) To allow the Belgian priests who have been found innocent and who are now prisoners in German camps to return to Belgium.
 - (2) To allow the Nunciature free communication with the Holy See and with the bishops, likewise free intercourse between the latter and Rome.
 - (3) To facilitate the immediate publication in Belgium of the Encyclical of November 1st.
- I have acquainted the competent "Armees Bischof" with the desires of your Eminence, which I have most earnestly endorsed, concerning the spiritual interests of Flemish prisoners. I hope he will manage to satisfy claims which are so justifiable.
- If I can still be of any use to your Eminence in this matter, it goes without saying that I am at your service; I am also ready to do all in my power to lighten your cares.
- Respectfully kissing your Eminence's hand, I have the honor to be your Eminence's devoted servant in the Lord,
- (Signed) FELIX CARDINAL VON HARTMANN,
Archbishop of Cologne.

*NOTE—From the very beginning of the occupation Mr. Mercier had begged Cardinal von Hartmann to use his influence that such prisoners might have priests known Flemish put at their disposal.

Plea for Priests Wins Freedom

The Cardinal did not reply till December 28th to the letters of the Governor General and of Cardinal von Hartmann. Von Bissing did not wait for his answer before he acquainted him with the fact that the priests who had been deported to Germany were to be set at liberty at an early date.

General Government of Belgium Offices
Sekt. Ia. No. 456. Brussels, December 9th, 1914.
To Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, at Malines.

Following on the note which has been forwarded to me by the head of the civil administration, I have the honor to make to your Eminence the following communication:

The ministry of war at Berlin has given orders to set at liberty all priests detained in Germany, provided no charge has been made against them; so that I have every reason to believe that priests who have duties as teachers will return without further delay.

An regards Count Cornet d'Elzium, I have taken the necessary steps with the competent German authorities. I shall not fail to let you know the result.

The Governor General,
(Signed) VON BISSING,
Cavalry General.

*NOTE—The Count Cornet d'Elzium had been arrested for taking up in his motorcar an Englishman suspecting of spying.

Seeks Liberation of Teachers

In reply to this communication the Cardinal's secretary, Very Rev. Canon Vrancken, sent to the Governor General a note to call his attention to the fact that his Eminence was also interested in lay teachers.

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 16th, 1914.

By dispatch dated December 9th, 1914, Sekt. Ia. No. 456, His Excellency the Baron von Bissing, Governor General of Belgium, has been pleased to inform His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines that by a decision of the ministry of war at Berlin the members of the Belgian clergy detained in Germany will be set at liberty at an early date, on condition that no charge has been made against them.

In consequence, His Excellency expresses the hope that ecclesiastics engaged in the duties of teaching will be soon set at liberty.

But it is not in these alone that the Cardinal is interested.

His Excellency had asked, besides this, for the liberation of lay teachers in primary schools, whom Belgian military law puts on the same footing as members of the clergy.

The absence of these teachers from the country is causing great difficulties in the organization of the people's education.

Cardinal and Von Bissing Meet

On December 16th the Cardinal had at Brussels an interview with Von Bissing. On the following day the latter repaired to Malines, where he was received at the Archbishop's house. In the course of these two interviews the Governor General reiterated the sentiments he had already manifested in his letter to Cardinal von Hartmann. He insisted especially on the desire he entertained to guard the religious interests of Belgium, but he expected in return that the Belgian clergy and their head on their part would assume an attitude, if not friendly, at least conciliatory. He had already, he said, obtained the liberation of guiltless priests deported to Germany; he now intended to solicit the Imperial Government for the speedy release of lay teachers.

In order to show his good-will toward the ecclesiastical authorities, he gave the Cardinal every facility to communicate with the Belgian suffragan bishops.

The Cardinal thanked Von Bissing for his benevolent attitude, but called his attention to the fact that the Belgians, whatever might be the feelings of the Governor General toward them, would not forget the horrors which had marked the beginning of the invasion.

Von Bissing cut him short. He said that he could not discuss the conduct of the German army, which, he maintained, was fully justified by the attitude of the Belgian people.

