

Belgian Ministry of Colonies

THE  
FATE OF THE PRISONERS  
DURING THE  
EAST AFRICAN CAMPAIGN

*The Treatment of the Allied Prisoners by the Germans*  
*The Treatment of the German Prisoners by the Belgians*

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE MARTYRDOM OF THE BELGIAN PRISONERS HELD BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA.

Since the beginning of August 1914, in violation of The Hague Convention, the German government began to arrest all Belgian civilians who were to be found in German East Africa, or on board departing ships from Dar-es-Salaam, and interned them.

It used the same practices on subjects of the Entente nations.

These prisoners, who henceforth will be referred to as prisoners of war, were, for the most part, interned at the Tabora camp.

This camp will remain, in the annals of the African campaign, symbolic of all the suffering and humiliation that the brutality of a barbaric race, deprived of morality, can inflict on defenseless prisoners.

The martyrdom of the European prisoners is officially established today 19 September 1916; day when the capture of Tabora by the Belgian forces which brought them to deliverance.

The treatment to which the Germans subjected their prisoners has been certified by a judicial investigation, opened after the capture of Tabora, by the Auditor General, Mr. Dellicour, attaché in the Belgian corps operating in East Africa.

In the process of this investigation, this high magistrate listened to the former prisoners, who swore by oath on their testimony. He also heard from the ex-commander of the prison camp, Lieutenant Brandt, as well as from the camp's German guards: Herling, Müller, Ravens, etc. These German subjects made their statements in the presence of Mr. Schön, the Secretary of German East Africa, and the transcripts were then signed by both them and Mr. Schön.

Some other factors confirmed the facts established by this investigation. These being, most notably, annotated journals of the campaign which were seized from German subjects, as well as photographs.

This investigation, which offered, as one shall see, all the guarantees of authenticity and sincerity, established that the prisoners of the German government in Africa were not only treated in violation of the laws of war, but also that they did not even receive treatment in compliance with respect to human dignity.

In order to understand the abhorrent character of this treatment, one must grasp the realities imposed on a European in such a tropical climate. The European, in Africa, cannot apply himself to manual labor and in order to combat an enemy, he must enjoy a healthy and sustaining diet.

On the other hand, civilized nations have always been preoccupied with maintaining the prestige of the white race intact in Africa, vis-à-vis the native. The Germans were the first and the only

1. The English Government has, on its part, overseen the judicial proceedings of an investigation of the poor treatment to which the British subjects were victim in Africa. The results of which have been published in a collection entitled: "Reports on the Treatment by the Germans of British Prisoners and Natives in German East Africa," London, 1917.