

Primo Levi, Testimony in the Age of Denial, vs. Testimony *before* the Age of Denial

Sources

In the opening of his preface to *The Drowned and the Saved*, his last testimony, Primo Levi discusses the possibility of “rejection” of the reports about the Nazi death camps. These reports began circulating in Italy in 1942 and, as Levi recalls, they were met with disbelief, the “very enormity” of cruelty and the “proportions” of the massacres were such that the “public was inclined to reject them.”

Having opened thus Levi makes an almost seamless leap to discuss what looks like a matter related to disbelief but in fact, I would argue, brings with it a much bigger issue—denial. As Levi writes:

It is telling that this rejection had been predicted well in advance by the perpetrators themselves. Many survivors (including Simon Wiesenthal, in the last pages of *The Murderers Among Us*) recall that the SS soldiers used to enjoy taunting the prisoners with a cynical warning: No matter how this war ends, we have won the war against you. No one will be left to testify, but even if one of you does survive, the world will not believe you. There might be suspicions, discussions, historical research, but there will be no certainty, because we will destroy both you and the evidence. And even if some evidence should remain and some of you do manage to survive, people will say the events you describe are too monstrous to be believed: they will call them exaggerations of Allied propaganda, and they will believe us, who will deny everything, and not you. We are the ones who will dictate the history of the concentration camps. Curiously, this same thought (“Even if we told, no one would believe us”) emerged from the despair of the prisoners in the form of nocturnal dreams.”

Source: Primo Levi, “Preface,” *The Drowned and the Saved*, in *The Complete Works of Primo Levi*. Volume III, (New York : Liveright, 2015), 2411.

Preliminary sources:

1. The Persian Historian Juzjani (b. 1191) records an encounter between Genghis Khan and an imam who fell from the walls of Heart during the Mongol siege of city 1221 (the city surrendered, so no massacre, but it was destroyed)

After some time with the imam, Chinggis Khan asked the cleric if the world would remember Chinggis Khan. After some moments of consternation the imam asked for the security of his person. Chinggis Khan affirmed he would be safe no matter what the answer, and the imam replied ‘A name continues to endure where there are people, but how will a name endure when the Khan’s servants’ martyr all the people and massacre them, for who will remain to tell the tale?’ The statement angered Chinggis Khan but after he regained his composure he said:

I used to consider thee a sagacious and prudent man, but, from this speech of thine, it has become evident to me that thou dost not possess complete understanding, and that thy comprehension is but small. There are many kings in the world, and, wherever the hoofs of the horses of Muhammad, the Aghri, have reached, there I will carry slaughter and cause devastation. The remaining people who are in other parts of the world, and the sovereigns of other kingdoms that are, they will relate my history.

Source: Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, trans. H. G. Raverty (New Delhi, 1970), pp. 1041-2. The Muhammad to whom Chinggis Khan refers is Muhammad Khwarazmshah.

1. Hitler, August 22, 1939

"Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

My decision to attack Poland was arrived at last spring. Originally, I feared that the political constellation would compel me to strike simultaneously at England, Russia, France, and Poland. Even this risk would have had to be taken.

Ever since the autumn of 1938, and because I realized that Japan would not join us unconditionally and that Mussolini is threatened by that nit-wit of a king and the treasonable scoundrel of a crown prince, I decided to go with Stalin.

In the last analysis, there are only three great statesmen in the world, Stalin, I, and Mussolini. Mussolini is the weakest, for he has been unable to break the power of either the crown or the church. Stalin and I are the only ones who envisage the future and nothing but the future. Accordingly, I shall in a few weeks stretch out my hand to Stalin at the common German-Russian frontier and undertake the redistribution of the world with him.

Our strength consists in our speed and in our brutality. Genghis Khan led millions of women and children to slaughter -- with premeditation and a happy heart. History sees in him solely the founder of a state. It's a matter of indifference to me what a weak western European civilization will say about me.

I have issued the command -- and I'll have anybody who utters but one word of criticism executed by a firing squad -- that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death-head formations in readiness -- for the present only in the East -- with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space (*Lebensraum*) which we need. Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?

Source: The text above is the English version of the German document handed to Louis P. Lochner in Berlin. It first appeared in Lochner's *What About Germany?* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1942), pp. 1-4. The Nuremberg Tribunal later identified the document as L-3 or Exhibit USA-28. Two other versions of the same document appear in Appendices II and III. For the German original cf. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswartigen Politik 1918-1945*, Serie D, Band VII, (Baden-Baden, 1956), pp. 171-172.