There was discussed also a report of the commander at Heidelberg complaining of bad treatment by the Belgians of German doctors who were prisoners, and threatening reprisals on the Belgian doctors and dispensers, numbering about thirty, interned in that town. Von Bissing asked the Cardinal to intervene with the Belgian Government to put an end to this abuse.

Lastly, he offered to forward to Cardinal von Hartmann the answer which His Eminence would be pleased to give to the letter written by the former on December 6th.

"We Assert Our Rights to Independence"

As a result of these interviews, the Cardinal sent to Von Bissing the following letter:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 28th, 1914.

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, Governor General, Brussels.

Sir—I have delayed for some time my reply to Cardinal von Hartmann's letter under date of December 6th, in which my most eminent colleague conveyed to me the expression of your good-will toward Belgium. Your Excellency has kindly offered to forward my reply, herewith inclosed, to its destination.

Since the above date I have had the honor of entering into personal communication with your Excellency, and as the Cardinal of Cologne led me to expect, I can only express myself as satisfied with the dispositions made by your Excellency in regard to myself and in regard to the matters I had the opportunity and the honor to commend to your notice.

In particular, I thank your Excellency for having notified me of the release from imprisonment of the guiltless priests deported to Germany, and I trust you will continue your efforts to bring about also the release of our schoolmasters, who, as I have had the honor of pointing out to your Excellency, cannot be put in the same category as prisoners of war.

I am thankful to your Excellency for having granted me authority to communicate with the suffragan bishops of Belgium whenever I may judge it useful, and I am gratified also to know that you have consented to take steps on behalf of Count Cornet d'Elzium, although these steps have so far been without result.

On my own side, I am still desirous of negotiating with my Government in order to satisfy the Commandant of Heidelberg, who complains of cruelties inflicted on certain German doctors and who threatens reprisals, as your Excellency will remember, on the thirty Belgian doctors and dispensers interned at Heidelberg. But to render any steps of mine effective, I ought to know who these German doctors are that underwent these indignities and when and where they underwent them.

Your Excellency has made it your business to assure me of the sincerity of your good-will toward Belgium. As a soldier, you will understand how anxious I am to give expression in my own turn to the feelings with which I am animated toward yourself. My esteem for your Excellency's person, my gratefulness for the care which you manifest for the religious interests of the country, are deeply sincere, as also is my desire, as far as in me lies, to lighten and in no way to aggravate the burden of your charge and its responsibilities. Nevertheless, I regard it as my strict duty in the interests of truth to add that, no matter what the personal dispositions of Baron von Bissing may be, the Governor General represents amongst us here a usurping and hostile nation, in whose presence we assert our right to independence and respect for our neutrality. Further, as guardian of the moral and religious interests of Belgium, I protest against the acts of injustice and violence of which my compatriots have been the innocent victims.

In the letter to Cardinal von Hartmann, herewith inclosed and which I invite your Excellency to read, I, as a Belgian citizen and a bishop of the Belgian Church, give free rein to the indignation aroused in me by the words spoken by the Imperial Chancellor and by his travesty of the truth.

Kindly accept, Governor General, the expression of my respect.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

*Editor's Note—The Governor General never furnished any details.

"Imperial Chancellor Uttered a Lie"

The following is Cardinal Mercier's letter to Cardinal von Hartmann inclosed with the foregoing:

Archbishop's House, Malines,
December 28th, 1914.

To His Excellency Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne.

Most Eminent Lord—The very kind letter dated December 6th, with which your Eminence honored me, gave me lively pleasure and most sincerely do I thank you for the same.

I greatly appreciated at the time the steps taken by your Eminence to secure for the Belgian and French priests imprisoned in Germany the same treatment as is accorded to officers.

Your Eminence's intervention on behalf of the guiltless ecclesiastics imprisoned at Munsterlager and at Celle has been successful. All the priests belonging to a religious order, except two, have been set free. I have not yet been authorized to send priests to minister to our compatriots imprisoned in Germany, but your letter to the "Armees Bischof" gives

me every confidence that on this point also we shall at length obtain satisfaction.

I had the honor of interviewing at Brussels and of receiving later at Malines His Excellency the Governor General, Baron von Bissing.

