

From Belgium with Love:
La Dame Blanche, 1918

BELGIUM



MUNUC 36

Model United Nations at the University of Chicago

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CHAIR LETTER

Hi guys!

My name is Ishita, but please call me Ish! I am very excited to be your Chair for La Dame Blanche at MUNUC 36. I'm a senior at the University of Chicago, double majoring in Molecular Engineering and Economics. It's going to be a great experience, and I'm sure our triple engineering team will manage to work together seamlessly to handle the *interesting* mechanics for this committee.

We are very excited to run this committee with the hopes that it will give you all the opportunity to practice your public speaking, communication, research and collaborative skills. We hope you will be creative with your crafting of solutions while keeping in mind the historical setting of this committee. While this may be a challenging environment, the main goal is for this to be a fun and informative experience, and I look forward to working with all of you.

Outside of MUN, you may catch me creating art, listening to music, watching anime, cooking (and eating), or dancing K-pop covers. As an international student, I have lived in 6 countries including India, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa, and I look forward to living in more. As I have moved around a lot, it has made me genuinely curious about other cultures, and I love meeting new people and learning about their stories. I look forward to getting to know you all over the course of the weekend.

I started doing Model UN way back in 9th grade, and so I completely empathize with any feeling associated with attending a conference. I know that there are times with worries or concerns, but there are also times with unbridled enthusiasm - I am sure you know which one I hope outweighs the other. Please feel free to reach out to me at ishitapillai@uchicago.edu at any time you want to talk about something, and I am happy to help with questions, feedback or even if you just want to say "Hi!".

Best of luck with your preparations, and see you all soon!

Ishita Pillai

CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTERS

Hey everyone!

My name is Antoni and I'm very excited to be your Crisis Director at MUNUC 36 this February. I'm a fourth-year at the University of Chicago studying Molecular Engineering and Computer Science, and a relatively recent initiate to MUN. It's my pleasure to embark on this journey with all of you into the covert world of espionage and the fascinating history of World War 1.

The success of La Dame Blanche lies in your collaboration, strategic thinking, and adaptability. Each of you is tasked with navigating a maze of tricky diplomacy, treacherous subterfuge, and strategic alliance-forging. I encourage all of you to delve into the geopolitical landscape of 1918 Europe and the history of the spy organization you all have now sworn yourselves to — diving deep into your character is what Crisis is all about, and you might even learn something along the way. (Good thing we made this handy background guide for exactly that!).

As your Crisis Director, I'll be orchestrating the behind-the-scenes of this entire operation. With the help of the rest of the crisis staff, we'll be responding to notes, creating breaks, and helping you bring the committee to life. I'm very much looking forward to seeing the creative ideas and fruitful debate all of you will bring to this committee. Let your imaginations run wild — your enthusiasm and dedication are what make MUNUC great. We're here to make this committee as engaging, fun, and welcoming as possible, and we need your help to make that happen!

Outside the MUN sphere, I'm involved in UC Robotics and the Society for Molecular Engineering (you might notice the conspicuous lack of non-engineers on the dais...). You can also find me climbing rocks, playing chess, or prattling on about Poland. If you have any questions or concerns or just want to chat, feel free to reach out at awwellisz@uchicago.edu.

Stay hydrated,

Antoni Wellisz

Howdy peeps!

My name is Rishi, and I am very excited to be your Crisis Director for MUNUC 36 for the La Dame Blanche crisis committee. I am a fourth year student at the University of Chicago studying an unusual combination of Molecular Engineering and Economics.

I started doing MUN for the first time just last year when my roommates who have been doing MUN since high school dragged me along to MUNUC 35 and ChoMUN, UChicago's collegiate conference as an AC. Though it was my first time participating in the MUN ecosystem, I had so much fun making new friends and connections. I learned how to debate within the historical context, think critically and strategically about global issues, and collaborate with the MUN team to build relationships and pass impactful policy. We as a committee bring you an exciting and thrilling committee where we hope to provide you with all these skills and more to aid you in your missions throughout Belgium and life.

In my role as Co-Crisis Director, I will be responsible for helping aid both the front room and backroom of the committee. In the front room, I will be moderating debate with Ish, and in the backroom, I will be writing notes, delivering crisis breaks and overall just driving the committee forward. I am excited to see where your creativity and research end up driving the committee!

Outside of MUN, you'll find me listening to my roommates ramble on about MUN. I help lead the Society for Molecular Engineering and UChicago SEDS, where we build high powered rockets. Outside of school, I love playing spikeball on the quad, watching anime, trying not to kill my plants, discovering new Star Wars lore, and talking about the newest quantum nonsense. Please feel free to reach out to me at rishic@uchicago.edu if you have any questions, concerns, or want to chat about anything!

Over and Out,

Rishi Chebrolu

EST. 1989

MUNUC

SENSITIVITY STATEMENT

At the core of everything, MUNUC is the idea of pedagogy. Your chairs, crisis directors and every single member of the Executive Committee hopes that, when you walk away from this weekend, you not only have an incredible time and a weekend filled with lively debate and creative backroom arcs, but that you also grow over this weekend—academically and personally.

We understand that La Dame Blanche and this period of history is one that will inspire incredible arcs and conversation. We must, however, ask you to be respectful and considerate. It should go without saying that racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other behavior along this line will not be tolerated. Bigotry—whether the intent be unintentional or intentional—will not be acceptable and disciplinary measures will be taken as needed. We also understand that there are historical differences culturally between the current era and age that we live in and the era of history in which this history occurs. We would like to make clear that historical accuracy is not an excuse for any inexcusable behaviors and we expect the modern standard for morals and ethics to be exhibited in our 1918 committee.

This standard of conduct extends beyond your front room speeches and directives but into your backroom arcs and crisis notes. If you have any questions about what is appropriate, please feel free to send a note or ask the dais. We take these matters extremely seriously at MUNUC and disciplinary measures will be taken as needed.

With this being said, we look forward to meeting you in February and to a weekend of incredible debate!

EST. 1989

MUNUC

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

Allied intelligence agencies played a crucial role in thwarting the German Spring Offensive of 1918—intercepting German communications, breaking codes, and carrying out reconnaissance were crucial for anticipating Germany's next move. La Dame Blanche, in particular, developed an incredibly sophisticated railway reconnaissance network that gave the Allies nearly real-time information on all of the German military's railway movements. This life-saving information helped Allied countries adjust their own positions to prepare for and disrupt German attacks.

