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A Cry of Distress and a Plea for Justice.

Too late for notice in our last issue there came to us from the German Evangelical Mission Aid Society of Berlin-Steglitz the English edition of an address which Dr. Theol. Karl Axenfeld, Director of Missions, delivered before the annual convention of the Mission Aid Society in 1919. Though three valuable months have elapsed since the receipt of this address, the readers, we doubt not, will agree with us that its intrinsic value, its defense of eternal and essential rights, is such that even at this somewhat belated date the message of the speaker should be reiterated here. It is a simple plea for fundamental justice, and is well founded, particularly if one studies Article 438 of the Peace Treaty. We hold no brief for the Mission Aid Society, whose confessional basis is not fully known to us, nor do we subscribe to every sentiment expressed in the address. What the speaker, however, is battling for is an inalienable right of the Church of Jesus Christ, common and dear to every member of the Church.

The title of Dr. Axenfeld's address is, "Germany's Battle for the Freedom of the Christian Missions." The author says:—

The imminent conclusions of peace will not only bring about a great transformation in the political and economic life of the nations, but intellectual values, as well as the spiritual and the *religious*, are at hazard. There is a great danger that these most precious possessions of mankind will not be sufficiently regarded in the battle for wealth and power.

The chief point at issue, however, cannot be confined to the acquisition of additional territory by certain nations, nor to the reinforcement of

their power, nor to the wresting of commercial advantages from other nations. If these things cannot be gained without enslaving other peoples, forcing them into unendurable situations and filling them with thoughts of hatred, bitterness, and revenge, then they are far too dearly bought. So many unspeakable things have occurred in this war on both sides — things which cry to Heaven, and which were unworthy of "Christian nations" — that it would prove a crime of crimes if the conclusion of peace were to diminish, weaken, or fetter those forces which are alone capable of purifying and improving, of saving and reconciling.

I trust that I may be permitted in the following lines to make plain the perils which threaten the religious life of Germany, the native Christian congregations which have been built up during two centuries of German missionary work, and the future reconciliation of the nations, by the projected exclusion of German missions. I beseech the Christians of all nations, no matter what their attitude may have been during the war or in the question of the guilt for the war, to ponder in this last hour what they can do and must do in order to prevent a calamity which can never again be made good.

Ever since the beginning of the war the Entente Powers have proclaimed to the world that they were battling for freedom and progress, for the rights of the weak and the oppressed, for a more just, a nobler and a happier shaping of the conditions to which nations as well as individuals are subject. Germany, on the other hand, they declared, was desirous of establishing by the brute force of arms an autocratic mastery over the world, and oppressing and enslaving the life of humanity. The outcome of the war has placed the Entente Powers in a position to realize their war-goals to the fullest extent. The world has already had some experience of what this means and is well able to judge whether these lofty words were inspired by truth and whether the life of humanity has become freer, more moral, or more wholesome under the order which has now been imposed upon it.

We Germans do not seem to understand the art of conveying to other peoples our political needs and desires, nor even of clothing the justifiable necessities of our own existence in the false and glittering robes of unselfishness and concern for others.

Thus we assured the world — and it was nothing but the simple truth, a truth which will yet emerge out of all the obfuscation and the distortion to which it has been subjected — that we were fighting for the defense of our lives. But the nations would not believe us. It was the will of our enemies that they should *not be permitted to believe us* — the pretext of our ruthlessness was too valuable a weapon in the hands of these enemies.

And yet, that the very Germany which has been decried as lawless, brutal, and reactionary pursued a policy not only before the war, but during her very struggle for life, which was progressive, liberal, and humane, may perhaps be more clearly and convincingly demonstrated in her colonization activities than in any other field.

It was not Germany who militarized her colonies and long ago prepared her natives for a war to be waged in Europe. Germany had maintained only a slight armed force in her protectorates as a protection against native revolts, and had not even developed her natural means of defending her frontiers in case of being involved in a European war. Germany based her faith upon the Congo Acts which were meant to neutralize Central Africa in such an event, and she endeavored to ensure the validity of these Acts at the outbreak of the war. It was not Germany who broke them, and therefore upon her head falls no responsibility for the fact that the colored races, the whole of heathen humanity, without distinction of religion or degree of civilization, were plunged into the misery and horror of the war. Germany kept the Congo Acts, not because this was to her advantage, but from conviction. It would have been greatly to her advantage had she followed the example of the French, militarized her colonies beforehand, and then, in defiance of the Congo Acts, proceeded to the attack. But Germany held as inviolate the unwritten law by operation of which the white race maintained its position over the colored races by virtue of its own self-esteem and the fundamental premiss of its superiority. Even here the principal lines of German colonial policy may be plainly discerned from the circumstance that the Germans had ceased to regard the protectorates and their inhabitants merely as means to an end — to further the interests or the power of the colonizing race, but had, on the contrary, regarded their civilizing mission in the colonies seriously, particularly their task among the natives.

