

CHAPTER CXXVII.

THE GERMANS IN RUSSIAN POLAND.

THREE INVASIONS—ADMINISTRATIVE PARTITION OF RUSSIAN POLAND BETWEEN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA—CLUMSY GERMAN EFFORTS AT CONCILIATION—DROPPING THE MASK—PRUSSIAN RULE AT ITS WORST—ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY—THE POLES AND THEIR MASTERS—LAW—EDUCATION—WARSAW UNIVERSITY REOPENED—TYRANNY IN THE SCHOOLS—LANGUAGE QUESTION—THE JEWS—THE CENSORSHIP—ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION—SPOILIATION OF FOOD AND RAW MATERIALS—GENERAL DEVASTATION—CRUSHING TAXATION—BRITISH RELIEF OFFER REJECTED.

THE occupation of Russian Poland by the Germanic Powers was the result of three campaigns: Hindenburg's first offensive against Warsaw, in October, 1914; his second invasion of Poland culminating in the battle of Lodz, in November, 1914; and the great Austro-German advance in the summer of 1915 which, after the fall of Warsaw on August 5, left the Central Powers in possession of the entire country. During the lull which intervened in the winter and spring of 1914-15, the battle-front to the west of the Vistula extended along a practically straight line running north and south from the mouth of the Bzura to the mouth of the Nida. This line was during that period the eastern boundary of the part of Russian Poland occupied by the enemy. Meantime north of the Lower Vistula and of the Nareff, and in the government of Suwalki, the respective positions of the German and the Russian armies continued to undergo rapid and frequent changes. Hence no attempt was made by the enemy to introduce in those districts any form of government other than that exercised by the commanders of the occupying armies. The Lower Vistula between Vyshograd and the Prussian frontier remained, up to the time when the

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German Government-General of Warsaw was established, the northern frontier of Poland subject to a regular German administration.

Within the occupied area, the border-line between the Austrian and the German spheres was settled by a compact concluded at Posen in January, 1915. The Austrians received the southern part, shorn, however, of its richest and most populous regions; the country bordering on Prussian Silesia and comprising the industrial centres of Tchenstochova and Sosnoviets, as well as a large portion of the mining district of the "Zaglembie" ("Depression"), was included in the German sphere of occupation. With some small modifications this delimitation was maintained even after the great advance in the summer of 1915; the disposal of the new acquisitions was settled at a conference of Austrian and German delegates in September, and by an agreement concluded at Berlin on December 14, 1915, between the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Prince Gottfried zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst and the German Foreign Secretary, Herr von Jagow. East of Tomashoff the boundary was made to follow the Pilitsa down to its junction with the Vistula and from there it ran up the Vistula to Ivangorod; between that fortress and the

"it therefore was soon ablaze."* Some 30,000 of its inhabitants scattered through Poland, a living evidence of the frightful fate of their homes. After that many a Polish peasant answered the prescribed greeting of the German officers by muttering some grim question about Kalish, and, whilst bowing deep in feigned reverence, followed it up by unrepeatable curses, naturally incomprehensible to the new Polish "scholars" of the German army. The moral effect produced by the catastrophe of Kalish frightened the Germans themselves, and a certain measure of restraint was imposed on the commanders. Even then German officers and soldiers continued to rob and steal, churches were desecrated, acts of gratuitous vandalism were committed (the destruction of the ethnographic museum at Lovitch may be quoted as an example). Nevertheless it is true to say that during the first offensive in October, 1914, a definite attempt was made by the Germans to conciliate the Polish population. Foremost in these endeavours was the politician General von Liebert, the first German governor of Lodz. In the past a well-known enemy of the Poles, he discharged his new duties with considerable tact and honesty. Most of all, he earned the thanks of the local population by confining his interference within the real limits of the military requirements, and by not obstructing the self-help and autonomous activities in his district. Conditions were difficult, as they are bound to be in an invaded country, but as yet not unbearable.

Then came the German retreat to the west and the second invasion of Poland. The new German rule began with the note of displeasure and disappointment; the Poles had not risen in their support. The old propaganda tricks were dropped, and the doctrine was now openly avowed that Poland was enemy-country (*Feindesland*), and that it had to be treated accordingly. Henceforth no Polish social activity, no self-government was tolerated except in so far as it served the convenience of the German army and administration. A complicated system was established of a

partly military and partly civilian government. The supreme master in the country was naturally Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, the *Oberbefehlshaber Ost* (Chief Commander in the East). It was by his order that, in January 1915, was formed the "Imperial German Civilian Administration for Russian Poland." † At first Posen was chosen for its headquarters, and even when a few months later it migrated to the province which it was to administer, its seat was fixed in the border town of Kalish, from where it was by no means easy to com-



communicate with the different parts of the country. The civilian administration was therefore unable to develop the full measure of its activity until after its transfer to the conquered capital of Warsaw. German civilian officials, called *Kreischefs*, were placed at the head of the provincial districts, nominally responsible to the civilian administration, but in reality bound hand and foot by the orders of the Army Command. The district of Lodz, the most important industrial area in the whole

* Kalish was bombarded and burnt between August 4-8, 1914. Destruction was in those days, in Poland as in Belgium, the approved German method of dealing with towns in which any assault against German soldiers was alleged to have occurred. Here is a typical army order: "Houses or blocks from which shots are fired at German soldiers will be instantly blown up or razed. Not even women or children will be allowed to leave those houses." (Signed) COLONEL ZOLLERN. (Dated) Tchenstochova, August 6, 1914.

† When the Germans resumed their advance into Poland, in June, 1915, its name was changed to "Imperial German Civilian Administration for Poland, on the Left Bank of the Vistula" (*links der Weichsel*).

country, was entrusted to a *Polizei-Präsident* (President of the Police); Herr von Oppen, a member of the Diplomatic Corps, not an administrative bureaucrat, was appointed to that important post. Lodz was also made the headquarters of a number of departments directly dependent on the Army Command (thus, *e.g.*, the railway-administration, the censorship and press bureau, etc.). It became the real centre of German official and military opinion, and the *Kindergarten* for the future government of a much wider province. It was here that the policy of the German administration in Poland was evolved and settled, and that its first experiments were tried.



GENERAL VON ETZDORFF,
German Governor of Warsaw.

The new rulers of Poland were taken almost without exception from the ranks of the Prussian bureaucracy, as some of them used to insist with pride and pleasure. Administrative reasons demanded that the bureaucratic personnel sent to Russian Poland should have some knowledge of Polish conditions; this was naturally to be found only in the eastern provinces of Prussia, in the so-called *Ostmarken* (Eastern Marches). The officials in these districts belonged, however, to a quite peculiar category—their main tradition was hostility to everything Polish. For years they had been trained to fight the “Polish peril,” and were rewarded for efficiency in repressing any signs of national life and ambitions among the Poles. They were permeated with hatred and contempt for Poland and the Poles.