In this committee, delegates will each represent a member of the leadership of La Dame Blanche. As the German offensive on the Western Front continues, it will be the responsibility of this committee to do whatever it takes to disrupt Germany's plans through reconnaissance, sabotage, and collaboration, as well as increase the influence and scope of La Dame Blanche's clandestine operations. Our timeline begins on March 21, 1918, at the beginning of the German Spring Offensive, and will advance through the end of the war.

There is one crucial twist, however: not all spies are loyal to Belgium. An undisclosed number (but less than half) of delegates in this committee are in fact double agents, secretly working for Germany and the Central Powers.

Double agents will participate in front room activities such as caucuses and directives, appearing to be a true agent, but will employ subterfuge in their notes to the crisis staff—the Backroom—to advance their own goals and frustrate the efforts of the Allied committee members. This may change the flow of the committee substantially: who can you trust to work together? Who may be secretly plotting against you? How can true agents (TAs) prevent double agents (DAs) from sabotaging their plans? How can double agents avoid being revealed? For this reason, we are introducing a few unique mechanics, described below.

It is your job as delegates of La Dame Blanche to execute your own arcs to drive the events of the front room committee. Crisis is broken down into two sections: the frontroom and the backroom. The frontroom will consist of the Chair and the delegates. In the frontroom, delegates will debate and discuss the crisis events facing La Dame Blanche and collaboratively evaluate all information provided by the backroom crisis team in order to pass directives to address said crises. During frontroom debate, delegates will be expected to write crisis notes and create their backroom arc. Crisis committees may be new for some delegates, so please feel free to reach out to the dais with any questions. Delegates should read through the [Crisis](#)

[Committee Trainings](#) provided at [munuc.org](#) and be familiar with crisis mechanics going into the conference.

Investigations And Joint-Person Directives

As a TA, you will likely be tempted to investigate any suspicious members of La Dame Blanche or try to uncover traitorous plots. To avoid abuse of investigations, we require that any investigation must be carried out via investigative Joint-Person Directive (JPD), and only after the second committee session has begun. (Please see the [information on Joint Arcs on the munuc.org website](#) for details). Additionally, we look favorably upon investigations of potential plans to sabotage committee activities or to discover more information about sabotage that has already been carried out, rather than investigations of particular people. We will never explicitly provide the name of any other delegate responsible for sabotage or reveal their arc as a response to an investigation.

JPDs must be submitted in groups of at least four delegates, and no delegate can be a signatory to more than one investigative JPD in a given committee session. In general, the results of an investigation may not be returned at the same time as other notes sent to the Backroom—the crisis staff may take more time to respond to investigative JPDs than other notes depending on the pace of committee.

The quality of the JPD will determine its success and impact on the committee and crisis breaks.

As with any material sent to the Backroom, a high quality JPD will be specific, well-written, and clear, and should include a detailed plan, evidence of probable cause to investigate suspicious events, or any other demonstrated capacity of successfully carrying out the investigation. Recall that the purpose of JPDs will be to investigate certain events or actions throughout the committee that may seem suspicious to the delegates—JPDs will not be used to investigate specific delegates without good reason. Backroom will keep track of all JPD submissions, so use these investigations as tools to further your own arcs and frontroom directives based on your character role.

Excluding investigative JPDs for gathering intelligence on suspicious activity, normal JPDs may be submitted as usual with no requirements on the minimum number of sponsors.

Sabotaging Investigations And Crisis Breaks

Though the La Dame Blanche has a strict vetting process for all intelligence passing through, information can be corrupted by DAs within the agency. In the case that a DA is a co-sponsor of a JPD, they may plant false evidence or engage in other diabolical actions to sabotage JPD findings.

Any and all subterfuge must be thoroughly detailed within their next note to inform the

backroom. For this reason, it is in the best interest of the committee to choose their co-sponsors wisely and be skeptical of any findings that arise from a JPD. What may appear to be news of German troop movements may really be false intelligence planted by a DA to throw the committee off the scent of other nefarious plans!

So delegates, keep an eye out, be skeptical, and be careful with whom you share information with—Belgium needs you!



Statement Of The Problem

The German Spring Offensive



Map of the Western Front

The Western Front stretched from the English Channel in the north to the Swiss border in the south during World War 1. It was the main theater of war in Europe, where the German Army fought against the Allied forces of France, Belgium, and Britain. At the beginning of the war in 1914, the German Army advanced rapidly through Belgium and into France, but was eventually stopped by Allied forces at the Battle of the Marne in late 1914. The Western Front was then established and both sides began digging in, creating a series of trenches and fortifications that stretched for hundreds of miles. Over the next few years, the Western Front became a stagnant and deadly battlefield, with both sides launching massive offensives that resulted in huge casualties but little territorial gain. The Germans, in

particular, launched several offensives, including the Battle of Verdun and the Battle of the Somme, both of which resulted in massive casualties.

At the end of 1917, General Erich Ludendorff, the *de facto* commander of the German army, recognized that Germany had one brief, final chance to win a decisive victory on the Western front.¹ The Russian Revolution created a period of political instability and internal conflict in Russia, weakening the Russian war effort.² This allowed Germany to redirect a substantial portion of its troops and resources from the Eastern Front to the Western Front. Additionally, following German submarine attacks on American passenger and merchant ships, the United States declared war against Germany in April of 1917, but has not yet sent troops across the Atlantic to assist the Allies in the war effort. For this reason, Germany has a short window of opportunity to exert its strengthened military and break through the Western Front before overwhelming American forces arrive in Europe. Now, in early

¹ Alexander Watson, *German Spring Offensives 1918* in 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel et al., issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2016.

² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Russian Revolution," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 8, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Revolution>.

1918, the Allies know an attack is imminent, but it is not known exactly when or where the German army will strike.

With liberation appearing more unattainable by the day, civilian morale in Belgium is low, but intelligence gathering and espionage is more important than ever. Allied intelligence agencies will play a crucial role in thwarting the impending German offensive—intercepting German communications, breaking codes, and carrying out reconnaissance are crucial for anticipating the enemy's next move. While La Dame Blanche agents loyal to Belgium are disrupting Germany's plans through reconnaissance, sabotage, and collaborating with Allied leaders, the sinister shadows of double agents who had turned or infiltrated the ranks of the Belgian intelligence apparatus are doing everything they can to crush their efforts. In this deadly dance, the survival of La Dame Blanche—and all of Belgium—hangs by a thread.