As a missionary, I am entitled to belief when I say that the welfare of the natives is for me the first consideration. The missionary does not go forth into the wilds for his own benefit, but for the good of the strange peoples to whom he knows that God has sent him. It is for this reason that he feels the wrong and injury done to these stranger peoples as if they had been suffered by himself. All colonization has had a preliminary period in which heroism and brutality, far-sightedness and incompetence were found active side by side in the most contradictory fashion, and endangering the lives and welfare of the native population. Ever since the beginning of the German colonial era, the German missions have kept up a fearless and determined battle on behalf of the natives against everything that came to their notice in the shape of excesses, errors of policy, "superman" tactics, and oppression of every kind. They boldly criticised the policy pursued in connection with the natives of German Southwest Africa, for example, and the manner in which the Herero campaign was waged, and did not permit themselves to be intimidated by the fact that the then Chancellor attempted in the Reichstag to deny them the right to speak as the advocates of the natives. *Immediately after this they had the satisfaction of seeing German colonial policy pursue a new course under Dernburg as Secretary of State, and regard the preservation, education, and betterment of the natives as the preeminent task confronting colonial activity.*

Since then the course pursued by German colonial policy has been resolutely liberal and progressive. Abuses and false moves, to be sure, were not absent. But has there ever been a colony wholly free from these? Not only self-discipline, but also self-denial and experience are necessary in order for the white man to be perfectly just to the black. The sudden invasion of a superior alien civilization has at all times endangered the physical and moral health of the inferior race. This is particularly noticeable in modern colonization, because the gulf which yawns between white and black is so enormous. Before the war, however, the experts of all nations, including the English and Americans, invariably came to this conclusion: where benevolent, humane treatment of the natives was concerned, Germany and England stood in the forefront of all other colonizing nations in Africa; after them came France and Italy, then Portugal and last of all, Belgium. If Germany is now to be declared unworthy to possess colonies on the score of her treatment of the natives, this can only be regarded as an evidence of how frightful have been the inroads made by the war upon the sense of realities and love of truth.

England possessed over us the advantage of a century of experience, but the younger sister had no need to be ashamed before her elder. Germany had begun to take the lead precisely in the question of caring for the natives. In British colonies, wherever the interests of white and black came in conflict, the interests of the European were favored. In German protectorates, the point of view held good during the last decade that the native, as the weaker party, possessed a special right to the protection and fatherly help of the governing bodies. Whilst a land law was in course of preparation in the South African Union designed ruthlessly to sunder the blacks from the lands of their fathers, so that the natives of Natal, after they had appealed in vain to all possible authorities, finally to the King himself, broke into the moving complaint: "No hearts more for us, no sympathy now for the weak, the poor, the helpless, inarticulate down-trodden in a British land. Only God now left to help us and protect us!"¹⁾ — during this very period the administration of German East Africa was preserving the lands of the natives by means of suitable crownland declarations. This was done to such an extent that in some districts it became difficult for white settlers and even for missions to obtain the requisite land.

Jurisdiction in German East Africa, thanks to the use of the native tongue in the courts and the growing endeavors to establish the rights of custom of the natives, was actuated by a greater spirit of justice towards the native than was the case in the adjoining British colonies. The sanitary legislation of the German administration was also far superior to that which was to be found in other colonial governments. Shortly before the war, I traveled for an entire year through East Africa. In the course of this journey I heard many natives speak of the difference between

1) Letter of the Rev. John Dube to the white population of Natal, as quoted in the *Ilanga Lase Natal*, Olwesihlanu, Aug. 22, 1913. Also *Berliner Missionsberichte*, 1918, p. 14f.

then and now. Especially the older natives, the men who still remembered the days of the slave-hunts and the slave-trade, the despotic rule of the chieftains and the tribal feuds, the battle of all against all and the general insecurity of life, would often praise in blunt and childlike speech — all the more impressive for that — the good which had come to them through their great and noble ruler.²⁾

