

Hate in Occupied Zone a Real, Concrete Thing, Ernest Hemingway

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Not Only the French That the Germans Hate—Nationalists and Workers Glare at Each Other—Communism Very Strong—French Run Things Smoothly.

RUHR WORKMEN LACK PATRIOTIC SPIRIT

The following is the ninth of a series of articles on the Franco-German situation by Ernest M. Hemingway, staff correspondent of The Star.

By ERNEST M. HEMINGWAY. Special to The Star.

Dusseldorf April 30.—You feel the hate in the Ruhr as an actual concrete thing. It is as definite as the unswept, cinder-covered sidewalks of Dusseldorf or the long rows of grimy brick cottages, each one exactly like the next, where the workers of Essen live.

It is not only the French that the Germans hate. They look away when they pass the French sentries in front of the postoffice, the town hall and the Hotel Kaiserhof in Essen, and look straight ahead when they pass poilus in the street. But when the nationalists and workers meet, they look each other in the face or look at each other's clothes with a hatred as cold and final as the towering slag heaps back of Frau Bertha Krupp's foundries.

Most of the workers of the Ruhr district are Communists. The Ruhr has always been the reddest part of Germany. It was so red, in fact, that before the war troops were never garrisoned here, both because the government did not trust the temper of the population and feared the troops would become contaminated with the Communist atmosphere. Consequently when the French moved in they had no barracks to occupy, and had a very difficult time billeting.

A Revival Peters Out.

At the start of the occupation all of the Ruhr united solidly to back the government against the French, the night of the demonstration when Thyssen came home from his trial at Mayence, a German newspaper man told me he identified over a hundred men in the mob, singing patriotic songs and shouting for the government, who had been officers and non-coms in the Red Army during the Ruhr rebellion. It was a great revival of national feeling that molded the country into a whole in its opposition to France.

"It was most uplifting," an old German woman told me. "You should have been here. Never have I been so uplifted since the great days of the victories. Oh, they sang. Ach, it was beautiful."

That is finished now. The leaders of the workers are saying that the government has no policy, except passive resistance, and they are sick of passive resistance. Their newspapers are demanding that the German government start negotiations with the French. The French have seized millions of marks of unemployment doles, and as soon as the unemployment pay doesn't come in the workers begin grumbling.

It was the beginning to look as though the workers would not hold out in the passive resistance, and the industrialists were extremely anxious to provoke an incident between the workers and the troops. Something to stir

up a little trouble and revive the old patriotic fervor. They ordered sirens blown to summon workers for a passive resistance demonstration whenever French troops appears for requisitionings.

Easter Bloodshed.

On the Saturday before the Easter the incident occurred. It cost lives of thirteen workmen. It would not have happened perhaps, if the young officer in charge of the platoon that came to requisition motor trucks had not been nervous. But it did happen.

I have heard at least fifteen different accounts of what actually happened. At least twelve of them sounded like lies. The crowd was very thick and pressed tight around the soldiers. It was in a big courtyard. Those that were in the front rank of the crowd were killed or wounded. You are not allowed to talk to the wounded. The troops are not giving interviews. In fact, they were sent a very long way away very soon after the last ambulance load of wounded had gone. Hearsay evidence is worthless, and there are plenty of wild stories.

Two things stand out. The French had no reason to make any bloodshed and wanted none. On the contrary, they had every reason to avoid any sort of conflict, as they were making every effort to win over the workers from their employers. The industrialists, on the other hand, had been provoking incidents and advising the men to resist.

Twenty different workmen swore to me that there were Nationalist agitators, former German "Green police," in the crowd. The workmen say these men egged on the workers and told them they could swarm over the French, disarm them and kick them out of the courtyard.

Disputes Over Shooting.

All the workmen said the crowd ran at the first volley, which was fired over their heads. They had all served in the army and had no desire to attack armed troops unarmed once they saw they meant business and would really shoot. It is there that the question arises whether or not the lieutenant proceeded to fire unnecessarily. I do not know. All the men I have talked to swear they were running after the first volley and did not see anything. After the first volley the troops fired independently.

The funeral at Essen was delayed the last time because the French and German doctors could not agree on the nature of the bullet wounds. The Germans claimed eleven of the workmen were shot in the back. The French surgeon claims that four were shot in the front, five bullets entered from the side and two in the back. I do not know the claims on the two men who died since the argument started.

At present the Ruhr workmen are feeling decidedly unpatriotic. They believe that sooner or later negotiations will start, their steadily dwindling unemployment pay will stop, the mark will plunge down again, and that they will not be able to work full time, due to various sabotages and the general disorganization. None of them have any illusions that the government will be able to pay them unemployment pay indefinitely and they are demanding that the government start something.

Keep Troops From View.

The French seem to run the administration of the occupation admirably. The troops are kept out of sight as much as possible, and there is a

minimum of interference with Germans going through from unoccupied to occupied Germany. They are all required to have red card passes, but the examination of these passes is purely perfunctory. A non-com. sees the red card, says, "bon," and the line of Germans passes through the barrier.

They ran the military end smoothly, but are only able to move six trains of the one hundred and thirty-three from Essen each day. In three months of occupation France has obtained the same amount of coal she had been getting each week from Germany for nothing before the Ruhr seizure.

M. Loucheur, the millionaire ex-minister of the devastated regions under Briand, went to London and felt out public opinion on his own hook, although he told Poincare he was going, and reported to him on his return. Poincare was reported furious at Loucheur's trip, which he regarded as a first step in a Loucheur drive for the premiership when the Chamber of Deputies again sits in May. Loucheur suffers in France from being called the French Winston Churchill, and has a record for brilliant performance and brilliant failure. His very sound credentials for the premiership will be that he has always opposed the Ruhr venture.

Briand's Ambition.

Aristide Briand is now working on a speech that he hopes will return him to power. He is planning to attack Poincare by stating the number of millions Briand got out of the Germans in reparations while he was prime minister and compare them with the money Poincare has lost since he came into office.

The Caillaux Liberal camp have started a new paper in Paris. Leon Daudet, the Royalist, says the first thing he will ask the chamber when it reopens is why M. Loucheur was permitted to go to England as an alleged representative of the government against the wishes of the government, etc.

Andre Tardieu has announced an attack on the Ruhr policy as it has been carried out. Things are beginning to boil.

The end of the Ruhr venture looks very near. It has weakened Germany, and so has pleased M. Daudet and M. Poincare. It has stirred up new hates and revived old hates. It has caused many people to suffer. But has it strengthened France?

The End