He appeared to me to be all that your Eminence had described and such as he represented himself in the letter you had the goodness to acquaint me of. I mean that he is a man both just and prudent, and truly anxious as well to further rather than obstruct the interests of religion in Catholic Belgium. He himself has had the kindness to inform me of the release of our imprisoned priests, and he gives me grounds for expecting the speedy return to freedom of our lay schoolmasters. Further, he has accorded me every facility for seeing my fellow bishops.

In my view, he has accurately defined the terms upon which the relations between Belgians and himself become possible and desirable. Without expecting to be welcomed as a friend, he requests all, more especially the religious authorities, not to render his task heavier than it is. On this point I am in full accord with the Governor General. As in the first days of the war we counseled our faithful to refrain from all hostile acts against the enemy's army, so now at this moment we recommend them to abide by the military regulations in so far as these would neither our consciences as Christians nor our feelings as patriots.

"We Decline to Waive Our Rights"

Nevertheless, it must be clearly understood that, though for the moment we thus bend to the yoke of a power which is stronger than ourselves, we proudly decline to waive our rights or our unshakable confidence in the future.

It must be stated, furthermore, that the comparative good-will shown to us at present in no wise atones for the outrages to which Belgians have been so cruelly subjected. When the Imperial Chancellor in his speech on December 2d dared to say, "We shall remember after the war the wrongs done to our defenseless compatriots in enemy lands, wrongs which clash with all the laws of civilization," he went beyond all bounds; and in so far as these words were aimed at Belgium he uttered a monstrous lie.

I am personally acquainted with hundreds who have been the victims of wrongs contrary to all the laws of civilization and I am in possession of details which would make any fair-minded man shudder—horrors indeed which recall the pagan persecutions of the three first centuries of the Church. I was loath to believe these stories before I personally had made an unbiased and now completed investigation of them.

The evidence has been overwhelming; and on my oath I affirm that up to the present hour I have been unable to establish one single act of savagery inflicted by a Belgian civilian on a German soldier, while, on the other hand, I am aware of hundreds of acts of cruelty "clashing with all the laws of civilization" committed by German soldiers on innocent Belgians. Your Eminence will understand that patriotism and justice impose upon me the duty to go on protesting against these crimes until they have been punished; and I will add that if you were in possession of all the evidence that I have gathered, your own sense of righteousness would compel you to unite your protest to ours.

Accept, Most Eminent Lord, with the expression of my thanks, the homage of respect and religious devotedness.

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Malines.

*Editor's Note—Von Bissing refused to forward this letter to its destination. He openly admits this in a letter to the Cardinal dated December 31st, which is given in full in the chapter dealing with the pastoral "Patriotism and Endurance."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

BOOKS OF ALL SORTS

CAPITAL AND LABOR
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"Iron City" Is, However, Artistic, Not Propagandistic Fiction

M. H. Hedges has struck on a timely topic for his novel, "Iron City." It deals with the fundamental differences between capital and labor and the age-old clash therefrom. This essential conflict when turned to fictive uses is almost invariably made the material for propaganda one way or the other.

The author of "Iron City," however, does not turn his novel into a brief. He is mirroring life, not proving anything—or something. It happens that capital and labor, lockouts and strikes, autocracy and democracy, plutocracy and proletariat, furnish the background and the setting for his personages and as such, purely and simply, he uses them. With him they are simply the materials of the artist. He uses them selectively and artistically to project and propel his chief characters in their relations of drama and life. He has written an engagingly good novel, not without some crudities of form and excesses of sentiment, but despite that, a book of substance and spirit.

A labor leader, a magnate's son, a young professor, all questing for the goal of fulfilled ideals are the media by which the author observes life and interprets democracy—these being his theme and design.

IRON CITY. By M. H. Hedges. New York, Doubt & Livingston.

YOUTH'S BLIND LUNGE
AT HEART OF ROMANCE

"Brute Gods" an Unusual and Somewhat Disillusioning Novel

Louis Wilkinson has built up an unusual story, though scarcely a pleasant one, about the first adventures in love of an impetuous English youth whose blind lunge after romance lead finally to hard disillusionment. This novel, by the author of "The Buffoon" and "A Chaste Man," is called "Brute Gods," and, while well filled with interest, seems hardly to maintain the standard set in the second of its predecessors.

