

	Overleden te	op	2) Gezinsv.		
	Akte no.				
3) Gesl.nm. a	b) op 22 Maart 1889		7) Beroep (h-o) zonder		
	gem. Offenberg				
Voorn. b	ond./land Duitsland				
	5) Nat. Vr				
8) van Josef--		geb. op 11 Sep 48	te Offenbach D1		
en van Bikard, Hedwig--		geb. op 11 Sep 66	te Rothweil D1		
Gehuwd met	9) Geslachtsnaam en 10) Voornamen	11-12) Geboren	13) Huwelijk gesloten	14-15-16) Huwelijk ontbonden	17) Afgevoerd (dagt. en gem).
	I Thelen, Otto Wilhelm	op 26 Oct 92 te Berlijn D1	op 8 Mei 18 te Rt	op 14 Jul 45 door O te Portier Fr	
II		op	op	door	
		te	te		
21) Dagt. aangifte	22) Gemeente en adres	21)	22)	21)	22)
11 Feb 55	FRANKFORT a/d MAIN ASD Prinsengrt 644 I	b/broer	Siegfried K		
28 Mrt 55	FRANKFORT a/d MAIN Schweigerstr 88			V Thelen	

VERBLIJFREGISTER

26) EIGEN en STIEFKINDEREN (alleen invullen op kaart GEZINSHOOFD)					
27) A.H.O. Dagtekening	28) Geslachtsnaam en 29) Voornamen	30-31) Geboren		32) Verh. gezinsh.	33-34) Aantekeningen
I		op			
II		te			
III		op			
IV		te			
V		op			
VI		te			
VII		op			
VIII		te			
IX		op			
		te			

3) Gesl.nm. a) Baschwitz--		4) Geboren op 2 Februari 1886 gem. Offenburg ond./land Duitschland		7) Beroep (h-o) journalist vertaler	
Voorn. b) Kurt-- Siegfried--		5) Nat. Vr			
8) van en van		geb. op		te	
		geb. op		te	
9) Geslachtsnaam en 10) Voornamen		11-12) Geboren	13) Huwelijk gesloten	14-15-16) Huwelijk ontbonden	17) Afgevoerd (dagt. en gem.)
I Thiessen, Erika		op 11 Apr 83 te Linden D1	op 25 Sep 19 te Hamburg	op 19 Apr 33 door S te Berlijn D1	14 Sep 40
II		op	op	op door	
		te	te	te	
21) Dagt. aangifte	22) Gemeente en adres	21)	22)	21)	22)
11 Oct 33	BERLIJN D1 ASD le Helmerstr 201bv div adressen		p/a Salomon		
30 Jul 41	PB 04359				
20 Jan 43	Deurloostraat 92				
12 Jul 43	DUITSCHLAND				

26) EIGEN en STIEFKINDEREN (alleen invullen op kaart GEZINSHOOFD)					
27) A.H.O. Dagteekening	28) Geslachtsnaam	29) Voornamen	30-31) Geboren	32) Verh. gezinsh.	33-34) Aanteekeningen
I A 24 9 35	Baschwitz	Horst	op 15 Oct 20 te Hamburg D1		NI
II zie 33-34)	Gisela		op 14 Mrt 22 te Hamburg D1	d	zie Thiessen, Erika
III zie 33-34)	Rotraut		op 29 Oct 23 te Hamburg D1	d #	zie Thiessen, Erika
IV			op		
V			op		
VI			op		
VII			op		
VIII			op		
IX			op		

H/W: 23apr58AA

1) Vergel. met gebakte (dagt. en jaar) No. 5aVr 23apr58AA

2) Gezinso.

73

3) Gest.nm. a) Baschwitz-- b) Sigfried-- c) Siegfried/ Kurt--	4) op 2 Februari 1886. gem. Offenburg ond./land Duitschland 5) Nat. Ned zie 35)	[Redacted]	beroop (1-10)
			journalist vertaler hoogleraar zonder

Zoon (5) van en van Josef-- Bikard, Hedwig--	geb. op	te
	geb. op	te

9) Geslachtsnaam en 10) Voornamen Thiessen, Erna Luise Erika Scholz, Ilse Emma Elisabeth =	11-12) Geboren op 11 Apr 83 te Linde D1 op 22 dec 14 = te Berlijn D1 =	13) Huwelijk gesloten op 25 Sep 19 te Hamburg op 16 jun 58 = te Asd =	14-15-16) Huwelijk ontbonden op 19 Apr 33 door S = te Berlijn D1 = op door te	17) Afgevoerd (dagt. en gem.) = - E.V.C. -
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21) Dagt. aangifte	22) Gemeente en adres	21)	22)	21)	22)
11 Oct 33 22 Nov 33 14 Sep 40 30 Jul 41 20 Jan 43 12 Jul 43 28 Oct 43 8 Nov 43 14 Jan 46 gew 8 Mei 46 11 Mei 48 13 Sep 50	BERLIJN DL ASD Ie Helmersstr 201bv Weissenbruchstr 35 II Niersstr 59 II PB04359ing 216956 Deurloostr 92 D1 ASD Deurloostr 92 I PBI 7329 Z Amstelln 260 I Rooseveltln 260 I Saphatistr 80 hs Prinsengracht 644 Hs moet zijn Prinsengr 644 I+II				
		<p><i>Handwritten notes:</i> 115 19 Sep 1958 m/v 300 20.11.58</p>		<p>Overleden te AMSTERDAM op 6 jan 68 , Akte No. 3-139 Naam _____ / lijkshouwer H van de Eijk</p>	

26) EIGEN en STIEFKINDEREN (alleen invullen op kaart GEZINSHOOFD)

27) A.H.O. D. tekening	28) Geslachtsnaam en 29) Voornamen	30-31) Geboren	32) Verh. gezinsh.	33-34) Aanteekeningen
I <i>11 Dec 47</i> <i>Paranormal Sw.</i>	Baschwitz, Horst	op 18 Oct 20 te Hamburg D1	Z	
II <i>33 34)</i>	<del>Gisele</del> Hedwig Gisela	= op 14 Mrt 22 te Hamburg D1	= d	zie Thiessen, Erika
III H 6 Sep 55 met A E M H Bloklander	Rotraut	op 29 Oct 23 te Hamburg D1	d	
IV		op		
V		op		
VI		te		
VII		op		
VIII		te		
IX		op		
X		te		
XI		op		
XII		te		

**Version: 1 August 2016**

**Jaap van Ginneken, Notes on a GENEALOGY OF KURT BASCHWITZ  
for a biography in English and Dutch (to be published late 2017)**

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**DISTANT FAMILY/ NAME ORIGIN: PROBABLY BASZOWICZE,**  
Kielce district, LITH.-POLISH COMMONWEALTH (some later spelled it Baswitz)

Dynasty of Jewish bookprinters

Early 1700s: Zwi Hirsh ben Meier Baschwitz, born in Brzecz, Lithuania, migrated to  
Germany

With son: Meir > Frankfurt a.d. Oder

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Some further early data from Geni/ My Heritage:

**GREAT GRANDFATHER BASCHWITZ** (son of Meyer Markus Hirschel B. and  
Zore/ Sara Rifka), father of Samuel: BARUCH Meyer,  
well-known bookprinter, associate of the even better-known Wolf Heidenheim in  
Rödelsheim/ Frankfurt a.M.  
Married (in The Netherlands, before French take-over?): Clara 1775-1845.

**GRANDPARENTS BASCHWITZ**

Grandfather of Kurt B., Father of Joseph B.: SAMUEL, bookprinter (27 July 1813 – 4  
April 1884, buried in Frankfurt am Main).

Grandmother of Kurt B., Mother of Joseph B.: Hannicke HAHN (18 July 1813 – 27  
Nov. 1872)

**GRANDPARENTS BIKARD**

Grandfather of Kurt B., Father of mother Hedwig: Max Bikard, beer brewer?

Grandmother of Kurt B., Mother of mother Hedwig: Sophie Esslinger

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**PARENTS OF KURT B.**

Father: JOSEPH BASCHWITZ (b. 11 Sept. 1847- d. 1 August 1918 Frankfurt a.M.),  
(not beerbrewer?). First book printer/ seller? then bank/ insurance representative

Siblings: Older sister Clara (1842-1895) married Daniel Zucker; Younger brother  
Herman (b. 1851); younger sister Ida (b. 1854) married Carl Olaren; Bertrand;  
Sabine.

Mother: HEDWIG BIKARD, als called Hedro (sister of Lydia Metzger). b. Rottweil/  
Baden Württemberg 20 Sept.1866 – d. 29 March 1943, Westerbork transit camp. Urn  
Jewish cemetery Diemen > Internet 'Joods monument')

Marriage Joseph & Hedwig: .... (19 years age difference?)

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**SIBLINGS OF KURT B.**

Kurt's baby brother Alfred Bertram (b. 20 August 1887, d. 24 May 1888 as an infant)

Kurt's younger Sister: JOHANNA (also called 'Hans?'), b. 23 March 1889  
Offenburg- d. ?.

Married (8 May 1918, Rotterdam) Otto Wilhelm Thelen (Born 26 Oct. 1892  
Hagenau/ Berlin, then interned German officer, later aircraft engineer)  
(Son of Hermann Heinrich Thelen and Anna Margarethe Roeck)  
(Brother of Robert, 23 March 1884 Nürnberg – 23 Febr. 1968 Berlin-Hirschgarten,  
famous German air pioneer)  
Son of Johanna and Otto Thelen: Peter Thelen (a.o. journalist, Der Spiegel ± 1959)

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**Siegfried KURT BASCHWITZ (2 Febr. 1886 Offenburg – 6 Jan. 1968  
Amsterdam), journalist/ university professor**

First marriage 25 Sept. 1919 (Hamburg), to Erna Louise ERIKA THIESSEN  
TEMMELE, then actress/ concert singer – artist name Bronow?. Divorced: (19 April  
1932, Berlin. Long continued to live together thereafter). 3 children (see below).

PM. Kurt published 6-7 books in German, Dutch a.o. languages; of which one  
wartime book in Dutch under the borrowed name of Casimir K. Visser

(After retirement: Second marriage of Kurt with ILSE SCHOLZ from Berlin,  
marriage 1958 Amsterdam). No children.

Pm. Early biography outlines about Kurt in published master's theses by Vera Ebels-  
Dolanová (Dutch, Amsterdam 1983) and Dieter Anschlag (German, Münster 1990).  
More complete biography in preparation by Jaap van Ginneken (English & Dutch,  
late 2017).

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**CHILDREN OF KURT & ERIKA**

(Changed their German-sounding first names to more general or Dutch-sounding  
ones, upon the family's forced exile to The Netherlands, summer/ autumn 1933).

**Eldest son of Kurt & Erika: Horst, later called HANS** (18 Oct. 1920, Hamburg –  
18 Aug. 1993 Long Meadow, Massachusetts (Profession in later life: insurance  
salesman)

Emigrated from The Netherlands, via Surinam/ Neth. Antilles and Puerto Rico to the  
U.S., after the Second world war

Married, 1952: Hazel Williams

Daughter: Carol, married Reverend Dr. Peter J. Smith (Hanson, Mass.). Has  
grandchildren.

Son: Kent, also called Kim.

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**Eldest daughter of Kurt & Erika: Gisela, later called ISA** (14 March 1922  
Hamburg – 25 Febr. 2002 Amstelveen)

Son: Bubo Jan Damen (born 1951, theatre/ film director, lives in Amsterdam)

Early marriage of Gisela/ Isa to: Antonie Jacobus GUNDELACH (Colleague from resistance/ B.S. interior forces. Designer/ Architect, b. 23 March 1919, d. 2000).  
Son of Isa & Anton Gundelach: Reinout (Died in accident, at appr. four years old).  
PM. Gundelach professional file in Amsterdam City Archive + Gift (painted Baschwitz portrait, B. book copies etc.) to Univ. of Amsterdam. Divorce. Remarried Helena Gelderloos (1935-1995).

Later marriage of Gisela/ Isa to: DAVE (David Ewoud Allard) TESKE, economist (Born 17 March 1912. Deceased Ad: *De Telegraaf* 8 Oct. 1994, on Delpher search).  
Had children from a previous marriage? > Sons Daco & Eric; Daughter Marijke Fijneman Teske, married to Martin Fijneman (b. 18 Sept. 1948- d. 23 Aug. 2009)  
No children of Isa & Dave Teske.

**Youngest daughter of Kurt & Erika: Rotraut, later called RODY** (29 Oct. 1923 Hamburg - 1 June 1992 Oegstgeest/ Leiden) > Deceased ad: *Leidsch Dagblad*, 3 June 1992 (on Delpher search)  
Marriage to: A.E.H.M. BLOKLANDER (psychiatrist/ univ. teacher ... - 1 Nov. 1995)  
Elder grandson: ERIK Bloklander  
Younger grandson: Hans JORIS Bloklander

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Notes Jaap van Ginneken; for check microfilms KB & *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*. Chronology, around WWI.  
Version: 6 Nov. 2016.

Background. KB worked for the HF from 1909 until 1924; from Oct. 1916 until Jan. 1919 as a correspondent in neutral Rotterdam. I am particularly interested in his own and the editors' views of German vs. allied 'wrongdoings' during the First World War (and Versailles). Because his subsequent book *Der Massenwahn* (1923, 1932) is a kind of patriotic polemic against allied (and neutral) propaganda. It looks he was half wrong and half right there. It remains interesting today for its view of the psychodynamics of enemy images.

I am completing an intellectual biography of Kurt Baschwitz in English and Dutch (maybe later translated into German). This (1909-1924) was the very first phase of his career, with some youthful mistakes. He later became a major founder of press/ mass communication science and mass psychology in The Netherlands and elsewhere. Long ago, there have already been two master's theses on him: one in Dutch by Ebels; one in German by Anschlag. But I have already added quite some new material, even on the period around WWI.

Unfortunately, for reasons of both time and money, it is impossible to even try and identify all his HF articles and analyze them. I read German but cannot write it properly, and the *Frakturschrift* will make very rapid scanning extra difficult. So I will try to **focus on certain dates or periods**, with the best chances at somehow finding 'usable' results. These may include front-pages/ headlines/ articles on major events produced by the newspaper's entire staff, or articles/ comments by Baschwitz himself in particular (also under initials or aliases), on the most pertinent topics.

The emphasis of my search will therefore be on:

A) The start of the war (late June, July-Aug. 1914); including German rumours about civilian atrocities against regular troops;

B) The polemics about German mass reprisals/ atrocities against civilians, part. in Belgium (first in Sept. 1914, with intellectuals taking positions, with a flurry of later 'final' reports in Spring 1915).

C). Other atrocity stories: the Lusitania sinking, the 'Corpse factory' hoax (see below). With on the other hand later the blockade & famine in Germany at (and after) the end of the war;

D) Baschwitz' days in Rotterdam (Oct. 1916- Jan. 1919), his further reflections on propaganda and enemy images, and his first days back in Hamburg.

The detailed chronological list below is for my own orientation during the search; I do not necessarily need to see every date.

~~1909~~

~~PM. Febr. mid: Baschwitz hired at the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*~~

~~Dec. 17: art. KB on 25<sup>th</sup> jub. merger Lib. Part. (mentioned by Ebels)~~

~~PM. New Year's donation lists~~

1910

~~Dec 11: art. KB on Edouard von Simson (Ebels)~~

Dec. 31: art. KB (year overview, foreign affairs (Ebels)

1911

Febr. 2: art. KB, 'Reichtum an Menschen' (Ebels)

Oct. 20: KB, 'Von der Kaiserstrone' (Ebels)

1912

Jun. 20: KB, Politische Wochenschau

1913

Jun. 2, HF Literarische Rundschau. KB, Buchbesprechung 'Geheime Wissenschaften'

1914

Jun. 28: Sarajevo

July 5: (Yes or no) Kronrat in Postdam

July 20-23, 25: Fr. State visit and troop review in St. Petersburg; Russ.

Kronrat supports Serbia

July 23, 28: Austrian ultimatum & War declaration. Further mobilisations and ultimatums

July 25 a.f. Pro-war demonstrations in major capitals

July 29: art. KB/ HF, 'Angriffslust des Sklaventums'

Aug. 1: Decl. of war on Russia

Aug. 3: Decl. of war on Fr.; Demand of Transit, followed by Invasion

Lux. & Belgium. Britain enters & imposes maritime blockade on

Germany

Aug. 7: Dutch *Telegraaf* a.o. 'eyewitn.' reports about franc-tireur resistance in Liège/ Luik, part. Herstal, picked up abroad

(PM. Aug. 9: art. KB/ *Afrika Post*).

Aug. 10, 20: German occup. Liège/ Luik & Brussels, many civilians killed

Aug. 14: 1<sup>st</sup> denunciation of German atrocities/ war crimes by Belg. Comm.

Aug. 19 (- Sept. 6): Aarschot massacre, 156 civilians  
Idem Andenne, Tamines, Dinant (See Lipkes; Horne & Kramer).

Aug. 20: German intell. & artists renounce British awards

Aug. 25: Destruction Old Leuven/ Louvain/ Löwen, 248 citizens killed

Sept. 5-12: Battle Marne, Fr. Gov. to Bordeaux, stabilis. Front

Sept. 18: *Times* declaration by 52 Br. authors

Sept.: Various further early reports about atrocities

Sept. 27, 28: Protest 127 art. & intell. against Germany, *Tribune de Genève*

Oct. 4: Das Manifest der 93 – Aufruf an die Kulturwelt

Oct. 16: Erklärung der [3,000] Hochschullehrer des Deutschen Reiches

Oct. 21: *The Times*, reply to the 93, by 150 Br./ for. art./ intell.

(Nov. 3: Mid-term elections U.S., Rep. gains)

Nov. 20: Itw. Crown prince Wilhelm with UPI – ‘We did not want war’

1915

Jan. beginn.: 1<sup>st</sup> atrocities report French Commission , 45+250 pp. (transl. 1916)

Febr. 22: Germany announces U-boat warfare against merchant ships

Spring: More extensive reports about atrocities (in Belgium, Fr. etc.)

Apr. 25 (- Jan. 9, 1916): Dardanelles offensive and retreat

May 7: Sinking of Lusitania (versions contested)

May 10: German White Paper ‘Die volkswiderr. Führung d. belg. Volkskriegs’

May 13: British Bryce report, 61 + ... pp. Major impact in U.S.

Aug.: Baralong incident

Oct. 11: Exec. Br. nurse Edith Cavell, in Brussels

1916

Febr. 18: 1<sup>st</sup> British blacklist of firms in neutr. countries

Febr. 21 (- July 21): Verdun

April: Belg. ‘Livre Gris’ response to German White Book

**June 22: Fr. Bombard. Cirkus Karlsruhe (Baschwitz)**

June 24 (- Nov. 26): Somme

Aug.: Hindenburg & Ludendorff lead gen. staf

Sept. 15: British tanks employed

**Oct. 2 a.f.: News about arrest of KB’s predecessor Paul Vollrath for ‘spying’**

**Oct. 10: arrival of Kurt Baschwitz in Rotterdam**

- Nov. 2: art. KB 'Deutschland, England und die Holänder' (Ebels)  
 Nov. 4: art. KB, 'Die Zaungaste' about German children in Neth. ? (Ebels)  
 Nov. 7: Wilson re-elected  
 Dec. 12: German peace proposals rejected by Entente  
 Dec. 21: Demand for everyone's Peace proposals (Wilson)

1917

- Jan. 19: Publication Zimmermann telegr. (somewhat twisted? > Febr. rupt. dipl. rel.)  
 Jan. 22: Wilson 'peace without victory'  
 Febr. 1: Germany resumes unrestricted U-boat warfare  
 Febr. 27: 'Febr.' revol. Russia (Mrch. 17: Abic. Nicolas II)  
 Apr. 3: Return Lenin (demands soc. rev.)  
 Apr. 2, 6: Congress meets, Am. enters the war (Good Friday)  
 Apr. 10, 17: Corpse factory story, of Berlin *Lokal Anzeiger* twisted in *Times* a.m.o.  
 May 22: art. KB, 'Die Diplomaten der Mittelmächte auf der Heimreise' (Ebels)  
 May 26: art. KB 'Deutsche Kinder in Holland' (Ebels)  
 June 26: 1<sup>st</sup> Am. div. in Fr.  
 July 19: Reichstag Peace resol. majority parties  
**Sept. 4: Arrival of mother Hedwig B.-Bikard in Rotterdam**  
 Nov. 7: 'October' revolution  
 Nov. 20: 1<sup>st</sup> tank battle, Cambrai  
 Dec. 1: Armistice Brest-Litovsk, start peace negot.

1918

- Jan. 8: Wilson 14 points  
 Mrch. 3: Peace of Brest-Litowsk  
**Mrch. 21: Arrival sister Johanna in Rotterdam**  
 Mrch. 21 (- Juli 17): German 'final' offensive  
**May 8: Marriage sister in Rotterdam, with Otto Wilhelm Thelen, interned German air force officer (brother of air pioneer)**  
 Summer: 'Spanish/ Flemish' flu  
 July 18 (- Aug. 8): Allied counter-off., German retreat to Siegf. Line  
**Aug.: News of death of father Joseph B. in Frankfurt a.M.**  
 Sept. 29: (Even) vHindenburg & Ludendorff now want offer of armistice  
 Oct. 3, 4- 12: vBaden chancellor, German offer of armistice (on basis of 14 points), retreat  
 Oct. 8, 14, 23: Am. notes with answers and minimum demands  
 Oct. 29, Nov. 7, 9: Fleet mutiny Wilhelmshafen, Revol. Munich & Berlin

Nov. 9, 10: Abdic. & Flight Wilhelm, Procl. of Rep. by SPD chairman Scheidemann, handing over of gov. to Ebert  
 Nov. 11: Armistice

1919

Jan. 3: Hoover leads Europ. Aid progr. (> German Famine)

Jan. 5-11: Spartacus revolt, founding of Nazi party

Jan. 18: Opening Versailles conf., without Germans

**Jan. late: Return KB to Hamburg**

Febr. 3: Wilson presides over 1<sup>st</sup> session Versailles

Febr. 11: Ebert pres. German Rep.

Apr. 28: Arrival of German repr. Versailles

May 7, 29, June 16: Handing over of peace cond.; counter-proposal; signing demanded; SPD Chanc. Scheidemann refuses

**June mid?: riots in Hamburg**

June 21, 22, 28: New German gov., Assembly agrees, sign. Versailles

July 31: Weimar Rep.

**Sept. 25: Marriage KB in Hamburg**

Nov. 13: Am. senate refuses League of Nations and Versailles (repres. leave)

Dec.: Dec. German elections

THE REST OF THIS LIST IS 'PRO MEMORIAM';  
 I DO NOT PLAN TO SCAN THOSE DATES

1920

Jan. 10, 16: League of Nations, 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

Febr. 26: Invasion Saar

Apr. 6: Fr. Occup. (> Ruhr)

June 21: Allied command imposes 42 years of annual repar. payments

Nov. 2: Harding pres.

1921

Jan. 10: 'War crimes' tribunal Leipzig (Apr. 24: Ludendorff freed)

Mrch. 8: Failed payments; Fr. occup Ruhr cities

**Mrt. 24: Comm. riots Hamburg**

Apr. 27: Repar. payments 269 bio Goldmarks, later 132; German counter-proposals

May 5: Ultimatum 1<sup>st</sup> term; Fr. Mobilis. f. Ruhr (> Jan. '23)

Aug. 29 (-Dec. 16): State of Emergency Germany

Oct. 27: Germany accepts conditions for war repar.

Dec. 15: Demand for Moratorium on payments

**1923: Publ. *Der Massenwahn* (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> pr.)**

**1924?: KB leaves for Berlin. Dawes plan**

1925: Locarno conf.

1930: Young plan: 34,5 bio Goldmarks in 59 j. (t. 1988)

1932: Lausanne: final payment war rep. 3 bio (DTV: according to Germany 53 paid in all; according to some Allies only 20 - through American loans).

