

Settler and Administration Antagonism in Colonial  
German East Africa, 1885-1925

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of  
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# Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed limit of 80,000 words for the History Degree Committee.

# Settler and Administration Antagonism in Colonial German East Africa, 1885-1925

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## Summary

This dissertation argues that a study of the distinct experiences of the colonialism of settlers, administration in German East Africa, and the metropolitan government in Germany provides a more nuanced understanding of German colonialism as a whole. The relations between these groups were characterised by tripartite divisions that persisted throughout the period of official German colonial rule in eastern Africa (1885-1918) and even after. While settlers sought the creation of a racially pure “white man’s country”, the colonial administration pursued strategies to foster the economic development of the colony and all its inhabitants. The metropolitan government, meanwhile, treated the “colonial issue” with low priority and always pragmatically. After the war and the subsequent loss of colonies, these same currents continued. (Former) settlers wanted to return to eastern Africa, (former) administrators sought a principled colonial revisionism, and the German government used any still existing colonial ambitions as a bargaining tool to achieve other, more pressing goals. These trends also continued through the period of greatest colonial upheaval (1904-1908). This dissertation uncovers hitherto unidentified continuities that suggest that German colonialism was much more diverse than usually presumed, and that the German colonial project never united competing interests to follow a single colonial goal.

# Acknowledgements

When I started this project in the summer of 2018, I had no idea that it would turn into this. The pandemic has substantially changed my research. That it still has culminated in this dissertation is not down just to me or to any single individual. It is rather the result of the invaluable help of many people throughout these last four years.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AAKA – Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung

DKG – Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft

DKZ – Deutsche Kolonialzeitung

DOAG – Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft

DOAL – Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie

DOAZ – Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung

EMDOA – Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika

FDKG – Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft

GfdK – Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation

ICI – Institut Colonial International

KORAG – Koloniale Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft

PMC – Permanent Mandates Commission

RKA – Reichskolonialamt

RKB – Reichskolonialbund

UP – Usambara Post

## **A NOTE ON LANGUAGE**

Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this dissertation are my own. I have tried to translate as much and as accurately as possible, but occasionally, certain words or terms are used because they convey a specific meaning in their original language that is not captured by the English translation.

Some of the language in the original sources is highly offensive. In particular, on page 195, I cite a deeply insulting racial slur. The decision to directly quote this term, and others, was not taken lightly. The sparing citations I use are essential to illustrate the highly racialised language of the colonisers, which is a central aspect of my argument that settlers were motivated by the desire to establish a “white man’s land” in German East Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of March 1901, the local administration of Dar es Salaam set up two rikshaws for public use on a trial basis.<sup>1</sup> In itself, this was hardly a landmark event. For the capital city of the colony of German East Africa, home to around 300 Europeans and more than 20,000 Africans, two single seater, hand-pulled carts certainly seemed insignificant. But over the following weeks, months, and even years, these rikshaws stood synonymous for many of the insecurities and conflicts of daily colonial life. Shortly after the government's initial provision of two rikshaws, another five were added, owing to the high demand by the inhabitants of Dar es Salaam.<sup>2</sup> In June, the government leased the operations to German businessman Max Nette.<sup>3</sup> It can be assumed that the business was a highly profitable one because shortly afterwards other rikshaw providers emerged in Dar es Salaam and in other cities of the German East African colony. Everyone wanted to get their fair share.

Of course, it was not Nette and other Germans themselves who pulled the carts. This physical work was left to local Africans who in return received a small wage. For the European colonisers, this "division of labour" was the "natural order of things". In the first few years of rikshaw operations, customers could book a ride at any time pending availability. There was no restriction on who could use the rikshaws, and Europeans, Indians, and Africans all were customers. But in 1904, Europeans increasingly criticised the service's "egalitarian" approach. The *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung* (DOAZ) claimed that "Europeans risk getting their white suits dirty" if they were to use the same rikshaws that non-Europeans used.<sup>4</sup> The newspaper demanded that some rikshaws should be reserved for European use only. Rikshaw operator Nette accordingly allocated two carts to serve Europeans exclusively.<sup>5</sup>

Over the next years, the rikshaw business boomed and many entrepreneurs imported carts from overseas or sourced them locally to satisfy the growing demand for transportation of the German East African urbanites. But with expansion, Europeans' complaints increased. They lamented that restrictions, such as those instituted by Nette, did not apply to other operators. They also claimed that Indians overcharged their customers and underpaid their drivers, that rikshaws operated by non-Europeans were not maintained properly, or that physical strength

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<sup>1</sup> 'Aus Daressalam und Umgegend', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 2 March 1901, III/8 edition, 3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Aus Daressalam und Umgegend - Rikshaws', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 20 April 1901, III/15 edition, 3.

<sup>3</sup> 'Aus Daressalam und Umgegend', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 8 June 1901, III/22 edition, 3.

<sup>4</sup> 'Aus Daressalam und Umgegend - Unsere neuen Rickshaws', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 April 1904, VI/15 edition, 3.

<sup>5</sup> 'Aus Daressalam und Umgegend - Rickshaws', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 23 April 1904, VI/17 edition, 3.

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and manoeuvring abilities of drivers were inadequate. Settlers demanded the administration to regulate the rickshaw industry, including provisions that would safeguard European “superiority”. It was only during the governorship of Heinrich Schnee (1912-1918) that the administration began to enact such targeted measures.<sup>6</sup>

In the first one and a half decades of the Twentieth Century, when German rule in eastern Africa was at its height, the rickshaws became truly ubiquitous: they were found in all German East African towns and were used by virtually everyone.<sup>7</sup> But in these carts, we can identify a range of issues that persisted throughout the German East African period, and which impacted the relations between colonial society, colonial state, and colonised populations. These issues and their analyses will run throughout this entire dissertation. Firstly, there was an obvious racial element to the rickshaw operations: initially, only European businessmen managed, bought, leased, and controlled all aspects of this trade. The clear exception was the actual physical work of pulling or driving the carts, for which local Africans were recruited. European managers collected the substantial profits of the business and paid their African employees a small salary. But there was also a racial element to the customer base and local perceptions of the business: white Europeans turned up their noses at the fact that the African, Indian, and Arab populations, too, could use the very same rickshaws that transported Europeans in their “pristine, white Sunday attire”.<sup>8</sup> They demanded bans and the segregation of the rickshaw business. When the rickshaw industry expanded, Europeans also criticised the non-European rickshaw businessmen. They accused them of shoddy business practices, haphazard maintenance, and a general “unfitness” to run a business. European operators and customers united behind a sense of racial superiority seeking to legitimise special and preferential treatment.

A further aspect that the rickshaw issue represents is the settlers’ strong and vocal opposition to anyone who did not contribute to their ultimate goal of creating a “white man’s country” in German East Africa. Repeatedly, the settler newspaper DOAZ fired shots at the colonial administration. They demanded rickshaw regulations – most of which aimed to curtail or prevent the involvement of non-European populations – or suggested that the government’s inaction was in fact due to an inherent anti-settler bias. This was especially pronounced during

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<sup>6</sup> See for example ‘Lokales - Europäer Rickschaws’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 21 December 1912, XIV/120 edition, 3; ‘Verordnung betreffend den Verkehr mit Rickschaws im Stadtbezirk Tanga’, *Amtlicher Anzeiger für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 12 July 1913, XIV/36 edition, 1–2.

<sup>7</sup> Walther Dobbertin, n.d., Photograph, n.d., Nachlässe und Sammlungen, Bilder, Plakate, Karten, Pläne, Töne, BILD 105 Nachlass Walther Dobbertin, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Aus Daressalam und Umgegend - Unsere neuen Rickshaws’, 3.

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the governorship of Albrecht von Rechenberg (1906-1912), whom many settlers considered an enemy of European settlement.<sup>9</sup> These demands brought the settlers into tension with the administration, with the administration only slowly – and often reluctantly – acquiescing in their demands to introduce controls to colonial commerce. Finally, there is the forum that the settlers used to express these views and demand the attention of the colonial administration: the DOAZ. This publication was the central organ for settler self-expression, their main “public sphere”, and the chief way in which they communicated with the administration and the metropole.

There are other parallels that can be drawn between the rikshaw issue and daily colonial life: economic opportunities for settlers and local populations, spaces for Africans to influence European culture, abuse and violence against the colonised, allegations of political impotence or overreach, and more. All these themes will be explored in the five chapters of this dissertation. Taken all together, I argue that in German East Africa there was no such thing as one *German colonialism*. Instead, I suggest that to fully understand the experiences of German colonial rule – and its connected processes, parts, and issues – we must disaggregate distinct interest groups. In particular, colonial settlers and administration often stood at opposing ends on questions about the development of the colony. This was due to different priorities: whereas the government sought to make the colony economically viable for the German empire, settlers pursued the creation of a “white man’s country” in which the settlers’ belief in racial superiority would be confirmed by segregation and the policing of white colonial privileges. The colonised indigenous populations, Arab businessmen, and Indian traders meanwhile constituted further interest groups that acted within the parameters of colonialism but sought to pursue their own plans and achieve their own goals. Patronised and under- or entirely unrepresented, Africans and others nonetheless managed to, on occasion, exploit the inconsistencies of German colonial rule. As varied as the issues surrounding the rikshaws were, so was the period of German colonial rule in eastern Africa. The rikshaw question might thus be considered a microcosm of the entire German East African experience. Only by looking at its constituent parts can we understand better the events and processes of this *German colonialism*.

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Antikolonialismus’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 2 August 1911, XIII/61 edition, 1–2; ‘Siedlungspolitik in Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 2 August 1911, XIII/61 edition, 2.

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### Historiographical context

German East Africa was the largest German colony, both in terms of population and land area. Yet, despite this position, the colony was insignificant to the German Empire as a whole.<sup>10</sup> It was a financial drain, it did not provide a real solution to migration and overpopulation questions, nor did it possess any real strategic or geopolitical value. Real enthusiasm for colonialism remained constrained to a few elite and business circles only, and the colonial administration was largely comprised of public servants that had aristocratic or military backgrounds – or both.<sup>11</sup>

However, this is not to say that Germany's involvement in colonialism (1884-1919) was unimportant to the German Empire, or that German society as a whole opposed colonialism. Colonial advocates were vociferous and adept at publicising their causes, both through their own newspapers and pamphlets, as well as through advertisements, marketing material, interviews, and popular literature.<sup>12</sup> Germans could buy “exotic” goods, such as cocoa, sugar, spices, and tobacco through dedicated *Kolonialwarenläden* (colonial goods shops) – and from the mid-1880s, such products arrived in the German metropole from German colonies.<sup>13</sup> But people from overseas also gradually arrived in German cities. *Hagenbecks Tierpark* hosted many *Völkerschauen* (ethnological expositions) and “exhibited” peoples from places as far apart as Lapland and Ethiopia.<sup>14</sup> Others permanently moved to Germany, some on their own accords, some as servants, and some as other employees.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Other German colonies were Deutsch Südwestafrika (modern Namibia), Togoland (Togo), Kamerun (Cameroon), Deutsch-Neuguinea (Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, Bougainville), Deutsch-Samoa (Samoa), and Kiautschou (in and around the Qingdao area in China).

<sup>11</sup> Notable exceptions were Colonial Secretary Bernhard Dernburg (1906-1910), who previously had been a banker, and Heinrich Schnee, last governor of German East Africa (1912-1918). See Katharina Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee: Karriereweg und Erfahrungswelten eines deutschen Kolonialbeamten* (Kiel: Solivagus Præteritum, 2017), 321.

<sup>12</sup> See for example David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany*, *Fulcrum.Org*, vol. 171, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), <https://www.ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/CAM/reader.action?docID=3300927&query=>; Jeff Bowersox, ‘Classroom Colonialism: Race, Pedagogy, and Patriotism in Imperial Germany’, in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, ed. Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). See also Hans Grimm, *Volk ohne Raum* (München: Albert Langen, 1926).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Colonial goods have it all: exotic consumer goods, precious prestige objects, the spoils of bloody colonial violence. Firmly woven into imperial supply chains, freely fluctuating through colonial landscapes. We encounter it as jewellery and delicacy, work of art and ceremonial object, raw material and university degree, human remain and constitutional category, changing its characteristics in different contexts of use and power constellations.’ See Ulrike Gleixner et al., eds., ‘Kolonialwaren’, *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* XV, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 4.

<sup>14</sup> Anne Dreesbach, *Gezähmte Wilde: die Zurschaustellung ‘exotischer’ Menschen in Deutschland 1870-1940* (Campus Verlag, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> One example can be found in the case of Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, a scholar and teacher who was employed by the *Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen* in Berlin. See Ludger Wimmelbücker, *Mtoro Bin Mwinyi Bakari: Swahili Lecturer and Author in Germany* (African Books Collective, 2008).

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Despite the presence of colonial products and people in the German metropole, the simple fact was that the colonies remained far away. Travelling to German East Africa from Hamburg took roughly three weeks and was costly, even in the lowest class of carriage. Naturally, any goods and news moving between metropole and colony were similarly at the mercy of shipping timetables and favourable weather conditions. Communication between German East Africa and the German metropole was drastically improved with a telegraphic wire between Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar and the consequent connection of the colony to the global telegraphic network in 1890.<sup>16</sup> Telegraphic and heliographic connectivity within the colony improved throughout the period of official German rule so that news between Munich and Mwanza on Lake Victoria could be transmitted almost instantaneously. The telegraph certainly connected colony and metropole in unprecedented ways, leading to virtual simultaneity between the two distant places.<sup>17</sup> Yet, that simultaneity was reserved to a few wealthy and important individuals since Germans had to send their messages via the British cables from Zanzibar to Europe.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, even though news from the metropole could reach the colony in next to no time, dissemination of information across the colony would be delayed. This put further distance between ordinary settlers and the metropole, but also between settlers and their colonial administration.

All these aspects of Germany's colonial past have received scholarly attention only relatively recently. In his overview of German colonial history, Sebastian Conrad has identified three "cycles of colonial interest" in historiography.<sup>19</sup> In the direct aftermath of the First World War, when the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles (1919) officially stripped Germany of its colonies, historical accounts of the overseas possessions generally bemoaned their loss. Conrad contends, however, that in this politically revisionist current, professional historians occupied marginal positions only. Instead, "colonial veterans", such as the former governors Schnee and Theodor Seitz, were at the forefront of public discourse and produced many written opinions

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<sup>16</sup> See also Chapter I.

<sup>17</sup> See Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* / Daniel R. Headrick. (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's Online Pioneers* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998); Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=1042518>; Amelia Bonea, *The News of Empire: Telegraphy, Journalism, and the Politics of Reporting in Colonial India, c. 1830–1900* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199467129.001.0001>; Jean-Michel Johnston, *Networks of Modernity: Germany in the Age of the Telegraph, 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), <https://directory.doabooks.org/handle/20.500.12854/70058>.

<sup>18</sup> A side effect of this was the vulnerability of the German connection. Almost immediately after the outbreak of the First World War, the British operators cut off German East Africa's access to the telegraph network.

<sup>19</sup> Sebastian Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 3rd ed. (München: C.H.Beck, 2008), 8–14.

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on Germany's colonial past.<sup>20</sup> The few anglophone publications of the post-war years were mostly disregarded by German revisionists for political reasons.<sup>21</sup>

The second cycle of historical interest in Germany's colonial past coincided with the global decolonisation movements of the 1960s. New "critiques of the traditions of German historiography" and a new perspective that was critical of imperialism and emanated from historians in the German Democratic Republic re-evaluated German colonialism. Here, the focus lay on the "structures of social, political, and economic development," and also included attempts to locate African agency within the colonial experience.<sup>22</sup> John Iliffe's studies of German East Africa and Gilbert Gwassa's work on the Maji Maji, for example, pushed back against the assumption that colonialism was predominantly a one-way street in which Europeans acted and Africans reacted.<sup>23</sup> This was still a minority perspective, however. The works by Wolfe Schmokel, Roger Louis and Prosser Gifford, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Klaus Hildebrand, and others rather analysed German colonialism within a framework of German high-state politics and German society: "they were often conceptually oriented towards the question of the long-term and structural deficits of German society."<sup>24</sup> The focus remained on Germany and on Germans and sought to uncover the actions and events of, and consequences for the colonising power.

In the grand scheme, however, colonial historiography was still only a side issue, overshadowed – in Germany – by investigations into National Socialism and the Holocaust. This changed in the 1990s with the increased popularity of postcolonial studies and global history. Here, the main tenet was that the colonial phase was not an experience that was only

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<sup>20</sup> A key text was Heinrich Schnee, *Die koloniale Schuldfrage* (Munich: Buchverlag der Süddeutschen Monatshefte, 1926), [http://archive.org/details/schnee-dr.-heinrich-die-koloniale-schuldfrage\\_202103](http://archive.org/details/schnee-dr.-heinrich-die-koloniale-schuldfrage_202103).

<sup>21</sup> See for example Frank R. Cana, 'German East Africa and Its Future', *African Affairs* XVII, no. LXVI (January 1918): 125–35, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a099766>; Ferdinand Stephen Joelson, *The Tanganyika Territory (Formerly German East Africa): Characteristics and Potentialities* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1920); Donald Cameron, 'Position and Prospects in Tanganyika', *African Affairs* XXVI, no. CIV (July 1927): 315–22, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a100622>.

<sup>22</sup> Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> G. C. K. Gwassa and John Iliffe, eds., *Records of the Maji Maji Rising* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967); John Iliffe, 'The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion', *The Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1967): 495–512; John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); G. C. K. Gwassa, 'Kinjikitile and the Ideology of Maji Maji', in *The Historical Study of African Religion: With Special Reference to East and Central Africa*, by T. O. Ranger and I. N. Kimambo (London: Heinemann, 1972), 202–17; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>24</sup> Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 11. See also Wolfe W. Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919-1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964); WM Roger Louis and Prosser Gifford, eds., *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967); WM Roger Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969); Klaus Hildebrand, *Vom Reich Zum Weltreich : Hitler, NSDAP Und Koloniale Frage 1919-1945* (München: Fink, 1969).

imposed onto passive colonised populations. Instead, the framework of *postcolonialism* considers the perspectives of indigenous societies, their influence on the colonisers, and the patterns of exchange and transfer during colonialism as a whole. On this basis, scholars of German colonialism have begun to critically engage with their own colonial past. Since 2014, an initiative at the University of Hamburg has sought to unravel and demystify the city's role and involvement in Germany's colonial period.<sup>25</sup> Similar projects exist all throughout the country.<sup>26</sup> The focus is no longer on colonial high-politics and the decisions of influential, male, colonial stakeholders. Instead, analysis now centres on scientific, cultural, literary, and other fields of colonial encounters.<sup>27</sup> Simultaneously, scholars increasingly consider the role and experiences of women and of the colonised populations in their analyses of German colonialism.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Forschungsstelle Hamburgs (post-)koloniales Erbe*. <https://kolonialismus.blogs.uni-hamburg.de/>

<sup>26</sup> For some examples, see the activities in Berlin: <https://eineweltstadt.berlin/mitglieder/berlin-postkolonial-ev/>, Düsseldorf: <http://deutschland-postkolonial.de/>, Freiburg: <https://www.freiburg-postkolonial.de/>, or at the Frankfurt Research Centre for Postcolonial Studies: <https://www.normativeorders.net/de/component/content/article/289/>.

