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THE DEPORTATION OF THE GERMAN SVD MISSIONARIES DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

This article presents the ordeal of the German SVD missionaries during their deportation to the United States, the position of the Generalate concerning the resulting state of affairs of the SVD mission in Abra, and the return of the missionaries to the Philippines.¹ Excerpts of the account written by Fr. Wilhelm Finnemann about the voyage across the Pacific Ocean were translated into English to give an idea of what the missionaries went through. The correspondence and reports of the missionaries which are often replete with graphic and extensive narrative of their experiences are not only testimonies of the tribulations of the German missionaries and the uncertainties of SVD endeavors as a consequence of the First World War, they also enable one to look at the facts of this untold story as they are.

Introduction

The Divine Word missionaries came to the Philippines in 1909 in response to the urgent requests of bishops on account of the shortage of priests to administer parishes abandoned by the Spanish missionaries after the defeat of Spain during the Spanish-American War.² It was a time when the United States governed the Islands. Before the

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¹ The bulk of sources dealing with the situation of the missions in Abra during the period between the expulsion and the return of the missionaries is found in the *Archivio Storico* (AS) of the *Archivum Generale Societatis Verbi Divini* (AGSVD) in Rome.

² With regard to the beginnings of the SVD mission in the Philippines, see Fritz Bornemann et al., *A History of Our Society* (Analecta SVD 54), Rome: Collegium Verbi Divini 1981, 328-344. See also Josef Schmitz, *Die Abra-Mission auf Nordluzon, Philippinen* (Studia Instituti Missiologici Societatis Verbi Divini 3), St. Augustin: Steyler Verlag 1964, and Michael Layugan, Fr. Ludwig Beckert: "Fundator Missionis Philippinensis": *Verbum SVD* 51 (2010) 193-226.

outbreak of the First World War, the German missionaries were assigned by the Bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia to work in the province of Abra in Northern Luzon.³ The course of events drastically changed the situation of the German missionaries as well as their missions when the United States got involved in the war.

I. The Outbreak of the First World War

Although the First World War did not directly affect the Philippines, the SVD missionaries who were mostly German citizens suffered its consequences. Edward Shillito had this to say:

At once certain states were directly involved with all their dominions across the seas; Germany, Austria, Russia, France, Belgium, Serbia, Great Britain, as soon as the storm broke, found themselves committed to the last ounce of their strength; but the non-belligerent countries also from the first could not escape from the war. Money could not be transmitted; travelling was checked; markets were everywhere in confusion. No human society could live in any land as if there were no war; not only in the lands directly involved but in every land it became clear that missions must be adjusted to this new and terrible fact. Now in a thousand ways it was brought home, almost as soon as the first shot was fired, that missions must suffer with the rest. The war for them too, as for every society, became the dominating fact.⁴

When the United States entered the war in April 1917, the condition of the SVD missionaries became uncertain. The fate of the missionaries was sealed when Governor General Francis Burton Harrison issued a decree in 1918 relating to the expulsion of German nationals from the Philippines.⁵ This decree did not spare the SVD missionaries. The deportation of the German missionaries was a severe blow to the struggling mission of the Society in Abra.

³ The Diocese of Nueva Segovia during this period comprised the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra, La Union, Pangasinan, five towns of Tarlac and Mountain Province.

⁴ Edward Shillito, *The Sweep of the War: The International Review of Missions* 8 (1919) 434-435.

⁵ Schmitz, *Die Abra-Mission auf Nordluzon*, 173-177. Francis Burton Harrison served in the United States House of Representatives before he was appointed Governor General of the Philippines by President Woodrow Wilson. He was the Governor General of the Philippines between 1913 and 1921.

A. News of the Impending Expulsion

Before the deportation in 1918, there were twelve SVD missionaries in the Philippines: Josef Stigler, Michael Hergesheimer, Bruno Drescher, Theodor Buttenbruch, Franz Blasczyk, Heinrich Bürschen, Philipp Beck, Wilhelm Finnemann, Br. Patricius [Konrad Grabsch], Theodor Schindler, Br. Ulrich [Franz Meyer] and Johann Kronemeyer.⁶ There were ten priests and two brothers. Fr. Hergesheimer was the Regional Superior.

In May 1918, Br. Ulrich and Fr. Kronemeyer, who stayed briefly in the Philippines, were the first SVDs to leave for the United States.⁷ An imminent deportation of the other SVD missionaries was foreseen. On 30 August 1918, Fr. Hergesheimer sent a messenger to deliver a copy of the telegram of the Bishop of Vigan to Fr. Finnemann who was informed that he, together with Fr. Stigler and Fr. Drescher, had to go to Vigan to see the Bishop. As soon as he received the telegram, Fr. Finnemann feared that he would have to leave his mission station. An extradition was forthcoming.⁸ Hence, he gathered

⁶ The Official Catholic Directory of 1918 provides us with a list of the different mission assignments of the SVD missionaries in Abra before some of them were exiled. See *The Official Catholic Directory*, New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons 1918, 803.

⁷ Concerning the departure of the two missionaries, Fr. Hergesheimer wrote: "Le 15 de ce mois, avec un transport, le P. Fr. Kronemeyer et le Fr. Ulrich M[eyer], s'allèrent aux États-Unis. – Le premier avait fait une pétition [*sic*] au gouvernement pour être porté à l'Amérique. Il lui était défendu de retourner à Mindoro, était aussi suspect à cause d'être patriote enthousiaste. Il préférerait le voyage aux E. U. que venir à Abra pour ne pas nous faire des molestes. – Le dernier avait écrit, à Vigan, où il séjournait pour quinze jours pour faire plomber ses dents, une lettre avec une expression offensive à un personnage sublime. L'au[tre] l'a lu, et la petite phrase lui coutait cher. Il n'y avait lieu pour intercession, ni de ma part, ni de la part du Délégué Apost[olique]. On m'a dit qu'ils se réjouiront de liberté, peut-être ils pourront visiter ses amis en Amérique. J'espère qu'ils ne souffrent pas dommage et que cette croix leur soit salutaire." Hergesheimer to Blum, 23 May 1918, Rome, AGSVD, AS, Raccogliore 730/I. During this period, many letters of the missionaries were written in languages other than German, like English, French and Spanish. Fr. Kronemeyer was not officially appointed for the Philippines. He was assigned to New Guinea and was on his way to Europe when the First World War broke out. Caught in the middle of the war, he sought refuge in Tsingtao, China and then left for the Philippines in 1915.

⁸ Fr. Finnemann wrote: „Als ich am 11. September 1912 zum ersten Male philippinischen Boden betrat, dachte ich bei mir selbst: ‚In diesem Lande wirst du leben und arbeiten, Seelen retten, bis der kalte Tod dir ein stilles Grab gräbt im heißen Sande Abras.‘ Mit diesem Vorsatz betrat ich die Philippinen; doch es sollte anders kommen. Nachdem ich 6 Jahre in der Abra Mission gearbeitet hatte, wurde ich abberufen, nicht durch die Stimme mei-

all his belongings and prepared to set out from his mission station: “I packed the necessary clothes, books and papers in order to leave the following morning. Nevertheless, I could not find a porter for the next morning since all the people were working in the fields. So I had to wait the next day which was the day of the Lord. I told my teacher about the telegram, and the news spread like wildfire throughout the whole village: *Pumanao ni Apo Padi* (The priest goes away).”⁹ When the news was disseminated throughout the village, people came to see him to express their sorrow and to plead with him not to leave them.¹⁰ Fr. Finnemann wrote, “I cannot describe the sorrow of these good people, and God alone knows how many tears were shed on that day in my house. Often it was impossible for me to stop my tears upon seeing that so many children and adults were weeping bitterly.”¹¹ When the last of his visitors left the house, he wanted to sleep but his thoughts kept him awake, and he could not find peace even in the stillness of the night.¹² He woke up early the next morning to celebrate the Mass before his departure. He related what happened that morning:

At six o'clock I celebrated the Holy Mass to start out early. How astonished I was when I saw the church filled with people. Pagans and Christians alike, even those from the very remote parts of my extensive district, came. In a few words, I exhorted the people to remain true to the Faith and

ner Obern, sondern durch die Macht dunkler Gewalten.“ See Wilhelm Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁹ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

¹⁰ As Fr. Finnemann recounted: „Schon in aller Herrgottsfrühe kamen am nächsten Morgen Leute zu mir, um ihrer Trauer Ausdruck zu geben. Und den ganzen lieben Tag gingen ohne Unterbrechung Leute ein und aus. Christen wie Heiden waren traurig und ergingen sich in den mannigfachsten Klagen. ‚Jetzt haben unsere Kinder keine Schule mehr‘, ‚nun müssen wir wieder ohne Priester sterben‘, ‚jetzt haben wir keinen mehr, der uns hilft in der Not‘ und wie die andern Klagen alle heißen. Ich tröstete sie, dass die belgischen Patres die Sorge für die Schule übernehmen würden und dass sie diese auch rufen könnten, wenn jemand krank sei. Aber die sind uns unbekannt, und dazu weit entfernt, sagten sie.“ See Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“.