## Kurt Baschwitz, Key years, places & occupations

- 1886, Febr. 2, **Offenburg**, Baden: Born, childhood & primary school  
1897, **Frankfurt** am Main: Lessing Gymnasium  
1903, 1904, Bruchsal (near **Karlsruhe**): Final year ?  
1905, summer, **Heidelberg**: univ.; **Berlin** univ.; **Frankfurt** Acad. f. Social & Ec. Sc.  
1908, **München**: university, Ph. D./ doctorate economics with Prof. Lujo Brentano  
1909, **Frankfurt** am Main: journalism, brief internship *F.Z.* ?  
1909, Febr., **Hamburg**: journalist, quality daily *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* (*H.F.*)  
1916 October, **Rotterdam** (Neth.): Wartime foreign correspondent  
1919 January, **Hamburg**: return to editorial staff *HF*, first marriage  
1924, **Berlin**: Editorial staff, daily *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (*D.A.Z.*)  
1929, **Dresden**: editorial staff daily *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten* (*D.N.N.*)  
1929, **Berlin**: editor-in-chief, newspaper publisher's weekly *Zeitungs-Verlag* (*Z.V.*)
- 1933, Early March (age 47): flight to **Amsterdam** (Neth.), as an anti-fascist and Jew  
1934, Jan. (?): three years assistant at Alfred Wiener's 'information bureau' (on anti-Semitism in Germany), today Holocaust museum in London  
1935, Jan., March: 'private lecturer' in press studies at municipal university  
1936, 1937: assistant, at Posthumus' Int. Inst. for Social History (first as volunteer)  
1940: invasion, flight, stay at various addresses  
1940, Dec.: fired as a Jew at the IISH and the university  
1942: arrest in razzia, transit camp Westerbork, release, hiding  
1945, 1946: restoration as 'private lecturer'  
1947, 1948: lecturer, then professor of press studies  
1957, 1958, 1959: retired, in phases  
1968, Jan. 6: Deceased

Kurt Baschwitz:

**DER MASSENWAHN – seine Wirkung und seine Beherrschung**

Zweite unveränderte Auflage

C.H. Becksche Verlagsbuchhandlung Oskar Beck München (1923)

„Die Schlachtreihe der Männer sind durchbrochen. Nun stehen, wie in alter Vorzeit, die Frauen im Kampf. Auf ihr Wirkungskreis, auf den der sorgenden Mütter, trifft dem Krieg nach dem Kriege in seinem Geitzermürbendsten Form. Ihr stilles, ungerühmtes Heldentum des Alltags verteidigt den Fortbestand des deutschen Heimes und rettet dessen seelischen Werte über die Jahre, in denen die deutsche Heimat der Verteidigung ermangelt. Der einen aus der Heerschar der in Treue und Mut nie verlahmenden Notgefährtinnen ERIKA ist diese Buch gewidmet“

Inhalt

pp. 1-5: Vorwort – Über den vorsichtigen Gebrauch dies Buches (+ motto Fichte)

**EINLEITUNG: UNSER ABERGLAUBE (+ motto Machiavelli)**

**6 - 1. Unsere Massenwahnvorstellungen über den Massenwahn**

7 Gegen Massenwahn hilft kein ‚Besprechen‘

9 Der Dunstkreis des Deutschenhasses

11 Überschätzung der Wichtigkeit des Kabelbesitzes

13 Überschätzung der gegnerischen Werbekünste

15 Versagen der englischen Meinungsmacherei im Burenkrieg

17 Versagen der Aufklärungsarbeit Lincolns

19 Meinungsumschwung und Vergesslichkeit

**19 - 2. Massenwahn im Geschichtsurteil**

21 Der alte Fritz im Ringen um die Weltmeinung

23 Friedrich des Grossen vergebliche Aufklärungsmühe

25 Friedrichs Empfindungen über das Urteil der Welt

27 Das heutige Irrtum über die damalige Völkerstimmung

29 Goethes Eindrücke

31 Der Erfolg wandelt die Meinung

33 Das Einkreisungsgeräusch

34 2. Urteile der Geschichte als Massenwahnerscheinungen

35 Gesetzmässigkeiten im Irrtum

**ERSTER TEIL: MASSENWAHN UND EINZELVERSTAND \* (+ motto Goethe)**

**37 - 3. Ansteckende Massengeisteserkrankungen**

39 Der Massenwahn ist keine Krankheit

41 Kampf und Besessenheitsseuchen

43 Die Ansteckungsgefahr in der Neuzeit

**45 - 4. Zwischen Geisteskrankheit und Massenwahn**

47 Die Schuldfrage beim Hexenwahn

49 Die Möglichkeit von Rückfällen in den Hexenwahn

- 51 Schreckensherrschaft Geisteskranker über Gesunde
- 53 Herenwahn und Deutschenhass

#### **54 - 5. Der Massenwahn gesunder Menschen und seine Ursachen**

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(pp. 277-282: Ankündigungen andere Bücher der C.H. Becksche Verlagsbuchhandlung, München, über Politik. Wie: Oswald Spengler, Der Untergang des Abendlandes; Albert Schweitzer, Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur u.v.a.)

Massenwahn 1932, Abstracts

**Abstract/ Summary/ Overview of the argumentation in the final edition of Kurt Baschwitz' study on 'Mass delusion' (*Der Massenwahn*).**

*Note about the changed subtitle.* It changed from 'Its workings and mastery' (Seine Wirkung und seine Beherrschung, 1923) to 'Causes and healing of the hatred of Germans' (Ursache und Heilung des Deutschenhasses, 1932). The emphasis within the book itself shifted accordingly.

Both versions can well be considered rather *one-sided*, in the sense that they mobilized all possible arguments *against* the 'official' allied version of events (that largely remained dominant in history books ever since), but shunned possible arguments to support it – of which there were many as well.

(During his later life in The Netherlands, Baschwitz hardly ever mentioned this 'youthful error of judgment' or referred back to it in some detail in subsequent works. He probably felt slightly embarrassed by it, particularly after the Second World war had reinforced the allied perspective. He may have hoped it would be overlooked – which it largely was. Few later readers went far beyond the title, or dug deep into the text itself. As the first edition was printed in the old-fashioned 'Frakturschrift' which readers found increasingly burdensome to decipher; and fewer even knew there had also been a second version).

*Background.* After his Ph.D. in economics, young Kurt Baschwitz had begun to work as a journalist for a quality daily in Germany's main seaport, the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*. Like most middle-class liberal intellectuals, he was proud of the country's resurgence and identified with it. At thirty, halfway the First World War, he was sent to become its correspondent in the key neutral Dutch seaport of Rotterdam. This enabled him to closely follow the international press, to try and sort fact from fiction.

To his great surprise many allied propaganda stories continued to thrive, long after having been debunked by German sources or by mere facts. Even though the Dutch (as well as the Swiss) governments tried to maintain neutrality, he felt, the population of these neighbouring non-combatant states turned increasingly anti-German. This even continued long after the war had been lost, and after the disastrous Versailles treaty had been imposed. He wondered why this was the case, and thus embarked on the book upon his return.

*Central ideas.* The Atlantic allies did of course have huge advantages in international propaganda, both material and immaterial, which the confined central European powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) had not. But the main reasons, he felt, were psychodynamic. The author of whom most studies were quoted by far, was Sigmund Freud. Even though Kurt Baschwitz did not follow a conventional psychoanalytical approach, his key notions in this book were all closely related to it.

The contrast between conscious and unconscious thoughts, the idea that we are often not aware of our own deepest drives, and deploy a wide variety of mental 'defence mechanisms' to overlook them. Another key process is similar to 'cognitive dissonance reduction', although that term was coined only much later. Since the Versailles treaty imposed an extraordinarily heavy punishment on the ordinary German adults, their children and even future generations, they must somehow be held extraordinarily guilty.

*Editions.* The first edition of the book was published during the first desperate economic crisis of 1923, and immediately sold two printings. It was followed by a

slow return to more-or-less normal, but then a fallback into a second desperate economic crisis five years later. It launched the Nazis on the road to power, with remilitarization and the first anti-Jewish measures – which ultimately cost Baschwitz his prestigious new job and forced him to flee. So it was with further anger and despair that he reworked the entire book for a more elaborate second edition published in 1932, and added a new subtitle on the unreasonable Germanophobia – particularly of ‘onlooker and bystander’ states. To the unprepared reader, however, both the title and the argument may easily convey a false impression about his true motives and preoccupations.

*Slanted perception.* We tend to see the First World War through the lens of the Second World War and conflate the two. The Germans were alone in causing the war, we are told, and committed unspeakable atrocities. The Allies had no ulterior motives: neither the Americans, nor the British, or even the French. Generations of new academic historical research, however, paint a rather different picture. The First World War arose out of an escalating struggle between half a dozen big powers, which had been going on for many years and had become increasingly hard to contain. It was the first war in history that was both massive and industrial. There were many horrors and atrocities during the First World War, but Germany was not alone in committing them – and many ‘accepted truths’ about them have since turned out to be plain wrong. This is not to plea for a ‘revisionist history’, but for an understanding of Baschwitz’ preoccupations in this place and time.

*PS. Style.* A confusing habit of his is to use an entire paragraph for positing a way of thinking, and then abruptly follow it with Nein/ No: this is not how things really are, and then another paragraph to explain why. It regularly puts the reader on the wrong foot.

p. V. This second edition is devoted to Baschwitz’ mother. The first edition had been devoted to Baschwitz’ wife. (Reasons for the shift can be found in the biography).

This second edition has an Introduction and a Conclusion (‘Ausblick’). It consists of eight chapters, with four to seven sections each, and thus a sum total of forty-five text fragments.

Baschwitz began writing for the first edition almost a century ago, in circumstances that are hard to imagine today. I have tried to summarize the drift of his argument as well as I could, but found I often could only do so by choosing my own words. Rather than sticking to an overly literal translation, which would often create more misunderstandings rather than clearing them up – and thus demand too much immediate explanation there and then.

p. 1. *Introduction.* Explains why this second edition was produced, how and why it differs, and was largely rewritten. It notes that many newly published memoirs have confirmed his earlier version of events: about the causes and start of the First World War, about atrocities and propaganda, the entry of the U.S., the imposition of the disastrous Versailles Treaty, etc. It also notes that things have continued to go from bad to worse for Germany and its citizens.

#### CH. 1. PERSECUTIONS OF WITCHES AND HERETICS.

PM. Much of the material in this chapter has been added in this second edition, apparently to emphasize the ‘eternal’ nature of the phenomena under discussion. I have limited its rendering here, and in the list of events covered. The theme has been much further elaborated in Baschwitz’ later works, from the Second

World War onwards, and particularly in his last, best-known and most-translated work on witch hunts.

I-1, p. 13. *Superstition does not explain mass delusion*. These phenomena are often linked to the 'dark Middle Ages', to religion and the clergy. Baschwitz emphasizes that they really intensified during the transition to the newer ages, with the spread of printing and also of secular ideas.

I-2, 24. *Information anxiety and guilt feelings*. Some people tried to stand up to the persecutions. But many others felt that if witches and heretics were punished so horribly, they must have committed terrible crimes. This points to a need of onlookers/ bystanders to unburden their conscience. (Compare the later notion of 'cognitive dissonance reduction').

I-3, 29. *The need for an embodied evil*. When people suffer from uncertain forces (the weather, epidemics, famine, crises, etc.) they tend to look for individuals or groups to blame. They want to believe in a personal Evil, rather than an anonymous one.

I-4, 35. *The weapon of Heresy*. Once the charge of heresy exists, power holders and others abuse it against opponents, to tighten their grip and expand their possessions. Examples abound, from the history of countries like Great Britain, France and Germany.

I-5, 42. *The atrocity lie about religious wars*. There were widespread atrocities during the various religious wars, but they were also further exaggerated by the other side. Similar ludicrous stories turn up time and again, also after the spread of printing.

I-6, 47. *Horror as a means of war in the new age*. Secular wars have become just as horrible as religious ones, particularly with the development of new technologies, and the failure of statesmen to reach accommodation.

## II. THE HATE OF GERMANS AS A MASS DELUSION

II-1, 51. *The propaganda superstition*. Warring parties have powerful tools for making propaganda and influencing public opinion. But the problem is not so much that they can lie, but that people want to believe. A good example is the 'corpse factory' story. It was almost immediately demonstrated to result from a translation error, but continued to thrive thereafter.

II-2, 57. *The overestimation of opinion makers*. Allied propaganda stuck, and German attempts at clearing such things up remained ineffective. One reason was that various peoples, particularly the neutral onlookers/ bystanders, wanted to unburden their conscience.

III-3. *The enigma of the horror thrill*. It is surprising that even the most outlandish stories are widely believed. Particularly if they contain immoral or even sexual elements. Shocking has entertainment value in newspapers. (There are even references to the use of the first audio records and moving pictures for propaganda purposes, although mostly in the immediate aftermath of the war).

III-4, 73. *Horror campaigns with or without after-effects*. Some horror stories re-emerge under entirely different circumstances. True reports that Belgians systematically cut off hands of transgressors in Congo probably helped inspire false reports that Germans systematically cut off children's hands in Belgium.

## III. THE SPLITTING OF CONSCIOUSNESS AS A SIGN OF MASS DELUSION.

III-1, 77. *Double standards*. The allied powers have sooner or later committed the very same transgressions they blamed on the Germans. Being the first to formally

declare war, to violate the neutrality of third countries, to prepare youngsters with 'militaristic' movements, etc. (Think of Baden Powell's boy scout movement inspired by the British war against the Boers).

III-2, 88. *Repression of one's better judgment.* Excesses of the Germans have been exaggerated: against women and children, churches and antiquities. The same holds for submarine warfare. The lie about the sinking of the Lusitania is a case in point. This in contrast to allied air attacks.

III-3, 101. *Omissions in the war guilt story.* Article 231 in the Versailles 'Diktat' makes Germany the sole initiator of the war. Yet newspapers had long reported that France and Russia were pushing for war. Even if the German government is held guilty, the enormous reparations make the civilian population and future generations pay.

III-4, 109. *Did the world press really fail?* Analyses of the pre-war press further show that many other elements that contributed to the outbreak of the war were out there in the open. For instance that the assassination of the Austrian crown prince in Bosnia was committed by terrorist networks with close links to the Serbian state, and to the pan-Slav movement promoted by Russia.

III-5, 114. *Where was the war guilt propaganda?* Initial press reports, also in Britain, had said that it was Russian mobilization that triggered the war. It was only later that the sole blame was put on Germany. That is also when the atrocity propaganda took off.

III-6, 120. *The resistance against information.* Attempts by neutral researchers (in Norway, the U.K. and the U.S.) to lay the facts on the table were ignored. Even neutral peoples did not want to know things that went against the dominant tide.

#### IV. THE 'NEED FOR UNBURDENING' AS THE CAUSE OF MASS DELUSION

IV-1, 127. *Do newspaper readers accept lies?* Newspaper editors cannot simply do as they please. If they get away with tendentious reporting, this is because the newspaper readers prove receptive to it. Because they share the same 'altered state of mind', the same double standards and mass delusions. Not only citizens of enemy states, but also of neutral states – the latter sometimes even more.

IV-2, 141. *Forgotten outbreaks of hate between peoples.* Baschwitz extensively quotes the works of Prussian king Frederick the Great (also on Macchiavelli), who reflected on these issues during the seven year war. Both agreed that public opinion and history always side with the victors.

IV-3, 153. *Guilt feelings about official neutrality.* Countries often claim neutrality, but overlook shipments of weapons and ammunition to one side. This further reinforces the need of those onlookers/ bystanders to unburden themselves, by choosing to believe in the evil nature of the other side.

IV-4, 159. *The moral self-preservation drive.* Masses and groups do not have a soul or mind, only individuals do. Although they may indeed reinforce each others' wishful thinking through 'proof in numbers', for instance about the nature of friends and foes. They identify with their own group or category, and try to hold it in esteem. Freud has shown that this may result in a split consciousness, and the mobilization of a variety of defence mechanisms.

IV-5, 176. *Communities of responsibility.* A major object of identification of citizens is formed by their nation or state and its authorities, also in their interaction with other nations and states. They thus tend to identify with their own people and

country, in conflicts and wars. They tend to take moral responsibility for them. This translates into their beliefs.

IV-6, 190. *The mass psychological need for unburdening*. People feel they ought to speak out and stand up for weaker states bullied by more powerful ones. That is what many did when the Boer settlers in South Africa were attacked by the British. But if they cannot or will not act in this way, if they choose neutrality, they need to unburden their conscience by blaming the victims.

## V. REVERSE AND MIRROR IMAGES AS EXPRESSIONS OF MASS DELUSION

V-1, 205. *Scholars in delusion*. Before the war broke out, Germany had widely been considered as one of the cradles of modern European civilization, with peak contributions ranging from literature and music, to science and medicine. Its educated liberal middle classes were shocked to suddenly find their people depicted as Militaristic and Barbaric.

This resulted in the 14 Oct. 1918 Appeal of 93 of the most renowned Nobel Prize winners and university professors against the claims of allied propaganda. It consisted of half a dozen paragraphs, each beginning with the formula 'Es ist nicht war' (It is not true, that ...). It was later followed by a second similar appeal, with even more signatories. But there also was a response from overseas colleagues, examples of a boycott and discrimination.

V-2, 216. *The child murder tale as a reverse image of the famine war*. As soon as the war broke out, Britain had deployed its almighty fleet to block a relatively narrow stretch off Denmark, to entirely cut off access to Germany's three main seaports – all in the North-west. In fact Germany's launching of submarine warfare was largely a response to that blockade, and a vain attempt to impose one on Britain as well. But the Entente powers also pressured neutral buffer states such as Switzerland and The Netherlands to stop deliveries of food and other necessities over land.

This led to shortages and malnourishment in Germany, which at first they tried to deny and hide. But toward the end of the war it led to the outbreak of a real large-scale famine. The blockade was maintained until half a year after the armistice, and allegedly caused a million civilians to die prematurely – including many children. The Versailles reparations, furthermore, at that point imposed the cession not only of many means of transport (ships, planes, railway carriages and cars) but also ten percent of cattle including much-needed milk cows. Baschwitz linked this to the allied propaganda claims that the Germans themselves had proven to be 'baby killers' – in Belgium and on the Lusitania.

V-3, 229. *Guilt feelings and the urge of the weak to worship (the strong)*. Small states have become accustomed to the fact that they cannot really deflect the larger course of events. When the big powers do things that are unjust, therefore, they have only two options. One is to oppose them, which often proves futile. The other is to believe that the stronger alliance is per definition right, and that the weaker alliance has brought its fate upon itself.

The small buffer states thus try to unburden their conscience by adhering to the idea that the weaker alliance is guilty: of having single-handedly started the war, violated the neutrality of a small neutral neighbour, and embarked on an uninterrupted campaign of atrocities. In fact, Baschwitz argues, the excesses in Belgium were no worse than in any other situation where an occupier faced armed resistance from a civilian population. Such as when Britain later tried to squash Irish independence (or

all allied powers thereafter tried to squash the independence of their colonies, with only very few exceptions).

V-4, 249. *The meaning of mirror thoughts.* Baschwitz' 'Mirror thoughts' are comparable to Freud's defence mechanism of 'Projection'. They do not so much apply to neutral as to warring peoples. They deny and repress their own darkest thoughts and leanings, and ascribe them to the opponent instead. They are a further manifestation of the splitting of consciousness, and to judging by double standards.

#### VI, 254. RULES OF HATE BETWEEN PEOPLES – Intermediary summary

Two-thirds into the book, Baschwitz takes a pause to sum up the regularities and rules he has identified so far. They are mostly clusters of apodictic claims. They are somewhat repetitive, and add few new elements here. Neither do they form a theoretical framework developed in successive steps, although one might consider translating these eight pages in their entirety – along with some later similar overview fragments.

[Note that his framework can also be understood as an earlier version of later social categorization and attribution theory. We categorize ourselves, and are categorized by others, as belonging to certain groups – for instance nations. We tend to identify with them, and tend to be identified with them. This has profound consequences for the ways we organize and reorganize our mental frameworks all the time.

When we, or our own group, do something good or well, we tend automatically to attribute this to our common goodness or competence. When we, or that same group, do something bad or badly, by contrast, we tend just as automatically to attribute this to an unhappy concurrence of circumstances. For our enemies and opponents, the exact reverse happens. So our mind is a rapid-fire sorting machine of people, actions and events. Protecting a self-image of moral rectitude is the key. JvG].

#### VII. THE CHANGEABILITY OF HATE BETWEEN PEOPLES

VII-1, 262. *The secret of the control of moods by the French.* During the war itself, the U.K. and later also the U.S., proved largely able to steer international public opinion. In Versailles, it were the French who imposed the disastrous terms of the treaty, even on their own allies. But the others had gone along that far, and could not easily back out again. Soon, however, even Lloyd George and Wilson publicly expressed doubts and regrets, whereas the American senate refused to become party to the treaty and have it signed. While the Anglo-Americans demobilized, France instead stepped up its military deployment. It also came to dominate international public opinion for a while, and revived the old atrocity stories.

VII-2, 269. *Mood making through military violence.* It was not only France's occupation of the mining-and-industry Rhine and later the Ruhr area in the German West that created new facts on the ground, but also its role in the allied military commands in the German East. The most eloquent example was the fate of mining-and-industry Upper Silesia, where election results were dismissed at first.

VII-3, 274. *Changing affinities in the life of peoples.* At various points in the recent past, the politicians, the press and the public of France, Britain and the U.S. had suddenly expressed a great like or dislike of each other (depending on sudden wars overseas and other conflicts of interest). But it is true that larger language communities (English, German) do more easily draw together, and sources of misunderstandings between those countries are fewer.

VII-4&5, 284, 288. *England and France as 'hate profiteers'*. During the early war, Britain was the major power and the major propagandist. After the war and the Versailles treaty, France took over this role. It even tried to manipulate the League of Nations and the Red Cross to this effect.

VII-6&7, 299, 301. *The paralysis of England, and the mirror images of France*. Britain had become enmeshed in the Versailles treaty conditions, could not extricate itself from them to prevent the French 'resumption of the war' through its Ruhr invasion. All successive French governments had consistently been looking for 'revenge' for the 1870 war [and finally succeeded through their alliance with Russia].

Paris now exulted in its victory and succeeded in forcing the acceptance of its extremely harsh conditions by its more reasonable allies in 1919. It also told itself that the Versailles conditions and subsequent events might impose an impossibly heavy burden on Germany, but that they would surely have done the same if it had been the other way around. (The war reparations imposed by Germany on France in 1871, and by Germany on Russia in 1918, had also been considerable).

### VIII. THE MASS DELUSION OF STATESMEN

VIII-1, 314. *The uniqueness of the Versailles proceedings*. It was not Germany and Austria that had started the war, but France and Russia – with England and later the United States going along. The disastrous current situation was not the consequence of the war, but of the peace, and the conditions attached to it. Both Lloyd George and Wilson had earlier stated publicly, that there should be no revenge, no annexations, no reparations. It was the French who imposed these. Lloyd George and Wilson later regretted this.

VIII-2, 322. *Meetings under the spell of the most forceful* (Durchdringlichen). Mass psychologists Taine and Le Bon had already noted that during the French Revolution, the 'hypnotic suggestion' exerted by the most radical (Robespierre and company) did often prevail. Poincaré and Clémenceau played a similar role in this war and peace. The others are often paralysed, and later blame the pressure of the group as a whole for the derailments. (An argument further developed in his later book 'Rational man and the crowd').

VIII-3, 327. *European mores in treating the defeated*. Earlier victorious statesmen such as German chancellor Bismarck had treated their defeated opponents in a much more chivalrous way than French Marshall Foch and prime minister Clémenceau did – in both war and peace. President Wilson even told his famous advisor Colonel House so.

VIII-4, 332. *The essence of war crimes*. Italian mass psychologist Sighele had noted that even smart, just and good people might get involved in crimes under the influence of a crowd. Many leading allied politicians had publicly denounced the harsh conditions imposed by victors on the defeated as counter-productive and a cause of further conflict. Yet this is exactly what happened in Versailles.

VIII-5, 336. *The pangs of conscience, in statesmen guilty of peace*. People closely involved in the process, such as the American Secretary of State Lansing and Italian prime minister Nitti, later revealed the contradictory feelings and regrets of some of the main protagonists.

VII-6, 341. *The man of fate*. Baschwitz is particularly harsh on American president Wilson. He says he was not the unworldly intellectual and dreamer caught in events that he was later made out to be. He had originally been sympathetic to Germany, but as soon as the war broke out he and a large part of the policy elite were set on supporting Britain. Yet he, too, resented and regretted the French forcing his

hand in Versailles and thereafter, and said they had ‘torn up’ the peace. [Note that key details about Wilson’s personality and illnesses were not known at the time; an entire literature about this subject has since arisen].

PROSPECT (Ausblick)

365. *The paralysis of European statesmen, and overcoming it.* Personalities played a major role. In England, for instance, foreign minister Edward Grey and navy minister Churchill overrode the reservations of some colleagues. All railed against ‘secret diplomacy’, but many of the harshest Versailles conditions had already been convened in secret bilateral contacts between the European powers before or during the war (the U.S. only became aware of this long after).

But some major driving forces of the war were psychological, Baschwitz concluded: reverse and mirror images, the inclination to blame the victim, etc. (see under ‘Notions’ below. [Such ideas were later elaborated by theories of social categorization, attribution and of the logic of enemy images]. However, powerholders cannot flee their responsibility by blaming the masses of the peoples. [An argument further developed in ‘Rational man and the crowd’).

Last sentence: ‘The elimination of the mass delusion [among allies and neutrals] can only happen through the elimination of the need to unburden oneself, that is to say by the restoration of justice’ [with regard to Germany]. PM. A final irony is that by the time this revised second edition of the book was published in 1932, events in Germany had already become irreversible: the rise of Hitler, Nazism and anti-Semitism. Only *a few months* later, Baschwitz was fired from his influential position as a Jew, and fled to The Netherlands).

380-5. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Distinguish between publications up to 1923 (first edition of *Der Massenwahn*), and up to 1932 (second, revised edition)

(Prefixes like De, Le, Von etc. are mentioned after the initials or first names)

(The first characterization of the authors is taken from Baschwitz, on occasion it is further completed)

(The last numbers refer to the pages in the final, revised edition)

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PM. The terminology is sometimes polemical, invented and varying. I have mostly favoured literal translations, but added the original German wording between brackets for comparison.