Flemish-Walloon Tensions And Flamenpolitik

The two predominant cultural and linguistic groups of Belgium are the Flemish and the Walloons. The Walloons largely live in Wallonia, the French-speaking region in the south of Belgium bordering France. The Flemish speak Dutch or Belgian Dutch (sometimes also called Flemish) and reside chiefly in Flanders, near the

northern border with the Netherlands.³ The area that now constitutes Belgium was, for several centuries, a loosely connected collection of Flemish- (in the north) and French-speaking provinces (in the south) controlled by the Spanish, then the Habsburgs, and ultimately the French as a result of the French Revolution.⁴ After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, the Great Powers at the Congress of Vienna made Belgium a part of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands.⁵ This was not to last: there were religious tensions (the Catholic Church was suspicious of the Netherlands as a Protestant state) and cultural conflicts (the francophone aristocracy resented foreign control and the use of the Dutch language) that ultimately led to a revolt against Dutch rule. On October 4th, 1830, the provisional government of the Belgian provinces declared independence. By 1839, after nearly a decade of *de facto* independence rocked by intermittent fighting, this new state was recognized by the Great Powers and had entirely broken away from the Netherlands. It is only at

³ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Fleming and Walloon," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 22, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fleming>.

⁴ Robert Mnookin and Alain Verbeke, "Persistent Nonviolent Conflict with no Reconciliation: The Flemish and Walloons in Belgium" in *Law and Contemporary Problems* 72, no. 2 (2009): 156. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40647745>.

⁵ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Congress of Vienna," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 2, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Congress-of-Vienna>.

this point that the notion of a shared “Belgian” national identity came into being.⁶

The Flemish have always outnumbered the Walloons, but it was the francophone Belgians in Wallonia who controlled the country culturally, politically, and economically for much of the country’s history. Indeed, during the 19th century, the right to vote was granted only to wealthy property owners, the overwhelming majority of whom were French-speaking. Belgium’s strong centralized government was essentially entirely dominated by the Walloons and the small francophone Flemish elite. Additionally, Wallonia’s large coal reserves allowed it to become one of the first regions in Europe to industrialize, leading to rapid economic growth. Throughout this period, Flanders’ economy still relied on subsistence agriculture and had no modern industry, and the economic rift between northern and southern Belgium continued to widen.⁷ To make matters worse, French was the sole official language of Belgium, and social and economic discrimination against Dutch speakers was rampant. It is not surprising, then, that a “Flemish Movement” had emerged by the 1890s, largely focusing on greater equality between the Dutch and French languages. Around the same time, constitutional amendments were passed that granted suffrage to non-landowning men, indirectly allowing greater

Flemish participation in Belgian politics. The Flemish Movement achieved some victories, such as an 1898 law that recognized the validity of Dutch in official documents and legal proceedings; however, cultural and political tensions between Flanders and Wallonia continued into the 20th century.

During the German occupation of Belgium during the First World War, the Germans deliberately fanned the flames of internal tensions within Belgium to divide the country and break anti-German patriotism. Germany’s *Flamenpolitik* (“Flemish policy”) consisted of actively supporting the Flemish movement and, by tapping into Flemish resentment against the Walloons caused by the systematic discrimination against the Dutch language, positioning themselves as the defenders of Flemish language and culture.⁸ For example, in 1916, Germany established Von Bissing University, a Dutch-speaking university in Ghent distinct from the existing University of Ghent, which almost exclusively operated in French. In 1917, the Council of Flanders was created with German support, and explicit administrative separation between Flanders and Wallonia was introduced in occupied Belgium. Belgian patriotism is strong and *Flamenpolitik* does not divide the Belgian populace as a whole, but a section of the Flemish

⁶ Mnookin and Verbeke, 157.

⁷ Moonkin and Verbeke, 160.

⁸ Antoon Vrints, *Flamenpolitik*, in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel et al., issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2016.

Movement is willing to actively collaborate with Germany and believes German support is essential to realizing their goals.⁹ In particular, the radical wing of the movement is seeking an independent Flemish state, not subject to Walloon influence, and Germany is happy to create and heighten these anti-Belgian sentiments.

The Bolshevik Revolution And Communist Uprisings Across Europe

Embroiled in revolution, Russian society was weary. After the February Revolution in 1917 and the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II that March, many Russians wished to concede to Germany and remove Russia from the war against the Central Powers. There was also considerable support for continuing the war to maintain Russia's territory and defend its honor.¹⁰ Germany found an opportunity in the strained Russian populace: if it could foster anti-war sentiment in Russia, Germany could achieve peace on the Eastern Front and direct its resources to the greater threats of Britain and France in the West. Seizing this chance, Germany granted Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Russian Bolsheviks, safe passage in a sealed train wagon from Switzerland, where he had been exiled since

1907, through Germany and into Russia.¹¹ Within just a few months of arriving in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg), Lenin led the October Revolution, and his Bolshevik regime entirely took over the Russian government (and inherited and exacerbated the disintegrating social structure and serious internal difficulties of Russia). While the new Bolshevik government was trying to rebuild its economy and administration, peace negotiations with Germany began in December 1917.

Although Germany is the birthplace of Marx and Engels, no communist revolution had gained significant traction in Germany, to the dismay of many European communists. Some Germans saw the cultural, economic, and political upheaval of the First World War as a perfect opportunity to drum up support for a revolution on German soil and hoped to draw support from their fellow Russian revolutionaries. Leftist sympathies were not uncommon in Belgium, too, particularly among the Flemish Movement. Some pro-communist Belgians may have seen German influence as a necessary evil to achieve their aims; anti-communist Belgians may have considered rejecting communism as inextricably tied to pushing back German occupation. Amidst these intricate webs of ideology and allegiance, the stage

⁹ Antoon Vrints, *Flamenpolitiek*.

¹⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Russian Revolution," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 8 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Revolution>.

¹¹ Albert Resis, "Vladimir Lenin." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 8, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vladimir-Lenin>.

was set for a complex interplay of revolutionary attitudes and aspirations of freedom.



