

Transcription, January 2015:

The Idaho Avalanche (Silver City, ID) No. 42 (9 June 1894) (anon.).

‘A Freiland Colony. An Interesting Experiment to be Tried in Africa. Disciples of Dr. Hertzka, the Austrian Economist, Attempt a Practical Exemplification of His Communistic Theories. Plans and Prospects of the Colonists.’

Another attempt to solve the great social problem on the lines laid down by an economic theorist will soon be under way in eastern central Africa. It is to be a communistic colony of the sort advocated by Dr. Theodor Hertzka, a distinguished Austrian political economist, in his book “Freiland,” from which the new settlement takes its name. The scheme has been under discussion for the past five years or more, and an association was long ago formed in Vienna for the purpose of carrying it out. There are now some 30 branch associations in Germany and England, and “the Freiland movement,” as it is called, is international in its aspirations.

The colony is to be located in what is now called Machakoland, a district to the east and south of Mount Kenia, which is said to be very fertile, well watered and salubrious. A party of 15 men is now on the way thither to select the actual site for the settlement and make preparations for the larger party of 40 or 50 persons which will sail from Hamburg as soon as the pioneers get everything in readiness.

Dr. Hertzka will not go to Africa himself, but will remain in Vienna and endeavor to promote the best interests of the colony from its European base of supplies. The pioneer party is under the command of Dr. Julius Wilhelm, a Vienna lawyer, who is known as the “economic chief” of the colony. English supporters of the project, among whom is Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, who is a vice president of the organization, have contributed most of the funds toward fitting out the expedition, though each of the colonists pays \$250 for his passage and outfit.

Each man is armed with a Mannlicher rifle and a full supply of cartridges, though it is not expected they will have to do any fighting with the natives, as they take along a large supply of barter goods with which to conciliate the blacks and pay for any provisions needed on the journey. They have a small stern wheel river steamer, with which they will ascend the Tara river as far as Hargazo, the head of navigable water, where it is intended to establish a river station.

It is but fair to let the colonists explain for themselves what they hope to accomplish and how they hope to do it, and for that purpose no better summary can be made than the following extract from their prospectus:

A number of men from all parts of the civilized world have united for the purpose of making a practical attempt to solve the social problem. They seek this solution in the establishment of a community on the basis of perfect liberty and economic justice—that is, of a community which, while it preserves the unqualified right of every individual to control his own actions, secures to every worker the full and uncurtailed enjoyment of the fruits of his labor.

For the site of such a community a large tract of land shall be procured in a territory at present unappropriated, but fertile and well adapted for colonization.

The Free society shall recognize no exclusive right of property in the land occupied by them, either on the part of an individual or of the collective community. For the cultivation of the land as well as for productive purposes generally self governing associations shall be formed, each of which shall share its profits among its members in proportion to their several contributions to the common labor of the association. Any one shall have the right to belong to any association and to leave it when he pleases.

The capital for production shall be furnished to the producers without interest out of the revenue of the community, but it must be reimbursed by the producers.

All persons who are incapable of labor and women shall have a right to a competent allowance for maintenance out of the revenue of the community. The public revenue necessary for these purposes as well as for other public expenses shall be provided by a tax levied upon the net income of the total production.

Freeland will be located in British territory, and the colonists will fly the British flag, claim British protection and talk the English language. They have no desire to establish any free state except in the economic sense and will have nothing to do with politics or government outside the confines of their own territory.

Chief Wilhelm had an interview with the authorities of the British foreign office about a year ago to make arrangements for the establishment of the colony and received satisfactory assurances from Sir Philip Currie that the colonists should have perfect freedom to regulate their internal affairs on a socialistic basis, though they must be subject to general laws which the English government may impose.

Dr. Wilhelm says it is impossible that such an experiment in colonization should be carried out anywhere else than in British territory, for while the English government is in no way interested in the Freeland movement it always regards favorably any scheme of settlement in its various colonies.

Machakoland has an elevation of between 6,000 and 7,000 feet above the level of the sea, and from it the Tana descends to the lowlands in a series of falls, of which some are 100 feet in height. The district the Freelanders propose to occupy comprises between 40,000 and 50,000 square miles and is believed to be one of the most suitable in the world for experimenting upon. The land can produce two crops yearly, and grain and maize are said to be 20 times as productive as in Europe.

The natives are reported to be exceptionally intelligent and friendly, and cattle and grain are plentiful. The land is said to be a veritable hunter's paradise, abounding in all sorts of big African game, including the elephant, rhinoceros, lion, giraffe, antelope and other kinds of beasts, and the Freelanders will be the first large party of white men to enjoy the sport to be found there, though young William Astor Chanler did some hunting in the neighborhood of Kenia several years ago.

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The Alfred Russel Wallace Page, Charles H. Smith, 2015.