

WAR DEMORALISATION IN GERMANY

BERLIN, MONDAY

The special correspondent, at Berlin, of the Manchester Guardian says:

The mother and her eighteen-year-old daughter shared a flat with an elderly widow in one of the most densely populated parts of Berlin. The widow died, whether naturally or by violence is still unknown. The mother and daughter, fearing some possible misadventure, took away the scanty furniture and left the flat destitute, hushed up the death of the old woman, cut the body into pieces, and burnt it in the washhouse fire.

A sister of the Reichswehr, carrying his full pack, issued from a station of the Berlin Underground late one evening. Another soldier, who happened to be passing by, caught sight of him, and, thinking he was carrying a sack of stolen or smuggled goods, advanced upon him. The soldier with the pack thought he was going to be attacked and robbed. He unslung his rifle, fired, and killed his comrade.

One night a man got into a taxi and ordered the driver to proceed to a distant part of Berlin. As the taxi careered through a dark, secluded street he fired into the driver's back, searched his pockets, and made off with a few bundles of bank-notes, the accumulated earnings of one day.

Such things happen almost every night here in Berlin. Incidents that would fill the English press with sensational copy are dismissed in short paragraphs by the German papers. Before the war the streets of Berlin were as safe as the streets of London. Now one walks uneasily through any but frequented thoroughfares at night-time. The Friedrichstrasse is a narrower, uglier Market Street, than the street of that name in Manchester. Until eleven o'clock its numerous, well-heated restaurants and cabarets are thronged by a noisy horde of nouveaux riches, who squander their plentiful money on plentiful food and drink. After eleven the dingy crowds fill the streets until the early morning. The Friedrichstrasse is therefore safe (except perhaps from pickpockets) throughout the twenty-four hours.

The wide and spacious Unter den Linden, flanked by sumptuous hotels and shops, is safe enough, although after midnight it is only peopled by occasional stragglers. Unter den Linden leads to the Tiergarten—Sunday pleasure-ground of pale children, a large, monotonous wall right in the heart of Berlin. Here it is that things often happen, and one is constantly warned against crossing it after night-fall. One prefers to make a detour rather than risk meeting doubtful characters along its secluded foot-paths that intersect close masses of trees.

The Forces Of Order.

Berlin is crowded with soldiers "field greys" of the old army, "Stoherheitswehr" in shining black helmets, and "Nosse's Guard," the famous Reichswehr, who, when on duty, patrol the streets carrying implements such as could be seen scattered broadcast on Flanders battlefields—steel helmets, hand-grenades (grey cylinders on wooden stalks), rifles, bayonets, and sometimes even Flammenwerfer. The Reichswehr soldiery are sufficiently imposing, but, like the pompously ornamental frontage and pseudo-classical porticoes of Berlin flats inhabited by people who have not seen milk for years and live in unheated rooms), they seem to be more imposing than useful, although in a country still saturated with militarism the "moral

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effect" is perhaps deemed an important contribution towards maintaining "law and order."

Today I called on the chief of the criminal police, an "Oberregierungsrat" and asked him if he could tell me anything startling about the crime wave here and the measures taken to counteract it. He said there was nothing startling to tell.

The crime wave is, of course, colossal," he continued. "To speak of a huge increase in crime is no mere sensationalism. But there are no new varieties of crime, only the old crimes committed in greater number and with added violence. You have the same thing in France and England, though less acutely, no doubt. Things are worse here in Germany because of shortages, poverty, and demoralisation are far more widespread than in the victorious countries. You can't expect anything else after a war. People have grown used to violence and think little of it. There's hardly a burglar in Berlin who does not carry a revolver. Robbery with assault and murder have never been so common as they are now. If the police get on the tracks of a man they know they may have to exchange shots with him before they can arrest him."

Demoralisation of Army Life.

"Army life has had a bad influence."

"Of course it has. Our young men have been terribly demoralised by four years of war followed by revolution and social misery. The country is full of desperadoes. Many of those who come before my notice must have been refined and decent fellows before the war, but are now nervous wrecks, with all their moral stamina gone, careless of life and thinking nothing of murdering another man for the sake of a few marks."

"There are other things as well. So many soldiers have learnt the 'scrounging' habit in the army—a habit that isn't easily dropped, at least not when a man is hungry. The military practised requisitioning in great style during the war, and, after all, 'requisitioning' and 'stealing' are only different words for the same kind of thing. And all armies do it; all armies are alike. And then there are the deserters, deserters from the army. They all live in hiding and many by theft. They are a particularly desperate lot, and very difficult to deal with."