History And Context



State of Europe in 1914 at the start of the First World War.¹²

Outbreak Of The Great War

On June 28th, 1914, Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian empire, and his wife Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, while they were visiting Sarajevo for a military inspection.¹³ It is this event—one that you are certainly familiar with—that is cited most often as the “cause” of the Great War. However, as James Morton put it, “Children have been taught that the First World War began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria as if he were killed at six in the evening and the war began an hour later.”¹⁴ In reality, a complex web of alliances and competing national

interests built up over decades of growing tensions in Europe makes describing the true reasons that kindled the outbreak of the War a much thornier affair. How did a Balkan conflict erupt into international warfare? It is impossible to satisfactorily answer this question in the space of this background guide. Still, the following extremely abridged retelling of the history of the Great War may help contextualize this committee.

Bosnia was annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908, and the Bosnian-Serb nationalist group to which Gavrilo Princip belonged believed that assassinating the Archduke was the first step to liberating the South Slavic peoples, including Bosnian Serbs, from foreign rule.¹⁵ Although the Serbian government was not directly involved in the plot, the conspirators received weapons and training from Serbian military intelligence. Serbian-backed separatism had been a simmering threat to the Austro-Hungarian Empire for years, and the assassination provided a perfect *casus belli* to wield force against Serbia. Knowing such a war would almost certainly escalate, Austria-Hungary sought backing from Germany, their most powerful ally, attempting to deter Russian intervention.¹⁶ On July 5th, 1914, Bethmann Hollweg, the German chancellor, and Wilhelm II, the German emperor, offered essentially unconditional support to Austria-Hungary to

¹² *Europe 1914*, National Archives.

¹³ Showalter and Royde-Smith. *World War I*.

¹⁴ Morton, *Spies of the First World War*.

¹⁵ Stevenson, *World War One*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

secure a military and political victory in the Balkans.¹⁷ In offering this “blank cheque,” Germany made at least two critically mistaken assumptions: first, that Austria-Hungary would immediately and swiftly defeat Serbia before other European powers could substantially interfere; second, that the Tsarist regime in Russia, despite its ties with Serbia, was not prepared to retaliate and risk escalating to all-out war in Europe.¹⁸

Austria-Hungary did not invade immediately. On July 28th, a month after the assassination (and four days after Russia declared that it would not allow Serbia to be crushed), Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and began bombarding Belgrade. Russia, seeking to protect its interests in the Balkans and defend against the threat of growing German and Austro-Hungarian power, mobilized its military forces by July 30th.¹⁹ France, who was allied with Russia and had been at odds with Germany since the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, unsurprisingly supported Russia.²⁰ Germany was suddenly faced with the prospect of war between the major powers of Europe and sent an ultimatum to Russia to halt military mobilization and to France to maintain neutrality; both

nations ignored Germany’s demands. France ordered a general mobilization of its military, and Germany declared war against Russia and France on August 1st and 3rd, 1914, respectively.

German Invasion And Occupation

With the signing of the Treaty of London in 1839, the Kingdom of Belgium was fully recognized as independent from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands by all the major powers of Europe. In addition, the five great powers—Austria, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Prussia (which would become the leading state of the German Empire)—pledged to guarantee Belgium’s neutrality. Most importantly for understanding the outbreak of the War, if Belgium’s neutrality were to be violated by an invading aggressor, Great Britain would come to their aid. Additionally, during the decades leading up to the Great War, Belgium focused primarily on building up their economy and colonies in Central Africa. As a consequence, Belgium lacked military might in comparison to the great European powers surrounding it. By the onset of the war, Belgium had amassed 190,000 troops through compulsory military service, just one-tenth the size of the German army.²¹

With rising tensions across Europe and the assassination of the Archduke, the French and German governments and militaries were on high alert. Germany intended to invade France to

¹⁷ Mulligan, *Germany's Blank Cheque to Austria-Hungary*

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Showalter and Royde-Smith.

²⁰ Stevenson

²¹ Niles, *Belgian Neutrality*, 3.

capture its capital in Paris, sparking panic in Belgium, as it had recognized neutrality with its neighboring countries on the brink of war. Belgium had every intention of remaining neutral and would regard any incoming force as an enemy.²² The British also involved themselves in this delicate situation, emphasizing their recognition of the independence and neutrality of the Kingdom of Belgium per the 1839 treaty. On August 2nd, 1914, Germany issued an ultimatum to Belgium: allow German forces to pass through Belgian territory to mobilize against France or risk invasion themselves. It was an impossible situation—accepting the demand and violating Belgium’s obligations as a neutral country meant forgoing international protection, but rejecting it would mean facing Germany, a far more powerful enemy, on the battlefield.²³ The Belgians ultimately refused the German army passage. On August 4th, Germany responded with force and began its invasion of Belgium as part of the Schlieffen Plan, violating the Treaty of London of 1839 and involving the British in a new war.²⁴

Belgian Espionage: The Early Years Of The War

Dieudonné Lambrecht was born in 1882 in a suburb of Liège, a city in Wallonia, the

French-speaking region of Belgium. Together with his brother-in-law, he established a small factory producing precision machinery, and he lived a peaceful and stable life with his wife and daughter.²⁵ This all changed in August 1914 when Germany invaded Belgium. Lambrecht’s first thought was to join the Belgian Army, but as soon as he reached Holland as a refugee, he was approached by a secret service agent named Afchain connected with British General Headquarters (GHQ), who persuaded him to return to Belgium to organize an espionage service.

Lambrecht recruited several former railway employees with the help of his brother-in-law, Oscar Donnay, and two Jesuit priests, Father Dupont and Father Des Onays. Lambrecht recruited several former railway employees and established multiple train-watching posts in southern Belgium. For a year and a half, Lambrecht and his assistants tracked every train passing through Liège, Namur, and Jemelle and reported to British General Headquarters all troop movements between the Eastern and Western fronts that passed through Belgium.²⁶ These reports were more valuable than stolen or captured documents: the Germans might falsify information or change their plans after orders had been written, but troop movements were a

²² Nilesch, 2

²³ De Schaepdrijver, *Belgium*, 386-402.

²⁴ Nilesch, 2.

²⁵ Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 13.