The new era also had its dangers and its abuses, to be sure. But seen as a whole, the welfare of the natives was progressing constantly along ascendant lines, and there would have been a still wider, quicker, and greater development had the colonies been spared the war, as was Germany's wish. No! it is not an unselfish solicitude for the lives of the natives which these enemies profess to find threatened by Germany, which keeps our enemies from restoring to us our colonies, but simply their desire to add these fine territories, brought to such a stage of promising development, to their own already immeasurable colonial possessions. They also profess to be anxious lest Germany follow their own example after the war and use her colonies in order to create a black army, and the harbors of her colonies to menace England's mastery of the seas.

It is precisely the gratitude and the faithfulness of the German natives — the strongest proofs of the nature of the treatment which they have received at German hands — which has caused confusion in the ranks of our enemies. Surely, in such a matter the truth must be evident to all. Is there no one in all the wide world who is willing to strike a blow for the truth, no one who can make clear to President Wilson, who has been so completely and obviously misled and misinformed, the real conditions in the African colonies of Germany? Since it is unfortunately true that even British missionary circles have ventured to support these false accusations against the German colonial policy, it behooves us who know the truth, to defend not only this, but the honor of the German name and to protest before all mankind with all the clearness and persistence of which we are capable, that:

Were Germany really to lose her colonies, this would not be due to any compassion for the fate of the natives, but wholly and solely to the fear inspired by a guilty conscience and to the insatiable greed of our enemies who would rob the German people of the lands their industry, enterprise, resources, and devotion have built up.

I am no politician. Nor do I speak in the name of any state authority. As a servant of the Church of Christ, as a member of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, I cannot but compare the position of Christian missions at that time with the position which they occupy to-day. At that time the non-Christian world was open to all of us, and all of us were called to the common task and responded with joyful hearts. How different is this world to-day! I cannot refrain from bringing before the eyes of those whose hearts like mine bleed because of these things, and

²⁾ See *Koloniale Rundschau*, Berlin, 1913, p. 670 ff.

yet who, like myself, must remain true to that highest goal of human service, the fulfilment of Christ's command to His disciples — the dangers which menace not only the German missions, but *all* missions through the ruthless abuse of power by various states.

Before the war the Christian missions, without distinction of creed or nationality, enjoyed a great degree of confidence and the freedom of action vouchsafed them by the colonial governments. In the toleration and grateful recognition of mission work Germany, England, and Holland occupied first place, whilst France and, to a still greater degree, Russia, showed far less magnanimity.

The liberal and generous-hearted character of the German colonial administration was clearly expressed in its attitude towards the Christian missions, and without the slightest differences being made on the score of nationality. The German authorities, as a matter of principle, forebore from making any difficulties whatsoever for the missions and were not chary of expressing their approbation. The missions in German colonial territory are among those which have developed themselves most quickly and most favorably in the entire field of foreign missions. During my visit to Africa, British missionaries told me, of their own accord, that it was easy to carry on missionary work in German colonies, in some respects it was easier there than in adjoining British East Africa. The liberal-mindedness of the German administration, for example, went so far that no objection was made to the University Mission having the native teachers for its schools in German East Africa trained year after year at Zanzibar, that is to say, in British territory and amid surroundings which were far from being friendly to Germany.

Even during the war Germany sought to pursue a liberal and magnanimous policy in regard to the missions. In the autumn of 1914, when the wave of popular excitement against England was running high in Germany, I called upon the Secretary of State for the German Colonial Office with the request that the inoffensive foreign missionaries in German colonies remain unmolested and their activities undisturbed. I received his cordial assent, and was assured that a corresponding order would be transmitted to German East Africa. This order, however, was never received by the administration of German East Africa. And yet, what greater proof of the soundness of the broad, humane, and liberal principles of German colonial policy could there be than the fact that the administration in this colony pursued the same course upon its own initiative! The German administration resolved to remain faithful to its principle of leaving the foreign missionaries in complete freedom and in the unhindered pursuit of their work, in so far as there were no urgent military reasons or measures on the part of the enemy which made a different course necessary. The missionaries of enemy nations, with the exception of a few who lived close to the frontier and the Usambara Railway (which was of the utmost importance in a military sense) were permitted to remain at their stations and at their work.