¹¹ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

¹² Fr. Finnemann reminisced: „Bald begab ich mich zur Ruhe. Doch war an Ruhe nicht viel zu denken. Zentnerschwer lag auf meinem Herzen das Bewusstsein, dass diese guten Leute nun für lange Zeit wieder ohne Priester sein würden. Und was wird aus ihnen werden? Stundenlang lag ich wach, und als endlich der erquickende Schlaf meine müden Augen schloss, war es nur für ein paar Augenblicke.“ See Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“.

not to listen to the insults of the American Protestants who had such contempt for our holy Faith. I encouraged them to send their children to school and to gather in the church on all Sundays and feast days for prayers. Those who lived far from the church should recite the rosary at home. If a priest came, they should attend the Holy Mass. Again many tears flowed.¹³

B. Interventions of the Church Hierarchy

In Pilar, Fr. Finnemann met Fr. Stigler who was also surrounded by people who came to see him.¹⁴ There was weeping when the two missionaries left for Tayum where they would meet Fr. Hergesheimer, whom they did not find, for he had already departed for Vigan. When Fr. Hergesheimer returned from Vigan, he broke the news that all German missionaries had to leave. After they obtained their permits from the authorities in Bangued in order to travel to Vigan, Fr. Finnemann and Fr. Stigler left Abra on 3 September 1918.¹⁵ In Vigan they lodged at the Bishop's residence where Bishop Peter Joseph Hurth told them that he had done everything he could to prevent the deportation.¹⁶ Fr. Finnemann vividly remembered what the Bishop said about his encounter with the authorities: "I asked to see the papers,' he said, 'and as I read what one had brought against the priests, I told myself, the enemies of the Church are behind it.' I [Finnemann] asked him what was against me. He said that there was nothing on the list against me. 'You have to go because you are a Catholic priest,' he said."¹⁷ It was inevitable that the three missionaries had to go to Manila. While waiting for their departure, Fr. Fin-

¹³ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

¹⁴ Fr. Finnemann vividly recalled: „Wieder musste ich Zeuge sein derselben traurigen Szenen wie in Villavieja. Des Jammerns und Weinens war schier kein Ende. Allen wurde es schwer, sich von ihrem Missionar zu trennen.“ See Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“.

¹⁵ The Germans in the Philippines were required to secure a permit before they could travel to another province. Failure to obtain it could lead to arrest. Concerning their departure, Fr. Finnemann wrote: „Zum letzten Male eilten die Naturschönheiten, die sich an beiden Seiten des Flusses dem nimmer müde werdenden Auge des Reisenden darbieten, an uns vorbei. Ob es wirklich das letzte Mal ist, dass ich diese Herrlichkeit sehen darf?“ See Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“.

¹⁶ Peter Joseph Hurth was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia in 1913 and retired in 1926. His jurisdiction included the province of Abra where the SVD missionaries worked.

¹⁷ Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

nemann and Fr. Stigler visited their friends in Vigan who told them that the reason for their expulsion was that they had committed crimes against the American government. According to the allegations, the missionaries carried a German flag instead of an American flag during a procession, derided George Washington and maintained German schools where they forced the children to enroll in these institutions.¹⁸ Fr. Finnemann maintained, “I would like to say that we never had a German flag in our mission, neither before nor after the war. Our schools were Catholic schools not German.”¹⁹

After visiting their friends, the missionaries went to see the tomb of Fr. Paul Schrage who was buried at the cemetery in Vigan. In the evening, they had a long talk with the Bishop, who promised them that he would still plead with the authorities to avert their deportation. During this conversation, the Bishop told them to return to Abra after the war was over. Early the next morning they set out from Vigan together with Fr. Oktaaf Vandewalle, a Scheut missionary, who was in Abra for one month to learn more about the situation of the mission there. The car passed along Narvacan, Sta. Maria, San Esteban, Santiago, Candon, Santa Lucia, Santa Cruz until they reached Tagudin where they took their lunch at the rectory of the Scheut missionaries.²⁰ Fr. Finnemann expressed admiration for the hospitality of the Belgians: “The fathers had just prepared their meal on the table. With great hospitality, they served the meal for us and prepared something else for themselves.”²¹ When the SVDs reached

¹⁸ Ibid. Fr. Finnemann wrote: „In klugem Eifer hatten unsere Feinde dafür gesorgt, unsere Staatsverbrechen bekannt zu machen. Man erzählte, dass wir in einer Prozession die deutsche Fahne hoch voran getragen hätten, während die amerikanische nieder gehalten wurde. Wir hätten den großen Mann Amerikas, George Washington, verhöhnt, unterhielten deutsche Schulen und zwängen die Kinder, diese deutschen Schulen zu besuchen. Das waren also unsere Sünden! Wie diese alle den Stempel der Lüge an sich tragen, brauche ich nicht zu erläutern.“ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Fr. Finnemann further wrote: „Da diese in den letzten zwei Jahren einen ganz ungewöhnlichen Aufschwung genommen hatten, waren sie unsern Feinden schon längst ein Dorn im Auge. Man bekämpfte sie offen und geheim; aber man konnte ihnen nichts anhaben. Da machte man sich unter den Mantel des Patriotismus und weil Deutschland mit Amerika im Kriege war, benutzte man unsere Nationalität, um unser Werk zu zerstören!“ Ibid.

²⁰ The Scheut missionaries are also known as CICM missionaries or Belgian missionaries. Their mission outposts included the provinces of the Cordillera region which at that time was known as the Mountain Province. See Pedro Peñaranda, *Carrying on the Mission: 100 Years of CICM in the Philippines*, Quezon City: CICM-Philippines 2007.

²¹ Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

San Fernando in La Union, they were received by Fr. Quintin Donato, a diocesan priest. After a short respite, they went to see the station commander of the Philippine Constabulary in order to secure another permit so that they could travel to another province. The officer gave them permits for the whole trip to Manila to ease the trouble of getting another pass every time they reached another province. The missionaries conveyed their gratitude for this gesture of kindness on the part of the officer. After celebrating Mass early the next morning, they traveled to Bauang which was the last railway station in the north.²² When they arrived in Manila, Fr. Stigler and Fr. Drescher lodged with the Spanish Jesuits at the Observatory while Fr. Finnemann stayed with the Irish Redemptorists. They paid a visit to Apostolic Delegate Giuseppe Petrelli the following day.²³ Together with the Apostolic Delegate, they went to see Governor General Harrison in order to inquire into the reasons why they were being told to leave the country. The Governor General only asked them where they were staying and told them to wait, giving them hope that they could return to Abra. The missionaries waited for several days without any word from the Governor General. When the Archbishop of Manila met Fr. Finnemann, he told him that he could try to intercede for them. Ecstatic about the involvement of the Archbishop, Fr. Finnemann called his companions, and they went to see Archbishop Michael O'Doherty the next morning.²⁴ Hope turned to disappointment when the Archbishop told them that he could not do anything to prevent the deportation.²⁵ Fr. Finnemann wrote, "We went in and the Archbishop said: 'The matter is no longer in my hands.' That was an excuse because he probably would not speak in our defense just like the Apostolic Delegate. The gentlemen were

²² Fr. Finnemann gave an account of what happened on their way there: „Wir kamen zum Flusse, der für gewöhnlich kaum Wasser enthält. Aber durch den starken Regen am Vorabende war er so hoch angeschwollen, dass kein Auto ihn passieren konnte. Wir und unser Gepäck wurden auf einen Kuhwagen geladen, der uns eine Strecke ins Wasser hineinfuhr, bis der Fluss zu tief wurde. Dort wurde er auf ein Floss gefahren, auf dem wir den übrigen Teil des Flusses kreuzten. Am andern Ufer angekommen, mussten wir wieder umpacken. Ein anderer Kuhwagen brachte uns zum Bahnhofe. Zum Glück waren wir früh aufgebrochen; sonst hätten wir hier nochmals den Zug verpasst.“ See Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“.

²³ Giuseppe Petrelli was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Lipa before he was appointed *Chargé d'Affaires* in 1912. He was the Apostolic Delegate between 1915 and 1921.

²⁴ Archbishop Michael James O'Doherty was appointed Archbishop of Manila in 1916 and died in 1949.

