

MERCIER "NEVER PROMISED" TO SUBMIT TO THE CENSORSHIP

Explanatory Comment

There is an old Belgian adage which runs thus: "Walloon and Flamand are first names; the family is Belgium." The Germans obstinately refused to recognize this fact. It stood in the way of their characteristic plan to divide the Belgian nation by capitalizing the ancient quarrel—largely cultural—between those of King Albert's subjects whose mother tongue was French with a Walloon accent and those whose native language was Flemish.

Von Bissing's plan to erect a linguistic barrier across Belgium is evident in his orders concerning the use of Flemish in the primary schools, a flat against which Cardinal Mercier strongly protests in the appended letter to M. Corman.

The most grandiose feature of the hypocritical scheme, however, related to the University of Ghent. A lively dispute over the language to be spoken in this institution animated Belgian politics in the years immediately preceding the war. The Flemings felt that their interests were being discounted by the French-speaking population. But the invasion promptly ended these domestic differences. Flamand and Walloon joined hands and hearts against the oppressor.

The Governor General refused to see the situation that way. He interested himself in the project to convert Ghent into a narrowly Flemish University. The two great Flemish organizations of the country instantly repudiated his plan.

Professor Pirenne, a noted Flamand, refused to accept the position of rector of the college. Professor Fredericq also declined to accept the ruling ordering him to give his lectures in Flemish. The two eminent scholars, who, until the war set aside local quarrels, had been actively pro-Flamand, were deported to Germany.

Von Bissing had so much trouble in securing Flemish professors that he eventually imported teachers from the Netherlands and Germany. His sinister plan for disrupting national sentiment in Belgium by playing upon the language line-up proved in the end an utter fizzle. Hun psychology, resplendent in theory, failed once more miserably in practice.

Cardinal Mercier's Story

Including his correspondence with the German authorities in Belgium during the war, 1914 to 1918, edited by Professor Fernand Mayence of Louvain University and translated by the Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate, England.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Interference of the Occupying Power With the Teaching of the Normal Schools

BEGINNING with the month of February, 1916, the Governor General, on the pretense of doing justice to the Flemish claims, in reality to prepare for the administrative separation which later on he intended to bring about, published a long series of orders concerning the use of Flemish in the primary schools. Certain provisions of these orders were at variance with Belgian legislation. Accordingly, M. de la Vallee Poussin, secretary general of the ministry of sciences and arts, in a note addressed to the Governor General, declared that he could not become an accomplice in the execution of illegal decrees. The only answer vouchsafed to him by the Governor General was an intimation that he was forbidden for the future the exercise of his functions as well as all access to the office of his ministry.

On the 2d of August Baron von Bissing published a fresh order "relative to the teaching staff in primary and infant schools, also concerning the granting of certificates to qualified teachers."

This order, upsetting the whole teaching of the normal schools in the Flemish provinces, was in flagrant opposition to the Belgian law. In Article 3, paragraph 2, he ventured even to fix the language in which communications to parents should be drawn up. M. Corman, director of primary education, having officially informed the Cardinal of the publication of this order, received this reply:

Hague Convention Ignored

Archbishop's House, Malines, October 13, 1916.

To M. Corman, Director of Primary Education, Brussels.

Sir—You have been kind enough to convey to me, on behalf of the minister of sciences and arts, an order of August 3, 1916, concerning the use of languages in the teaching at the normal schools. This order, I grieve to say, ignores the Hague convention and the Belgian constitution. It transgresses the limits fixed by Article 43 to the acts of the occupying power. In virtue of this Article 43, indeed, the steps which the occupying power is authorized to take have exclusively for their object the re-establishment and maintenance of public life and order, by respecting, save where quite impossible, the laws already in force in the country.

The regulation on a novel basis of the use of languages in normal education has no relation whatever to the public life and order of the country. The occupying power by interfering in this matter goes beyond the role which is recognized as belonging to it by the law of nations. Furthermore, the provisions contained in Article 3, paragraph 2, is tainted with unconstitutionalism. In virtue of the constitution, Article 23, the use of languages employed in Belgium is optional. It can only be regulated by the legislature, and this regulation can only be enforced in administrative and judicial acts. Our free schools enjoy in this respect the same privileges as private individuals. The correspondence with pupils' parents is on all fours with a correspondence between private persons; no legal enactment fixes the language to be employed nor can any member of the legislature seek to fix it without a direct infringement of Article 23 of the constitution.

Thus the law of 1878, which prescribes the languages to be used in administrative correspondence, only concerns state functionaries. Communes and private individuals make use of what language they choose.

The limitation which the constitution imposes on the legislature is imposed a fortiori on the executive. Regard for the law of nations and the Belgian constitution forbids me then to take any part in the enforcement of the order of August 2 on the free normal schools of the diocese of Malines.