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Compare the 'Auswahl' of a Bücherverzeichnis, pp. 380-385.

Distinguish between publications up to 1923 (first & second edition of *Der Massenwahn*), and up to 1932 (third, revised edition)

(Prefixes like De, Le, Von etc. are mentioned *after* the initials or first names)

(The first characterization of the authors is taken from Baschwitz; on occasion it is further completed)

(The last numbers refer to the pages in the final, revised edition)

The asterix \* indicates that their publications are included in the 'selected book list' at the end

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**Selected excerpts from a provisional ‘summary’, three quarters into ‘Mass delusion’, on its ‘laws’.<sup>1</sup>**

*Vulnerability.* We do not suffer injustice because we are underappreciated. But we are underappreciated because injustice is being done to us. Doing injustice makes a people less unloved than suffering injustice. Unassailability makes beloved, vulnerability to foreign attacks stimulates the hatred of the attackers. Because for the need of the collective soul to unburden itself, the completed act is equivalent to the planned one.

*Inflammatory propaganda.* Inflammatory propaganda belongs to the delusional hatred against a people. It accompanies and aggravates it, but is not the cause of the mass delusion. Smart people who do not yet crave the mass delusion, do not accept such a propagandistic treatment running counter to their healthy notions of rationality and morality. Typical mass delusions can neither be created nor eliminated through planned propaganda. Sudden fundamental changes in popular mood have often occurred without preparatory propaganda, or even in contradiction with previous propaganda (pp. 254-5).

*Unburdening.* The need to unburden oneself manifests itself more painfully, the refusal to be enlightened more tempestuously, depending on how blatantly and saliently the extent of an inflicted injustice is shown to a responsible community, and the more difficult it is made for it to close its eyes. The more bitterly it will hold on to the delusional wish to believe in evil, to irrationally shift blame to the victim. At the same time the delusional wish to believe in the benevolence of the hate profiteer, and the blind urge to venerate him, become more unlimited’ (p. 256).

*Hatred between peoples.* Hatred between peoples knows only one criterion. Everything the hate-subject does, is unjust and reproachable. Everything the hate-profiteer does, is just and right. It does not matter what is being done, but who does it’ (p. 258).

*Splitting of consciousness.* The state of mass delusion can be recognized from the splitting of consciousness. Connected with it is the reluctance to enlighten oneself that is otherwise exceptional. Splitting of

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<sup>1</sup> Not quoted from the first edition, but from the second. Although this edition was even more apologetic, it was also slightly better at apodictically spelling out some of the purely psychodynamic claims of the whole concept.

But the argument is sometimes a little convoluted, so literal translation is very difficult. I have also skipped the more idiosyncratic parts focusing on Germany’s own fate around the First World War (discussed in the chapter itself), and highlighted the more universal claims - which might also apply to the semi-colonial, colonial and postcolonial conflicts in which the neutrals and allies themselves got involved (at this point in time and later).

consciousness: Man resists becoming aware of his own knowledge, his own observations and his own conclusions. But only within a partial area limited by a particular need for unburdening. While he remains fully conscious of his waking senses in other areas, and uses his common sense'. (pp. 258-9)

*Knowledge and education.* 'Knowledge and education do not prevent descending into mass delusion. Warm-hearted and good-natured people experience it especially painfully – the pressure of conscience because of unfulfilled demands for humanity. Their craving for the self-deceptive means of mass delusion, for blaming the victim, therefore expresses itself particularly tempestuously and apparently crudely' (p. 259).

*Resistant to refutation.* 'A mass delusion does not simply consist of incorrect views, that one might refute. With however forceful words, one cannot prove that witches do not exist in view of a burning woodpile [Holzstösse ?]. Man caught in a mass delusion wants to believe things of whose untruth and irrationality he was (and will again be) convinced in a state of sane thinking.' (p. 260).

*Flight into consensus.* 'The mass delusion is a flight, a hiding from one's better self, an effort to keep one's self-respect with treacherous means. In these cases, man is not overpowered by the "mass", that is to say the influence of the consensual feelings of the many. Instead he flees into this "mass", into this consensual feeling, that seems to provide him with a treacherous justification. So as not to have to listen to the urgent and countervailing voice of his own reason' (pp. 260-1).

*(Preliminary study, not finalized, do not quote)*

## WWI PROPAGANDA – FACTS & FICTION

‘If men define situations as real,  
they are real in their consequences’  
(‘Thomas theorem’).<sup>1</sup>

Jaap van Ginneken<sup>2</sup>

(This paper/ essay arose out of the following question. How is it possible that well-meaning German intellectuals enthusiastically supported the cause of their country during the First World War, were extremely disappointed by its outcome, and by the Versailles Peace Treaty imposed on their country? What may that war and peace initially have looked like from their perspective, and how come we find it so difficult to put ourselves back into their shoes today?)

This preliminary study began as an elaborate ‘spin-off/ by-product’ of an intellectual biography of Kurt Baschwitz (1886-1968), published in English and Dutch, late 2017 and early 2018. The reflection began as a mere section for an early chapter on the First World War, then became a possible appendix to the book. But as I delved deeper and deeper into the ambiguities and complexities of the issues, studied a whole shelf of the latest books and related documents about it, the fragment continued to expand and thus became a separate essay.

In later life, Kurt Baschwitz became a pioneer of communication studies and mass psychology, in Germany and The Netherlands. But during the latter half of the First World War, he had been a young, inexperienced German war correspondent in the neutral Dutch harbour of Rotterdam, confronted with propaganda on a daily basis. This experience inspired his subsequent first German book, about mass delusions and enemy images in wartime (1923, 1932). Although he was a staunch defender of ‘law and order’, its patriotic overtones are difficult to understand today. That is why I decided to delve into the precise context).

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<sup>1</sup> First formulated by American scientist William Thomas (1863-1949) and his later wife Dorothy, in their 1928 study on child behaviour. The theorem later helped inspire various and broader applications in psychology and sociology, economic and political science. For instance in Robert Merton’s notion of ‘self-fulfilling prophecies’, and much more.

<sup>2</sup> Mass psychologist and communication scientist, former associate professor at the University of Amsterdam, now retired. Website: [www.jaap-van-ginneken.com](http://www.jaap-van-ginneken.com) . E-mail: [jaapvanginneken@free.fr](mailto:jaapvanginneken@free.fr)

*The First World War was the first modern war. Its outcome was not so much decided by the valour of the soldiers on the battlefield, as by the weapons factories on the home front, by the industrial strength that could be mobilized. Hence the unprecedented importance of winning the 'hearts and minds' of the working population and the taxpayers at home.*

*New printing techniques had spurred a popular mass press with million-copy titles, along with posters and flyers in chauvinistic overtones. New photo cameras added action pictures for the first time. The gramophone played nationalistic songs, early movies reconstituted earlier historic events. Advertising and PR began to use motivation and emotion.*

*So that is how modern propaganda took off. Enemy atrocities played a key role: both real and imagined. Let us get back to the beginning, and follow developments from there.*

*Princip.* 28 June 1914. 'This was Gavrilo Princip's moment ... he drew his revolver and fired twice from point-blank range ... At first it appeared the shooter had missed his mark, because Franz Ferdinand and his wife remained motionless and upright in their seats. In reality, they were both already dying ... When [Count von] Harrach asked him if he was in pain, the archduke repeated several times in a whisper "It's nothing!" and then lost consciousness'.

*Fateful day.* This is how the Austrian crown prince and his wife were assassinated, on their wedding anniversary. But they had chosen a particularly ill-suited day to visit Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina contested by the Serbs. Because it was also the latter's most important nationalist holiday. The event was again narrated by Australian historian Christopher Clark, in his justly acclaimed and monumental 2012 study *The Sleepwalkers*, about the start of the First World War.<sup>3</sup>

*Clark.* His painstaking reconstruction of relevant events, meetings and conversations between key decision-makers in the major European capitals shows that not only Germany but *all* the great powers were to blame for the outbreak of the First World War. Over the previous years, their top leaders in both the East and the West had all discussed 'preventively' starting it, at one point or another.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, they had all been well aware that the first spark to start a prairie fire might well come from the Balkans.

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers – How Europe went to war in 1914* (London: Penguin 2013), pp. 374-5.

<sup>4</sup> See Clark. Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley Blackwell 2006, 2012) discusses many German examples, but for instance also mentions (p. 70): 'In February 1905 Admiral Fisher gave a provocative speech calling for a preventive strike against the German navy'.

*Black Hand.* At the time some claimed Princip was a ‘lone wolf’ assassin. But it has since been confirmed he was part of a seven man assassin team along the entire route, armed with revolvers, bombs and cyanide capsules, and close to the underground Black Hand society. Princip had missed an earlier opportunity, and an earlier attack by a comrade had only caused minor scratches, but they were almost certain to reach their goal in the end. The nationalist group and similar others, with thousands of members, were indeed condoned by parts of the Serbian army, police and secret services, and by the Pan-Slavs among their Russian allies.

*Blame.* Clark devoted more than a hundred pages to the details of the complicated Serbian role, but denied he blamed them in particular. Canadian historian Margaret MacMillan, a great grandchild of the British prime minister of those days, published a similar but slightly less pointed 2013 overview of newer findings about *The war that ended peace*.

### **Re-appraisal**

*Revisionism.* Charges of ‘revisionism’ predictably dominated and partly spoiled two 2014 centenary conferences, held in Bosnian Sarajevo and Austrian Salzburg, with specialist historians from all over the world.<sup>5</sup> The preceding generations had already published some 25,000 books and articles on these questions. Yet newer historical research was still able to throw a rather different light on some key aspects: not only on the start of the conflict, but also on its further course and its ultimate conclusion.

*Simplifications.* Stories and images like those from the First World War tend to become simplified. In historical overviews and schoolbooks, in commemorative radio and television series, in feature films and in video games. In recent years, World War One was mostly told through the most simple narrative of good guys versus bad guys. A story of the winners about the losers. This makes it difficult to understand how it was experienced by ordinary citizens, with incomplete and only tentative information, ‘on the other side’. Furthermore, there are several substantial problems with the stereotypical story.

*Perspectivism.* The first problem is that of *perspectivism*: earlier events are usually seen and depicted through the lens of later events. More specifically: World War One has long been seen and depicted through the lens of World War Two. The title of one major study about the First war (to which I will return extensively) even speaks of

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<sup>5</sup> Book reviews: *The Guardian* 19 July 2013 and *NRC De Week* 13 Jan. 2014. Conferences: *INVT*, 13 June and 11 Sept. 2014.

*Rehearsals.* Flaws in the Prussian and German character, and/ or in their social organization, are often assigned a key role in such accounts. We will see that there are indeed close links between the two wars, but also that things could easily have gone very differently

*Balkans.* Another major problem is that the war is usually seen and told from an Atlantic perspective: as if it started in Western Europe. It did not. It started in Eastern Europe, and for a very precise set of reasons. Gavrilo Princip was not an isolated case. The reason his action became a trigger for the catastrophe was precisely that it was closely connected to the entire balance of power throughout the Balkans.

## PROLOGUE OF THE WAR

### **Three competing empires in the Balkans**

*Three empires.* Even in natural science, an equilibrium between two forces may well remain stable for a prolonged period of time, but an equilibrium between three forces almost never does.<sup>6</sup> In this case, the equilibrium between the three empires in the European east had long become unstable. The borders among the spheres of influence of Muslim Ottoman Turkey, Catholic Austria-Hungary and Christian Orthodox Russia in the Balkans were constantly shifting.

*Destabilization.* This destabilization accelerated when the overextended Ottoman empire began to unravel, and Austria and Russia vied for the spoils. Apart from more territory, they both strove for more stable maritime access to the Mediterranean, thereby to the Suez canal, the Strait of Gibraltar, the oceans and overseas colonies, to the rest of the world. Therefore, the three empires in the West did in turn also have a vital interest in how this played out: Great Britain, France and Germany. In this sense, Clark says (p. 242), the First World War really began as the Third Balkan war.

*Balkan wars.* The first round had begun after the Young Turks evicted the sultan in 1908, began to try to establish a more modern and secular regime in the Turkish heartland. That same year, Austria annexed Ottoman Bosnia-Herzegovina that it had 'provisionally administered' since the Treaty of Berlin. The various smaller nations in the Balkan patchwork then began to jockey for position, to gain or reinforce their independence and territory. Most activist was Serbia, which tried to establish a Greater Serbia and trigger the unravelling of the entire Austria-Hungary dual monarchy in turn, with the tacit support of Pan-Slav policy-makers in similarly Christian Orthodox Russia.

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<sup>6</sup> Think of the notorious three magnet problem, which produces maximum unpredictability, fractals and chaos.

*Atrocities.* All this had already triggered a second round in the Balkan wars of 1912-13, which ignited a powder keg with centuries of accumulated religious and ethnic hatreds between the three religious cultures. A 1914 report by the Peace Endowment funded by American steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie concluded that it had been a succession of unspeakable horrors. Women had been widely raped, men tortured and mutilated, churches with refugees and entire villages torched. In only ten weeks time, tens of thousands of civilians and two hundred thousand soldiers had thus been killed, and millions displaced.

*Heir.* It was in this tense situation, that Gavrilo Princip had assassinated not just any prince. Franz Ferdinand embodied the Austrian-Hungarian hopes for reform and reinvigoration of the whole empire. His father Franz Joseph was no less than 84 years old and had already reigned for a record 66 years, but had no other direct male heir. So the idea was not only to kill the successor, but also the dynasty and the empire. That is why Vienna was outraged. It issued an ultimatum for the ‘terrorist’ networks to be dismantled, and was backed up by Berlin. This led to a flurry of consultations in and between the capitals of the other great powers, which had long been convinced that a great reckoning could indeed start there.

### **Two triple alliances in Europe**

*Alliances.* In anticipation, they had formed two giant blocs. On the one hand the Triple Entente of Great Britain, France and Russia; and on the other hand the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and then Turkey. The imperial dynasties of Great Britain, Germany and Russia were closely related, by the way, through grandchildren of Queen Victoria. At one point, the rulers of the first two were her grandsons, whereas the ruler of the third was married to her granddaughter. But the familiarity of their exchanges did not inflect the course of history.

*Alsace Lorraine.* A powder keg in Western Europe was in turn formed by the Alsace-Lorraine regions, along the Rhine and Mosel valleys, north of the Vosges mountains. French kings Louis XIV and XV had conquered them, in order to create a ‘natural’ frontier there – just like the great rivers and mountain ranges that protected France elsewhere (from Pyrenees to Alps). After German unification, that country gradually became larger and more populous than France, and took those regions back in 1870. All major French politicians swore revenge, but ultimately proved powerless.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> War minister Boulanger, nicknamed ‘general Revanche’, almost took the initiative. He started a very modern mass movement and propaganda campaign to that effect in the latter 1880s. Details in my *Crowds* etc., pp. 149-161.

*Russia.* French politicians finally found a solution to their quandary: in a commercial, technological and military pact with the even larger Russia, on the other side of Germany. The country was vast and backward, but France helped it to rapidly develop its mining and industry, as well as build extensive road and railroad networks that would be useful for rapid mobilization, in the event it finally came to fighting. On the eve of the First World War, this effort had already begun to bear substantial fruits.

*Schlieffen.* This did in turn stir a Great Fear in Germany. Since it was centrally located in the midst of Europe, the new Franco-Russian alliance could make it face war on two very long opposing fronts at the same time: an impossible position to defend very long. It might easily be held back in the West by a huge line of advanced fortifications, furthermore, whereas it might easily be overrun from the East by vastly larger numbers of troops. That is when and why army commander general [Von] Schlieffen developed a secret plan to deal with such a two-front front war, which was to be the key to subsequent events.

#### **Final consultations in July 1914**

*Kaiser.* Allied propaganda later claimed that Germany had decided within a week after the assassination to launch a general war, during a special *Kronrat* or crown council of the *Kaiser* or emperor, on the eve of a naval trip. This then became a key element in the subsequent claim of the unique 'war guilt' on their side. But the Germans claimed it had just been a limited consultation on whether to approve of Austria's action against Serbia, and they did not expect Russia (and therefore France) to step in. They called the story of a 'war council' a fabrication, and the sovereign was later also adamant in denying it.<sup>8</sup>

*Kronrat.* In his memoirs, he was to write: 'The much-discussed so-called Potsdam Crown Council of July 5<sup>th</sup> [1914] never took place. It is an invention of malevolent persons. Naturally, before my departure, I received, as was my custom, some of the Ministers individually, in order to hear from them reports concerning their departments. Neither was there any council of ministers and there was no talk about war preparations'. By contrast, both he and the highest army and navy commanders left for a summer holiday at this exact point in time.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The supposed 'war council' was even represented in a drawing in the *New York Times*, on 31 May 1918. Denial: *Süddeutschen Monatshefte* 1928, Heft 11. Both mentioned in Baschwitz, *Der Massenwahn*, p. 200.

<sup>9</sup> There may also have been confusion with a *Kronrat* that took place two years earlier, on the eve of the Balkan war, where a decision of that nature was indeed considered. But the chancellor had intervened to kill the idea. One should add that

*Alliance.* The story of the war council may also have functioned to distract attention from developments on the other side. The year before, the Russian ambassador in Berlin had reported to his foreign minister in Saint Petersburg that Germany did not want war, whereas the Russian ambassador in Paris reported that France did from now on - since the election of Poincaré as the new president. His election had been welcomed by French proponents of revenge, and followed by an extension of the military service to three years. This was well before the assassination of the crown prince in Sarajewo, followed by Austria's ultimatum.<sup>10</sup>

*State visit.* On 20-23 July 1914, then, the French president (accompanied by his prime minister) paid a very important strategic visit to the Czar and his cabinet. Centre-right Poincaré originated from the 'stolen' Lorraine region himself. Alternating with the centre-left revanchist Clémenceau, he presided over French politics as president, prime minister or minister of foreign affairs from long before the First World War until well after the Versailles Peace Treaty. They played key and rather bellicose roles in the unfolding of the events.

*Military review.* Clark: The French and Russian heads of state at that point 'established that they were both along the same lines. The key point was alliance solidarity, and that meant not just diplomatic support, but the readiness for military action'. This meant that if Austria was now to attack Serbia in the East, and Russia would feel forced to help its ally, then France would definitely step in in the West as well. According to an attaché from the French embassy in the Russian capital, that week 'The tragic poker game had begun'. As over the last days 'The talk was of nothing but war'. This was followed by a military review involving 70,000 men.

*Dinner.* At a state dinner, one of the minor princesses present told the French ambassador that she had received secret confidences from her father: 'There's going to be a war ... There'll be nothing left of Austria ... You're going to get back Alsace and Lorraine ... Our armies will meet in Berlin ... Germany will be destroyed'. People toasted to that (Clark, pp. 444-8). So Russia continued to encourage Serbia to reject key elements of the Austrian ultimatum, knowing full well what the probable consequences would be.

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Clark and others mention a series of occasions where high officials of other great powers had proposed to take such an initiative.

<sup>10</sup> Swerbejew in Berlin, and Iswolski in Paris, to Sassonow in Saint Petersburg. On 29 May 1914, his closest aide Colonel House already wrote to American president Wilson that France and Russia would launch war on Germany and Austria as soon as Britain gave its permission. Also quoted in Baschwitz's *Der Massenwahn*, pp. 198-200.

### **Trigger: the dominoes start falling**

*War.* It was a month after the assassination, then, and after the expiry of the ultimatum on July 28, that Austria finally declared war on Serbia. It could have remained a local affair, but soon the dominoes began to fall, one after the other, all over Europe. Russia had already started preliminary preparations for the seemingly inevitable conflict, and on the very next day it announced a general mobilization, in support of Serbia.

*Dominoes.* Germany was afraid to be outnumbered and overrun if it simply waited for the next step. It thus demanded that Russia rescind its mobilization order. When it did not, Germany declared war on Russia on August 1.<sup>11</sup> When France predictably mobilized in turn, Germany declared war on it as well. It then demanded free passage through the sparsely inhabited woody and hilly Ardennes border region in Eastern Belgium, and when this was refused, it also declared war on it as well. (More below). This immediately led Britain to enter the conflict. The continent-wide conflagration had thus begun.

*Ranke.* Noted German historian Leopold von Ranke had observed: 'It is neither blindness nor ignorance that ruins nations and states ... But deep inside them is a force at work, favoured by nature and reinforced though habit, that drives them forward irresistibly as long as there is still any energy in them. Divine is he who controls himself'.<sup>12</sup> But the leaders did not control themselves. They now let the events unfold, with a wide range of disastrous consequences they had not foreseen.

*Tuchman.* Almost half a century after the start of the war, American historian Barbara Tuchman published a gripping reconstruction of how things got out of hand, with the best-seller *The Guns of August*. 'Foolish monarchs, diplomats, and generals blundered into a war nobody wanted [on this scale], an Armageddon which evolved with the same grim irreversibility as a Greek tragedy'. The book received a Pulitzer Prize, and was later followed by *The March of Folly*, comparing this instance with the many other instances where overconfident statesmen had light-heartedly entered a horrendous war that then escalated totally out of control, and from which they could no longer extricate themselves.

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<sup>11</sup> Clark notes that the peacetime strength of the Russian army in 1914 was twice that of the German army (p. 331).

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Michael Stürmer, in *The German Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson 2000), p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted from the Foreword to the 1994 edition, republished by Presidio (Random House) in 2004, p. XIV. She was related to the influential Morgenthau family: her

### **War enthusiasm, all around**

*Revitalization.* Because at this point in time, many leaders were still confident that it would be a quick and easy affair, that the soldiers would be ‘home by Christmas’, that is to say within only five months time. Dutch historian Ewoud Kieft published a substantial 2015 study on the ‘war enthusiasm’ of both elites and masses in those days. Over the preceding decade, many leading thinkers and writers throughout Europe had vented the idea that a war might clear the air, prove a regenerative experience, revitalize the nation(s).

*War enthousiasm.* Media relayed the mood to the wider public. Most governments had meanwhile formed press offices, which issued one firm self-righteous statement and ultimatum after the other. The new million-copy newspapers had begun to replace ‘artists impressions’ of events by real photo pictures, and thrived on the sudden surge of jingoism. When war had finally been declared, crowds of up to ten thousand thronged into the streets of the major capitals to celebrate and jubilate, shouting triumphalist slogans and singing nationalist songs.<sup>14</sup>

*Volunteers.* Young men enthusiastically registered as volunteers, to defend the fatherland. Slightly later, they confidently marched off to the front lines. But American historian Adam Hochschild’s 2012 study [The War] *To End All Wars* noted they had too easily extrapolated the experiences of recent colonial wars. They felt it would largely be a one-sided affair: they would be shooting, but there would not be shooting back.

*Uniforms.* Many French and Austrians did not wear camouflage uniforms, but combat outfits of brilliant red and blue, and had no metal helmets either. The German westward thrust was to be headed by ‘eight cavalry divisions with more than 40,000 horses – the largest such body ever sent into battle’ in these territories. But most were totally unprepared for the impact of new inventions like barbed wire and the ultra-rapid machine gun.<sup>15</sup>

*Knightley.* Prize-winning British *Sunday Times* journalist Philip Knightley’s published an overview book on war correspondents and propaganda in the modern age, with the title *The First Casualty*

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grandfather was ambassador in Turkey under president Wilson during the First World War, her uncle later became a long-time secretary of the treasury under president Franklin Roosevelt during the Second World War.

<sup>14</sup> Ewoud Kieft, *Oorlogsenthouasme – Europa 1900-1918* (Amsterdam: Bezige Bij 2015). But at the end of the first part he also noted that historians have been divided over the extent of this war enthusiasm, and some felt politicians had later exaggerated it to justify their fatal decisions (pp. 82-4).

<sup>15</sup> Excerpt in the *INYT*, 29 July 1914.

(meaning: ‘... in war is The Truth’).<sup>16</sup> He wrote: ‘The First World War was like no other war before or since. It began with the promise of splendour, honour, and glory. It ended as a genocidal conflict on an unparalleled scale, a meaningless act of slaughter that continued until a state of exhaustion set in ... More deliberate lies were told than in any other period of history, and the whole apparatus of the state went into action to suppress the truth’.<sup>17</sup>

*Essay.* As explained in the prologue, this essay is primarily focused on propaganda about the origins, course and conclusion of the war that ended up in the history books, and about real and imagined atrocities. I delved into a dozen (mostly recent) overview studies, and into many dozens of related other articles and documents. It is not revisionist, not assigning or re-assigning blame, but just tends to nuance an overly stereotypical view of events. To gain a better understanding of why so many well-meaning German (and Austrian) intellectuals long continued to adhere to a radically different view of what happened.