Consider the Following Statements by earlier perpetrators:

Egypt 1208 BCE

In 1208 BCE, the great Pharaoh Marneptah went on an expedition against the Kingdom Hatti—the land of the ancient Hittites whose empire stretched from the cousecuses to Anatolia and its southern kingdoms in the Levant. The expedition was a huge success, so claimed the Egyptians. Marneptah commemorated it in a victory stele that counted the victories against various peoples and the destruction of different places. It reads as follows,

The princes are helpless, crying, “Peace!”
Not one is raising his head among the Nine Bows.
Now that Libya has come to ruin,
Hatti is pacified;
The Canaan has been plundered into every sort of woe:
Ashkelon has been overcome;
Gezer has been captured;
Yano’am is made non-existent.
Israel is laid waste and his seed is not;
Hurru is become a widow because of Egypt.

Prism of Sennacherib (705- 701 BCE)

Dear reader, I could not redact this beautifully horrible text, you might want to just peruse, skipping from massacre to massacre):

I, Sennacherib, the great king, the mighty king, king of the universe, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters (of the earth); the wise ruler (lit. shepherd, "pastor"), favorite of the great gods, guardian of the right, lover of justice; who lends support, who comes to the aid of the needy, who turns (his thoughts) to pious deeds; perfect hero, mighty man; first among all princes, the powerful one who consumes the insubmissive, who strikes the wicked with the thunderbolt; the god Assur, the great mountain, an unrivaled kingship has entrusted to me, and above all those who dwell in palaces, has made powerful my weapons; from the upper sea of the setting sun to the lower sea of the rising sun, all humankind (the black-headed race) he has brought in submission at my feet and mighty kings feared my warfare -- leaving their abodes and flying alone, like the sudinnu, the bird of the cave (? cliffs), to (some) inaccessible place.

In my first campaign I accomplished the defeat of Merodach-baladan, king of Babylonia, together with the army of Elam, his ally, in the plain of Kish. In the midst of that battle he forsook his camp, and made his escape alone; (so) he saved his life. The chariots, horses, wagons, mules, which he left behind at the onset of battle, my hands seized. Into his palace, which is in Babylon, joyfully I entered. I opened his treasure-house: -gold, silver, vessels of gold and silver, precious stones of every kind (name) goods and property without limit (number), heavy tribute, his harem, (his) courtiers and officials, singers, male and female, all of his artisans, as many as there were, the servants of his palace, I brought out, I counted as spoil. In the might of Assur my lord, 75 of his strong walled cities, of Chaldea, and 420 small cities of their environs (within their borders), I surrounded, I conquered, their spoil I carried off. The Arabs, Aramaeans, and Chaldeans, who were in Erech, Nippur, Kish, Harsagkamma, Kutha and Sippar, together with the citizens, the rebels (lit. sinners), I brought out, as booty I counted. On my return (march) the Tu'muna Rihihu, Yadakku, Ubulu Kibre, Malahu, Gurumu, Ubulu, Damunu, Gambulu Hindaru, Ru'ua, Bukudu, Hamranu, Hagaranu, Nabatu, Li'tau, Aramaeans (who were) not submissive, all of them I conquered. 208,000 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep, without number, a heavy booty, I carried off to Assyria. In the course of my campaign, I received from Nabu-belshumate, governor of the city of Hararate, gold, silver, great musukkani-trees, asses, camels, cattle and sheep, as his onerous contribution. The warriors of Hirimme, wicked enemies, I cut down with the sword. Not one escaped. Their corpses I hung on stakes, surrounding the city (with them). That district

(province) I reorganized: One ox, 10 lambs, 10 homers of wine, 20 homers of dates, its choicest, (as gifts) for the gods of Assyria, my lords, I established for all time.