<sup>27</sup> See Birthe Kundrus, ed., *Phantasiereiche: zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003); Volker Langbehn, ed., *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, Routledge Studies in Modern European History 13 (London: Routledge, 2010), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=481106>; Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., *German Colonialism and National Identity*, Routledge Studies in Modern European History (New York: Routledge, 2011); Denise Toussaint, *Dem kolonialen Blick begegnen: Identität, Alterität und Postkolonialität in den Fotomontagen von Hannah Höch, Dem kolonialen Blick begegnen* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1515/transcript.9783839428740>; Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198703464.001.0001>; Jeremiah J. Garsha, 'Expanding Vergangenheitsbewältigung? German Repatriation of Colonial Artefacts and Human Remains', *Journal of Genocide Research* 22, no. 1 (2 January 2020): 46–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2019.1633791>; Jürgen Zimmerer and Kim Sebastian Todzi, eds., *Hamburg: Tor Zur Kolonialen Welt: Erinnerungsorte Der (Post-)Kolonialen Globalisierung*, Hamburger Beiträge Zur Geschichte Der Kolonialen Globalisierung, Band 1 (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2021). See also the edition by Olaf Zimmermann and Theo Geißler, eds., *Kolonialismus-Debatte: Bestandsaufnahme und Konsequenzen*, vol. 17, Aus Politik & Kultur (Berlin: Deutscher Kulturrat e.V., 2019).

<sup>28</sup> See for example Martha Mamozai, *Schwarze Frau, Weisse Herrin: Frauenleben in Den Deutschen Kolonien* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.30000053156182>; Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Felicitas Becker, 'Traders, "Big Men" and Prophets: Political Continuity and Crisis in the Maji Maji Rebellion in Southeast Tanzania', *Journal of African History* 45, no. 1 (2004): 1–22; Daniel J. Walther, 'Gender Construction and Settler Colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894–1914', *The Historian* 66, no. 1 (2004): 1–18; Katharina Walgenbach, 'Weiße Identität Und Geschlecht', in *Soziale Ungleichheit, Kulturelle Unterschiede: Verhandlungen Des 32. Kongresses Der Deutschen Gesellschaft Für Soziologie in München.*, ed. Karl-Siegbert Rehberg (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2006), 1705–17; Derek R. Peterson, 'Morality Plays: Marriage, Church Courts, and Colonial Agency in Central Tanganyika, ca. 1876–1928', *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 4 (1 October 2006): 983–1010, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.111.4.983>; Philippa Levine, 'Sexuality, Gender, and Empire', in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 134–55, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199249503.001.0001>; Daniel Joseph Walther, 'Racializing Sex: Same-Sex Relations, German Colonial Authority, and Deutschtum', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 1 (2007): 11–24, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sex.2008.0001>; Ulrich van der Heyden, '„Besoffen wie ein Deutscher“. Das Deutschlandbild von Afrikanern zur Zeit der direkten Kolonialherrschaft', *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 65, no. 4 (1 January 2013): 357–93, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700739-99000085>; Stefanie Michels, *Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten:*

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Interest in German colonial history has certainly picked up in the recent past and has led to the publication of numerous books, essays, and articles that seek to critically evaluate the legacy of German colonisation.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, other academic frameworks have emerged that are destined to contribute to inquiries into Germany's colonial past, triggering what may be a fourth cycle of historical interest in German colonialism. *Transnational* history both transcends national boundaries and tends to focus on events whose contours cannot be captured from within the confines of any one country. Because transnationalism relativises the focus on national narratives, there is a tendency for the scholarship that results to detach itself from attitudes or points of view that appear to reflect a specific national bias.<sup>30</sup> However, this methodology has seldom been applied to a targeted study of colonialism or imperialism and the events and processes that characterised them.<sup>31</sup> Instead, the historiography of colonialism remains largely focused on comparisons and contrasts of different colonies and empires.

Another aspect that historiography of German colonialism tends to neglect is the relationship between the colonial state and colonial settlers.<sup>32</sup> German colonialism is frequently treated as a singular concept or unit of analysis.<sup>33</sup> German colonialism is therefore a catch-all

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*Mehrdeutige Repräsentationsräume und früher Kosmopolitismus in Afrika, Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839410547>; Steven Fabian, *Making Identity on the Swahili Coast: Urban Life, Community, and Belonging in Bagamoyo*, *African Identities: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108590853>.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Willeke Sandler, *Empire in the Heimat: Colonialism and Public Culture in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Sean Andrew Wempe, *Revenants of the German Empire: Colonial Germans, Imperialism, and the League of Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190907211.001.0001>; Jeremy Best, *Heavenly Fatherland: German Missionary Culture and Globalization in the Age of Empire* (University of Toronto Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487532444>.

<sup>30</sup> For some brief and basic overviews, see: Gunilla Budde, Conrad, Sebastian, and Oliver Janz, eds., *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen Und Theorien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); Sebastian Conrad, 'Doppelte Marginalisierung. Plädoyer für eine transnationale Perspektive auf die deutsche Geschichte', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28, no. 1 (March 2002): 145–69; Albert Wirz, 'Für eine transnationale Gesellschaftsgeschichte', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27, no. 3 (September 2001): 489–98.

<sup>31</sup> Notable exceptions are Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Das Kaiserreich Transnational - Deutschland in Der Welt 1871-1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); Ulrike Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen: Deutschland Und Großbritannien Als Imperialmächte in Afrika 1880-1914* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011); Roland Cvetkovski and Volker Barth, *Imperial Co-Operation and Transfer, 1870-1930: Empires and Encounters* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017).

<sup>32</sup> I understand and will use the term "settlers" in the same way that archival sources and contemporary writers tended to use it. When German colonisers refer to *Siedler*, they more often than not mean any European who is not part of the colonial administration or military. A further exclusion are missionaries, who are always treated as a distinct group. That leaves traders, businessmen, plantation owners, artisans, and all their dependents. Another way to understand "settlers" as a social, political, or economic unit is to consider them as those Germans or Europeans, who emigrated from their metropolitan homes in order to permanently live (=settle) in the colony. This, again, excludes most of the administrative and military personnel of the colony, but also some of the planters or international merchants who reside in the colony for a short period of time only to tend to their businesses. Unless I highlight it otherwise in the text itself, I use the term "settlers" to refer to those Germans (and Europeans) who permanently live in the colony and are not part of the colonial administration or military.

<sup>33</sup> Söldenwagner's work on settlers in German East Africa is primarily concerned with the process of settling, such as acquisition of land tenure or the economic realities of colonial settlers. My work builds on her analysis and extends it to relate the settlement experience to the government's position and opposition. See Philippa

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phrase for any colonial action, event, or thought within the confines of the German state: a governor issuing a decree to increase taxes is *German colonialism*, but so is the concern of a rural plantation manager that he cannot recruit enough workers in his area. This often leads to generalisations which blur the intricate dynamics that act within German colonialism. In this dissertation, I examine the relations between different actors of German colonialism, specifically between the settler community and the colonial administration. This analysis occurs on a meso-level. It does not consider German colonialism as a big picture, uniform entity (macro-level), nor studies individual actors by themselves (micro-level). Instead, by breaking down German colonialism into a few smaller components it will be possible to clarify and nuance the effects, processes, and consequences of German colonial rule. This provides a more comprehensive picture and enhances our understanding of what we mean when we speak of *German colonialism*.

### Sources

The colonies occupied a somewhat undefined position within the structure of the German Empire. They and their inhabitants – both colonisers and colonised – did not have a dedicated public representative in parliament, despite frequent demands by settlers to have their voices recognised.<sup>34</sup> Neither was there a German East African parliament.<sup>35</sup> Settlers instead resorted to forming associations to combine their individual political interests and to create “a political arena outside the institutions of the colonial state.”<sup>36</sup> Of similar importance was the creation of various colonial newspapers, including the DOAZ, the *Usambara Post* (UP), or the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* (DKZ). These newspapers represented and disseminated the thoughts, ideas, demands, ambitions, and concerns of the settlers within the colony and in the metropole.

Given the lack of political representation, the colonial newspapers form one of the main sources of my dissertation. The DOAZ in particular provides a comprehensive picture of settler thought in German East Africa. The newspaper was founded by businessman Willy von Roy in 1899. Even though the paper was initially propped up by the administration, its subscription numbers continuously increased as the settler community grew, and the business was

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Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation: European settlement and settlers in German East Africa 1900-1914* (München: Meidenbauer, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> See for example ‘Kolonie und Reichstag’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 17 September 1913, XV/75 edition.

<sup>35</sup> For the administrative structure of the colonies, see Chapters I and II.

<sup>36</sup> Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 216.

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profitable.<sup>37</sup> The DOAZ soon emerged as a platform for various political associations and its articles found resonance in the metropole as well:

the associations were not solely concerned with the publication of their opinions, but also and especially with the targeted influence through the broad effect that was associated with the newspaper print and which became significant in Germany as a reference. In the debates of the Reichstag and in the columns of the opposition and conservative papers, reports from the colonies were cited if they could be used to substantiate political agendas.<sup>38</sup>

In this way, the colonial newspapers had an *ersatz* function: without parliamentary representation, the papers were the best way through which settlers could communicate their causes to the wider public and to the political decisionmakers.

Focusing on the colonial newspapers as a historical source therefore allows the scholar to reconstruct the political discourse of settlers. This is, however, also exclusionary. The newspapers were, for instance, an entirely male domain. Founder, editors, and authors of letters to the editors were exclusively male. At the height of settlement in German East Africa, women constituted about twenty percent of the European population. But they remained almost entirely relegated to traditional roles in the household and society as a whole. For many settlers, the colony was a “conservative utopia” in which traditional social values could be protected or even re-instituted.<sup>39</sup> That is not to suggest that women did not have anything to say about their experiences in German East Africa. The writings of Magdalene von Prince, Frieda von Bülow, or Margarethe von Eckenbrecher leave no doubt about that.<sup>40</sup> Yet, these works are chiefly travelogues for a domestic, predominantly female, audience. Owing to the social and patriarchal conventions of colonial life, women were therefore largely excluded from the public political discourse that forms the centre of my analysis. This study is consequently extremely “male-heavy”. This represents, however, the historic political realities of German East Africa between 1885 and 1918/19.

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<sup>37</sup> Redeker suggests that the three major colonial newspapers in German East Africa - DOAZ, UP, and the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Rundschau*, which was published by the Rechenberg government - had a combined circulation of 4,300 in 1911 against a total European population of around 4,000. Dietrich Redeker, *Journalismus in Deutsch-Ostafrika, 1899-1916: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Presse in den früheren deutschen Kolonien*. (Frankfurt am Main: M. Diesterweg, 1937), 4-6, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Detlef Bald, *Deutsch-Ostafrika 1900-1914: Eine Studie über Verwaltung, Interessengruppen und wirtschaftliche Erschließung*, Afrika-Studien 54 (Munich: Weltforum Verlag, 1970), 125.

<sup>39</sup> See especially Chapters I and IV.

<sup>40</sup> Magdalene von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau im Innern Deutsch-Ostafrikas: Elf Jahre nach Tagebuchblättern erzählt*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/53773/53773-h/53773-h.htm>; Frieda von Bülow, *Reiseskizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Walther & Apolant, 1889), <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/64483/pg64483-images.html>; Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, *Im dichten Pori: Reise- und Jagdbilder aus Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1912).

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The second main body of sources are official communications – letters, telegrams, dispatches, reports, etc. – sent between the colonial offices in Berlin and the colonial administration in German East Africa.<sup>41</sup> They represent a more official side of Germany's colonial project and reveal competing visions for colonial development, dissonances between policymakers, and a recurrent lack of knowledge of local conditions. These most often personal and sometimes secret exchanges provide second perspective on the antagonistic nature between settlers, administrators, and metropole.

### Chapter outline

In Chapter I of this dissertation, I employ a modified framework of *transnational history*, applied to the study of colonies and empires. By analysing German colonialism in a *transimperial* framework, I suggest that the German Empire's acquisition and establishment of its colonies contained processes that acted *across* different empires and colonies. It was not solely a result of competition *between* different European empires. Chapter I therefore suggests that Germany's entrance into the colonial world was characterised by processes that were distinctly national, European, and global all at the same time. This chapter starts by discussing European imperialism and colonialism during the Nineteenth Century and locates Germany's role and Germans' visions for their own nation within this geopolitical context. The decision to expand overseas was a consequence of political and economic trends, but also a matter of national prestige. After sketching the structure of the German colonial administration and providing an overview of Germany's colonial possessions, Chapter I continues by examining why Germans and other Europeans moved specifically to the German East African colony. This chapter also considers how the colonised populations – Africans, Indians, and Arabs – perceived the new colonial reality.<sup>42</sup> While colonisation was violent and destructive, the

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<sup>41</sup> Most of these archival materials are held in the German *Bundesarchiv*, but other sources are held in the National Archives at Kew, at the University Library of the University of Cambridge, and at the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford.

<sup>42</sup> German East Africa was a highly diverse territory in which colonisers and colonised were further subdivided into different ethnicities and nationalities. Iliffe provides comprehensive overviews over the different population groups: Iliffe, *German Rule*; Iliffe, *Modern History*. Throughout this dissertation, I refer to various population groups: Germans, Europeans, Africans, Arabs, Indians, etc. I use these terms in correspondence to how they are being used in the sources, though I recognise that there were and are significant differences within all of these groups. Broadly speaking, *Germans* refer to anyone who can trace their background to the German metropole and who would have been considered a citizen of the German Empire. *Europeans* include *Germans* and largely corresponds to anyone with white skin colour who comes from the European continent. *Africans* refer to the indigenous populations of the colony and the African continent as a whole, and are similarly identified by their skin colour. *Indians* mainly describe people originating from the Indian subcontinent. They usually consisted the trading class of the colony and were also considered British subjects. *Arabs* are referred to as those people originating from the Arabian Peninsula and later Zanzibar, who the sources often identify with (slave) traders and

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colonised were also able to exploit the ignorance and inexperience of their new rulers for their own personal gains. Chapter I thus sets the scene of the early years of German East Africa and provides the starting point for the subsequent analysis.

In Chapter II, I push against the idea that the genocidal war against the Herero and Nama in German Southwest Africa (1904-1907) and the Maji Maji war in German East Africa (1905-1908), as well as the ensuing systemic changes to the colonial administration fundamentally changed German colonialism.<sup>43</sup> Instead, I suggest, that despite the upheavals of 1904-1908, many aspects of German colonialism remained the same: the antagonism between settlers and administration did not change, and neither did the administrations in the colonies and in the metropole align to pursue a coherent and well-functioning colonial course. An analysis of these continuities thus paints a more holistic and representative picture of German colonialism. Traditionally, the years 1904-1908 are seen as a caesura in Germany's colonial period. The Herero and Nama and Maji Maji wars revealed the precariousness of colonial rule, both to Germans in the colonies, as well as to those in the metropole.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, as Chapter II argues, these reforms remained confined largely to the upper echelons of the colonial administration and colonial policymaking. From the perspective of the settlers and colonised populations the changes were less absolute. The grievances with the administration and the patterns of exploitation that existed before Dernburg and Rechenberg arrived on the scene continued to characterise their regime, and even continued after the two men exited the colonial service. The otherwise cataclysmic events of the Maji Maji War did not fundamentally change the ways in which settlers were frustrated with their government. This is best demonstrated by the settlers' recurring cycles of hope and despair that accompanied the appointment of every new governor or colonial secretary. Similarly, Maji Maji and the Dernburg-Rechenberg regime did not fundamentally alter the ways and means by which the indigenous populations of the colony attempted and succeeded in capitalising on the inherent weaknesses of the German colonial system. By focusing on the continuities and constantly recurring grievances, Chapter II concludes that the momentous shifts in the German colonial

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influential businessmen. The sources only seldom distinguish different populations of *Africans*, *Indians*, and *Arabs* and I will highlight these wherever they occur.

<sup>43</sup> Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 36.

<sup>44</sup> See for example Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Münster: Lit, 2002); Felicitas Becker and Jigal Beez, eds., *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1905–1907* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2005); Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2016).

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administration in general and in German East Africa in particular were less absolute than previously thought.

In Chapter III, I explain this by focusing on the themes of violence, labour, immigration, and racism. Above all else, the German East African settler community was concerned with their perceived position of racial supremacy. They cared for the establishment and maintenance of racial segregation and sought to create a “white man's country” in the colony. This included practical demands, such as the right to whip African employees or the restriction of immigration of Indians, and more ideological concerns, such as the settlers’ objection to non-white policemen having authority over whites.

The colonial administration, meanwhile, pursued other goals. They saw the colony predominantly in terms of economic opportunities and within a context of physical security. Maji Maji and Dernburg's reforms prompted a colonial course that put the indigenous populations at the centre of the colony's development. Especially Rechenberg advocated for higher wages for indigenous workers, promoted Arab and Indian traders, and curtailed the powers of European plantation managers. Here, the administration believed that outright exploitation would only result in rebellion, ultimately leading to economic losses and the destruction of colonial rule.

Despite their opposition to the government's focus on indigenous economic development, the settlers realised that the colonial administration was not interested in surrendering economic development to their demand for unrestrained white dominance. To nevertheless accomplish their goals, the settlers coated their concerns in the economic language of the government. Settlers did not renounce their racial and ideological goals but attempted to convince the government that their interests aligned. In the end, this strategy proved only marginally successful and the antagonism between settler community and colonial administration remained.

Chapter IV builds on the exploration of this antagonism and the settlers’ belief in their racial and moral superiority. Here, I argue that the failure to secure a government-sanctioned “white paradise” in German East Africa, prompted settlers to look elsewhere for affirmation of their claimed racial and moral superiority. They found an outlet in their celebration, performance, and exhibition of *Deutschtum* (Germanness). This Germanness was everywhere in the colony: flags and insignia, coffee and cake, birthday celebrations for the emperor and empress, the German language, military drills, and more. In all these things German settlers took pride and they sought to regulate who could partake in and who would be prohibited from

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this *Deutschtum*. Settlers claimed that such distinctly German cultural practices and artifacts were the signs of a civilised people; the reverse suggested that anyone who lacked these distinctions was uncivilised. This allowed the settlers to maintain their claims of white racial superiority even when the political and economic course of the colony suggested otherwise.

