



"Obtain for Us, I Entreat You," Cardinal Writes, "Permission to Send Them Our Priests to Protect Their Morals and Safeguard Their Faith." America Joins in Protest

Explanatory Comment

THE consistent opposition of the Belgian people against employment which could further the German cause was emphasized from the first days of the occupation. Deportation organized and conducted by the military authorities was the only effective imperial weapon against such resolution and courage.

Tempting wages proved no bait whatever. In Luttre in April, 1915, thirty workmen were summoned by the invoders and promised wages running up to \$5 a day. These men all flatly refused to resume the work which had been held up since the occupation began. They were imprisoned in cattle trucks and told that they would be sent into Germany.

At the moment when the train began to move their fellow citizens, who had crowded to the railway station, raised shouts of "Long live Belgium!" The train proceeded, but went no further than Namur, where the workers were liberated. Later M. Kesseler, manager of the works, was arrested and after two days' confinement was told to exhort his employes to return. He repeated the German order, but at the same time declared that he left every man free to act according to his conscience. In the end, however, 190 of his workmen were deported to Germany and he himself was sent to prison at Charleroi. A few weeks afterward sixty more men were arrested and transported out of the country.

In Flanders, where the Germans hoped to enlist sentiment against the Walloons predominating in Brussels, they were enraged at the cessation of all work in the barbed-wire factory of Sweveghem. On June 11, 1915, the men were dragged to their benches by force. But they would not resume their old tasks. Sixty employes were imprisoned in Courtral and later their wives were incarcerated there. Meanwhile idleness prevailed at the barbed-wire plant.

Unquestionably the deportations were instituted partly as a policy of revenge. Not all the specious res soning of Von Bissing in his letters to the Cardinal can conceal this truth.

Cardinal Mercier's Story

Including his correspondence with the German authorities in B.li im during the war, 1914 to 1918, edited by Pistessor Fernand Mayence of Louvain University and transl ted by the Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate, England.

[Continuation of Chapter XXX-The Deportation of the Unemployed.]

FROM the very beginning of the occuration, the Cardinal had over and over again berged both the military and ecclestastical authorities of the empire for permission to send Belgian priests to prison camps in Germany, but in vain. Undaunted by the successive rebuffs he met with, he returns once more to the attack on behalf of the victims of this system of deportation; he appeals to the German bishops and entreats them to use their influence to obtain permission for Belgian priests to go into the land of exile, so as to afford the unfortunate deported the consolations of religion.

Plea to German Bishops

Archbishop's House, Malines, January 23, 1917.

Most Eminent Lords.

I pray God to enlighten your Eminences so that you may recognize the spirit of charity in which this letter is written and be inspired to read it in the same light. I cannot forget that my previous correspondence was received by you with undeserved distrust, but now that I have to deal with interests so exclusively religious, my Christian confidence triumphs over my fears.

Your Eminences are aware that there are some thousands of military and civil Belgians-we do not know the exact number-confined in the German Information reaches us from time to prisons. time bringing the sad news that a considerable number of them have gradually abandoned their religious practices. One of the reasons for this progressive indifference is the antipathy inspired in them by cheplains whose language is a constant reminder of a belligerent nation and a sorrowful past. It avails little to say that the chaplains are charitable and the prisoners in the wrong. I refrain from passing judgment on this fact, but none the less it is a fact which we, as shepherds of souls, cannot but bitterly deplore. Up to quite recently the military authorities have refused even to those condemned to death a priest of their own nationality and speaking their own language. I know of nothing more deplorable than this. It cannot be denied that faith must be raised to the level of heroism. if the prisoners are to be inspired with filial confidence in a priest who, from the human point of view, appears to them in the light of an envoy from an enemy power.

least desirous of contributing by every means at his command to the repatriation of these two classes of the deported. As announced in his instructions to his priests, he established at the archbishop's house an office for the recention of appeals. In his first request to the Governor General he appeals for the repatriation of F98 nersons.

Archbishop's House, Malines, January 24, 1917. To His Excellency Baron von Huene, Interim Governor General, Brussels.

In its reply to the protest made by the United States against the deportation of Belgium citizens into Germany, the Imperial Government declared that the transfer should be limited to those only who were receiving help from public funds and had no work in Belgium. I have the honor of inviting your Excellency's attention to the cases of men belonging to my diocese, the transfer of whom is no doubt due to mistakes made in recruiting.

As the certificates joined to the petition of repatriation duly attest, these deported persons held an independent position or were engaged in work remunerative enough to enable them to provide adequately for their own wants and those of their dependents. In order to avoid discussion respecting certain certificates which mention a different trade from that carried on by the holder before the outbreak of hostilities. I think it necessary to inform your Excellency that in consequence of the mobilization of our army, when war was declared, and the exodus of part of our population, many workmen have for the time being changed their trade.