## THE OPENING PHASE

### **The German Schlieffen Plan**

*Schlieffen, Russia.* I have already mentioned that ever since France had concluded its pact with Russia, the German high command had been scared to death about being encircled. A vulnerable nation with very long frontiers in the centre of Europe, and forced to fight a war on two opposing fronts at the same time. On one side, vast Russia would ultimately be able to bring much larger numbers of troops to bear – including the feared Cossacks, ‘the whip-wielding onetime horsemen of the southern Russian steppes’.<sup>18</sup>

*Mobilization.* A balance between troop numbers was still often considered decisive. It would just take the Russians some time to deploy, because of the vast numbers and territory, so it was important for Germany to attack and declare war as soon as they began to mobilize and refused to back down. But since Schlieffen’s days, transport and logistics

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<sup>16</sup> Alluding to American senator Hiram Johnson’s famous statement (in relation to America’s entry into the war). It turns out this is actually a variation of an older German proverb: ‘Kommt der Krieg ins Land/ Dann gibt’s Lügen wie Sand’ (Quoted by Fernand van Langenhove, op. cit., p. 1).

<sup>17</sup> *The First Casualty*, or. 1975. Quoted from a later re-edition (London: Pan 1989), p. 80.

<sup>18</sup> The characterization is from the *INYT*, 5 August 2015, when they turned up as ‘volunteers’ in Eastern Ukraine.

had been considerably improved with French help, and many Russian units had already been pre-deployed along the frontier.

*Schlieffen, France.* On the other hand, France had constructed an almost impregnable series of fortifications along the common border. The only way out seemed to be to invoke an ‘unprecedented vital danger’ to the nation, and ask for a right of passage through the Ardennes in the extreme Southeast of neutral Belgium, and adjacent tiny Luxemburg. This is what the Germans demanded in an ultimatum issued August 4.

*Rücksichtslosigkeit.* As the plan developed under the previous German army commander Von Schlieffen was to have a rapid unimpeded thrust to the West in this way to take Paris within no more than six weeks, and then be ready to confront the inevitable Russian onslaught in the East. But this imposed an extremely tight schedule and no leeway for consideration. That is to say: it implied *Rücksichtslosigkeit*.

*Neutrality.* The first setback was that the Belgium authorities refused unhindered passage to the German troops. King Albert went before the parliament and asked them: ‘Are you resolved to defend the sacred patrimony of our ancestors?’<sup>19</sup> The country was located right in between the three major Western European powers, so upon its belated creation it had been forced to accept to always remain neutral. The invasion began the next day. There was an immediate outrage all around. Ministers, party leaders, newspaper commentators talked about heroic resistance. But the million soldier German army was no match, even though the French and British armies rushed in, to assist Belgium.<sup>20</sup>

*Neutral reports.* As late as a full month after the invasion, the *New York Times* published a manifesto of five American newspapermen at the front: for the Associated Press news agency, the *Chicago Tribune* and *Daily News*, as well as the national *Saturday Evening Post*. The report had been forwarded via Berlin. They declared they had accompanied the Second German Army as neutral outside observers for several weeks and more than a hundred miles. They had investigated many rumours, they declared, but had found no evidence of atrocities. As much as more than a year later, a professor from Princeton university, son of a Civil War general, travelled to Belgium, and made similar claims.<sup>21</sup> Yet from the very start, things had begun to get terribly out of hand.

*Belgium.* Belgium itself only had a small army, and had only introduced universal military service during the previous year, 1913. It

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted from Horne & Kramer, op. cit. below, p. 215.

<sup>20</sup> The eventuality had already been foreseen, and secretly discussed between the countries.

<sup>21</sup> *NYT*, 7 Sept. 1914 & 10 Oct. 1915. Lipkes, pp. 625-6, among others.

also had a civilian militia or auxiliary police force called the *Garde Civique*, but this consisted of two parts. On the one hand an ‘active’ and trained part with 46,000 members in full uniform, mostly located in the urban areas. And on the other hand a ‘non-active’ part with a further 100,000 members, located in rural areas. Not all of the latter disposed of the regular blue tunics or shirts from the beginning; a rush of new volunteers only received rudimentary armbands and insignias initially (not always clearly discernable at greater distances). This contributed to the general confusion. There were also boy scouts and others that may have assisted them on occasion.<sup>22</sup>

*Clarification.* Within a few days, the Belgian authorities came to realize that there was apparently a confusion over who were military men and who were civilians, issued instructions as to who had a mandate to participate in the fighting or by contrast to refrain from hostilities. It also tried to communicate these clarifications to the German authorities and army command. But things immediately degenerated – also due to a very precise set of circumstances at the outset of the confrontation.

### **The fateful Dutch *Telegraaf* article**

*Liège.* The Easternmost major city of Belgium at war was Liège, the Southernmost major city of the adjacent neutral Netherlands was Maastricht. They are both on the Meuse river, only 25 kilometres apart. In between was the town of Herstal. Since a quarter century, it was home to the FN ‘national factory of weapons of war’ and a notoriously rebellious proletariat. But it even had an arms home industry: as citizens produced parts to sell to the factory. Liège had major military fortifications and was already hard to conquer. But Herstal even had firearms widely circulating among the civilian population – an obvious cause of possible trouble.

*Maastricht.* Maastricht and the Southern border of the Netherlands were the best observation posts and points of passage for wounded, refugees, journalists, eyewitnesses and stories. The largest newspaper of The Netherlands was *De Telegraaf*. At the time it claimed it was also among the oldest, as it incorporated the *Amsterdamsche Courant*, founded 295 years earlier. Many foreign correspondents thus considered it a rather prestigious and authoritative source. On Friday 7 August 1914, it published the first eyewitness reports from the frontline by ‘a special correspondent’. I will provide an elaborate quotation, and try to translate it as literally as possible, because it played an essential role in setting the stage for the further course of events.

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<sup>22</sup> Lipkes, op. cit., pp. 49-50; Horne & Kramer

It opened: ‘Liège has not yet capitulated, because the Belgian people offer superhuman resistance. Yesterday two thousand German troops had advanced to the Fabrique Nationale in Herstal. They were received by terrible gunfire. Every house –even the small miner homes– had been turned into fortifications. Barricades were put up, children and women dragged along ammunition. Armed resistance lasted until the last man, the last woman, in the narrow streets had been knocked out of combat.

*Revenge.* Another item a bit further down in the same newspaper reported that there was ‘talk of a German punitive column that would level the Belgian villages in revenge over the attack of citizens on the Germans going through’. Still another item quoted German officers who expressed regret ‘that the foreign press would of course tell tales about the various atrocities committed by the “Barbarians of Emperor Wilhelm’.<sup>23</sup> But that was only the beginning.

### **Other early frontline reports**

*Tijd/ Maasbode.* Other Dutch newspapers carried similar stories from the border at Maastricht that day, although less lively and detailed. The local correspondent of the Catholic *De Tijd* had similar headings about ‘the heroic struggle around Liège ... atrocious scenes of war’. It said: ‘If the city is taken, it will have been partially destroyed ... The population provides stubborn resistance’. The equally Catholic *De Maasbode* quoted a German lieutenant-colonel who said they had been shot at by women and children, that this would be punished, and that Liège would be completely levelled.

*Brussels.* It is important to establish all this. These dramatic stories and their sources have later been belittled, but they provided the *first definition*, the first narrated images –right or wrong– about what was going on at the front and in Belgium. They therefore had an outside influence in steering later perceptions and reports. The *Telegraaf* story in particular was very widely quoted and copied, for instance by the influential Francophone newspapers *Le XXe Siècle* and *Le Soir*, in the capital Brussels.<sup>24</sup>

*Handelsblad/ Gazet.* Other Belgian newspapers added their own stories. The Flemish *Handelsblad* had reported a day earlier: ‘The fury also seized a certain portion of the country populace where peaceful labour in the fields was disturbed. They were mad to defend the native

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<sup>23</sup> Retrieved through the Delpher press data bank. It was later claimed that this report was based on a compilation of hearsay, and not produced by a trained journalist.

<sup>24</sup> References in John Horne & Alan Kramer’s very complete recent overview study *German atrocities 1914* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press 2001), pp. 107-8, n. 75.

soil against the treacherous Prussian ... From cellar-windows, roof-apertures, made by removing tiles, from private houses, farms and cottages, a furious fire was opened'. And the Flemish *Nieuwe Gazet* reported a day later: 'Advance parties came into conflict with the townspeople who fired like madmen from the windows and roofs of houses. Even women took part in the fighting'.<sup>25</sup>

*Grasshoff*. The Germans later published an elaborate overview of such Belgian newspaper articles of these first weeks, purporting to be at least partly based on eyewitness reports of resistance and sniper fire. Others later claimed they were in reality based on embellished hearsay, and not produced by professional reporters. A correspondent of the aforementioned Catholic daily *De Tijd* from the neutral nearby Netherlands did by contrast say he travelled four months behind the German troops through the war zones, but said he had been unable to find a single soldier who claimed that he had actually witnessed sniper attacks.<sup>26</sup>

### **Impact of the newspaper reports**

*Attempted clarification*. So, soon, the Belgian government recognized the danger, and said some of these newspaper reports were grossly exaggerated. It reminded citizens that they should not mount armed resistance on their own, as this might elicit bloody reprisals. But by then, it was too late. The stories had already been picked up all around Europe, circulated widely, convinced many outsiders that there was indeed broad armed resistance on the part of civilians. The stories travelled onwards to the major other belligerent countries, where they had further impact.

*News agencies*. The main British news agency Reuters reported the first Dutch stories about armed resistance in Herstal from Paris, they were printed in the prestigious London *Times* and other papers.<sup>27</sup> The main German press agency Wolff then carried an official notice about them: It 'establishes the fact that the inhabitants have taken part in the hostilities. Ambushes have been prepared for our troops and shots fired upon them,

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted from later overviews by R. Grasshof and by Raf Verhulst, in: Jeff Lipkes' recent study about the German atrocities: *Rehearsals* (Leuven: Leuven University Press), pp. 28-9. The latter adds that these reports were not credible. This later became the official Entente view. Bart Mokveld, correspondent of the aforementioned Dutch *De Tijd* later travelled widely throughout the region and Belgium, published a book on his experiences, and also claims that the reports about widespread franc-tireurs were without foundation.

<sup>26</sup> German: Richard Grasshoff *Belgiens Schuld*, translated as *The Tragedy of Belgium* (Berlin and New York, 1915). Dutch: Bart Mokveld *De Overweldiging van België* (Brussel 1916), translated as *The German Fury in Belgium* (NY 1915).

<sup>27</sup> Horne & Kramer, op. cit., pp. 107-8, n. 75.

as well as upon doctors engaged in their work, and cruelties have been inflicted upon the wounded by the populace'.<sup>28</sup>

*Germany.* The reports were published throughout Germany. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* had a headline about 'The Devils from the Liège Basin'. The *Hamburgischer Correspondent* quoted an officer on home leave who confirmed that many girls and women had participated in the atrocities. A *Landwehr* captain and novelist reported in a 1914 memoir about his war experiences, that they had found enough weapon parts in houses of the region to produce 20,000 rifles. Horne & Kramer add: 'He also mistook the working-class passion for pigeon-racing as evidence of espionage. Herstal thus recast the fear of proletarian insurrection in military form as a legend redolent of the Paris Commune – which had been marked by street-fighting and mythic women-arsonists, the *pétroleuses*'.<sup>29</sup>

*Burning village.* These perceptions then stirred mass reprisals. One German combatant reported to the *Magdeburger Zeitung*: 'We were just about to rest when we were suddenly fired on from each house ... Each male inhabitant of the village was arrested. Then our artillery was brought into action and shot the whole place into flames. I can tell you, [it's not easy] when you go through something like this - to go through the burning village and simply shoot down everyone. But the people have themselves to blame, for during the day they were hospitable and in the night they shot at us'. Apparently, such 'reprisals' soon became official policy.<sup>30</sup>

### **German complaints about Belgian atrocities**

*Franco-Prussian war.* Resistance through a partisan, guerrilla or peoples war had always represented the worst possible nightmare of the Prussian and German army command – as it was entirely focused on military order and discipline. Something of the kind had happened during the previous major war, the Franco-Prussian war. It had been started by Bonaparte's nephew, French emperor Napoleon III, but he was soon defeated and taken prisoner.

*People's war.* The new republican government had then called for a 'levée en masse' and a 'guerre à l'outrance' (mass mobilization and war

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<sup>28</sup> Fernand van Langenhove, *The Growth of a Legend* (London: Forgotten Books 2015 re-edition), pp. 147-8. More below.

<sup>29</sup> Pp. 108-9. They tend to dismiss the *Telegraaf* report. Yet similar elements also turned up in reports from other sources. The subsequent claim of some observers that nothing of the kind ever happened in Herstal therefore seems farfetched.

<sup>30</sup> Repr. in the *Deutsche Krieger-Zeitung*, 23 August 1914, found in the Reichskanzlei, Potsdam. Horne & Kramer, op. cit. p. 96-7, n. 28. Compare similar newspaper quotes on p. 136. And subsequent official instructions on p. 162.

to the extreme), just like those during the French revolution. Although it also put down a socialist revolution in Paris, the *Commune*. (Staged and faked pictures of atrocities had played a key role there).<sup>31</sup> The Germans then ordered collective reprisals for individual acts of resistance in North-Eastern France.

*Franc-tireurs*. On the one hand they feared civilian *franc-tireurs* or free-shooters, which could open fire at any point and any moment, and lay ambushes. On the other hand civilian women, children and the elderly - who could also suddenly attack in a treacherous manner, secretly finish off the wounded, and or mutilate them. Those 'experiences' subsequently came to colour memoirs and novels.

*Manuals*. Or even training lessons, army manuals (also for translators), and their recommendations on how to deal with such incidents. So these fears had already been well implanted in soldiers' minds before the new war broke out, but were made acute by the first reports of civilian resistance from the 1914 Belgian frontline. This installed a kind of collective paranoia, where every single anomaly was interpreted as another sign of civilian treachery.

*Atrocities*. It led to numerous German reports of free shooters, killings and mutilations by women, children and the elderly. Of fingers cut off to take wedding rings, but also of eyes scooped out; ears, noses and genitals cut off from the bodies of wounded or dead soldiers. Such 'war lore' stories had resurged during every major European conflict of the previous centuries, and again during the recent atrocious Balkan wars of 1912-3. Now they turned up again, all over German newspapers, with regard to Belgium.

*Knightley*. Knightley's book on war correspondents and propaganda (p. 106) reported that: 'The German press abounded with stories of hospitals filled with German soldiers who had had their eyes gouged out. The *Weser Zeitung* reported that a ten-year-old boy had seen "a whole bucketful of soldiers' eyes", an atrocity story as old as the Crusades. *Die Zeit in Bild* ran an account of a French priest who wore around his neck a chain of rings taken from fingers he had cut off. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* said that Belgians gave German troops cigars filled with gunpowder'. (Note that Kurt Baschwitz was of the editorial staff of the latter newspaper at that point in time).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See my essay on the trafficking of images of violence in: Jacqueline Wesselius, *Het Mijneveld – Over journalistiek en Moraal* (Amsterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar 1994), Ch. 3.

<sup>32</sup> There are elaborate references to the civilian franc-tireur resistance of 1870 and 1914, to proud Belgian articles and Dutch cartoons about them, in Baschwitz' book about collective delusions, *Der Massenwahn* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 90-2, 237-41, and elsewhere.

*Hannover.* The *Hannoversche Courier* of 13 August 1914 wrote, in turn: ‘The atrocities inflicted upon our wounded make Belgians of both sexes appear like beasts thirsting for blood. Where has one seen, except among barbarians of a remote epoch, the tearing out of the eyes or the traitorous butchering of the wounded? Such things were, indeed, only possible in the days of the Huns! And now we meet with the same thing in Christian Belgium with its ultramontane [traditionalist Catholic] government and its seventy thousand priests!’.<sup>33</sup>

*Catholic.* This latter allegation to a specific clerical role was very significant. The vanguard German divisions invading Belgium were Prussian, primarily protestant and profoundly mistrustful of a Catholic hierarchy of supposedly hypocritical black-robed priests. That mentality also tended to spread to other units. They felt priests might hide resistance fighters in Church buildings, send secret messages from the towers (for instance through flag signals or even the mysterious new invention of wireless radio). They might also ring the Church-bells to warn and mobilize their parishioners.

*Reaction.* Interestingly, however, this latter body of stories then stirred disbelief among German Catholics (who had survived the *Kulturkampf* confrontation with the Empire). Some areas along the Belgian border were also heavily catholic, with strong institutions and media. The important German Centre party, the catholic Pax association, and related newspapers like the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* from Cologne, began to systematically investigate the German atrocity stories from the front, and found them wanting. They found there might have been a few isolated incidents of these kinds, but they were vastly exaggerated and over-generalized.

*Denial.* The documents and testimonies to back them up had meanwhile also been contested from the Belgian side. A statistical analysis showed, for instance, that there often was huge gap between the dates the incidents were supposed to have taken place, and the dates the testimonies were finally recorded. This left too much room for embellishments, for what other experts later called ‘levelling, sharpening and assimilation’ of elements.

### **Rumour research**

*Rumour.* So this then inspired the first-ever systematic and empirical study of a body of rumours or a legend - although mainstream social science returned to that subject only very much later. Fernand van Langenhoven had first been a young assistant at the first Belgian

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Fernand van Langenhove, *The growth of a legend* (London: Forgotten Books, 2015 re-ed.), p. 8.

sociological research centre, the Solvay institute, and was then employed by the Documentation Bureau of the Belgian government in exile. He collected and investigated the German atrocity stories, one by one.<sup>34</sup>

*Analysis.* He grouped them together, then dissected the social and psychological processes that might have been at work. The recurring themes of the stories: treachery, incitement, poisonings, mutilations, murders and attacks. Their genesis: unconscious errors of observation, the psychology of the soldiers, the further elaboration. Their transmission and diffusion: oral, written, and through images. A complete inventory of all possible factors at work.

*Editions.* The study was only published half-way the war, in 1916, as 'How a legend cycle is born', in the main Belgian languages of French and Dutch. That same year it also appeared in English, and a year later in German (in neutral Switzerland). It was further disseminated through the various Entente communication services. The French version helped inspire a later article on the subject by historian Marc Bloch, and still later the famous study *La Grande Peur* by Georges Lefebvre (about the early phases of the French revolution). It thus influenced the emphasis on the evolution of mentalities of the entire French *Annales* school of historiography.<sup>35</sup>

*Study of rumour.* The English-language edition was prefaced by the famous American psychologist James Mark Baldwin. But it exerted little direct influence on the further scientific study of rumour, which only really took off during the next war.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile the publication of the legend study in German, and its trickling through, came too late to affect the firm belief of German commanders and troops in the widespread existence of Belgian 'free shooters' and atrocities.

*Too late.* As early as one week into the war, the Emperor had already noted privately that 'the population of Belgium ... behaved in a diabolical, not to say bestial, manner, not one iota better than the Cossacks. They tormented the wounded, beat them to death, killed doctors and medical orderlies, fired secretly ... on men harmlessly standing in the street – in fact by pre-arranged signal, under leadership'.

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<sup>34</sup> He later became a noted secretary general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under socialist Emile VanderVelde, and then a Belgian representative at international organizations, from Benelux to U.N. When I first consulted it, the elaborate Dutch Wikipedia item about him falsely claimed he had refuted the German franc-tireur myth. This is obviously based on a misunderstanding. He did not, he refuted the German atrocity legends.

<sup>35</sup> 'Sur les fausses nouvelles de guerre'. *Revue de synthèse* 1921. Reprinted in his *Écrits de guerre*, published 1997. Quoted by Horne & Kramer, p. 3, n. 2, pp. 91-2, 427.

<sup>36</sup> With the *Psychology of Rumor*, by psychologists Gordon Allport and Leo Postman, published in 1948 (and followed by the former's 1954 book on prejudice).

He said the King of the Belgians had to be notified that this would have grave consequences. That same day, the commander of the Second Army decreed that individual crimes would from now on lead to collective punishments such as heavy fines, hostage-taking or burning [of houses, villages and neighbourhoods].<sup>37</sup>

## THE EARLY LAND WAR

### **The Hague Conventions**

*International law.* There were heated debates over the transgressions of international law. The Prussians and the Germans apparently still waged the war in a 19<sup>th</sup> century manner. They claimed it was a battle of strength between uniformed and organized armies. If citizens without uniforms and a command structure got involved, they placed themselves outside the law. Not only they themselves, but also their families, neighbourhoods and villages would thus be subject to reprisals. Clausewitz had already claimed that soft and wavering reactions on this score would only lengthen the suffering, whereas harsh and decisive measures would shorten it.

*Conventions.* The Convention signed after the First Hague Conference of 1899, and then again after the Second Hague Conference of 1907, had laid down new rules. (A Peace Palace offered by American steel magnate Andrew Carnegie had been festively opened in 1913, but the Third Hague Peace Conference had had to be postponed because of the outbreak of the war). Yet the Germans had clearly felt uneasy about signing up to those rules in the first place.

*Order.* The Prussians favoured a professional army and *Ordnung muss sein*: there must be no ambiguity or uncertainty. Whereas since the Revolution, French Republicans tended to promote partisan, guerrilla or people's warfare: where citizens might well rise up in arms, if this was necessary to defend their country. Resistance against Napoleon's armies (in both Spain and Germany) had often taken that form as well. But this could easily lead to an escalation of excesses, on both sides, as colonial warfare had since begun to illustrate further.

*Rules.* So the new The Hague rules said that there could be no 'free fighters', that 'privileged combatants' such as militias should have a clear command structure, carry their arms openly, and wear distinctive signs clearly notable from a distance. There was of course a fierce polemic, as to what extent this was the case in 1914 Belgium. But since the invasion had been illegitimate in the first place, outside observers argued, the whole discussion was partly besides the point.

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<sup>37</sup> Horne & Kramer, op. cit., pp. 18-9.

### **The German offensive in Belgium**

*Columns.* The first German columns had been Prussian, but they were soon followed by columns from Bavaria, Württemberg and elsewhere. They proceeded to Aarschot, Andenne, Tamines, then to Dinant and Louvain/ Leuven, to cut into less protected Eastern and Northern France from there. In each of these towns, hundreds of civilians were killed. On occasion, they took hostages to protect their troops, as 'human shields'. Upon the slightest suspicion of individual armed attacks, they shelled and burned entire houses and villages, shot entire families and populations 'in reprisal'.

*Rape of Belgium.* The military campaign was thus accompanied by massive atrocities against civilians. It was later estimated that over eight hundred communities were destroyed, that five and a half thousand Belgian civilians, and a further thousand French civilians, were killed, that twenty thousand houses and buildings were destroyed, and that one and a half million citizens (or a fifth of the population) felt forced to flee.<sup>38</sup> Some German authors still suggest these numbers may have been somewhat inflated, but most observers today accept them as basically correct.<sup>39</sup>

*Lipkes.* As recently as 2007, American economic historian Jeff Lipkes published another painstaking reconstruction of the events in the various places affected by the campaign, from town to town, and from day to day. He concluded (p. 562) that 420 civilians had already been killed in Liège and surroundings, 1,700 more in the five towns conquered next, but thousands more in villages and the countryside in between. He was able to consult local Belgian archives with additional testimony, previously untapped by others.

*Tone.* Although it was an academic study brought out by an academic publisher (Leuven University Press), he did not try to hide his renewed outrage, almost a full century later. As he first planned to call his study *The Huns of August* (with a pun on the title of Tuchman's famous bestseller), and finally called it *Rehearsals* (meaning for the Nazi atrocities of World War II). He dissected all subsequent attempts at denial of atrocities, and sharply rejected them.

*Horne & Kramer.* A slightly earlier academic study on *German atrocities 1914*, by Irish historians John Horne and Alan Kramer in 2001 did not limit itself to the facts and testimonies about the military campaign and its excesses, by contrast. It also tried to weigh the atrocity stories that preceded and followed it among German troops, thus

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<sup>38</sup> Wikipedia overview item 'The rape of Belgium'.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Hoeres, in his review of the Horne & Kramer book, again quoted below.

providing a somewhat more balanced picture of the why and how of the events. (Lipkes categorically rejected those nuances). As in many other wars, night-time alcohol abuse had probably also contributed to the derailments, to looting, abuses and rapes.<sup>40</sup>

### **Belgian accusations of German atrocities**

*Outlandish.* There is little doubt that the German troops knowingly terrorized the civilian population, claiming this was done ‘in reprisal’ for acts of violence that later proved ill documented. But some stories about German atrocities were again made even more horrible through frequent retelling, and it is not always clear whether the published versions are based on first-hand eyewitness accounts, on hearsay or represented the umptieth distorted reproduction. There were, for instance, stories about people having seen crucified bodies of adults and children. Baschwitz’s later book on mass delusions has several elaborate passages about *Greuelbehagen* (pleasure in horror stories) and *Lustmörderphantasien* (fantasies about lustful murders), how they originated, spread, and were picked up in newspaper reports.<sup>41</sup>

*Mutilations.* One of the stories most frequently told in horror, and echoed in Entente propaganda for years to come was that of intentional mutilations and amputations, on soldiers and civilians. Not only about breasts of women cut off, but also about hands of children cut off on a large scale, or even of babies. The claim had no precedent in previous war-time propaganda, it became one of the signature stories for the international outrage, and one of the arch-images for pictorial renderings of the brutalities in the allied nations.