Whilst these British missionaries in German East Africa — threatened as this was on all sides by the enemy — were left unmolested upon their stations, the German missionaries in the immense empire of India in which there were but some 1,200 Germans, including the families of missionaries, as against 315 million inhabitants, had already long been penned behind the barbed wire of the prison-camps.³⁾ It was only after the forcible measures taken by the British government against the German missionaries had become known and the military authorities had repeatedly issued warnings as to the peculiar significance of the Central Railway in the neighborhood of which there were several British mission-stations, that the government finally determined to issue an order to consolidate all British missions at a single British station. The further measures undertaken were dictated only by the ever-increasing difficulties of the military situation. The fact that British missionaries were thereby occasionally brought into very unpleasant situations, and forced to endure all the privations of a blockaded land, that some of them were unjustly accused of espionage, and that subordinates did not always act properly towards them has been made the subject of violent reproaches against the Germans. Nevertheless, quite apart from the fact that these things were as nothing compared to the treatment suffered by the German missionaries in British hands and above all by the unfortunate men in the hands of the French in Dahomey, the government of German East Africa did its utmost, so far as conditions permitted, to adopt only the mildest measures.

Subsequent events have proved all too clearly that the German government was simply forced to intervene. *Whilst as yet not a single instance has been proved of even one of the more than 500 German missionaries in the British colonial empire, or a single member of their congregations, numbering some 600,000 souls, having seriously violated their obligations to the authority of the land during the war, the stations of the "White Fathers" in German East Africa which were under the control of French and Alsatian missionaries, were converted into veritable "Information Bureaus" for the enemy. The head of the University Mission already mentioned, Bishop Weston of Zanzibar, wholly unscrupulous and surpassed by no one in his capacity for calumny, has assumed the leadership of the agitation against the return of the German colonies, and has not even hesitated, despite his episcopal dignity, to organize (in flagrant violation of international law) the native East African subjects of Germany, the Christians of his mission (whom he persists in calling "ex-German subjects"), into "Coast Carrier Corps" and leading them as auxiliary war-workers against Germany, their sovereign country.*⁴⁾ Even

3) Compare the British policy concerning missions and missionaries in India during the war, as set forth in detail in *Oepke, Ahmednagar und Golconda*, Doerfling and Franke, Leipzig, 1918.

4) Compare Report of the second session of the German Evangelical Mission Aid Society, 1916, p. 26; also that of the fourth session, 1918, pp. 23, 24; also Solf, *The Missions in the German Protectorate*, Guetersloh, 1918, C. Bertelsmann, pp. 4, 29.

the English Church Mission, which has usually devoted itself so conscientiously to purely religious ends, has not hesitated to publish the reports of its native teachers without a single word of apology, — reports in which these men recount how they ran over to the enemy and betrayed the German positions.⁵⁾

These events were, in part, already known in Germany when Dr. Solf, the German Colonial Secretary, made his declaration respecting the *supranationality of missions* at the sessions of the German Evangelical Mission Aid Society. The war situation at that time justified Germany in anticipating a victory, as a result of which a more just and equitable division of the African colonial possessions, based upon the actual powers for colonization of the nations, might have taken place. In such an event, flourishing and valuable fields of French and British missionary endeavor might have come into German hands. For since the sacred principle of the supranationality of the missions had been ruthlessly violated, it would have been natural that the German Government should have made some kind of reprisals for the lack of probity on the part of foreign missions in German East Africa and for the aggravated acts of violence which had in the mean time been perpetrated against the German missions in the British colonies by the expulsion of all foreign missions. The German Government, nevertheless, *harbored no such intentions*, but established its point of view *in advance* through Dr. Solf's declaration, which was afterwards expressly confirmed by the Chancellor, to the effect that Christian missions without regard to nationality or confession were to be free to participate in missionary work, in so far as the missionaries remained politically unobjectionable, that is, confined themselves to their religious-ethical tasks, and maintained the loyalty of the natives to their authorities in accordance with the laws of the land. At the same time the German Government announced its intention of using its influence at the conclusion of peace towards bringing about the acceptance of the same principle by the other colonial nations, and to bring about a complete abolition of all the restrictions which had been imposed upon missions during the war, so that they might pursue their work, so rich in blessings, unhindered as of old, and create a bond of peace and reconciliation among the antagonized peoples.

