1.) Conversion as Social Misunderstanding

Emil Schatz wrote to Berlin on August 1st, 1850:

"June 9th was an important day for us. ... Kesu and his son in law Bandhu-Gurha and Neumann were baptised on that day; ... Our dear brothers from the Koles sought for a long time, following the Hindu ways, but did not find peace. ... They came to us with amazement and joy, but they did not like the fact of being sinners or becoming sinners; they perceived themselves as heroes of pureness. Hence they left. However, they could not resist coming back. And so they came and went over the past two years. All of a sudden they confessed that they were great sinners. Now they wanted to seek the truth seriously. ... One Sunday morning they came to the service. When everybody left at the end – they stayed – we talked to them; they stayed. As we held our English service at 12 o’clock, we asked ‘Would you like to stay? And they said “Yes, we will stay.’ So we left them sitting. – They now realised that we on our part would not do anything apart from: singing, praying, reading, preaching, and that we would not try any Hokuspokus (tricks). They were very impressed by this ... After the service with us, they accepted our invitation to eat with us. This was now what we did. We will never forget this. ... We had the meal in front of us – we prayed and in God’s name: they were conquered. (The barriers between the castes were torn down by this common meal and the most difficult part was overcome.) Since we had no reason to doubt the pureness of their step and they complained about our hesitation, we baptised them into the death of Jesus. May the Lord have written their names in the book of life.”

Five years after their arrival the Missionaries were able to report to the Mission father Johannes Evangelista Gossner in Berlin about the first conversion of a group of adult Adivasi. It is obvious in this report that there is a communicative gap between the missionaries and the Oraon in their understanding of the gospel. I dealt with this theme in another paper, with the title “mission as misunderstanding.”

On the one hand the missionaries expected them to make a confession to Christ and, even more important, a confession that they were “great sinners”. But the Adivasi “they did not like this”. The missionaries were living in the theology of the 19th century. For them, the question was not really whether the recognition of sin is possible without forgiveness of sin, as is discussed in present day theology. For them, the notion of superiority was crucial. The indigenous religion or the Hindu religion in itself was a sin. This had to be realised first.

On the other hand the Adivasi were fascinated by the message of the equality of brothers and sisters originating in the gospel. They were fascinated by the fact that Christianity did not have a concept of a double religion with a sacred area behind the common religion. On the contrary, they discovered: The Sahibs did nothing different in their service than they did in the service with them that is preaching the word, prayers and

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1 The letter is printed in the journal of Gossner Mission, Biene auf dem Missionsfelde (abbr.: Biene), No.1 1851 p.3.
songs. Finally, the common meal broke the ban on eating together, since it was not usual for the Sahib to eat together with an Adivasi.

The two different perspectives did not match with each other; one aims at realising sin, the other one at accepting the equality of sisters and brothers. Right at the beginning, in the process of conversion, it is obvious that the Missionaries and the Adivasi had a different understanding on the social implications of the truth of the gospel. The misunderstandings based on these distinct interpretations and the resulting differences, would accompany the work of the missionaries throughout the 19th century. The difference is in the following years obvious in the question of land. The debate is whether to understand the gospel as liberation of the heart or as liberation from social oppression.

Before describing the perspective of the missionaries to the question of land property and its social relevance I will describe in brief the background of the conflict.

2.) The question on land in Chotanagpur

When the first missionaries, whose names are still sung today at the Gossner Church, began their work in Chotangpur, they were aware of the difficult social situation of the local indigenous peoples. The underlying problem was that of land ownership. According to the tradition of the tribal people the land belonged to the person who had originally cultivated it. He was called "Khuntkattidar" or "Bhuinar". This ownership of the founder’s family was maintained even when the land was given to other families to cultivate.² These families had only the right to the crop yield from the land.