*Scepticism.* There were further embellishments on the sadistic nature of the practice.<sup>42</sup> No single case proved to be well documented, in retrospect. An American sceptic reportedly travelled to Europe to find even a single case but failed to; he was said to have later publicly offered a thousand dollars (tens of thousands in today’s money) to anyone who could produce such an amputated child victim – but no one came forward.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> A recent Dutch theory claims that the extreme stress of combat leads to additional testosterone rushes, which then contribute to sexual abuse and rapes. (Retrieve source?).

<sup>41</sup> *Der Massenwahn* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 66-74 (including a reference to the Congo connection), 100, 196, 216 ff., 225. ‘Babykiller’ label: p. 226-7.

<sup>42</sup> Babies carried around on bayonets, roasted, troves of baby hands carried around in uniform pockets, to be eaten or as mere souvenirs, etc.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Famously iconoclastic American lawyer Clarence Darrow’. Fleming, op. cit., p. 54.

*Baby hands.* One question is of course where the story about the cut-off hands came from. Surprisingly, it was a kind of *reverse projection*: as it had been a true story alleged against Belgian colonial troops and mercenaries. As they had used amputation on a grand scale, as standard punishment against those who refused forced labour in black Africa, or ran away. The Berlin conference to divide Africa had assigned the Congo as a personal possession to be developed by Belgian King Leopold II. His royal family ultimately made an estimated billion dollars out of it.<sup>44</sup>

*Transfer.* The overexploitation and excesses in his name inspired Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* (again echoed in our days in a sequence of the movie *Apocalypse now*). After a further international outrage and a British investigation had confirmed the widespread excesses under his royal rule, the colony had been transferred to the Belgian state on the eve of Leopold II's death, only five years before the First World War (in 1909), and the succession by his cousin Albert.

*Hochschild.* In recent years, American historian Adam Hochschild has published widely acclaimed studies about the most pertinent related issues. His study on Leopold's colonization said that some ten million (!) Congolese natives had been killed, died from starvation or disease, fled abroad or went missing, in just over a few decades. It also confirmed systematic amputation of hands as punishment. (Pictures of the practice and the victims abound, even on the Internet today). Hochschild's subsequent study on Britain and the First World War said that it had many colonial traits, and that the story about German soldiers cutting of children's hands had probably indeed sprung from the then-still-recent Congo reports.<sup>45</sup>

*Stabilization.* By mid-September 1914, the situation began to stabilize. The Germans had almost completed their thrust to Paris, when at the very last moment, the French were able to throw in additional troops. Paris police famously told taxis in the streets (still a relative novelty elsewhere) to eject their passengers, pass by their garages to fill up with gas, and then report for exceptional military duty. 600 cars took five soldiers each, brought them to the Marne frontline in one long column, and then returned to take another load. This is how weaknesses in the lines were repaired at the very last minute, and the invaders were pushed back to the North. Over the next few years, however, in spite of horrendous slaughters, the frontlines moved relatively little.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, op. cit. Also quoted by Fleming, pp. 49-50, n. 156.

<sup>45</sup> *King Leopold's Ghost* (1998), and *To End All Wars* (2011).

<sup>46</sup> Tuchman, op. cit., p. 521.

### **Facts and fiction**

*Excesses.* From the very beginning of the First World War, stories about extreme excesses made the rounds. Each side reconfirmed those of their own side as well-documented, and denied those of the other side as mere rumours. After the war, there were investigation commissions, but their claims were sometimes less than perfectly documented, leaving room for some ‘neutral observers’ to claim they had just been ‘atrocities propaganda’.

*Horne & Kramer.* But academic scholars have not left the issue alone, and tried to study every scrap of paper that was still available. Horne and Kramer, already quoted above, concluded (p. 419) that the first round of German stories on Belgian atrocities had been largely untrue. ‘The Great Fear which swept through the invading German armies took the form of a collective delusion that enemy civilians were engaged in massive resistance in a franc-tireur war.’

*Explanation.* They explained: ‘The combination of the trauma of combat with ideological and cultural predispositions – the expectation of a *levée-en-masse* on the pattern of 1870 and the paranoid world-view of a great part of the officer corps- generated this myth-complex. The delusion developed such force that it persuaded one million men of the reality of a chimera’. That seems plausible, even though some critical reviewers claimed they came to this conclusion by privileging Belgian sources, and under-privileging German sources on the incidents.<sup>47</sup>

*Thomas theorem.* But Horne and Kramer also concluded that the second wave, of Belgian stories about German atrocities, had by contrast been largely true. The theorem later formulated by the American sociologist William Thomas and his wife may well have been at work here: ‘If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’. Since the Germans *believed* in widespread Belgian atrocities, they were even less reticent in *committing* atrocities against them in turn.

*Schlieffen.* But the main reason why Germans undertook massive reprisals against civilians after each individual scare (however ambiguous) lay of course in the original Schlieffen plan of attack. As it dictated that Paris must be taken within six weeks time, at whatever costs, in order to redeploy the troops and be able to resist the inevitable onslaught on the other side: that of the Russian armies, in vastly greater

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<sup>47</sup> Peter Hoeres, review of the German translation of the book, in *Sehepunkte – Rezensionenjournal für die Geschichtswissenschaften*, Vol. 4, Nr. 7-8 (15 July 2004). Relevant parts of the archives of the German chiefs of staff and the Prussian army had been destroyed during World War II. Various written testimonies of soldiers and officers survived, but he felt they had (again) been used in a one-sided way.

numbers. This tight time schedule imposed *rücksichtslosigkeit* or ‘no consideration’.

### **The Battle of the Manifestoes**

*Britain.* When the war was only a few weeks old, internationally renowned academics and intellectuals, writers and artists from the larger warring countries, began to publicly take sides. Late August, a group of German luminaries renounced the honorary awards they had received from across the Channel in protest, because the British obviously refused to accept their countries’ achievements and were set on destroying it. Within a month, the newly set up secret British propaganda bureau secretly engineered a response in kind.

*France.* Meanwhile, the international outrage over the destruction of Belgian Louvain (‘the intellectual capital of the Low Countries since the Middle Ages’), its university and invaluable library, and over the damage to the famous gothic cathedral in French Reims, had gathered force. The famous Paris Salon des Artistes banned German works, French societies and academies expelled their colleagues, for the ‘cultural vandalism’ displayed by their troops. French pacifist author Romain Roland wrote a letter to his German colleague Gerhard Hauptmann with the angry question: ‘Are you the grandchildren of Goethe or Attila?’<sup>48</sup>

*Appeal.* Early October, 93 world-famous German intellectuals and artists then published an ‘Appeal to the World of Culture’, in which they denied that their country had started the war or was guilty of atrocities, and maintained it had just acted in self defence. Those who had taken the initiative had coordinated with the foreign ministry and intelligence bureau in the end, and concluded it with the resounding sentence ‘The German army and the German people are one’.

*Signatories.* The Appeal was signed by a dozen German Nobel Prize winners in physics and chemistry, physiology and medicine, as well as a host of other world famous scientists (including Ernst Haeckel, Max Planck, Wilhelm Röntgen). Furthermore a Nobel Prize winner in literature, as well as a host of other world famous authors, composers and artists. It also included many noted philosophers and even theologians. The Appeal was translated into many languages, and tens of thousands of copies were distributed.

*Brentano.* There is every reason to believe that Kurt Baschwitz supported it whole-heartedly at that point.<sup>49</sup> One of the signatories was the supervisor of his Ph. D. thesis, the noted economist Lujo von

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Frits Boterman, op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>49</sup> There are references to it in his personal papers (file 129), articles (*DAZ*, 8 Sept. 1925) and an elaborate one in his first book (*Der Massenwahn*, pp. 205-216).

Brentano, for whom he still felt reverence. Although Brentano and ten others later renounced the appeal. They claimed that they had just given their agreement in principle by telephone or telegraph, had not been aware of the involvement of the authorities, and had not seen or approved the precise final text. (After the war, sixty others expressed varying degrees of regret for having signed it).

*Follow up.* Mid-October thousands of university teachers followed suit with another declaration of solidarity with the army. Only Albert Einstein and a few exceptional others had refused to sign such appeals, and protested against German nationalism. But the international battle of the manifestos continued throughout the entire autumn. From now on, the German word 'Kultur' was presented as suspect, and fundamentally different from –if not completely opposite to- the Franco-British word 'civilisation'.<sup>50</sup>

*Echo chambers.* The shallow nationalism of most 'opinion leaders' all around illustrated several things. Claims and counterclaims about who had triggered the war or committed atrocities were still extremely confusing. For many, it was apparently still very hard to confidently separate fact from fiction, therefore everybody continued to believe what they wanted to believe. Namely that their side were the good guys and the other side the bad guys. As information about all this primarily resonated within the echo chambers of separate language areas and press systems. The information in each separate nation was extremely one-sided, and made it impossible to consider or even imagine any alternative point of view.

*Prussia.* Information in Germany may have been even more one-sided than elsewhere, as the rather authoritarian *Obrigkeitsstaat* still prevailed at the very top in Berlin. The Prussian monarch and army command, the key ministers and deputies, had a much larger voice than the rest of the country, and pushed through their preferred course of action. (Prussian deputies were still elected through the three class system, which gave considerably more weight to a small elite of national conservatives).

*Wilhelm.* Yet later that same autumn, on 20 November 1914, crown prince Wilhelm gave an exceptional interview, which was then distributed by the American news agency UPI. He said: 'Undoubtedly this is the most stupid, senseless and unnecessary war of modern times. It is a war not wanted by Germany, I can assure you, but it was forced on us'. He added: 'The fact that we were so effectually prepared to defend

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<sup>50</sup> Horne & Kramer, pp. 278-85. Wikipedia item 'Manifesto of the 93'.

ourselves is now being used as argument to convince the world that we desire conflict'.<sup>51</sup>

### **The special department at Wellington House**

*Britain.* British decision makers increasingly felt the Americans needed to be convinced to give up their isolationism. Stories that this was 'Civilization being attacked by the Barbarians' conveyed a strong message. The U.K. had one of the strongest media and communication systems in the world, which was in many ways closely connected to that of the U.S.: the other strongest media and communication system in the world. Not only through a shared language, but also through parallel or linked communication channels (such as the transatlantic cables), institutions and companies.

*Markets.* Within a week after the beginning of the war, parliament passed the famous Defence Of the Realm Act DORA, 'which gave British censors the power to scrutinize every word that went from England to the United States and elsewhere', and that is still in force today.<sup>52</sup> Even at that point in time, the combined Anglo-Saxon countries together already began to form the richest, strongest and most influential international media market that they still are today.<sup>53</sup>

*Newspapers.* It had two strong newspaper groups, controlled by Lord Northcliffe (with *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and others), later succeeded by his brother Lord Rothermere, and by Lord Beaverbrook (with the *Daily Express* and others). They were conservative, and driving at war over the fleet and the empire, in spite of the reticence of some leading liberal politicians. The former Lord was later made to head a Ministry of Information. (Compare Baschwitz's *Der Massenwahn*, p. 61).

*Further press.* The quality dailies with limited circulations were supplemented by popular dailies with a million copies a day. They were occasionally even more jingoistic in tone, without reticence. The country also had a host of weeklies and illustrated magazines. New cameras allowed for better action pictures, and new printing techniques allowed for their better rendering. Colour was increasingly being used. Yet sound reproduction and moving images were still in their infancy, and only played a role at the end and in the aftermath of the war. (B/MW 71).

*Masterman.* But as soon as Britain had entered the war, all media were mobilized. Britain set up a secret 'war propaganda bureau' at Wellington House, set up by Charles Masterman. I already mentioned

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<sup>51</sup> J.A. Morris, *Deadline every minute* (New York: Doubleday 1957), p. 68. Quoted in Knightley, op. cit., pp. 118-9, n. 6.

<sup>52</sup> Fleming, p. 43; Knightley.

<sup>53</sup> See the relevant chapter in my earlier book *Understanding global news* (London: Sage 1996).

that he recruited 52 of the most popular writers for a response to the appeal of German intellectuals to ‘the world of culture’, but they could not mention his involvement. They included James Barrie (*Peter Pan*), G.K. Chesterton (*Father Brown*), Arthur Conan Doyle (*Sherlock Holmes*), Rudyard Kipling (*The Jungle Book*), and H.G. Wells (*The War of the Worlds*). It was the latter who coined the famous ambiguous pacifist-sounding but pro-war phrase: ‘This, the greatest of all wars, is not just another war – it is the last war!’.<sup>54</sup>

*Atrocities.* In all, the War propaganda Bureau was to bring out more than a thousand publications. Most relayed the stories about German atrocities from Belgium and France, and further added to them. September 1914, the popular *Daily Mail* already devoted ten percent of its editorial space to them. Around the middle of the month, for instance, it carried an item about a child’s foot that had been found among the rubble of a destroyed village. It was accompanied by the picture of a man apparently holding it up.

### **British propaganda**

*Annihilate.* William Le Queux, best-selling Franco-British author of 150 popular novels, reportedly ‘described the German army as “one vast gang of Jack-the-Rippers”, and described in graphic detail events such as a governess hanged naked and mutilated, the bayoneting of a small baby’ etc.<sup>55</sup> The nationalist weekly *John Bull* pleaded for the complete annihilation of the German people with the help of poison gas, after which its circulation shot up to three hundred thousand within a few months time.<sup>56</sup> Only the famous Welsh philosopher Bertrand Russell and the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw disagreed. The latter said the British had employed the same mass reprisals against the slightest signs of civilian resistance in colonial wars.<sup>57</sup>

*Cavell.* One later key British propaganda theme was the German treatment of Edith Cavell, a British woman working in a hospital in Belgium. She was presented as a kind of Florence Nightingale: an attractive frail young nurse, tirelessly caring for the wounded and dying. She did in fact also run an underground organization, however, which smuggled two hundred Belgian, French and British fighters out across the border to neutral Holland.

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<sup>54</sup> Knightley, *The First Casualty*, Ch. 5, pp. 79 ff.

<sup>55</sup> Wikipedia ‘The rape of Belgium’, referring to Nicoletta Gullace’s 2002 *The Blood of Our Sons*.

<sup>56</sup> Kieft’s study on war enthusiasm, p. 376, n. 19-20, quoting Adrian Gregory’s 2008 *The Last War* a.o.

<sup>57</sup> In his autumn 1914 essay ‘Common sense about the War’, quoted in Horne & Kramer, pp. 287-8.

*Cult.* The Germans condemned her through a summary procedure, and executed her as an illicit combatant. This caused a widespread outrage and made her an icon of the 'Rape of Belgium': in her impeccable white nurses uniform, with a red cross on her cap. She was made into the heroine of a cult, also in neutral countries of Europe and America. But Knightley's propaganda study adds (p. 82): 'The French had already shot one woman for exactly the same offence, and were to shoot another eight before the end of the war'. (Comp. B, MW, 92-3).

*U.S.* Within four months, the Propaganda Bureau had already translated, published and distributed some twenty different publications for neutral countries. But the main focus was on the U.S. To lead its New York bureau, Masterman recruited his fellow MP, Canadian-born best-seller author Gilbert Parker. He soon had 54 people working for him. 'He arranged for American reporters to interview more than one hundred prominent Englishmen: from the prime minister to the Archbishop of Canterbury', the highest cleric of the Anglican church.

*Mailing list.* 'They combed *Who's Who in America* and other sources to assemble a mailing list of 260,000 influential men and women'. They also linked up with the influential U.S. Navy League, which included many bankers and corporate executives. Already in autumn 1914, one of a major bank's partners said: 'In America there are 50,000 people who understand the necessity of the United States entering the war on [England's] side. But there are 100,000,000 Americans who have not even thought of it. Our task is to see that those figures are reversed'.<sup>58</sup>

### **The continental investigations**

*Prologue.* Already during the first weeks of the invasion, when the first systematic atrocities were being reported from both sides, some people higher up in the command structure suggested that these accusations be investigated and reported systematically. Eyewitnesses should be heard, their testimony recorded, with times and places and details. These declarations were then collected, and made public. Soon the Germans, Belgians, French and British came with small preliminary reports, sometimes several successive ones. For half a year, however, the overall picture remained contradictory and confusing.

*Spring 1915.* It was only next spring 1915, that their larger and more complete 'final' reports came out. In general, they had large appendices with (the most horrible) parts of eyewitness declarations, preceded by a smaller summary that drew general conclusions from them, about the actions of the adversary. In the propaganda use that was made

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<sup>58</sup> Fleming, pp. 46-7; Knightley.

of these, however, the more salient claims stood out - not always the more credible ones. Also because at this point in time, the battle geared up for public and political opinion in the giant U.S. – which remained officially neutral but could easily become the final arbiter of the conflict.

*Germany.* The first of the larger reports to be published was the German White paper, on ‘The conduct of the Belgian People’s War in breach of international law’. Early on, the German army commander, then the chancellor, and then the *Kaiser*, had officially claimed that the Belgian civilian population had offered armed resistance, and committed atrocities – particularly against the wounded. The army command then collected eyewitness testimonies to this effect, mostly from its own soldiers. The accusers were identified in great detail, but not the alleged perpetrators. Nor had any been arraigned or charged. Apart from Catholic representatives, socialist deputy Karl Liebknecht was one of the few to express doubts.

*Translation.* The Belgians soon brought out a 500 page *Livre gris* or ‘grey’ book, to refute the German claims made in the ‘white’ book. Yet the British refused to authorize an English translation of the German White Book, even after this supposed refutation. It was only after the war was over, that a full translation was published in England. By that time, Van Langenhove’s aforementioned study on the probable role of early front rumours had already provided a plausible explanation for much of the German soldiers’ atrocity tales.

*France.* France had its *Bureau de la Presse*, initially given a budget of 25 million gold francs from secret services funds. It published regular compilations of new accusations, and saw to it that most newspapers soon carried a standard section, labelled *Les Atrocités Allemandes*. Among the few to express reticence about the more extreme stories was the writer André Gide.

*Diaries.* Military intelligence had meanwhile been able to send investigators into former war zones that the Germans had retreated from. Their evidence included letters and diaries found on dead soldiers, wounded ones and prisoners. They then gave access to this material to a philology professor at the famous Collège de France.<sup>59</sup> He produced two brochures on the ‘confessions’ to atrocities they contained. German critics later criticized his translations and interpretations. After the war, unfortunately, much of the original material turned out to have disappeared.

*Belgian.* Within days after the invasion, the Belgian Minister of Justice had in turn established a commission to collect testimonies of gross German violations of international law. It published several smaller

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<sup>59</sup> Joseph Bédier, both available in English in 1915. See Horne & Kramer; Lipkes.

preliminary reports, and then a larger ‘final’ one (for the time being) – also in the spring of 1915. On the one hand, the country long remained in utter chaos –even far behind frontlines- and the material was sometimes less than perfect. On the other hand, the interviews were often made by local authorities, familiar with the situation and with the witnesses – which enhanced their truthfulness. There also were a number of parallel investigations, by clergymen or secular notables, which led to further reports and archives, which the aforementioned Jeff Lipkes was able to use as an additional source of information, even ninety years later.

*Neutrals.* The Belgians and the French worked hard to communicate their findings to the outside world, to the neutral countries including the United States. They had a strong German constituency in the mid-West, but less so on the leading East Coast, between Boston and New York, Philadelphia and Washington. Feelings about Entente power Great Britain were sometimes contradictory: it was the former colonizer of America all right, but also a linguistic, cultural and ideological relative. For the time being, isolationism had the upper hand: most of the population wanted to stay out of the distant conflict. But key decision makers soon favoured helping the Entente powers, and were aware that they might sooner or later be forced to take sides anyway.

### **The British Bryce report**

*Initiative.* As early as mid-September, a British MP had asked the Government for plans to investigate the German atrocities. The popular novelist Henry Rider Haggard (of the famous series around the imperial adventure hero *Alan Quatermain*) called for a Royal Commission. It turned out the PM had already asked the Attorney General to begin making arrangements. Belgian refugees who had witnessed war crimes were urged to come forward.

*Procedure.* First in the depots where they arrived, then at their next addresses. (Some British soldiers were also interviewed, and some investigators later travelled to Belgium for additional information, but not for on-site verifications). In the end, 22 barristers were engaged to take some 1,200 statements. (From one percent of the 120,000 Belgians that ultimately ended up in Britain).

*Hearsay.* The idea had been to only include first-hand eyewitness reports, and to discourage hearsay. But the witnesses were in a distant anonymous environment, and their names were to be excluded anyway (supposedly for fear of possible reprisals). They tended to justify their fleeing and becoming refugees, of course. Many hardly spoke English, only Wallonian-French and Flemish-Dutch dialects, but interpreters were hired as well. There was time pressure to come up with a report as soon

as possible, to get home opinion further behind the war effort, but also neutral countries and first of all the United States.

*Commission.* When the investigation was already well under way, in early 1915, the authorities felt it would be a good idea to recruit a commission of reputable persons, to vouch for the work done, and to draw general conclusions. They soon found the ideal chairman: the former liberal MP James Bryce. He had studied in Germany, was the author of a number of scholarly books. One of his major early studies had been a noteworthy book on *The American Commonwealth*, which brought him honorary doctorates there.

*Friends.* It ‘took him throughout the country and earned him many friends’, one bio says. They ‘ranked among America’s elite: lawyers, politicians, captains of industry, journalists’.<sup>60</sup> During the years before the war, he had therefore already been the ambassador of the crown to Washington, and one of those friends was president Woodrow Wilson himself – who needed to be convinced to give up his neutrality.

*Cox.* Next to Bryce, the committee to investigate the ‘alleged German outrages’ consisted of half a dozen elderly jurists and historians. One of the youngest was another former liberal MP: mathematician and economist Harold Cox, then journalist and editor of the old and prestigious Scottish *Edinburgh Review*. But he soon expressed doubts and even threatened to resign publicly.

*Reservations.* Since they could only report that: ‘We have read through a large number of printed statements furnished to us by persons appointed by the British Government. These statements profess to be a transcript of depositions made by British soldiers and Belgian refugees. Some of the statements appear to us on prima facie grounds to be incredible’, but others not.

*Face-to-face.* He demanded that the Commission itself meet some of the supposed eye-witnesses face-to-face, to cross-examine them. But the others countered that this was impractical, and it was already late. In the end, Cox agreed that they would therefore only meet the barristers that had taken the depositions. Only a limited number of statements were included in the Appendix, some of the most far-fetched stories were already omitted. The vast majority of the alleged victims were men, not women or children.<sup>61</sup>

*Lipkes.* The aforementioned overview study by American historian Lipkes defends the Commission and the statements. ‘The final report itself is unimpeachable, but the evidence published in Appendix A [still]

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<sup>60</sup> Jameson Ryley, ‘The historian who sold out’, *Iowa Historical Review*, Vol. 1, Issue 2 (2008), pp. 60-85.

<sup>61</sup> According to the Australian historian Trevor Wilson, in a 1979 article and a 1986 book, quoted by Lipkes, pp. 648-51, n. 194 ff.; pp. 692-4.

includes too many stories of dubious merit; and a number that are most likely outright inventions' (p. 694). He then proceeded to rate those depositions on a five-point scale, from 'very likely' to 'probably a legend or invention'. His estimate was that 16,6% or one-sixth of the testimony on key regions belonged in the latter category.

*Evaluation.* He felt this was little, since it meant that the vast majority of the testimony about mass terror was probably true. But one could object that it were exactly the most salient stories from the last category about lurid sex crimes and the most gratuitously sadistic acts (like crucifixions and amputations) that stood out in the newspaper cartoons and in the minds of the readers, both at home and overseas, among allies and neutrals. His first conclusion was that 'the German Army did not systematically cut off the hands of Belgian children and the breasts of Belgian women'. But he further concluded that much of the rest was true.<sup>62</sup>

### **Further exploitation of atrocity stories**

*Impact.* The Bryce report was released on 13 May 1915, and soon translated into some thirty languages. 41,000 copies were shipped off to the U.S. The *New York Times* rendered it in great detail, including fanciful stories that were probably incorrect. Within two weeks, the New York department of the British War Propaganda Bureau triumphantly reported back home in its *American Press Resumé* that it was a great success: 'Even in papers hostile to the Allies, there is not the slightest attempt to impugn the correctness of the facts alleged. [Because] Lord Bryce's prestige in America put scepticism out of the question'.<sup>63</sup>

*Doubts.* Yet after the war was over, further doubts were expressed. Successive authors questioned the veracity of some of the statements, and demanded to see the originals. However, the relevant authorities could not produce the material, and said it might have been mislaid or lost. The most complete and frontal attack then came in an American academic book on *Atrocity Propaganda 1914-1919*, that was only published at the beginning of the next war, when the U.S. did again initially remain neutral. Immediately thereafter, the British authorities claimed the material from the Bryce report had miraculously been located – but then lost again without a trace, possibly in a German bombardment. This reinforced international scepticism about new atrocity stories.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Lipkes, *Rehearsals*, pp. 675, 694, 698-700.

<sup>63</sup> Fleming, pp. 53-4. Also see Knightley, pp. 83-4.

<sup>64</sup> James Read, *Atrocity Propaganda 1914-1919* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press 1941), discussed by Lipkes, pp. 640-7, 697-8. The book came out just before the first tentative information about Auschwitz and the Nazi concentration camps reached western decision makers, and possibly helped delay effective action.