Dr. Solf took these guiding lines, not from the doctrines of statecraft, but from an insight into the essence of the Christian mission. As a service of that kingdom which is not of this world, and which is established in the hearts of men, the mission must remain free from the claims and

5) See *The Black Slaves of Prussia*, an Open Letter Addressed to General Smuts by Frank Weston, D. D. Bishop of Zanzibar, London, 1918; also *Deutsche Kolonisatoren in Afrika*, Zuerich, Institut Orell-Fuessli, 1918 (or its English version); also *Die deutsche Kolonialpolitik vor dem Gerichtshof der Welt*, a Reply by German Colonial authorities and missionaries, Basel, Ernst Finckh, 1918; also *The Treatment of Native and Other Populations in the Colonial Possessions of Germany and England*, an Answer to the English Blue Book. Hans Robert Engelmann, Berlin W. 15.

the quarrels of the temporal powers. Its divine task in its differentiation from all human dispensations, had hitherto been the more comprehensible to all non-Christian peoples because of the obvious fact that in nearly all missionary lands, the preachers of the Gospel were of various nationalities, but were united in a fraternal community as messengers in this service of the same Heavenly King. If the war is to bring about the result that the Christian missions are to be forced permanently into national limitations, in such a manner as to permit only the nationals of the particular colonial power to carry out their duties, then their blessed work would be diminished, their sincerity menaced, and a new occasion furnished for an enduring bitterness among the missionizing peoples. On the other hand a unanimous resumption of their work on the part of the missionaries, without distinction of nationality, would essentially contribute to rehabilitate the shaken prestige of the colonial peoples and to keep the further development of the natives within wholesome bounds.

Had Germany been granted victory, the progress of humanity in this field would have been assured, and all nations without distinction would have been able to pursue the path of free participation. *Germany to-day still champions the cause of the free and upright Christian mission. I am anxious to make it clear beyond all manner of doubt, at home and abroad, that the German Government has publicly confirmed this liberal and great-hearted colonial policy, not merely after the Revolution, and assuredly not because of any concern for its own colonies and missionaries fields, but during a time when it was obliged to conclude that the realization of such ideals would necessitate sacrifices and self-renunciation and occasion bitter reproaches in certain circles of its own population.*

British colonial policy before the war was likewise broad and liberal in many respects, especially with regard to missions. The missions of all countries were enabled to work in blessed and contented labor throughout the British Empire, and this vast colonial power derived abundant benefit therefrom. The effectiveness of the missions everywhere furthered the prosperity of the land and the morals of the populace, and facilitated in a great degree England's rule over her enormous possessions. The share borne in this by the German missions was particularly noticeable in India, South Africa, and on the Gold Coast. The German missions received the grateful recognition of the various governments for their unassuming, sterling, sober, and heartfelt work. A century of mutual confidence had established the most cordial relations. Even beyond the limits of her own empire, England vigorously and persistently championed the rights of missions to an unhindered preaching of the Gospel. England, Holland, Germany, and America, in contradistinction to France and Russia, were the leaders in this field of human advancement and liberal evolution.

But precisely as Britain has reshaped her home life in a reactionary sense during the war and has sacrificed many of her best traditions, so has her mission policy changed more and more and assumed the character of reaction and autocratic despotism. After a century of the most devoted

service, the German missions, in cases in which military considerations did not necessitate restrictions, had the right to expect considerate treatment, if not by France, Japan, and China, then surely by England. But the German missions were forced to undergo many and terrible disillusionings. Nowhere, with the exception of Dahomey, were the German missionaries treated more callously, nowhere were their fields of activity trodden more brutally under foot than where they were at the mercy of British might. And the rigor of these persecutions increased with the duration of the war. A system of expulsions followed up the system of internments. When German East Africa was overrun, a system of deportation was adopted. *The members of the missions, men, women, and children, Catholics as well as Protestants, were all dragged from their stations and robbed of their possessions, though they had nothing whatever to do with the military operations, and there could have been no political necessity for such a deed. The men were thereupon torn from their families and prevented for years from writing to them or to their congregations, who were forbidden to hold services or carry on instruction. These unfortunate men were kept in the most unhealthful climates, with insufficient food for many months and then dragged off to Egypt. They are still there, in so far as they have not perished as a result of this treatment, whilst their families, likewise penned behind barbed wire, are held back in South Africa. It will be three years this summer [1919], since this deportation began!*

Were these measures due only to war-necessities, were they exaggerated war-measures, induced by nervousness, we should be forced to reconcile ourselves to them, even though they were almost unbearable. And the same would apply if these abuses could be attributed only to single individuals. But both assumptions would explain only a moiety of the things that happened. *The increased rigorousness of these measures came from the home government.* Frequently the harshness and injustice of these orders was such that they became painful to the officers who were forced to execute them.