The German press has been giving much attention to the "Out-Juden Problem." The so-called Ostjuden are Jews and Gypsies who continue to invade Germany from Poland and Galicia in great numbers. It is said (probably with exaggeration) that there are thirty or forty thousand in Berlin alone. They are charged with making the serious housing problem still more serious and of committing a big proportion of Berlin crimes. I asked the Oberregierungsrat if this was so. He said:

Undesirable Immigrants.

"Yes, there is a huge influx of shady characters from the east, and they have helped to swell the criminal population of Berlin. You would be surprised by the number of Poles and Galicians amongst the thieves we catch."

"Why doesn't the Government control or restrict immigration?" The Oberregierungsrat angrily stabbed his blotting-pad with his pencil and said:

"We've got a thoroughly inactive, humanitarian Socialist Government that thinks all people are alike. But something will have to be done. It's difficult to guard our long eastern frontiers, and it's quite impossible to repatriate alien criminals. We are preparing concentration camps to receive them, though. Even there the difficulties will be great, for the Polish and the Ukrainians or whatever Government is to have Galicia may raise objections or even take reprisals. We're at the mercy of our neighbors now, and haven't the position we had before the war."

"Do Berlin thieves show any preference for any particular articles?"

"Yes, carpets. Carpets are greatly sought after by the thieves generally. The number of carpets stolen in the last few months is amazing. And it isn't always easy to trace thefts of that kind, although they are so often accompanied by murder. The difficulty that there are receivers of stolen goods amongst all sections of the population. Even educated people of the upper classes now buy stolen goods at low rates. Such things were quite unheard of before the war, but then so many of the people who were wealthy once have been demoralised by poverty and deprivation."

"Are any special measures taken to meet the evil?"

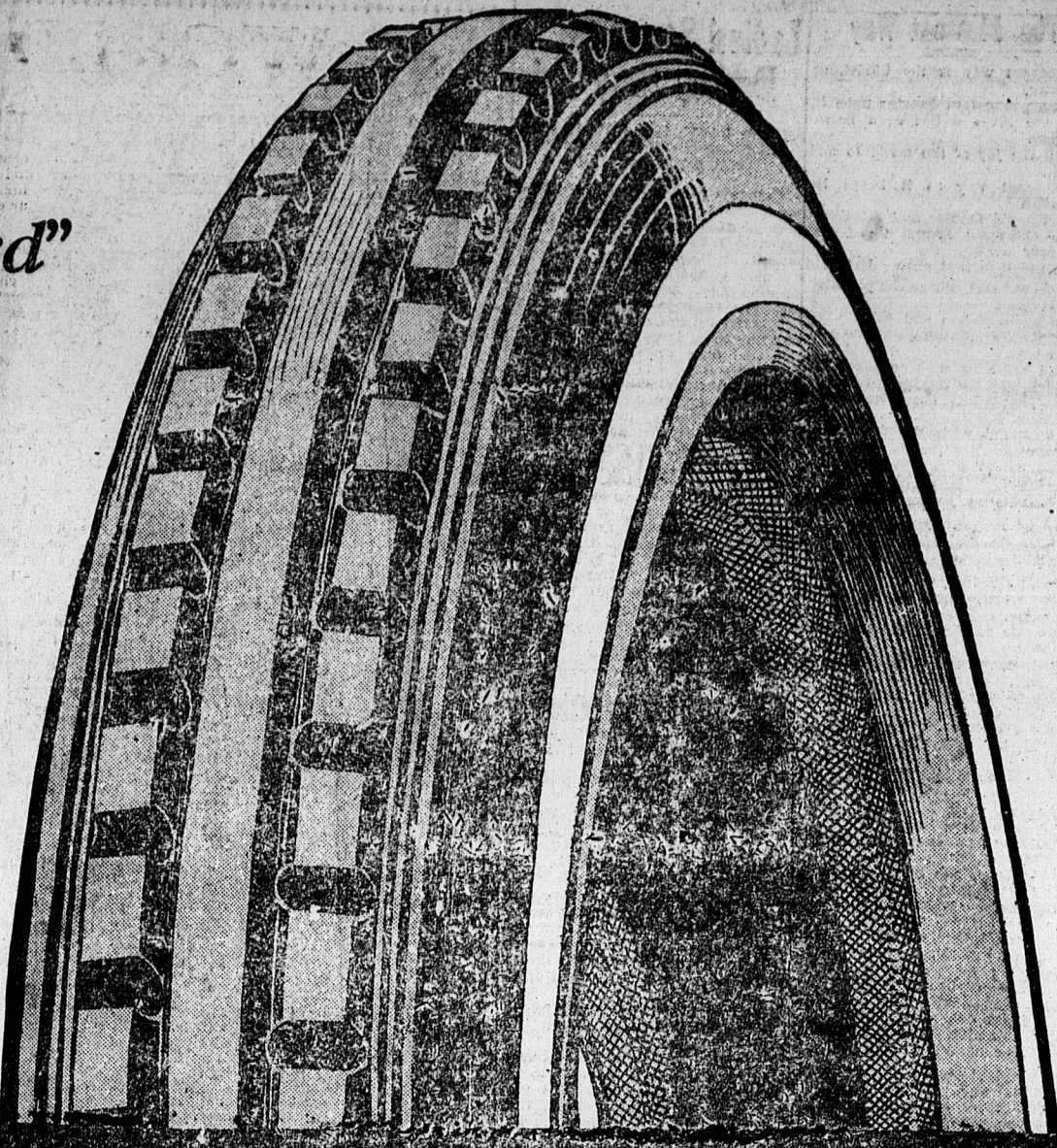
"All sorts of measures. We'll keep a complete record of all pets that are sold by dealers, and we exercise careful surveillance of newspaper advertisements—stolen goods are often offered for sale in the advertisement columns of the press. Very valuable work is done by our 'coppers' marks," our set agents, on the principle of a thief to catch a thief. These are set very high wages, and often information that leads to the recovery of hundreds of dollars of stolen property."