The young adventurer after romance is Alex Glaire, who, by contrast with his selfish son of a father and a coarse elder brother, is not such a bad sort of chap. The story opens with the elopement of Glaire's wife. Alex's stepmother, which throws the household into confusion and awakens in Alex the most curious and, to him, inexplicable emotions.

Alex's first real love affair, a tentative effort which preceded it not having attained the heights of romance, is with Gillian Collett, a girl of twenty-six years to Alex's nineteen. Gillian loves the boy perhaps more deeply than he does her, but she makes a sacrifice of her love to save the lad. This, with the dramatic disclosure of Gillian's relationship to the clergyman who is Alex's chief counselor and friend, is the climax of the book.

BRUTE GODS. By Louis Wilkinson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, \$2.

A Church Calendar

The Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, Protestant Episcopal order, has compiled with rare discrimination in their anthology and with an appropriate reverential choice for each day from the treasures of religious prose and poetry. "A Church Year Book of Social Justice." There is a selection for each day from Advent, 1919, to Advent, 1920. As the title indicates, many of the extracts are concerned with the new social service and social justice which are greatly interesting the church. The book is brought out under the auspices of the Social Service Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church, but the authors are by no means narrowly restricted to Anglicans or Episcopalianism, among those quoted are Pope Clement, St. Catherine of Siena, Lionel Johnson, among Catholics; James Nayler and John Woolman, the Quakers, and such radical politicians as George Lansbury and Kier Hardie.

A CHURCH YEAR BOOK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE. New York: F. S. Dutton & Co.

A Christmas Interpretation

"A Wonderful Night" is a charming little book for Yuletide giving. It is by James H. Snowden and is an interpretation of the function and meaning of Christmas. Maude and Mena Petersham have made some beautiful decorations.

WONDERFUL NIGHT. By James H. Snowden. New York: Maginlian Co.

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Continued from Page One

plebiscite on the question of soviet government. But they never showed the slightest inclination to take this step.

They do not dare to submit bolshevism to a popular vote, because they very well know that its followers form only a small minority of the population and that the result would be an ignominious defeat at the polls. And thus the truth has soon transpired in Switzerland that bolshevism is a movement of a perverted minority, raging at its own electoral impotence, and seeking to impose its will by force on the majority of the people.

Bolshevik hatred of democracy all over the world is rooted in this right of democratic people to choose their own form and manner of government, which pitilessly exposes the numerical weakness and sinister nature of the Bolshevik movement.

Semibolshevik Movement

From the very beginning, too, bolshevism in Switzerland understood that bolshevism in a foreign semibolshevik movement, conceived by Oriental minds and limited with the subtle criminality of Oriental despotism. Not for nothing have Lenin, Lunacharsky, Kameneff and other more or less Mongolian masters of Russia, for many years past, been in their midst. The characteristics and methods of these future tyrants were well known in Switzerland at a time when they still enjoyed the reputation of "extreme but sincere idealists" in other countries.

It was in Switzerland that the imperialistic, world-conquering policy of the Russian Bolsheviks was first revealed by the notorious capture of the Swiss labor movement.

The manner in which this conquest was achieved is very significant and instructive because bolshevism uses the same tactics of subversion and treachery of evidence that it is employing with success today in many other western countries. The Swiss Bolshevik movement was launched—long before the Russian revolution at the famous Zimmerwald Socialist conference, the chief organizers of which were Lenin, Trotsky and Zisovieff, all three then enjoying Swiss hospitality and protection as "Russian exiles."

These three foreigners succeeded in splitting the Swiss Socialist party and in constituting a "left wing" with a clearly defined "communist" program. After this successful debut they established, with the help of the German communist, Muenzenberg, and the German-born, naturalized Swiss Socialist, Plattner, special sections of the new radical group in all the larger cities.