²⁵ Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“.

afraid of being regarded as German friends if they stood up for innocent German priests.”²⁶

Bishop Hurth also travelled to Manila where he sought the help of a lawyer to appeal the case of the missionaries. The lawyer wrote to the Bishop that it was futile even to ask for the reasons why the missionaries were being deported.²⁷ The intervention of the Bishop of Vigan yielded no results. Fr. Finnemann recounted:

After waiting for more than two weeks, we were called to appear at the Intelligence Office. We were told to fill up a large double sheet in triplicate about all kinds of things. Then they took our pictures, one in front and one more from the side and finally we had to have all our fingerprints taken three times, then the entire hand as well, as if we were the toughest criminals on American soil. Then we were dismissed but we were told to be ready at any moment.²⁸

The missionaries were instructed to go to Fort Santiago on 23 September 1918. There, at Fort Santiago, the three missionaries met and were questioned by an American. As the American who examined them told them that he was a Catholic, only one of their suitcases was inspected. Fr. Finnemann went on to say: “After that I had to give a short biography of myself. I do not know whether in that way he wanted to establish our crimes. I gave it to the man with these words: Keep it well, so that if someday I will be canonized, one will not be embarrassed because of the curriculum vitae.”²⁹

II. The Deportation of the German SVD Missionaries

A. The Finnemann Narrative

1. The Voyage across the Pacific Ocean

Fr. Finnemann dispatched a letter to Superior General Nikolaus Blum: “We are in Manila awaiting [the] steamer for [the] United States of America. Father Bruno [Drescher] and Father José [Stigler]

²⁶ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

²⁷ Fr. Finnemann wrote: „Ein paar Tage später schrieb der Advokat des Bischofs an Letzteren: ‘The Governor General asked me for a statement of the reasons why some of these gentlemen should not be deported.’ Nun war es klar, dass man alle Missionare deportieren wollte, ohne nach Gründen weiter zu fragen.“ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

²⁹ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

are with me. Belgian Fathers have taken up and will continue our work. Pray for us. We hope to go to Techny, if possible. The others will follow soon, the bishop said.”³⁰ On the 23rd of September, they were brought to the port where they boarded the ship at two o’clock in the afternoon. They requested the intelligence officer to assign them to a cabin where the three of them could stay together. To their great surprise, the missionaries were put inside a compartment with thick iron bars together with 33 Germans and 25 American army prisoners with a soldier guarding the door. Fr. Finnemann recounted, “Nobody was allowed to go out. It was indescribably hot inside. We were packed like sardines, and there was no breeze from the little round windows. It was midday in the tropics. Two Germans fainted. I had a severe headache.”³¹

The ship sailed at four in the afternoon to the delight of the passengers as a fresh breeze entered their compartment. Shortly after they left the port, the SVD missionaries, together with 20 of the German prisoners, were transferred to another room.³² The priests asked for the captain of the ship in the evening of that day to make a request. A guard brought them to an officer. Fr. Finnemann gave this account of the encounter with the officer: “We expressed our desire to have a separate room for ourselves so we could live our priestly life. ‘It does not matter to me that you are priests,’ was his reply.”³³ The officer, however, gave them permission to go to the deck for half an hour.

As they were approaching Guam on 29 September, two guards were posted to keep an eye on them. An officer also came every hour to count them. The security was so tight that even though there were many soldiers on board the ship, the prisoners had to take their meals inside their compartment. For many hours they were confined inside their cabin.

The ship came to anchor in Honolulu on 11 October 1918. While the ship was docked at the port, the prisoners were not allowed to go

³⁰ Finnemann to Blum, 10 September 1918, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. Fr. Nikolaus Blum was the second superior general of the Society of the Divine Word between 1909 and 1919.

³¹ Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

³² The cabin was not a better one, as described by Fr. Finnemann: „Gewonnen hatten wir bei diesem Wechsel gar nichts, da es nur ein anderes Gefängnis war, und ebenso bewacht wie das, aus dem wir kamen. Der ganze Raum des neuen Käfigs war 14 ½ zu 20 Fuß, und in diesem Raume mussten wir 23 Mann mit noch etwa 40 Gepäckstücken einen Monat leben.“ Ibid.

³³ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

out for three days. Fr. Finnemann recalled: “We were not allowed to eat outside even once. All meals were taken behind bars.”³⁴ Locked up for many hours without fresh air and unable to sleep because of the constant disturbances day and night, they rejoiced when the ship started to leave the port of Honolulu. After their departure, their request to have fresh air was granted but they had to clean all the toilets and the bathrooms as well as the corridors and public places which were full of spattered vomit. They reached the port of San Francisco at two thirty in the afternoon on 22 October 1918. While all the passengers of the ship went ashore, the prisoners remained locked inside their cabins. It was only on 25 October that they disembarked from the ship and were transferred to a military fort near the harbor of San Francisco.

2. Life at the Military Barracks in San Francisco

After enduring many indescribable tribulations on board the ship, the deported SVD missionaries were interned at Fort Mason, San Francisco, California on 25 October 1918.³⁵ In this command post, they had a better accommodation and the officer was very kind to them. They were only told to clean their quarters. For their meals, they were taken to a nearby barracks under heavy guard three times a day. They were accompanied even to the public lavatories. Although they were still kept under military custody, Fr. Finnemann had this to say: “We are all three well. It is pretty nice here, nothing is missing; plenty of food, well prepared, four hours recreation every day. As we are with 36 Germans in the same room spiritual exercises are practised as well as possible under these circumstances.”³⁶ From Fort Mason they were transferred to the *Praesidio* on the outskirts of the

³⁴ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Fr. Finnemann further wrote: „Alle Mahlzeiten wurden hinter Schloss und Riegel genommen; unser Essgeschirr mussten wir 23 Mann in einem Eimer voll Wasser spülen, der in den Käfig gesetzt wurde. Nachdem wir bereits über 50 Stunden ohne frische Luft gewesen waren, wurde es manchem ungemütlich; denn die Luft war zu dick in dem kleinen Raum.“ Ibid.

³⁵ Finnemann to Blum, 2 November 1918, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. See also Finnemann „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“. Fort Mason was also known as San Francisco Port of Embarkation and served as a military fort. Fr. Finnemann also wrote to his brother Franz and his sister-in-law informing them that he spent thirty days travelling across the Pacific Ocean. See Finnemann to Finnemann, 24 July 1919, Finnemann Letters, Josef Schmitz Papers.

³⁶ Finnemann to Blum, 2 November 1918, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

island in San Francisco on 19 November 1918.³⁷ In this camp, they had to discharge several tasks like “scrubbing, sweeping, rinsing, cleaning toilets and bathrooms, peeling of potatoes and onions, dragging of coals and so on.”³⁸

During their stay at Fort Mason, the SVDs were not allowed to celebrate Mass even though a small chapel was located not far from their barracks. An Irish priest who heard about the missionaries visited them at the fort, and they were able to talk to him for a few minutes. When they were transferred to the *Praesidio*, however, the priest was not allowed to converse with them. The army chaplain who visited them twice in December promised that he would talk to the Archbishop of San Francisco about their request to celebrate Mass. The reply of the Archbishop was held back by the authorities and was only forwarded to them when they were already in Techny, Illinois.

Meanwhile in Europe, the First World War came to an end with the signing of the armistice on 11 November 1918. Another group of deportees, however, already departed from Manila before the conclusion of the truce. On 25 November, 16 Germans who were deported from the Philippines arrived in San Francisco. Among them were Fr. Michael Hergesheimer, Fr. Heinrich Bürschen and Fr. Franz Blasczyk.³⁹

The missionaries were released on parole on 17 December 1918 on condition that they would leave immediately for St. Mary’s Seminary in Techny. From the *Praesidio* they went to the Franciscans in San Francisco and stayed there until 19 December since the authorities were still questioning them. Fr. Blasczyk, who had been admitted to the military hospital, was transferred to another hospital in San Francisco in order to recuperate. Fr. Bürschen was also hospitalized, so he could not travel. The other missionaries took the train in the evening of the 19th of December and arrived in Techny before the eve of Christmas to the great jubilation of their confreres who eagerly awaited their arrival.

³⁷ The date given by Fr. Finnemann in his account regarding the transfer was 19 October 1918. Following the series of events, however, the date should be 19 November 1918.

³⁸ Finnemann, „Von den Philippinen nach Nord-Amerika“.

³⁹ The missionaries departed from Manila in October 1918.

B. The Generalate and the Philippine Question

1. The Repercussions of the Deportation of the Missionaries

On account of the deportation of the SVD missionaries, Bishop Hurth requested the superior of the Scheut missionaries to take over the mission stations in Abra. Fr. Oktaaf Vandewalle, the parish priest of Tagudin, Ilocos Sur was sent to Abra to check the conditions there. After visiting the main stations together with Fr. Hergesheimer, he made a report to his superior, who sent three Scheut missionaries: Fr. Séraphim Devesse, Fr. George Giebens and Fr. Gaston Declercq. They took over part of the Abra mission.⁴⁰ The diocesan priests who took charge of the parishes in Abra were Fr. Alejo Umel, Fr. Basilio Fortuna, Fr. Montano Domingo, Fr. Jacinto Garcia, Fr. Baltasar Advincula, and Fr. Miguel Busque. Fr. Devesse was the superior of the Abra mission while Fr. Umel assisted him. Fr. Fortuna took care of San José. Fr. Giebens was assigned to La Paz and San Gregorio and then was succeeded by Fr. Domingo who in turn was succeeded by Fr. Garcia. Fr. Declercq was in charge of the station in Lagangilang as well as Lacub, Licuan and Bangilo. He was succeeded by Fr. Advincula. Fr. Busque worked in Pilar for a short time.

During the exile of some SVDs, the outstations could not be visited by priests. The catechists took over the task of teaching the people in their absence. One of them was Bernardo Batoon who had studied in Tayum under the administration of the Holy Ghost sisters. Since then he had become actively involved in the mission of the SVDs. He gathered the people in Licuan every Sunday and taught them the rudiments of the Christian faith. His exemplary life was a model for Christians and non-Christians alike.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Peñaranda, *Carrying on the Mission*, 26.

⁴¹ The SVD missionaries expressed their admiration for Bernardo Batoon in these words: "Gedurende de gedwongen verbanning der missionarissen had de onderwijzer van Licuan zijn werk goed overlegd. Hij moest optreden als pastor, onderwijzer, leider enz. Elken Zondag placht hij zijn engelsche Bijbelsche Geschiedenis mee naar de kerk te nemen en voor de vergadering 'n paar hoofdstukken te vertalen en uit te leggen. Zijn godvreezend leven was een toonbeeld zoowel voor de nieuwe christenen als voor de heidenen van het dorp en den omtrek. De onderwijzer heet Bernardo Batun [Batoon], een jonge Philippijn, tusschen de 20 en 30 jaar. Hij ontving zijn opleiding van de Eerw. Zusters, die een school voor meer uitgebreid lager onderwijs besturen te Tayum in Abra." See: Een Merkwaardige Bekeering in Abra: *De Katholieke Missiën* (July 1921) 138-139. He entered the seminary in Vigan and was later ordained priest.

In October 1918, Fr. Hergesheimer, Fr. Blasczyk, and Fr. Bürschen were also deported to the United States. In order to avert the imminent expulsion of the remaining SVD missionaries, Bishop Hurth went to Manila to negotiate personally with Governor General Harrison, but to no avail. The Governor General maintained that the deportation of all German citizens had been ordered by the government. In view of this situation, those who remained in the Philippines were waiting for the deportation orders.

The SVD missionaries who were not deported continued to serve in the province of Abra. Father Theodor Schindler remained at San José, Fr. Theodor Buttenbruch was transferred to Villavieja and Fr. Philipp Beck stayed in Pilar. The Bishop of Vigan and the Apostolic Delegate, however, strongly opposed the departure of the remaining SVDs. Both wanted to take up the case of the deported missionaries as they had been wrongly denounced.⁴² Fr. Beck wrote:

I should have liked also to go to the United States together with the Brother and the two fathers. Therefore I was last week in Manila. We would have received free transportation on the government transport. But our bishop and the Apostolic Delegate opposed this strongly. They want to have our case taken up as we had been wrongly denounced by the native element. The Delegate wrote to the Apostolic Nuntius [*sic*] in Washington to have the Fathers sent back in order to impress on the people that they had been wronged. I do not know whether this is advisable or not. I and many others have the impression that after some time we have to go anyhow.⁴³

Unable to make a decision under the prevailing conditions, Fr. Beck sought instructions from Fr. Blum: “But kindly let us know soon what we should do. If you want us to go also to the States and if we can do it send me a telegram, th[at] is, send it to Holy Ghost College, Manila. I am ready to go anywhere or also to stay in the Islands.”⁴⁴ In spite of the troubles of the German missionaries, there were some bishops who asked for SVD missionaries to work in their dioceses. Bishop Alfredo Versoza of the Diocese of Lipa wrote to Fr. Beck with

⁴² Beck to Blum, 30 November 1918, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. News concerning the deportation was published in the *Steyler Chronik*. Nachrichten aus unsern Missionen: *Steyler Chronik* (February 1919) 15.

⁴³ Beck to Blum, 30 November 1918, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

a request to send missionaries to his diocese.⁴⁵ Such requests strengthened the arguments of the missionaries to stay in the Philippines.

The Apostolic Delegate dispatched a letter to the Apostolic Nuncio in Washington to make an appeal before the American authorities for the SVD missionaries to be allowed to return to the Philippines as a vindication that they had been wrongly accused. Meanwhile, Fr. Beck earnestly asked the advice of the Superior General whether they should already leave for the United States. In view of the impending deportation, Fr. Beck exhumed the remains of Fr. Johann Scheiermann, Fr. Friedrich Bermel and Fr. Wilhelm Riede which were transferred to the Church in Bangued while the remains of Fr. Ludwig Beckert were interred in the Malate Church in Manila.

Fr. Blum in his letter to Fr. Finnemann wrote, "I am very happy to hear you and your brethren are quite well. Here we do not forget you, always praying to God that he may give you a good chance to quick[ly] go to Techny Ill., to be restored there from your fatigues and can help the Rev. Fathers there in their works."⁴⁶ In the meanwhile, Fr. Beck forwarded a letter to Fr. Blum: "I was in November at Manila and intended to leave with the remaining two priests and the brother Patrick. The delegate and our bishop absolutely refused us the permission to go. But we had already given over, th[at] is, Father Regional had done it, the whole mission to the Belgian Fathers of Scheut."⁴⁷ With the growing uncertainty about the future of the four SVDs who were left behind, Fr. Beck asked the Superior General, "Will the fathers come back and will we continue the work in Abra or will the mission be given up?"⁴⁸ He insisted:

But we would be very thankful, and also the Belgian Fathers if we would be informed, whether our Society shall continue that mission in Abra or not. We need to know it on account of the schools, more than we the Belgian father[s], who are really in charge, need to know. In as much I can judge I don't think they will refuse to take over the mission when they will be asked by the ecclesiast[ical] authorities. So kindly dear Father, if possible send a telegram to Holy Ghost College, Manila (this is the surest address) informing

⁴⁵ Bishop Versosa made this request: "Al momento yo quisiera ser feliz teniendo en ésta Diócesis algunos Padres de su Congregación para ayudarme." Versosa to Beck, 18 December 1918, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R746.

⁴⁶ Blum to Finnemann, 6 February 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁴⁷ Beck to Blum, 14 February 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

us, whether it is your intention to continue the mission or not and where we should go.⁴⁹

As the situation was becoming worse, Fr. Buttenbruch, who was at that time in Villavieja, sent a letter to the Superior General: “The uncertainty of our situation keeps away ... the enthusiasm for mission work. If you decide in favor to stay in Abra, we would gladly obey your orders.”⁵⁰ Fr. Finnemann also wrote to the Superior General giving the reasons why the Society should keep the Abra mission. He also requested him to send him back to the Philippines: “I would like to add an urgent request to send me back to the Philippines if you believe that we should keep this mission. A ‘tropical plant’ is not good for the cold.”⁵¹ Bishop Hurth informed the Superior General that the deportation of the SVDs was a result of religious hatred. He asserted:

The reputation of your beloved Society, as well as Catholic missionaries in general, requires that this plot in a decisive manner is a work of lies that should be put before the public. This can happen when the deported missionaries return to the area and continue working as before. It is perhaps the only vindication for the Fathers, which is feasible under the circumstances, but it is also quite expedient. I am already in correspondence with Washington in order to eliminate the obstacles which stand in the way for the return of the Fathers.⁵²

In an article written by a Protestant minister, W. R. Hanna, which was published in the *Ti Dalan ti Cappia* and also in a Jesuit magazine in the United States, the German missionaries were maligned. According to the allegation, German priests and nuns acted as spies for Germany. In spite of the writer’s malice, the write-up expressed one of the most glowing tributes that could be given to the evangelical life and apostolic labors of the pioneer SVD missionaries in the Philippines. Mr. Hanna contended:

The *Daily Bulletin* here at Manila spread the news that the German priests and nuns in Abra are spies of Germany. The Secret Service had found out that the Society which was believed to be holy and which is called “The Society of the Divine Word” is a dirty society, sent and guided by the Department of Spies of Germany to work in all parts of the

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Buttenbruch to Blum, 14 March 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁵¹ Finnemann to Blum, 4 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁵² Hurth to Blum, 10 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R756. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

Orient for the spreading of German interests. Never was there a clearer proof that there are wolves in the clothing of sheep than in the case of the German priests in the Philippines. Through their zeal and fervor for the Roman Catholic Religion, through their leading a poor life, through their continuous hard traveling, they pretended as if they were true ministers of the Word of God; but their hearts were black, they were malefactors, friends of the devil and of Kaiser Wilhelm who willfully tricked the rich and the poor, the high and the lowly, and even the Government. The engineer Smith of Vigan told the writer of this that he gave money to one of those priests, who had nothing but corn to eat, and told him to buy rice. The priests tell with their mouths that they are poor, and ask the Government for food and for help for their schools, and the riches of Germany were behind them untouched.⁵³

The missionaries were accused of espionage. News spread about the existence of a plot, which had its center in Shanghai, that branched out and spread everywhere. According to the exposé, the SVDs were German officers dressed in cassocks in the service of the German government.⁵⁴ The plot was “discovered” in October 1918 and was published in the newspapers. Bishop Hurth wrote a letter of protest to the editor of the *Manila Daily Bulletin* which made a stir about the plot and demanded compensation after the war was over if the allegations against the missionaries were not true. The Bishop presented six points of the espionage charges to be proven by the editor. The editor did not respond to the Bishop’s letter.

On 2 May 1919 Bishop Hurth gave a homily on the occasion of a pontifical requiem in the chapel of the old cemetery which was attended by many prominent people in Vigan. In his homily he defended Fr. Blasczyk who suffered on account of the accusation hurled against him.⁵⁵ Bishop Hurth showed his solidarity with the missiona-

⁵³ Protestant Defamation of Philippine Catholics: *America* (10 May 1919) 136. See also Wilhelm Finemann, „Deutsche Spione sind entdeckt“, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/L.

⁵⁴ Buttenbruch to Blum, 25 October 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁵⁵ In his letter to Fr. Blum, Fr. Beck recounted the homily of Bishop Hurth: “Para que comprendan Vds. lo que esto, deben Vds. recordarse que en el pais del Padre Blasczyk un sacerdote que comite tal delito es un objeto de desprecio común [*sic*]. Debe hacer penitencia sincera y sin embargo salir de la diocesis para poder continuar sus trabajos. Asi es que esta calumnia ha sido el golpe mortal para el R.P. Bl[asczyk]. Despues de haber oido esta infame calumnia el pobre padre estuve tan agitado que durante tres noches no podía dormir, llorando y gritando à si solo. Llegado à San Francisco cayó enfermo y los medicos no podían diagnosticar su enfermedad. Murió este padre assesi-

ries. In acknowledging the efforts of the bishop, Fr. Beck wrote: “We on our part are indebted very much to the bishop for his fearless words as he himself has been in great danger and as he has numerous enemies.”⁵⁶

Although the SVDs preferred to stay and work in the Philippines, the future seemed to be bleak as they were waiting for the final word from the Superior General. After receiving a telegram from Steyl, Fr. Beck informed the Bishop that they would be leaving in three to four weeks. He went to see Msgr. Hurth who complained that he was not informed by the Superior General about the decision.⁵⁷

2. Entreaties and Decisions

All in all, from 1909 to 1919, there were sixteen Divine Word Missionaries who had been officially assigned to the Philippines. The first missionaries sent to the Philippines were quite young. Many of them were newly ordained and were sent to the mission for the first time. Because the missionaries were unaccustomed to the climate of the tropics, their health was a paramount concern.

Before the arrival of the SVD missionaries, many Catholics had gone over to the Aglipayans⁵⁸ or to various Protestant sects in Abra

nado, si verdaderamente asesinado. Se asesina con revolver y puñal, se asesina tambien con la lengua. Algunas autoridades à quienes el gobierno central había confiado de vigilar por el bien del pueblo, se han avalorado de la falsificación de firmas para acusar a los misioneros de Abra. Y aquel padre Blasczyk ha sido calumniado. Aquella niña à quien se refería la acusación ha firmado un documento cuyo contenido no conocía como testificó su propia madre. El buen padre ha muerto asesinado y deben Vds. ver pues en este acto de hoy una reparación y satisfacción publica que le debemos.” Beck to Blum, 15 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁵⁶ Beck to Blum, 15 May 1919.

⁵⁷ Fr. Beck wrote to Blum: “It seems that the bishop has complained to the Apostolic Delegate and taken recourse to the Holy See against your decision. Sr. Hieronyma was called by the Apostolic Delegate on April 26, because Msgr. Hurth had complained to him, that Sr. Superior called two sisters for the Novitiate to Manila. He said, that this would be only the beginning and that most likely the sisters would one by one be called back. He protested against this conduct of Sr. Hieronyma, who could easily defend herself. Msgr. Petrelli said, the bishop seems to be nervous.” Beck to Blum, 15 May 1919. See also Beck to Blum, 1 July 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁵⁸ Gregorio Aglipay, together with Isabelo de los Reyes, worked for the formation of a Filipino national church, which became known as the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, and then later on as the Philippine Independent Church. Eventually, it broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. This sect also became popularly known as the Aglipayan Church, and its members were called Aglipayans. See Pedro de Achútegui and Miguel Bernad, *The Life*

because of the absence of priests to attend to their spiritual needs. Moreover, the mission stations were so scattered that the number of missionaries was not in proportion to the missionary enterprise. Another setback was the diminution of personnel because there were several casualties during the incipient years of the mission of the Divine Word Missionaries. Fr. Johann Scheiermann was the first casualty, having died of typhoid fever in 1910 after only a few months in Abra. Fr. Beckert himself was not spared. He succumbed to dysentery in 1913, influenza carried off Fr. Friedrich Bermel in 1914, Fr. Wilhelm Riede drowned in 1915, and Fr. Paul Schrage died of typhoid fever in 1916. With the outbreak of World War I, five new priests appointed for Abra in 1914 could not leave Steyl on 3 August 1914.⁵⁹ Towards the end of World War I, seven SVDs were deported to the United States where Fr. Franz Blasczyk died in 1919.⁶⁰ Four SVDs remained in Abra.

The table below lists the SVD missionaries who came to the Philippines between 1909 and 1918.

*List of SVD missionaries who were officially assigned
to the Philippines*

Missionary	Birth	Arrival	Death
Fr. Ludwig Beckert	1880	1909	1913
Fr. Johann Scheiermann	1883	1909	1910
Fr. Josef Stigler	1885	1910	1939
Fr. Michael Hergesheimer	1881	1910	1969
Fr. Bruno Drescher	1881	1910	1970

and *Church of Gregorio Aglipay*, vol. I of the *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, Manila: Ateneo de Manila, 1960. See also Mary Dorita Clifford, *Iglesia Filipina Independiente: The Revolutionary Church*, in: Gerald Anderson (ed.), *Studies in Philippine Church History*, London: Cornell University Press 1969, 223-255. Protestant missionaries were sent to the Philippines in great numbers. See John Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University 1979, 345-347.

⁵⁹ Fr. A. Greinert, Fr. I. Hüllmeier, Fr. G. Antweiler, Br. Lidwinus (J. Middendorf), and Br. Justinianus (L. Walter) were appointed for the Philippine mission and were listed in the *Schematismus SVD*. See *Schematismus SVD 1918*, Steyl: Domus Missionum ad S. Michaellem 1918, 37 and *Schematismus SVD 1919*, Steyl: Domus Missionum ad S. Michaellem 1919, 42. They did not work in the Philippines. See also Michael Hergesheimer, *Jahresbericht 1916 der Abramission: Steyler Missionsbote* (May 1917) 120.

⁶⁰ Hermann Fischer (ed.), *Im Dienste des Göttlichen Wortes*, Steyl: Missionsdruckerei 1925, 122.

Fr. Theodor Buttenbruch	1886	1911	1944
Fr. Franz Blasczyk	1879	1911	1919
Fr. Heinrich Bürschen	1881	1911	1957
Fr. Philipp Beck	1880	1912	1947
Fr. Friedrich Bermel	1884	1912	1914
Fr. Wilhelm Riede	1879	1912	1915
Fr. Wilhelm Finnemann	1882	1912	1942
Br. Patricius [Konrad Grabsch]	1870	1912	1929
Br. Ulrich [Franz Meyer]	1889	1912	1940
Fr. Theodor Schindler	1887	1913	1961
Fr. Paul Schrage	1888	1913	1916

With the deportation of some of the SVDs and the uncertainties of the war in Europe that made it impossible to send reinforcements to the SVD mission in the Philippines, some confreres sent letters to the Superior General in which they asked him whether they should abandon the SVD missions. The Generalate thought seriously of giving up the Philippine mission altogether, but there were some SVD missionaries who strongly urged the Generalate to keep it. From Techny in the United States, where the missionaries were exiled, some of the deported missionaries sent letters to the Superior General in which they indicated several reasons why the Society should not give up the Abra mission.

The Apostolic Delegate, concerned about the total withdrawal of the SVD missionaries, entreated those who were not deported to delay their departure. He instructed Fr. Beck to write to the Superior General not to make any hasty decision that could have adverse consequences.⁶¹ In the meanwhile, Fr. Hergesheimer wrote to the Superior General: “[T]he principal question is this, if we will or not keep the mission we had since 1909, or if we will give it up, now without going back and without any negotiations with the prelate. If we give it up, and know this from your Reverence, we shall give up our hopes and thoughts of going back, prepare us for another activity.”⁶² Fr. Finnemann was of the opinion that the Society should keep the mission in the Philippines. In his letter to the Superior General, he

⁶¹ Petrelli to Beck, 14 March 1919, Manila, Philippine Central Province Archives, *Abra*.

⁶² Hergesheimer to Blum, 24 March 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

stated the reasons why the Society should remain in the Philippines.⁶³ Not knowing whether or not the Superior General had intentions of withdrawing from the Philippines, Fr. Beck sent a telegram to Fr. Blum asking him whether they should already prepare to leave Abra. On 3 April 1919, a telegram from the Generalate instructing the SVDs in Abra to go either to Flores or to the United States was delivered to the Holy Ghost College, and Sr. Hieronyma [Elisabeth Schulte-Ladbeck] sent it by mail to Fr. Beck. When Fr. Beck received the cable, he thought that it was an answer to the cable he had sent. Fr. Beck then left for Manila to prepare for their departure, but there were no steamers bound for their destination.

Regional Superior Hergesheimer once again dispatched a letter to the Superior General stating the reasons why the Society should keep the mission. He reasoned:

I wish to plead for our old territory although we have had many difficulties and to bring hard sacrifices of every kind, that territory deserves our sympathy. First on account of the many sacrifices we had thereat. The seed is now growing and bearing fruit by and by. Should we now give it up? Second, the more than 40 schools with 2500 pupils are going on, as the help from these good Catholics began to be realized. Aided by them, we can carry on the work, and rather enlarge it. Third, we have to go back in order to win the full victory of our good reputation that has been stained by calumniations. Our prelate worked so much for us, and he wants us back at every price, even if he has to pay our ticket. He will be in favor for the stipulations to be made between him and us. Fourth, our staying here in [the] States brings us a better knowledge of the English language we absolutely need there in order to enjoy the necessary esteem and efficiency in the school work. Should we not make use of this knowledge? In that place where it is badly needed? At the time when the help of English speaking missionaries is more required than anytime before? Fifth, we make the acquaintance with good friends who are willing to help a mission in an American colony. So our chance, even financially, will be far better than before. Will they help us when we go to other places? Sixth, the experiences gathered during nine

⁶³ Fr. Finnemann argued: “Hemos salido de Abra á consecuencia de calumnias y exageraciones é intrigas que nos hacían los enemigos de la Religión Católica. Han triunfado aquellos inicuos, y en caso de que no se vuelvan sus hijos de Vd. allí, sería completo el triunfo de ellos. Pues creo que sería nuestro deber de volver cuanto antes posible.” Finnemann to Blum, 3 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. See also Finnemann to Blum, 4 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

years will be more or less of no use to us when we do not return.... We are willing and ready at every hour to return to that place which we have left. We do not feel well satisfied under the actual circumstances and conditions.⁶⁴

Fr. Finnemann cited the presence of non-Christians, the expansion of the mission of the Society, the schools, the possibility of American missionaries to work in the country, the apostolate of the press and the deportation as reasons why the Society should not give up the mission in the Philippines.⁶⁵ He forwarded another letter requesting the Superior General to send him back to the Islands.⁶⁶ When Fr. Beck informed the Apostolic Delegate about leaving the Philippines, the latter wrote:

As to your idea to leave for good for the States, please do not hurry, and do delay to take any definite step, until you may have [the] chance to talk with dear Bishop Hurth. I have written him this day on the subject, and hope that he calls you for a conference. I would respond before your Superior General for the temporary delay in carrying on the instructions you might have received from him to quit the Islands for the States.⁶⁷

Fr. Heinrich Bürschen also wrote an impassioned letter enumerating the reasons why the Superior General should not give up the Philippine mission.⁶⁸ He wrote, "All the fathers love the mission and would like to continue working there with the exception of Fr. Beck."⁶⁹ Bishop Hurth was convinced that the return of the exiled SVD missionaries would be a vindication for the reputation of the Society and the Catholic Church. Upon being informed about the suggestion of Bishop Hurth that the deported SVDs should return to the Philippines as a proof of their innocence, Fr. Blum was not at all

⁶⁴ Hergesheimer to Blum, 4 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. See also Hergesheimer to Blum, 13 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. Fr. Finnemann also made the same entreaties to the Superior General. See Finnemann to Blum, 21 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁶⁵ Finnemann to Blum, 4 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁶⁶ Fr. Finnemann expressed his sentiments: "Creo y espero de toda fuerza que sea de poca dura nuestra morada aquí. No tengo gana de residir en esta casa por lo resto de la vida, sinó siguiendo una ansia piadosa quiero volver á Abra, si será posible." Finnemann to Blum, 16 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁶⁷ Petrelli to Beck, 28 April 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁶⁸ Bürschen to Blum, May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁶⁹ Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

in favor of the proposal of the Bishop.⁷⁰ In Techny, Fr. Hergesheimer wrote: “Today came a letter from Sr. Hieronyma saying that Fr. Beck received a telegram from you: Go to Flores or United States if possible. That shows that our fate there in our mission has been decided.”⁷¹ Writing from Villavieja in Abra, Fr. Buttenbruch wrote to Fr. Hergesheimer suggesting that the recall by the Superior General was “due to the unfounded insistence on the part of Father Beck.”⁷² In Techny, Fr. Finnemann once again wrote a letter to the Superior General about his desire to go back to Abra.⁷³

Bishop John Bernard MacGinley of Nueva Cáceres conveyed his sentiments to Fr. Beck: “I am sorry to learn that you and all the Fathers are to leave the Philippines for good; it may be for your good but certainly not for the good of the Philippines.”⁷⁴ He wanted the Society to work in his diocese.

Meanwhile, Fr. Blum wrote to Fr. Hergesheimer, “We are not totally opposed to the return [of the SVDs] to Abra, when there is a really clear and good contract with the bishop.”⁷⁵ Having been informed about the withdrawal of the SVD missionaries, Archbishop O’Doherty of Manila wrote to Fr. Beck that he was not in favor of the

⁷⁰ Fr. Blum remarked: „Wenn ein solcher Kontrakt nicht zustande kommt, ist die Rückkehr ausgeschlossen. Dass Sie zurückkehren sollen, nur um sich dort zu zeigen, ist nicht nötig. Wer soll die Kosten tragen?“ Blum to Hergesheimer, 5 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁷¹ Hergesheimer to Blum, 13 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Fr. Hergesheimer further wrote: „Und doch muss ich und müssen wir Verbannten hier sagen, dass diese Entscheidung ganz gegen unsere Erwartung ist, da wir in all unsern Schreiben immer wieder darauf zurückkommen, uns vorläufig nicht umzubestimmen, und auch die drei Patres mit dem einen Bruder doch dort zu lassen, da sie mehr oder weniger die Grundlage für unser Verlangen sind. Doch werden sie zunächst nicht fortkönnen, weder nach Flores noch hierher. Und somit ist noch ein letzter Hoffnungsschimmer für unsere Rückkehr vorhanden. Es ist nötig, dass wir dorthin zurückkehren, und zwar aus den Gründen, die ich schon angeführt habe, und aus dem, was wir jetzt immer wieder hören aus Briefen, die von drüben kommen.“ Ibid.

⁷² Buttenbruch to Hergesheimer, 20 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁷³ Fr. Finnemann implored: “Oh pluguiera al Señor que después de poco tiempo podamos volver.” Finnemann to Blum, 21 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁷⁴ MacGinley to Beck, 22 May 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁷⁵ Blum to Hergesheimer, 5 June 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738. The quotation is a translation of the German text. Fr. Blum expressed the same opinion in his letter to Fr. Buttenbruch. Blum to Buttenbruch, 6 June 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

departure of the remaining SVDs.⁷⁶ The confusion brought about by the situation prompted Fr. Blum to write to Bishop Hurth regarding the position of the Generalate. The former informed the Bishop that the Generalate had not yet decided whether or not to give up the mission.⁷⁷ While the question regarding the withdrawal of the rest of the SVDs and the return of the deported missionaries was in progress, Fr. Hergesheimer, the superior of the Philippine mission, requested the Superior General to send him to another mission in case they were not to go back to the Philippines.⁷⁸ In view of the forthcoming deportation of the SVDs still in Abra, mission property was turned over to the bishop, and the bishop invited the Scheut missionaries to take charge of the administration of the missions in Abra out of fear that the four SVDs would be deported.⁷⁹ The bishop also sent three Filipino priests for La Paz, San Juan and Tayum.

As the clamor for the German missionaries to stay became compelling, Fr. Beck asked the Generalate to keep the Abra mission. Fr. Beck had this to say:

Not knowing whether your Reverence intended to give up the mission of Abra or not I sent therefore a telegram asking 'Shall we leave Abra or the Philippines.' When your cable arrived I considered it as an answer to my cable. As above stated I went to Manila but only to find out that we could not leave. There are no steamers for Dutch Indies and for America are also no steamers. Besides this I need the recommendation of the Archbishop in order to have permission to go to U.S. The Archbishop does 'not like the idea of helping out of the country [the Fathers of] the Society of the Divine Word.' Also the Delegate opposed very much our going and he pledged himself to take the responsibility for my delaying the departure until you could be informed. Also the

⁷⁶ O'Doherty to Beck, 11 June 1919, Rome, AGVSD, AS, R738.

⁷⁷ Blum to Hurth, 28 June 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R756.

⁷⁸ Fr. Hergesheimer wrote: „Es wird langweilig in dieser Ungewissheit. Ich wiederhole nochmals meine schon ausgesprochene Bitte, dass ich im Falle wir gehen nicht mehr zurück, lieber in irgendeine andere Mission gehen möchte als mich in diesem Lande verd[ien]t zu machen. Ich will damit keinerlei Druck ausüben, aber meinen Wunsch aussprechen. Ich bin noch jung genug, um in eine ferne Mission zu gehen und um irgendeine fremde Sprache zu erlernen, [auch] schließlich zwei, wenn es sein muss. Auch habe ich eine ziemlich gute Gesundheit, wenn ich auch oft starke Kopfschmerzen habe und mich unpässlich fühle.“ Hergesheimer to Blum, 28 June 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁷⁹ Fr. Beck was of the opinion that two different congregations in one mission territory would not work, so he wanted the mission in Abra to be under the administration of the SVD.

other bishops especially Bishop Versoza, our sincere friend, and Bishop McGuinley [MacGinley] of Nueva Caceres expressed their sincere sadness about our going... After all this we thought it to be the will of God that we should stay. The superior of the Belgian Fathers declared that they could not take over the mission for lack of priests and that they themselves had a great district, where they needed still priests.⁸⁰

Fr. Beck informed Bishop Hurth that the SVDs would only continue to take charge of the mission stations entrusted to them on the condition that the latter would defray the expenses of the school and the remuneration of the sisters. He also told the bishop that there would be no hope of continuing the mission unless the whole of Abra including Bangued would be turned over to the Society. Optimistic that the aforementioned conditions would be fulfilled, Fr. Beck proposed to the Superior General: "So I would suggest now to Your Reverence to let us continue in the Philippines even if not all the Fathers in the U.S. could return, if only the Bishop is willing to accept your conditions. Perhaps you could send one or another American father for exchange."⁸¹ Fr. Hergesheimer, however, put forward that the SVDs should leave Abra even if there was a contract with the Bishop. He also wanted to be relieved from his responsibility. He wrote: "I can no longer burden myself with new responsibilities. It is already enough. I have done what I could for the mission... I decline any responsibility for the further fate of the Abra mission."⁸²

Fr. Josef Schipman, a Scheut missionary, disclosed that his congregation could no longer maintain the missions in Abra which had been started by the SVDs. He persuaded the SVDs who had not been deported to stay:

There is a great need and a great lack of missionaries here in Northern Luzon and it will take a long time still before the field may be adequately covered. Therefore if possible, you should stay here. As to the question, whether we would eventually take over your places definitively in Abra, that is something that I cannot answer. We were ready and glad to do relief work in an emergency, but as to take over your mission altogether would not simply mean an extension of our work in the P[hilippine] I[slands] but would really be to take over an established mission under [the] care of another

⁸⁰ Beck to Blum, 1 July 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R738.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Hergesheimer to Blum, 7 July 1919, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

Congregation, I could not decide that, but it would go up to our Super[rior] General and his Council. And really we are far from being able to fill the field we have; need for men, need for money is all I hear and see all the time. So I hope Divine Providence will keep you here to fulfill the work you have so successfully begun.⁸³

Having taken into consideration the entreaties of the missionaries who labored in the Philippines, the decision to remain there was the last official act of Superior General Blum for the Philippine mission. Fr. Blum dispatched a letter to Regional Superior Hergesheimer in Techny, Illinois that the Generalate was in favor of the return of the deported missionaries to the Philippines, and the SVDs who were still in Abra could stay.⁸⁴ In September 1919, Fr. Blum wrote to Bishop Hurth that the missionaries who had not been deported could remain, and the missionaries who had been exiled in the United States could return to work in the Philippines.⁸⁵ Upon learning of this development, Fr. Hergesheimer wrote:

And I still cannot get rid of the views already expressed, that in my opinion the S.V.D. should hold on to what it has had till now, especially since the future does not look that rosy for Germans in the foreign missions. If American missionaries have to pitch in for China, if so many are sent to Flores in order to save and to help, why should we not also in the Philippines at least keep what we are able to keep?⁸⁶

III. The Return of the Deported German Missionaries

A. The Period of Waiting

The fate of the deported German SVD missionaries was still uncertain, and some of them could no longer endure the seemingly end-

⁸³ Schipman to Beck, 18 July 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁸⁴ Blum to Hergesheimer, 7 September 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. Fr. Blum also wrote a letter to Fr. Beck telling him that he could remain. See Blum to Beck, 7 September 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁸⁵ Blum to Hurth, 7 September 1919, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R756. The Superior General wrote: „Mit Bezugnahme auf mein Schreiben vom 22.6. teile ich Eurer Bischöflichen Gnaden ergebenst mit, dass ich gerne sehe, dass die drei Patres dort bleiben und die andern zurückkehren. Möge der liebe Gott helfen, dass wir unsere Tätigkeit in Abra ungestört zur Ehre Gottes fortsetzen können. Helfen Eure Bischöfliche Gnaden mit, einen guten Weg zu bahnen für die Zukunft.“ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Hergesheimer to Blum, 1 October 1919, AGSVD, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R756. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

less days of waiting. While in Techny, Fr. Hergesheimer worked at the Procure, Fr. Stigler taught Biblical history and German, Fr. Drescher did pastoral duties at a seniors' residence. Fr. Bürschen taught Biblical history and helped the rector in the supervision of the students. Fr. Finnemann taught Greek, English, Geography and Spanish. He was also the prefect of the students. Meanwhile, the Generalate in Steyl decided to continue the SVD mission in the Philippines to the delight of the deported missionaries. Fr. Bürschen expressed his joy at the news that they were allowed to return to Abra. He wrote: "We have won our dear mission and have seen that we can work there with success, particularly at a time when we have learned the necessary languages, have won the trust of the people and have known their character. Our stay in America has an additional and very valuable outcome, which has enriched us with many experiences and skills that for a missionary in the Philippines are of great importance."⁸⁷

There were some missionaries who had other views concerning the mission in Abra. Fr. Hergesheimer, in one of his letters, even suggested: "For me, it would be right if our mission neighbors, the Scheut Fathers, took over our mission area. Geographically and ethnographically, Abra belongs to their larger mission. It is regrettable that it was not given to them from the beginning. Abra is and remains a small province with a maximum number of 100,000 inhabitants even if we accept 20 to 25,000 in Ilocos Sur."⁸⁸ He further observed that there was a prevailing antipathy towards white people

⁸⁷ Bürschen to Bodems and the Generalate, 8 January 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. The quotation is a translation of the German text. The shortage of priests, the rise of Protestantism and the situation of the youth were the reasons for the importance of the mission in the Philippines as mentioned by Fr. Buttenbruch to Fr. Bodems. See Buttenbruch to Bodems, 23 January 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. Fr. Bürschen also remarked: „Wir sehen daraus, dass der Hochw. Generalrat beschlossen hat, die Philippinen nicht aufzugeben. Dieser Entschluss freut uns sehr und wird alle Mitbrüder dieser Region mit Freude und Mut erfüllen dort weiterzuarbeiten.“ See Bürschen to Bodems, 3 May 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁸⁸ Hergesheimer to Bodems, 6 April 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. The quotation is a translation of the German text. He also maintained that the mission in Kalinga should belong to the Scheut missionaries: „Was P. Buttenbruch Ihnen neulich schrieb über diese Gebiete und ihre Angliederung an die Abra Mission, so muss doch gesagt werden, dass es sich nie machen lässt: das Gebiet gehört einmal den Scheut-Vätern, und durch ihr Gebiet allein wird der beste Zugang offenstehen (von Abra aus nur beschwerlicher Reitweg), nämlich ein fahrbarer Weg.“ Ibid.

and especially the SVDs for taking over the parish in Bangued.⁸⁹ For him, Abra was a small mission without a future.⁹⁰ As a reaction to the comments made by Fr. Hergesheimer, Fr. Bürschen corresponded with the Generalate: “It was unknown to me that Fr. Hergesheimer had brought up before the Generalate the idea of giving up the mission in the Philippines. Probably I had spoken with him once about this matter, when everything was still so uncertain, but I did not know that he had written in this respect.”⁹¹

Fr. Bürschen had high hopes concerning the future of the Philippine mission. He was enthusiastic about emerging requests for new mission projects: “The plan of taking over a large and abandoned parish in Manila is very favorable to us, and we hope that this plan will soon be implemented after our return to the Philippines. It would be good to have a permanent place in the capital for the press.”⁹² His vision of the SVD’s expansion did not only extend to Manila but also to far-flung villages situated deep in the mountains of Abra where the Tingguians lived and the vast uncharted non-Christian region of Kalinga and Apayao.⁹³ The prospects of the expansion of the SVD mission towards Kalinga further rekindled the desire of the missionaries to continue their work in the Philippines. Fr. Buttenbruch embarked on a mission trip to Kalinga and took notice of the absence

⁸⁹ Hergesheimer to Bodems, 6 April 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. Fr. Buttenbruch took over the administration of the parish of Bangued when the old parish priest died. When the parish in Bangued was turned over to the SVD, Fr. Bürschen wrote: „So konnte die große und wichtige Pfarrei uns gegeben werden ohne alle Schwier[i]gkeit und ohne böses Blut abzusetzen.“ See Bürschen to Bodems, 3 May 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. See also: De Missionarissen van het Goddelijk Woord op de Philippijnen: De Missie van Abra en Manila: *De Katholieke Missiën* (September 1925) 223.

