

CHIEF POLISH COUNCIL**POLITICAL DEPARTMENT**

Poznań, March 1919.

Grenzschutz.

The entire German force including Grenzschutz consists of 25,000 to 30,000 men armed principally with machine guns. In Laurahütte for eighty soldiers there are 40 machine-guns. In Ratibor for about 700 soldiers there are 70 machine-guns. The Grenzschutz is composed of unemployed workmen hired and brought to this territory principally from exclusively German sections. The soldiers receive 6 mks. daily in addition to free board and clothing. It is at present declared that this pay is to be increased to ten marks. Some mineowners pay the soldiers an additional fifteen marks daily. The soldiers are demoralized and do not obey orders while the officers shift off responsibility for excesses of the soldiers, and do nothing to check them when they are directed against Poles. In Lublinitz in January 1919 the Grenzschutz soldiers plundered Polish houses for two days continuously robbing them and causing ruin and destruction by these raids. The officers announced that in the face of disobedient and disorderly soldiers they were helpless to do anything.

Imprisonments and illtreatment of Poles by the Grenzschutz continue. The Grenzschutz arrested Mr. Laskowski of Oleśno, the Rev. Kuczka from Wysoka, the Rev. Roloty of Gieraltowic, the Rev. Robota from Włochy, Bronislas Koraszewski, editor of the „Gazeta Opolska“, and Mr. Madosza. They were taken to a German meeting, where they were brutally abused, attacked and insulted in various ways. The Wilczak brothers from Jastrzab and Mr. Gruchla from Robietnicz were also arrested. In Kozłowa Góra an officer of the Grenzschutz in a public meeting of Poles spat in the Polish speakers face and ordered him to be taken into custody and then to Katowitze. In Mała Dąbrowka (Eichenau) a German soldier openly wrote a letter to the Polish parish priest threatening to shoot him in his church because being a Pole he advised the Polish people not to participate in the

elections to the German constitutional assembly. In Rydoltowy and Psiarskie Doły the Grenzschutz arrested about fifteen Polish citizens, without warning or cause, they were taken to the prison of Ratibor where they were ill-treated and fed only with beetroot.

Germans under the protection of the Grenzschutz hold meetings in different places and adopt resolutions which they send to Weimar, purporting to be protests of Polish people against separation from Germany and union with Poland. In Beuthen, Polish people came to a meeting of this sort and entered a vigorous protest, which resulted by the Grenzschutz opening fire upon them, killing one man and wounding a woman. Peaceful and defenceless Poles are constantly attacked and robbed by the Grenzschutz soldiers. German officials are mobilized by the directors, owners and chiefs of mines and industries and these mobilized Germans in addition to their salaries as officials receive soldiers pay and an insurance for 20 000 marks in the event of death payable to their kin.

German newspapers daily contain advertisements for the purpose of enlisting German soldiers. In Ratibor county they requisitioned all dogs to pull machine guns.

In Kattowitz two weeks ago a meeting of German army officers was held, at which it was decided, that in case the Allies reunite Upper Silesia to Poland the Grenzschutz will destroy all machinery in the mines and industries, will flood the coal mines and that they will continue to fight against the Poles and devastate the country.

Polish newspapers are under ban. In Katowice the „Gazeta Ludowa“ was closed with a great hubbub.

The Commissioner of the Polish Peoples Council Mr. Czapla was imprisoned without cause, as a warning to the Poles.

The German Roman-Catholic clergy, — and with few exceptions almost the entire catholic clergy of Upper Silesia is German, — are now working hand in hand with socialists and the Hakatists against the Polish people, misusing the pulpit, confessional and church, for German political purposes.

In Oppeln and other places, Germans have formed an organisation known as the „Freie Vereinigung zum Schutze Oberschlesiens“ which daily distributes all over Silesia circulars, appeals and documents in Polish and German. They seek in these appeals, in a most outrageous manner and with deliberate falsehoods to provoke the Polish people; they attack the new Polish republic and its government, and rouse the resentment of the Poles by their slanders and libels. The same organisation is recruiting men for the Grenzschutz on a large scale. It sends agents from village to village, who under various pretexts, cause the Poles to sign docu-

ments, which often turn out to be petitions and requests against their own interests and wishes and even against their union with the Polish State. The police authorities also collect their signatures by means of intimidation. Poland is everywhere represented by these and other German agencies as a land where Bolshevism, chaos and anarchy are reigning, while order and peace is affirmed to prevail everywhere, under the German rule.

Promises have been made and put forward in every way by the German government, but they have not been kept. In spite of solemn assurances all government officials are still Germans, who persecute the Poles which makes up about 80 per cent of the entire population. In all offices and courts only the German language is allowed and petitions, communications etc. to the authorities in Polish are not accepted. It has been announced that the Polish language would be introduced and taught in schools, but the teaching still continues exclusively in German, and Polish is not taught.

The lot of the Polish people in Upper Silesia is worse to-day than it was even in the days of the old imperial regime. The people are left a prey to the workmen's and soldiers' councils and to the Grenzschutz. During the war the Germans decimated the cattle of Polish owners and now they are taking the balance announcing that they do so because it is necessary to feed the Grenzschutz.

What remains of wheat and potatoes is taken from the peasants by force, so that even in villages hunger is already felt. Among the workmen the want and misery are extreme. The hungry and persecuted population may be driven by despair to inconsiderate action and may attack the Germans.

The Polish leaders have succeeded, though with great difficulty, in preventing the excited and despairing population from an imprudent action of self-defence; but no one can say, how long they will be able to check the movement, how long the people will patiently bear this condition of things, if the brutal German persecution is not put a stop to.
