



German History in Documents and Images

Volume 5. Wilhelmine Germany and the First World War, 1890-1918

Bernhard vom Brocke, "Scholarship and Militarism': The Appeal of 93 'to the Civilized World!'"

The great majority of Germany's leading writers, composers, and academic scholars passionately supported the war effort, which they portrayed as the defense of German culture. Manifestos that invoked German cultural superiority in order to justify the country's cause, including the pursuit of expansive war aims, were signed by many of Germany's leading intellectuals. This public appeal, written by Ulrich von Wilamowitz (1848-1931) and signed by about 100 of Germany's leading artists and intellectuals, defiantly dismissed accusations of German barbarism in occupied Belgium. These cultural figures were prominent fixtures in the campaign to mobilize morale on the home front.

To the Civilized World

An Appeal.

We have received the following *appeal* for publication.

As representatives of German scholarship and art, we hereby protest to the entire civilized world against the lies and calumnies with which our enemies are trying to stain the honor of Germany in the grave struggle for existence that has been forced upon the country. The firm voice of events has demonstrated how fanciful the German defeats are that have been fabricated for general circulation. Hence our enemies are working all the more fervently with their misrepresentations and calumnies.

It is not true that Germany is guilty of causing this war. Neither the people, nor the government, nor the Kaiser wanted it. The German side did its utmost to prevent it. Documentary evidence of this truth is available for the world to see. During the twenty-six years of his reign, Wilhelm II has often enough shown himself to be the protector of peace, and even our opponents have often enough acknowledged this fact. Indeed, this very Kaiser, whom they now dare call an Attila, has been ridiculed by them for years, because of his steadfast efforts to maintain peace. Only when the great force that has long lurked about us attacked our people from three sides, only then did we rise up as one man.

It is not true that we maliciously violated Belgian neutrality. France and England were demonstrably determined to violate it. Belgium was demonstrably in agreement with them. It would have been suicide on our part not to anticipate their move.

It is not true that the life and property of a single Belgian citizen have been infringed upon by our soldiers, unless the most desperate self-defense made it necessary. For again and again,

notwithstanding repeated warnings, the Belgian population shot at our troops from ambush, mutilated the wounded, and murdered doctors while they were performing their healing work. One can falsify matters no more basely than to remain silent about the crimes of these assassins, to turn the punishments that they have justly suffered into crimes committed by Germans.

It is not true that our troops have wreaked brutal havoc in Louvain. They were compelled reluctantly to bring a sector of the city under fire, in order to retaliate against raging inhabitants who had treacherously attacked them here. The greatest part of Louvain has been preserved. The famous Town Hall stands completely intact. With great self-sacrifice, our soldiers have saved it from the flames. – Should works of art have been destroyed in this terrible war, or should they be destroyed, every German would regret it. However, as little as anyone can surpass us in our love of art, we refuse just as decisively not to purchase German defeat at the price of preserving a work of art.

It is not true that our waging war disregards international law. It knows no undisciplined cruelty. But in the east, the earth is drinking the blood of women and children who were butchered by wild Russian hordes, and in the west, dum-dum bullets mutilate the breasts of our soldiers. Those who have allied themselves with Russians and Serbs, and who present the world with shameful spectacle of inciting Mongolians and Negroes against the white race, have the very least right to portray themselves as the defenders of European civilization.

It is not true that the struggle against our so-called militarism is not a struggle against our culture, as our enemies hypocritically claim it to be. Were it not for German militarism, German culture would long ago have been eradicated. For the protection of German culture, militarism arose in a land that had for centuries been plagued like no other by predation. *The German army and the German people are one and the same.* Consciousness of this fact today unites 70,000,000 Germans as brothers, without respect to education, class, or party.

We cannot wrest the poisonous weapons of lies from the hands of our enemies. We can only proclaim to all the world that they are giving false witness against us. You who know us, you who together with us have guarded the highest possessions of mankind – to you we also call out: Believe us! Believe that we shall fight this war to the end as a cultured people to whom the legacy of Goethe, Beethoven and Kant are as sacred as hearth and land.

This we pledge to you with *our names and our honor!*

Adolf von Baeyer, Professor of Chemistry, Munich; Prof. Peter Behrens, Berlin;
Emil von Behring, Professor of Medicine, Marburg; Wilhelm von Bode, General Director of the Royal Museums, Berlin; Alois Brandl, Professor, President of the Shakespeare Society, Berlin;
Luju Brentano, Professor of National Economy, Munich; Prof. Justus Brinkmann, Museum Director, Hamburg; Johannes Conrad, Professor of National Economy, Halle; Franz von Defregger, Munich; Richard Dehmel, Hamburg; Adolf Deitzmann, Professor of Theology, Berlin;
Prof. Wilhelm Doerpfeld, Berlin; Friedrich von Duhn, Professor of Archaeology, Heidelberg; Prof. Paul Ehrlich, Frankfurt am Main; Albert Ehrhard, Professor of Roman Catholic Theology, Strasbourg; Karl Engler, Professor of Chemistry, Karlsruhe; Gerhard Esser, Professor of Roman Catholic Theology, Bonn; Rudolf Eucken, Professor of Philosophy, Jena; Herbert Eulenberg, Kaiserswerth; Heinrich Finke, Professor of History, Freiburg; Emil Fischer, Professor of Chemistry, Berlin; Wilhelm Foerster, Professor of Astronomy, Berlin; Ludwig Fulda, Berlin; Eduard von Gebhardt, Dusseldorf; J.J. de Groot, Professor of Ethnography, Berlin; Fritz Haber,