Receive, Mr. Director, the assurance of my sincere esteem.

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

Though there was no need for them, the Governor General opened two new Flemish normal schools at Laeken and at Uccle. M. Corman, director of primary education, officially informed the Cardinal of this and requested him to appoint for each of these schools an ecclesiastic to whom instruction in religion and morals could be entrusted. The Cardinal refused his assistance to the establishment of these needless schools, designed as they were to exercise a Germanizing influence on the Belgians. The number of his priests had, moreover, been considerably reduced, a good number of them being with the army in Holland or in England, or in the prisons of Belgium or Germany.

Cardinal Opposes New Schools

This is the reply he addressed to M. Corman: Archbishop's House, Malines, November 1, 1916.

To the Director General of Primary Education. Sir—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 31st October, in which you inform me that on 6th November next two training colleges for teachers will be opened, one at Laeken, the other at Uccle.

You request me to appoint an ecclesiastic to each

of these schools to give instruction in religion and morals or in the event of my considering such nominations unnecessary for the time being, to examine the feasibility of intrusting such instructions to curates.

I regret I see no means of complying with your request owing to the scarcity of priests from which we are suffering. A good number of our clergy are serving as chaplains or stretcher-bearers at the front, and one after another our zealous priests have been sent to prison in Belgium or deported into Germany. Hence the number of priests employed in active work, either in parochial duties or in teaching, is daily growing less; they are overburdened with work, and I shrink from rendering their task still heavier.

Accept the assurance of my sincere esteem. (Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER, Archbishop of Malines.

CHAPTER XXIX

Interview Between the Cardinal and Baron von der Lancken Regarding the Pastoral Letter "The Voice of God"

ANOTHER pastoral letter of the Cardinal, dated Ro-sary Sunday (October 1, 1916), entitled "The Voice of God," was the cause of a fresh conflict between the Cardinal and the Governor General.

The first part of the letter was read in all the churches of the diocese on Sunday, October 15, of the same year.

After speaking of the protracted trial to which Belgium had been subjected, the Cardinal exhorted his flock to pause and consider and endeavor to realize the deep meaning of the circumstances of the times, and fixing their eyes on eternity to listen to the voice of God. "Christ," said he, "gives to us through the mystery of His death and resurrection the key to these events. Life springs from death." The letter concluded with an exhortation to prayer. "Let us be grateful to God. The independence of our country is today no longer subject to doubt; let us bless God for having assured its preservation. Let us pray for those of our dear country who are present and those who are away, our brave prisoners and our dear refugees. We must not exclude any one from our prayers, not even our enemies, but Christian theology teaches us to regulate our affections. 'Love with predilection,' says St. Thomas, 'those who do good to you.' Let us then above all pray for our dear soldiers whom we hold so dear, not only on account of the close and intimate ties of blood and patriotism, but also for their whole-hearted devotedness to their country and to us. Let us pray also for their wives and mothers, silent heroines of the great European drama, and finally for the armies of our allies, who, in the east, west and south, fight so bravely and with such stubbornness for the common cause." The Cardinal furthermore asked for prayers for stricken Poland and the poor Armenian people.

"And let us continue to the end," he concludes, "patiently, perseveringly, sursum corda. Lift up your hearts. Let us hasten our deliverance. Let us implore God in the words of the holy liturgy, 'Come to my aid, O God, O Lord, make haste to help me.' (Deus in adiutorium meum intende, Domine ad adjuvandum me festina.) Meanwhile be calm, be courageous, do not murmur. Let us apply to our sufferings as patriots what our Saviour said of our eternal salvation, 'He that shall persevere to the end shall be saved.' 'Qui perseveraverit usque in finem hic salvus erit.'"

Printers of Pastoral Arrested

On October 9 the printers of the pastoral letter—MM. Smeesters, father and son—were arrested. In the course of a domiciliary visit made to their printing works, 250 copies of the letter were seized by the police.

On Sunday, October 5, the very day on which the first part of the pastoral was read from the pulpit, the Kreischef of Malines asked the Cardinal if he could receive the chief of the diplomatic department, Baron von der Lancken, at 7 p. m. To this the Cardinal agreed.

At the appointed hour the Baron presented himself at the Archbishop's house and was conducted to his Eminence.

"I am in an extremely difficult position," said he. "I had hoped that your Eminence would do nothing to provoke fresh dispute and, had, in fact, communicated my impression to the Governor General. And now he is intensely annoyed. 'You see,' said he to me, 'the Cardinal has again published a document, and in spite of my orders ignored the censorship and takes advantage of the occasion to meddle in politics.'"

