

This is the first we have heard of any mistreatment of Austrians in this country, but then they probably had to advance some sort of reason for going to war. (1)

The ----- Chargé came around this afternoon to ask about getting to Antwerp, where he wants to flee for protection. He was very indignant because the Military Governor had refused to allow him to go. When I asked him on what ground the permission had been refused, he said that it had not exactly been refused, but that he could go only on his own responsibility. He wanted us to protest against this. I meanly suggested to him that he would be in much more serious danger if he had an escort of German troops to take him to the Belgian lines, and he left in a terrible state of mind.

Mr. Whitlock and the Spanish Minister went to call on the Military Governor this afternoon to get off some telegrams which he had promised to send, and to talk over the general situation. After that they went to call on the Burgomaster, and came back with a pretty good idea of what was happening in our fair city.

The Governor loaded them up with a large budget of official news, showing that Germany was victorious all along every line; that she was not only chasing the French and English armies around in circles, but that Uhlans were within forty kilometers of Paris, and that five Russian army corps had been beaten in Eastern Prussia. It really looks as though things were going pretty badly for the Allies, but we have absolutely nothing but German news and cannot form an accurate opinion.

The Germans are particularly bitter against the Belgian clergy and insist that the priests have incited the people to attack the German troops and mistreat the wounded. So far as I can learn, this is utter rubbish. The authorities of the church have publicly exhorted the people to remain calm and to refrain from hostile acts,

pointing out that any provocation would bring sure punishment from the German military authorities. The priests I have seen have been at great pains to set an example that the Germans should be the first to commend.

The clergy has a tremendous influence in Belgium, and is sincerely respected. They will be a vital force in holding the people together in their patriotic devotion, and in maintaining public tranquillity.

A new Governor-General is to be sent us here. The Minister could not remember his name. I am curious. von Lüttwitz will remain for the present at least.

The Burgomaster reports that the inhabitants of Brussels are calm and that there need be no fear of trouble unless they are allowed to go hungry. A committee has been formed to revictual the town, and is working night and day. Monsieur Solvay has given a million francs, and other Belgians given large sums. Soup kitchens are being started for the poor and the question of bringing food supplies from neutral countries is being taken up and pushed with activity. These Belgians are admirable in the way they handle things of this sort. They all realise the importance of keeping quiet so as to avoid any possibility of a repetition of the Louvain business. It would take very little to start something of the sort here and the result would be the same--the destruction of the city. Naturally everybody is turning to and trying to head off any excuse for violence.

1. The Belgian Government sent the following reply to the Austrian declaration of war :

Antwerp, August 29. 1914.

Belgium has always entertained friendly relations with all her neighbours without distinction.

She has scrupulously fulfilled the duties imposed upon her by her neutrality. If she has not been able to accept Germany's proposals, it is because those proposals contemplated the violation of her engagements toward Europe, engagements which form the conditions of the creation of the Belgian Kingdom. She has been unable to admit that a people, however weak they may be, should fail in their duty and sacrifice their honour by yielding to force. The Government have waited, not only until the ultimatum had expired, but also until Belgian territory had been violated by German troops, before appealing to France and Great Britain, guarantors of her neutrality, under the same terms as are Germany and Austria-Hungary, to coöperate in the name and in virtue of the treaties in defense of Belgian territory.

By repelling the invaders by force of arms, she has not even committed a hostile act as laid down by the provisions of Article 10 of The Hague Convention, respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers.

Germany has herself recognised that her attack constitutes a violation of international law, and being unable to justify it, she has pleaded her strategical interests.

Belgium formally denies the allegation that Austrian and Hungarian subjects have suffered treatment in Belgium contrary to the most primitive demands of humanity.

The Belgian Government, from the very beginning of hostilities, have issued the strictest orders for the protection of Austro-Hungarian persons and property.

DAVIGNON.

In GIBSON, Hugh (Secretary of the American Legation in Brussels, 1914) ; *A journal from our Legation in Belgium* ; New York ; Doubleday, Page & Company Garden City; 1917 :

<http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/memoir/Legation/GibsonTC.htm>

Footnotes.

It would be interesting compare with what **Roberto J. Payró** told about the same day in his *Diario de un testigo* (*La guerra vista desde Bruselas*) :

Original Spanish version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140829%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO.pdf>

Original Spanish version about Leuven :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140825-30%20PAYRO%20DESTRUCCION%20LOVAINA.zip>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140829%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20INCOMUNICADO%20FR.pdf>

French version about Leuven :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140829%20PAYRO%20DESTRUCTION%20DE%20LOUVAIN%20FR.pdf>

It would be also interesting compare with what **Paul MAX** (cousin of the *bourgmestre Adolphe MAX*) told about the same day in his *Journal de guerre* (*Notes d'un Bruxellois pendant l'Occupation 1914-1918*) :

http://www.museedelavilledebruxelles.be/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Fichier_PDF/Fonte/Journal_de%20Oguerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf