

**Brussels, September 26, 1914.**---My departure for Antwerp has been put off again and again, but if the German authorities live up to their promises, I shall be able to start to-morrow morning early. At the last minute the mothers of Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock decided to avail of the opportunity to go home, so I shall take them as far as Rotterdam before going to Antwerp. I shall attend to my business there and then go back to Rotterdam., take the ladies over to England, turn them over to Mr. N-----, spend a day or two there getting a line on the news, and then rush back to Antwerp, and then back to Brussels. I suppose I shall be away ten days or so, but there is no way of telling. I should like the little trip to England and a breath of air in a country where there is no actual fighting.

It is now half past eight and there is no telling when this family will sit down to dine. The Burgomaster has indulged in some more repartee with the German authorities, and they, with their usual *finesse*, have put him in prison. Yesterday the Germans got out a proclamation announcing that since the city of Brussels had not settled "voluntarily," the whole of the forced loan imposed upon her no more requisitions should be paid in cash, as had been promised.(1) Max thereupon sat down and wrote a letter to the banks, saying that they were to pay nothing on the forced loan unless and until the Germans conformed to their part of the agreement. He further annoyed the Germans by putting up an *affiche*, giving the lie to a proclamation of the Governor of Liège :

*The German Governor of the town of Liège, Lieutenant-General von Kolewe, caused the following notice to be posted yesterday :*

*"To the inhabitants of the town of Liège.*

*"The Burgomaster of Brussels has informed the German Commander that the French Government has declared to the Belgian Government the impossibility of giving them any offensive assistance whatever, as they themselves are forced to adopt the defensive."*

*I absolutely deny this assertion.*

*ADOLPHE MAX,  
Burgomaster.*

Lüttwitz replied to this by having Max arrested, and the present prospect is that he is to be sent to Germany as a prisoner of war. That is not very comforting for us, as he has been a very calming influence, and has kept the population of Brussels well in hand. If they do send him away, the Germans will do a very stupid thing from their own point of view, and win make Max a popular hero everywhere.

Early this evening Monsieur Lemonnier, the Senior Alderman, came around with several of his colleagues, and laid the matter before Mr. Whitlock and the Spanish Minister. They immediately went over to see General von Lüttwitz to see whether there was anything to be done for Max, but as they have been gone a long time, I fear they are going through one of those long and thoroughly unsatisfactory discussions that get nowhere.

Monsieur Lemonnier is waiting in my office to hear the result of the visit to Lüttwitz. He is naturally far from cheerful, and looks forward with a good deal of dread to taking over the reins if Max is sent to Germany. He, of course, foresees that the chances are in favour of his following Max into exile sooner or later, if he tries to do his duty. As to his own future he says only---"I succeed only to the

troubles of the office---*Max a bien emporté sa gloire avec lui.*" The life of a Belgian official these days is anything but comfortable.

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.**

1. The German point of view was set forth in the following official notice:

*"The German Government had ordered the cash payment of requisition, naturally believing that the city would voluntarily pay the whole of the forced payment(contribution de guerre) imposed upon it.*

*"It was only this condition that could justify the favoured treatment enjoyed by Brussels, as distinguished from the other cities of Belgium which will not have their requisition orders settled until after the conclusion of peace.*

*"Inasmuch as the city administration of Brussels refuses to settle the remainder of the forced payment, from this day forward no requisition will be settled in cash by the Government treasury.*

"The Military Governor,  
BARON VON LÜTTWITZ,  
Major-General"

Brussels, September 24, 1914.

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/19140926%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO.pdf>

French version :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140926%20PAYRO%20DIARIO%20DE%20UN%20TESTIGO%20FR.pdf>

Original Spanish version about Adolphe MAX :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140916%20PAYRO%20UN%20CIUDAD%20ANO%20EL%20BURGOMAESTRE%20MAX.pdf>

French version about Adolphe MAX :

<http://www.idesetautres.be/upload/19140916%20PAYRO%20UN%20CIUDAD%20ANO%20EL%20BURGOMAESTRE%20MAX%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%20guerre\\_de\\_Paul\\_Max\\_bdef.pdf](http://www.museedelavilledebruxelles.be/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/Fichier_PDF/Fonte/Journal_de%20guerre_de_Paul_Max_bdef.pdf)