For all that, the servants of the King who bore the crown of thorns, must learn to overcome and forgive the most grievous injury. But unfortunately we have to do not only with happenings of the past. That which we have experienced and suffered up to the present, was but a prologue, the real drama still lies before us. According to authentic reports and certain signs the men at present in power in England *cherish the intention of excluding the German missions from their colonies and the German colonies even after the war.*

We have reason to fear that the same procedure will be applied to the Near East; and recently China, under persistent English coercion and according to the English example, has gone so far as to send home German missionaries and confiscate German property. Finally it has also come to our ears that Japan has confiscated all German mission property in Tsingtau and granted its use only until the conclusion of peace. *If these intentions attain their full and permanent realization, then German Chris-*

tendom will lose nearly all its mission-fields and retain almost none save those in the Dutch colonies.

Into whose hands the congregations which we have built up (and which have demonstrated their faithfulness and attachment in so touching a manner all through the distress and sorrow of the war) are to be given, is something concerning which neither we nor these congregations are asked. Our German mission societies are to be permitted to give their entire property in the mission-fields to British societies—otherwise it will be forcibly taken from us by the Government without the slightest compensation!

Attempts, of course, are made to comfort us with the hope that this exclusion will not be permanent—that we may be admitted again in ten years—perhaps even in five!

This solace is a poor one, quite apart from the fact that the expropriation of our property does not look like a provisional measure.

But even an exclusion for an indefinite number of years has the effect of a *permanent* exclusion—and the Christians of other countries should not delude themselves as to this. Throughout all the affliction and suffering, mental and physical, inflicted upon them by the war, the German missionaries have clung with every fiber of their hearts to the hope that the conclusion of peace would permit them to take up their beloved work once more. Several of them have just refused the opportunity of returning home and seeing their loved ones again and have reconciled themselves to imprisonment and to loneliness only to remain nearer to their fields of labor, and if possible to hasten at once to their orphaned congregations at the end of the war. This added exclusion will be the heaviest blow which could fall upon these brave and sorely tried men. What are they to do during these 10 long years? Can the home church, itself in a position of great difficulty, offer them—and there are hundreds of them—bread and service? How many of them, after these ten years, will be still young enough, have enough energy or a sufficient command of the native tongue to be able to take up their former duties? And even if they did take up their old work and finally returned to their old congregations,—like convicts who have been released from a long term of prison,—how should they, these dishonored ones, ever recover their authority? And what, in the meantime, is to become of the German missionary societies, and what of their seminaries? Can one expect us to train young men and women for the missionary service, merely upon the vague possibility of sending them out—after the lapse of a decade?

No, the Christians of other lands, they who so casually advise us to submit silently to this ten years' exclusion and obediently surrender our property, because this would make "a good impression" upon the British government—they do not know what they really demand of us!

The heathen mission has long been the darling of the German Evangelical Church. The blow which is leveled at the head of this child also strikes the heart of the mother.

The Catholic Christendom of Germany has, for more than the span of a human life, conducted its heathen mission with wonderful fervor, especially during the last decades. No other Catholic country can show a similar upward development of its missionary work. If the German missionaries, despite their exemplary behavior under the most difficult circumstances, are now to be excluded from their fields of work, no German Christian will ever forget or reconcile himself to this. Let no mistake be made: *The fulfilment of the British mission policy would also mean the fulfilment of the rupture of Christianity.* And if the perpetration of this unheard-of outrage also be permitted, without a loud and indignant cry of protest *from the Christians of other lands, how shall the German Christian ever be persuaded of the truth and the value of international fraternity?*

Things would never have come to this pass if the British Christians, supported by America and the other countries, had warned their governments in time and with all due emphasis, against pursuing such a course. A unanimous public expression of opinion in defense—not of German interests—but of the interests of the non-temporal character of the Christian missions, would surely not have been in vain. Years ago we declared to the Christians of foreign countries: the later one begins to build the dam, the more unlikely it is that it will be erected before the flood comes breaking in. And now that even British missions themselves begin to feel the heavy hand of their government—we can feel no surprise—we have foreseen and foretold this for years. *It is not only the further co-operation of the German missions which is in peril—but the freedom of Christian missions as a whole.*⁶⁾

The exclusion of the German missions seems to have some connection with the growing anxiety with which the British government regards its colonial empire. The natives have been lured and coerced into participation in the war—vast expectations have been awakened in them—without any intention of gratifying them. The catch-word of “the right of self-determination of the peoples” was meant to serve for the dismemberment of the enemy empires, but was to find no application to one’s own. And now the call has been sounded for a retreat in colonial policy.