In my second campaign, Assur my lord, encouraged me, and against the land of the Kassites and the land of the Yasubigallai, who from of old had not been submissive to the kings, my fathers, I marched. In the midst of the high mountains I rode on horseback where the terrain was difficult, and had my chariot drawn up with ropes: where it became too steep, I clambered up on foot like the wild-ox. The cities of Bit-Kilamzah, Hardishpi and Bit-Kubatti, their strong, walled cities, I besieged, I captured. People, horses, mules, asses, cattle and sheep, I brought out from their midst and counted as booty. And their small cities, which were numberless, I destroyed, I devastated, I turned into ruins. The houses of the steppe, (namely) the tents, wherein they dwelt, I set on fire and turned them into (a mass of) flames. I turned round, and made that Bit-Kilamzah into a fortress, I made its walls stronger than they had ever been before,

Column II

and settled therein people of the lands my hands had conquered. The people of the land of the Kassites and the land of the Yasubigallai, who had fled before my arms, I brought down out of the mountains and settled them in Hardishpi and Bit-Kubatti. Into the hand(s) of my official, the governor of Arrapha, I placed (lit. counted) them. I had a stela made, and the might of my conquering hand which I had established upon them, I had inscribed thereon. In the midst of the city I set it up. The front of my yoke I turned (that is, I turned about) and took the road to the land of the Elippi. Before me (my approach) Ispabara, their king, forsook his strong cities, his treasure-houses (cities), and fled to distant (parts). Over the whole of his wide land I swept like a hurricane. The cities Marubishti and Akkuddu, his royal residence-cities, together with 34 small cities of their environs, I besieged, I captured, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. The people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep, without number, I carried off. I brought him to naught, I diminished his land. Sisirtu and Kummahlum, strong cities, together with the small cities of their environs, the district (province) of Bit-Barrfi in its totality, I cut off from his land and added it to the territory (lit. border) of Assyria. Elenzash I turned into the royal city and stronghold of that district. I changed its former name, calling its (new) name Kar-Sennacherib. Peoples of the lands my hands had conquered I settled therein. To my official, the governor of Harhar, I handed it over (counted it). Thus I extended my land. On

my return, I received the heavy tribute of the distant Medes, whose name no one among the kings, my fathers, had (ever) heard. To the yoke of my rule I made them submit.

In my third campaign I went against the Hittite-land. Lule, king of Sidon, -the terrifying splendor (lit. terrors of splendors) of my sovereignty overcame him and far off into the midst of the sea he fled. (There) he died. Great Sidon, Little Sidon, Bit-Zitti, Zaribtu, Mahalliba, Ushu, Akzib, Akko, his strong, walled cities, where there were supplies (lit. fodder and drinking places), for his garrisons,-the terrors of the weapon of Assur, my lord, overpowered them and they bowed in submission at my feet. Tuba'lu I seated on the royal throne over them, and tribute, gifts) for my majesty, I imposed upon him for all time, without ceasing. From Menachem, the Shamsimurunita, Tuba'lu, the Sidonite, Abdi-liti, the Arvadite, Uru-milki, the Gublite, Mitinti, the Ashdodite, Budu-ilu, the Beth-Ammonite, Kammusu-nadbi, the Moabite, Malik-rammu, the Edomite, kings of Amurru, all of them, numerous presents, as their heavy tribute, they brought before me for the fourth time, and kissed my feet. But Sidka, king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke,-the gods of his father-house, himself, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his brothers, the seed of his father-house, I tore away and brought to Assyria. Sharru-lu-dari, son of Rukibti, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon and I imposed upon him the payment of tribute (in the form of) presents to my majesty. He accepted (lit. bore) my yoke. In the course of my campaign, Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Banaibarka, Asuru, cities of Sidka, who had not speedily bowed in submission at my feet, I besieged, I conquered, I carried off their spoil. The officials, nobles and people of Ekron, who had thrown Padi, their king, bound by (lit. lord of) oath and curse of Assyria, into fetters of iron and had given him over to Hezekiah, the Jew,-he kept him in confinement like an enemy, they (lit. their heart) became afraid, and called upon the Egyptian kings, the bowmen, chariots and horses of the king of Meluhha (Ethiopia), a countless host, and these came to their aid. In the neighborhood of Eltekeh, their ranks being drawn up before me,

Column III

they offered battle. (Trusting) in the aid of Assur, my lord, I fought with them and brought about their defeat. The Egyptian charioteers and princes, together with the charioteers of the Ethiopian king, my hands took alive in the midst of the battle. Eltekeh (and) Timnah I besieged, I captured and took away their spoil. I drew near to Ekron and slew the governors and nobles who had committed sin (that is, rebelled), and hung their bodies on stakes around the city.