⁹⁰ Fr. Hergesheimer wrote: „In der Tat, Abra ist und bleibt ein enges Gebiet ohne Zukunft. Was wir dann noch außerhalb der Provinz tun könnten, das können die Belgier später auch tun, sie brauchen bloß Leute zu haben; sie hatten mehr Erfahrung als wir. Das ist meine heutige Meinung, die ich auch früher schon gehabt, als allerlei Probleme auftauchten.“ See Hergesheimer to Bodems, 6 April 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁹¹ Bürschen to Bodems, 3 May 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁹² Ibid. The quotation is a translation of the German text.

⁹³ Bürschen to Bodems, 3 May 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. In his article written for a magazine, Fr. Theodor Winter described the Kalingas as headhunters. He wrote: “Boven, hoog in de Abrabergen, in den uitersten hoek van mijn missiegebied, woont de stam der Kalinga, beruchte koppensnellers.” See Theodor Winter, De Toovenares in de Abrabergen: *De Katholieke Missiën* (October 1928) 236. The Tingguians belong to the indigenous peoples who inhabit the province of Abra.

of a missionary in that region. The road that linked the province of Kalinga and Abra, which was started by the American government, made it easier to travel to this mountainous enclave. During that time, the bishop of Vigan also gave thought to the idea that Abra, Kalinga and Apayao could be united into one prefecture apostolic.

The eagerness to return to the missions was dampened by the prolonged delay. Fr. Bürschen voiced his exasperation that there was still no certainty about their situation in the United States as there was no definitive permission from the American government allowing them to return to the Philippines.⁹⁴ Under the prevailing conditions, he proposed that an American confrere be assigned to the Philippines to administer the SVD properties during those critical times and to oversee legal contracts.

B. The Departure of the Missionaries

Major General Frank McIntyre, Chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, answered the inquiry of the deported missionaries by cablegram on 8 June 1920 stating that on 14 May 1920, Governor General Harrison told Bishop Hurth, who was on his way to the United States, that the former had given the permission for the deported German missionaries to return to the Philippines, because enough time had already elapsed to calm the situation brought about by World War I.⁹⁵ The Governor General had no objections to the return of the missionaries any more. Writing from Techny on 11 August 1920, Fr. Bürschen disclosed that they were given permission by the American authorities to return to the Philippines.⁹⁶ He communicated the news to Fr. Johann Bodems that they already bought tickets for their return trip and that they were scheduled to leave on 27 October 1920 from Seattle.⁹⁷

On 27 October 1920, Fr. Heinrich Bürschen, Fr. Michael Hergesheimer and Br. Benedict Spohn boarded the steamer *Fushimi Maru*

⁹⁴ Bürschen to Bodems, 20 May 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁹⁵ Bürschen to Bodems, 13 July 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁹⁶ Bürschen to Bodems, 11 August 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. Fr. Bürschen wrote: "De terugkeer der missionarissen, door de regeering toegestaan, is een duidelijk bewijs hunner onschuld. De ons goed gezinde vrienden der missie verheugden zich van harte en kregen meer moed de Katholieke Kerk trouw te blijven. De schuldigen en ons minder goed gezinden werden kalmer." See Heinrich Bürschen, Het Missiewerk op de Philippijnen: *De Katholieke Missiën* (August 1923) 148.

⁹⁷ Bürschen to Bodems, 8 September 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

from Seattle to Japan. They arrived in Manila on 8 December 1920.⁹⁸ With regard to their return, Fr. Bürschen scribbled these lines: “What makes us happy the most is the sincere and childlike disposition of the populace, and the awareness that we can contribute a lot for these well-meaning people. In my travels to various places where we occasionally visit because there are no priests assigned there, people ask for priests.”⁹⁹ On 4 January 1921, three deported missionaries, Fr. Drescher, Fr. Stigler and Br. Ulrich left the United States and arrived in Manila on 17 February 1921.¹⁰⁰ Fr. Finne-
mann remained in the United States to solicit funds for the missions in Abra.

Conclusions

A narrative, derived from the written accounts of those who left behind the vestiges of the past, is an instrument to reconstruct the episodes of a bygone period that often baffle the imagination. In the same way, an example of deportation is a glimpse into the untold suffering of innocent victims who are caught in the quagmire of warfare, and the uncertainties that result from this strife. Fr. Finne-
mann’s account of the deportation is a vivid testimony of those difficult times. Moreover, the sources show that the missionaries were not only prolific writers but they were also eloquent narrators. These written narratives make their memories live on.

For the German SVD missionaries, it was a period of uncertainty. Amid this confusion was a conspicuous indecision on the part of some missionaries who wanted to give up the missions as shown by the correspondence between the Generalate and the missionaries. Nevertheless, there were others who evoked the triumph of the human capacity to be resolute, persevering and optimistic, as demonstrated by those who wanted to keep the SVD mission in Abra, which eventually

⁹⁸ Bürschen to Gier, 20 February 1921, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I. Br. Benedict Spohn was appointed for the Philippine mission on 4 August 1920. See Minutes of the General Council Meeting: Sitzung nr. 605, 4 August 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, Protokollbuch des Generalrates: 1914-1923. Fr. Bürschen also advised the Generalate to send missionaries who were healthy and strong since those with a weak constitution could not withstand the tropical climate. Fr. Bürschen wrote: „Der Mann muss, wie alle Missionare die zu den Philippinen kommen, sittlich fest stehn, ein gutes Streben nach Vollkommenheit haben und ein gesundes kräft[ig]es Herz haben. Wir haben dort ein tropisches Klima, wo Leute mit schwachem Herzen nicht lange leben, wie wir schon erfahren haben.“ See Bürschen to Bodems, 8 October 1920, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

⁹⁹ Bürschen to Gier, 20 February 1921, Rome, AGSVD, AS, R730/I.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

persuaded the Superior General and his Council to decide in their favor.

After the fact, it is easy to piece together every one of the pertinent informations to reach a decision. It is a different situation when one has to make decisions while the fact is in progress with all the complexities attached to it. Notwithstanding the obstacles, crucial decisions with far-reaching consequences can be made even during times of seemingly insurmountable crises. Along this line of thought, we clearly see the dilemma of the Superior General whether to keep the mission in the Philippines during the war; those were trying times. One can only appreciate today the significance of the decision he made during a period of great quandary. The resolution of the Philippine question has resulted in the continuance of the SVD mission and has eventually contributed to the development and expansion of the SVD apostolate in the Philippines.

ABSTRACTS

In diesem Artikel geht es um die Erfahrungen der deutschen Steyler der Abra-Mission während ihrer Deportation in die USA, die Haltung des Generalats bezüglich der daraus resultierenden Lage der SVD-Mission auf den Philippinen und die Rückkehr der Missionare. Auszüge aus dem Bericht von P. Wilhelm Finnemann über die Pazifik-Überfahrt wurden vom Verfasser ins Englische übersetzt und geben eine gute Vorstellung von dem, was die Missionare im Exil durchmachten. Die Briefe und Berichte der Missionare, die oft voller bildhafter und ausführlicher Beschreibungen ihrer Erfahrungen sind, sind nicht nur Zeugnisse der Drangsal der deutschen Missionare und der Unsicherheit für die SVD-Missionen als Konsequenz des Ersten Weltkriegs, sondern sie erlauben auch einen Blick auf die Fakten eines bisher unbekanntem Kapitels der Geschichte.

L'article présente l'épreuve des missionnaires SVD allemands lors de leur déportation aux États-Unis, la position du Généralat concernant l'état consécutif de la mission SVD à Abra et le retour des missionnaires aux Philippines. Des extraits du récit écrit par le Père Wilhelm Finnemann concernant la traversée de l'Océan Pacifique furent traduits en anglais pour donner une idée de ce qu'endurèrent les missionnaires. La correspondance et les rapports des missionnaires, qui sont souvent remplis de récits détaillés et imagés de leur expérience, ne sont pas seulement des témoignages des tribulations des missionnaires allemands et des aléas des entreprises SVD en raison de la première guerre mondiale, ils présentent aussi les faits d'un chapitre d'histoire inédit jusqu'à présent.

Este artículo presenta los sufrimientos de los misioneros alemanes del Verbo Divino durante su deportación a los Estados Unidos, la posición del Generalato en referencia a la situación de la misión verbita en Abra y el retorno de los misioneros a las Filipinas. Pasajes del informe escrito por el padre Wilhelm Finnemann sobre el viaje a través del Océano Pacífico fueron

traducidos al inglés para dar una idea de lo que les pasó a los misioneros. La correspondencia y los informes de los misioneros que presentan una extensiva y gráfica narración de sus experiencias, no solo dan testimonio de los sufrimientos de los misioneros alemanes y de las inseguridades de las empresas de la SVD como consecuencia de la Primer Guerra Mundial, sino que ellas también le permiten a uno mirar los hechos de esta historia aún nunca contada.