*Louis Raemaekers.* Capitalizing on the horror, a cartoonist from neutral Holland had meanwhile become one of the most effective propagandists of the Entente cause, and later of the Bryce report. Louis Raemaekers had briefly studied in Brussels, had become an art teacher, but then went to make political drawings for the Amsterdam *Telegraaf*, the aforementioned largest newspaper of the country. He was outraged by the German actions.

*Arch-scenes.* He drew a country in ruins, strewn with corpses of civilians. But ‘The Rape of Belgium’ was more often symbolized by a vulnerable young woman, terrorized by male German brutes. He thus took the most extreme atrocity stories, condensed them into a single striking image, that would jump off the paper it was printed upon, and into the face of the reader. His creations with clear black lines and occasional primary colours were easy to reproduce, and soon got carried by foreign newspapers as well, such as Lord Northcliffe’s popular *Daily Mail* in London, and *Le Journal* in Paris.

*Success.* He therefore soon moved to London, got an agent. But it was in fact Wellington House, the powerful secret British propaganda service, that took him under its wings. It organized an exhibition, published books with his best work – one prefaced by the prime minister himself. It then organized a promotional trip to the still neutral United States, where he even met president Woodrow Wilson. His cartoons were also picked up by the Hearst syndicate: with hundreds of papers, in millions of copies every day. There is no doubt that he single-handedly helped influence the further course of events. Ex-president Theodore Roosevelt later called his cartoons ‘the most powerful of the honourable contributions made by neutrals to the cause of civilization in the World War’.<sup>65</sup>

*Karlsruhe.* By contrast, German counterpropaganda was largely ineffective, and sometimes even absent. At times, Baschwitz was in the capital to report for the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*. On one occasion, in the summer of 1916, the war press office invited such representatives of the press to meet a host of higher military authorities. On this occasion, they were told *not* to report on a large-scale massacre French planes had caused in Karlsruhe.

*Circus.* Forty bombs had been thrown on the inner city. Some had hit a special children’s representation given in the tent of Circus Hagenbeck, set up on a square near the central railway station (the city

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<sup>65</sup> Dutch Ariane de Ranitz wrote a Ph. D. dissertation and a book about him. There was a renewed burst of interest upon the centenary of the beginning of the war, with another exhibition and book. Also see her article in the trade magazine *De Boekenwereld*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (2014), pp. 50-55.

was familiar to Baschwitz since his last year in grammar school). Some 120 people died: 71 children. 169 more were wounded. Rather than exploiting the 'atrocities', the army command was afraid that it might (further) demoralize the civilian population. But of course the rumour of the *Kindermord* got out, and made things even worse.<sup>66</sup>

## THE WAR AT SEA

### **Fleet competition**

*Berlin Conference.* Thirty years earlier, the German Kaiser had invited the representatives of the other major powers to Berlin, for a grand conference in the interest of keeping the peace, but also to divide the world among themselves, to keep control of the 'scramble for Africa' after quarrels over the Congo.<sup>67</sup>

*Empires.* At that point in time, Great Britain was building the largest colonial empire ever, from West to East, 'where the sun never set'. From African Egypt to Asian India: 13 million square miles, with 444 million subjects.<sup>68</sup> France began to follow suit. Germany was a latecomer, and was only able to get hold of the left-overs: some minor and mostly less attractive colonies. Much smaller countries on the Atlantic coast (like Portugal, Belgium, and The Netherlands) had been able to acquire more significant possessions.

*U.S.* Even the United States were building an informal colonial empire. The Monroe doctrine had already proclaimed U.S. hegemony over South America, now key parts of the Pacific were brought under control as well. The war against Spain 'liberated' Cuba and acquired Puerto Rico, the Canal brought parts of Panama, and meddling in Central America. It also brought Guam, formalized possession of Hawaii, later followed by some of the Samoan islands, and the entire Philippines.<sup>69</sup>

*Transition.* After emperor Wilhelm I had been succeeded by Wilhelm II, the emphasis shifted from continental to world politics, to a

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<sup>66</sup> On the Catholic Feast of Corpus Christi, 22 June 1916. These were the early days of mutual aerial warfare. The French at first exalted, as it was supposedly a successful reprisal, but later claimed it had been a tragic mistake. See Baschwitz' section on 'The child in war hate propaganda', in a subsequent article on 'Germanophobia and the manufacture of opinion'. Also in *Der Massenwahn* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 129-30. Eyewitness accounts and more details on the websites of the city and of the regional broadcaster (SWR).

<sup>67</sup> See the elaborate television documentary by Joël Calmette 'Berlin 1885: La Ruée sur l'Afrique - Les Coulisses de la Colonisation', broadcast by the Franco-German quality channel Arte, 1 March 2011, later rebroadcast sur Tv5 Monde..

<sup>68</sup> Fleming, p. 63. He added that only the overseas settlers had a vote; in the British homeland 2.5% of the population controlled 98% of the wealth.

<sup>69</sup> Clark, p. 151-2.

*Weltpolitik*. Germany needed to import raw materials, to export industrial products, and to profit from the margins between them. As one foreign minister formulated it just before the turn of the century: ‘We don’t want to put anyone in the shadow, but we demand our place in the sun’. <sup>70</sup> During the quarter century before the First World War, Germany’s part in world trade rose thus from 11 to 13%, whereas Britain’s part fell from 20 to 15% - so only slightly more. <sup>71</sup>

*Fleets*. Germany now had more than double the iron-and-steel production of Britain. <sup>72</sup> It used its new industrial might to rapidly expand its merchant navy, but its military navy as well, to try and catch up with the other major powers. The British construed this as ‘a threat’, and scoffed *Der Kaiser* as a megalomaniac with a childish fascination for boats and a fleet. At one point, admiral Fisher ‘called for a preventive strike against the German navy’, as it wanted to continue to ‘rule the waves’ around the world – alone and unchallenged. Soon thereafter, Britain had begun to build monster vessels –the heavily armed and swift dreadnoughts’. Yet even in 1910, Germany still had only reached forty percent of the warship tonnage of Britain. <sup>73</sup>

*Grey*. On the eve of the First World War, Britain’s political and opinion leaders were divided between hawks and doves. Some felt a major confrontation was inevitable, and were eager ‘to get it over with’. A decisive voice for the war camp was long-time foreign secretary Edward Grey (relative of Earl Grey, of scented tea fame). According to Clark (pp. 200-201) he ‘knew little of the world outside Britain, had never shown much interest in travelling, spoke no foreign languages and felt ill at ease in the company of foreigners’.

*Churchill*. He was nominally a liberal, but with a conservative agenda. He shut out others from the decision to enter the war. Another enthusiastic supporter was an ambitious young First Lord of the Admiralty by the name of Winston Churchill, who wrote to his wife upon news of the outbreak of war: ‘Everything tends toward catastrophe, & collapse. I am interested, geared up and happy’. <sup>74</sup> (He subsequently pushed the disastrous Dardanelles campaign, which cost a hundred thousand lives).

## **Blockade and famine**

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<sup>70</sup> Bernhard von Bülow’s famous speech before the *Reichstag*, of 6 Dec. 1897. Quoted here from Clark, p. 151.

<sup>71</sup> Guillen, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>72</sup> Stürmer, pp. 71-2.

<sup>73</sup> Kitchen, op. cit., pp. 157 ff., 170. Stürmer, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>74</sup> Letter to Clementine, 28 July 1914, quoted from Clarke, p. 552.

*Threats.* The current standard historiography of the First World War usually overlooks the early naval actions by Britain, thereby actively making subsequent German reactions at sea inexplicable and again pathological. Already at the time of the Boer war, an assistant under-secretary of the British Foreign Office had told others not to meddle, because: ‘Should it come to a war with Germany ... a blockade of Hamburg and Bremen and the annihilation of German commerce on the high seas would be child’s play for the English fleet’. <sup>75</sup> Germany was indeed extremely vulnerable for the fact that all its maritime harbours were located in a very small North-western tip of the country that gave access to the open seas, and it could very easily be shut off. By contrast, Britain had complete access to the North sea and the Atlantic ocean all around.

*Blockade.* So from day one of the war, the vastly superior fleet of Great Britain imposed a blockade on Germany, until well after the signing of the peace agreements, almost five years later. Within a year, this cut both imports and exports in half, and led to rapidly escalating shortages. Not only of raw materials needed for industrial production, which could sometimes be replaced by synthetic inventions, but also of agricultural foodstuffs (and some key medicines) needed for the civilian population. This rapidly led to malnourishment and a harrowing famine.

*Rationing.* Initially, the German authorities tried to pass the rationing problems over in silence, but the Entente powers soon became aware that the stranglehold was indeed increasingly effective. The Germans later called it one of the major war crimes and atrocities on the part of the allies. It is now estimated that their average daily intake fell from an ample 3,400 calories on the eve of the war, to an insufficient 1,000 toward its end. <sup>76</sup> The last ‘hunger winters’ were terrible, with bread riots in many major cities.

*Famine.* While the Peace negotiations dragged on for half a year, an estimated 800 adults per day died of hunger in North Germany alone. When future American president Herbert Hoover tried to prepare an emergency food relief program, French PM Clémenceau reportedly quipped ‘There are twenty million Germans too many’ anyway. <sup>77</sup> The Germans estimated said that the blockade led to an extra mortality from hunger and disease of three-quarters to one million people in all; more restrictive later allied studies tended to lower these estimates somewhat.

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<sup>75</sup> Sir Francis Bertie, quoted in a specialized study by Harald Rosenbach, and in Clark, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>76</sup> Kitchen, p. 184.

<sup>77</sup> Paul Vincent, *Post World War I Blockade of Germany*, p. 146, a.o. quoted in Fleming, p. 312. Later: *The Politics of Hunger – The Allied Blockade of Germany 1915-1919* (Ohio University Press 1985).

<sup>78</sup> The famine caused a trauma that marked an entire generation. (It also became one of the reasons why the Germans started the next war in the way that they did).<sup>79</sup>

*Baschwitz.* Kurt Baschwitz was a German journalist, and later a foreign correspondent in the Dutch seaport of Rotterdam. He devoted a complete section and many further pages of his subsequent book on ‘mass delusions’ to this ‘hunger war’. (B/MW 216-228). He also related in detail how the British soon forced the neutral Netherlands to also stop its provisions, and the heart-rending scenes at the train stations on the border. With on the one hand emaciated children arriving to spend a few weeks at a foster family, and on the other hand healthy children who were sent home again. But who were frisked by zealous customs employees and burst into tears when they were stripped of the extra piece of chocolate they had planned to bring home - as a special gift for their little brothers or sisters.<sup>80</sup>

### **Submarine U-boats**

*Submarines.* To counter British military might at the surface of the seas, Germany had recently begun to develop a fleet of submarines (‘Untersee’ or underwater, therefore ‘U-boats’). The idea of submarines was old, very primitive wooden prototypes had even been built during the American independence war and civil war, but engineers had now developed more sophisticated models.

*U-boats.* They could therefore sneak through, under the surface navy blockade, to in turn threaten British merchant ships and supplies in turn. Because its major trading partner had now become the United States. Officially, opinion there was divided and the country remained neutral. But major policy and opinion makers chose to support their ‘family relative’ Great Britain, and were aware that this might sooner or later force them to openly take sides.<sup>81</sup>

*Procedures.* The use of U-boats is usually presented as another German war crime, but they had meanwhile been adopted by the allies as well, and have since become a common weapon of war. Initially, they were only used against enemy ships that carried illicit goods, and followed strict procedures. They would surface to warn, and launch only

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<sup>78</sup> See the overview Wikipedia item on the Blockade.

<sup>79</sup> By invading the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway with their longer coastlines; and by invading Eastern Europe with its vast agricultural territories. To conquer what Hitler called *Lebensraum* or ‘vital space’.

<sup>80</sup> *Der Massenwahn* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 216-228; also 48, 69-70, 215, 268, 361. Customs checks: p. 226.

<sup>81</sup> A brilliant recent alternative history is Thomas Fleming’s *The illusion of victory – America in World War I* (New York: Basic/ Perseus 2003).

one torpedo. This would cause only a limited hole, and cause the target to begin to sink only very slowly – enabling the crew to get into the boats and survive.<sup>82</sup> But soon, the British devised countermeasures.

*Churchill.* ‘The admiralty under First Lord Winston Churchill warned ship captains that they would be prosecuted if they tamely surrendered their ships. The admiralty ordered crews to ram or fire on U-boats whenever possible. Churchill also ordered that the survivors of sunken U-boats be treated as felons rather than prisoners of war, meaning they could be shot if this was “the most convenient” way of dealing with them’.

*Executions.* Such executions of prisoners of war were later actually undertaken by the *Baralong* (a ‘Q type’ that is to say a British warship disguised as an American merchant ship to lure attackers). Furthermore ‘British ships were ordered to sail with no names or registry numbers. When they were in the barred zone around the British isles, they were told to fly a neutral flag, preferably American. On the voyage before it was sunk, the *Lusitania* had used this tactic’.<sup>83</sup>

### **The sinking of the Lusitania**

*Lusitania.* The sinking of the *Lusitania* was (and still is) widely invoked as another horrendous German war crime. It was nominally a very large but still fast British passenger ship, which also used to carry considerable merchant loads. The Germans had put ads in papers of the still neutral U.S., to warn passengers that they took considerable risks when they booked on such ships. This did not prevent multimillionaire Alfred Vanderbilt, or an art collector with sealed tubes (containing paintings by Rembrandt and Monet) to board.

*Sunk.* On May 7, 1915, the huge Cunard Superliner, on a run from New York to Liverpool, was hit. But the initial torpedo explosion was soon followed by a second much larger explosion, which made the ship sink much faster than expected – making almost 1,198 people drown, including 128 Americans, 291 women and 94 children. The *Titanic* had been an accident, but this was premeditated: another unprecedented German atrocity. Baschwitz noted that the outrage again focused on the Germans as ‘baby killers’.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> American political scientist Harold Lasswell’s authoritative overview study on *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (or. 1927, repr. 1938, and again by Martino, Mansfield Centre, CT, 2013), noted that ‘Admiral Sims has categorically declared that the reports of the terrible inhumanity of submarine commanders was, with a single exception, pure fabrication (p. 207, n. 1).

<sup>83</sup> Fleming, op. cit., p. 66. *Baralong*: Horne & Kramer, p. 259-60.

<sup>84</sup> *Der Massenwahn* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 93-9, 227-8.

*Ammunition.* The Germans claimed they had only fired one torpedo, and that the larger second explosion must have been caused by a huge load of ammunition that they secretly carried. This was of course adamantly denied by both the British and the Americans. But upon the centenary of the event, an American journalist reported that seven years earlier, he had accompanied a group of Irish sports divers to the site of the wreck.

*Confirmation.* The divers first turned up ‘a plastic container holding a handful of .303 rounds they’d found inside the plankton-hazed ruins’. Then one cried out: ‘There’s thousands of cases of ammo down in that hole ... You could just scoop the stuff up’. So the treacherous Germans had been right after all.<sup>85</sup>

*Churchill.* He added: ‘Shortly before the disaster, Churchill had written in a confidential letter that it was “most important to attract neutral shipping to our shores, in the hopes especially of embroiling the United States with Germany”. Afterward, he all but celebrated the sinking as a great Allied victory, saying “The poor babies who perished in the ocean struck a blow at German power more deadly than could have been achieved by the sacrifice of a hundred thousand fighting men”. The American article was also a review of a new book by Eric Larson on the entire sinking of the *Lusitania*. It rejoined the conclusions of an earlier elaborate study by Diana Preston on the same subject.

*Off and on.* After further frequent incidents with merchant ships sunk, president Wilson told Germany to stop its unrestricted U-boat warfare, or else the U.S. would give up their (nominal) neutrality and (openly) enter the war. Ten months later, the German admiralty gave in. Slightly later, it launched a massive attack on the giant British blockade fleet, in the unprecedented Battle of Jutland (off Denmark) involving 250 warships no less. Because of the winds, however, the Germans were not able to deploy their Zeppelin airships. The British lost more ships and twice as many sailors, but were able to limit the damage as they had been able to acquire the German codebooks beforehand.<sup>86</sup>

### **U.S. entry into the war**

*Wilson.* Meanwhile Woodrow Wilson campaigned for re-election in the U.S.: again as a peace candidate, under the slogan: ‘He kept us out of the war’. Fleming’s recent re-appraisal study reports that he won with a ‘whisker thin’ majority in November 1916, ‘decided by a mere 4,000 votes in California’. At the same time, he had long allowed the steady

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<sup>85</sup> Hampton Sides, about Larson’s book, below. *INYT*, 7-8 March 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Wikipedia item ‘Battle of Jutland’.

stream of both civilian and military goods to Great Britain to grow, to a value of 10 million dollars per day.

*Good Friday.* This allowed that country to consolidate, and therefore made Germany resume unrestricted U-boat warfare against merchant ships. Mid-March 1917, they sank four American ships. This then predictably triggered the long-postponed U.S. entry into the war, on the highly symbolic sacrificial date of Good Friday, 6 April 1917. But at that point, the Army numbered only 127,588 men: less than the army of Belgium. Recruitment began (with the help of newly invented psychological tests), but organization and transport would still take considerable time.

*Media system.* The war effort mobilized the entire country, which had meanwhile developed into the largest economy in the world. In parallel, it had also developed the richest media system in the world. Topical information from the European continent came through transatlantic cable, controlled and censored by Great Britain.<sup>87</sup> The U.S. had a long string of local newspapers, strong national groups, feature syndicates, news and advertising agencies, public relations and political lobbying experts, was on the verge of inventing opinion and attitude research proper.<sup>88</sup>

*Committee.* Wilson had already considered founding a government press service, but now founded the Committee on Public Information. It was headed by muckraking journalist George Creel, who had worked for his re-election campaign, but had also been president of Princeton university. His goal was to create 'war will'. In his own words: create 'a passionate belief in the justice of America's cause, that [would] meld the people of the United States into one white hot mass instinct'.

*Re-cycling.* He claimed to be an objective reporter of the bare facts, but did of course recycle the entire earlier Entente propaganda on 'The Huns' sole guilt in starting the war and committing unspeakable atrocities. He hired top copywriters and artists. Remember the famous colour poster depicting a King Kong gorilla with a German helmet holding a bare breasted virgin, with a landscape of ruins in the background. It said: 'Destroy this mad brute ... Enlist'.<sup>89</sup>

### **Creel's propaganda committee**

*Book.* Immediately after the war, Creel proudly summarized the work of his committee in the book *How We Advertised America*. It said:

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<sup>87</sup> *The illusion of victory*. Thin majority: p. 13. Value of goods: p. 71. Army numbers: p. 87. Cables: pp. 44-5.

<sup>88</sup> More in: JvG, 'Social orientations', Ch. 7 in Jeroen Jansz & Peter van Drunen (eds.), *A social history of psychology* (Oxford: Blackwell 2004), pp. 220-244.

<sup>89</sup> Fleming, pp. 93-7, 117-9, 247-9.

‘From first to last, without halt or change, it was a plain publicity proposition, a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world’s greatest adventures in advertising. We did not call it propaganda, for that word, in German hands, had come to be associated with deceit and corruption. Our effort was educational and informative throughout’.

*Effort.* He summarized a scale of effort unmatched by anything in history. ‘Some thirty odd booklets were printed in several languages. Seventy-five million copies were circulated in America ... Tours were arranged ... Fort-five war conferences were held. The Four-Minute Men commanded the volunteer services of 75,000 speakers, operating in 5,200 communities, and making a total of 755,190 speeches’ to all different linguistic and ethnic communities. Also: ‘It issued a daily newspaper with a 100,000 circulation for official use. It ran an information service and syndicated feature articles for the Press. Plate-matter for the country Press, and specialized material for the labour, religious and women’s press was supplied.

Moving pictures were commercially successful in America and effective abroad ... Over two hundred thousand stereopticon slides were distributed. Still photographs were prepared, and a stream of 700 pictures per day of military activities were censored. Cable, telegraph and wireless services were employed by an official news service. A special mail and photograph service was also built up for the foreign press’. The summary was quoted (and slightly adapted) by Harold Lasswell, in his overview book on *Propaganda Technique in the World War*. He added ‘an ingenious device, the free balloon ... The Allies had the benefit of the prevailing westerly winds, and they laid a barrage of print [flyers] over the German lines’.<sup>90</sup> At the end of the war, Hollywood began producing features like *The Kaiser: the Beast of Berlin*, which also had a great impact in Europe.

*Collaborators.* Among those who participated in the CPI’s work were many pioneers of social science. One was Edward Bernays, the founder of the new fields of public relations and lobbying after the war. He wrote: ‘Engineering of consent on a mass scale was ushered in ... Critics charged that sometimes the Committee’s volunteers were hysterical, but, after all, hysteria was generally prevalent at the time. Reports that the Germans were beasts and Huns were generally accepted. The most fantastic atrocity stories were believed’.<sup>91</sup>

*Political science.* Another participant was Charles Merriam, professor in the new field of political science at the University of

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<sup>90</sup> See George Creel’s 1920 report *How we advertised America* (New York: Harper & Bros 1920), pp. 6 a.f.

<sup>91</sup> Edward Bernays, in his memoir *Public relations* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press 1952), pp. 71, 75.

Chicago, and advisor to several presidents. His assistant Harold Lasswell published the authoritative overview study *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, and became a founder of the new fields of political communication and political psychology. Persuasion experts later produced detailed graphics, of how German military and civilian morale had risen and fallen in every month of the war, and finally collapsed in 1918.<sup>92</sup>

*Critics.* By contrast Walter Lippmann, author of a groundbreaking new book on *Public Opinion*, criticised the work of the CPI as ‘an unmitigated brag accompanied by unmitigated gullibility’.<sup>93</sup> Kurt Baschwitz observed in turn, that Creel was apparently aware that German attempts to counter the atrocity propaganda by trying to clear up facts remained largely ineffective. That is how he came to develop a psychodynamic theory about enemy images.<sup>94</sup>

### **The uses of ‘coloured’ troops**

*Racism.* As soon as the war had broken out, there was a great shortage of manpower: not only at the front but also in the rear, not only among the military but also among civilians, not only in the home territories, but also in overseas colonies. Most main leaders of the warring ‘white’ nations were profoundly racist, including American president Woodrow Wilson and British Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill.<sup>95</sup>

*Cannon fodder.* The only difference was that the French, British, and later the Americans did have ‘coloured’ men in large quantities at their disposal, whereas the Germans and Austrians did not. There was of course a temptation to deploy them as ‘cannon fodder’ in the most difficult positions along the frontlines. But there was also reticence to put firearms in their hands, which they might turn against their white officers – now or later.

*Overview.* A 2011 overview edited by Santanu Das says that ‘by conservative estimates well over four million non-white men were

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<sup>92</sup> Reproduced in W. Albig, *Public Opinion* (New York: McGraw Hill 1939), p. 295. Repr. in *Psychologische Praktijken*, edited by me and Jeroen Jansz (The Hague: Vuga 1986), p. 191)

<sup>93</sup> Wikipedia item Committee on Public Information.

<sup>94</sup> *Der Massenwahn* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), pp. 58-9.

<sup>95</sup> Wilson: See the recent row over Princeton students demanding the renaming of their famous WW international affairs school, discussed in *INYT* reporting and an editorial on 26 Nov. 2015. (He was said to have favoured the Ku Klux Klan and segregation, and to have purged administrations of well-placed African Americans). Churchill: Lawrence James, *Churchill and Empire* (New York: Pegasus 2014), reviewed in the *INYT* upon the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, 20 August 2014.

mobilised into the European and American armies during the First World War, in combatant and non-combatant roles. But they remained largely invisible in the historiography of the conflict, in the images as well as the texts. Two million Africans were involved. Ten percent died, and even twenty percent among the labourers in Africa, often used as beasts of burden. ‘Additionally, nearly 140,000 Chinese contract labourers were hired’ and brought to Europe – largely for the gruesome job of clearing the battlefields. (Compare Baschwitz’s *Der Massenwahn*, pp. 201-16 a.o.).<sup>96</sup>

*France.* In addition to the 90,000 “troupes indigènes” already under arms when the war started, France recruited between 1914 and 1918 nearly half a million colonial troops. 210,000 from Northwest Africa, 166,000 from West Africa, 46,000 Madagascans and also 50,000 Indochinese. Most served in Europe. General Mangin felt the blacks, in particular, were natural warriors: primitives ‘whose young blood flows so ardently, as if avid to be shed’. To spare white French troops, colonial black troops were used as ‘attack fodder so numbed that they could not fix bayonets or throw hand grenades’.<sup>97</sup>

*Great Britain.* Great Britain had 1,3 million additional men from the white dominions, but also blacks from the Caribbean. One of those remembered (Field Marshall) ‘Lord Kitchener said [that] with the black race, he could whip the world’.<sup>98</sup> Britain also had 1,5 million men from India – combatants as well as non-combatants. ‘After heavy casualties were suffered by the British Expeditionary Force in August 1914, two Indian divisions were diverted to France’. 3,000 British Indians were sent into the battle of Gallipoli, and more than half died. (The numbers were even higher during the next war: 2.5 million served, 90,000 became casualties).<sup>99</sup>

*U.S.* When the U.S. entered the war, nearly 400,000 African-American troops were inducted into the forces; half of those served in Europe. At one point, it was proposed to have black divisions under white officers, but in the end this was considered too risky. President Woodrow Wilson was born in the Southern State of Virginia, and favoured race

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<sup>96</sup> Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011), and other publications. Fragments from these and other books can also be found on the Internet.