Precisely because the dangerous solution of “freedom for the oppressed peoples” has been promulgated on account of its useful effect upon the public opinion of the world, the reins of power have been drawn tighter than ever. The missions are to be placed under close supervision in order that no movements for independence may attain a foothold.

The difficulty of laying the evil spirits which have been evoked may indeed be great. But is the British government no longer aware that of all the native Christian congregations, those of the German missions were the most trustworthy, because the German missionaries (as once more publicly confirmed by a recent letter of the Secretary of the London Mis-

6) See *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift*, 1916, p. 337 f. 534 f.

sionary Society, Mr. Frank Lenwood 7)) were more seriously concerned in teaching obedience to the prevailing authorities than were the Anglo-Saxon? If the government were to investigate the teachings of certain Anglo-Saxon missionaries, who preach "a democratic gospel," and educate the natives according to modern theories for which they are not yet ripe, this would be comprehensible. But no vested authority has anything to fear from the German missionaries. The German missions have always been pillars of reliability in the life of the natives. If these be deprived of the missionaries by whom they permitted themselves to be willingly led, and if these leaders be replaced by men insufficient in number and lacking in experience, then indeed another spirit may soon take root. A government which fears difficulties can make no mistake in ensuring for itself the influence of men to whose safe and wise guidance the natives have accustomed themselves.

This projected boycott of German missions is in reality only part — and the most ungrateful and insulting part — of the world-boycott of all German activity after the war. For our enemies reckon that this boycott would remain incomplete and lacking in full effectiveness if they did not likewise exclude the German missions.

For this very reason the German government must continue its battle for the freedom of the Christian missions in the peace negotiations, and must insist firmly upon the Wilsonian principles which are to establish a "sure and an upright peace," and clear away the barriers which the war has erected between the nations. The removal of the embargo against the German missions must be one of the first steps to this end. In that Germany, however, persists in her battle for the freedom of the Christian missions, she does not alone protest her own, well-acquired rights, but serves humanity in its greatest need — for she serves in this the promulgation of the Gospel throughout the world.

No claim is made that the German missions must under all circumstances continue to work in all the mission-fields in which they were active before the war. It is possible that our weakened Fatherland must also impose restrictions upon itself in this respect. Our German missions have always shown due understanding for certain rules and precautions entailed by the attitude of the natives of a country.

But we demand, first of all, that our rights and our good name be restored to us — that is to say, that our fields of work be restored to us as a matter of principle.

Then governments and missions, former missionaries and their present representatives may discuss in a dignified and objective manner, how in God's name the future is to be shaped. We have no desire to hold back the car of progress in a spirit of stubbornness. But we do not wish to look on with fettered hands and see the work in which God has blessed our fathers and ourselves go to ruin. The British missions do not possess the mission-

7) See *The Challenge*, London, May 10, 1918.

aries necessary to supplant us in our fields of labor. And even if they possessed the men, these do not know the language nor enjoy the confidence of the natives. *If much of the noblest and most faithful missionary work in the world is not to be irreparably damaged, the German missionaries must be given back the majority of their fields of activity.* But where it may be deemed suitable to place this work in other hands, we ourselves would wish to aid in finding these hands, and do all in our power to prevent our congregations — which cannot be shoved and pushed and handed from one to another like empty boxes — from suffering harm. Wherever a change is to be made, this change must be inspired by insight and conscientiousness and not carried out by brute force. Wherever we yield our place to others we wish to do so of our own free will and not be driven out like criminals.

Ought not these simple truths and clear rights be understood even by those foreign Christians who profess our common creed — even though they may think differently than we about the war? And should not their consciences force them to speak out — as a few of them have already done in so commendable a manner — and enter the lists valiantly for the liberty of the Christian mission in the very hour in which it is most imperiled?