The separation between right of ownership and right of use remained even when a kingdom developed in Chota Nagpur. The reasons for the emergence of a kingdom are not exactly known. One reason may be that the Mundas as the Austro-asiatic tribe and Oraons as Dravidian tribe agreed to an external leader.³ The Khuntkattidars were committed to respect the king and to serve him in his militia. This legal system was binding on all parties until the mid 17th century when then the king claimed not only a part of the yield of the land, but laid claim to the land itself. Following the example of neighbouring Mogul rulers, he installed the so-called Zamindars (feudal lords) and so-called local Tikardare (tenant farmers). The king converted to Hinduism and with the help of his Brahmín lifted his Zamindars up into the second highest Hindu caste - the Kchatriyas (warriors). Therefore they were endowed with special rights.⁴ With this process Hindus migrated into the territories of the indigenous population in Chota Nagpur.

Between the new masters and the indigenous population of the country arose conflicts over land ownership. The indigenous population took for granted that there was a separation of ownership and income rights. The tax collectors however tried to claim the land for themselves and their masters whenever there were cases of default on the payment of higher taxes. When the British took over the sovereignty of Chota Nagpur in 1771, it was hard for them to solve the problem of land ownership. This was because they had to rely on translators, who worked as Hindus in favour of their masters.

² Roy, Sarat Chandra: The Mundas and their country, London 1970, p.75. The term Khuntkattidar is used mainly regarding the land of the Mundas, the other tribes use the term „Bhuinari“.
⁴ Ibid. p.40.
Unfortunately the British gave the Zamindars in 1809 official police rights. Thus the indigenous people were without rights. The taxes were continually increased, even the fruit of planted trees could be no longer picked by the people. This led to a major revolt in 1831-32, in which 3000 Adivasi fought together, but they were no match for the military superiority of the British. The Adivasi leaders surrendered voluntarily.

3.) The question of land from the missionaries’ perspective

The question of land ownership accompanied the missionaries from the beginning. However, as with other social questions, it was not a central theme for them as was already clear from their description of the first Adivasi conversion. Although the missionaries revealed a change in their perception of the question on land in their communication with Berlin, their attitude was dominated by a continued theological distance to this issue. It was based on the Lutheran separation between the external and inner man. In Luther’s book ”On the freedom of a Christian” the Reformer postulated: ”A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.” The external man, however, continues to live in his (from God given) social position and therefore he is available as „a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” This idea is strengthened within the revival theology of father Johannes Gossner’s in the 19th century. He was concerned during his mission with the “Gottseligkeit”, the godliness of the inner man - of his heart. The missionaries’ beliefs were deeply rooted in this way of thinking and we will see that we encounter this idea not only among them but also among the catechists whom they taught. But how did they perceive the land question from their perspective?

The missionaries reported to their German homeland regularly through articles in the missionary magazine, the so-called ”Biene auf dem Missionsfeld”, ”The bee in the mission field.” Additionally there were a few scientific articles, which were published in the ”Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift”, ”The general missionary magazine”, which was founded 1874. In the following paper I would like to evaluate these sources, which deal mainly with the news sent to the German readers through the mission journal about the missionaries and their work. As far as I am concerned we can describe three distinct phases in the perceptions surrounding the land question:

a) Bishop Cotton and the silence of the missionaries

In spring of 1864 the Anglican Bishop George Edward Lynch Cotton visited the German mission in Ranchi. When he came out of the Christ Church a group of indigenous Christians comes up to him. They recognised him evidently as an officer of the British government and wanted to hand a petition to him. They requested that he should stand up for their rights on the land. The German missionary Friedrich Batsch, who accompanied the Bishop, took the petition out of their hand. He ripped up the petition in front of their eyes. This symbolic action is omitted from the articles in the mission journal, and thus concealed from the German reader. Instead of this they printed a letter from Bishop Cotton to the Chairman of the Gossner Mission General Superintendent Carl Büchsel. Bishop Cotton wrote that the mission should have stronger financial support

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7 Borutta, Helmut: Revolution für das Recht, p.45.
and should possibly strengthen cooperation with the Anglican Church. Three years later, in 1867, the readers of the magazine learnt through a detailed report by Friedrich Batsch about the land question and how great the burden was on the Adivasi caused by taxes and arbitrariness. He concludes his article:

„Is the government doing nothing? Are there no courts in the country; is there no police? Yes, indeed, in abundance. But the British hear, see and talk about everything through the native agents who are not Kols, but Hindus and Muslims, and these sorts of people are, when it comes to greed, even worse than the Jagirdars and Thikedars. Here lawsuits cost so much that there is hardly any way for the common man, to bring a case before the courts in order to uphold his rights. In the rare event that a Kol wins his case, it is unfortunately very difficult to enforce this achieved right, Batsch recognizes very accurately the difficult legal situation surrounding the Adivasi land question. But even here he conceals the essentials such as the encounter during the visit of Bishop Cotton.

The experience of arguing unsuccessfully in court and thereby losing a lot of money was made by a group of Adivasi a year earlier in 1866. A group of presbyters of the Mudas and the Uraons had collected money in the villages and sued in the Calcutta court against the arbitrariness of Tikardars. They had no success. The process, however, dragged on as this was in the interest of lawyers. Friedrich Batsch had strongly condemned these so-called "Calcutta-goers". He referred to them from the pulpit as "damned people". He even excommunicated them. This is only reported in 1874 by the young Missionary Thomas Jellinghaus who wrote about these events in an article for the scientific reader in the General Missionary Magazine. Jellinghaus attended the church during the damnation of the “Calcutta-goers”. How embarrassing this must have been for the young missionary is recognized in a footnote, in which he stated:

"It has been denied in later public documents; but even then, as a new Missionary of only five months, I wrote the words of my inner outrage in my diary followed by: "Deus mihi causa tacendi poenam non dabit" (God let me not conceal the cause of their punishment.)

Apart from the long article by Friedrich Batsch in the mission journal, where he concealed the excommunication of the land law activists, and his ripping up of the petition, only a few notes on the sufferings of Adivasi in connection with the land question can be found in the period up to 1868. The relative silence on the question of land marks the first phase of the mission. But change will come.

b) Division of Mission – the question of land becomes a subject

In 1868 there was a division between the German missionaries. Father Johannes Gossner had originally sent his missionaries to India without financial support. The missionaries were expected to live by their work as craftsmen and teachers in the mission field. The missionaries through donations from Germany, through protection of the British and through careful financial management, gradually acquired houses and land, and therefore, the mission agency in Berlin began to regulate the Indian mission

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8 Biene, 1864, No 11, p.81-83.
field. They introduced mission statutes and regulated the ownership of the land of the mission. The conflict cannot in detail be described here. The older missionaries did not feel that they had been involved in drafting the mission order. Furthermore, sending Hermann Ansorge as an inspector to Ranchi offended them. Therefore in the autumn of 1868 six missionaries declared their withdrawal from the Gossner Mission. Among them were the first missionaries Friedrich and Heinrich Batsch. They set up what in various sources was described as a so-called “Counter Mission”, which they linked to the Anglican Church. For this purpose Bishop Milman ordained them again. 10 Their hope was to win over as many of the Adivasi as possible to their side11. The land question seems to have been particularly suited to serving this purpose. The representatives of the “counter-mission” attempted, especially in the rural areas, to demonstrate that they had better options on offer for assistance because of their enhanced contacts with British officers. This led in some places to a situation of competitiveness. A report of missionary Jellinghaus about the Murumkela village located nearby to Goßnerpur / Govindpur may serve as an example:

"Four years ago, six Christian families were expelled by the Thikedar from the village Murumkela, three of these families are connect to the counter-mission and three to us. If the counter-missionaries tell people: come to us, we will help you - they often reply: Help first the displaced Murumkela Christians." Now people often asked who will be the first to move back to Murumkela, the Christians belonging to the old church, or those who are loyal to the British? Our opponents had often met with the Thikedar, but in vain. Well I visited him, the evil enemy of Christians, and spoke to him in a very friendly way, he told me, I should meet him together with the Christians. I took two congregational presbyters with me. The Thikedar gave us a friendly welcome." During the conversation under the tree there appeared two Christians of the opposite side looking menacing and carrying sticks. Jellinghaus to them: "I asked them if they own the village and told them that I had come at the request of the Thikedars." This public recognition of the position of the Thikedars as the owner of the village opened the negotiations. "After half an hour they reached agreement and the Thikedar promised with a handshake that they should have their land and ordered that houses be built immediately and he gave to them the wood for that purpose."12

Jellinghaus's attitude in the conflict can be well understood given the Lutheran background. To accept the Thikadar in his secular role on the one hand in the discussion could have diplomatic reasons - to win him over. On the other hand the missionaries advocated the doctrine according to Martin Luther, who understood the secular authorities were appointed as a part of a divine order. In a general conference of the congregations in 1871 the missionaries and the native catechists, teachers and pastors discussed among other matters the question of land. A local teacher at the seminary, a certain Hanukh, presented the Lutheran view, which Jellinghaus implies and completes the discussion interestingly:

10 Biene 1869, No 8, p.65.
11 Biene 1869, No 4, p.28: So „ließen sich die alten Missionare in ihrer Aufregung dazu verleiten, eine Gegenmission mitten in Ranchi zu errichten, in dem sie anfingen gleichzeitig mit den Gottesdiensten der Christuskirche an anderer Stelle (in einem Zelt) Predigten zu halten und die Glieder der Gemeinde von der Christuskirche ab- und ihrer Predigt zuzuwenden.”
12 Biene 1870, No 5, p.43.
"Listen brothers, so often you tell our beloved teachers and so often you complain about the Thikadars. But you are not right to do this, because very often you are suffering through your own fault and often lies are said to the Padri. Know, that the Thikadars are installed by God as persons in authority. They have received power over us; then we must also give what belongs to them. Now I know from contact and talking with you that most people hope to be freed from all authoritarian obligations by the adoption of Christianity. If that were so, then God would not have established such positions of authority. Dear brothers, I am sure, if we give the Thikadars what is right and proper, then we Christians will suffer much less than we are now."

This Lutheran concept about authorities - here presented from a native - led to a reluctance of missionaries to be engaged in the land question. The Board/Kuratorium of Gossner Mission in Berlin particularly supported this attitude. Chairman General Superintendent Carl Büchsel circulated in 1869 a pastoral letter to the congregations of the Indian mission field. It is a reaction to the specific situation of the division of the mission but also covers the social issues in the country. He wrote:

"With cordially sympathy we have heard from the oppressions that you suffer from the pagan Zamindars. ... But Brothers, distance yourselves from violence, outrage, carnal self-help and all such things. God does not bless such methods and they just bring more misery and distress upon you. The Lord must help and He will do so. Pray that all may be fulfilled by the gospel of Jesus Christ. If the Zamindars become Christians, all distress will end.... In your situation remember of the word St Paul: “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the existing authorities are established by God.” Rom 13.

Büchsel’s attitude, which he had propagated also during the revolution in Berlin in 1848, is deeply rooted in Lutheran theology, as I have said. A change of external conditions cannot be brought about by violence. This was not only a learned lesson of the German Reformation, but there is also another aspect to it. The missionaries, through their analysis of the conversion motives of the Adivasi, felt confirmed in their Lutheran reluctance to become involved with land matters. They feared, that the conversion of the Adivasi to Christianity would remain superficial, if the land issue was their main interest. Very clearly Hermann Onasch verbalised this in an assessment of the mission field in 1870. He quotes an Adivasi question that he encountered again and again: "If the body does not survive, how can the faith survive?" Without any reported reply to that question, he describes the specific situation of Christians after the Sepoy revolt in 1858. After the revolution many Christians received generous payments as compensation by the British. Additionally presbyters went through the villages and promised that Christians would get back their lost land and be freed from compulsory labour.

"The result were mass conversions to Christianity ... Our missionaries discover more and more how Christianity was initially adopted up by the Kols under the slogan: Sahai from the Sahebs; Freedom from the Thikadars; Recovery of all long lost possessions, if it must be, by perjury, opposition and revolution if it must be, also murder and manslaughter, and this

13 Biene 1871, No 11, p.84.
14 Biene 1870, No 5, p.48.
By distancing themselves from the land question the Missionaries wanted to avoid that the Christian faith would be adopted because of an expected external benefit. Their mission father Gossner had said: A Christian is one who has the call of Christ in his heart. The Missionaries remained faithful to that doctrine. One would misunderstand them and their theological reasons, if one would interpret this as an evasion. They were concerned about the spiritual existence of the mission. Addressing the land question would mean in their point of view an externalizing and thus endangering of the sustainability of the mission. The mission is saved only in the conversion of the inner man. Noticeable is their description of their reaction when they faced individual cases of the abuse of the Thikadars. Stereotype they say again and again: “We request them to pray”. However this did not mean that the problem should be dismissed. Instead, they want to establish through prayer a spiritual sympathy, compassion and closeness to the Adivasi on this extremely distressing issue. That’s why after the division of the missionaries in 1868 the number of reports on the question of land to the German readers greatly increased seeking intercessions from abroad. Compared with other reports an inner sympathy can be seen here.

For example:

• Missionary Didlaukies tells about a visit in the village Changatola at Dumatoli where he encountered a Christian who is cheated out of his harvest every year by the Thikadar. He therefore does not have enough for his hungry children.
  
  Didlaukies: "It was a moment that I am unable to describe. But so great is the depth of the distress and bitter misery of some of our Kols-christians- you have to wonder at how firmly they still depend on their saviour … One would almost be ashamed of one self. I tried to comfort them, urging them to persist in their prayers. "

• Hermann Ansorge tells of a visit to the village Palki, where he met a Christian who during his attendance at a service of worship in Ranchi was dispossessed by a "bad Thikadar called Manoram". He closes his report with the sigh: "May the Lord God look down soon on such misery!"

As part of that inner sympathy, the missionaries start in the post-division period to learn the indigenous languages of the Munda and Oraon. This allows them to be much closer to the population and to pray with them. This inevitably leads now to the fact that distancing themselves from the conflicts on land issues becomes difficult. In the area of work of the missionary Didlaukies, two interesting cases are reported in which he locally overcomes the oppression of the Thikadars.

1) In 1870 in Hulsu, Didlaukies heard that the local Thikadar had not issued the receipts for payments already made and now he tried to increase the taxes. The Thikadar had caught the Christian landowners held them as prisoners on his terrace guarded by soldiers. Didlaukies went to the house and was also captured and bound by the soldiers and by the brother of the Thikadar. The landlord was not present at that moment.

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15 Biene 1870 No 3, p.18 und 20.
17 Biene 1869, No 12, p.96.
Didlaukies witnessed how an honourable old church member was beaten. In the late afternoon the Thikadar reached the place and saw with horror the bound Sahib. Didlaukies insisted on involving the police, which the Thikadar wanted to avoid. So Didlaukies could negotiate fair deals for rural landowners with the Thikadar. 18

2) In the spring of 1870 Didlaukies was fortunate to meet the manager of the Raja of Chotanagpur, whose responsibility it was to supervise the land property on behalf of the five-year-old son of the deceased Raja. The supervisor, Mr. Smith, was apparently an English lawyer, and he was called Raja-Saheb. Didlaukies found in the Raja-Saheb Smith an understanding of the situation of Christians in the area of Goßnerpur / Govindpur. So it was possible to instruct the local Thikadars to refrain from oppression. 19 For some years the situation was secure. Again, the Lutheran recognition of authority was a key to improving the local situation.

The second phase of the mission is therefore determined through the perception of the land question by the missionaries, by their Lutheran reluctance to act on the side of the Adivasi, by their spiritual guidance in prayer and from all of these, the initiative to mediate in local conflicts. Here the missionaries were helped through Lutheran theology to accept Thikadars as authorities, which sometimes opened the door for negotiations. The missionaries had found their own way to deal with the land question. At the same time, however, during this phase they left the German readers in ignorance about the other groups engaged in the Adavasi land issue.

c) Political distance – Sardare: socialist agitators

The single local solutions, which the missionaries found, aroused of course the impression that they could be more involved in the land question. This was the preserve of the so-called Sardars.

In 1889 the term Sardar was used the first time in the mission magazine of the Gossner Mission. 20 Sardars were local leaders - very often they were educated Christians - who collected funds in the villages to pay lawyers who fought for their land rights in court. However, the phenomenon occurred much earlier, namely around 1864 with the so-called “Kolkata-goers” as I have already mentioned. The Sardar movement had at the end of the 19th century a special dynamic. In 1887 a delegation of the Sardars joined the General Conference of the missionaries, handing over a memorandum on the land question. It included 17 points, which Alfred Nottrott quoted in the more scientific General Missionary Magazine – “Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift”. The demands of the Sardars included a restoration of an idealized primary status of land ownership of the Adivasi.

"10th As our ancestors were free people, so we want it to be too. 14th ... Every nation rules in his own country, the English in England, the Chinese in China, the Germans in Germany - why should we the Mundaris and Uraus not be Lords in our country? 17th ... With the

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18 Biene 1870 No 2, p.16.
19 Biene 1870, No 7, p.62.
20 Biene 1898, No. 1, p.6. Nottrott describes here the results of the petition of the Sardars. He name them as „Sirdare“ (sic) adding the explanation: The Sirdars are „the at the top of all malcontent standing leaders.
mission we have become wiser, we heartily thank you; But the Mission should help liberate us from our earthly distress. “

Nottrott saw clearly that the demands for an original Adivasi-kingdom could hardly be contested successfully in court. The Sardars still wanted the support of missionaries. As a result not only did the representatives of Munda and Oraun Sardars fall out with each other, but also the Sardars split away from the German mission. The last meeting of a deputation of Oraun Sardars with the missionaries contains a very interesting dialogue, which demonstrates once again the determination of the Lutheran missionaries, not to use worldly power.

"Do you want as German missionaries to help us rule the country or not?" Answer: "No, we are missionaries and have no worldly power!" -
"Will you at least help us execute our program and be on our side?" - Answer: "No, because it contains unreasonable and unfeasible demands." -
"That’s why we make the statement that from today all Uraus will leave the German mission. Answer: "You are free people and can do what you want, but know that you will answer for all that you do before God at the end of your days. “

Looking back Nottrott noticed that the missions feared a sizeable loss of Christians. But three years later, he mentioned that from 36,000 souls of the whole Adivasi Christian community only "1,295 souls apostatized or abandoned their faith ".

In the following years until 1895 however the missionaries paid a lot of attention to the topic of the Sardars in their reports to the German readers. The Missionaries saw firstly the Sardar movement associated with the mission of the Jesuits. They wrote of the Jesuits sprinkling "poison".

"What they allow to be preached, is the relief from the funds to be paid to the landlords, the lure of money and help of any kind; about Christianity more or less nothing is being said. “

The Jesuits would act in areas “where they could spread their poison without being disturbed by one of our catechists, but they disappear immediately if any one of us appears.”

Except to this single note it is remarkable that in the writings of the German Protestant missionaries we find only very few brief notes on the work of the Jesuit mission and on their attitude towards the land question. Apparently, there was little contact and debate between protestant and catholic missions in Chotanagpur. Nottrott complains symbolically about the "disappearance" of the Jesuit mission when there was a risk of an encounter in the mission field. On the whole, it seems that the relationship of the missions in the 19th century in Chotanagpur would have to be researched using the different catholic and protestant sources.