<sup>97</sup> According to Charles Cruttwell’s 1936 *History of the Great War*, quoted by Knightley, p. 108, n. 39.

<sup>98</sup> With the name of George Blackman. Quoted in Simon Rogers, ‘The forgotten soldiers’, *The Guardian*, 10 November 2008.

<sup>99</sup> According to books by Raghunath Karnad and by Yasmin Khan, column and review in the *NYT* 15-16 August and 1 Dec. 1915. (Their numbers are not entirely identical). The latter adds that the war also contributed the Great Bengal Famine of 1943, in which several million people perished.

segregation. So blacks were not issued their own firearms, and only used in supporting roles – like digging trenches and loading ammunition for the artillery.

*Germany.* German military and civilians were largely unfamiliar with ‘coloured’ troops, also felt they were probably more primitive and brutal, and their deployment could even more easily lead to excesses of violence and rape. This played a role when, after the war, the French used Senegalese colonial troops in the occupation of the German Saarland. But of course those who sent them there were just as racist as those who received them there.

### **Cadaver confusion**

*Most appalling.* Overviews later said it became ‘the most appalling’ and ‘the most popular’ atrocity story of the entire war: the ‘corpse factory’ story.<sup>100</sup> It was a hoax, but later also contributed to doubts and delays when the first information began to leak out, about the real greatest atrocity ever during the next world war. So it merits further attention.

*Horses.* The original German ‘Schlieffen’ plan of attack had been based on a very rapid *Blitzkrieg*, particularly in the West. For that purpose, the army brought a huge cavalry to bear, of 40,000 horses and men. Many horses were soon wounded or killed, and one logistical problem was how to dispose of the large dead bodies - of half a tonne or more. Since there was scarcity on the home front, the Germans tried to recycle the animal carcasses. As it was too inefficient to transport them over long distances, one or more recycling plants were built close to the front, to make useful fats and powders out of them for soap, candles and cattle fodder – but also glycerine and even nitro-glycerine (for explosives).

*Kadaver.* They were called *Kadaver-Verwertungs-Anstalt* or *KVA*. Normally, the German (and Dutch) word *Kadaver* is reserved for animals, and only in very exceptional cases for humans. But in French and English, the words ‘cadavre’ and ‘cadaver’ are normally used for humans as well. It is not entirely clear whether the confusion arose unintentionally and spontaneously among the Entente civilians and military men hearing about the German installations, or whether the misunderstanding was intentionally promoted from its very beginning.<sup>101</sup>

*Raemaeker.* But soon after the spring 1915 Entente reports about German atrocities, rumours turned up that the Germans recycled human

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<sup>100</sup> Overviews by Piers Brendon and Philip Knightley, quoted in the Wikipedia item about the ‘German Corpse Factory’

<sup>101</sup> Also see Lipkes, pp. 611-4.

corpses from the battlefield. The wife of the British prime minister noted it in her diary, later a French newspaper reported it, and even American ones. As early as 1916, famous Dutch artist Louis Raemaekers already based a propaganda cartoon on it. It 'depicted bodies of German soldiers being loaded onto a cart in neatly packaged batches. This was accompanied with a comment written by [British writer] Horace Vachell: "I am told by an eminent scientist that six pounds of glycerine can be extracted from the corpse of a fairly well nourished Hun ... They are sent ruthlessly to the blast furnaces. One million dead men are resolved into six million pounds of glycerine".' <sup>102</sup>

### **The 'corpse factory' hoax**

*Anzeiger*. A few days after the U.S. announced that it would join the war, on 10 April 1917, the *Berlin Lokal-Anzeiger* newspaper carried a short chance item by a German front correspondent on such an installation in a Belgian town near the German border. It said 'We pass through Evergnicourt. There is a dull smell in the air, as if lime were being burnt. We are passing the great *Kadaver Verwertungs Anstalt* of this Army Group. The fat that is won here is turned into lubricating oils, and everything else is ground down in the bones mill into a powder, which is used for mixing with pig's food and as manure'. <sup>103</sup>

*La Belgique*. This story was then picked up by Belgian resistance newspapers such as the conservative catholic *La Belgique*, meanwhile rebaptized *La Libre Belgique*, reportedly (partly?) printed in Leyden in the neighbouring neutral Netherlands. The original minor piece was elaborated into a much larger embroidered story: not about the recycling of animal corpses, but about that of human corpses.

*R'dams Nieuwsblad*. The fake story was then picked up by regular newspapers in the neutral Netherlands, including the *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad* of Thursday 16 April 1917, in the big harbour city where Kurt Baschwitz had meanwhile settled as a German war correspondent. His personal archives still contain the clipping, with underlining in red. The headline on the front page says: 'Lubricants, explosives and animal feed from corpses'. It first cites from the original Berlin newspaper story, then adds: 'This message confirms the sensational story about the new grisly German industry ... We have long known that the Germans undress their dead behind the front lines, and tie them together' in packages. They were then said to be loaded onto trains to Liège, and north of Brussels.

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<sup>102</sup> Wikipedia 'German Corpse Factory'.

<sup>103</sup> *Times* translation, quoted from Lipkes, p. 613, n. 51.

*Times*. Another resistance newspaper was *L'Indépendance Belge*, reportedly (partly?) printed in England. So the original German story, and the new Belgian twist to it, were then picked up by Lord Northcliffe's *Times*, *Daily Mail* and other newspapers in London. Berlin then issued a clarification about the German word 'Kadaver' usually applying to animals, unlike the English word 'cadaver'. This was confirmed by independent translators familiar with the two languages. Berlin denied categorically that the installations processed human corpses. But these denials were willingly ignored. The opposite happened: having noticed the emotional outrage the story produced among the public, Entente sources reconfirmed the Belgian misinterpretations, and further added to them.

*Reconfirmation*. A week later, on 24 April, the same *La Libre Belgique* said that the German denial only confirmed the truth of the revelations. (The clipping is again still among Baschwitz' personal papers. The story was discussed in his book on mass delusions, pp. 53-7, 72, 201-2). The article said that a closed train wagon with German cadavers, naked and tied together in packages, had even mistakenly arrived in neutral Rotterdam. It also said it had been a pleasure for Belgians to show the newspapers with the item from the British Reuters news agency to German watchmen who proved vividly impressed. 'The idea of being transformed into stéarine was even so unpleasant to them, that a German *Landsturm[er]* refused his meagre portion of margarine', it said.

### **The hoax exploitation**

*Punch*. The story was widely distributed and discussed. On 25 April 1917, for instance, 'the weekly British humorous magazine *Punch* printed a cartoon entitled "Cannon-Fodder – and After", which showed the *Kaiser* and a German recruit. Pointing out a window at a factory with smoking chimneys and the sign *Kadaverwertung[sanstalt]*, the *Kaiser* tells the young man: "And don't forget that your Kaiser will find a use for you – alive or dead".' Propagandists hoped the story would help demoralize German front troops.<sup>104</sup>

*Charteris*. After the war was over, both the French and the British secret services claimed to have invented and pushed the hoax. In the mid-Twenties, the former British chief of intelligence, then a Tory MP, paid a visit to New York. During a dinner party at the National Arts Club, he boasted that he had gotten the bright idea when he was shown two German newspaper pictures: about dead soldiers to be buried and about

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<sup>104</sup> Wikipedia 'German Corpse Factory'.

dead horses to be processed. He claimed he had decided to simply switch the captions.

*New York Times.* He had not realized that there was a reporter in the audience, and the next day his boast ended up in the *New York Times*. (It may have felt particularly rattled, as it had reported the original story as probably a probable April Fool's joke).<sup>105</sup> There was an outrage on the home front in Britain, and as soon as he got off the boat again, he felt forced to issue a formal retraction. (Also because after many years of vivid hostility, there was finally a key state visit of the German chancellor and his foreign minister to their British colleagues coming up).

*Fake diary.* In order to underline his integrity, the former British secret service chief even added that he had at the time refused to use the faked diary of a German soldier confirming the corpse factory story, which had been produced and offered to him by the general headquarters in France as a propaganda tool. This faked diary actually existed, and was apparently exposed for some time in the Imperial War Museum in London. But as it put the veracity of other German soldier diaries with confirmation of atrocity stories (used in all Entente atrocity reports) in question, it later disappeared from sight.<sup>106</sup>

*China/ Vietnam.* One calculus behind the worldwide circulation of the 'corpse factory' story was to horrify public opinion in East Asia and among East Asians overseas in particular, as burial ceremonies and veneration of forebears were a sacred ritual for them. China dotted by British free ports could still have become an ally, the French colony Vietnam already was one. One of the least-familiar stories about the war was that huge numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese labourers were brought to Europe to perform war-related tasks. For instance the cleaning up of the vast pock-marked and corpse-studded battlefields in the North of France.

*Hitler.* One final consequence was the following. Frustrated front-fighter Adolf Hitler became obsessed with the 'corpse factory' story. When the plan for an *Endlösung* of the Jewish question was finally put in motion during the beginning of the next war, and information about it began to leak out, many people initially refused to believe the stories about the gas chambers and the corpse ovens.<sup>107</sup> (Including Kurt Baschwitz himself, who had meanwhile been labelled an ethnic Jew, was fired in Germany, fled to The Netherlands. When it was occupied, and

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<sup>105</sup> *NYT*, 20 April 1917 & 20 Oct., 29 Nov. 1925.

<sup>106</sup> Knightley, pp. 105-6.

<sup>107</sup> The so-called 'Sternbuch cable' of Sept. 1942 mentioned that 'from the corpses of the murdered soap and artificial fertilizers are produced'. Joachim Neander's 2013 study on *The German Corpse Factory*, quoted in the Wikipedia item.

ethnic Jews were forced to register, he narrowly escaped a fatal transport from there to the East).

## U.S. ENTRY

### **The final phase of the war**

*Front lines.* For most of 1916, the front lines had hardly budged. Millions of lives had been lost with futile charges and counter-charges, along the 500 kilometres of muddy trenches separated by barbed wire, stretching from the Channel coast to the Swiss mountains. Ernest Hemingway wrote it ‘was the most colossal, mismanaged butchery that had ever taken place on earth. Any writer who said otherwise lied’. <sup>108</sup>

*Lloyd George.* Late 1917, British prime minister David Lloyd George and other top politicians were greatly affected when they heard a war reporter returned from the front detail the horrors of trench warfare. The next day, he confided to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*: ‘If people really knew, the war would be stopped tomorrow. But of course they don’t know and can’t know. The correspondents don’t write and the censorship would not pass the truth’. <sup>109</sup>

*Weapons.* The battle over the key fortifications around Verdun on the river Meuse in North-Eastern France lasted for most of 1916: super-canons fired 60 million shells that killed 379,000 French and 335,000 Germans, but changed little. <sup>110</sup> A similar stalemate developed around the Somme river in the Northwest. Even the introduction of entirely new types of weapons changed little at first. Germans had for instance accused the French of using British bullets first produced at Dum Dum near Calcutta in India, that caused larger and more unhealable wounds. They in turn introduced flamethrowers and poison gas, which were soon copied. The first tanks broke down easily, Zeppelins soon became too vulnerable, and airplanes were still too light for heavy bombs. <sup>111</sup>

*East to West.* Lenin had been helped to return from his exile in Switzerland in a closed German railway car. After the Bolsheviks had taken power in late 1917, they backed out of the war – although the early 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk imposed a very heavy price on them. But it

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<sup>108</sup> *Men at war.* Quoted by Knightley, p. 79.

<sup>109</sup> Knightley, p. 109.

<sup>110</sup> Upon the centenary, Merkel and Hollande visited the site; several French public tv-channels broadcast (a.o. TV5 Monde, 25 May 2016, 21.09-22-42 hrs.) broadcast a commemorative overview documentary, where these figures were mentioned again.

<sup>111</sup> Upon the centenary, History Channel and affiliates produced and broadcast 4 one hour television documentaries on new weaponry, its ‘successes and failures’ during ‘The First Modern war’. (Repeated on the French science channel RMC Découverte, 29 April 2016).

allowed the Germans to move a million soldiers from the Eastern to the Western front. They meant to stage a 'final offensive' before the full weight of the American entry could be brought to bear. (The U.S. still had only 300,000 men on the ground in that March, but 1,800,000 in October). According to the German military command, the desperate gamble almost succeeded. But when the allies then started their formidable summer offensives, the German home front gave way.

*Armistice.* The continental U.S. were beyond reach, its industrial potential to produce ever more arms and munitions was almost unlimited. Germany therefore finally agreed to an armistice, which was signed on Nov. 11, 1918. But it soon turned out to be a surrender, without conditions. The U.S. president demanded that the emperor step down and he was indeed deposed by the chancellor – after a power struggle with the army and the navy commands. The allies even asked that the emperor, the army and navy commands be extradited. The emperor fled to the neutral Netherlands, only a few culprits later faced a small war crime tribunal in Leipzig, and some were acquitted.<sup>112</sup>

### **Mental grids**

*Germanophobia.* Already on the eve of the war, Germanophobia had begun to surge among the Entente nations. In the course of the war, it had only grown further, with the true and the false atrocity stories, in Europe and America. All this contributed to the allied treatment of Germany at the end of the war, and to the Versailles Peace Treaty imposed on it. The French considered the harsh measures fully justified, the allies were divided in the end, the Germans increasingly came to consider them unjust. Whatever the case, the Versailles Treaty proved counterproductive. So it is useful to take a pause here, to look at the enemy images driving the demand for severe punishment of the entire German people.

*East-west.* Ever since Antiquity, Western Europe had developed a constant fear of the vast spaces and populations of Central and particularly Eastern Europe, sometimes deemed 'half-Asian'. In their later days, civilised Rome (and Carthage) had already been threatened by attack and take-over on the part of the marauding Vandals. The 'nomad hordes' of the Eastern steppes, with their unequalled cavalries, pushed West time and again, to plunder and retreat. First Attila and his Huns, then Genghis Khan and his Mongols. The crusades had further exacerbated the fear of the Muslim Arabs and later the Ottoman Turks, who in their turn pushed into the Balkans.

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<sup>112</sup> More in Horne & Kramer, part IV, Ch. 9.

*Mental schema.* By the time of the First World War, a hidden mental schema had already widely taken root in Europe. Barbarity was rooted in the East, and tended to push west. Civilization and Enlightenment had sprung up along the Western shores, and set an example for everyone else. First on the British Isles, then in France, the Low Countries, and elsewhere. When Sigmund Freud, the patriarch of psychoanalysis, developed his central idea of the three instances of the mind, he explicitly drew on this geographical metaphor of Europe. With in the upper-left North-west the small pro-social *Ueber Ich* or Super Ego. With in the middle the *Ich* or Ego, torn between two opposing forces. And in the lower-right South-East the vast realm of biological drives, the *Es* or Id.<sup>113</sup>

*Grid.* The simple spatio-cultural grid organized the tropes directing both strategy and propaganda of the warring alliances. The Central powers of Austria-Hungary and Germany were obsessed with the danger posed by the ‘primitive brutes’ hurled at them by small Serbia and huge Russia. They had previously been obsessed by vast Ottoman Turkey, but saw a potential ally in its new secular regime. By contrast the Western powers of Britain and France saw Central Europe as the less-civilized East. Austria-Hungary with its Balkan provinces; Germany with its Prussia. Even Berlin underwent the influence of an Eastern Prussia with a quasi-feudal social structure, it seemed. Hence: the Germans could turn into half Genghis Mongols, Attila Huns, Vandals, during a war.

### **Germanophobia**

*Race.* Entente publications suggested Germans were ethnically different and inferior. The famous British imperial author Rudyard Kipling made a distinction between ‘human beings and Germans’. Baschwitz quoted the famous French psychiatrist Edgar Bérillon as saying he could identify Germans by their smell. Baschwitz’ personal archives also contain an American newspaper page with the latest findings by physical anthropologists. They claimed the Asian hordes invading the European plains with their ‘round-headed skull’ had largely replaced the Teuton tribes with their ‘gentle long-headed type’ – that ‘only 10% of Germans’ retained. The famous *Homo Heidelbergensis* (closer to the Neanderthals) had thus in reality been ... the First Prussian, they said.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> As an enlightened Jew, Freud closely identified with the Western countries where emancipation had begun, and not with the Eastern ones where pogroms persisted. The First World War brought him to review his mental grid. More in the relevant chapters of my earlier study on *Mass Movements*.

<sup>114</sup> Kipling: conservative London daily *Morning Post*, 22 June 1915, quoted in Knightley, p. 84, n. 6. Bérillon: quoted by Baschwitz, *Der Massenwahn* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), p.

*Trotter.* British physician Wilfred Trotter had recently been the first to spell out the implications for nation-building of humans having a herd instinct. He was a brother-in-law of Freud's British representative and later biographer Ernest Jones. (His 'herd instinct' inspired Freud's aforementioned notion of a 'super ego'). But he now adapted his book to proclaim events showed that Germans and English had completely different group instincts. The former had that of rapacious wolves, the latter that of industrious bees.<sup>115</sup>

*Kaiser.* In propaganda, the enemy people are often represented by their prime leader, in this case *Der Kaiser* (preferably in strange-sounding German). It was easy to make him into an icon: with the typical point on the helmet, the large moustache, a Prussian uniform and riding boots. The emperor was widely described in psychopathological terms: as childish in his fascination with the fleet and war games, as a latent homosexual taking macho postures, as a manic depressive, as alternately disengaged and meddling.<sup>116</sup>

*OHK.* The *Oberste Heeres-Kommando* and generals were in turn widely described as aggressive and megalomaniac. Some of that may well have been true, but could also have been applied to certain leaders on the allied side. The same holds for slogans and anthems taken out of context, as was later done with 'Deutschland über alles' (which just expressed patriotism, and no more hegemonic pretension than 'Britannia rules the waves').

*Stereotypes.* Stereotypes about the Germans had been in circulation among their neighbours since decades or even centuries. The British dismissively called Germans 'Krauts' (after a favourite dish), the French and Belgian Wallonians had long called them 'Boches' (possibly for 'dumbhead' or poor speaker of the language), the Dutch and Belgian Flemish 'Moffen' (possibly from the fur hand-warmers that such Easterners wore in winter-time). But now the question arose whether German education and character were fundamentally different, whether their social structure and national mentality were. Over the next decades, one key term gradually became *The authoritarian personality*, later linked to the 'F-' for 'Fascist' personality scale.<sup>117</sup>

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211. Anthropologists, Prof. Osborn of the American Museum of Natural History and Prof. Gregory of the Evolution Chair at Columbia university. Quoted in an article about 'Prussian ferocity' by Dr. Ballou, of the Academy of Sciences, in the *Chicago Herald & Examiner*, Weekly section, Sunday 2 June 1918.

<sup>115</sup> More in my *Mass Movements*, Ch. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Boterman, pp. 243-9.

<sup>117</sup> From the 1930s onwards: Reich, Fromm and the Frankfurt School of social research, later resulting in the famous American study of that name, with Adorno as

### **Other's atrocities**

*War crimes.* The general suggestion was that Prussians and Germans were more prone to commit atrocities and war crimes, and that the allies would have been viscerally incapable of such things. The truth was of course, that all the allies had committed similar atrocities against civilians, and would continue to commit similar atrocities against civilians, under similar circumstances.<sup>118</sup>

*Guerrilla.* That is to say: in situations where they encountered or suspected partisan, guerrilla or peoples warfare on the part of civilians resisting foreign troops – for instance in the African and other colonies. The subjugation of the Philippines by the U.S. around the turn of the century had reportedly cost between half and three-quarter million lives, for instance.<sup>119</sup>

*Russian atrocities.* But allied whites had also committed such atrocities against other whites in recent times. The allied Serbs in the Balkan wars, the Russians in East Prussia in 1914. (B/MW 131). Horne & Kramer do in turn report that ‘ The devastation caused by the Russian retreat of 1915 was probably greater than anything experienced by civilians in France and Belgium. Although the overall death-toll is hard to establish, at least 300,000 Lithuanians, 250,000 Latvians, 350,000 Jews, and 743,000 Poles were deported to the Russian interior. But it was also a different phenomenon – a combination of chaos and the persecution of the imagined “enemy within” ‘.<sup>120</sup>

*British atrocities.* The British had earlier deployed 450,000 soldiers against 60,000 (mostly Dutch and German) ‘Boer’ settlers in South Africa, at the beginning of the century. They systematically torched their cottages and stables, killed the cattle, salted the land, poisoned the wells, and dispatched more than 100,000 women and children to over a hundred concentration camps. According to recent studies, about 28,000 white civilians and at least 16,000 black civilians perished there.<sup>121</sup> (B/MW, 190-4). During the First World War, the British imposed a blockade, that cost almost half a million lives (mostly civilians, women, children and elderly), and which Fleming’s study about America’s entry calls ‘the worst atrocity of the war’.

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its first author. More about the development of this entire tradition in my study *Mass movements*.

<sup>118</sup> See the Wikipedia category ‘War crimes committed – By country’.

<sup>119</sup> Clark, pp. 151-2.

<sup>120</sup> Horne & Kramer, p. 84, n. 141 & 142, based on several sources.

<sup>121</sup> Gregory Fremont-Barnes 2003 book on *The Boer War* and others, quoted by Kieft, pp. 262-3, 500, n. 24 & 25; Bill Nasson’s 1999 book on *The South African War*, quoted by Horne & Kramer, pp. 422, 562, n. 7.

*Ireland.* Ireland was another case, inside Western Europe itself. The 19<sup>th</sup> century famine that ‘killed 1.5 million Irish, while the British feasted on beef and barley exported [by absentee landlords] from Ireland, was still a vivid memory. In 1911, the slums of Dublin had a higher death rate than Calcutta’ and the highest of any European capital.<sup>122</sup> A million or more of the destitute had therefore left for America. The Easter rising of 1916 announced the final phase. After Sinn Féin won the post-war elections, and declared independence the next year, the British violently repressed the movement. Over five years, an estimated 2,500 people were killed, and 4,500 interned.<sup>123</sup> (B/MW 244).

## THE VERSAILLES TREATY

### **An idealistic theoretical plan**

*Tuchman.* The Great War had mobilized 65 million troops and had caused unprecedented destruction. Tuchman summed up the European situation: ‘When the war was over, the known dead per capita of population were 1 to 28 for France, 1 to 32 for Germany, 1 to 57 for England and 1 to 107 for Russia’.<sup>124</sup> The number of wounded was a multiple of that. It meant that there was hardly a family that had not been hit. The great question thus became, how such conflagrations could be prevented in the future.

*Wilson.* American President Wilson seemed to be the best arbiter. He is said to have been an idealist, who felt the conflict should become ‘The war to end all wars’. He had therefore asked a study group of 150 academics to come up with recommendations for settlements. They met in New York, produced 2,000 reports and 1,200 maps with details. The final and overall statement of principles was primarily drawn up by his two closest advisers: ‘Colonel’ Edward House, and journalist Walter Lippmann. Wilson presented their ‘14 point plan’ to Congress in a speech on 8 Jan. 1918.

*Europe.* Toward the end of that year, the major European allies officially accepted the plan as well. At that point, the Central Powers had begun to collapse. After deposing the *Kaiser*, the chancellor of the new German republic demanded a ‘just’ peace on the basis of those same 14 points. It later maintained it had been tricked, as it had been on this basis

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<sup>122</sup> Fleming, p 63, n. 48, referring to Robert Rhodes James 1977 *The British Revolution*, p. 260.

<sup>123</sup> Centenary of the Easter Rising: *INVT* 17, 25, 26-7 March 2016. Wikipedia item ‘Irish War of Independence’.

<sup>124</sup> Troops: Clark, p. XXI. Deaths per capita: Tuchman, pp. 522-3, note.

that they had agreed to the Armistice. But once they had laid down arms, there was no way back.

*14 points.* The fourteen points sounded utopian, but the post-war reality was different. They began with a call for an ‘open diplomacy’ from now on, and the abolition of ‘secret treaties’. They called for the dismantling of the empires – mostly meaning those of the three conquered Central Powers-; self-determination for national minorities – mostly meaning the ‘white ones’ in Eastern Europe-; ‘adjustment’ of overseas claims to ‘balance’ the interests of settlers and native peoples; and finally the founding of a League of Nations with its seat in neutral Switzerland, for the settlement of future differences.

### **A cynical practical reality**

*Empires.* Of course the allied Empires of Great Britain, France, and the emerging informal one of the U.S. were not dismantled, nor did their colonies get self-determination. In fact, the Entente powers exploited the situation to divide the overseas territories of the Central Powers in Africa and elsewhere among themselves, under various pretexts (‘mandate’, ‘protectorate’ etc.).