Professor of Chemistry, Berlin; Ernst *Haeckel*, Professor of Zoology, Jena; Max *Halbe*, Munich; Prof. Adolf von *Harnack*, General Director of the Royal Library, Berlin; Gerhart *Hauptmann*, Agnetendorf; Karl *Hauptmann*, Schreiberhau; Gustav *Hellmann*, Professor of Meteorology, Berlin; Wilhelm *Herrmann*, Professor of Protestant Theology, Marburg; Andreas *Heusler*, Professor of Northern Philology, Berlin; Adolf von *Hildebrand*, Munich; Ludwig *Hoffmann*, City Architect, Berlin; Engelbert *Humperdinck*, Berlin; Leopold Graf *Kalckreuth*, President of the German Confederation of Artists, Eddelsen; Arthur *Kampf*, Berlin; Fritz Aug. von *Kaulbach*, Munich; Theodor *Kipp*, Professor of Jurisprudence, Berlin; Felix *Klein*, Professor of Mathematics, Goettingen; Max *Klinger*, Leipzig; Alois *Knoepfler*, Professor of History of Art, Munich; Anton *Koch*, Professor of Roman Catholic Theology, Münster; Paul *Laband*, Professor of Jurisprudence, Strasbourg; Karl *Lemprecht*, Professor of History, Leipzig; Philipp *Lenard*, Professor of Physics, Heidelberg; Max *Lenz*, Professor of History, Hamburg; Max *Liebermann*, Berlin; Franz von *Liszt*, Professor of Jurisprudence, Berlin; Ludwig *Manzel*, President of the Academy of Arts, Berlin; Josef *Mausbach*, Professor of Roman Catholic Theology, Münster; Georg von *Mayr*, Professor of Political Sciences, Munich; Sebastian *Merkle*, Professor of Roman Catholic Theology, Würzburg; Eduard *Meyer*, Professor of History, Berlin; Heinrich *Morf*, Professor of Roman Philology, Berlin; Friedrich *Naumann*, Berlin; Albert *Neisser*, Professor of Medicine, Breslau; Walter *Nernst*, Professor of Physics, Berlin; Wilhelm *Ostwald*, Professor of Chemistry, Leipzig; Bruno *Paul*, Director of the School for Applied Arts, Berlin; Max *Planck*, Professor of Physics, Berlin; Albert *Plehn*, Professor of Medicine, Berlin; Georg *Reicke*, Berlin; Prof. Max *Reinhardt*, Director of the German Theater, Berlin; Alois *Reihl*, Professor of Philosophy, Berlin; Karl *Robert*, Professor of Archaeology, Halle; Wilhelm *Roentgen*, Professor of Physics, Munich; Max *Rubner*, Professor of Medicine, Berlin; Fritz *Schaper*, Berlin; Adolf von *Schlatter*, Professor of Protestant Theology, Tübingen; August *Schmidlin*, Professor of Sacred History, Münster; Gustav von *Schmoller*, Professor of National Economy, Berlin; Franz von *Stuck*, Munich; Reinhold *Seeburg*, Professor of Protestant Theology, Berlin; Martin *Spahn*, Professor of History, Strasbourg; Hermann *Sudermann*, Berlin; Hans *Thoma*, Karlsruhe; Wilhelm *Treubner*, Karlsruhe; Karl *Vollmoeller*, Stuttgart; Richard *Votz*, Berchtesgaden; Karl *Votzler*, Professor of Roman Philology, Munich; Siegfried *Wagner*, Bayreuth; Wilhelm *Waldeyer*, Professor of Anatomy, Berlin; August von *Wassermann*, Professor of Medicine, Berlin; Felix von *Weingartner*; Theodor *Wiegand*, Museum Director, Berlin; Wilhelm *Wien*, Professor of Physics, Würzburg; Ulrich von *Wilamowitz-Moellendorf*, Professor of Philology, Berlin; Richard *Willstaetter*, Professor of Chemistry, Berlin; Wilhelm *Windelband*, Professor of Philosophy, Heidelberg; Wilhelm *Wundt*, Professor of Philosophy, Leipzig.

Source: Bernhard vom Brocke, “‘Wissenschaft und Militarismus’: Der Aufruf der 93 ‘an die Kulturwelt!’ und der Zusammenbruch der internationalen Gelehrtenrepublik im Ersten Weltkrieg“ [“‘Scholarship and Militarism’: The Appeal of 93 ‘to the Civilized World!’ and the Collapse of the International Republic of Letters in the First World War“], in William M. Calder, III, ed., *Wilamowitz nach 50 Jahren [Wilamowitz 50 Years Later]*. Darmstadt, 1985, p. 718.

Translation: Jeffrey Verhey and Roger Chickering