Those among our fellow countrymen who fied to Holland and only returned on the assurance that they would not be mole ted, find themselves in a neculiar position. The reply of the German Government to the note of the Netherlands Government, dated November 29, 1916, regarding the deportation of Belgians, aims at recognizing the exceptional position affecting a considerable number of the people of my diocese. We have, therefore, been satisfied with proving their presence in Holland in 1914.

The forms have been filled in by the parochial clergy themselves, or under their instructions, and countersigned by the mayors of the communes.

To facilitate the work of your Excellency's officials, we have forwarded them to you in duplicate, together with the attestations attached thereto. They



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Christopher Martin (nee Echgeimeior), 1 69. Relatives and friends invited to tral services, Fri., I p. m., 1320 N. How-st. Int. private, Hillside Cem. Remains be viewed Thurs. eve.

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EBB -Jan, 11 EMMA MAY, wife of

The oft-repeated petitions of the Belgian episcopate, to which I am assured the German bishops have been good enough to lend support, even the august intervention of his Holiness himself, have not yet succeeded in bringing about any improvement in this state of things.

Now, the occupying power has deported and continues to deport thousands of civilians, Flemings and Walloons, and sends them we know not where into camps and factories, compelling them to work to the advantage of the enemy. These wretched men suffer from hunger and cold; many of them are spat upon and beaten because they refuse to work "voluntarily." It is easier for you than it is for us to verify this cruel treatment and have it brought to an end. We tremble, and the mothers of families tremble, at the thought of the danger to which the faith and the morals of these poor, forsaken men are exposed. They feel isolated, without home life, far from the sacraments and out of contact with their parochial Belgian clergy.

I am loath to believe that your Eminences feel no sympathy with us in our anxiety and that you will hold your powerful support from us now.

If the German Empire will not grant the repatriation of our fellow-citizens, whom, contrary to all truth, it styles unemployed, a burden on public funds, obtain for us, I entreat you, permission to send them our priests to protect their morals and safeguard their faith. These priests are ready to endure every sacrifice. They will agree not to return to Belgium save with those to whom they earnestly desire to devote themselves.

I intrust with all confidence my petition to your apostolic hearts, which petition is a joint one from the Belgian clergy and episcopate, the mothers, wives and children of our Christian families.

Receive, my Lord Cardinals, the assurance of my respectful and religiously devoted sentiments. (Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,

Archbishop of Malines.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne and other German bishops made pressing and repeated attempts, but without success, to obtain from the military authorities permission for the Belgian priests to accompany those deported.

America Joins Protests

The United States protested against the transfer of Belgian workmen to Germany. The Imperial Government answered that it would only deport the unemployed who were in receipt of outside help. Consequently, persons occupying an independent position and men actually in work would be exempt from deportation.

On the other hand, in reply to a note from the declared that it would not deport Belgians who had der Lancken was instructed to advise the Cardinal to taken refuge in Holland in October, 1914, and had that effect. entered Belgium on the distinct understanding that hey would not be molested. Being powerless to put the mentionest of the

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are classified according to communes, grouped by deaneries and arranged in alphabetical order.

Today I am handing your Excellency a first list containing in duplicate 698 forms affecting the inhabitants of the deaneries of Contich, Diest, Jodoigne and Orp-le-Grand.

I sincerely hope that, as the result of your Excellency's kind offices, 698 exiles will soon be restored to their afflicted families.

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

The petitions on behalf of the unemployed deported o Germany were sent in rapid succession. On January 29, 1917, the Cardinal forwarded to the Governor General 325 petitions for repatriation; on February 1, 530; February 7, 515: February 15, 516: February 17, 593; February 26, 563: March 5, 408, and May 21 and 22, 65, The archives of the archbishon's house contain one

solitary reply from the Governor General to these various letters, as follows:

Government General of Belgium, Brussels, February 12, 1917. To His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Mulines.

I have the honor to inform your Eminence in reply to your esteemed letter of the 7th inst., that the petitions asking for the repatriation of Belgians deported to Germany as unemplayed will be submitted to the competent German authorities.

Authority to return to Belgium will be granted to those who can prove that they have been unjustly deported.

I present to your Eminence the expression of my sincere esteem.

BARON VON BISSING. (Signed)

Priests Spurn Foe's Scheme

As the communal authorities declined to hand in the list of unemployed, the occupying power, to compass its end, resorted to an indirect expedient. It summoned to the "meldeamt" all persons occupying an independent position as well as men actually in work. A special stamp had to be affixed to their identity card, certifying that they were not unemployed and were exempt from deportation. All those whose identity card was not furnished with this stamp were to be regarded as out of work and taken to Germany.

A body of nineteen Malines priests, at the head of which was Canon Vranken, the Cardinal's secretary, refused to lend their co-operation to this scheme and addressed the following letter to the Kreischef: Malines, Dec. 24, 1916.