Chapter IV also investigates how Africans navigated and influenced this *Deutschtum*. Far from being passive in this confrontation, the local indigenous populations consciously adopted and adapted Germanness for their own benefits. At the same time, they conveyed their traditions and cultures to the colonisers and altered what it meant to be German in the colony. German homesteads became decorated with African artifacts and German colonial administrators adopted the practices of *shauri* as a pragmatic method to conduct business with African leaders. Mixed-race relations between (predominantly) European men and African women led to further renegotiations of *Deutschtum*.

Finally, Chapter V examines the end of formal German colonial rule in eastern Africa and elsewhere. The end of the First World War saw the dissolution of the German Empire and the transfer of the German colonies to the Allied powers and the League of Nations. All Germans had to leave German East Africa. Back in the metropole, settlers, former administrators, and businessmen faced a new reality: colonialism without colonies. In a manner similar to the roughly thirty years of formal colonial rule, the post-war, post-colonial period saw distinctions between different colonial stakeholders. Most settlers longed for a return to their “colonial home”, irrespective of who actually ruled the territory. For the former colonial administrators – especially for the last governor of German East Africa, Schnee – the fact that the Allied powers had stripped Germany of its overseas possessions was an injustice. They realigned their aborted colonial careers to focus on the restitution of the German colonial empire. Backed by vocally strong revisionist lobbying groups, Schnee and others attempted to direct the government to pursue colonialism once again, and to seek an international solution to the “theft of the colonies”. Yet the Weimar governments had no genuine desire to reclaim the colonies. Other priorities trumped colonial restitution. Politicians such as Gustav Stresemann used the issue only as a pragmatic tool or bargaining chip: domestically to placate the strong colonial movement, and internationally to accomplish other, more pressing goals, such as membership in the League of Nations.

The different objectives of these three groups once again illustrate the continuity of a divided ‘German colonialism’: settlers, colonial administration, and German government were not on the same page regarding Germany's colonies. Despite the caesura of losing the colonies,

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the different interest groups did not form a consistent and cohesive colonial plan. Especially the revisionists failed to unite settlers, government, and the rest of the country. This was the same dynamic that had characterised the entirety of Germany's colonial experience.

Taken as a whole, this dissertation aims to deconstruct the notion of *German colonialism*. By breaking Germany's colonial experience down into disparate parts – settlers, administration, government – I push back against the idea that German colonialism was a unitary, high-political phenomenon. There were, in fact, a variety of different German colonialisms within the period of official German colonial rule and even after it. The focus on different stakeholders reveals their disunity for much of the colonial experience. At the same time, it exposes hitherto unidentified continuities amidst the most radical changes and tumultuous years of Germany's colonial period. In other words, this dissertation reveals the consistencies of German colonialism by examining its inconsistencies.

## CHAPTER I: GERMAN EAST AFRICA'S COMPLEX BEGINNINGS

### Introduction

The declaration in 1884 by the German government that it intended to formally extend protective power over privately acquired lands in southwestern Africa seemed to signify an official break with previous policy. Until that point, the upper echelons of German politics were hesitant to commit to a colonial future. As recently as in 1881, Otto von Bismarck had declared to the Reichstag: “as long as I am Reich Chancellor, we will not pursue a colonial policy.”<sup>1</sup> Yet, only a few years later, the German Empire began to acquire territories which, over the following years, were developed into colonies.

Historians have puzzled over the German change in attitude towards colonialism for decades. At the heart of this inquiry remains the fundamental question of whether the German Empire's turn towards colonies constituted a break with tradition, or whether the expansion overseas was a continuation of already existing social, political, and economic domestic and strategic trends.<sup>2</sup> Bismarck's position, personality, and change of mind are significant to current discussions of Germany's colonial legacy, as are inquiries into the fast-growing public fascination with overseas colonialism in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century.<sup>3</sup> The colonial societies that quickly sprang up at the beginning of the 1880s, notwithstanding their negligible membership numbers and seeming insignificance, managed to consolidate a vocal and vigorous colonial movement at the behest of a well-connected elite that gained traction in all circles of German society. Yet, however we choose to explain the decision, it is clear that once the German Empire had acquired overseas territories, it hardly knew what to do with them.

Whereas other European empires could look back at centuries' worth of colonial expansion and conquest, the German Empire had no prior colonial experience. The precise means and methods of colonial development thus had to be figured out and learned extemporaneously. And this had to take place in a structure marked by a high level of federal complexity in which competences for colonial policy had not yet been definitively assigned. A plurality of actors attempted to shape the direction of development of the German territories

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<sup>1</sup> Otto von Bismarck, quoted in Heinrich Ritter von Poschinger, *Fürst Bismarck und die Parlamentarier*, vol. 3 (Berlin: E. Trewendt, 1894), 54.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief overview, see Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Axel T. G. Riehl, *Der 'Tanz Um Den Äquator': Bismarcks Antienglische Kolonialpolitik Und Die Erwartung Des Thronwechsels in Deutschland 1883 Bis 1885*, vol. 1, Quellen Und Forschungen Zur Brandenburgischen Und Preussischen Geschichte (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1993), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003003714>; Ulrich S. Soénius, *Koloniale Begeisterung im Rheinland während des Kaiserreiches.*, Schriften zur rheinisch-westfälischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte 37 (Köln: Rheinisch-Westfälisches Wirtschaftsarchiv zu Köln e.V., 1992).

and of colonial policy. A lack of precedents and a colonial legislation that was only slowly evolving allowed different stakeholders within Germany itself to push agendas that were informed by personal interest, but also grounded to a large extent in observations of other European empires' conduct. Individuals and interest groups sometimes justified colonial policy in terms of the prosperity and the advancement of the German Empire and the German people. At other times, however, stakeholders appealed to pan-European interests, claiming that their schemes would benefit the white race, humanity as a whole, or any other imaginable community.<sup>4</sup> These were processes that the historiography on German colonialism might describe as “transnational”.

I suggest, however, that the transnational methodology requires redefinition. When used in the context of colonialism, the processes that constitute transnationalism – that is, border-crossing and transcending ‘the national’ – occur in an imperial arena. Here, it is vital to recognise that there exists a fundamental difference, if not rivalry, between ‘the national’ and ‘the imperial’.<sup>5</sup> At an essential level, nations are primarily concerned with establishing a coherent, principally homogenous culture and society. Empires, on the other hand, are inherently multicultural or heterogenous, with a marked difference between a usually elite imperial metropole and relegated localities, often culturally, ethnically and geographically far removed from the centre.

Nations, while internally homogenous, can be viewed externally as horizontally oriented, with distinct states competing on the international stage. Empires, on the other hand, can be seen as vertically aligned. The imperial metropolises, placed securely over the distant territories, had in fact far more in common with the elite centres of other empires, than with the subjected people over which they ruled. In the words of Krishan Kumar, “[i]mperialist ideologies are universalistic, not particularistic. [...] Imperial peoples do not, unlike nationalists, celebrate themselves; they celebrate the causes of which they are the agents or

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<sup>4</sup> Other ‘communities’ might be missionaries or merchants. I realise that the concept of the ‘imagined community’ was famously developed by Benedict Anderson to analyse nationalism. Instead of strictly referring to nationalism, I adopt the concept as a placeholder to signify any group an individual might consider themselves part of. This may indeed be a particular nation, but, in my usage, may also refer to a racial, economic, social, cultural, or religious ‘community’. I use the term ‘imaginable’ rather than ‘imagined’ in order to indicate the sheer variety of ‘communities’ while still retaining some of Anderson’s meaning. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London and New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Discussing the theoretical and practical differences between nations and empires goes far beyond the scope of this dissertation. For some views, see, for example, Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2005); Frederick Cooper and Jane Burbank, *Empires in World History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983); George Steinmetz, ed., *Sociology and Empire: The Imperial Entanglements of a Discipline* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

carriers.”<sup>6</sup> These causes were, crucially, not necessarily purely nationalistic. They also be related to scientific discovery or consist of the spreading of Western ‘civilisation’ to supposedly more backward societies.

If the transnational methodology is to be truly useful to the study of German – and more broadly European – imperialism, it must first be reconfigured. The success of the imperialist project of each nation-state was dependent not only on the creation and performance of a pan-European, ‘superior’ culture, but also on ensuring that the dominance of this culture over the ‘other’, in this case the African subjects of European colonists, was maintained. We should therefore consider an examination of German colonialism as a *transimperial* project – as opposed to a strictly *transnational* one. This would yield a more complete picture of Germany’s colonial past and of European imperialism on the African continent in general.<sup>7</sup>

Transimperial history considers the “complicated relationships between the metropolises and the colonies, both within each empire and between empires, and how these are related to the power game being played out by competing empires.”<sup>8</sup> It thus investigates the processes that transcend the boundaries of empires, both in the metropolises and in the territories. These processes of cooperation, observation, demarcation, and so forth, serve the purpose of continuing and legitimising imperial rule over other societies. At the forefront of these transimperial processes, then, is not the goal of demarcating the unique culture of the nation vis-à-vis another nation, but rather the manifestation of an order that is envisioned as simultaneously horizontal (the imperial elite of one state identifying with the imperial elite of another) and vertical (ensuring their ‘European’ domination over the respective colonial populations).

This chapter examines the early phase of German colonial expansion and investigates why, how, and when different stakeholders employed nationalist, transimperial, or both discourses at the same time in their quest to further their own colonial projects. The chapter will show that German East Africa took shape as a medley of – sometimes competing – ideas,

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<sup>6</sup> Krishan Kumar, *Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 30.

<sup>7</sup> A quick analysis with Google Books Ngram Viewer reveals a first increase in frequency of the term ‘transimperialism’ in 2006, a smaller one in 2012, and a third increase in 2017. Using the term ‘transimperial’, upticks are noticeable in 2013 and 2017. For more information and critiques on Ngram, see Jean-Baptiste Michel et al., ‘Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books’, *Science* 331, no. 6014 (2011): 176–82; Nadja Younes and Ulf-Dietrich Reips, ‘Guideline for Improving the Reliability of Google Ngram Studies: Evidence from Religious Terms’, ed. Christopher M. Danforth, *PLoS ONE* 14, no. 3 (22 March 2019): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0213554>.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Heé, ‘Transimperial History - Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition’, *Journal of Modern European History* 16, no. 4 (1 November 2018): 433, <https://doi.org/10.17104/1611-8944-2018-4-429>.

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methods, and processes. Far from being a colony with one distinct purpose, German East Africa combined different strategies of colonial development and brought together different peoples, businesses, interests, and ideas.

The first section explores the pre-history of German colonialism and analyses the different trends within German and international society that contributed towards the eventual acquisition of colonies. Economic and political factors were important, but so was national prestige. Section II addresses the setup and hierarchy of the colonial administrative system by analysing the different levels of authority. In Berlin, the colonial offices were under the direct purview of the chancellor, while governors and district officials carried out colonial rule in the respective territories. Section III provides an overview of Germany's colonies. The following sections focus on German East Africa's population. Section IV explores the disparate motivations that brought immigrants into the colony. Section V focuses on the indigenous populations and asks how Africans themselves made sense of the colonial occupation. While colonial rule certainly proved exploitative and violent, Africans were able to exploit the colonial system themselves: by offering alliances or threatening to withdraw cooperation, African leaders could extract value from their relations with the European authorities. Lastly, Section VI examines the distinct national and transimperial character of German East Africa. Administrators, traders, settlers, and missionaries framed specific issues both as particular to the German Empire, and relevant to broader constituencies such as the "white race". This section and the chapter as a whole thus push both against those trends in scholarship that attempt to locate colonialism within the domain of distinct national concerns, and those which describe colonialism as a global experience. Instead, the analysis follows the call by Birthe Kundrus, who urges that scholarship should attempt "to grasp colonialism as a phenomenon that is global, European, and national at the same time."<sup>9</sup>

### Section I: The pre-history of official German colonialism

In the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, when rapid industrial modernisation, economic protectionism, the expansion of nation-state power, and unstoppable globalisation reshuffled economic, social, and political affairs in Europe, thinkers and ordinary citizens alike began to view colonialism as an attractive solution to newly arising problems. In Germany, the arguments for colonial expansion were manifold. The historian Winfried Speitkamp has

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<sup>9</sup> Birthe Kundrus in German History, 'Forum on The German Colonial Imagination', *German History* 26, no. 2 (1 April 2008): 254, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ghn005>.

identified four: access to markets, the “chosen” quality of the German people, colonialism as an answer to domestic labour problems, and the opportunity to redirect emigrants from Germany to other German territories, rather than losing them to colonies of foreign nations.<sup>10</sup> Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann has added that the growing pro-colonial atmosphere in Germany was driven by the proliferation of missionary, geographical, and expeditionary societies, as well as by an increasing volume of literature and other written and visual information that stimulated the colonial imagination.<sup>11</sup>

Others have brought forward transnational or transimperial motivations, such as “humanitarian reasons” – referring specifically to the fight against slave trade and the abolition of slavery – or situated colonial expansion within broader geopolitical trends.<sup>12</sup> In their seminal study of the German Empire’s transnational relations, Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel have recently suggested that Germans of all political, economic, and social strands began to view their nation within a wider context of *Weltpolitik*: “[t]hey now all spoke of world economy, world politics and world powers between which there seemed to be an almost natural rivalry. Nowhere else was this ‘world’ rhetoric developed as hypertrophically as in Germany.”<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, David Armitage has argued that it was not nationalism or “national consciousness”, but rather the rise of political liberalism that made colonialism appealing.<sup>14</sup> The colonies were “a level playing field” on which Europeans could leave behind the constraints of their home societies and could interact “in truly liberal fashion: as independent and equal human beings.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet arguments that consider colonialism as purely the result of shared European processes are as limited as those that view colonist expansion as arising from distinctly national or domestic developments. In the case of German colonialism, both the *national* and the *global* influenced, motivated, and justified colonial expansionism. Demographic changes and migration, national prestige, new markets for excess industrial production, geopolitical

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<sup>10</sup> Winfried Speitkamp, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 18–19.

<sup>11</sup> Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, ‘The Purpose of German Colonialism, or the Long Shadow of Bismarck’s Colonial Policy’, in *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany*, ed. Volker Max Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 195–96.

<sup>12</sup> Jörg Hausteil, ‘Strategic Tangles: Slavery, Colonial Policy, and Religion in German East Africa, 1885–1918’, *Atlantic Studies* 14, no. 4 (2 October 2017): 502, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14788810.2017.1300753>.

<sup>13</sup> Conrad and Osterhammel, *Das Kaiserreich Transnational*, 10. See also Woodruff D. Smith’s chapter on “‘Weltpolitik’ und ‘Lebensraum’” in the same edition, pp. 29–48.

<sup>14</sup> David Armitage, ‘John Locke, Carolina, and the Two Treatises of Government’, *Political Theory* 32, no. 5 (1 October 2004): 602–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591704267122>.

<sup>15</sup> Jens-Uwe Guettel, “‘Between Us and the French There Are No Profound Differences’: Colonialism and the Possibilities of a Franco-German Rapprochement before 1914’, *Historical Reflections* 40, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 32–33.

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competition with Britain and France, or the “civilising mission”; all these developments occurred simultaneously and mattered to those advocating for colonies. A colonial discourse that referred to both the domestic and the international context was alive and well in Germany, gaining prominence and being disseminated publicly in the years and decades before 1884.

In the late 1870s and early 1880s, economic reasons took primacy over any other motivations for pursuing colonial action.<sup>16</sup> Policy makers but also well-connected merchants believed that the increasing productivity of German industry could only be maximised through access to bigger markets. At the same time, entrepreneurs would be able to exploit the colonies’ natural resources, which in turn would allow the German Empire to reduce its reliance on foreign resources and provide labour opportunities for an excess workforce. Naturally, these arguments were brought forward by those who had the highest stakes in such considerations: merchants, industrialists, and traders. Adolph Woermann, the Hamburg-based merchant and shipowner, propagated the colonial cause as a delegate to the Reichstag. Others founded colonial and exploration societies. These included the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation* (Society for German Colonisation, GfdK), whose main goal was to establish German plantation and trading colonies, especially in Africa, and the *Deutscher Kolonialverein* (German Colonial Association), which brought together industrialists, merchants, bankers, and economists, and had amassed over 12,000 members just four years after its founding.<sup>17</sup>

However, others criticised the focus on economic motivations as too narrow. The economic theorist Joseph Schumpeter suggested that it was not only new markets or other economic pressures that drove individuals and companies into the colonies, but also the opportunity to “escape from a rationalising world.”<sup>18</sup> In their influential study *Africa and the*

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<sup>16</sup> Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, *Imperialismus vom Grünen Tisch: deutsche Kolonialpolitik zwischen wirtschaftlicher Ausbeutung und ‘zivilisatorischen’ Bemühungen* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2009); see also Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson, eds., *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988); Evans Lewin, *The Germans and Africa (1915)*, 2nd ed. (London: Cassell, 1939), chap. II; Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 38; Francesca Schinzingler, *Die Kolonien und das Deutsche Reich: die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der deutschen Besitzungen in Übersee* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1984); Helmuth Stoecker, ed., *Drang nach Afrika: Die koloniale Expansionspolitik und Herrschaft des deutschen Imperialismus in Afrika von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977), chap. I, II, IV; German overseas expansion as ‘purely economic’: H.L. Wesseling, *Divide and Rule: The Partition of Africa, 1880-1914*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (London: Praeger, 1996), 33.

<sup>17</sup> The *Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation* was co-founded by Carl Peters on 28 April 1884. Shortly after, the society was renamed to *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* [German East Africa Company]. See Bruno Kurtze, *Die Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Schutzbriefgesellschaften und zur Geschichte Deutsch-Ostafrikas*, Abhandlungen des staatswissenschaftlichen Seminars zu Jena 12 (Jena: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1913), 2; Winfried Speitkamp, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 19–20.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Alois Schumpeter, *Zur Soziologie der Imperialismen* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1919); Jakob Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft Und Ihre Grenzen: Die Kolonialpolizei in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894-1915* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 273.

*Victorians*, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher have similarly argued against the predominance of economics and instead suggested that political deliberations – such as foreign policy – played a more important role in colonial debates. While certainly focused on the British Empire, it can be assumed that their view was to be extended to Germany and other empires as well.<sup>19</sup> Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s work on the “theory of social imperialism” similarly considered colonial expansion a result of political trends.<sup>20</sup> According to his *Sozialimperialismustheorie* (theory of social imperialism), the German ruling class used the promise of prosperity that would result from overseas expansion as a defensive manoeuvre to distract from their exploitation of a disadvantaged majority. Wehler argued that the elites used social imperialism “as the glue to hold together a fractured society and to maintain popular support for the social *status quo*.”<sup>21</sup>

Economic and political considerations were only two parts of the debate in the Nineteenth Century. Migration certainly played a role as well. The liberal politician and publisher Friedrich Naumann estimated that more than five million Germans had emigrated to the United States of America between 1821 and 1912.<sup>22</sup> Others had left Germany for Chile, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, and elsewhere. Once settled in foreign nations or colonies, these emigrants were lost to the German state. Worse than losing their economic, social, political, and intellectual capital was the fact that the German emigrants would instead contribute to the progress of other, rival powers.<sup>23</sup> In 1884, Heinrich von Treitschke wrote that “colonization becomes a matter of survival. [...] North American emigration is simply a loss for our nation, a gift offered to foreigners without any remuneration.”<sup>24</sup> With no overseas territories of its own, Germany remained vulnerable to this loss of human capital. In his famous pamphlet, *Bedarf*

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<sup>19</sup> Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, (2015) (London • New York: I.B.Tauris, 1961); See also Pogge von Strandmann, ‘The Purpose of German Colonialism’, 194.

<sup>20</sup> According to this *Sozialimperialismustheorie*, the German ruling class used the promise of prosperity resulting from overseas expansion as a defensive manoeuvre to distract from domestic political tensions. See Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969); for an early critique, see Geoff Eley, ‘Defining Social Imperialism: Use and Abuse of an Idea’, *Social History* 1, no. 3 (1976): 265–90; see also Dirk van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt: deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (München: C.H.Beck, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Geoff Eley, ‘Social Imperialism’, in *Modern Germany: An Encyclopedia of History, People, and Culture, 1871-1990*, ed. Juergen C. Doerr and Dieter K. Buse (New York: Garland Pub., 1998), 925–26.

<sup>22</sup> Friedrich Naumann, ‘Die amerikanische Neutralität’, *Die Hilfe. Wochenschrift für Politik, Literatur und Kunst*, 1916.

<sup>23</sup> William Otto Henderson, ‘The German Colonial Empire, 1884-1918’, *History* 20, no. 78 (September 1935): 152, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-229X.1935.tb00090.x>.

<sup>24</sup> Heinrich von Treitschke, ‘Die ersten Versuche deutscher Kolonialpolitik’, in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, ed. Heinrich von Treitschke and H. Delbrück, vol. 54 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1884), 561–62.

*Deutschland der Kolonien?*, the colonial advocate Friedrich Fabri suggested that directing the flows of migration “had become a *Lebens-Frage*” to the country.<sup>25</sup>

Colonial proponents also pointed at the successes of many of the German emigrants, asserting that “the German” was destined to be the carrier of a colonial project: “Germans were convinced, and rightly convinced, that their compatriots made excellent colonists,” wrote one commentator retrospectively.<sup>26</sup> In this way, colonial expansion also became an issue of national prestige.<sup>27</sup> In the lead-up to the mid-1880s, colonial fascination – “once the fixation of a middle-class minority” – quickly spread through German society, even though the “romantic dream” of a colonial empire soon made way for the fear of losing out: “‘colonial fever’ was giving way to *Torschlusspanik*.”<sup>28</sup> Dividing up the last “remaining” parts of the world thus became an extension of “intense competition” between European states, and the acquisition of overseas territories was a statement of political will and military power.<sup>29</sup>

This was a trend visible throughout Europe and especially in France. After losing Alsace and Lorraine due to defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the French sought to restore some of their injured national pride by acquiring overseas possessions.<sup>30</sup> Colonies were a compelling means to revive French national prestige. They also provided a means of French revenge against Germany without having to commit to another costly war in Europe.<sup>31</sup> While many believed that colonies offered the best means of sustaining French national prestige, the idea of French overseas expansion contributed to feelings of inadequacy and fear in Germany. Every claim made by France – and Britain, too – necessarily meant that less territory was available; every imperial addition led to a strengthening of Germany’s rivals. Even if there was no material need for colonies, acquiring overseas territories evolved into a metonym for possessing global power.

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<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?: eine politisch-oekonomische Betrachtung* (Gotha: Perthes, 1879), 90, <http://digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/urn:urn:nbn:de:hbz:061:1-38389>.

<sup>26</sup> Lewin, *The Germans and Africa* (1915), 41.

<sup>27</sup> Max Weber called prestige an “irrational element in all political foreign relations.” See Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 911.

<sup>28</sup> Casper W Erichsen and David Olusoga, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust: Germany’s Forgotten Genocide* (London: Faber, 2011), 36. Others, such as Ulrike Lindner have argued that national prestige assumed the leading role in colonial discourse only after the acquisition of overseas territories proved a financial and economic disaster. Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 38; see also Kundrus, *Phantasiereiche*.

<sup>29</sup> Toyin Falola and Chukwuemeka Agbo, ‘Colonial Administrations and the Africans’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History*, by Martin S. Shanguhya and Toyin Falola (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 84.

<sup>30</sup> See also Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Kumar, *Visions of Empire: How Five Imperial Regimes Shaped the World*, 425; see also Henri Brunschwig, *French Colonialism, 1871-1914: Myths and Realities*, trans. William Brown (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1966); WM Roger Louis and Prosser Gifford, eds., *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971).

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Expansion became an issue of “being a power of equal standing,” of joining the imperial “haves” and or remaining among the “have-nots”.<sup>32</sup>

But it was not only the fear of losing out on colonies that informed the discourse of national colonial prestige. Geographical exploration and discovery were further aspects in which the German public took pride. As Evans Lewin reflected on Germany’s entry into the colonial circles, “Germans realised with pride that their countrymen had been instrumental in solving many geographical problems, and that the explorers were active agents in the establishment of German influence in countries that were as yet unoccupied by any European Power.”<sup>33</sup> In some ways this was a vindication; “exploration” had generally been believed an affair outside the influence of Germany. The “new worlds” in the Americas, in Asia, and in the Pacific had been left to be “discovered” by the maritime nations of western Europe. But when explorers began to chart the African continent on maps, Germans took an active part: the journeys of Peter Kolb (1675-1726), Friedrich Konrad Hornemann (1772-1801), Heinrich Barth (1821-1865), Karl Klaus von der Decken (1833-1865), and others found public acclaim within Germany and beyond.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time that the quest for national prestige was driving colonial lobbying domestically, there emerged an international discourse around questions of legitimising colonisation as well. On the one hand, broader cultural developments had created a new view of the world and Europe’s role within it. Growing colonial interest was prompted by the publication of scientific discoveries and theories – such as Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, or Ernst Haeckel’s *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* in 1868.<sup>35</sup> These works contributed to the quickly spreading belief in European societies that humanity was ordered according to a “hierarchy of the races” in which the “white race” was most civilised and thus at

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<sup>32</sup> Ulrike Lindner, ‘German Colonialism and the British Neighbor in Africa Before 1914: Self-Definitions, Lines of Demarcation, and Cooperation’, in *German colonialism: race, the Holocaust, and postwar Germany*, ed. Volker Max Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 255.

<sup>33</sup> Lewin, *The Germans and Africa (1915)*, 64.

<sup>34</sup> Ed. Schauenburg, ed., *Reisen in Central-Africa, von Mungo Park bis auf Dr. H. Barth und Dr. Ed. Vogel*, vol. 1 (Lahr: M. Schauenburg u. C., 1859); see also Cornelia Essner, *Deutsche Afrikareisende im neunzehnten Jahrhundert: zur Sozialgeschichte des Reisens* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985).

<sup>35</sup> Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. (London: John Murray, 1859), [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/On\\_the-Origin\\_of\\_Species\\_\(1859\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/On_the-Origin_of_Species_(1859)); Ernst Haeckel, *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte: Gemeinverständliche wissenschaftliche Vorträge über die Entwicklungslehre im Allgemeinen und diejenige von Darwin, Göthe und Lamarck im Besonderen, über die Anwendung derselben auf den Ursprung des Menschen und andern damit zusammenhängende Gründfragen der Natur-Wissenschaft*. (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1868), [https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10075783\\_00005.html](https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10075783_00005.html).

the very top of the ladder.<sup>36</sup> This, in turn, informed the conviction held by many colonial advocates that the white race had a moral duty to “uplift” those populations they perceived as backwards – which essentially included all peoples on the African continent. Here, Fabri called upon the German Empire to use its “*wieder gewonnene Machtstellung*” (regained position of power) to contribute to the *Cultur-Mission* and to “no longer hesitate to pursue the colonising profession.”<sup>37</sup>

The tenets of the civilising mission also found dissemination in the broader public. More widely accessible were works of art and literature that propagated colonial and racist causes. Rudyard Kipling’s famous poem *The White Man’s Burden* encapsulates the sentiment of the civilising mission, albeit in a different spatiotemporal context.<sup>38</sup> Other emblematic works, such as Mark Twain’s *To the Person Sitting in Darkness*, show that the civilising mission, imperialism, and colonialism were widely discussed issues.<sup>39</sup> Far from being reserved for intellectuals or circles with considerable economic or political influence, discourses and ideas around colonialism and “the imperialist imagination” were commonplace in European society.<sup>40</sup>

Allusions to the “civilising mission” were made in all colonising states. A common belief in racial superiority and in the power of European civilisation facilitated pan-European colonial cooperation. As much as colonial expansion was influenced and fuelled by political, economic, and military competition between European powers, the expansion itself also led to the creation of a “shared European colonial identity.”<sup>41</sup> Attestations can be found everywhere. In political and diplomatic channels, colonial decision makers discussed everything from the abolition of slavery and the slave trade;<sup>42</sup> there were Anglo-German exchanges over the

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<sup>36</sup> Christian Geulen, *Geschichte des Rassismus* (C.H.Beck, 2011); George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*, ed. Christopher R. Browning (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=6319582>.

<sup>37</sup> Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?*, 112.

<sup>38</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Rudyard Kipling’s Verse: Definite Edition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1940), 321–23, <http://archive.org/details/rudyardkiplingsv0000kipl>.

<sup>39</sup> Mark Twain, ‘To the Person Sitting in Darkness’, *The North American Review* 172, no. 531 (1901): 161–76.

<sup>40</sup> Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

<sup>41</sup> Alois Maderspacher, ‘European Colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Germans, French, and British in Cameroon, 1884-1939’ (Doctoral Dissertation, Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 2011), v–vi, Manuscripts Room, University Library, Cambridge.

<sup>42</sup> See for example Martin A. Klein, ‘The Study of Slavery in Africa’, *The Journal of African History* 19, no. 4 (October 1978): 599, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700016509>; Jan-Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa, c. 1884-1914* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 2006); Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139014946>.

desirability of an international wildlife protection conference;<sup>43</sup> and bilateral preliminary plans to divide up the Portuguese colonial territories in Africa.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, aside from pan-European considerations, colonialism was also riven by the antipathies between nations. Anglo-German colonial relations were initially hostile. This stemmed from the geopolitical context. For the British, France had been the biggest rival in colonial affairs for a long time, and British officials saw Germany's entry into the colonial world as a further threat.<sup>45</sup> They disapproved of Bismarck's manner of empire-building and fears over Franco-German cooperation to "oust" the British from Africa permeated the Foreign Office.<sup>46</sup> The British government was especially concerned that a German intrusion into the eastern parts of the continent would endanger alternative routes and access to India. After France annexed Madagascar, the east African coast became vital to British interests in India: "the political future of the country is of real importance to Indian and Imperial interests," a memorandum of the British Foreign Office read.<sup>47</sup> But only a short while later the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which sought to regulate European colonialism, brought Britain and Germany closer together. Both advocated for free trade relations while France took a protectionist stance. Germany found its interests aligned closer to Britain and the British managed to block French expansion in the Congo with the help of the German delegation.

Consequently, for the British, German colonial expansion came to be seen as a cause worthy of support. Prime Minister William Gladstone declared to the House of Commons on 12 March 1885: "[i]f Germany is to become a colonising power, all I say is 'God speed her!' She becomes our ally and partner in the execution of the great purposes of Providence for the advantage of mankind. [...] Gladly shall I hope that she will become associated with us in carrying the light of civilisation... among the more backward... regions of the world."<sup>48</sup> Only later, when the German Empire began again to cooperate closer with the French did Britain backtrack. Yet, as Michael Fröhlich has argued, dozens of Anglo-German colonial agreements

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<sup>43</sup> See the exchanges between the British Foreign Office and the British ambassador to Berlin, for example in T.A. Sanderson to Frank Lascelles, 'Objects for a Conference Respective Wild Animals in Africa', 3 March 1898, Foreign Office, Records of Embassies, Germany, FO 244/567, National Archives.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Fröhlich, *Von Konfrontation Zur Koexistenz. Die Deutsch-Englischen Kolonialbeziehungen in Afrika Zwischen 1884 Und 1914* (Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1990), 5, 184.

<sup>45</sup> Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919*, 20; Fröhlich, *Von Konfrontation Zur Koexistenz*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> WM Roger Louis, 'Great Britain and German Expansion in Africa, 1884-1914', in *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, ed. WM Roger Louis and Prosser Gifford (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 3-5.

<sup>47</sup> Clement Hill, 'Foreign Office Memorandum', 9 December 1884 quoted in Robinson and Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians*, 191.

<sup>48</sup> William Gladstone quoted in I. M. Cumpston, 'The Discussion of Imperial Problems in the British Parliament, 1880-85', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 (1963): 39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3678728>.

illustrate a willingness to make compromises, rendering their relations both “friendly” and “unfriendly” at the same time.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, it can be observed that, overall, European relations in the colonial sphere remained largely benign. Very little actual physical confrontation and fighting took place between European powers during the division of the African continent and the acquisition of overseas colonies from the 1880s onwards. While certainly informed by geopolitical competition between imperial powers, European colonialism was a joint undertaking in practice.<sup>50</sup>

Colonial expansion was hotly debated in nineteenth-century Europe. In Germany, stakeholders on all levels influenced, propagated, and disseminated the colonial cause: acquiring colonies was thus a matter of economics, of politics, of culture, or of prestige. Arguments for the acquisition of colonies did not arise from any drastic or sudden change. They rather were a consequence of the underlying societal and intellectual processes of the time, and were also introduced from outside the German borders. The eventual expansion overseas was thus a response to both changing domestic and global circumstances.

### Section II: Hierarchies of colonial administration

From 1884, the German Empire formally acquired four colonies in Africa in quick succession, and a few others in China and the Pacific.<sup>51</sup> The territories were largely co-opted into the empire after private opportunist initiatives had run into financial hardship and were unable to provide for their own security vis-à-vis the populations from which they had taken the land. The German colonies varied in size, population and location. German Southwest Africa contained a small band of fertile land along the coast, but was otherwise mostly a hot and dry desert; it adjoined the British South African colonies to its south. German East Africa had a densely populated

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<sup>49</sup> Fröhlich, *Von Konfrontation Zur Koexistenz*, 14–15.

<sup>50</sup> Falola and Agbo, ‘Colonial Administrations and the Africans’, 86.

<sup>51</sup> For an overview over German colonialism in German East Africa, see John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); for German Togo: Peter Sebald, *Togo 1884-1914: eine Geschichte der deutschen ‘Musterkolonie’ auf der Grundlage amtlicher Quellen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1988); Peter Sebald, *Die Deutsche Kolonie Togo 1884-1914: Auswirkungen Einer Fremdherrschaft* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2013); for German Southwest Africa: Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (Münster: Lit, 2002); for German Cameroon: Alexandre Kum’a N’dumbe, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich in Kamerun Wie Deutschland in Kamerun Seine Kolonialmacht Aufbauen Konnte 1840 - 1910* (Berlin: Exchange & Dialogue, 2009); Ulrike Schaper, *Koloniale Verhandlungen: Gerichtsbarkeit, Verwaltung und Herrschaft in Kamerun 1884-1916* (Campus Verlag, 2012); for Kiautschou: Mechthild Leutner, ‘Kiautschou – Deutsche „Musterkolonie” in China?’, in *--Macht und Anteil an der Weltherrschaft’: Berlin und der deutsche Kolonialismus*, ed. Ulrich van der Heyden and Joachim Zeller (Münster: Unrast, 2005); for German colonies in the Pacific: Hermann Hiery, *Die deutsche Südsee 1884-1914: ein Handbuch* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002).

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coastal region, some fertile highlands that were believed suitable for European settlement, impenetrable tropical rainforests, vast steppes, and lay on the Indian Ocean. Togoland, and to a lesser extent Kamerun, were thought entirely uninhabitable for Europeans. The colonies in western Africa were directly bordered by both the French and British African empires. In the Pacific, the German Empire had acquired various islands and territories, including the north-eastern part of the island of New Guinea. The concession around the Kiautschou Bay in China was a special case: it had come into existence as a base for the German navy and was administered directly by the Imperial Naval Office. All the other colonies were under the control of the German Foreign Office.

The relations between German motherland and the colonies were first regulated in the *Schutzgebietsgesetz* (Protectorate Law) of 17 April 1886, but these guidelines were revised many times in the subsequent years.<sup>52</sup> According to these ordinances, the formal *Schutzgewalt* (protective authority) resided with the emperor. The emperor had the power to delegate sovereign rights to the government or to colonial societies and chartered companies. However, in conjunction with the *Konsulargerichtsgesetz* (Consular Courts Law) the emperor's legislative power for the colonies was curtailed. Instead, the Reich chancellor held legislative authority over the colonial administration.<sup>53</sup> Yet, the administrative law process for the colonies was not the same as for the German motherland. Instead of legislation that involved both *Reichstag* and *Bundesrat*, administrative laws applicable to the colonies were issued directly through *kaiserliche Verordnung* (imperial decree), though they were passed in consultation with the chancellor.<sup>54</sup> Other areas of law, such as civil and criminal law, however, remained within the remit of the ordinary legislative process.<sup>55</sup>

The administration of the colonies was broadly divided into three hierarchical levels. At the top stood the Reich chancellor as the highest imperial officer. He held authority over the entire imperial administration, which included the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office) and the later-instituted *Reichskolonialamt* (Imperial Colonial Office, RKA).<sup>56</sup> The Reich chancellor

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<sup>52</sup> See Marc Grohmann, *Exotische Verfassung: die Kompetenzen des Reichstags für die deutschen Kolonien in Gesetzgebung und Staatsrechtswissenschaft des Kaiserreichs (1884-1914)*, Beiträge zur Rechtsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 284–85.

<sup>53</sup> Peter J. Schröder, *Gesetzgebung und 'Arbeiterfrage' in den Kolonien: das Arbeitsrecht in den Schutzgebieten des Deutschen Reiches*, vol. 18, Europa-Übersee: Historische Studien (Berlin: Lit, 2006), 26–27.

<sup>54</sup> Of course, some exceptions existed. Especially in regard to financial matters, Bundesrat and Reichstag had to be consulted. See 'Gesetz über die Einnahmen und Ausgaben der Schutzgebiete' (Deutsches Reichsgesetzblatt, 30 March 1892), Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutsches\\_Reichsgesetzblatt\\_1892\\_019\\_0369.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutsches_Reichsgesetzblatt_1892_019_0369.jpg).

<sup>55</sup> 'Denkschrift: Die Kolonialverwaltung der europäischen Staaten', Aktenstück 1356 (Berlin: Julius Sittenfeld, 9 February 1914), 2709, [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k13\\_bsb00003399\\_00725.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k13_bsb00003399_00725.html).

<sup>56</sup> An independent *Reichskolonialamt* was founded 1907. It will be discussed in more detail in Chapter II.

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held important powers of decree: he could issue internal administrative regulations, but could also issue ordinances and decrees for the colonies themselves.<sup>57</sup> This power, however, was delegated to the foreign and colonial offices, so that the leaders of the respective office in effect issued ordinances and decrees.<sup>58</sup>

Colonial affairs were initially handled by only one clerk, but operations had expanded into a dedicated colonial department (*Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung*, AAKA) by 1890. The first director of the AAKA was Paul Kayser, an inexperienced lawyer whose tenure was characterised by a slow but steady expansion of the administrative apparatus in the colonies. During Kayser's directorship, chancellor Leo von Caprivi convened the *Kolonialrat* (Colonial Advisory Council) for the first time in 1891.<sup>59</sup> The *Kolonialrat* was comprised of colonial experts and representatives of German industry and trade, and sought to assist the AAKA as a point of contact for colonial political and economic interests.<sup>60</sup> Even though the Council had no official decision-making authority and could only make recommendations to the official colonial administration, the influence of important business magnates was significant. Following the upheavals and reforms of 1904-1908, the colonial administration under its new head Bernhard Dernburg established the *Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee* (Colonial Economic Committee) in a bid to curb the influence of the *Kolonialrat* and to better regulate lobbying activities. The *Kolonialrat* was eventually disbanded in 1908.

The operations of the AAKA and RKA were under the direct purview of the chancellor and directors and secretaries reported to him. This meant that the colonial officials by extension were directly answerable to the emperor – unless the chancellor intervened. And this in turn meant that the director or secretary was directly responsible for colonial policymaking, and was not accountable to any cabinet.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, since the *Reichstag* controlled the imperial budget – that is, for the colonial offices and for the colonies themselves – all colonial policy could be influenced indirectly. An 1892 financial law regulated that “all income and

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Gesetz, betreffend die Rechtsverhältnisse der deutschen Schutzgebiete’ (Deutsches Reichsgesetzblatt, 17 April 1886), 75–76, Wikimedia Commons, [https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Gesetz,\\_betreffend\\_die\\_Rechtsverh%C3%A4ltnisse\\_der\\_deutschen\\_Schutzgebiete](https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Gesetz,_betreffend_die_Rechtsverh%C3%A4ltnisse_der_deutschen_Schutzgebiete).

<sup>58</sup> Sören Utermark, “Schwarzer Untertan versus schwarzer Bruder”. Bernhard Dernburgs Reformen in den Kolonien Deutsch-Ostafrika, Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Togo und Kamerun’ (Doctoral Dissertation, Kassel, Universität Kassel, 2011), 41–42, <https://kobra.uni-kassel.de/bitstream/handle/123456789/2012082441677/DissertationSoerenUtermark.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Protokoll der ersten Kolonialratssitzung’, 1 June 1891, fol. 48ff., Reichskolonialamt, Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Kolonialratssachen und Kommissionen beim Reichskolonialamt, R 1001/6987, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>60</sup> Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, ‘Der Kolonialrat’, in *Kolonialmetropole Berlin*, ed. Joachim Zeller and Ulrich van der Heyden (Berlin: Bebra, 2002), 32–35.

<sup>61</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 33.

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expenditure in the colonies, and all loans raised for colonial purposes, must pass through the regular legislative and accounting procedures of the Reichstag.”<sup>62</sup> In this domain, the parliament’s power was “absolute”.<sup>63</sup> Yet, as the events of 1904-1908 showed, this arrangement also proved to be one of the colonial system's most significant flaws, leading to a national political crisis.<sup>64</sup>

At the intermediate level, the colonies were administered directly by the empire or indirectly by the colonial societies.<sup>65</sup> In eastern Africa, the GfdK, which later transformed into the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (German East Africa Company, DOAG) had signed spurious contracts with local leaders. Under the aegis of the GfdK’s founder, Carl Peters, African chiefs were tricked into surrendering their territories to the colonisers. Peters carefully cultivated an image of grandeur and power: his caravan was decorated pompously with flags and was accompanied by fantastical rumours and gun fire.<sup>66</sup> In exchange for the marking of a cross on a contract written in German language, Peters made vague promises of protection to the African chiefs. He also brought gifts, such as European uniforms.<sup>67</sup> Returning to Germany, Peters presented his *Schutzverträge* (protection contracts) to the public. Shortly after, on 27 February 1885, emperor Wilhelm I in turn extended the empire’s formal protective authority over Peters’ acquisitions.<sup>68</sup>

The GfdK, and later DOAG, continuously expanded its holdings on the East African coast until the outbreak of the Abushiri revolt in 1888: when the Sultan of Zanzibar was forced to relinquish control over areas on the coast to the German colonisers, the indigenous Arab and Swahili populations rebelled and killed or drove out representatives of the DOAG. In early 1889, Bismarck tasked Hermann von Wissmann with an expedition to crush the rebellion. Wissmann gathered around 100 German officers and recruited six battalions of 100 African soldiers, called *Askari*.<sup>69</sup> The *Wissmann-Truppe* brought the territories back under German

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 37; ‘Gesetz über die Einnahmen und Ausgaben der Schutzgebiete’.

<sup>63</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 36.

<sup>64</sup> This will be explored in more depth in Chapter II.

<sup>65</sup> In the colonies of German East Africa, German New Guinea, and the Pacific, territorial administration was carried out by colonial societies modelled on British chartered companies. German Southwest Africa, Kamerun, Togoland, German Samoa, and Kiautschou were administered directly by the imperial government. Schröder, *Gesetzgebung und ‘Arbeiterfrage’ in den Kolonien*, 18:29–30.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Pesek, ‘The Boma and the Peripatetic Ruler: Mapping Colonial Rule in German East Africa, 1889-1903’, *Western Folklore* 66, no. 3/4 (2007): 241.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Kaiserlicher Schutzbrief für Carl Peters’ Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation’, 27 February 1885, [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=1869&language=german](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1869&language=german).

<sup>69</sup> The Swahili word *askari* translates as “soldier” or “military”. In the colonial context, Askaris were the native military troops that made up the majority of the fighting force of the Schutztruppe. For more information, see especially the work of Moyd, who is the expert on the Askari. Michelle Moyd, “‘All People Were Barbarians to the Askari...’: Askari Identity and Honor in the Maji Maji War, 1905-1907”, in *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*,

control within months. On 20 November 1890, the German Empire formally assumed sovereign rights over eastern Africa from the DOAG, who would continue to operate plantation and trading businesses. Hermann von Wissmann became the colony's first governor (1888-1891). He was followed by Julius von Soden (1891-1893), and Friedrich von Scheele (1893-1895). After Wissmann's second stint as governor (1895-1896), tenures became longer. Eduard von Liebert (1896-1901), Gustav Adolf von Götzen (1901-1906), Albrecht von Rechenberg (1906-1912), and Heinrich Schnee (1912-1918) all spent several years in the East African colony and were able to fundamentally influence the territory's development.

The establishment of formal German imperial administration brought German East Africa under direct control of the AAKA. A governor stood at the head of the administration of each colony. He held "an extremely strong, legally secured, dominant position" and could regulate and shape the internal affairs of his colony almost at will: geographical distance, limited transport links, and slow communication lines meant that supervision from Berlin was constrained.<sup>70</sup> To facilitate his administration, the governor held authorities that were devolved from the imperial government. These included the power to issue ordinances pertaining to the general administration of the white populations, as well as to the legal relations of the indigenous populations. Furthermore, the governor held direct regulatory and disciplinary authorities. Unlike any official in the German motherland, the governor was authorised to exclude German nationals from German territory: he alone could expel criminals and other undesirables; a manifestation of the special status of the colonies.<sup>71</sup>

The German East African governorate was further subdivided into different *Referate* (departments), such as political administration – which was responsible for the colony's annual reports, correspondence with foreign agencies, matters for discussion with the council, and "native affairs" – staff, justice, finances, medicine, agriculture, forestry, mining, construction,

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by James Giblin and Jamie Monson, *African Social Studies* 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 149–79; Michelle Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014). See also Tanja Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika: Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegführung, 1885 bis 1918* (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2011); Jürgen Kraus and Thomas Müller, *Die Deutschen Kolonial- Und Schutztruppen: Von 1889 Bis 1918; Geschichte, Uniformierung Und Ausrüstung* (Wien: Verlag Militaria, 2009); Susanne Kuß, *Deutsches Militär auf kolonialen Kriegsschauplätzen: Eskalation von Gewalt zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2010). See also Jutta Bückendorf, 'Schwarz-weiss-rot über Ostafrika!': *deutsche Kolonialpläne und afrikanische Realität* (LIT Verlag Münster, 1997), 384ff.

<sup>70</sup> Schröder, *Gesetzgebung und 'Arbeiterfrage' in den Kolonien*, 18:46.

<sup>71</sup> This authority was controversial. Not for any real-life application, but for its symbolism. The settlers did not object to the governor's right to expel German nationals from the colony, but rather to the interpretation of law that implied that German colonies were not part of Germany proper. 'Das Kammergericht und die Ausweisungsbefugnis der Gouverneure', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 21 May 1910, XII/40 edition, 1.

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local administration – including school, missionary, or postal matters – policing, and railways.<sup>72</sup> These departments reported to the *erster Referent* (head of departments), who screened and assessed all incoming administrative matters according to the administration's political course, feasibility, legal context, and so forth. The *erster Referent* also acted as deputy of the governor in times of his absence.<sup>73</sup>

Further assistance was provided by the *Gouvernementsrat* (Governorate Council), which was chaired by the governor and comprised of *amtliche* (official) and *nichtamtliche* (unofficial) members of the white population. The unofficial members were appointed directly by the governor for at least one year.<sup>74</sup> Unsurprisingly, the consequence of this prerogative was that the governor could fill the council with whomever he considered loyal or unthreatening while at the same time he was able to maintain a veneer of public consultation. For the governor, the selection process for the council and its function as an advisory body were provisions well worth protecting. The governor was simultaneously the highest authority of the civilian and the military administrations. He could thus command the *Schutztruppe* (Protection Force) to carry out operations and expeditions, though the training, day-to-day affairs, and other operational matters remained within the control of the Force's commander.<sup>75</sup>

Significant authority was thus concentrated in the governor's position. The governorship attained its power through its combination of executive and legislative authorities. In the words of Andreas Eckert and Michael Pesek, this combination was “a perfection of power that even the emperor could only dream of.”<sup>76</sup> The primacy of the governorship at the same time also meant that personality and personal preferences made a continuous colonial policy difficult. Every new governor brought with him to German East Africa his own convictions, ideas, and plans, so that every couple of years colonial and administrative priorities changed. When Governor Liebert announced in 1899 that he would return for a second term – the first German East African governor to do so – the settler press was ecstatic, calling the announcement “a colonial event of greatest significance.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> ‘Die Kolonialverwaltung’, 2714–15.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 2714.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 2712.

<sup>75</sup> A point of contention that became especially pronounced under Governor Heinrich Schnee and *Schutztruppenkommandeur* Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck at the outbreak of the First World War.

<sup>76</sup> Andreas Eckert and Michael Pesek, ‘Bürokratische Ordnung und koloniale Praxis: Herrschaft und Verwaltung in Preußen und Afrika’, in *Das Kaiserreich transnational - Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 94.

<sup>77</sup> ‘No title’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 February 1899, I/1 edition, 1.

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At the lowest level of the colonial administration stood local officials. German East Africa was divided into twenty-two civil and military districts, even though the number varied throughout the period of official German colonial rule.<sup>78</sup> Every district was administered by either a *Bezirksamtmann* (district official in districts under civil administration), or by a *Bezirkshauptmann* (district official in districts under military administration).<sup>79</sup> These acted as the governor's local deputies and had to ensure that ordinances and laws issued by the governor were enforced. Every *Bezirksamt* (district office) was further subdivided into smaller areas or wards. In general terms, those administrative districts that were "developed" – those that contained larger numbers of Europeans – were under civil rule, while those that were "undeveloped" – containing only few Europeans – were administered by the *Schutztruppe*.<sup>80</sup>

This division was a thorn in the settlers' side, and they lobbied for the abolition of military rule.<sup>81</sup> They achieved some autonomy with the establishment of *Kommunalverbände* (municipal associations) in areas with sizeable numbers of Europeans.<sup>82</sup> These were similar to the Governorate Council and held some authority over the use of collected taxes. The municipal associations initially included African members, though, as discussions were deliberately held only in German, their participation was superficial and eventually prohibited in 1904.<sup>83</sup>

While the administration of the German colonies was marked by hierarchies and powerful individual office holders, the colonial service was also characterised by competing personal interests and obscurity.<sup>84</sup> In the same way that the governor was detached from Berlin

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<sup>78</sup> In German Southwest Africa, Kamerun, and in German East Africa (Rwanda and Burundi), local districts were complemented by so-called *Residenturen*. These were tasked with assisting and controlling African chiefs and leaders, and to ensure that German authority was recognised.

<sup>79</sup> See also the entries 'Bezirke' (vol. I, p. 198), 'Gouvernement' (vol. I, p. 746), 'Gouvernementsräte' (vol. I, p. 746), 'Gouverneur' (vol. I, pp. 746f.), 'Militärverwaltung' (vol. II, p. 560), 'Verwaltung' (vol. III, p. 615), and 'Zivilverwaltung' (vol. III, pp. 755f.) in Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsches Koloniallexikon* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920).

<sup>80</sup> Special districts [*Residenturen*] existed in Bukoba, Rwanda, and Burundi. These were areas in which direct administrative rule was considered unfeasible at the time. Instead, administrative officials attempted to steer colonial development indirectly by "cooperating" with indigenous leaders.

<sup>81</sup> 'Die Organisation unserer Zivilverwaltung', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 5 January 1907, IX/1 edition, 1.

<sup>82</sup> 'Die Kolonialverwaltung', 2713–14.

<sup>83</sup> For the historian Detlef Bald, 'the governor had achieved an extraordinary accumulation of power with this construction.' Bald, *Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 41; see also Juhani Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German Colonial Policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884-1914*, *Studia Historica* 49 (Helsinki: Finnish Historical Society, 1994), 257–58.

<sup>84</sup> Bruce Berman has aptly described the colonial state's seemingly paradox image. Berman's analysis focuses on the colonial state's structure and its relation to the colonised, but its main tenets are applicable to the administration-settler relationship as well: 'On the one hand there is the "strong" state, the potent bureaucratic agent of imperialism. By coercion, indirect pressures and material inducements it smashed the self-sufficiency of indigenous pre-capitalist societies and managed their subordinate linkages to metropolitan capital. Its continually expanding apparatus intervened in even wider areas of the colonial political economy, directing change to serve the interests of the metropole while containing and suppressing indigenous social forces. [...] On the other hand, however, there is the "weak" colonial state, the paternalistic mediator struggling to maintain a precarious sovereignty over the contending interests of colonial society. Constantly strapped for resources, plagued by poor

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and had political discretion, so too were his subordinates. Bar a few expeditions and visits to other places in the colony, the governor remained fixed to the colony's capital. In the case of German East Africa, this was Bagamoyo (1885-1890) and later Dar es Salaam (1890-1916). The governor therefore relied on information and reports from remote district officials who, in many cases, were fighting their own battles. Lines of accountability were blurred while personal power was almost absolute. And while the governor might have held supreme power in the colony, the colonies themselves occupied an ambivalent position within the empire, so that a governor's power did not extend much beyond the borders of his own territory.

### Section III: The African colonies

The German colonial empire was the fourth largest in the world, and was only surpassed by those of Britain, France, and the Netherlands. Yet, since colonial administration depended to a great extent on the personal ideas and motivations of a governor, the development of the individual territories varied drastically. Germany's late entry to the colonial circle also meant that decision makers in the colonial offices in Berlin had little knowledge of what to do with their territories. Administrators on the ground were all driven by the conviction that one must establish a strong colonial state and administration. But whether this constituted the export of "the ideal of the rational state", or "a political form sui generis" is debated.<sup>85</sup> What united the German colonial territories in this process was that their administrations developed control, power, and rule through a process of trial and error. Colonists were "eclectics" who attempted to navigate spatial and conceptual playing fields that by and large were unknown to them.<sup>86</sup> For the administrations, but also for merchants, traders, and businesspeople, making mistakes was the order of day.

In German Southwest Africa, Germans and other Europeans sought to create a "white man's country". The territory was largely unusable for any sort of plantation economy; at most,

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communications and inadequate information, and possessing limited coercive force, it appears as a facade of power sustained by a delicate game of bluff and wit, combining exhortation and threat with the cooptation and accommodation of indigenous social forces. Rather than being the agent of change, the colonial state feared the consequences of change emanating from social forces over which it had little effective control. Colonial order was ultimately a "close run thing", constantly threatened by crisis and struggle.' Bruce Berman, 'Structure and Process in the Bureaucratic States of Colonial Africa', *Development and Change* 15, no. 2 (1984): 161–62, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.1984.tb00178.x>.

<sup>85</sup> Eckert and Pesek, 'Bürokratische Ordnung und koloniale Praxis: Herrschaft und Verwaltung in Preußen und Afrika', 88–89; Jürgen Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*, 5th ed. (München: C.H. Beck, 1995), 62.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft in Deutsch-Ostafrika: Expeditionen, Militär Und Verwaltung Seit 1880* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005), 295ff.; see also Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 37–38.

farmers could grow enough for their own needs, though a fairly successful cattle industry emerged. Many settlers saw in German Southwest Africa the opportunity to free themselves from the conflicts of a modernising and industrialising society.<sup>87</sup> This was to be paired with reviving a sense of Germanness which many believed had come under threat from socio-economic and political shifts from within the empire, but also from its entanglement within broader, global trends.<sup>88</sup> Especially for social conservatives, German Southwest Africa was envisioned as a model, even a utopian ideal, for the German nation: freed from housing shortages and the uncertainties and haste of modern urban metropolises, and with the possibility to “do something heroic”:

One's own farm, the refuge wrested from the hostile African environment by one's own hands, [...] supposedly far away from modern conventions and needs, far away from state constraints, could become the epitome of an alternative concept to the industrial society in the self-perception of the emigrant searching for his 'own clod' and the support of the colonial administration.<sup>89</sup>

Hans Grimm's widely popular novel *Volk ohne Raum* encapsulated this romantic longing for “the good old times”, even if it was first published only after the German Empire had come to an end.<sup>90</sup> But the reality is that only negligible numbers of Germans actually left Europe and settled in German Southwest Africa. By the outbreak of the First World War, only around 12,000 Germans lived in the colony.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, this was the largest number of Germans in any one colony across the empire.

The two German colonies in western Africa, Togoland and Kamerun, offered an entirely different picture. At its height, fewer than 2,000 Europeans lived in Kamerun, for its climate prevented any enduring white settlement. Instead, Kamerun developed one of the most extensive plantation industries in western and central Africa.<sup>92</sup> The labour-intensive work was largely carried out through the coercion of the local populations. Officials went to great lengths to justify coercive forms of labour and used arbitrary definitions to differentiate them from outright slavery. Cocoa was the main plantation product, but trading in rubber, among other

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<sup>87</sup> Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 56.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.; Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 275.

<sup>89</sup> Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 275; see also Birthe Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten: das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2003); Daniel Joseph Walther, ‘Creating Germans Abroad: White Education and the Colonial Condition in German Southwest Africa, 1894-1914’, *European Education* 44, no. 4 (1 December 2012): 31–50, <https://doi.org/10.2753/EUE1056-4934440402>.

<sup>90</sup> Grimm's novel was published long after German colonialism had come to an official end. Yet, the 1920s and 1930s saw a continued increase in colonial revisionism that in many cases employed the same discourses and arguments as were present in the German pre-colonial phase. Part of the novel are set in German Southwest Africa. Grimm, *Volk ohne Raum*.

<sup>91</sup> It must be noted, however, that, unlike in any other territory, a significant proportion of the German population remained in the colony after German rule came to an end.

<sup>92</sup> A similar policy was adopted by the Belgian government of the Congo Free State.

things, also made an important contribution to the colonial economy. Togoland hosted even fewer Europeans, most of whom lived on the short coastal strip. They engaged in trade with the indigenous populations, mainly in palm products. The colonial administration made attempts to sell land to large plantation companies, but ultimately these remained unsuccessful. Instead, Togoland developed a “West-Coast” solution, mirroring British policy in Nigeria.<sup>93</sup> Here, colonial officials put the focus on African peasant agriculture. By the end of German colonial rule, Togoland had become economically viable, boasting a more or less even trade balance; it was the only German colony in Africa to ever accomplish this feat.

German East Africa was the empire’s largest colony both in terms of area and population. It was also defined by different geographical and climatic zones. Large European population numbers settled on the coast, with urban centres forming in Dar es Salaam, Tanga, and Bagamoyo. Small but growing settlements were also established in the highlands around Mount Kilimanjaro and in the Usambara mountains, where moderate climate and the absence of malaria were conducive to European expansion. Here, Moshi and Arusha emerged as important population, military, and trading centres. Many large plantations, farms, and numerous missionary stations dotted the landscape in this north-eastern part of the colony. But aside from that, the vast majority of the country was devoid of any Europeans. Climatic conditions, the prevalence of tropical diseases, as well as a lack of water sources made many parts uninhabitable for Europeans.<sup>94</sup> Instead, European settlement was confined to “islands of white”.<sup>95</sup> German East Africa was not picked out for European settlement in the same way that German Southwest Africa was and discussions around the viability of the territory as a destination for Europeans persisted until the end of German rule.<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless, just before the outbreak of World War I, around 5,500 Europeans lived in German East Africa of whom eighty percent were German. In comparison with the seven to eight million Africans who lived in the colony – the most indigenous people in any German colony – the number of Europeans was negligible; but this should not distract from the realities of power and control, which were firmly in the hands of the Europeans and will be explored at a later stage.

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<sup>93</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 51.

<sup>94</sup> W. O. Henderson, ‘British Economic Activity in the German Colonies, 1884-1914’, *The Economic History Review* 15, no. 1/2 (1945): 57, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2590312>.

<sup>95</sup> Dane Keith Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).

<sup>96</sup> Matthias Deeken, *Die Auswanderung nach den deutschen Kolonien, unter Berücksichtigung der wirtschaftlichen und klimatischen Verhältnisse: Eine kolonialwirtschaftliche Studie unter besonderer Zugrundelegung amtlicher und halbamtlicher Veröffentlichungen*, vol. 21/22, *Koloniale Abhandlungen* (Berlin: W. Süsserott, 1908).

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German East Africa was also home to numerous large plantation enterprises. The Colonial Economic Committee was founded in 1896 with the aim of stimulating the production of agricultural goods for export, and similarly, companies such as the DOAG or the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Plantagensgesellschaft* (German East African Plantation Company), began extensive operations in the colony. They undertook numerous experiments to establish a modern industry around coffee, cotton, sugar, tobacco, as well as grain and maize, and other agricultural products. Coffee was cultivated especially in the mountains of the northeast. The success of this venture and the favourable climate allowed for the settlement of significant numbers of Europeans. But even those agricultural products that were considered a failure as plantation crops, such as cotton and tobacco, only increased further cultivation: “the spread of new varieties to African producers gradually increased the production of those commodities.”<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, rubber plantations produced great profits, but the most successful plantation crop was sisal.

It is evident that the conditions on the ground differed starkly from one territory to the next. Varied geographies, a governor’s personal ideas, and the difficulties of the colonial offices to establish a coherent course meant that the development of any one colony was unique.<sup>98</sup> To that end, scholars such as Christoph Marx have brought forward colonial typologies that can be used to differentiate between different territories. These might include “plantation colonies”, “mining colonies”, and “settler colonies”, but they certainly are not exhaustive.<sup>99</sup> In the case of the German colonies in Africa, such typologies could be applied as follows: German Southwest Africa was a settler colony, Kamerun a plantation colony, and the administration of Togoland focused on peasant agriculture. German East Africa was a trickier case since different forms of colonial development coexisted. The plantation industry was promoted by colonial societies such as the DOAG and others. Products from mining and forestry, too, constituted significant exports.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, European settlement was extensive, and many believed the colony to be a “paradise”.<sup>101</sup> As we shall see in Chapter II, the administration also considered the

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<sup>97</sup> Gregory H. Maddox, ‘Networks and Frontiers in Colonial Tanzania’, *Environmental History* 3, no. 4 (October 1998): 442, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3985206>.

<sup>98</sup> Cooper has reminded us to recognise “the specific forms of colonization that spread out from Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.” Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 52–53, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=231908>.

<sup>99</sup> Christoph Marx, ‘Siedlerkolonien in Afrika - Versuch einer Typologie’, in *Rassenmischehen - Mischlinge - Rassentrennung: zur Politik der Rasse im deutschen Kolonialreich*, ed. Frank Becker (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004), 82–96; see also M. I. Finley, ‘Colonies: An Attempt at a Typology’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (1976): 167–88, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3679077>.

<sup>100</sup> Kaiserliches Statistisches Amt, ed., *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1912* (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1913), 456, [http://www.digizeitschriften.de/dms/img/?PID=PPN514401303\\_1912%7Clog2](http://www.digizeitschriften.de/dms/img/?PID=PPN514401303_1912%7Clog2).

<sup>101</sup> ‘Burenansiedlungen in unserer Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 June 1903, V/26 edition.

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colony's economic future to lie in the concentrated development of an indigenous agriculture, whose production could then be sold on the world market. Taking all these different aspects into consideration, German East Africa can thus be thought of as a "hybrid colony".

The purpose of each colony – settlement, plantation, trade, etc. – impacted how colonisers interacted with and thought of the colonised indigenous populations. A colony that was earmarked for European settlement ultimately sought to replace local populations; one that was destined a plantation colony, on the other hand, often had to rely on local populations as workforce. It hardly mattered for the local populations which European empire had planted a flag in their respective territory, for the colonial situation always was one of exploitation and oppression.

### Section IV: German East Africa's colonisers

Even though the German Empire entered the colonial sphere at a very late stage, many saw the occasion as confirmation of Germany's status as a great power.<sup>102</sup> But due to its late colonial commitment, the German Empire lacked the colonial expertise that other empires had cultivated over the previous decades and centuries. In the absence of any pre-existing colonial policy template or overarching plan, the development of German East Africa proceeded by means of experiments and eclectic improvisations. Many different stakeholders – from colonial administrators and district officials, to individual settlers and settler interest groups, to merchants, planters, trading companies, and soldiers, as well as foreign actors – sought to shape the colony in accordance with their own ideas and interests. This frequently led to clashes, but it also caused German East Africa to become a highly distinctive hotchpotch of interests and ideas, quite unlike the other colonies of the German Empire for which specific courses – plantation, settlement, and so forth – had been set out.

So, who were those people who went to the colonies, specifically to German East Africa? What were their motivations, what were their intentions, what were their desires? How did they seek to fulfil their hopes? Did they manage to establish themselves overseas, and how successful were they in shaping the colony? And how did they view and interact with those whose land they occupied? Those are just few questions that guide this study. Led by their own needs and demands, public and private individuals exploited the lack of colonial plans and treated the colony as a space in which rules and conventions could be stretched and amended.

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<sup>102</sup> Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 105–6.

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For Europeans, German East Africa was thus not a geographical nor conceptual space to which any standardised behaviour could be applied, much less so a space onto which a European “way of life” could be easily grafted. At the same time, this colonial space was, of course, not empty. Hundreds of different African, Muslim, and Indian populations lived in the territory and their actions and reactions to colonial occupation impacted European plans. German East Africa certainly was a “laboratory of modernity”, one in which not only the state sought to experiment with new and alternative ways of governing and control, but where private individuals and commercial enterprises adapted traditional practices to the local circumstances in order to achieve whatever goals they were after.<sup>103</sup>

Members of the colonial administration came to eastern Africa with their own interests, goals, and desires.<sup>104</sup> Colonial officials saw postings to Africa as the stepping-stone to a successful and long-lasting career.<sup>105</sup> Eduard von Liebert, for example, had quickly risen through the ranks of the German military before he was appointed to the German East African governorship. After his tenure as governor, Liebert made a name for himself as a right-wing conservative politician. He was elected to the Reichstag, serving as a delegate of the *Freikonservative Partei* (Free Conservative Party) from 1907 until 1914. Liebert furthermore became an influential member of the Pan-German nationalist *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League), as well as a member of the governing body of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (German Colonial Society, DKG).<sup>106</sup>

Yet, in their duties as administrators, colonial officials were in a delicate position. They had to balance the competing interests of locals – Europeans, Africans, as well as other residents – and the demands of the colonial administration in Berlin. In a practical way, colonies were extensions of Europe, with a bureaucratic system that sought to regulate every little detail of colonial development.<sup>107</sup> For the colonial officials, this was both a blessing and a curse. It was

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<sup>103</sup> Conrad, ‘Doppelte Marginalisierung’, 155; Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler have argued that this opportunity to experiment with the colonial ordering of social, political, and economic affairs, allowed the colonised populations to act with agency and to shape the development of the colony. Far from being only an indigenous “response or resistance to an imperialist initiative,” the colonial encounter was confounded by “ambiguous lines that divided engagement from appropriation, deflection from denial, and desire from discipline.” The many contradictions inherent in colonial rule provided spaces that the colonised could exploit for their own gain and progress. See Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>104</sup> Margery Perham, ‘White Minorities in Africa’, *Foreign Affairs* 37, no. 4 (1959): 640, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20029385>.

<sup>105</sup> Christopher Prior, *Exporting Empire: Africa, Colonial Officials and the Construction of the Imperial State c. 1900-39* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 28.

<sup>106</sup> For biographical information, see Horst Gründer, ‘Liebert, Eduard Von’, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 1985, <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/gnd116996595.html#ndbcontent>.

<sup>107</sup> Falola and Agbo, ‘Colonial Administrations and the Africans’, 90.

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a blessing because it curtailed their work to a certain degree. They did not have to engage in laborious policymaking, hoping to push an agenda through various legislative bodies. They certainly had to report to the colonial offices in Berlin in detail; the archives leave no doubt on this. But the lobbying and campaigning was done far away from the colonies, and colonial administrators had to concern themselves only with putting the new plans, policies, and laws into action. With limited supervision, they were often free to make ad-hoc decision and could influence the development of a colony to a great extent.

Of course, the colony as an extension of metropolitan Germany was also a curse. What policymakers decided in Berlin was seldom informed by personal knowledge of the circumstances on the ground. Very few members of the Reichstag had ever been to German East Africa. Nine delegates travelled to the colony on a fact-finding mission in 1906, but their trip remained one of the few exceptions.<sup>108</sup> In the absence of any deeper understanding of local conditions, the course decided upon in Berlin was often at odds with German East African realities, leading to frustrations of the administration in the colony and at home.

In 1902, the missionary Father van der Burgt of the *Orden der Weißen Väter* (Order of the White Fathers) approached the AAKA with a request for a grant to publish his studies of the Kirundi language. He had meticulously studied the Warundi during his missionary work in German East Africa. The AAKA was quickly convinced that such Kirundi dictionary would prove immensely practical and could be used by local authorities to control whether African interpreters were accurately representing German interests. This would further strengthen German rule and AAKA director Wilhelm Stübel thus instructed governor Götzen to make the funds available.<sup>109</sup> But when Götzen's reply arrived less than two months after Stübel's request, the governor's answer was clear. The plan to commit any funds of the colony to the compilation of a Kirundi dictionary had "no practical use". Local officials already had enough to do; checking whether interpreters were translating correctly was their least worry. The colony's yearly budget was fully exhausted and Götzen was convinced that the mission society had more than enough funds at their disposal to publish the dictionary. But not only meagre finances and personnel prohibited any contribution to the dictionary. More important, Götzen reminded Stübel, was the commitment to and spread of Kiswahili as the colonial state's language. The

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<sup>108</sup> The fact-finding mission will be discussed in Chapter II. 'Studienfahrt von Mitgliedern des Reichstags', July 1905, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Expeditionen, Inspektionen und Reisen, R 1001/298, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>109</sup> Oscar Wilhelm Stübel to Gustav Adolf von Götzen, 'Kirundi-Wörterbuch', 7 February 1902, fols 12–13, Reichskolonialamt, Expeditionen und Wissenschaft, Wissenschaftliche Sachen, R 1001/6176, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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promotion of other languages would consequently lead to an undermining of the administration's policies and would thus go against "the colony's interests".<sup>110</sup> In the end however, Stübel won out. He simply rolled the expenditure over to the next year's budget, promising and later delivering the funds to van de Burgt.<sup>111</sup>

Unfortunately, it is unclear from the surviving material whether Stübel was actually convinced of the practicality of the Kirundi dictionary, or whether he simply wanted to show the governor who was in charge. Nevertheless, the deliberations around the dictionary are telling. They reveal, on the one side, the power of the administrative hierarchy. While Götzen might not have believed such dictionary important enough to warrant expenditure, Stübel had the upper hand: as director of the AAKA, he commanded the budget. On the other hand, the discussion also reveals how little knowledge Berlin-based officials had of conditions on the ground.

For those not employed in the colonial administration, other reasons for going to the colonies were important. Of course, motivations varied widely from person to person, but some broader tendencies can be discerned. Firstly, many had been alienated by socio-economic trends in Europe. Those who had received little to no education and were struggling to make ends meet often saw emigration as a last chance to start over. With the establishment of a colonial empire at least some of these migrants were now channelled into the new colonies. But poverty was only part of the picture that pushed many out of the continent. Europe's rapid transformation into a modern and industrial society was the other factor. Many idealised the colonies as a place in which traditional values could still be pursued and upheld.

The idea of creating such a "conservative utopia" in German East Africa also restricted the immigration and opportunities of female German settlers. By 1914, only around twenty percent of the European population of the colony were women. Many women had followed their husbands to eastern Africa, only few had come independently, predominantly as nurses or missionaries.<sup>112</sup> Following the establishment of settler society, some settler families hired single women as housekeepers: Elise Borchert, for example, first worked in German Southwest Africa before coming to German East Africa, where she worked in two families.<sup>113</sup> Shortly after,

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., fol. 14.

<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, the archival material did not reveal any response by Götzen. Oscar Wilhelm Stübel to J. van der Burgt, 30 May 1902, fol. 15, Reichskolonialamt, Expeditionen und Wissenschaft, Wissenschaftliche Sachen, R 1001/6176, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>112</sup> Wolfgang Uwe Eckart, *Medizin und Kolonialimperialismus: Deutschland 1884-1945* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1997); Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 79.

<sup>113</sup> Elise Borchert, 'Protokoll', 30 April 1914, fol. 70, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Armensachen, R 1001/132, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

Borchert fell ill, became unable to work and had to ask the government for financial support to return to Germany with her five year old daughter.<sup>114</sup> For other single women, colonial life was equally challenging: Marie Nibbe was constantly abused by her employers – the von Prince family – and had to resort to theft and what might be described a sham marriage to escape the relationship of dependency.<sup>115</sup> In the final years of German rule, the DKG and the *Frauenbund der DKG* (Women’s League of the German Colonial Society, FDKG) sent women to the colonies with the hope of preventing “racial mixing” and to expand German settlement.<sup>116</sup>

Others saw the colonies with romantic eyes and were driven by a sense of adventure.<sup>117</sup> Men especially regarded life in the colony also as a chance to wield power, to command, and to give orders. In this way, the colonies were imagined as a place where “men could prove themselves”, a place where a distinction between “friend and foe” was obvious, and where glory and honour still meant something.<sup>118</sup> Writing on her husband’s participation in the *Wissmann-Truppe*, Magdalene von Prince recounted with pride that “the deeds of Wissmann, this heroic leader of the first German colonial troops, tireless in battle and exemplary in enduring the efforts and deprivations of the tropical war, belong to history, and so do those of my husband.”<sup>119</sup> The scholar Albert Spring, who eventually was tasked to survey and map Lake Victoria in 1891, similarly recounted his fascination with eastern Africa that had started in his childhood: “How vividly I remember the time when nothing could give me greater pleasure than, after completing my school work, to immerse myself each evening in the travels of a bold explorer and, forgetting everything around me, to experience his wanderings, to join him in his adventures and dangers, and at the end of his journey, having arrived in a safe harbour, to breathe a sigh of relief with him and thank God for his gracious protection and guidance.”<sup>120</sup>

Patriotic motives also drove Germans into the colonies, as an entry from the diary of an engineer named Rudolf Ganßer illustrates: “I did not come here [German East Africa] as an

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<sup>114</sup> Heinrich Schnee to Magistrat in Königsberg, Letter, 15 May 1914, fols 74–75, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Armensachen, R 1001/132, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>115</sup> Marie Nibbe to Reichskolonialamt, Letter, 22 October 1907, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, Rechtspflege und Strafvollzug, R 1001/4823, Bundesarchiv Berlin. See also Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 79–80.

<sup>116</sup> Wildenthal, *German Women*.

<sup>117</sup> Erichsen and Olusoga, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 85.

<sup>118</sup> Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 273–75; see also Sandra Mass, *Weisse Helden, schwarze Krieger: zur Geschichte kolonialer Männlichkeit in Deutschland 1918-1964* (Köln: Böhlau, 2006). For an examination of gender relations in the colonies of the German Empire, see Walther, ‘Gender Construction and Settler Colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894–1914’; Heike Ingeborg Schmidt, ‘Colonial Intimacy: The Rechenberg Scandal and Homosexuality in German East Africa’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 1 (2007): 25–59, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sex.2008.0011>. See also Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The ‘manly Englishman’ and The ‘Effeminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>119</sup> von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 3.

<sup>120</sup> Albert Spring, *Selbsterlebtes in Ostafrika* (Dresden: Alexander Köhler, 1896), 3, <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/dsdk/content/titleinfo/9331450>.

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adventurer, nor because my home ground had become too hot under my feet, but I came here animated by the desire to contribute with my modest energies to the blossoming of our colony, to the welfare and blessing of my native motherland.”<sup>121</sup> All these motivations underlay the decision to move to the colonies and to German East Africa in particular, whether for permanent or for just temporary settlement.

The manifold motivations for individuals are also described in Ernest Hemingway’s *Green Hills of Africa*. In his account of a month-long safari in eastern Africa, Hemingway makes the acquaintance of a farmer named Kandisky. Kandisky reports that he fought in the army of Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck during the First World War and sets out his reasons for moving to the colony. He explains: “I went as a patriot. [...] To me it is always interesting. The natives and the language. [...] Then too, in reality, I am a king here. It is very pleasant. Waking in the morning I extend one foot and the boy places the sock on it. When I am ready I extend the other foot and he adjusts the other sock. I step from under the mosquito bar into my drawers which are held for me. Don’t you think that is very marvellous?”<sup>122</sup>

Other actors were driven by different motivations. Merchant companies were guided by financial incentives and their exploration of new markets and resources was at the forefront of colonial expansion. After the German East African colony had been founded by the commercial enterprise of Carl Peters, economic exploitation began immediately:

The agents started at once to fill the company coffers, and to that end introduced a series of taxes compared with which the collection of the tenth, the twentieth and the hundredth penny by Philip II was mere child’s play. Among many other taxes, they levied a burial tax, a transport tax, a cocoa tax, a poll tax, and in addition created concessions and obligations, measures, orders and regulations, papers, seals, dues and stamps, all in the best Prussian tradition.<sup>123</sup>

But Peters and his chartered company were not the only actors who sought financial gain and quick profits. Individual merchants and representatives of larger trading houses – especially from Hamburg – were keen to find economic opportunities in German East Africa. The DOAZ explained that clerks and other commercial representatives of trading houses found a lucrative “paradise” in German East Africa. These individuals could claim passage on company accounts, were paid handsomely with additional allowances for their work in the colony and

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<sup>121</sup> Heinrich Dauber, ed., *Nicht Als Abentheurer Bin Ich Hierhergekommen...’: Tagebücher Und Briefe Aus Deutsch-Ostafrika 1896-1902* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1991), 34.

<sup>122</sup> Hemingway’s personal experiences in Europe as an ambulance driver during the First World War and as a reporter during the Second World War should be kept in mind. Ernest Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), 37, <https://gutenberg.ca/ebooks/hemingwaye-greenhillsof africa/hemingwaye-greenhillsof africa-00-h.html>.

<sup>123</sup> Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 146.

enjoyed comparatively high levels of authority and autonomy. They were in a similar position as the colonial administrators, as most of their superiors were thousands of miles away and only seldom got to know the ins and outs of operations on the ground.<sup>124</sup>

Working in the colony was also a job guarantee. Clerks were never at risk of being left unemployed. The German East African colonial administration could always use more Europeans within their ranks and the positions paid well enough. Since it was costly and time consuming to get personnel from Europe, the administration was always happy to employ traders and merchants who had left their previous positions. And since formal training for the colonial service did not exist in any case, it also did not matter how much experience a clerk had. With the safety-net of administrative employment, the early years of German colonialism in East Africa were especially lucrative for individual clerks and merchants, and hundreds of “eager young men” were thus drawn to German East Africa.<sup>125</sup>

### Section V: German East Africa’s populations

At the time that imperial borders were charted on European maps, around seven to eight million Africans, Indians, and Arabs lived in the area that would become known as German East Africa. When Carl Peters first set foot on the East African shore, he considered the vast majority of Africans to live in politically independent tribes. Yet Iliffe argues that it would be a mistake to speak of “discrete, compact, and identifiable tribes, each with a distinct territory, language, culture, and political system,” and that “Tanganyika was not composed of tribes.”<sup>126</sup> European travellers, colonisers, administrators, and scholars who described and grouped peoples into neatly identifiable entities “distort[ed] and oversimplif[ied] a vastly more complex reality.”<sup>127</sup> Most of these groups of peoples were commonly referred to as “Bantu”.<sup>128</sup> In the northeast, the Washambaa occupied the mountainous regions while the Wabondei lived in the lowlands just to the south. Further to the west, the Wasukuma and other peoples lived on the open plateau. Hundreds of different social, political, and ethnic groups lived across the territory. Their economic systems were characterised predominantly by agriculture. In the areas of the

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<sup>124</sup> ‘Der kaufmännische Angestellte in der Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 June 1899, I/17 edition.

<sup>125</sup> Erichsen and Olusoga, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 85.

<sup>126</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 8–9.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>128</sup> The term ‘Bantu’ is a European invention, popularised by Wilhelm Bleek to group together languages with certain commonalities. During the time of imperial conquest, the different ethnic groups commonly referred to as Bantu did not call themselves Bantu and did not share a common identity. See Raymond O. Silverstein, ‘A Note on the Term “Bantu” as First Used by W. H. I. Bleek’, *African Studies* 27, no. 4 (1 January 1968): 211–12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00020186808707298>.

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woodland savannah the staple crops were sorghum and millet. Their cultivation was facilitated by cutting and burning, and frequent abandoning of farm sites until the soil had recovered. In other, more fertile areas, irrigation furrows allowed for the cultivation of bananas and other foods. In the north and northeast of the territory, the economies of the Wachagga and Wamasai peoples were based on nomadic cattle herding.<sup>129</sup>

Political systems were as varied as farming practices, ranging from “complete statelessness to chiefdoms administered by appointed officers.”<sup>130</sup> Political organisation often resulted from the specific geographies or environments in which a certain people lived.<sup>131</sup> The more fertile and agriculturally productive an area was, the more people it could accommodate. From this followed “a significant correlation between population density and political organisation.”<sup>132</sup> But even then, political authority was very often highly localised and personal. Descent, loyalty, and responsibility for one’s own family were often paramount.

The area that became German East Africa was also home to Muslim and Indian societies, especially along the coast. These engaged in trade, effectively linking the East African interior to the Indian Ocean. In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, existing long-distance trade routes were expanding and new ones opened up. Goods and peoples were shipped through Zanzibar, and the East African coast and interior became more closely connected to the outside world. Trade, marriages, and intermingling of indigenous African populations and Arabs formed a coastal identity which became known as Swahili from approximately the Seventeenth Century.

The German arrival on the East African coast and the consolidation of German rule meant not only pure subjugation, but far-reaching interventions into the lives and societies of the African populations. Forced labour, land expropriation, portage, and abuse were only some of the direct repressive measures of the colonial occupiers. Less physical measures, such as taxes furthermore oppressed the colonised. The imposition of foreign colonial rule caused a constant state of exploitation and oppression. Colonialism was defined by the imbalance between rulers and ruled; it was a practice of domination. Everyday coercion and abuse – physically and psychologically – created an environment in which potential triggers for

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<sup>129</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 13–20; Utermark, ‘Schwarzer Untertan’, 29.

<sup>130</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 21.

<sup>131</sup> See, for example, Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control & Economic Development in East African History: The Case of Tanganyika 1850-1950*, 2nd ed. (London: James Currey, 1996); Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2007).

<sup>132</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 21.

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insurrections or open rebellions were constantly present. Revolts and rebellions were a common feature of colonial rule and occurred in all colonial territories. In German East Africa, the Abushiri Revolt (1888-1890) and the Maji Maji War (1905-1908) were the most significant and most structured resistances to German colonial rule. Their outbreaks followed specific colonial policies: the Abushiri Revolt was sparked by the official hoisting of the flag of the DOAG right next to the Sultan's flag, and the Maji Maji War was a direct response to higher taxes and intensified labour regulations.<sup>133</sup> In itself, these events likely would not have caused open insurrection. But against the backdrop of colonial everyday oppression, they could be seen as the straw that broke the camel's back.

During the phase of colonial power consolidation and expansion, African leaders readily entered agreements and bargains with German colonisers and military commanders in order to secure or enhance their own positions. This was the case, for example, in 1898 during German colonial expansion on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria.<sup>134</sup> The lack of knowledge or ignorance of German officials allowed Africans to exploit power vacuums by claiming that they represented a specific people or area. Relations between African societies and the German colonisers were constantly renegotiated, and consequently often led to confrontation and fighting. The Germans demanded recognition of their authority, and commanded labour and construction materials. Where possible, they sought to settle any disputes diplomatically, but they did not shy away from open physical confrontation. In return for their alliances, Africans were promised political and military support. The colonisers also provided flags, insignia, and other objects as presents, hoping to buy a society's loyalty.<sup>135</sup> This led to "the emergence of collaborators who often exercised a form of sub-imperialism over former rivals," such as the Wachagga leader Marealle on the eastern flanks of Mount Kilimanjaro.<sup>136</sup> In the late 1890s and early 1900s, Marealle became one of the most powerful leaders in the history of the Kilimanjaro. His power, however, was not to last. Two of his enemies convinced the German administrators that Marealle was planning a revolt. When Marealle heard that the German district official had arrested some of his confidants, and intended to dispatch a military

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<sup>133</sup> In his account of the Maji Maji War, governor von Götzen referred to the resistance as 'a fight of the Bantu negroes against all invaders of other races.' See Gustav Adolf von Götzen, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Aufstand 1905/06* (Berlin: Reimer, 1909), 47, <http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BIGXOR275291188/NCCO?u=29002&sid=zotero&xid=ea5080df>. The Maji Maji War will be discussed in more detail in Chapter II, and the violent nature of colonialism will be analysed in Chapter III.

<sup>134</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 116–17.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 120. See also Kathleen Mary Stahl, *History of the Chagga People of Kilimanjaro* (London: Mouton, 1964).

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expedition, Marealle fled to Kenya. Only later did he return, but the power structures had been altered forever.

The arrival of missionaries, too, altered African societies. Of course, the religious teachings of Christianity had a significant impact on African culture and religion. Indigenous religious practices served to explain the world and to find remedies against maladies. The proliferation of missions throughout the territory and the establishment of colonial rule transformed religious beliefs but also allowed Africans to utilise their indigenous religions in relation to colonialism. Rebellions, for example, very often drew on religious thought to popularise and legitimise the revolutionary's cause, and indigenous religions allowed Africans to make sense of their new circumstances and conditions.<sup>137</sup>

But missions also impacted local power structures. Initially, many African societies welcomed the arrival of missionaries. Prince Mwakatungila of the Wanyakyusa allowed the Berlin Missionaries to establish their station Wangemannshöh on the shore of Lake Nyassa in 1891. Just two days after the arrival of the missionaries, Mwakatungila sought their help with a herd of marauding buffalos, knowing fully well that the Europeans loved to hunt.<sup>138</sup> In the following years, Mwakatungila and other princes, chiefs, and leaders vied for the missionaries' goodwill. Being recognised by the mission as an authority or leader signified and even legitimised one's own power and could be used to expand one's position against others. Many thus attempted to gain the missionaries' backing.

An individual named Mwamafungubo sought the missionaries' support. He proclaimed to be the cowherd of Mbasi, a mythical, godlike figure of the Wanyakyusa. Mwamafungubo then presented himself to the missionaries as Mbasi's servant and as his "lord of the underworld". He claimed to have had summoned the missionaries to his country. But when he offered a present of cattle to the mission, the missionaries refused: they identified Mbasi with Satan. Mwamafungubo – or Mbasi – became convinced that the missionaries were hostile. When the annual rains failed to fall, Mbasi blamed the absence on the mission and boycotted it, virtually cutting it off from the rest of the world. This caused great dissonance among the local leaders, and many sided with Mbasi. Only Mwakatungila denounced Mbasi. While this alienated him from many of his peers, it also furthered his alliance with the mission. When the rains did indeed fall a short time later, Mwakatungila was vindicated. He emerged victorious,

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<sup>137</sup> The Maji Maji War, for example, was founded on the belief that the 'Maji medicine' could turn the bullets of German soldiers into water, thereby not harming anyone fighting against the colonial rulers. See, for example, Becker, 'Traders, "Big Men" and Prophets'.

<sup>138</sup> S. R. Charsley, *The Princes of Nyakyusa* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), 7.

having secured his peoples' and the mission's support. Mwakatungila would eventually overcome Mbasi's hostility and expand his power significantly.<sup>139</sup>

The arrival of Europeans, and the expansion and consolidation of colonial rule was characterised by exploitation, oppression, and brutality. Colonial wars in German East Africa claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands. The colonisers employed coercive labour regimes, mandatory but often arbitrary taxes, violence, and harsh punishments as means to subjugate local populations.<sup>140</sup> At the same time, however, the colonised did not only react or acquiesce to colonial rule: "Africans were not completely helpless [...] They could not avoid the imposition of colonial rule, but they were not simply objects or victims of processes set in motion outside Africa and sustained only by white initiative."<sup>141</sup> To the contrary, African leaders and African societies were able and willing to exploit the gaps and contradictions of colonial rule to further their own political, social, economic, or cultural agendas.

### Section VI: German East Africa in national and transimperial frameworks

Earlier scholarship of colonialism and imperialism has seen the African colonies as national projects in which states competed over territories, peoples, and resources. Far from seeking to examine cross-border developments, or even to provide detailed comparative analyses, colonialism has traditionally been viewed as a matter of distinct British, French, German, and other imperialisms. Colonialism or imperialism were thus viewed within a framework of competing national interest. Paul Kennedy, for example, has framed Germany's colonial expansion and its relation to British imperialism as part of the leadup to the First World War, suggesting that the Anglo-German antagonism played out in the colonial world as well.<sup>142</sup>

On the other hand, more recent scholarship has sought to draw out imperial cooperation and commonalities, and has attempted to detach itself from the confines of the nation state as the analytical tool of historiographic investigations. Such transnational and transimperial works have begun to establish that European colonialism was not purely a matter of national interest and processes that were driven by distinct national deliberations. Instead, many actors were

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 8ff.

<sup>140</sup> See Chapter III.

<sup>141</sup> T. O. Ranger, 'African Reactions to the Imposition of Colonial Rule in East and Central Africa', in *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960*, ed. Lewis H. Gann (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 293, <http://archive.org/details/colonialisminafr0001gann>.

<sup>142</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914*, 2nd ed. (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 1988); see also the review article by Jan R ger, 'Revisiting the Anglo-German Antagonism', *The Journal of Modern History* 83, no. 3 (September 2011): 579–617, <https://doi.org/10.1086/660841>.

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unconstrained by a particular national context and many developments were undertaken outside the confines of a single nation state or empire. Ulrike Lindner, for example, has portrayed Anglo-German colonial relations and exchanges as just one case among many that demonstrate the joint nature of European colonialism.<sup>143</sup> Similarly, Alois Maderspacher has characterised colonial control in Africa “less as a platform of European nationalism but more as a meeting point for European colonial ideas and practices that formed a layer of colonial identity, which subdued outright nationalism in the colonial context.”<sup>144</sup>

I suggest that individual actors employed language that implied either a national or transimperial field of reference depending on what plans, projects, or desires they hoped to achieve. Settlers, for example, communicated their wishes and demands with a specific German audience in mind. They made allusions to the strength of the German character with the hope to elicit a common German sympathy, or to frame their “cultivating” work on the colonial frontier as pointing towards a future in which Germany would take a leading global role. On the other hand, missionaries, for example, had a more global outlook. They were, after all, preaching the teachings of Christianity, not the merits of the German Empire or its peoples. It was thus unsurprising that missionary societies from many different nations operated within the German colonies, and that German missionary societies operated in the colonies of other empires.<sup>145</sup>

When colonial actors thought that a national discourse led nowhere, they framed their concerns with a different audience in mind and appealed to racial, professional, or religious commonalities. The goal of this rhetoric was to elicit understanding and help from those who were supposedly in a similar position. For example, some German colonists opposed the teaching of the German language to Africans because it would make it more difficult for “the white man appear as a superior being” – an idea they put forward in direct reference to similar Dutch and British policies in their respective colonies.<sup>146</sup> In other instances, German East African colonists also compared their own situation to those who lived under the rule of other empires. Especially when settlers or merchants believed that the German administration could not or would not cater to their individual needs, these stakeholders looked abroad. When they

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<sup>143</sup> Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 458.

<sup>144</sup> Maderspacher, ‘European Colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Germans, French, and British in Cameroon, 1884-1939’, vi.

<sup>145</sup> For a study of German missionary culture, see Jeremy Best, *Heavenly Fatherland: German Missionary Culture and Globalization in the Age of Empire* (University of Toronto Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487532444>.

<sup>146</sup> ‘Das Deutsche als Eingeborenen-Verkehrssprache in Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Rheinisch Westfälische Zeitung*, 15 July 1905, 693 edition, fol. 8, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/820, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

found that a similar situation was solved more satisfactorily in English, French, Dutch, Portuguese, or Belgian territories, they lashed out against the German administration and demanded that concessions or accommodations be made.<sup>147</sup>

But the colonial administrations too compared their own handling of affairs with that of other empires, especially with the British Empire. Here, colonial competition characterised much of the empires' relationship. For example, the Anglo-Congolese Treaty of 1894 became a point of friction.<sup>148</sup> At that time, the British competed with the French over supremacy in Africa. In order to halt the French Empire's expansion eastwards, the British sought to create a "buffer-state" on the western side of the Nile by leasing the territory from the Belgians. Just before signing the agreement, the British added a clause that would allow them to use the narrow but long strip of land between Lake Albert and Lake Tanganyika to further their dream of a Cape to Cairo railway. When the Germans learned of the agreement, they were astonished. Not only had "direct contact" with the Congo been lost, but now the German East African colony was encircled by the Cape to Cairo corridor.<sup>149</sup> Without having been consulted in the matter, the Germans felt side-lined and responded sharply. AAKA director Paul Kayser suggested that "there are but three Powers in Africa, England, France and Germany, two of which must inevitably combine against the third."<sup>150</sup> This went so far that the British ambassador in Berlin alluded to "possible war between Germany and Britain" over the colonial issue.<sup>151</sup> Faced with the potential of being the lone power in this scenario, the British backtracked and revoked the corridor clause.