"I never promised you," answered the Cardinal, "to submit to the censorship. You yourself were one day good enough to grant that it would be very difficult for me to do so and suggested many petty expedients for evading it, none of which satisfied me. The question therefore remained unsolved, and I informed you that I was preparing a letter for publication. You will recall our conversation and acknowledge that none of your suggested expedients appeared to me desirable. You particularly requested me to send you personally the first copy, not in manuscript but in proof. I replied, 'I am quite willing to send you a copy at the same time that I send the letter to my clergy, but on no account in advance. That would be tantamount to a tacit acknowledgment that I submit my letter to your good pleasure. That I cannot do.'"

"But after all," replied the Baron, "could you not contrive to let a proof copy be left behind on the table in one or other of the houses I am accustomed to visit in Brussels?"

"No, I do not particularly care for these paltry expedients which do not solve the problem. You would always have the right to say that I had in a covert manner recognized your right to censor a document essential to the exercise of my ministry. That is a matter of principle on which I cannot yield."

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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THOUSANDS KILLED IN MEXICO QUAKE

Damage So Widespread That Total Casualties May Never Be Known

SHOCKS STILL CONTINUE

By the Associated Press. Mexico City, Jan. 7.—Hundreds, possibly thousands, of lives were lost as a result of the earthquake which shook the state of Vera Cruz Saturday night. So widespread was the damage done by the shock and so wild are some of the sections that suffered from it that it is probable the number of casualties will never be known.

Private dispatches received here from Vera Cruz and Jalapa state that 1000 persons lost their lives at Coatzacoahuacan. These reports, which are said at both cities to be reliable, confirm information given out last night by presidential military headquarters. Thirty lives were lost at Teocelo, where three churches and forty houses were destroyed.

Volcanic eruptions have occurred at Cofre de Perite, from which point to the volcano of Orizaba the shock seemed to center, according to rumors. Flood waters pouring down the Pescados river have inundated Tehuacan, Malaxtlan and Tlapanala, while many ranches are under water. Barranca Grande and Los Simones are also suffering from floods. It is reported from Vera Cruz, twenty bodies have been recovered from the Pescados at Jalcomulco and Apazapan.

There were three slight shocks yesterday, according to information given out yesterday afternoon at the astronomical observatory at Tacobaya, a suburb of Mexico City. They were so feeble that they could be detected only by instruments.

Subterranean noises are still noticeable in the Pedregal, a rocky waste near this city, and great cracks have appeared in the earth. Travelers returning here from Vera Cruz say some streams were dried up as a result of the shock and it is feared that many mills near Orizaba, which depend upon waterpower, will be compelled to close.

REDS AGAIN OFFER PEACE TO ALLIES

Bolshevik Promise to Abolish Terrorism and Revolutionary Tribunals

DENIKINE ARMY CUT IN TWO

By the Associated Press. Stockholm, Jan. 7.—Nikolai Lenin, Russian Bolshevik premier, has made a new peace offer to the Allies, which is being taken to London by Colonel Talbot, British representative in the Baltic states. Among other conditions included in the offer is a promise to abolish terrorism and the activity of revolutionary tribunals, according to an Estonian newspaper.

London, Jan. 7.—The Bolsheviks have captured the seaport of Mariupol, in the government of Ekaterinoslav, sixty-three miles west of Taganrog. Panic exists among the bourgeoisie of Odessa owing to the approach of the Bolshevik army. Large numbers are leaving for Constantinople and enormous prices are being paid for passage on steamers.

The Reds have succeeded in cutting Denikine's armies in two. The wedge driven south with such force last week was annulled at Taganrog, where Denikine has had his military headquarters, but the actual breach of the armies has taken place ninety miles farther west, at Mariupol.

A Bolshevik communication received here last night, says: "We have captured Mariupol with

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large quantities of booty. The enemy fled, partly on steamers and partly along the coast."

New York, Jan. 7.—(By A. P.)—Whatever differences heretofore may have existed between General Semenov and Admiral Kolchak, "the misunderstanding no longer exists," declared Surgeon General Michael A. Logolevitch, special envoy of General Semenov, in a statement here yesterday. He arrived Monday, having left Siberia a month ago.

The visitor said he is here to tell the American people, and especially the

American government, the "truth" about eastern Russia.

"Get your government to co-operate with its business men," he urged, "that they may come to our assistance, and you will be killing bolshevism more surely than by sending armies and munitions."

Paris, Jan. 7.—(By A. P.)—Negotiations recently carried on in Warsaw between Ukraine and Poland have led to an understanding between the two governments, according to unofficial advices received from Warsaw. It is said the Polish government has

consented to recognize the independence of Ukraine, provided the latter consents to abandon its claims in eastern Galicia.

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