*Sykes-Picot.* Great Britain and France had already divided the entire Ottoman Middle East among themselves though the secret Sykes-Picot agreement, while at the same time promising Arabs independence in public (through ‘Lawrence of Arabia’ and others). In the wake of the Spanish American war, the U.S. had meddled in Cuba, acquired Puerto Rico, occupied the Panama Canal Zone, and took the Philippines, Guam and later some of the Samoan islands under their wings.

*Paris.* The Paris Peace Conference began on 18 January 1919, in the splendid French foreign ministry on the Quay d’Orsay. 27 nations were represented, but the ‘Big Four’ met in 145 closed sessions to prepare all the major decisions, for simple ratification by the others. American president Wilson got ill, and lost control of the process. French prime minister Clémenceau, who had sworn revenge was host, succeeded in hijacking the agenda, and pushing for harsh conditions. British PM David Lloyd George wavered. Italian PM’s Orlando and then Nitti had subsidiary roles.

*Treaties.* The central powers were excluded from the table. When the German delegates arrived in Versailles for their part, they were humiliated by the French and told there was nothing to negotiate. South African Boer leader Botha reportedly moved the former British prime minister and his wife to tears by describing the scene, and adding that he wanted nothing more to do with the statesmen of the western powers.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> According to Lady Asquith, quoted by Baschwitz in *Der Massenwahn*, pp. 326-7.

It was a simple dictate to ‘take or leave’: they had to either sign without any reservations, or resume the war (which had become virtually impossible). The delegation refused at first, demanded a delay to consult with the home front. But they were then issued an ultimatum: submit now, or else.

*Conditions.* The key element of the treaty was the innocuous sounding Article 231, which meant that Germany accepted sole responsibility for having started the war. The other conditions derived from it. Of course Germany had to return the Alsace Lorraine border region again. France demanded that the Rhine be made the definitive ‘natural’ border, but instead it obtained a fifteen year occupation of the Rhineland, a fifteen year ‘mandate’ over the Saar region and its coal output, and a complete demilitarization of the broader area.

*Materiel.* Great Britain demanded that Germany cede most of its navy and heavy weapons, would not be allowed to build them up again and thus become a rival. On top of that, it also had to cede 90% of its merchant fleet, large numbers of trains, lorries and even 10% of its cattle – anything that could be moved abroad.<sup>126</sup> To the civilian population, these conditions came as a heavy shock. They had been led to believe that they had ‘almost’ won the war, and that the peace would be equitable.

*Reparations.* There was a whole catalogue of other goods that it would be forced to hand over: their nature, the quantities, and the number of years. In all, it was to pay 226 billion gold marks in reparations, later reduced to 132 billion: the equivalent of 284 billion pounds or 442 billion dollars in 2015. Initially, these payments were to last until the early 1960s, later until the late 1980s – meaning the children of those day’s children would still continue to pay. The German minister of foreign affairs stepped down, saying ‘Germany will cease to exist’.<sup>127</sup>

### **Looking back**

*Keynes.* The main British financial adviser was John Maynard Keynes, to become a world-famous economist. He called the conditions a misguided attempt to destroy Germany on behalf of French revanchism just like Carthage had been destroyed by Rome - totally at odds with the letter and the spirit of Wilson’s original 14 points.<sup>128</sup> And it predictably led to the full decade of economic, social and political upheavals that would crush the moderate centre parties in Germany, favour the left-

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<sup>126</sup> Kitchen, pp. 198-9; Van Liempt, pp. 16-7.

<sup>127</sup> Wikipedia item, Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>128</sup> *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Ch. VI. Others countered the conditions were not much worse than those the Germans had imposed on France in the same Versailles 1870, and on Russia in Brest Litovsk in 1918.

extremist communists and the right-extremist fascists. They ultimately brought the latter to power, who soon ended the reparation payments.<sup>129</sup>

*Changed minds.* In the 1921 book *La Paix* and elsewhere, Clémenceau's closest aide André Tardieu revealed his boss' extremist attitude during the entire conference. It had despaired American president Wilson, who at one point even considered leaving the French capital early in protest. This was confirmed by his aide Colonel House, and his Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Wilson's contradictory attitudes later inspired the first political psycho-biographies.<sup>130</sup> British PM David Lloyd George also changed his mind about the deal.

*Nitti.* Italian PM Nitti published a 1922 book that denounced the treaties, and predicted a *Peaceless Europe*. Its preface said: 'It is necessary that the public should be made aware that the courses now being followed by the policy of the great victorious States are perilous to the achievement of serious, lasting and useful results. I believe that it is to the interest of France herself if I speak the language of truth, as a sincere friend of France and a confirmed enemy of German Imperialism. [But France] has hated too deeply to render a sudden cessation of her hate-storm possible, and the treaties have been begotten in rancour and applied with violence'. He included in the book numerous secret documents that had come into his hands, to prove his claims.<sup>131</sup>

*Secret treaties.* After their separate peace treaty of Brest-Litowsk, the Bolsheviks had already published many secret treaties they had found in the Tsarist archives, which showed that the Entente powers had silently divided the world among themselves behind the back of others – long before the Paris conference. On 26 February 1922, the *New York Times* further carried a page and a half on 'Europe's secret treaties ... How the Paris Conference was hampered by hidden agreements - about which Mr. Wilson and our State Department had no advance information'.

*Stern.* Meanwhile French prime minister Clémenceau maintained the Versailles treaty did not go far enough; triumphant French marchal

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<sup>129</sup> Lipkes (pp. 681-4), referring to later specialist American studies by S. Marks, S. Schuker and others, concludes that 'the Weimar Republic paid only a small fraction of the amount assessed, about 16%, and it did so by accepting loans and credits, largely from America, that were never repaid. And Belgium, in the end, received compensation for no more than a quarter of the damages inflicted by Germany'.

<sup>130</sup> Sigmund Freud was extremely disappointed by the outcome of the war for Austria, and wrote a first study about Wilson's personality, together with the American ambassador in Vienna, William Bullitt, who had at one point been a patient of his. His involvement was confidential, an English translation only came out much later. By the time, American psychologists Alexander & Juliet George had undertaken a more serious study, about *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House* (1964). But as the case was interesting, and the consequences great, this was followed by a host of further studies.

<sup>131</sup> Integral edition available on the Internet, through Project Gutenberg.

Foch said ‘This is not a peace. It is an armistice for 20 years’. He was right, almost to the day. Historian Fritz Stern thus said the conflict was ‘the first calamity of the twentieth century, the calamity from which all other calamities sprang’.<sup>132</sup>

*Kershaw*. Historian Ian Kershaw thus called his new 2015 history of Europe from war to war: *To Hell and Back*. It noted that 15 million died in World War I, followed by the Russian Revolution and Stalinism, 40 million more died in World War II, including 6 million murdered Jews. ‘Millions of families uprooted, centuries of Europe’s heritage destroyed, and countless unspeakable cruelties exacted by psychopaths’.<sup>133</sup>

**PM.** Detailed references in the Baschwitz biography. References to his *Der Massenwahn* refer to the last (3<sup>rd</sup>) edition.

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<sup>132</sup> Quoted in David Fromkin’s 2004 book *Europe’s Last Summer*, and Clark, p. XXI.

<sup>133</sup> Harold Evans’ review, *INYT*, 2 Dec. 2015.

## KB, RATIONAL MAN AND THE CROWD

German 'Du und die Masse'/ Dutch 'Denkend mens en menigte'  
(1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1938/1940-45, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1951)

JvG, Detailed dissection and reader report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, in 4 parts (summer 2015). As an intermediary research phase, in preparation of an autumn 2017 monograph.

### 1. DETAILED SUMMARY of chapters and sections

*Central idea.* The entire book can be seen as a polemic against a view that was widely held just before, and just after, the Second World War. Namely that it were the 'unstoppable dark forces' embodied in the popular masses and crowds that had brought about a crisis of civilization, the rise of the totalitarian regimes of the Left and Right, in Russia, Italy, Germany and elsewhere. It was also a *plea* to well-meaning, reasonable, decent people. Democracy, law and order, it said, could well be protected if legitimate authorities and citizens took a *decided stand*.

*[Translations.* Note that the connotations of the words group, mass, crowd etc. differ between Italian and French, German and English. So translations are often problematic, and may easily lead to a dislocation of meaning within semantic networks. This can well be seen in the various translations of the titles of the main books on these subjects by pioneers like Sighele, Le Bon, Freud and others].

*Paraphrases.* Where this abstract sticks to a literal translation of Baschwitz' words, expressions and sentences have been put between quotation marks. But often it paraphrases the argument for brevity's sake (and in view of the much wider related literature on mass psychology and collective behaviour sociology, before and after).

*(The first number of every paragraph always refers to the relevant section number, the second to the page in the Dutch edition)*

0-5. The book is devoted to 'The memory of my father Joseph Baschwitz'.

0-7. *Preface, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* The first edition was completed just before the Second World War broke out. The major changes in this second edition completed after the war concern the insertion of an elaborate discussion of new publications by American social scientists, in the central sections 7 and 8 (see below). Some outdated examples have been skipped, some of the terminology has been adapted ('The Great War' becoming 'The First World War', etc.). But the main argument and the final conclusions remain unchanged.

0-9. *Contents.* The structure and numbering have been simplified. From five chapters with twenty-one sections, to two-and-a-half parts with twenty-two sections. An index/ register was added. (But it has been very much further refined for this reading report, and split into three much more elaborate separate ones: for sources, events and notions (theoretical concepts).

0-11. **INTRODUCTION.** Discussion of the various meanings attributed to the word 'mass' (crowd). Introduction of half a dozen key notions elaborated in this book.

### PART ONE: THE ATTITUDE OF MASS PSYCHOLOGISTS

1-17. *Opening section: Psychiatrists send a warning to statesmen.* (350 eminent professors and mental health professionals from a dozen western countries warned against renewed 'mass neurosis' and 'war psychosis', against delusions and paranoia in 1935 – at the moment the author embarked on this project.

2-21. *The shadow side of mass psychology.* Sighele, Tarde, Le Bon and others [Italo-French authors since subsumed under the label 'Roman school'] painted a rather bleak picture of the dark leanings of masses.<sup>1</sup> [The events after the First World War – particularly in Russia, Italy, Germany and Austria with Hitler's *Mein Kampf* – were widely taken to confirm their hypotheses, and announce an impending implosion of civilization].

3-30. *Defence against a paralysing pessimism.* It is true that the very same people may react rather differently within heterogeneous volatile masses and within fixed articulated masses. But MacDougall and Geiger have elaborated the benefits of organized groups with stable leaders.

4-35. *Confusing findings.* A closer look at the Lenin, Mussolini and most of all the Hitler movement shows that mass psychologists have so far ignored the effects of intimidation, violence and force on the mass. As well as the 'differential affect' reserved for in-group and out-group – for instance in anti-Semitism.

5-39. *Fear of the power of stupidity.* Hitler copied many of the claims of the 'Roman school' of mass psychology, in particular of Le Bon, in *Mein Kampf*.<sup>2</sup> Such as the claim that within masses/ crowds, mental capacities decline and/ or the lowest common denominator takes over. Ortega's famous 1930 book about the 'rebellion of the masses' reinforces suggestions about a decline. But it is based on false premises.

6-49. *Fear of the half-educated.* Similarly, there has been a recurring discussion on the effects of mass education and mass media within mass society. Some have announced a general crisis of civilisation. But rather than lowering the general and average intellectual level, they have heightened it. Furthermore, there is no direct link with mass psychology as such.

7-58. *Europe and America.* Europe (and most of all continental Europe) has tended to a more pessimistic view of men and masses. Psychoanalysts such as Jung are examples. The Anglosaxon world (and most of all the United States) tends toward a more optimistic view, of spontaneous change and adaptation.

Ross' *Social psychology* has prolonged some of Tarde's work, in distinguishing between crowds and mobs on the one hand, publics and audiences on the other. Baschwitz distinguishes between physical/ visible masses, and purely psychological/ invisible ones. [I tend to add a third intermediary category, of emerging early social movements].

In this section, Baschwitz discusses newer contributions to social science by Floyd Allport, Bird, Ellwood, Gallup, Giddings, Lasswell, Lippmann, Young. They lead the way to a more empirical approach of groups/ masses, their opinions/ acts. And also to the flip side of the actions of the crowd discussed throughout this book: the *inaction* of authorities and silent majorities in the face of the excesses of vocal minorities. It is not only the actions of the former, but also the inaction of the latter, which pose a threat to law and order, and to democracy.

8-73. *Useful measures.* At this point Baschwitz inserts a further section, discussing various new notions deriving from this more recent literature. [But one should add that the whole new social technology concerning the 'measurement' of

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<sup>1</sup> Baschwitz' successor Brouwer incited me to take a very close look at the ideas of this school and its sources of inspiration, by doing archival research in Italy and France. This resulted in my belated doctoral dissertation *Crowds, psychology and politics 1871-1899*, later published by Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> See the section on the influence of Le Bon on subsequent statesmen such as Hitler, pp. 180-187.

opinions and attitudes, of communication and persuasion effects, which developed in America around the Second World War, only 'landed' and took root in continental Europe well thereafter].<sup>3</sup>

8a-73. *The relative scale*. Rather than talking about the mental characteristics of the mass/ crowd in absolute terms (good/ bad, rational/ irrational, intelligent/ stupid), we should use a relative or sliding scale. The mass may elevate individuals (for instance to heroism and/ or self-sacrifice), or lower them (to selfishness and/ or cruelty). This also holds for the contrast between 'true reality' and 'mere delusions'.

8b-77. *Abuse of the intelligence quotient*. Recurring claims that the less intelligent risk overtaking the more intelligent, or that there is a notable downward movement in the general population, are not supported by the evidence.

8c-83. *Optical illusions with regard to the directions of development*. It is true that only a very small proportion of the public reads broadsheet papers like *The Times*, and many more prefer the tabloids. But the total circulation of *The Times* has risen considerably, whereas a generation ago most people never read a newspaper at all and now many do. (Baschwitz refers to his other book *The newspaper through the ages*, and a more recent piece on the intelligence of newspaper readers).

8d-86. *The highly and poorly gifted as objects of research*. The Roman school claimed that in a typical mass situation, the mental differences between highly gifted and poorly gifted subjects disappear. This is not necessarily true; both may be affected. But the big question is under what circumstances this occurs.

8e-88. *The spiritual situation of the mass psychologist*. So scientists and mass psychologists may also be mistaken. But there is a difference between mere errors and biases/ fallacies shared with many colleagues. Therefore widely accepted ideas about the mass/ crowd must be tested. One way to do this is through experiments, for instance on competition and conformity. Another way to do this is by systematic comparison of historical events. Delbrück has done so with wars, and Brinton with revolutions. Mass psychologists such as Le Bon always repeat the same legends about the French Revolution and Napoleon. They always revert to unpredictable and dark forces at work, to the hypothesis of 'mass daemonia'.

So Baschwitz announces that throughout the rest of the book, he will focus on sudden and seemingly unusual changes in the behaviour of people who participate in common overwhelming experiences of the sort meant here, either by acting or by *refraining* from action. As they are subject to mutual affective influences denoted as those of the mass/ crowd. But this is not always the case, and we need to investigate the precise circumstances.

## PART TWO: THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE MASS

9-99. *The effects of the wild riot*. The most classical examples are the taking of the Bastille in Paris on 14 July 1789, or the Tuileries on 10 August 1792. Similar examples concern the events of 1848, or those in Germany in 1918/19. But in each case, precise circumstances play a key role during each successive stage: tentative steps, impunity, the most radical taking the lead. It is the belief in 'mass daemonia' itself that contributes to a paralysis of the authorities. [As well as the feeling that some demands may be justified after all].

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<sup>3</sup> Details in JvG, 'Social orientations', Ch. 7 (pp. 220-244) in J. Jansz & P. van Drunen (eds.), *A social history of psychology* (Oxford: Blackwell 2004). And for The Netherlands: JvG, *De uitvinding van het publiek* (The invention of the public. Amsterdam: Cramwinckel 1993).

10-116. *Popular mass and troop mass.* Mass volatility may affect the troops as well. Because the rebels take over their command intact, because the troops begin to fraternize with them, or because they begin to disintegrate, and desertions mount. This played a role in several of the various French revolutions. One famous example concerns Napoleon, particularly after he had escaped from Elba, landed on the Côte d'Azur with a small contingent, took the mountainous interior route to Grenoble, faced royal troops halfway, but succeeded in making them change sides.

Another famous example is that of Catherine II of Russia who mounted the tsarist troops against her husband Peter III. But during events in Italy in 1922, or later in Germany, many authorities did in fact make the troops stand back, while fascist and nazi thugs imposed their will. Tentative and unorganized crowds, so Baschwitz, can hardly ever overwhelm decided organized troops.

11-130. *Mass enthusiasm and force.* Both invisible and visible masses may seem to adhere to some new idea or demand. But even massive crowds do only mobilize a small percentage of a city population. A large part consists of onlookers and bystanders, furthermore. The many may drift along, but only a few take the lead, and an even smaller minute group commits violent acts. This was the case with successive republican revolutions in England, America and France, and more recently also in the Germany of 1918/ 19. As well as with earlier 'liberation wars', for instance of the Spanish, or some Germanic states, against Napoleon. The draft made armies swell alright, but also made them less professional and reliable.

12-144. *The passively acquiescing majority.* French Blanquists in the Paris Commune, Russian bolsheviks, Italian fascists and early Nazis claimed to represent widespread popular uprisings, but in fact they were very small minorities imposing their will on the people. They were reluctant to call a 'general strike', for instance, and on some occasions their designs were even frustrated by one called by their opponents. For instance in 1922 Italy (see Malaparte's classic work on the technique of the coup d'état). This also translated into the 'revisionism' polemic of Lenin, Trotsky and representatives of the Third (communist) International, against Kautsky and representatives of the Second (social-democrat) International.

13-155. *Violent minorities.* Unorganized masses, crowds and mass meetings are helpless against persistent troublemakers or organized heavies sent by competitors. This leads them to organize their own 'stewards'. Mounting hostilities may easily escalate into recurring brawls, street fights and near civil war – as it did in Italy and Germany in the early twenties. But it was the change economic tide in the late twenties that brought the Nazis their election victory. The president and the army command failed to uphold democracy, law and order, however, handing dictatorial powers to a small group that could not be voted out again. Intermediary summary: So it were not the unstoppable forces of popular masses yearning for a 'strong leader', that were decisive in the end, but the use of force by small groups.

14-168. *Limits to the power of the police.* But it is a misunderstanding that the mere use of force is sufficient to suppress a mass movement – witness Bismarck's failed *Kulturkampf* against the Catholics, or his *Sozialistengesetze* against the Socialists. Such measures often provoke tenacious resistance instead. Even the use of police goons against the opposition is often ineffective or counterproductive – witness the Tsar's silent support for the 'Black Hundred' and similar ultra-nationalist groups. A police state as such cannot impose permanent acquiescence on a population.

15-176. *Breaches of law and order.* It is only the paralysis of the will to act on the side of the legal authorities, which provides violent active minorities with the necessary room to impose their designs, and provokes the acquiescence of peaceful

passive majorities. But this acquiescence is only partial and temporary. It is caused by a distortion of ordinary judgment, and a suppression of contrary feelings.

16-179. *How 'mass crimes' occur.* Italian criminologist Sighele's pioneering book on 'the criminal crowd', the first monograph on mass psychology as such, claims that even ordinary people undergo a mental transformation in the crowd, bringing out the lowest in them. Baschwitz says that this may happen on occasion, but cannot be maintained in a general sense. Even Sighele himself admits that it is primarily the 'bad people' in a crowd who seize their chance. And that if courageous individuals stand up to them, this is often enough to stop the violence there and then. Heine reported an example from 1832 Paris, where crowds chased and killed half a dozen suspected 'cholera poisoners', but information in the press was able to stop this outbreak.

17-187. *The terror of the worst.* Another argument is, that violent minorities commit such crimes 'under the protection' of peaceful majorities. Baschwitz says the opposite is true: violent minorities commit such crimes by terrorizing peaceful majorities. People standing up to them do indeed take a risk of attracting their attention and malevolence. But they later tend to exaggerate these risks by invoking the myth of 'mass daemonia': the dark unstoppable force of the crowd. Examples are the Terror during the French revolution, the killing of innocent hostages – for instance in Munich in 1919. Often 'mass crimes' are not committed by masses at all, but by active minorities hiding among passive majorities.

18-193. *Mass crimes committed against outlawed groups.* This even holds true for most hate crimes against minorities: religious, racial, national, etcetera. During the Middle Ages, Jews were blamed for the Black Death, heresies, usury and much more. The Turk Muslim authorities considered the minority of Armenian orthodox Christians along the border a dangerous Fifth column during the First World war with the Russians. Poor whites in the U.S. South played a large role in the Ku Klux Klan and the lynchings of blacks. Curiously, this hate is often legitimated with erotic fantasies about the 'danger to our girls and women' – even in Streicher's notorious nazi rag *Der Stürmer*.

19-207. *Silent panic.* Authors of the 'Roman school' such as Taine, Sighele and Le Bon said even trial juries, mass meetings, national parliaments showed characteristics of the crowd. Although this was exaggerated, it is true that a 'silent panic' often gets passive majorities in its grip, when confronted by vocal minorities. When they remain inactive in the face of persecution, they strive to maintain their self-respect by implicitly assuming some kind of guilt on the part of the victims. In his earlier book on *Mass delusion*, Baschwitz had identified this tendency as a 'need for evening out'. (He means the same mechanism that Festinger later identified as 'reduction of cognitive dissonance').

## CONCLUSION

20-213. *The rules of mass psychology.* The facts provided in this book contradict the claims of the pessimist and Roman school, about the mental level of the individual dramatically sinking in a crowd. Of course there are lighter forms of credulity, for instance concerning faith healers or 'get rich quick' schemes. But we have found no proof that ordinary people are brought to violence – under normal circumstances.

It is the intimidation by violent minorities, by contrast, the paralysis of the authorities and the 'silent panic' among peaceful majorities that are responsible. It is not on a physical, but on a spiritual level, that these forces manifest themselves.

21-217. *The power of a paralysing idea*. A system of government collapses, when its leading representatives get the feeling that they fail at the tasks that the times have imposed upon them, or get depressed over the consequences of their errors. Conversely, its subjects give up their consent and acquiescence, and demand justice.

22-220/5. *Democracy*. Some people end up feeling that a forceful dictatorship is more effective than an indecisive democratic government, but this is a fallacy. Although majority decisions may take time to reach, they are also more effective in the end. Even Macchiavelli himself proved aware of that, in his famous *Discorsi*. This leads us to the necessity of developing a *psychology of politics*, dealing with questions of power, justice and freedom, within the framework of the law.

Mass psychology must give up its belief in fairy tales and magic formulas concerning mass daemonia and leader prestige [charisma]. We need to rediscover the power of 'the overwhelmingly great majority of decent people'.

PS.

The manuscript was developed from the mid-thirties onwards. The German original was first published in The Netherlands in 1938. The Dutch translation was ready for printing in May 1940 when the Germans invaded, and only published in that form immediately after Liberation in 1945. Both versions were then republished in The Netherlands in 1951, with mostly minor changes.

At the time Baschwitz first wrote the book, he was an exile in Amsterdam, and had found work at the newly-founded 'International Institute of Social History', which was smuggling key political archives out of Hitler's Germany and Austria. Mostly materials from the labour movement (anarchist, communist and social democratic) including the most important papers of Bakunin, Marx and Engels. During the occupation, some of this was temporarily sent to London for safekeeping.

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(The first characterization of the authors is taken from Baschwitz; on occasion it is further completed).

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### **3. SOCIO-HISTORIC EVENTS, first per country, then chronological**

#### LOW COUNTRIES

- 1830 Amsterdam Dam/ Exchange, Chasing of Van den Biesen: 16-183  
1935 Queen Wilhelmina (supporting psychiatrists): 1-17

## GREAT BRITAIN

1641-52 Oliver Cromwell and Ironsides, English civil war: 11-139  
1808 General Wellesley (later Lord Wellington) leading British forces against Napoleon in Spain: 11-137  
1848 dissolution Chartist movement, rise of trade unions: 12-151  
Clarity of one party (as opposed to coalition) governments: 13-164  
*The Times* newspaper: 8c-84/5

## FRANCE

Ineffective censorship, propaganda (from Louis to Napoleon): 19-211

### French Revolution

1789, 14/5 July (Invalides+) Bastille, Louis XVI/ Nat. Assembly: 9-101/3; 9-109  
1792 Allied invasion by Prussia and Austria, introduction of the draft: 11-140/1  
1792, 10 Aug., storming of the Louvre/ Tuileries: 9-110  
1792 September massacres Paris: 17-189  
Incursion/ murder at the National Parliament meeting, search of Fbg. St Antoine: 9-113  
Journées révolutionnaires, radicals: 9-109/10  
  
1794 Spring, Convention, Commune, Danton, Robespierre, Terror: 2-23; 9-111/4; 17-190/1; 19-207  
'Jeunesse dorée' militia sections, Muscadins, Le Peletier: 9-112/4  
1795 Spring/ Summer, General Pichegru putting down revolts: 9-111, 113  
1795, 5 Oct., Napoleon/ Église de St. Roch: 9-110/1, 114

### Napoleon

1792, 1795, Putting down revolts during Revolution: 9-110/1  
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