Berlin and London Police.

Asked whether there was any foundation for the belief that the Berlin police succeeded in obtaining a higher percentage of convictions than any other police, the Oberregierungsrat answered: "The Berlin criminal police undoubtedly efficient and their percentage of arrests over criminals is certainly very high, though I cannot give any figure. But I doubt whether an equal comparison between the force and the Paris or London

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force is possible. Each is good in its way, and I do not suppose there is much to choose between them."

"Is there any prospect of an appreciable reduction of crime here in Germany?"

"None whatever. It is all we can do to keep abreast of the vast epidemic of robbery, murder, and outrage. We are keeping abreast of it. It is no longer increasing, and that is in itself an achievement to be proud of. But there is at least no immediate prospect of reducing crime to pre-war dimensions. The effects of war, defeat, revolution, and misery are not swept aside so easily."

Time was in Toronto when the American dollar, today worth \$1.17 in our Canadian money, could be picked up for 40 cents. Those were the far-off days of the American Civil War before most of the Toronto money magnates had entered the world, and when Sir Edmond Walker, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, was a youth in his uncle's private banking office at Hamilton, where to handle the great influx of depreciated American money, separate ledgers were kept for it and our own Canadian currency.

The financial situation of the Northern States at that time has no parallel to that of Britain and Canada today. The North had not borrowed money abroad to secure the sinews of war. Uncle Sam had merely expanded his currency to an enormous extent. Early in the war most of the gold and silver in the States had been sent abroad to pay for supplies. There was nothing but paper in the country and with that and the uncertain fortunes of war, from early in the campaign American notes were at a big discount over here. During a considerable portion of the period between 1861 and 1865 the American dollar brought 50 cents and even 40 cents. At one time things looked so black for the North that in Quebec the American

greenback fell to 40 cents, where, as the Confederate dollar, which hardly passed current at all in Canada, brought 35 cents. Not until about 1879 did the American dollar get to par.

100,000 TURKS ORGANIZED FOR LIBERATION OF BAGDAD

LONDON, Feb. 9.—An extraordinary story about Enver Pasha is published in the Epoch, of Rome, says a Milan despatch to the Daily Telegraph. The story places this notorious Turk once more in the foreground as a wonderful adventurer. Enver has been in Turkey

for some time, it relates, organizing an army of 100,000 Turks for the liberation of Bagdad. His headquarters are at Ashkent, in Turkistan, where, during the war, there was a great camp of prisoners, Czech/Slovaks, Austrians, Hungarians and Turks.

Since the downfall of Admiral Kolchak Enver Pasha seems to have had a free hand in collecting Turkish war prisoners and recruiting among the Turkish population. He has proclaimed his purpose as being a great confederation of Muslemen countries, such as Turkistan, Bagistan, Mesopotamia and Bagdad, with the hope of finally penetrating as far as Afghanistan in the east, Arabia in the south and

Syria and Egypt to the west.

Numerous Turkish leaders fled from Constantinople to join Enver among them his uncle, Nuri Pasha who escaped from British control at Estoum, organizing Enver's forces in Baghistan and already has collected a considerable number of troops with which he occupied Derbent on the Caspian Sea. Hall Pasha, who escaped from prison in Constantinople, has organized a Turkish-Arab in Mesopotamia and it is said is marching on Bagdad with Shiek Chaivan and Adjemi Pasha. They intend to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan as an Armentan state, but will join all others in a new Turkish federation.