²⁶ Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 15.

surefire sign of an impending attack. Lambrecht and his agents devised a system of accurately measuring the exact size of a troop movement based on the number of railcars passing by each train-watching post, and this information was invaluable to the Allies in anticipating German offensive campaigns throughout 1915. Lambrecht's network of train-watching posts across Belgium transmitted an astonishing amount of information to GHQ. Lambrecht accurately reported on German troop movements from the Serbian Front into Flanders, which indicated troop advancements into France. He also reported on German troop preparations for an offensive on Verdun, which later became known as the Battle of Verdun, with over 750 thousand casualties.²⁷

During the 18 months Lambrecht was transmitting information to British General Headquarters, the Germans, too, were hard at work figuring out all the techniques used by Allied secret services and creating a formidable barrier at the Belgian-Dutch border consisting of electric wire, sentries, patrols, police dogs, and secret police guarding its entire length.²⁸ Communication between Belgium and Holland had become all but impossible; Lambrecht was cut off from the exterior, and his time-sensitive train-watching reports began to pile up, useless. Afchain, Lambrecht's contact at British General

Headquarters, was desperate to restore communication and risked sending a letter directly to Lambrecht, which was somehow intercepted by the German Counter-Espionage Service.²⁹ The Germans, who by this point had some knowledge of Lambrecht's activities, now knew exactly who was responsible. Lambrecht, suddenly aware that the Secret Police were following him, attempted to go home to warn his wife and one of his close associates. It was too late—the Secret Police were waiting for him inside. Lambrecht was arrested, but even torture could not induce him to betray the thirty or so agents working for him. Lambrecht was executed on April 18th, 1916. His heroic example was an inspiration to his friends and compatriots, who swore to avenge him and carry on his work.³⁰

The Revival Of Belgian Espionage

The execution of Lambrecht was advertised to the entirety of Belgium. The Germans plastered posters across the cities and communities as a message to the Belgian people. Walthère Dewé, Lambrecht's cousin, was greatly affected by Lambrecht's death. Dewé was the chief engineer at the Liège Posts and Telegraph administration and lived a peaceful life like many Belgians before the Germans invaded. Distraught by the events of the war and the loss of his cousin, Dewé, with no

²⁷ Bidou, *Battle of Verdun*.

²⁸ Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 17.

²⁹ Ibid, 18.

³⁰ Ibid, 23.

real spy experience, leaped into the war effort to reestablish a Belgian espionage network.³¹

The citizens of Belgium were all too familiar with the brutality of German occupation. They would often witness German Secret Police and counter-espionage imprisoning and executing spies—Dewé and his colleagues were well aware of German techniques and the risk they would be undertaking. But to establish a new spy network, Dewé would have to adapt what was left of Labrecht's service and employ new espionage techniques to have a chance against the occupying force in Belgium.³²

Men and women across Belgium had a strong sense of patriotism, but it was impossible to enlist in military service of the country during the occupation, and attempting to escape to the Netherlands or France to fight back was often deadly. Itching to contribute to the war effort in any way they could, many turned to espionage and spycraft to gather and disseminate information to the Allied powers. One of the men that Dewé recruited was his co-chief, Herman Chauvin, professor of physics at the Institut Montefiore.³³ Dewé, Chauvin, and other remnants of the Labrecht network united on a mission to avenge Labrecht and rebuild the great Belgian spy service on an even larger scale.

Birth Of La Dame Blanche

Though effective, the first iteration of the spy network developed by Labrecht needed to maintain a level of secrecy and sustainability that would allow consistent accumulation of intelligence while keeping agents and the organization safe. Labrecht had two great flaws within his organization. The first was that Labrecht would take on the dangerous tasks of infiltration and information gathering near the German hub. And second, Labrecht made his identity and the identity of all agents known to each other. Both flaws that Dewé and Chauvin identified would be addressed with their new system. Dewé and Chauvin decided that agents and couriers in constant contact with German Secret Police would be isolated to protect the main branch of the organization. The strategy of compartmentalizing knowledge was key to ensuring the long-term success and survival of the network. As a result of the separation of information, Belgium was divided into four separate territories with stations established at Liège, Brussels, Namur, and Charleroi.³⁴ Each territory was overseen by its head agent who would lead and execute its missions, and in the case a particular division was compromised, headquarters would remain isolated from added risk.³⁵ Internally, headquarters set up a counter-espionage branch to conduct surveillance

³¹ Ibid, 25.

³² Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 26.

³³ Ibid, 25.

³⁴ Landau, *The Spy Net*, 25.

³⁵ Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 27.

on the German Secret Police. This branch was led by the Chief of Liège Police, Alexandre Neujean, Father-in-Law to Chauvin.



Map of Belgium in 1915.³⁶

As the organization grew larger by the day, fueled by Belgian civilians with a strong sense of patriotism enlisting into the service of spies, Dewé and Chauvin needed a source of income to fund expensive operations and sustain their agents' lives. A Liège banker, Marcel Nagelmackers, would help front the cost of operations. Thus the new Belgium spy network was created. Initially, they had named it the Michelin Service, inspired by the advertising campaign of Michelin tires before the war, but later called themselves *La Dame Blanche*, after the White Lady of French folklore.³⁷

At its height near the end of the War, *La Dame Blanche* had grown to be larger than anyone outside of the organization could have known:

there were more than 900 members, mostly Belgians, sworn in and enrolled as soldiers.³⁸ Among these, 80 were nuns and priests—the clergy throughout occupied territories were incredibly dedicated to serving their countries. For *La Dame Blanche*, religious leaders were particularly useful for recruiting agents, as they knew who could be trusted, and those who were approached knew they could trust a member of the clergy. Women were also incredibly active in the organization, making up about a third of its members and the majority of its couriers, the most dangerous work in the interior. In fact, in response to Germany's threats to deport the entire male population of Belgium, *La Dame Blanche* was structured so that women members could immediately take over and run the entire espionage service in such a scenario.³⁹

Belgian Spies In Action

With a temporary source of income and a vast network of informants, couriers, and intelligence specialists, *La Dame Blanche* agents were amassing reports on troop movements and transportation routes from Germany to France across the Belgian railway system. Agents had to develop new and innovative methods for smuggling information across the country and across the border to Holland, where they often met with their contact from the War Office that

³⁶ *German Occupations*

³⁷ Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 27-28.

³⁸ Ibid, 175.

