

truth became known and the Hun realised that there was still a London—to say nothing of a few other quite considerable British cities—standing, and that for all the material and moral effect produced by this form of frightfulness the Zeppelin might as well have been kept at home to give joy-rides to war-weary Huns, there came a sort of revulsion of feeling and attitude. Now the German Press faithfully follows directions in so far as the printing of official versions of air raids is concerned, but of comment there is seldom a word. This is not at all in accordance with the wishes of German officialdom, which quite naturally desires to make the most of its frightfulness. In its issue of December 15th, the *Lokalanzeiger*, which is one of the leading journals of Berlin, printed an article, which is on the face of it official—or at least officially inspired—entitled “German and English Air Attacks.” In it is made the impudent assertion that air raids on open towns were not begun by Germany, but by her enemies, and that while Germany’s air raids are always conducted against “military” objectives those of the Allies are essentially against civilian populations! By process of altogether irrelevant argument, the article deduces that poor Germany is engaged in a purely defensive war against an unscrupulous but happily feeble enemy! In the end it seems that the purpose of the article is to side-track the implication that the British Government is willing to abandon raids on open towns if Germany will agree to do the same—and keep her bargain. The article concludes:—

“The proposal is so skilful, and at the same time so cunning, that there is only one description for it; it is thoroughly English. We have learnt to understand England’s view of true humanity, and England’s regard for promises. England is soft, conciliatory, and full of Christian charity as long as she lacks the means and the opportunity to strike; she is ruthless, violent, terrible when time and circumstances permit of a blow. That is England’s political creed. England began the starvation war against Germany’s women and children long before Germany began the air campaign against England’s armaments (*sic*).

“Britain would not have cried out so loud if our blows had not been so successful. The English airmen may come and attempt afresh their ruthless attacks on women and children; their atrocities will make us not soft, but hard. Our defences will not sleep. Our answer will be—two blows for one.”

Assuming that these are the views of official Germany, as undoubtedly they are, it is quite clear that it is only a waste of time to talk about coming to any understanding on the subject of war against civilian populations. General Ludendorff has declared that this is a war of nations and that the “civilian population is as much a mark for the enemy’s bombs as the fighting man.” That is certainly not a doctrine we were prepared to accept before the war, nor is it any more palatable to us after three-and-a-half years of fighting against the most unscrupulous enemy we have ever had to tackle. It is contrary to all the usages of international law, and is opposed to all the decent feelings upon which civilisation has hitherto prided itself. It is immoral, but because it is immoral it must be defeated, and if it is only to be defeated by bringing home to the originators of frightfulness that it does not pay, then so be it. We cannot afford, for the sake of the generations that come after us no less than for our own, to allow these breaches of international law and decency to go unpunished. It may be unfortunate that the way in which they can be adequately punished is by the application of the Mosaic law of “an eye for an eye,” but, unfortunate or not, it has got to be done and

will be done, in spite of all the squealings of the Hun who dreads nothing so much as being dosed with his own medicine.

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**Our
Own Policy
of
Reprisals.**

Lord Rothermere has told us that the Air Council is whole-heartedly in favour of reprisals, and that it has reached the conclusion that “it is our duty to avenge the murder of our women and children. For our own part, we have almost come to the pass at which we should be content to accept Lord Rothermere’s code of revenge, and to place our policy of counter raids on no higher a plane than that of avenging the murders of our defenceless civilians. But we think the matter goes far beyond that. In the first place, the duty is laid upon our authorities of defending our shores, and if that can only be done—as we believe to be the case—by raiding the enemy’s towns from the air until he cries for mercy, then let us raid them as often and as heavily as need be. We shall in the course of these raids undoubtedly kill and injure German civilians. We regret the necessity, but we cannot get away from the fact that the necessity has been forced upon us by the prior action of an enemy who has adopted frightfulness as his creed in the belief that he was the only one with a stomach for it. It has taken us long enough to learn the lesson, but we have learnt it now, and all we have to say is “Let there be raids!”

And at last we are assured that there *will* be raids, and that they will be continued in ever-growing intensity until, as in the case of poison gas, the Hun will regret nothing so much as his own outrages on international decency and the usages of civilised war. The recent raid on Mannheim—in which, by the way, the Arch-Hun himself seems to have unfortunately escaped by an hour or so—is only a fore-taste of what is in store for the apostles of frightfulness. Let us hope they will like it when it bursts on their heads in its full measure.

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**The
Dangers
of
State
Control.**

From time to time we have sounded a note of warning regarding the measure of State control to which the aircraft industry is being gradually and insidiously subjected. Let us make it quite clear that we do not mean by this that measure of control imposed by the Controlled Establishments Orders, or any similar regulations which we, like most sensible people, regard as being essential for the time being to the successful conduct of the war. What we have in mind is something quite different to that—it is nothing less than the nationalisation of the aircraft industry, not only now but after the war. We do not intend at the moment to give chapter and verse of all that has come to our knowledge in connection with the question, but we do say that a most careful watch will have to be kept on matters, else we may wake up one morning and find that there is no industry—only another Government Department.

We have, on several previous occasions, given at length a number of reasons why the nationalisation of aircraft manufacture would be a totally mistaken line of policy, apart altogether from questions of what is due to the people who have developed the industry and have to the full assisted to tide the Empire over a time of critical stress. Therefore, we do not propose at the moment to repeat or to elaborate those arguments, the more so as we imagine they are not subject