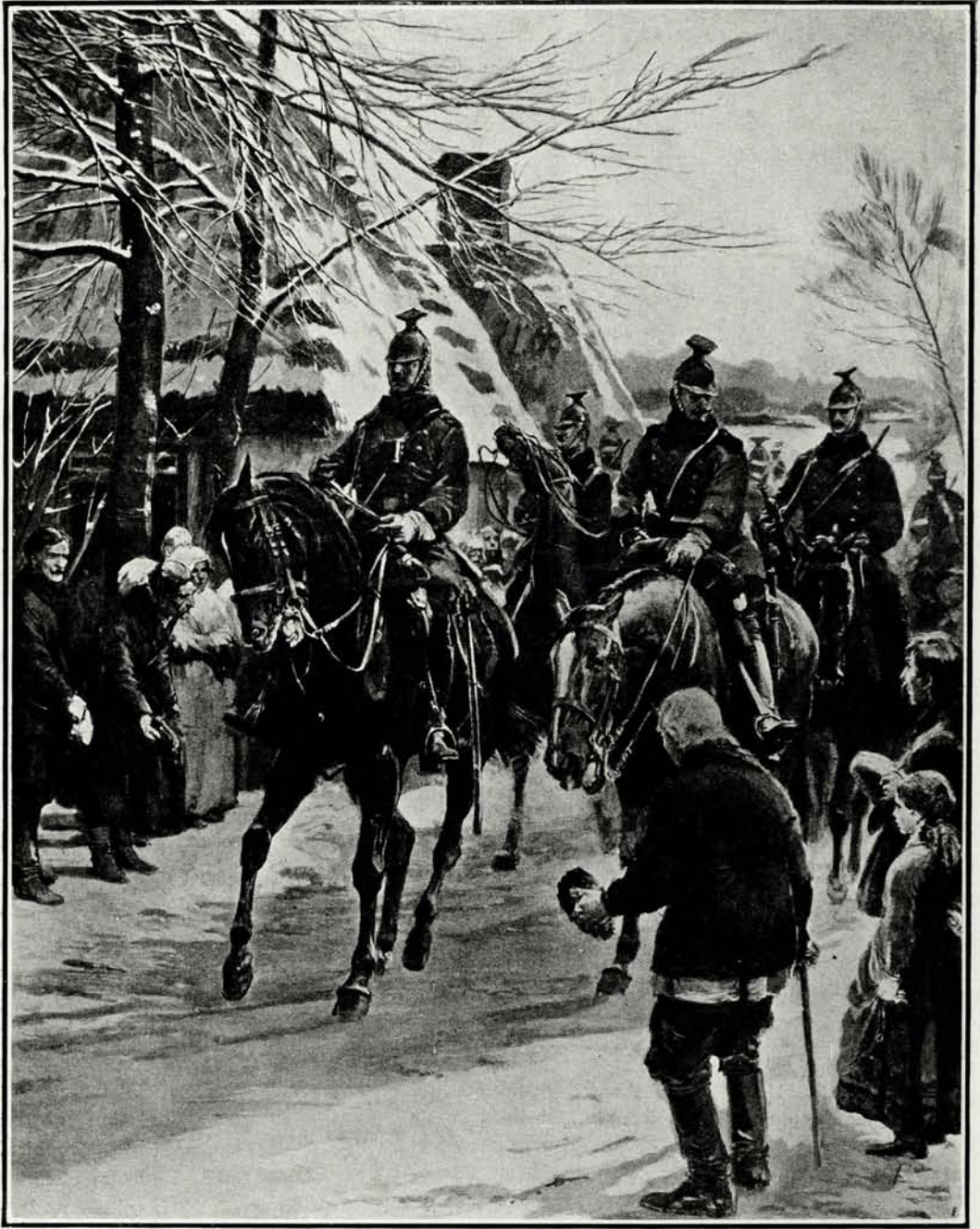
It was from among these champions of the *Drang nach Osten*—the German advance pres-

sing eastwards—that the Chief of the Civilian Administration, Dr. von Kries, his assistant Herr von Born-Fallois, and the whole host of minor officials, were chosen. Assurances were given from Berlin in the matter of regulations issued to them; after the fall of Warsaw, Herr von Delbrück, the German Minister of the Interior, whilst on a visit to the Polish capital, personally lectured the Prussian officials on their attitude towards the native population. All this proved of no avail. Insulting expressions continued to be freely used by the Germans in their official dealings; *Polnische Schweine* (Polish swine) became a household word. Women of the upper classes were insulted; Major Schultz, Commander of Sosnoviets, actually used his riding-whip on Polish faces. The German Town-Chief of Zgierz, bearing the attractive name of Stübl, made a regular practice of slapping people in the face; he inflicted this treatment, for instance, upon a woman in a baker's shop because she did not know the exchange of mark and rouble, fixed by the German authorities! * The host of minor German clerks, N.C.O.'s, etc., naturally followed the example of their superiors, and the “smart” Prussian manner could be seen everywhere in full éclat. †

Then negligence, the usual companion of arbitrary and irresponsible power, soon became a marked feature of the German management of local affairs in Poland; only where the interests of the Fatherland and of the German army were concerned did the Prussian officials maintain the high level of efficiency exacted from them at home. Yet, as payment for all

* Later on Herr Stübl came to grief owing to a “most regrettable mistake.” A dog barked at him in the street; he therefore gave a beating to its owner. The owner retaliated. He happened to be the local German manufacturer, Herr Hoffmann. Herr Stübl had him arrested, together with his whole family, and, having him properly bound, tried once more his strength on him. The incident caused violent indignation in the local German colony, and as they were Germans, Herr Stübl's brilliant official career came to a premature end.

† The well-known Styrian novelist R. H. Bartsch, a captain in the Austro-Hungarian army, was sent as an official reporter to Germany. He visited also the “occupied districts” and saw some samples of Prussian *Schneidigkeit* (military smartness). In a letter to the Viennese *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* he describes how his criticism of the insolent behaviour of a Prussian officer was answered with the remark that this man was prepared at any moment to lay down his life for his country. “Thereupon I replied: ‘I know and appreciate that. But however great a hero he may be, he can never kill even one-tenth of the enemies which his manners create for his Fatherland.’ . . . I should like to see it calculated how much blood has flowed, simply because that smartness has become fashionable! It would make a ghastly account . . .”



ENEMY TROOPS ENTERING A POLISH VILLAGE.

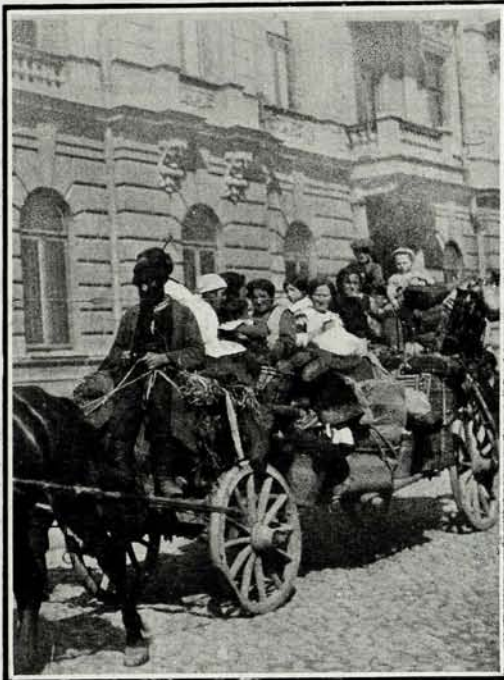
The inhabitants have to take off their hats to a detachment of Austrian cavalry.

their brutality and indolence, the bureaucratic army of occupation exacted a heavy tribute. As was pointed out in the German Reichstag on May 20, 1916, by the Socialist Herr Stücklen, the German officials in Russian Poland, though not exposed to any particular dangers, were paid twice the salaries which they would have received at home. His demand for a reduction of that unjustified expenditure was answered by the Under-Secretary, Dr. Lewald, with the

statement that "not a single penny is paid by the German Empire for the administration of the occupied districts. These districts themselves have to raise the necessary sums. . . ."

In these circumstances the chief desire and concern of the local population was to restrict their dealings with the German officials to a minimum, and to settle by themselves and among themselves their own affairs. And indeed the Germans were quite willing to

allow this within certain strictly defined limits. The one thing which they could never admit was the establishment of a co-ordinated system of self-governing bodies acting independently of the German authorities—in short, anything which might have suggested the idea of Polish autonomy and government. A certain semblance of corporate action and of government by consent was nevertheless welcome to the Germans. It was more convenient to exact from towns and districts the performance of services required by the German army and administration, and to burden them with the execution of works of military value, than to



POLISH REFUGEES.