³⁹ Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 176.

worked directly with GHQ in England. Methods of hiding information and transporting information included false bottoms to tins, hollow basket handles, adapted packets of chocolate, and silk paper which could be sewn into clothing.⁴⁰ Items were also carved into bars of soap, walking sticks, and within the soles of shoes. Women were able to hide slips in their hair. Intel was often stuffed into vegetables, like beets, and thrown over borders. These agents were clever. Those who were lucky could barter with German soldiers in Flanders by trading letters with secret ink messages in exchange for soup, bread, and butter.⁴¹

The end of the war was in sight for the Belgians and Allied Powers, but many agents started to lack morale. The pay was low, and agents wanted more legitimacy as soldiers by the Allied Powers. The Army Council of England approved La Dame Blanche's request, and the network was militarized in February 1918. This was a mutual agreement between the British and the Belgians. La Dame Blanche agents would be recognized as heroes and soldiers of the war and, with greater resources, would be able to provide more accurate and fuller reports to the War Office. It is important to note that while the La Dame Blanche agents were officially soldiers, they had no direct involvement with battle strategy or Allied troop movements along the Western front.

La Dame Blanche remained a successful intelligence-gathering network throughout the war because of its unique position on the German front.

With the organization's militarization came new funding sources, resources, and structure for its operations. Initially, the network was organized into three divisions at Liège, Brussels, Namur, and Charleroi, each with multiple "letter boxes," i.e. secret locations used to drop off and pass information between couriers. But with the new insights from militarization, La Dame Blanche restructured by forming three battalions at Liège, Namur, and Charleroi. Each battalion was divided into companies which were further subdivided into platoons. Thus, the Namur sector became Battalion II, with companies at Marche, Namur, and Chimay; and the Marche company had its platoons at Marche, Arlon, and Luxembourg; the Namur and Chimay companies were similarly divided up into platoons. Each unit covered the area designated by its name.⁴²

Each battalion contained a special unit in charge of collecting messages from the company letter boxes and transporting them to the battalion letter boxes. Another courier would then transport these documents to the headquarters in Liège into a letter box based on its battalion of origin. These letter boxes and their couriers

⁴⁰ Morton, *Spies of the First World War*, 99.

⁴¹ Ibid, 99.

⁴² Landau, *The Spy Net*, 32.

serving were kept isolated to reduce the risk of investigation and loss of secrecy. Letters that made it to headquarters underwent a strict verification protocol before being sent to headquarters, where the co-chiefs, Dewé and Chauvin, would relay the reports to the War Office in Holland. Letters sent to Holland would be placed in letter boxes on the frontier and would then be picked up by a different team of couriers.⁴³

German Secret Service And Counter-Espionage

German counter-espionage can be divided into two main groups: the Secret Field Police (SFP) and the Central Police Bureau (CPB). Different SFP divisions within the various German armies would operate and serve a fixed area. The total area encompassed most of the posterior of the German front including Flanders. Though working with the German Army Headquarters, they most often reported to the CPB which was based in Brussels. The mentioned territories split up into areas centered around Antwerp, Limbourg, Namur, and Brabant, each with a supervising captain. The headquarters in Brussels had three police posts called Sections A, B, and C. Notice the similarities in the structure of operations between La Dame Blanche and the SFP.⁴⁴

The CPB had four primary modes for cracking down on spy activity in Belgium: surveillance on the frontier, severe policing of the population, surveillance in the interior, and use of “stool-pigeons”, a term for traitors or double agents. In the interior, within the Belgium territory, Secret Police mandated identity cards and short distance travel passes.⁴⁵ SFP had a strong grip on the civilian population, often hindering the transmission of reports by La Dame Blanche by random searches in homes, railway stations, and cafés.

The Germans were aware that La Dame Blanche had adapted their strategies to subverting German counter-espionage tactics. The Belgians observed the German occupation for many years and were familiar with their tactics. The Germans were aware of this fact. The SFP employed Belgian traitors and implanted them into the supply chain of the reports that traveled through the letter boxes. These pigeon-stools would capture frontier couriers and the traitors would replace them as substitute couriers allowing them information and a pathway into the organization.⁴⁶ To the benefit of La Dame Blanche, the compartmentalization of agents’ communication channels help to mitigate the damage caused by the SFP’s tactics.

⁴³ Ibid, 33.

⁴⁴ Landau, *Secrets of the White Lady*, 92.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 93.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 94.

Wartime Technologies

Many technologies were showcased for the first time during the war with the birth of trench warfare. The infantry were equipped with rifles, machine guns, rapid fire artillery, mines, and barbed wire.⁴⁷ Tanks were first used by the British in 1916, along with airpower in the form of the first iterations of fighter jets. The Germans made use of submarines equipped with speed and stealth. German chemists also worked towards chemical warfare, making trench warfare difficult to adapt to.⁴⁸

In addition to the letterbox system that La Dame Blanche pioneered, other information transmission systems were common throughout the war. Newspapers, telegraphs, and radios were critical technologies used by the Axis and Allied powers to coordinate attacks and direct troops. It was common for radio signals or telegraph wires to be tapped, leaking strategies and locations of troops and resources. We strongly recommend that you further familiarize yourself with information technologies that were used during this time period.

⁴⁷ *Technologies of War.*

⁴⁸ *Military Technology in World War I.*

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

The General Headquarters (GHQ) of La Dame Blanche was comprised of two Chiefs and a supreme council of eight member groups: the chaplain, the counter-espionage section, the finance section, the couriers, the secretariat, those responsible for hiding compromised agents, those responsible for the arrangement of compromised agents across the frontier into Holland, and those responsible for studying all new extensions.

Thus, we have arranged our committee to follow the GHQ structure, with delegates from each of the sections. For the purposes of this committee, please assume that all of these people are alive and well, and they are carrying out their duties and responsibilities to full capacity as their background indicates.

Chaplain

Father Claude Dupont (“Commandant Lisseau”)

Father Dupont was a Jesuit priest in Liège and was a key member in establishing connections for La Dame Blanche operations. He was recruited by Dieudonne Lambrecht, the founder of the Allied intelligence network Lambrecht, which later became La Dame Blanche after his cousin, Walthère Dewé, took over. Father Dupont and Father Des Onays both worked closely to recruit their faithful followers as well as former railway employees to help man the train-watching posts that Oscar Donnay managed to set up in Liège, Namur, and Jemelle.