The citizens who sinned and treated (Assyria) lightly, I counted as spoil. The rest of them, who were not guilty (carriers) of sin and contempt, for whom there was no punishment, I spoke their pardon. Padi, their king, I brought out of Jerusalem, set him on the royal throne over them and imposed upon him my kingly tribute. As for Hezekiah, the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighborhood, which were without number, -by levelling with battering-rams (?) and by bringing up siege-engines (?), by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels and breaches (?), I besieged and took (those cities). 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep, without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil. Himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem his royal city. Earthworks I threw up against him, the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery. The cities of his, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land and to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bel king of Gaza, I gave. And (thus) I diminished his land. I added to the former tribute, and laid upon him the giving (up) of their land, (as well as) imposts-gifts for my majesty. As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and the Urbi (Arabs) and his mercenary (?) troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him (lit. took leave). In addition to the 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, (there were) gems, antimony, jewels (?), large sandu-stones, couches of ivory, house-chairs of ivory, elephant hide, ivory (lit. elephant's "teeth") ebony (?), boxwood (?), all kinds of valuable (heavy) treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, (which) he had (them) bring after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept (lit. do) servitude, he dispatched his messengers.

In my fourth campaign Assur, my lord, gave me courage, and I mustered my numerous armies and gave the command to proceed against Bit-Yakin. In the course of my campaign I accomplished the overthrow of Shuzubi, the Chaldean, -who sat in the midst of the swamps, - at Bitutu. That one,-the terror (lit. ague, chills) of my battle fell upon him, and broke his courage (lit. tore his heart); like a criminal (?) he fled alone, and his place was seen no more. The front of my yoke I turned and to Bit-Yakin I took the way. That (same) Merodach-baladan, whose defeat I had brought about in the course of my first campaign, and whose forces I had shattered, -the roar of my mighty arms and the onset of my terrible battle he feared and he gathered together the gods of his whole land in their shrines, and loaded them into ships and fled like a bird to Nagite-

rakki, which is in the middle of the sea. His brothers, the seed of his father-house, whom he had left by the sea-shore, together with the rest of the people of his land, I brought out of Bit-Yakin, (from) the midst of the swamps and canebrakes, and counted as spoil. I turned about and ruined and devastated his cities: I made them like ruin-heaps. Upon his ally, the king of Elam, I poured out terror. On my return, I placed on his (Merodach-Baladan's) royal throne, Assur-nadin-shum, my oldest son, offspring of my loins (knees). I put him in charge of the wide land of Sumer and Akkad.

translation excerpted from *The Annals of Sennacherib*, Daniel David Luckenbill, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924) pp. 23-35.

***Book of Joshua* (ca. second half of the 7th Century BCE), Chapter 6 Conquest of Jericho**
(supposedly 40 years after the Exodus, 13th Century BCE)

²⁰ So the people shouted, with the *shofars* blowing. When the people heard the sound of the *shofars*, the people let out a great shout; and the wall fell down flat; so that the people went up into the city, each one straight ahead of him; and they captured the city. ²¹ They completely destroyed everything in the city with the sword — men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

(translation: *Complete Jewish Bible*, 1998).

Qin Dynasty (China) 221 BCE

Chancellor Li Si Said: "I, your servant, propose that all historians' records other than those of Qin's be burned. With the exception of the academics whose duty includes possessing books, if anyone under heaven has copies of the Shi Jing [Classic of Poetry], the Shujing [Classic of History], or the writings of the hundred schools of philosophy, they shall deliver them (the books) to the governor or the commandant for burning. Anyone who dares to discuss the Shi Jing or the Classic of History shall be publicly executed. Anyone who uses history to criticize the present shall have his family executed. Any official who sees the violations but fails to report them is equally guilty. Anyone who has failed to burn the books after thirty days of this

announcement shall be subjected to tattooing and be sent to build the Great Wall. The books that have exemption are those on medicine, divination, agriculture, and forestry. Those who have interest in laws shall instead study from officials."

"The first emperor therefore directed the imperial censor to investigate the scholars one by one. The scholars accused each other, and so the emperor personally determined their fate. More than 460 of them were buried alive at Xianyang, and the event was announced to all under heaven for warning followers. More people were internally exiled to border regions. Fusu, the eldest son of the emperor, counselled: "The empire just achieved peace, and the barbarians in distant areas have not surrendered. The scholars all venerate Confucius and take him as a role model. Your servant fears if Your Majesty punishes them so severely, it may cause unrest in the empire. Please observe this, Your Majesty." However, he was unable to change his father's mind, and instead was sent to guard the frontier as a de facto exile."