A family leaving a town just before the arrival of German troops.

have to transact business with an unorganized crowd. "Where there is nothing, even the Emperor forfeits his claim," says an old German proverb. This is true with regard to individuals, but corporations can be made to mortgage their future. Polish towns and districts, where nothing more could have been raised by taxation or even confiscation, were made to undertake costly works of strategic importance on money borrowed in Germany—clearly the raising of loans was a transaction which could not have been undertaken without some appearance of representative government. Thus—*e.g.*, in 1915–1916, whilst the expenditure of the City of Warsaw exceeded

five to six times its income, it had to spend between August 5, 1915, and March 14, 1916, on executing the orders of the German administration, practically its entire revenue. Finally, once the country had been thoroughly stripped of all resources and foodstuffs, it was advantageous to have local bodies to take charge of the starving population, beg for help in foreign countries, search for food among neutral neighbours, and clamour for the relaxation of embargoes and blockades—and as their desperate efforts were bearing fruit, the Germans could start again the work of spoliation.

At the time of the new Austro-German advance in the summer of 1915, Russian Poland, and especially the Government of Warsaw, was covered by a network of Citizens' Committees, presided over by the Central Committee at Warsaw, and developing a most energetic and beneficial relief activity. On the evacuation of Poland by the Russians, these Committees had naturally to take over certain government functions, if only to prevent the country from being plunged into anarchy. Hardly had the Prussian bureaucracy had time to settle in the newly occupied territory, when the Central Citizens' Committee and all the local committees (with the exception of that of the City of Warsaw) were dissolved by an order of the new Governor-General of Warsaw,* von Beseler, dated September 12, 1915. The explanation given was that the Central Committee had undertaken "political action" by appointing judges; by raising taxes; and by organizing police forces and issuing permissions to carry arms. "The organization of relief-action passes therefore entirely into the hands of the German administration. . . ."

The results of the dissolution of the Citizens' Committees were catastrophic. In the Government of Warsaw alone it entailed the closing of 20 hospitals and 30 dispensaries, the stopping of sanitary and hygienic action (*e.g.*, vaccination): the closing of some 100 centres of food-distribution,

* During the first month after the fall of Warsaw, the German commanders and governors changed in quick succession. The first military commander of Warsaw was General Baron von Scheffer-Boyadel, the first governor General Gereke. After some ten days the latter was succeeded by General von Etdorff. In the final settlement of the Government, General von Beseler became Governor-General of Poland under German occupation, General von Etdorff remained Governor of Warsaw, Herr von Glasenapp became police-president of Warsaw, whilst Dr. von Kries and Herr von Born-Fallois retained their places at the head of the German Civilian Administration.

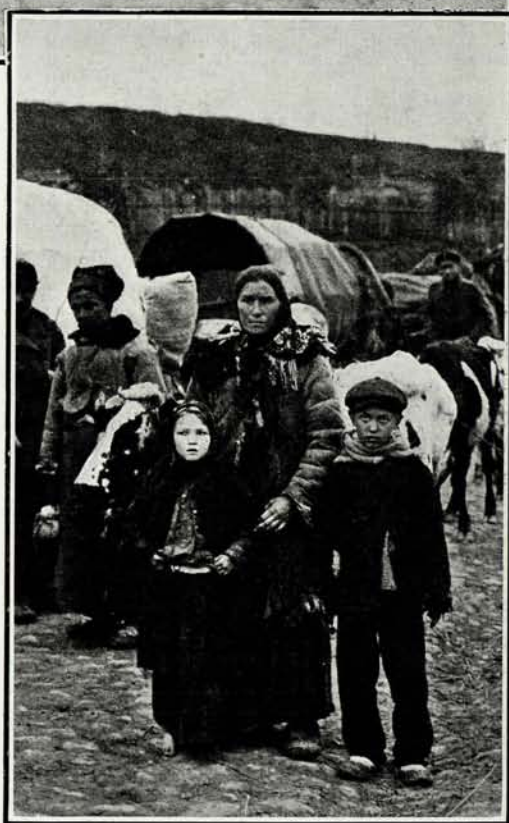


POLISH REFUGEES.

Inhabitants leaving a town in Poland before the German occupation.

some 150 tea-houses, and about 200 wholesale provision shops; of a refugee bureau helping about 8,000 people; of 300 schools, and many libraries and halls. Eleven inspectorates of civic police and about 6,000 special constables were prevented from discharging their duties, thus leaving many districts practically without any police protection. All work undertaken by the committees on the reconstruction of destroyed towns and villages came to an abrupt end.

The German "relief-action," which in the autumn of 1915 was to replace the work of the Citizens' Committees, consisted, as will be shown further on, mainly in the issuing of regulations for the trade in foodstuffs; these regulations were designed in such a manner as to enable the Germans to export considerable amounts of food from Poland, whilst taxing the population most heavily on whatever was left for local consumption. The misery in the country was growing rapidly; the death rate in Warsaw—which was by no means worst off—rose between August and October, 1915, from 15·88 to 34 pro mill. (calculated by the year), while in some provincial towns conditions were even worse. At last, in December, 1915, the German authorities allowed the reconstitution of the Committees under a new



name, and with a very strict limitation of their work to purely philanthropic action. However, even in this domain conflicts could not be avoided; thus, *e.g.*, in April, 1916, all the members of the Food Section handed in their resignation, because the German officials, besides hampering their work, took it upon themselves to sign with the name of the Section



INHABITANTS LINED UP TO RECEIVE BREAD RATIONS.

orders relating to food questions which the Section had definitely refused to accept.

Early in 1916 the Government-General of Warsaw published an order which created a kind of "councils" for 20 districts of Western Poland. Their competence was to include poor relief, the care of roads, and payments towards the building of new railways (*i.e.*, those required for military purposes), public health (in so far as the stamping out and prevention of epidemics which might have spread to the German Army were concerned, the Germans did very good work, sometimes in a grimly humorous manner);* lastly, "other economic affairs." The executive power of the

* The following is an authentic story: On entering the town of Lovitch the German commander summoned the local notables and told them that unless the town was properly clean by the next day he would have them all shot. They knew that he meant what he said, and took good care to save their lives. On the next day the commander assured them that had they failed to clean the town he would have gone on appointing and court-martialling the "cleaning committees" until the desired effect was reached.

In April, 1916, an Order was published by the German authorities in Lodz for the arrest of all dirty and ragged people covered with vermin. They were to be properly cleaned—but at their own expense. For this purpose they were to be kept at forced labour until they had compensated the authorities for the expense of the operation.

district council was vested in the German *Kreischef* and the officials appointed by him. The council itself was to consist of the *Kreischef* and twelve to twenty-four members. These "are elected by the inhabitants; the franchise is to be determined by the Governor-General; the life of the council covers six years. The members of the *first* council, however, or their successors in case of vacancies, *will be appointed by the Chief of the Civilian Administration. . . .*" A bigger farce of "representative" government could hardly have been enacted.

Towards the end of November, 1915, articles on German administration in Russian Poland were published in different German papers. They resembled one another to a remarkable extent—*e.g.*, concerning the establishment of jurisdiction after the withdrawal of the Russian armies and administration they told the same lie in very similar words. There were three degrees of jurisdiction in Russian Poland, of which the lowest—the offices of justices of peace and magistrates—were filled by local citizens, the two higher degrees by professional judges. These judges, being Russian officials, left with the Russian armies. According to the German Press, the local barristers then refused to fill their places "for fear of a return of the

Russians,"* and thus through *their* fault the entire judicial system was upset, until German judges were brought to fill the empty seats of justice. This statement, incredible in itself, stands in glaring contradiction to the fact that one of the reasons given for the dissolution of the Citizens' Committees by the Germans, had been their attempt to appoint judges. But from the earlier history of the judicial system under the German administration, and the regulations then introduced, can be got a full explanation of the refusal of Polish barristers to take a share in jurisdiction.