Father Jean Des Onays (“Commandant Belleflamme”)

Father Des Onays was a professor at Saint-Servais, a Jesuit college in Liège at the outbreak of the war. He, like Father Dupont, was recruited by Dieudonne Lambrecht, and his main role was to recruit faithful followers as well as former railway employees to monitor German Railway movements in Liège, Namur, and Jemelle. He was responsible for helping to recruit his brother-in-law, Oscar Donnay. Along with Oscar Donnay, he helped with underground press and smuggling letters from occupied Belgium to Belgian soldiers fighting with the allies.

Counter-Espionage

Marthe Mckenna (“Laura”)

Marthe Mckenna hails from West Flanders and trained as a nurse. She is now placed in a German military hospital in Roulers. She is valued by the Germans for her ability to speak English, German, French and

Flemish. Due to her work in the military hospital, she has been awarded with an Iron Cross by the Germans. In 1915, she was recruited into the Anglo-Belgian intelligence network. She is working both as a nurse and a waitress at her parents' café and is adept at collecting important military intelligence due to her close proximity to the German military personnel. Her information is vital, and she mostly communicates through passing and relaying messages through other agents to send to the GHQ.

Louise Vermeulen (“Moineau”)

Louise Vermeulen hails from Hasselt in the Flemish region of Belgium. She pledged into service due to the aftermath of the Battle of Halen, where her brother was a casualty. Now, based in Ghent, Vermeulen is an important asset in intercepting German communication, and has gained a reputation as a skilled saboteur. She works in a bakery and maintains her cover through that — she communicates with headquarters through a letterbox agent. Her sabotage involves disrupting lines of communication, and she has recently successfully completed an operation to destroy a German ammunition depot through placing explosives in the sewer tunnel system underneath it. She is a key member of the counter-espionage group.

Gabriel Claeys (“Ombre”)

Gabriel Claeys hails from Namur and was recruited into La Dame Blanche. He tends to a dairy farm with his wife, his brother, and his brother's family. He uses his delivery of produce into the market as a cover to pass on information that he is able to collect through a letterbox agent. He is nimble, agile, and can speak Dutch, French, and German — a rare skill for a Walloon. His main responsibility is the interruption of German communication, including destroying telephone lines and intercepting messages. He passes on any vital intel through his letterbox agent. On certain occasions, he is tasked with planting false information from La Dame Blanche and the Allied Forces.

Finance

Gustave Snoeck (“Farfadet”)

Gustave Snoeck is the President of Crédit Anversios, one of the largest Belgian banks. He is 50 years old, and the head of a large and wealthy family. Using his considerable connections, he is able to oversee a letter box and send out financial reports to foreign banking agents in Holland and England. Once a star cyclist for the Belgian team and 1892 winner of La Doyenne, one of the oldest classic cycling races in Europe, Snoeck is now the chairman of the Royal Belgian Cycling League.

Guillaume van den Broeck (“Hibou”)

Guillaume van den Broeck grew up near Ghent and was an accountant at the National Bank of Belgium. Before the start of the war, he began to work at Société Générale. The Belgian monetary system at the start of World War I changed massively, where Société Générale took over the responsibility as issuing house from the National Bank. Van den Broeck continues to work at Société Générale and reports coded financial records to La Dame Blanche. It is essential to remember that the Germans were intent on making occupied Belgium pay for the cost of the war, and such transactions were well recorded in the accounts that Van den Broeck is able to smuggle out.

Courier

Eglantine Lefèvre (“Lutin”)

Eglantine Lefèvre is an expert courier, at only 17 years of age. She hails from Trélon. She is a highly skilled courier who is able to maneuver through any area, even when there is tight security. She has expertise in traversing fields and the woods. Notably, when the Kaiser took up residence at Château de Merode near Trélon, and the roads would become heavily guarded, Eglantine would carry the reports at night through the fields and the woods. She is a key member of La Dame Blanche’s courier section.

Anna Thys (“Baleine”)

Anna Thys hails from Binche and is responsible for delivering messages safely, especially messages of high importance. Her professional occupation as a midwife provides her with a strong cover as it justifies the need for her to travel frequently to various destinations at odd hours of the day. Due to this, she doesn’t fall under suspicion. Anna took on duties as a courier from her husband, as she is able to circumvent the Secret Police while carrying deadly spy reports, skillfully wrapped on the whalebones of her corset.

Jean Leclerq (“Nuage”)

Jean Leclerq is a cousin of the recently deceased Dieudonne Lambrecht. He is based in Liège and was recruited early on into the organization by his cousin. When he was recruited into the organization, he used his cigar store in Liège as a letter box. While he still keeps his cigar store as a letter box, using his wife’s help to run it, he also serves as a courier to transfer these letters to the passage at the frontier. His cigar store in Liège helps to aid in communications between key players.

Marc Lenaerts (“Martinet”)

Marc Lenaerts has one of the more dangerous jobs in the organization: he is a special courier. He carries the reports from La Dame Blanche’s secretariat to the frontier letterbox and ensures their receipt. Each battalion

sends in reports to the secretariat after the battalion commander verifies the reports. The secretariat then types up all the reports to ensure that the bulk is reduced as well as remove the possibility of implication by handwriting. Lenaerts job is to deposit the compiled reports at the frontier letterbox. While the War Office service would carry the reports from this frontier letterbox to Holland, Lenaerts' job needs to be carried out with vigilance, due to the bulk and importance of the coded reports verified from every battalion.

Secretariat

Madame Thys Goessels (“Monique”)

Madame Goessels is in charge of the secretariat division in Wandre, near Liège. Madame Goessels oversees a villa and has been involved in patriotic war efforts since the start of the war. She is 35 years old, and her cover is renting rooms of the villa to tenants, who are other agents of the organization. While there has been attention from the Secret Police, she is well adept at handling them.

Hiding Agents

Sister Marie-Mélanie (“Papillon”)

Sister Marie-Mélanie, née Rose Lebrun, is a point contact at Congrégation Nancéienne de la Doctrine Chrétienne, at Chimay. This Congrégation Nancéienne is a French religious order which had been expelled from France. This bolstered the intense patriotism towards Belgium, as they are exiles. They help to provide a haven for refugee compatriots or those deported by Germans. A German military hospital was installed by force on the convent grounds, which makes it difficult to hide agents and allies. However, Sister Marie-Mélanie is adept at providing a temporary residence under the Church while contacting her large network of known safehouses to secure more permanent lodging. She reports to the Chimay company on the movement of these agents.