Source: Sima Qian, *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian): Chapter 6. "The Basic Annals of the First Emperor of Qin" thirty-fourth year (213 BC).

In 1260, the Mongol Prince Hulagu (destroyer of Baghdad, 1258) wrote to Qutuz, the Mamluk king of Egypt a letter:

"You should think of what happened to other countries and submit to us. You have heard how we have conquered a vast empire and have purified the earth of the disorders that tainted it. We have conquered vast areas, massacring all the people... You cannot escape from the terror of our armies... Resist and you will suffer the most terrible catastrophes. We will shatter your mosques and reveal the weakness of your God and then will kill your children and your old men together."

1542: Bartolomé de Las Casas Condemns the Exploitation of Indigenous Peoples,

The natives are capable of Morality or Goodness and very apt to receive the principles of Catholic Religion; nor are they averse to Civility and good Manners..., I myself have heard the

Spaniards themselves (who dare not assume the Confidence to deny the good Nature in them) declare, that there was nothing wanting in them for the acquisition of eternal grace, but the sole Knowledge and Understanding of the Deity....

The Spaniards first assaulted the innocent Sheep, so qualified by the Almighty, like most cruel tigers, wolves, and lions, hunger-starved, studying nothing, for the space of Forty Years, after their first landing, but the Massacre of these Wretches, whom they have so inhumanely and barbarously butchered and harassed with several kinds of Torments, never before known, or heard (of which you shall have some account in the following Discourse) that of Three Millions of Persons, which lived in Hispaniola itself, there is at present but the inconsiderable remnant of scarce Three Hundred. Nay the Isle of Cuba, which extends as far, as Valladolid in Spain is distant from Rome, lies now uncultivated, like a Desert, and entombed in its own Ruins. You may also find the Isles of St. John, and Jamaica, both large and fruitful places, unpeopled and desolate.

Source: Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies...* (Project Gutenberg EBook: 2007), 9-16.

1582, in Canton, China, Matteo Ricci indicts the Portuguese:

[...] the Chinese have always been afraid of foreigners, especially when they viewed them as hostile and belligerent, as they could easily see the Portuguese whose army and navy were the largest they have ever seen. Igniting this fire of hatred are the many Mohammedan Saracens who live in the city of Canton, who promptly told the Chinese that these men from Frankia, as the Mohammedans call the Christians of Europe (and since the Chinese cannot pronounce the letter *r*, because it does not exist in their language, they came to call them till now *Falanchi*, which is also the name for the [Portuguese] artillery as well for not having any other name for it yet), are valiant men, conquerors of other peoples' kingdoms, knowing already that they had subjected by military power Malacca and other Indian kingdoms.

Source:

Matteo Ricci, *Della Entrata Della Compagnia Giesu e Christianita nelle Cina, Libro Secondo, Capitolo I, (Macerata, 2001 [1615]), p. 112*

1671 Hurao (an indigenous Nobleman) Delivers a speech against the Spaniards, Marianna Islands (Guam)

The Europeans would have done better to remain in their own country. We have no need of their help to live happily. Satisfied with what our islands furnish us, we desire nothing else. The knowledge which they have given us has only increased our needs and stimulated our desires. They find it evil that we do not dress. If that were necessary, nature would have provided us with clothes. They treat us as gross people and regard us as barbarians. But do we have to believe them? Under the excuse of instructing us, they are corrupting us. They take away from us the primitive simplicity in which we live. They dare to take away our liberty, which should be dearer to us than life itself. They try to persuade us that we will be happier, and some of us had been blinded into believing

their words. But can we have such sentiments if we reflect that we have been covered with misery and illness ever since those foreigners have come to disturb our peace? Before they arrived on the island, we did not know insects. Did we know rats, flies, mosquitoes, and all the other little animals which constantly torment us? These are the beautiful presents they have made us. And what have their floating machines brought us? Formerly, we do not have rheumatism and inflammations. If we had sickness, we had remedies for them. But they have brought us their diseases and do not teach us the remedies. Is it necessary that our desires make us want iron and other trifles which only render us unhappy?

The Spaniards reproach us because of our poverty, ignorance and lack of industry. But if we are poor, as they claim, then what do they search for here? If they didn't have need of us, they would not expose themselves to so many perils and make such great efforts to establish themselves in our midst. For what purpose do they teach us except to make us adopt their customs, to subject us to their laws, and lose the precious liberty left to us by our ancestors? In a word, they try to make us unhappy in the hope of an ephemeral happiness which can be enjoyed only after death.