At first the administration of the law, in so far as it was not affected by the military government, was left in the hands of the citizens themselves. Suddenly, in March, 1915,

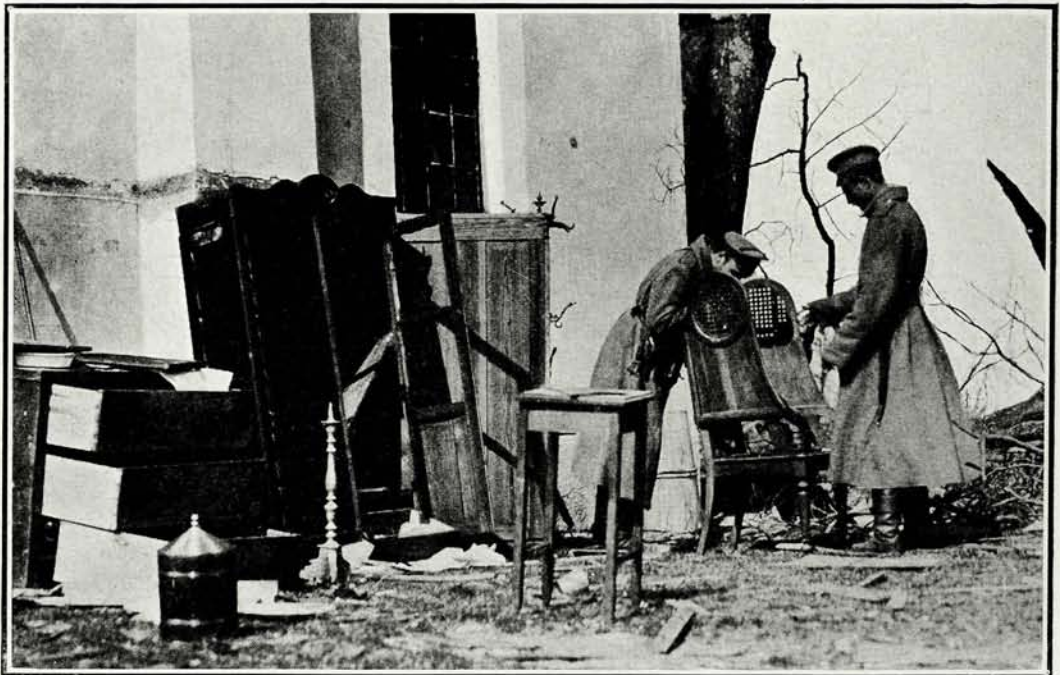
* Max Wiessner, in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, November 23, 1915: "The work in the higher courts had come to a standstill. . . . An attempt was made to get barristers to accept the places; these refused, perhaps because they were afraid that they might have to suffer if the Russians returned."

Paul Harms, in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, November 25, 1915: "Difficulties arose in the higher courts. . . . The attempt to fill the places with Polish lawyers failed in view of their refusal: they were evidently afraid of the possible consequences in the case if the Russians returned."

Paul Lensch (a German Socialist), in the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung* of November 30, 1915: ". . . No officials, no police, no judges. . . . And the Poles frequently refused co-operation, because they were still counting upon a return of the Russians. . . ."

without any apparent reason, the German administration published a new Order to operate from April 1. In the local courts the law, procedure, and language remained unchanged; but only for the time being, and for practical reasons, the remark being added: "If all the parties in the local court speak German, the case ought to be carried on in German." Into the higher courts the German language and procedure were introduced. The new organization of the jurisdiction, framed haphazard by the German bureaucracy, without any consultation with the lawyers of Russian Poland, and without any regard to the traditions and needs of the country, produced indignation among the Poles. It was a political *coup d'état*, which imposed on Poland the German language as official, introduced German officials and German procedure, fixed the Supreme Court outside the borders of the country (at Posen), and finally superseded the practice which had lasted for more than a century by which the Code Napoleon was binding.† From the point of view of law it was absurd, for the procedure was now mixed so that a case was judged in the first instance according to the procedure of Russian Poland, but in the second instance according to the German procedure.

† The Code Napoleon in Russian Poland is a survival of the Napoleonic Grand-Duchy of Warsaw.



THE CONTENTS OF A POLISH CHURCH THROWN OUT AND DESTROYED BY THE GERMANS.



POLISH REFUGEES AT A GERMAN QUARANTINE STATION.

In certain districts the German authorities called upon the Polish lawyers to take part in the organization of the jurisdiction, which was to be based on the principles given above; naturally they met with a refusal. The barristers pointed out the defects of the new Order with regard to the law; they showed that it did not fit the political conditions and protested against the introduction of a Germanizing principle into the jurisdiction. They also emphasized the fact that the population itself was quite capable of undertaking the care of the law, and that the barristers, as citizens of Poland, would not assist in the work of Germanization. This attitude of the local barristers gave rise to all kinds of oppression by the authorities. Contributions were imposed on towns (Lodz, Sosnoviets, Bendzin) under the pretext that the money was needed for the importation of German officials; in certain places the barristers were deprived of the right of practising. At Lodz, the President of the Police, Herr von Oppen, having met with a sharp criticism of the new arrangement on the part of the lawyers, demanded from the legal section of the Citizens' Committee that within 24 hours judges be supplied to act under the new system (of course, only for the courts of the first instance). In case of refusal he threatened severe reprisals against the town and the lawyers; naturally, under these circumstances, the only possible answer was a categorical refusal. He then imposed a contribution

on the city and closed the law courts. Not even pending cases were allowed to be concluded. The barristers were deprived of the right of practising in the German courts. At the doors of the chambers of the barristers of Lodz appeared the compulsory notice of refusal to accept any cases, whereas new plates appeared at the doors of unqualified clerks of doubtful standing. In case of contravention of the German prohibition, the barristers of Lodz were threatened with internment in a German camp for civilian prisoners; one actually suffered that penalty. In a city with a population of 500,000 inhabitants jurisdiction was suspended for two months. When, at last, German courts were opened, different tricks were invented in order to keep away the parties (*e.g.*, fees were exacted beforehand). As a matter of fact these precautions were unnecessary: the German officials who were brought to preside in those courts showed such exemplary inefficiency and such terrifying ignorance of conditions, that the population did all it could to avoid having its business brought before the judges. But the Germans claim that it was they who introduced law and order into Russian Poland.

Mutatis mutandis the history of the law courts of Lodz is also that of the Warsaw tribunals and of the jurisdiction in other parts of the country. A few significant passages may be quoted from papers appearing under Austrian or German censorship. The *Nova Reforma* (Cracow) stated under

date of November 1, 1915, that a meeting of Warsaw lawyers took place on October 28. "H. Konic was in the chair. After heated discussions which lasted from 10 a.m. till after midnight a vote was taken at 1 a.m. on the question whether Polish lawyers are to act as justices of peace in the courts." (Here follow six lines suppressed by the Austrian censor.) The question was decided in the negative. On November 18, M. H. Konic was deported to Germany. Herr Wiessner, in his eulogy of the German administration in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of November 23, stated that "even barristers had to be summoned from Germany." The reader can guess by himself the other parts of the story.

To the whole world the German Press announced the news of the reopening of the Polish University at Warsaw—the rest was silence. And yet it is the question of primary and secondary education which is the most important from the national point of view, for they, and not the University, concern the wide masses of the population most intimately, and even in the life of the comparatively few chosen, cover the decisive, formative period.