Sister Marie-Caroline (“Luciole”)

Sister Marie-Caroline, née Marijke Naessens, is a Sister at Congrégation Nancéienne de la Doctrine Chrétienne, at Chimay. Originally from a Flemish family in Brussels, she grew up speaking Dutch and French natively. Sister Marie-Caroline works closely with Sister Marie-Mélanie, but Sister Marie-Caroline is stationed at the German military hospital. Through her position tending to the injured at the military hospital, she has learned to speak German, and is able to pick up on key intelligence. She reports to the Chimay company on the information she collects.

Gaston Lafontaine (“Fourmilière”)

Gaston Lafontaine is a farmer at Bourlers, near Chimay. He and his wife were known to have hidden many French soldiers, notably in the retreat in 1914. Despite repeated visits from the German Secret Police, they harbored allies in their loft while communicating with the nuns of Congrégation Nancéienne de la Doctrine Chrétienne, at Chimay. This was the early stage of the Chimay company, the last of the nine La Dame Blanche companies to be formed. Through the course of the war, the Lafontaines have been crucial at providing refuge for members of La Dame Blanche and the Allies.

Escape Of Compromised Agents:

Charles Willekens (“Chevalet”)

Charles Willekens hails from Antwerp. He is a frontier guide and was recruited into La Dame Blanche due to his skills with traversing terrain. Willekens is well known within the organization as one of the best *passeurs*: he is very successful with crossing the frontier between Belgium and the Netherlands. His main responsibility is to help transport compromised agents, or agents on a mission, across the frontier. He is currently stationed to guide agents to Eindhoven. As a passeur, he is also highly valued for smuggling items and information.

New Extensions

Oscar Donnay (“Phare”)

Oscar Donnay is based in Liège and is the brother-in-law of Father Des Onays. He is one of the first few members to be recruited into La Dame Blanche. Donnay has played a huge role in setting up train-watching posts in Liège, Namur and Jemelle. Donnay, along with help from Father Des Onays and Father Dupont, reports on the information from these train-watching posts. He is also involved with the underground press and smuggling letters to Belgian soldiers. Donnay is actively expanding his train-watching posts as well as safely recruiting new members to the organization.

Jules Verhoven (“Perceuse”)

Jules Verhoven hails from Mons and was a part of the expansion section of La Dame Blanche, where he was responsible for the recruitment of new agents. In late 1917, he was tasked by the organization to assemble a group of trusted and capable agents to reclaim an old base of operations in Valenciennes, France. By 1918, Verhoven had successfully reestablished a base in Valenciennes, an important extension to La Dame Blanche, and recovered much of the old intelligence left behind. Verhoven and the team that he leads is now able to collect train-watching information of high importance, especially regarding the movement of German troops across the border between France and Belgium.

Anatole Gobeaux (“Carillon”)

Anatole Gobeaux is the Captain of the Chimay company. Gobeaux was raised in the old family of Sambre-et-Meuse and thus is very honor-bound and patriotic. Gobeaux is a strong man who leads by example. He rose through the ranks of La Dame Blanche through working as a courier and a counter-espionage agent, using his wit and courage to guide him out of many dangerous situations. He is well-liked by his men and well-known by the entire organization.

Lakshmi Michalewska (“Polonais”)

Born to Polish parents in Kerala, India, Michalewska speaks Polish, English, and Malayalam, and learned French in adulthood. Given her fluency in multiple languages, she is a crucial addition to every team she joins and quickly climbed up the ranks of La Dame Blanche given her ability to translate materials, communicate with foreign soldiers, and talk her way out of any situation. She is extremely well-liked, and has picked up plenty of friends along the way—especially bakers, as she often frequents bakeries to smuggle out foreign communications to the Allies.

Philippe Janssen (“Diadème”)

Philippe Janssen, originally from Sint-Niklaas, is the Captain of the Charleroi company. Janssen was recruited from the Belgian Army, where he fought in the Battle of Charleroi in 1914. He is well-respected for his intelligence and strategy and proves himself capable of managing the inflow of information, easily linking reports to gauge the overall picture. He is praised as a strategic visionary, and his battle experience has hardened him into an effective leader.

Scouting/Monitoring/Expansion

Lucas Crésillon (“Loupe”)

Lucas Crésillon is an employee at a sawmill next to a German engineer park at Glageon (between Trélon and Fourmies). This engineer park produced ladders to go over barbed-wires, mines, trench materials and more, and constantly sent divisions to fetch supplies. Crésillon was in charge of keeping watch on this key military information and became an important member of the Hirson Platoon. This platoon, using the information collected on the engineering park as a vital piece, shared the sure indication that it was the sector opposite this area that the Germans were going to launch the March offensive.

Felix Latouche (“Dominique”)

Felix Latouche was formerly a railway employee of the Compagnie du Nord. In the early stages of the occupation, the Germans forced him to continue working at his railway post while threatening to harm or deport his family if he refused to do so. Now, Latouche is based in Fourmies, and he is tasked with overseeing a train-watching post on the Hirson-Mézières line, reporting on the movement of German troop trains along this line. His cottage is situated right on the railway lines, so he takes shifts with his wife and two younger sisters to collect complete information.

Antoine Chastain (“Engrenage”)

Antoine Chastain is the brother-in-law of the recently deceased Dieudonne Lambrecht. He is an engineer and established a small factory in Liège, which produces high-grade precision machinery. Chastain had helped Lambrecht with establishing connections for the Allied intelligence network Lambrecht, which later became La Dame Blanche after Lambrecht’s cousin, Walthère Dewé, took over after his demise. As such, Chastain continues to help with maintaining connections, as well as providing input on advancements in the German engineer parks.

Claude Bihet (“Pierre”)

Claude Bihet is a Belgian engineer hailing from Charleroi. A proud patriot, Bihet wants to join the Belgian Army. However, he was instead recruited into La Dame Blanche to be an emissary. He is well-educated, well-spoken and extremely diplomatic. He is responsible for collecting information on many scouting missions in occupied parts of Belgium, with a cover as a businessman.

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