To the Colonel Pohlmann, Kreischef of Malines.

We the undersigned members of the Malines clergy have reason to believe that our summons to the 'meldeamt" on Wednesday next, 27th inst., is occasioned by our nonancearance at the general convocation on Friday. 8th inst.

We have the honor to inform you that our attitude had been maturely considered and was dictated by conscientious motives. It is impossible for us to cooperate in a line of action which is an infringement of the primary rights of our workingmen and adverse to their best interests.

Receive, sir, the expression of our sincere esteem. The Governor General inflicted a fine of 100 marks

Netherlands Government, the German Government on each of the signatories of this letter, and Baron von the ESTATE OF ANNA M. COX. DE

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Conneel Church 9 K. m. Int. Holy Cross DOHAN. Jan. 13. JOSEPH A. DOHAN. Relatives and friends invited. Thurs., T to 9 p. m. 3039 N. Park ave. DUNPHY Jan. 15. ALICE M. wife of Thomas Dunphy. ared 55. Relatives and friends also Sacred Heart. Altar and Rosary Societies and B. V. M. Sodality of the Ascen-sion Church. Workhill Circle, No. 7. invited to fumeral, Sat. 7th a. m. 1922 E. Madison at. Solemn requires high maks at Church of the Ascension 10 a. m. Int. St. Marz's Can. Ghoucester, M. J. Du P'NT, At. Charleston, S. C., Jan. 7. Funeral services a hor residence, Nonmurs. hear Milmington, Bell relay attension, at 2300 oclock. Int. private.

EDDY.-Jan. 12 THOMAS HENRY hus-ind of Mintle Eddy. Relatives and friends, askar Tribe. No. 184, I. O. R. M., and Hay-akers, invited to service. Thurs. 2 p. m. 11 Mi. Vernon st. Int. Mi. Moriah Cem-dends may view remains. World

da may view LIS.—Jan, 12. WII Jertha Ellis, aged Bell STER Division Bell Telephones Co., in-to functal metrices. Thurs. 2 p. m., Puaev ave., Collingdale, Pa., Friendas sall Wed., after 7 p. m. Int. private. BREE. - At Trenton N. J. Jan 13. & ELIZABETH, wife of James R. Em-aged SI, Relatives and friends invited relatives Fri. 2 p. m. hushand's rest-205 Lenwood ave., Trenton N. J. Commandia Cem.

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nanostr. Boyd Foley. Balatives and a invited to funeral, Fri. 5 a. m. W Allegheny sive. Solemn requirem at St. Bridgens Church 9:30 a. m. restmination of the Schurch 9:30 a. m. S. Fox the Schurvier, and 65. Ref. and friends invited to funeral Thurs. and first definition at. Solemn requirem t. Definition at. Solemn requirements Examination free. Fillings, 50e and \$1.00 DR. HYMAN 9th 2 Meet

Mass M. Gregory's Church 6:39 m. Fequiein Old "statement Com. Auto funeral m. Int. PRASER-Jan, 13. ELIZABETH FER-GESIN wite of sohn Fraser, azed 68. Relatives and friends invited to funeral. Thurs., 10:39 a. m. Brandywins Manor Chester county, Pa. Int. Brandywins Manor Pressysterian Cem. FULLER.-AI 208 N. Bith st. Jan. 13. SARAH J. widow of Dwisth B. Fuller, ased S. Announcement of funeral later. GAFFNEY, Suddenly, Jan. 12. JAMES GAFFNEY, hurband of isite Jennis Gaff-wy Friends, complexes of Gimbel Broa-bottime Dept., may call Wed.

of E. I. Smanuler, 3521 N. 18th et., "Dora-berviews and Int. New Britain, Con-GEIST-HOGAN.-Jan. 12. CHERISSIE, wife of Watter Geist. Relatives and friends invited to Juneral. Thure., 8:30 a. n., hus-hand's readence. 16 Summit terrace, Gar-ert Hill, Pa. Solemu requirem mass St. Theoma's Church. Villanova, Pa. 10 a. m. Theoma's Church. Villanova, Pa. 10 a. m. GERMAY.-Jan II. ANNA LUNA. wife of Jaweilys German and daughter of late steppen and Binabeth Kleppinger ared 50.

CARPENTER. - Jan. 12. CHARLOTT VISON, widow of Eyram Carbenter, ared is clailtows and frionds invited to fungral ser-ws, Thurs. 2. m. residence of daught trs. Lurs A. Bonhurt, 332 Rector st. Re-CHARLOTTE of Mrs. Nelson 1, 13, Mrs. J. A. F. J. Horne, Iorne, U. S. N.: McCLUNG.—At Residence Goss. 2335 S. 21st st., Ja cCLUNG mether of McJ ive of Cant Frederick J. Friends may call

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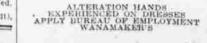
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