In Warsaw, on the retreat of the Russians, the care for education devolved on the Citizens'

Committee. This body immediately formed a Board of Education, consisting of four of the most prominent citizens of Warsaw, two Poles and two Jews. It was then reinforced by technical experts, and the four religious bodies (Roman Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran and Calvinist) were invited to select representatives. On August 23, 1915, on the motion of the Board, compulsory primary education was decided upon by the Citizens' Committee, and however bad was the financial condition of the city, a credit of £182,700 was voted for education. Meantime the work on primary and secondary schools, and even on kindergartens, was carried on.

Then came the unavoidable intervention of the German authorities. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg appeared in the new role of an educationalist. In an Order published from Headquarters on August 24, 1915, he laid down the law for school organization and educational policy in Poland under German occupation. No new school boards were to be formed, no schools were to be founded, no teachers appointed without the consent of the German authorities. Teachers in primary schools are appointed and may be removed by the German *Kreishefts*. All books used in schools require the sanction of the German administration. A



HERR DELBRÜCK, (×) German Imperial Minister of the Interior, and HERR VON LÖBELL, Prussian Minister of the Interior, on a tour of inspection in Russian Poland.

distinction was made between schools on a basis of nationality and confession. There were to be (1) German, (2) Jewish, and (3) Polish schools. All Protestant schools were classed as German. In all German and Jewish elementary schools the language of instruction was to be German; in the Polish schools, Polish; but in these German was to be taught in the higher forms.

A more flagrant attempt at enforced Germanization and the sowing of internal dissension among the population of Poland could have hardly been made. Many of the Protestants in Poland are of German extraction, but the greater part even of these are no more German than the Brandenburg Huguenots are French. Although a certain small group of the Jewish upper classes in Poland have become Polonised, the great mass of the Jews in Poland forms undoubtedly a nation in itself, owing to race,

traditions, culture and language. Yet if their language is not to be Polish (which in itself would hardly destroy their separate nationality), it can be only Yiddish or Hebrew—never German.

As the result of a most vigorous protest on the part of the Jewish community of Warsaw against the introduction of German into its schools, the German administration allowed Polish to remain the language of instruction in Jewish schools in which it had been taught before the publication of the Order of August 24, 1915. The Jewish community answered with a new memorandum pointing out that ignorance of the Polish language is for the Jews a serious handicap in professional life; that the peaceful intercourse of Poles and Jews requires that the Jews should learn Polish; that they wish to do so; and therefore ask that Polish should be the language of



THE REGISTRATION OF CATTLE.

Peasant farmers registering the number of cows and horses preparatory to having them commandeered by the German military authority.



GERMAN RULE IN POLAND.

Inhabitants of a Polish town drawn up for registration.

instruction in their schools. Even the Zionists and the Jewish workmen's organizations, whilst petitioning for Hebrew and Yiddish as the languages of instruction, demanded that Polish also should be taught in the Jewish schools. All petitions proved of little use. Whilst proposing to establish a new Ghetto for the Polish Jews and developing plans to prevent their immigration into Germany (*Grenzsperre*), the German authorities were determined to Germanize them in Poland; *divide et impera*.

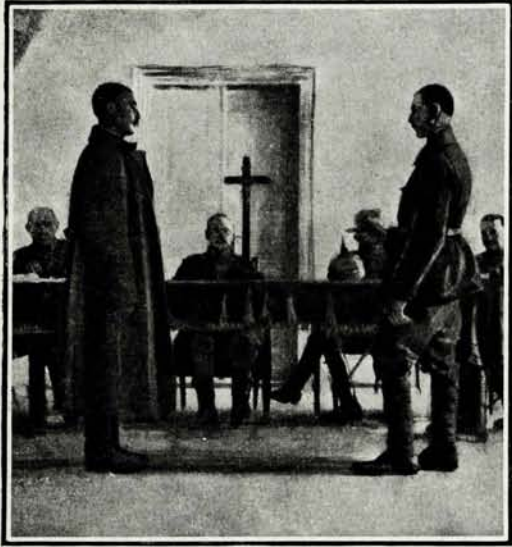
Similarly the Protestant community of Warsaw petitioned against the Germanization of its schools. In a memorandum to the Civilian Administration they pointed out that the Protestants in Poland must not be identified with German nationality; that according to the estimates made in 1907 by the Superintendent-General of the Protestant community of Warsaw, out of 20,000 members at the utmost 6,000 were Germans; that the percentage was now even less, as most of the German Protestants had been removed by the Russians from the war-zone, etc. All these arguments naturally fell on deaf ears.

But even the Polish schools had not yet seen the end of their troubles. Hindenburg's Order of August 24, 1915, was merely the starting point of a long series of measures, some general, others local, but all aiming at the same object: to withdraw the elementary schools from the control of the Polish Board of Education, and to put them under German supervision. These different, particular in-

junctions were codified in an Order of Dr. von Kries, dated October 3, 1915, and stating that the only competent authorities in school matters in Poland under German occupation would be henceforth the German Board of Education, which will issue orders concerning the plan of teaching, the books to be used, and the entire organization of schools. Thereupon, on October 29, Prince Z. Lubomirski, in the name of the Citizens' Committee, presented a memorandum to Governor-General von Beseler arguing that the only proper authority for issuing these regulations is the Polish Board of Education which is anyhow subject to German control. "Let the German authorities leave to the Polish nation the education of its children, and the teaching of adults. No one will do it better for us than we can ourselves."

No attention was paid to the memorandum; petty oppression and senseless interference even in the smallest details continued as before. The host of overpaid German officials* was desirous to establish its absolute authority over Polish education, and every day brought some new Germanizing innovations (thus—*e.g.*, contrary to Hindenburg's Order of August 24, an attempt was made to introduce the teaching

* Men without any knowledge of Polish conditions or even of the Polish language were put in charge of Polish education. The chief of the German Board was Prof. Dr. Herold, from Düsseldorf; under him Herren Schauenburg, Thaer and Müller, of whom only one understood Polish. The school-inspectors were all either Germans (Fratske, Grün, Otto, etc.) or Germanized Slavs, as is shown by the spelling of their names (Sakobielsky, Szumansky, Jendruschke, Datschko, Cebulka, etc.).



MILITARY COURT-MARTIAL.

A Russian soldier charged with espionage.

of German even into the lowest forms of the Polish schools). On November 17, 1915, the Citizens' Committee of Warsaw addressed to the German authorities a second memorandum. It deals in a most dignified manner with a number of questions arising out of the German interference,* and concludes with the following summary :

" 1. The issuing of new Orders by the German authorities is a denial of our natural rights, and of rights which we claim in the name of our culture.

" 2. The Orders issued are contrary to our needs.

" 3. In view of the local pedagogical needs, the teaching of a foreign language (German) is out of place."

"Having considered the Memorandum of the Citizens' Committee," began General von Beseler's reply. "I am compelled in view of its tenor to refuse an answer. It entirely ignores the position which becomes the Citizens' Committee in relations with a Power of occupation."

Matters were clearly driving towards a crisis. Herr von Glasenapp, Police-President of War-

* Of special interest is the point concerning the preparation of a school map for Poland. "We have not been summoned," says the memorandum, "to assist in the work of drafting a map of our country, the whole of which we know. Who will decide for us where Poland begins and where it ends, since it has hitherto remained partitioned? The Polish nation enters a firm and categorical protest against the fixing of the borders of Poland by the authorities of occupation of one State before the conclusion of the war, in which so many States take part."

saw, forbade members of the Board to visit schools or assist at the examinations of teachers. The Board, seeing itself deprived one by one of all its rights, decided to dissolve. Prince Lubomirski tried to plead with the German authorities; it was useless. In the last days of January, 1916, the Warsaw Board of Education closed its activities in view of the impossibility of cooperating with the German authorities.

Very similar was the fate of the Polish schools in other parts of the country under German administration. It will be sufficient to quote but one fact: that in November, 1915, all the Polish town councillors of Lodz voted against the grants of money for education "as under the conditions created by Herr Sakobielsky (the German school inspector) all work seems hopeless."

But what about the famous University and Technical High School opened at Warsaw by the Germans? Some light is thrown on that subject by an interview with Father Gralewski, one of the most prominent members of the Polish Board of Education at Warsaw, published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of March 20, 1916. "The German authorities refused to let the Board bear the expenses of establishing and maintaining the High Schools, and agreed to their establishment only on the express condition that they should be maintained by the German authorities. 'The Germans,' said Father Gralewski, 'in founding these High Schools, were playing a political game, whereas we Poles saw in them a place of learning.'"

In all countries the censorship secured for itself during the war a place in history by its unconscious humour and exotic enterprise. Yet none can dispute the first place to the German censorship in Poland. We pass over the things which it suppressed or deleted, the corrections which it prescribed—sometimes even in poetry—its standing orders concerning "things not to be mentioned," etc. It was all done under the expert guidance of Geheimrat Herr Georg Cleinow, the author of several books on Poland and Polish history, notorious for their hostile bias against the Poles. Yet more interesting than his literary activities were his business dealings.

From the very outset of his career as chief censor at Lodz he knew how to combine this office with the part of a newspaper proprietor. He spoke in all the languages; he founded, ran, or supported newspapers in Polish, German and

Yiddish * ; he claimed to voice the thoughts of every nationality. Could anyone have been a more fit censor to control their thoughts in less authoritative publications ? Anyhow, his papers were the best ; they always knew everything first (at Warsaw the censor's office closed at 6 p.m., so that only the censor's papers could publish the freshest news). Then the supply of paper gave rise to anxiety to other editors not to the censor and newspaper owner in one person. The providential German *Presseverwaltung* (Press administration) took the trade in printing paper into its own hands, fixed its price at £275 for the wagon, and refused to sell it in smaller quantities. In 1916 it even started to ration papers. But even that was not yet the worst. Distribution by mail was refused to independent papers. And finally, however much they were muzzled and curtailed, no Polish papers were allowed to leave the country under German occupation. They were

* Especially interesting is the story of the daily paper, *Godzina Polska*, which started publication at Lodz at the New Year of 1916. By misrepresentations its editor obtained from different distinguished Polish writers the promise of cooperation. When they became aware of the true situation they tried to withdraw their names, but the censorship did not allow their letters to be printed. It also suppressed the letter of M. C. X. Jankowski denying in terms in no way offensive to the paper the news that he was going to act as its secretary.

not to carry through the world the news of German oppression, economic spoliation and financial exactions, the marks of which it was almost impossible to remove altogether from the daily news of local events.

It was through other channels that the truth of the situation was made known to the world. Articles which kept appearing periodically in *The Times* unfolded a picture of barefaced robbery and endless suffering such as could hardly have been accepted as true, had not each assertion been supported by data and facts, none of which was ever disproved, or even seriously challenged, by any German statesman or writer.

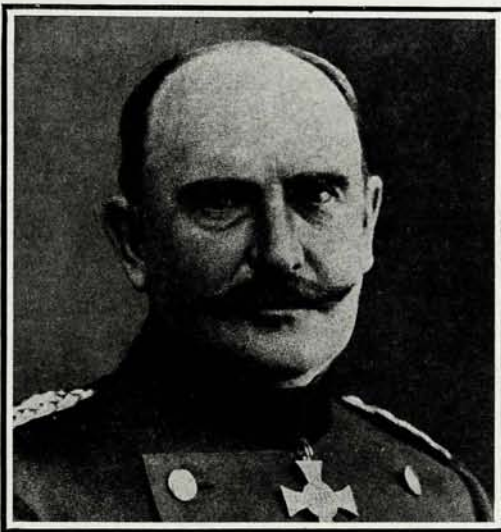
The economic exploitation of Poland by the Germans assumed every possible form of spoliation. Money was extorted by means of crushingly heavy taxes, contributions, fines, fees, excise duties, fiscal monopolies, and enforced fraudulent money exchanges. The material resources of the country were sucked dry by the confiscation and requisitioning of foodstuffs, cattle, raw materials, and machinery, and by the devastation of forests—in short, by the carrying away of everything which it was possible to remove. Commercially, Poland was ruined by the deliberate immobilization of its industries, by most unfair forms of prefer-



A POLISH FAMILY, WITH ALL THEIR WORLDLY BELONGINGS, STRANDED BY THE WAYSIDE.

ence conceded to German traders, and by commercial monopolies created in their favour. Finally, labour which might have been employed in the reconstruction of the country devastated by the war, had only the necessary materials been spared from German requisitions, was made to serve the German strategic needs, wherever an opportunity arose; and where it could not be employed locally for German aims, an organized attempt was made to carry it away to Germany for the use of German industries, to work under conditions amounting practically to indenture.

German spoliation began with the requisitioning of food, cattle, and raw materials.



GENERAL VON BESELER.

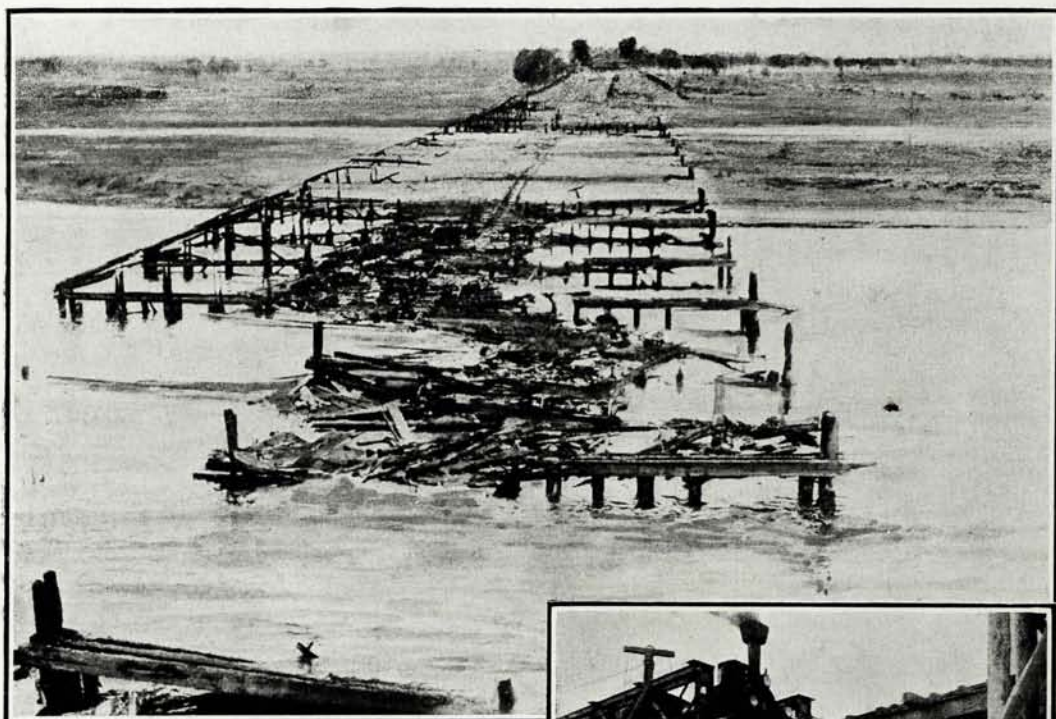
For weeks in the autumn of 1914 thousands of German wagons were carrying off from Poland the grain, potatoes, etc., which had been commandeered. Early in 1915 an Order was published forbidding private trade in grain, flour, and other country produce between different districts of Poland under German occupation, and the sole right of trading in them was vested in a German Import Company, the notorious *Wareneinfuhr-Gesellschaft*. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg was closely connected with it, and it was he who arbitrarily fixed the prices at which the monopoly bought and sold food-stuffs in Russian Poland. Thus the fact was quoted at a meeting of the Town Council of Lodz, in November 1915, that the Import Company was paying 7½ roubles for 1 cwt. of rye, when it bought it in the districts of Russian Poland under German occupation, but charged at Lodz 23 roubles for a bag of "war flour" which contained hardly 40 per cent. of the 1 cwt.

of rye. Herr Schoppen, a German official, pointed out in reply to the above statement that the German authorities at Lodz were unable to do anything in the matter, as these prices had been fixed by Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. Under these circumstances it was but natural if the Import Company yielded a profit of over 140 per cent., and if the death-rate in Russian Poland rose in proportion to its profits.