22 Ibid. p. 273.
23 Ibid. p. 278.
Without any further reference to the Jesuit mission, Nottrott continues to report on the land question. So in February 1892 he observed a local increase in the requirements of Thikadars as a result of the announcement of the Bengal Tenancy Act. In some villages the Christians were innocently involved in several legal actions. The Thikardars did not issue receipts for paid taxes, so that they could make more demands and gather pledges. Contrary to this, the Sardars tried to employ lawyers by raising money from the local people. They were successful in fundraising, because the need was great among the Adivasi. The missionaries admit this, but they have a special understanding and interpretation of it. Here are some examples:

- Missionary Püsching in February 1893: "Among the Christians in Tamar are socialist agitators, the Sardars, broke in and devastated a small congregation and they led 11 families back to paganism. On my way back ... I visited several villages outside Tamar, they are badly devastated by the Sardars. ... The poison of social democracy has damaged tremendously the Burju community. The number of souls which converted back to paganism through the Sardars is quite large and will continue to be quite significant in the coming years, because they always entice new groups away." 26
- Alfred Nottrott in December 1893: "The main event of the month of September was a revival of the Sardar’s deception. Already the waves had abated and for the Mundari communities, at least in Burju and Bandgaun, order began to return ... The new bait, which has been thrown out by the Sardars for trapping the masses, was their appointment of an English lawyer from Calcutta." 27
- Again A. Nottrott in January 1895: "On my trip I heard in Tapkara to my delight, that the Sardar-movement was dying out there because the infamous Sardar Gideon told his parents in-laws, they should from now on go back to the church." The editorial added explanatory a footnote on the Sardar-movement: "the socialist agitators in the Kol land issue." 28

Apparently the Sardar-movement decreased for several years after 1895, they were quiet but had not quit. The probably continuation of the Sardar-movement may have been an essential background for the later success of Daud Birsa Munda.

It is noticeable in the reports of the missionaries that they compare the Sardar-movement with the social democratic movement in 19th century Germany. They describe the Sardars often as "socialist agitators." (Sozialistische Wühler) What was the background to this?

The missionaries had observed how the social democratic movement in France and Britain had flooded into Germany. The term "socialist agitators" was often used in reports in the German newspaper. At almost exactly the same time as the term "socialism" is used in the letters of the missionaries describing the Sardars, the abolition of a law banning the social democracy was being vigorously discussed in Germany. After two assassination attempts on the German Emperor in 1878 the "Law against the public danger of Social Democratic endeavours" was adopted by the parliament. It forbade Social Democratic and Communist meetings. However Parliament could not extend it.
beyond 1890. Therefore conservative circles then feared a spread of social democratic ideas. At the same time the Government of the Protestant Church in Germany (Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat) forbade its pastors in a circular letter the “direct participation of the pastors in social democratic gatherings, which are connected to speech and counter-speech....” 29. This was the political background and the situation of the church when missionaries drew this comparison. They meant apparently: The objectives of the social democratic movement and the objectives of the Sardars are similar. The European Socialist wants a collective participation of the workers at the point of production and collective participation in the profits. The dream of Sardras is an Adivasi-kingdom with equal land rights and also collective – socialist – participation in that. It seems that the Missionaries wanted to say by this comparison: Look, even in faraway India you have to have protection against the "poison of social democracy". Insofar as the missionaries reported extensively on these processes in the villages of the Adivasi, it contained a secondary political message for the homeland readers. However, the missionaries did not address in any of their letters to the German reader their detailed understanding of the relationship between Sardar-movement in India and socialism in Europe.

4.) Summary
Primarily the missionaries reported only reluctantly about the land issue to Germany during the first phase. With their division in 1868 the reports and their comments about the land issue increased due to the activities of the counter-mission. They found in this second phase an effective spiritual way of dealing with the land question. Since this apparently created disappointment, and further oppression of Thikadars arose, the Sardar-movement increased in its importance. In this third phase the Missionaries remain consistent in their Lutheran attitude and in their distance to the Sardars. In addition, there probably was a secondary political motive to distance themselves from the Sardar-Movement. That was wise. Because a connection between the German Mission and the political movement of the Sardars would probably have meant in the upcoming conflict about Birsa Munda the end of the German Mission in Chotanagpur.