But even if they should remain silent, we, the people of Luther, will nevertheless remain faithful to the truth. We shall enter upon no cowardly nor dishonest compromises. We raise our voices in this crucial hour so that these voices may be loud in the ears of the men in power in enemy lands: —

Give back to German Christendom its fields of mission-work! You, who professed to have gone forth to battle for the ideals of Christianity, do not rob the envoys of Christ of its uprightness nor the freedom of its ways, to which its kingly service has so inalienable a right!

AFTERWORD.

Just as this pamphlet was going to press, I was handed the "Conditions of Peace" which were submitted to the representatives of the German Government at Versailles on May 7, 1919. Their proposal for the regulation of the mission question is embodied in Article 438 and reads as follows: —

The Allied and Associated Powers agree that where Christian religious missions were being maintained by German societies or persons on territory belonging to them, or of which the government is entrusted to them in accordance with the present Treaty, the property which these missions or missionary societies possessed, including that of trading societies whose profits were devoted to the support of missions, shall continue to be devoted to missionary purposes. In order to ensure the due execution of this undertaking the Allied and Associated Governments will hand over such property to boards of trustees appointed by or approved by the Governments and composed of persons holding the Christian faith. It will be the duty of such boards of trustees to see that the property continues to be applied to missionary purposes.

The obligations undertaken by the Allied and Associated Governments in this Article will not in any way prejudice their control or authority as to the individuals by whom the missions are conducted.

Germany, taking note of the above undertaking, agrees to accept all arrangements made or to be made by the Allied or Associated Governments concerned for carrying on the work of the said missions or trading societies and waives all claims on their behalf.

One need only compare this Article 438 with the provisos of Article 6 of the Congo Acts in order clearly to realize *the fatal retrogression from the freedom of Christian missions to their enslavement*. In the Congo Acts the Powers pledge themselves "to protect and to further without distinction of nationality or creed all religious, scientific, and charitable undertakings designed to instruct the natives and to make clear to them the advantages and the value of civilization." The Christian missionaries were to be accorded "special protection." "Liberty of conscience and religious tolerance were expressly guaranteed to the natives, as well as to all nationals and foreigners. The free and public exercise of all religions, the right to build houses of worship, no matter to what creed they may be devoted, were to be subject to no hindrance nor restriction."

These provisions reflected the progress of modern humanity and the humane, liberal attitude which British policy had adopted during its best period. But in Article 438 we behold what England has become under the operation of an imperialistic policy of might before right. The violation of the German missions is by this article extended to every continent. The German missionaries of both confessions, some 3,000 men and women, are to be driven from all their fields of labor; with the exception of the Dutch colonial possessions. The property which German Christians have accumulated through their alms and donations in the course of two hundred years, the stations which the industry of German missionaries has built and planted in the wilderness, are to be seized by the power of the state without a shadow of right or justice, and this state is to decree who is to administer all this in the future.

More than a million and a half Christians, inquirers, and pupils are to lose their spiritual guides. Apart from the Dutch colonies, Germany is no longer to have any share in the work of Christ. The greater part of the German mission societies may suspend their activities, dismiss their missionaries, shut up their seminaries. In that very moment when all Christians, without distinction of nationality, should endeavor of one accord to make good the terrible damage which has also been inflicted upon the non-Christian world during these years of war, and to heal the bitterness and hate among themselves, a new and insuperable bar is erected against the German Christians.

But if brute force is now to be permitted to do as it pleases with the German missionaries and the property of the German missions, what in the future is to prevent it from also doing as it pleases with the workers and the possessions of other missions? Are they unable to see that Article 438 is chiefly devised in order to reinforce the power of the State over the Christian missions, instead of guaranteeing and protecting their freedom and effectiveness?

“I HAVE THE MAN, THE LORD!”

Article 438 demands that Germany shall expressly agree to the outraging of the German missions. Was ever anything more immoral than this demanded of a government?

Article 438 can be understood only in connection with these “Peace” conditions, conditions which, were they to be realized, would be nothing less than an unfathomable, inexhaustible source of hatred, bitterness, and dissension among the nations. They represent an instrument such as the world has never before seen, an instrument forged with diabolical cunning and penetration in order to cut off the German people from all possibilities of development for an indefinite time to come, and in modern forms and under the guise of right, that is, by pledged treaties, to do what Nebuchadnezzar did against Judah and Rome against Carthage in perhaps a more brutal, but a more open form.

In all lands horror and indignation are making themselves felt over this monstrous crime which is contemplated against the budding life of an entire people. The Socialists have raised their voices in loud protest.

D.

WHAT WILL THE CHRISTIANS DO?