Agriculture itself was crippled by the frightful robberies which the German armies had committed on occupying the country. The Austro-Hungarian Governor of the District of Lublin, Major-General Anton Madziara, said to Herr Max Winter, correspondent of the Viennese *Arbeiter-Zeitung*: "In the eastern parts (of the district of Lublin) work in the fields is badly done, chiefly because the Germans on their advance carried away all that could be removed. The scarcity of animals for draft purposes is especially bad. I know a landowner who has 500 acres of land to till, but is left with only 6 horses and 3 cows. . . ." * Yet in spite of the reduced productivity of agriculture in 1915, the Germans continued their work of spoliation. The whole new harvest was requisitioned, and again thousands of wagons of grain and millions of quintals of potatoes from Poland found their way into Germany. On January 15, 1916, in the German Reichstag, General von Wandel, Deputy-Minister of War, was able to speak with pride of the work of the military "economic committees"; it was due to their skill and "untiring activity . . . that large stocks, which have made it easier for us to feed our people, have been brought from the occupied territories into Germany." He might also have added a word about the cheapness of those imports. Whilst the price for potatoes fixed by the authorities in Germany amounted to 2¾ marks a quintal, and according to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* oscillated in reality between 3 and 3½ marks, in Poland only 1¼ mark was paid for the quintal of sequestered potatoes.

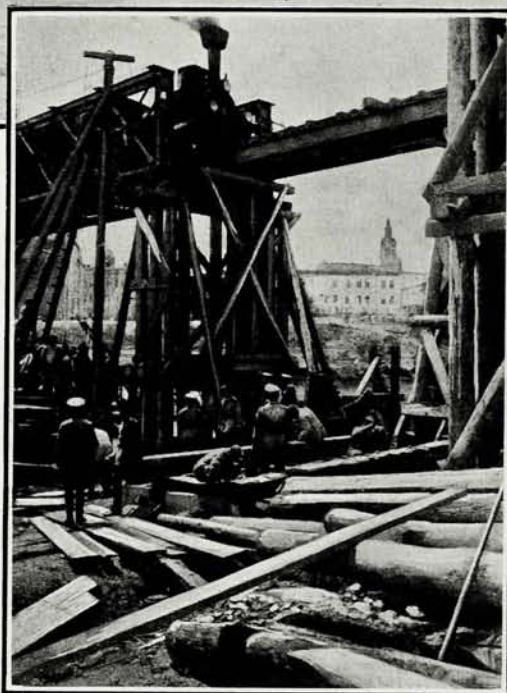
The amount of foodstuffs available for local consumption in Russian Poland was shrinking

* *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, March 5, 1916, p. 7. The eastern parts of the district lay on the "war-path" of Mackensen, the western were crossed by the Fourth Austro-Hungarian Army under Archduke Joseph Ferdinand. An editorial footnote to this article states that it had been heavily censored. What must have been its original disclosures, if the statement quoted above was passed by the censor!



WORKING FOR THE GERMAN ARMY.
 Bridge across the Nareff, at Pultusk, burnt by the Russians during their retreat. Smaller picture: The construction of a temporary bridge.

constantly. Bread and flour tickets were introduced in Warsaw a few weeks after its occupation by the German armies. At first the *per capita* quantities were fixed at 205 grammes (about 7 oz.) of bread a day, and 205 grammes of flour a week, or 24,000 cwt. of flour a week for Warsaw. On November 1 the amount was reduced to 20,000 cwt., on December 10 to 18,000 cwt.—*i.e.*, far below the rations allotted in Germany, where the population was much less dependent on farinaceous foodstuffs for its nourishment. In the course of February the allotted quantities were still further reduced by one-fourth. Moreover, a monopoly in meat was introduced, the maximum number of cattle to be slaughtered in a town of a million inhabitants being fixed at 800 a week, a quantity wholly insufficient, considering that the consumption of mutton in Poland is small, and that most of the Jews, who form more than one-third of the population of Warsaw, do not eat pork. That, in spite of the ever-growing scarcity of foodstuffs in Russian Poland and of the hypocritical cries for relief which German agents were raising abroad, the export of foodstuffs from Poland to Germany continued is best shown by Art. 6 of the Memorandum presented by the Central Council of the Relief-Committees



(the reconstituted Citizens' Committees) to Dr. von Kries early in February, 1916. It runs as follows: "That foodstuffs requisitioned by the German authorities should not be taken out of the country, but handed over at cost price to the local relief organizations." Were these likely to ask for things which were already actually done, or to petition against non-existing abuses?

From the very beginning the Germans proceeded to requisition all raw materials which could be of use to their own industries. The whole stock of oil, leather, sulphur, iron, and finally the entire store of wool and cotton was



BEWARE OF CHOLERA.

How the Germans warned their troops newly arriving in an infected town in Russian Poland.

carried away from the Polish factories—*e.g.*, in the factories of the district of Lodz alone, according to the most modest calculations, wool and cotton had been requisitioned to a value exceeding considerably £5,000,000. Not even their machinery was spared: the factories were crippled, if not ruined, for many years to come. The prices for the requisitioned materials were fixed in a most arbitrary fashion, but always so as to favour the German buyers; thus the valuation of cotton was made on the basis of the *pre-war* price at Bremen—although the price had more than doubled since then; not even freights and custom dues, which had originally been paid on it by the Lodz manufacturers, were considered. Out of the sum thus acknowledged as due to them, the German Government first of all paid claims of German firms against the Lodz manufacturers, and then promised to pay out the remainder to the owners three months after the conclusion of peace. A similar procedure was applied also in other districts, whilst the list of things requisitioned or to be given up to the German authorities was growing every month—contraventions of these orders being punishable with a fine not exceeding £500, or imprisonment

up to five years. Meantime, a true *furor Teutonicus* was shown in the work of devastating the forests of Poland.

By May, 1916, hardly any form of textile, metal, or wooden goods could be manufactured in Poland. Similarly, most of the corn mills, alcohol distilleries, breweries, starch factories, etc., had to stop work for lack of raw materials, though these had always been produced in the country itself. By 1916 Poland, a great sugar-exporting country, could no longer cover even one-fourth of its own normal consumption. Out of 54 sugar refineries, 13 had been destroyed; 11 were in need of repairs, which could not be made as the Germans had carried off the necessary materials; 15 were unworkable, because the copper or other parts of their machinery had been removed by the Germans, and only 15 were still fit to work, provided they were able to obtain the necessary supply of sugar-beet and auxiliary materials. General unemployment was the natural consequence of this systematic work of destruction carried on by the Germans in Poland. In a memorandum presented to the German authorities in March, 1916, Prince Z. Lubomirski mentioned the fact that, for instance, in the Warsaw industries,

only 10 per cent. of the normal number of workmen were at that time employed, and then proceeded to make the truly pathetic suggestion that in future "the factory installations, machinery and tools, and the most indispensable raw and auxiliary materials (*e.g.*, grease) be freed from requisitions and sequestration . . . especially in the case of those factories and workshops which use small amounts of raw materials, whilst giving employment to a considerable number of workmen."