Secure Grasp on Press

At the same time they set about obtaining control of the Swiss Socialist press. Through Radek—now languishing in Berlin prison because he insistently transferred his activities from Switzerland to Germany—and another of his agents named Bronsky, who had been previously smuggled as reporters into the editorial offices of the Volkrecht, of Zurich, and the Berner Tagwacht, Lenin was soon enabled to exert an occult influence over these two leading Swiss Socialist organs.

Gradually, the Russian and German contributors—for at that time Lenin had imperial Germany were working hand in hand to convert Switzerland into an outlet of bolshevism from which to carry the red banner of anarchy to the neighboring lands of western Europe—were introduced into

the editorial departments of both papers, among them the younger Alexrod and the famous Madame Balabanoff, a bunch-backed little old woman with a remarkable talent for intrigues both political and sentimental.

As soon as the Russians felt themselves strong enough they threw off the mask and ousted the editor of the Volkrecht, Sigg, a moderate Socialist, whose presence interfered with their plans, replacing him by a Swiss and a Frenchman, whom they knew to be a willing tool in their hands. Ever since the Volkrecht—the labor organ of the largest Swiss city—has been absconded by a Bolshevik clique, controlled by the Russians, and it is today the official organ of the Russian soviet in Switzerland.

Strikes as Reds' Weapon

Attempts to launch general strikes were made in November, 1918, and July, 1919, and persistent rumors of this sort is imminent.

Details of a vast plot to establish a "Red Guard" and "council of workers and soldiers" were discovered by the federal authorities, who also intercepted secret orders sent from Moscow insisting upon the paramount importance of Russia in the life of the community, not so much by strikes in the industries themselves as by strikes interrupting transport and traffic and forestalling automatically bringing all industries to a standstill.

Both strikes were frustrated before they really had time to develop by the repulse of the military force, a timely display of imposing military force and the evident determination of the vast majority of citizens not to allow themselves to be cowed by the strikers.

During the November strike three divisions of the Swiss army were mobilized and sent to Bern and Lucerne, and the railroads were not running—to the chief centers of Bolshevik unrest. I motored from Geneva up to Bern in those days, and all along the route saw columns of marching columns of cavalry and infantry with their machine guns, batteries of artillery trotting through the villages, ammunition wagons parked in the fields by the wayside—scenes as grim and warlike as any ever witnessed at the front.

The strikers were just as much impressed as I was by these martial preparations. The extremists and agitators—the real Bolsheviks among them—were cowed, as Bolsheviks always are, by the display of bourgeois force that he is prepared to use their own methods of force against them; and upon the great mass of the workers there began to dawn some suspicion of the criminal way in which they were being deceived and exploited by their foreign deceivers. Next morning newspapers appeared again in Bern and they contained the news that the great strike was over.

Last July the Bolshevik coup was even less successful. The strike never became general, and the railroads and press were affected only in Zurich and Basle, the two strongholds of Lenin in Switzerland. Troops were again promptly mobilized and conveyed to the critical centers.

In Basle a body of fanatical strikers surrounded and attacked a detachment of soldiers entering the town. Without an instant's hesitation the soldiers faced about and fired a couple of volleys, killing six persons and wounding many more, most of them women.

An agonized yell of fury and outraged virtue, as a solution by the Social

ist press, which declared that after this "brutal provocation" nothing could prevent a general strike of all the workers throughout the entire country, and even many staunchly conservative citizens went about with dismayed faces, believing that the "hasty action" of the military commander had rendered a revolution inevitable.

But a few hours later the strike was over and not even an attempt was made by the Bolsheviks to put any of their big threats into execution. They had lied enough.

In both cases the strikers capitulated unconditionally. No concessions were made until after their return to work and then only a very few of the demands they had been persuaded to put forward received satisfaction. Their crushing defeat caused a crisis among the executive committee of the Swiss Socialist party.

Threats Prove Mere Bluff

These threats also proved mere bluff and far from arousing the respect of the workers the trial opened their eyes to the real character and motives of their leaders, and as a result Grimm has not been re-elected to the Swiss Parliament.