They treat our history as fable and fiction. Haven't we the same right concerning that which they teach us as incontestable truths? They exploit our simplicity and good faith. All their skill is directed towards tricking us; all their knowledge tends only to make us unhappy. If we are ignorant and blind, as they would have us believe, it is because we have learned their evil plans too late and have allowed them to settle here. Let us not lose courage in the presence of our misfortunes. They are only a handful. We can easily defeat them. Even though we don't have their deadly weapons which spread destruction all over, we can overcome them by our large numbers. We are stronger than we think! We can quickly free ourselves from these foreigners! We must regain our former freedom!

Source: Charles Le Gobien, (1653-1708): Le Gobien, *Histoire Des Isles Marianes*, Paris, 1700.

1905 German Colonized Africa, Lothar von Trotha, proclamation of 22 Apr. 1905

Further, those few who refuse to surrender will have happen to them what happened to the Herero people, who in their blindness also believed they could successfully make war on the mighty German kaiser and the great German people. . . . The whole Herero people have had this happen, part of them have died of hunger and thirst in the desert, part were killed by German troops, part were killed by the Ovambo. The same will happen to the Hottentot people, if they do not freely surrender themselves and their weapons. . . . Those who believe that [because they have murdered or are leaders] they will receive no mercy, should leave the land, because if they are seen on German territory, they will be shot at, until all are destroyed.

Lothar von Trotha, proclamation of 22 Apr. 1905, reprinted in General Staff, *Kämpfe der deutschen Truppen*.

FALSEHOOD IN WAR-TIME

by Arthur Ponsonby British MP (1929)

Some quotes:

There must have been more deliberate lying in the world from 1914 to 1918 than in any other period of the world's history.

Atrocity lies were the most popular of all, especially in this country and America; no war can be without them. Slander of the enemy is esteemed a patriotic duty. An English soldier wrote ("The Times," September 15, 1914) : "The stories in our papers are only exceptions. There are people like them in every army." But at the earliest possible moment stories of the maltreatment of prisoners have to be circulated deliberately in order to prevent surrenders. This is done, of course, on both sides. Whereas naturally each side tries to treat its prisoners as well as possible so as to attract others.

The repetition of a single instance of cruelty and its exaggeration can be distorted into a prevailing habit on the part of the enemy. Unconsciously each one passes it on with trimmings and yet tries to persuade himself that he is speaking the truth. There are lies emanating from the inherent unreliability and fallibility of human testimony. No two people can relate the occurrence of a street accident so as to make the two stories tally. When bias and emotion are introduced, human testimony becomes quite valueless. In war-time such testimony is accepted as conclusive.

There are lying recriminations between one country and another. For instance, the Germans were accused of having engineered the Armenian massacres, and they, on their side, declared the Armenians, stimulated by the Russians, had killed 150,000 Mohammedans (Germania, October 9, 1915).

War is fought in this fog of falsehood, a great deal of it undiscovered and accepted as truth. The fog arises from fear and is fed by panic. Any attempt to doubt or deny even the most fantastic story has to be condemned at once as unpatriotic, if not traitorous. This allows a free field for the rapid spread of lies. If they were only used to deceive the enemy in the game of war it would not be worth troubling about. But, as the purpose of most of them is to fan indignation and induce the flower of the country's youth to be ready to make the supreme sacrifice, it becomes a serious matter. Exposure, therefore, may be useful, even when the struggle is over, in order to show up the fraud, hypocrisy, and humbug on which all war rests, and the blatant and vulgar devices which have been used for so long to prevent the poor ignorant people from realizing the true meaning of war. It must be admitted that many people were conscious and willing dupes. But many more were unconscious and were sincere in their patriotic zeal. Finding now that elaborately and carefully staged deceptions were practised on them, they feel a resentment which has not only served to open their eyes but may induce them to make their children keep their eyes open when next the bugle sounds.

The period covered [in this book] is roughly the four years of the war., The intensity of the lying was mitigated after 1918, although fresh crops came up in connection with other of our international relations. The mischief done by the false cry "Make Germany pay" continued after 1918 and led, more especially in France, to high expectations and consequent indignation when it was found that

the people who raised this slogan knew all the time it was a fantastic impossibility. Many of the old war lies survived for several years, and some survive even to this day.