But of what use was it to plead in favour of Polish manufacturers, the competitors of German industry? Time after time the case had been put before the German rulers of Russian Poland, appeals were made for mercy on the people to whom the measures spelled death from starvation—the answers given by the German officials merely added by their irony insult to injury. On September 25, 1915, the Polish manufacturers had presented a memorandum to Governor-General von Beseler, asking that machinery be exempted from requisitions, and only such parts be taken which it was possible to replace; that raw materials be not requisitioned unless needed for the army, and be not commandeered for the benefit of German manufacturers, etc. General

von Beseler's answer was simply this: that the German administration entertained the most friendly feelings towards the local population, though it must consider the country hostile territory; that the position of the German industry would be equally difficult had it not been for the ease with which it readjusted itself to the production of war materials (how could the Polish industry have done it when it was given neither orders nor materials?); and, finally, he asked that these views should be spread in the country.

The conquest of the Polish market for the German industries was organized with remarkable thoroughness. The customs frontier between Poland and Germany was abolished without any period of transition being granted, and freights on the railways were manipulated in such a way as to turn the measure entirely to the advantage of the Germans. The German railway administration contributed in every way it could to the ruin of Polish industries. Specially ingenious were its devices with regard to coal; even where the Germans did not introduce a monopoly of it (as Herr von Oppen had done at Lodz, making about £10 profit on each railway truck of coal), its price was raised very considerably, and most amazing of all, German coal finished by being cheaper in Poland



THE TYPHUS EPIDEMIC.

A sentry guarding a typhus-stricken house.

than the local output. After the fall of Warsaw an official German Bureau of Commerce was established in Poland to take charge of the interests of German manufacturers and traders. It enjoyed great privileges in the matter of telephones and wires ; its letters passed uncensored ; on the railways its goods were labelled *Amtliche Handelsgüter* (official goods), which insured them priority before all other goods—they were second only to transports required by the army. Special privileges were given to it in the matter of suing for debts. Finally, a regular system of commercial studies (or rather espionage) was organized under its auspices.

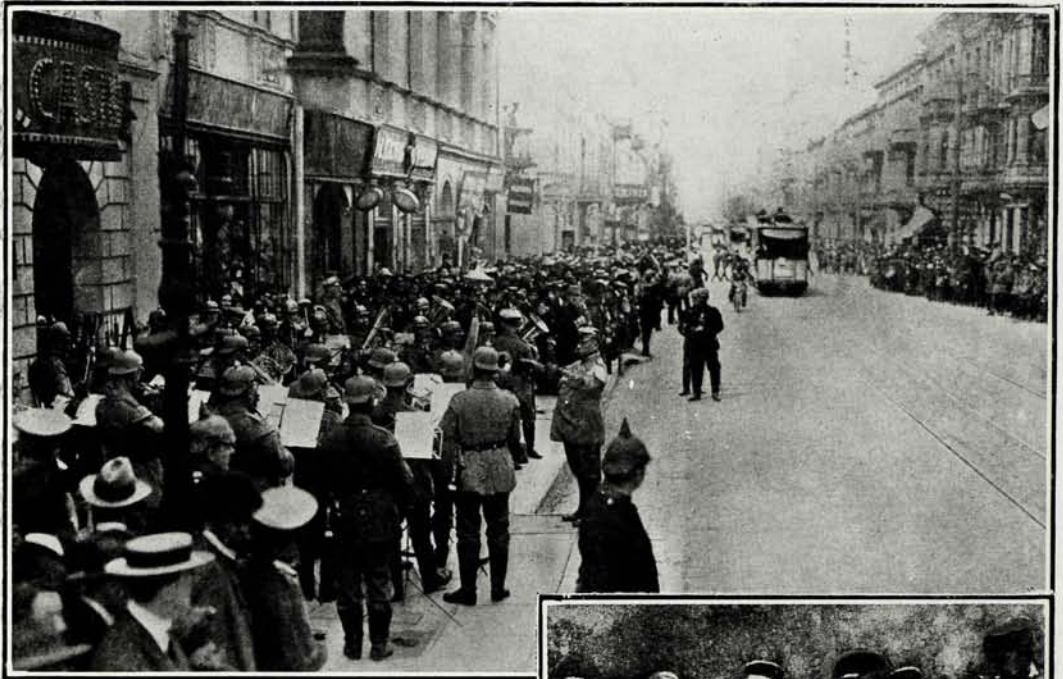
Ruined by requisitions, exploited commercially, economically dead, Russian Poland under German administration had to stand the burden of crushing taxation. It assumed every thinkable form. A poll-tax was introduced. A special permit had to be bought for travelling from one district to another. But besides that, every inhabitant above the age

of 15 had to buy a passport, which entitled him to nothing. A very heavy tax was introduced on dogs, in towns as well as in the country. Fiscal monopolies were established in alcohol, tobacco, and tea (the sale of "vodka" was reintroduced in Poland, simply in order that German distilleries might be able to grow rich by making spirits out of potatoes robbed from Poland, and that the German State might increase its revenue). The *pre-war* taxes were reintroduced, and even increased. Manufacturers had to pay industrial taxes on idle factories. In 1914 the Russian Government, in view of the general distress, had suspended the payment of certain taxes. In 1915 the Germans insisted on the payment of those arrears ! It is a matter of utter impossibility to go into the details of all these exactions : no sum was too small, no man was too poor, no trick was too dirty for the Germans, if only some profit could be reaped by it. The net result of their fiscal measures can, however, be summed up in one



AN INNOCENT VICTIM.

Sisters and playmates of a six-year-old Polish girl killed by a German bomb, bearing her coffin to the grave.



THE GERMAN BAND IN POLAND.

In a main street, Warsaw, on the occasion of the re-opening of the University by the Germans. Smaller picture: Polish boys compelled by the Germans to act as music-stands.



sentence: about the New Year of 1916 the Germans were drawing from the ravaged, impoverished part of Russian Poland under their occupation, where industries were idle, stocks exhausted, workmen unemployed, the same average monthly revenue which the Russian Government had been deriving from the *entire* country in the prosperous days which preceded the war.

Even volumes would not be sufficient to sum up the results of German economic rule in Poland in terms of human suffering. There is no exaggeration in saying that its population was simply dying off from sickness and starvation. The death-rate more than doubled after three or four months of German occupation; all the efforts of charitable organizations were unable to cope with the appalling misery. "A city of a million inhabitants cannot be fed except by a revival of its own trade activities," wrote Prince Lubomirski in his Memorandum on the economic condition of Warsaw. The same applies to a whole country. The Germans were fully conscious of what they were doing when they ruined the economic life of Russian Poland. It was throughout deliberate murder. "Should ever the British blockade conquer us," once said General von Beseler to a pro-

minent Pole, "you will not see it; you will be dead, all of you, long before that." The British Government, though fully aware that imports of food into Poland from neutral countries must in the long run benefit also its German masters, was still prepared to relax its blockade with regard to Poland, provided the guarantees were given without which it knew that no schemes could relieve the German-created misery in the unhappy country. It demanded that no food should be exported from Poland, either to Germany or to Austria-Hungary, nor be taken for the use of the German armies. But were the Germans to renounce the possibility of direct commandeering in exchange for possible roundabout gains (for the misery of the Polish population was never any concern to them)? No; they refused the British offer. Von Beseler was a grim prophet, and knew the mind of his masters.