This brief but truthful account of the Swiss strikes and their sudden ending will, I fear, shock some sensitive people in America. Here in the oldest modern democracy there have been strikes and conditions of citizens, only unreserved praise of the energetic firmness displayed by the federal council and the confident hope that it will act again with the same decision if the occasion should arise.

The Swiss people are ready to back any measure their government deems necessary to maintain the peace, because they have seen bolshevism face to face and entertain no illusions respecting it and the revolutionary nature of the strike movement inaugurated since the war by the ambitious perverters of the workers.

They have experienced the sinister intrigues of Lenin and his gang in their own country. They have seen the Swiss labor leaders degraded to be instruments of international outlaws. They have watched the systematic perversion of the industrious and loyal Swiss workmen by foreign demagogues, the essence of whose propaganda is to teach labor that work is a curse and patriotism a crime.

Worldwide Strikes

What they have witnessed has made them realize, long before other nations even began to suspect it, that the mysterious, worldwide strike epidemic of the present day is no longer an ordinary traditional labor movement—legitimate pressure brought to bear by the employed upon their employers in order to obtain fair wages and working conditions—but a subtle and dangerously illusive revolutionary maneuver engineered by invisible plotters to destroy democracy and seize dictatorial power by terrorizing the majority of the people by means of a fanatical minority of workers.

Corps for Russia Proposed

The ferociously anti-Bolshevik spirit of the Swiss army, which is simply the Swiss people in arms, is illustrated by the fact that not long ago a leading military review published an appeal proposing that a corps of volunteers should be formed to fight under the Swiss flag against the Bolsheviks in Russia. "It would be easy," concluded the review, "to find thousands of young men who would be willing to enlist under the federal banner and to

follow it into battle for the liberty of the world."

It is a pity that this plan came to nothing, owing to the vacation and final withdrawal of the Allies in Russia, for the example of a volunteer corps of free-born sons of the Swiss mountains battling against Bolshevik tyranny would undoubtedly have done much to open the eyes of Lenin's dupes all over the world.

The distinctive feature in all this recent democratic fight against bolshevism—the point I wish to make particularly clear at the risk of repetition—is that it is not so much action undertaken by the government or by individual authorities as by the Swiss people themselves in their overwhelming, enlightened majority.

After the warning of the recent strike citizens of all Switzerland, entirely on their own initiative and without any kind of official encouragement, set about organizing a "civic guard" to defend the country in case the military forces should prove insufficient to protect them. Many thousands of citizens not liable for military service have joined this corps, and today there is not a town of any importance without its glad composed of citizens who have pledged themselves to obey a call to arms and to undertake all duties serving to frustrate the triumph of anarchy.

The fury of the Socialist press over the creation of this force of loyal citizens alone suffices to prove its utility, and I am convinced that until the Swiss example is followed in other countries a Bolshevik menace will never be definitely surmounted.

Mountainers Inspire People

During the last general strike gangs of Bolshevik strikers raged through the streets of Bern, forcing all merchants to close their stores. At first the strikers charged but they were met by their shutters. But one old mountaineer, the owner of a small cigar store, calmly refused.

When the terrorists threatened to rattle his store without a complicity, he quietly took his trusty rifle down from the wall behind the counter and said: "The first man of you that crosses my threshold will be shot down like a dog. I am a man of holigans, at least fifty strong, quailed before the old fellow's shining rifle-barrel and grim face and turned tail without a word. That store remained open, and soon most of the adjacent stores followed its example.

Since then the old mountaineer's spirit has spread to the entire Swiss people, and they are no going to be led by the Bolshevik bullies and cowards close down the business of the nation any more, now that they have learned that a rifle and a revolver are all that is needed to prevent it.

Fortified by the knowledge that the people expect them to act with energy, the Swiss authorities are naturally not the most difficult problems confronting them is to prevent foreign Bolshevik emissaries from entering Swiss territory. Tourists irritated by the strict passport regulations that have to be fulfilled today in order to enjoy a holiday trip in Switzerland must reflect that by these unpleasant measures the Swiss are not only protecting themselves, but in a great degree all western civilization against the advance of Russian anarchy. For Switzerland is still the favored land of passage for Lenin's emissaries.

In spite of the vigilance of the Swiss