The British certainly had certainly not expected such strong response from the Germans. But the response was part of changing German approaches to international relations: following the ideas of *Weltpolitik*, Germany sought to put its global political weight on an equal footing with Britain's heretofore global dominance. Intellectuals such as Friedrich Nietzsche called on the German government to "take over England's role as global sovereign."<sup>152</sup> To the same

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<sup>147</sup> Settlers, for example, demanded that the German East African administration would ban Indian immigrants from entering the colony, a practice that they saw as working well in British South Africa. For more information, refer specifically to Chapter III.

<sup>148</sup> See WM Roger Louis, 'Sir Percy Anderson's Grand African Strategy, 1883-1896', *The English Historical Review* 81, no. 319 (1966): 292-314.

<sup>149</sup> Louis, 'Great Britain and German Expansion in Africa, 1884-1914', 21-22.

<sup>150</sup> Paul Kayser, quoted in *ibid.*, 22.

<sup>151</sup> Jean Stengers, 'British and German Imperial Rivalry: A Conclusion', in *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, ed. WM Roger Louis and Prosser Gifford (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 343.

<sup>152</sup> Timothy Brennan, 'Borrowed Light: Nietzsche and the Colonies', in *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany*, ed. Volker Max Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 5.

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effect, the German ambassador in London, Count Hatzfeldt, wrote to the civil servant Friedrich von Holstein in 1894, “[i]f I plead so strongly for pressure, it is because I am firmly convinced that otherwise we will accomplish nothing with the niggardly people here, either in [the colonial] or in other questions.”<sup>153</sup> Hatzfeldt’s calls for more decisive diplomatic action are telling for they reveal an increase in German fervour for the colonial issue. Colonies and colonial affairs were indeed issues of prestige and competition with other empires was one way to gain or defend German national prestige.

The construction of railways was a further issue that drew nationalist arguments from all sides and stood representative of questions over German competitiveness. All colonially-interested actors, that is administration, merchants, settlers, and others, were convinced that the slow progress and the repeated rejection of funds for railway construction in the Reichstag was not only detrimental to the economic development of the colonies, but also suggested to foreign powers that the German government remained uninterested in them. In an environment of perceived intense imperial competition, nobody in German East Africa, and hardly anyone within the broader circles of colonial advocates, could fathom why the construction of railways was met with such hesitance by policymakers in Berlin. The colonisers believed that a network of railways linking the coast to the interior would be the answer to almost all colonial problems, but with every rejection of the proposal lamentations of a vicious cycle resounded: “no railway - no settlement, no settlement - no development, no development - no trust, no trust - no money, no money - no railway, etc. ad infinitum!” complained one commentator in the DOAZ.<sup>154</sup>

The economic development of the colony relied on the construction of railways. Railways allowed for larger quantities of goods to be transported over longer distances at a faster pace and at a lower cost. The traditional caravan and porter routes from the interior’s plantations to the harbours at the coast were not only very expensive but, of course, took weeks to cross the colony, among other things making the establishment of industries with more perishable or time-constrained products unfeasible. But European settlement in eastern Africa also depended on the construction of railways, as they opened up distant but fertile and viable areas. When the first railway was built in German East Africa, it served exactly these two purposes of economics and settlement. A fourteen-kilometres-long line was opened in late 1894, a full ten years after the establishment of the colony. The line linked the port town of

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<sup>153</sup> Paul von Hatzfeldt to Friedrich August von Holstein, 04 June 1894, quoted in Norman Rich, *Friedrich von Holstein, Politics and Diplomacy in the Era of Bismarck and Wilhelm II*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 371, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b3344954>.

<sup>154</sup> ‘Der Kolonie Besiedlung’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 31 August 1901, III/34 edition.

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Tanga with Pongwe, a small village at the foot of the Usambara mountains which were considered highly suitable to European settlement. The private enterprises that financed and constructed the line envisioned that it would eventually reach all the way to Lake Victoria and would thereby link eastern and central Africa to the Indian Ocean and thus to the global economy. The goal of reaching Lake Victoria had to be put on hold shortly after construction began, however, as a series of investors pulled out of the project or went bankrupt. Over the next years, the line was only sporadically extended until it reached Moshi on the lower slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in 1911.<sup>155</sup> The very slow progress of construction of the Usambara Line was criticised widely at all levels, from the settler and colonial press all the way to members of the Reichstag.<sup>156</sup>

Yet, the construction of railways was also in the national and geopolitical interest. Especially the continuation of the Usambara Line was crucial to curb the influence and dominance of the British Uganda Line which had been constructed between 1896 and 1901.<sup>157</sup> Some contributors looked at the Uganda Line and the British commitment to it with envy. For the DOAZ, the Uganda Line had been a success in economic terms but also in regards to national prestige: “[a British investor] knows exactly that the capital dedicated to his colony is invested securely and will bring interest, and thus he connects the pleasant feeling of making a profit with that of flattering the national consciousness.”<sup>158</sup> But despite the concern over British expansionist efforts and the economic and settler benefits railways would bring, proposals for German East African railways were rejected annually. When the plans for the Central Line – intended to run over 1,000 kilometres from Dar es Salaam at the Indian Ocean to Ujiji on the shores of Lake Tanganyika – were turned down anew in 1900, the DOAZ wrote: “without the Central Line, the colony is doomed to sad stagnation. [...] But now action is needed if we are not to be eternally embarrassed in front of our envious cousins beyond the Channel.”<sup>159</sup> A short while later the DOAZ ran an article detailing the profitability of another rail line and commented on the nearing completion of a rail link between Lake Victoria and Mombasa on the coast of British East Africa, posing the rhetorical question “[w]hen will Germany pull itself

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<sup>155</sup> Franz Baltzer, *Die Kolonialbahnen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Afrikas* (Berlin: G. J. Göschen, 1916), 35–45.

<sup>156</sup> Hans Meyer, *Die Eisenbahnen im tropischen Afrika* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1902), 130ff.

<sup>157</sup> ‘Stimmen für die Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Nordbahn’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 December 1902, IV/51 edition; ‘Kisumu’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 January 1903, V/2 edition.

<sup>158</sup> ‘Die Bewilligung der Uganda-Bahn’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 5 May 1900, II/17 edition.

<sup>159</sup> ‘Die Ablehnung Der Zentralbahn’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 14 April 1900, II/14 edition.

together and make the bitterly needed emulation in this respect?"<sup>160</sup> For the newspaper and its readership, the inferred but self-evident answer was "never".

Most infuriating for the colonisers was the Reichstag's continued obstinacy and what the colonisers perceived to be a lack of knowledge in Berlin of the local German East African circumstances. Colonial railways were unproven and exceedingly expensive, the parliament argued, especially when the feasibility of colonial development in German East Africa remained open to doubt. Instead of railways, policymakers argued that normal roads and paths should be constructed first. Only if their viability was proven should railways be constructed at a later stage. The colonial press responded sharply to this proposal and suggested that the measures were entirely inappropriate and misguided. "Such advice ignores the historical fact that nowadays no cultural people think about building artificial roads, but build railways when it comes to opening up large uncultivated stretches of land," wrote one commentator in the DKZ, adding that following through on Berlin's plan would mean that "in fifty years' time we would still be standing on roughly the same footing as we are today, while all around our colony the English, French, Belgian and Portuguese railways would criss-cross the continent, taking over all trade and traffic."<sup>161</sup> Building railways was thus not a matter of economic development or increased settlement only, but rather took on a character of national prestige and the demand to not embarrass oneself vis-à-vis other European imperial rivals.

Eventually, the long-wished-for Central Line was approved in 1904, and the continuation of the Usambara Line as well as various other railway projects brought instant gratification and enthusiasm to the colonisers, especially to the settlers: "[w]e have achieved a lot with the railway! Finally the ice seems to have been broken, and this first major 'Yes!' for German East Africa will likely pour over the whole 'German Pond' like a tidal wave and will shake the slumbering colonial nymphs out of their rest."<sup>162</sup> The discussions and deliberations in the Reichstag make it similarly apparent that the commitment to the construction and development of railways in German East Africa was a matter of national prestige. The lengthy discussions around high construction costs were eventually overcome because the Reichstag saw colonial railways as crucial to Germany's international standing.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> 'England Als Vorbild', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 3 August 1901, III/30 edition.

<sup>161</sup> Gerding, 'Die allgemeinen Verkehrsverhältnisse und die Eisenbahnfrage in Deutsch-Ostafrika', *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 8 November 1900, XVII/45 edition.

<sup>162</sup> 'Der Dank der Kolonie', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 18 June 1904, VI/25 edition.

<sup>163</sup> See the Reichstag protocols, starting with 'Zweite Beratung des Entwurfs eines Gesetzes, betreffend die Übernahme einer Garantie des Reichs in bezug auf eine Eisenbahn von Daressalam nach Morogoro' (1904), [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k11\\_bsb00002810\\_00551.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k11_bsb00002810_00551.html) and continuing in the next two sessions.

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The arguments around the railway question, but also the discussions around Germany's place within a competitive and multi-imperial international order illustrate that administrators and settlers alike invoked nationalist arguments in order to promote their interests. These were similar to the justifications for colonialism that revolved around national prestige reasons, which, in part, led to Germany's entry onto the colonial stage in the first place. Perceived threats of being fenced-in by other empires, and an existential fear around losing face vis-à-vis rivals were instrumentalised and employed to change the course of German colonialism or to accelerate any particular development.

At the same time, German East Africa and its colonists also drew on the experiences of their imperial peers and framed their arguments within a broader, transimperial context. At the end of August in 1884, *The Times* claimed that “there are three methods of starting colonies – the English, which consists in making colonies with colonists; the German, which collects colonists without colonies; and the French, which sets up colonies without colonists.”<sup>164</sup> Chronologically-speaking, the assertion was slightly behind recent developments. By the time the article was published, the German Empire had already established its territorial claims in Africa, with the sole exception of German East Africa, which, however, would follow only a few months later. Yet, from a different perspective, the paper's assertion was certainly correct; the territories that had just come under the German sphere of influence were no colonies yet; infrastructure, control, and personnel were rudimentary, even by colonial standards.

At the time that Germany entered the colonial circle, Britain and France could already look back on decades of colonial administration. Their respective indirect and direct rule systems were largely in place and had to be adapted only to reflect new developments. But German officials in 1885 had no prior knowledge of how to build a colony. They therefore drew eclectically on the experiences of their imperial peers. Of course, other empires, too, had to improvise at the start of their colonial expansion and the territories in Africa and elsewhere seldom followed the exact courses set out from the beginning. Yet, German administrators recognised that they could take a shortcut, adopting those practices that were working in other colonies, and rejecting those that were not. Through picking and choosing from different imperial contexts, German East Africa took shape as a mishmash of ideas, methods, concepts, and processes that sometimes were inconsistent or even incompatible with each other. At the same time, however, the justifications and motivations of administrators, settlers, merchants, or

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<sup>164</sup> ‘Our News from Foochow’, *The Times*, 27 August 1884, 31,223 edition; quoted in Erichsen and Olusoga, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, 27.

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missionaries to bring about a certain development followed both domestic and foreign lines of thought, so that German East Africa took shape also as a mishmash of, sometimes competing, national and transnational ideas, methods, concepts, and processes. In German East Africa, colonialisms and imperialisms from different contexts were thus melted together and infused with some distinctly German perspectives.

In their attempts to accelerate the colony's development, German East African officials frequently visited the neighbouring British territories to study the local circumstances and British responses to them. Governor Götzen travelled to the Ugandan colony in 1905, paying special attention to the administration and to law systems, as well as to British approaches to "native affairs", to the botanical gardens, to a laboratory investigating sleeping sickness remedies, and to economic experiments relating to cash crop production.<sup>165</sup> The Germans found guidance from the British especially in terms of ruling and controlling indigenous populations, and imitating the British colonial administration became the *modus operandi*: "British colonialism was the model on which the Germans worked away, both imitative and demarcative."<sup>166</sup> This was taken to the point at which Germany sought to emulate the *Pax Britannica* system, by creating its own *Pax Germanica*.<sup>167</sup>

Cooperation between colonial governments was part of the German attempt to establish themselves firmly in eastern Africa. Friendly relations between the German East African administration and their colleagues in the British territories characterised the period of formal German presence. Upon the construction of a telegraphic line between Zanzibar and German East Africa, the British immediately sent a congratulatory telegram. In response, the German authorities replied, "[p]rosperity to all East Africa, whether German or English, are my first words I send you on the new cable."<sup>168</sup> The brief exchange shows anything but imperial rivalry. Rather, it appears as if, in the early days of German colonialism in eastern Africa, there was a recognition within the German colonial circles that the success of the colony also depended on the tolerance – if not support – of the British. Competition or rivalry would jeopardise being able to observe and emulate British practices. Friendly relations were key to be able to learn from the more experienced empires. These practices of observation and imitation remained present throughout the entire period of German East African colonialism, even when different

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<sup>165</sup> James Hayes Sadler to Alfred Lyttelton, 2 July 1905, fols 310–312, Foreign Office, General Correspondence, Africa, FO 2/942, National Archives.

<sup>166</sup> Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 8.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>168</sup> Hermann von Wissmann to Charles Euan-Smith, Telegram, 10 September 1890, Foreign Office, Records of Embassies, Germany, FO 244/473, National Archives.

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administrations – both in Dar es Salaam and in Berlin – pursued diverging paths to colonial development and exploitation.<sup>169</sup> The one constant factor of German colonialism was its tendency to emulate foreign actors, especially British ones.

Cooperation and imitation were crucial to German colonialism and therefore also permeated colonial society across all levels. On the governmental level, the policy of pressure propounded by Count Hatzfeldt had worked because the British were more afraid of French colonial expansion in Africa than they were upset over the Germans pushing back against British plans. But in order to advance their colonial and foreign policy goals, the German administration also sought cooperation with the British. The two governments planned to divide up the Portuguese colonial holdings in Africa, which became a serious possibility in light of Portugal's financial troubles. The agreement entered by Germany and Britain purposefully pre-empted any conflicts of interest that might have arisen from the Portuguese troubles, as one commentator in the *Daily Graphic* of 26 September 1898 observed: “[i]n short, Great Britain and Germany have become joint heirs to the estates of the Portuguese Crown in Africa, and while undertaking the reversion in common, they have prudently provided against any clashing of interests when the time arrives for entering upon and dividing their heritage.”<sup>170</sup>

But the British, too, realised that the Germans and German colonial operations had much to offer to their own handling of colonial affairs. In an article of April 1909, the DOAZ reported that the British, after many failed attempts to plant and cultivate sisal in the coastal areas of British East Africa, had finally succeeded. According to the DOAZ, the triumph was achieved “on the basis of the experiences we [the Germans] have gained in our coastal districts.”<sup>171</sup> To further help the British sisal industry, the German colonial government sought to alleviate unfavourable labour conditions and high export duties on sisal planting material that so far had also contributed to British sisal problems.

However, while German governors were curious and inquisitive and made frequent trips to their British neighbours, British high officials seldom travelled to German East Africa. Only occasionally did they visit the scientific research institute Amani in the highlands of the Usambara mountains.<sup>172</sup> The British did not believe that the German administration, as

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<sup>169</sup> For the structural and ideological changes of the German colonial administration, see Chapter II.

<sup>170</sup> ‘The Anglo-German Agreement’, *Daily Graphic*, 26 September 1898, fol. 107, Foreign Office, General Correspondence, Prussia and Germany, ‘Anglo-German Agreement. Portuguese Loan. Africa.’, FO 64/1467, National Archives.

<sup>171</sup> ‘Gedanken über unsere englischen Nachbarn’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 8 April 1909, XI/27-28 edition.

<sup>172</sup> Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 138.

newcomers to the colonial world, held any amazing secrets that would help with their own colonial rule. Nevertheless, other areas such as agriculture, tropical hygiene, or infectious diseases drew British interest and cooperation between the two colonial governments was pronounced. In *The Agreement and Protocol between the United Kingdom and Germany with regard to Sleeping Sickness* of 1908, the two empires regulated how outbreaks of the sleeping sickness could be prevented or contained and stipulated frequent visits and exchanges between German and British health officials.<sup>173</sup>

It was not only in governmental circles that cooperation and competition played out, but other groups and different levels also sought the help of imperial peers. Missionaries and missionary societies, for example, were already transimperially organised. This is not to deny that in many cases missionary societies followed the flag of a specific empire. The missions' motherland was the place from which funding and, crucially, permission to operate in a certain territory came. But, fundamentally, missionaries were not disseminating a specific national agenda. Some English missionaries had been working in eastern Africa for decades before the landing of German expansionists and the subsequent declaration of the territory as a German protectorate. By and large they welcomed the arrival of the German colonial administration – or more accurately, they welcomed the defeat of “hostile elements” and the “establishment of order” in the region. Particularly in the early days of official German colonisation, missionaries acted as intermediaries and translators between the local populations and German colonisers. Vice versa, they benefitted from the presence of a colonial state that sought to develop the territory, as Charles Smythies, bishop of the University's Mission to Central Africa, attested: “[w]e are no longer disturbed by constant rumours of wars – the roads are safe everywhere, fresh markets are opening, and the people are prosperous. The effect upon our missionary work has certainly been favourable and the friendliest relations exist between us and the Germans.”<sup>174</sup>

The question of European settlement in German East Africa, too, became a transimperial process. Overwhelmingly, the white population of the colony was German. In 1913, the DOAZ reported that 5,336 Europeans lived in German East Africa, of whom 4,107

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<sup>173</sup> ‘Agreement and Protocol between the United Kingdom and Germany with Regard to Sleeping Sickness’ (House of Commons, 27 October 1908), 20th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers, Parliamentary Archives, <https://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers/docview/t70.d75.1908-010141?accountid=9851>. See also Daniel R. Headrick, ‘Sleeping Sickness Epidemics and Colonial Responses in East and Central Africa, 1900–1940’, ed. Philippe Büscher, *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases* 8, no. 4 (24 April 2014): e2772, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0002772>; Harvey G. Soff, ‘Sleeping Sickness in the Lake Victoria Region of British East Africa, 1900–1915’, *African Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (1969): 255–68, <https://doi.org/10.2307/216357>.

<sup>174</sup> Charles Smythies to Philip Currie, 24 July 1891, fols 50–51, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Kirchensachen, R 1001/857, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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were German nationals.<sup>175</sup> This number, however, left over one thousand non-German whites in the colony. During and after the Second Boer War, concerted efforts had been made to facilitate the settlement of Boers in German East Africa, whom the administration considered to be an ideal coloniser. Franz Stuhlmann, acting as deputy governor in the absence of Governor Götzen, wrote to the AAKA:

The question of settling individual Boer families in the protectorate has long been the subject of consideration in the inner circles of the administration. The people have shown to be able to make economic progress in lands which are not dissimilar to certain parts of the protectorate [...] they might be able to achieve success here, too, as cattle breeders and farmers, and I believe that they could at least serve as an inspiration for our German settlers.<sup>176</sup>

The settler press, too, advocated for the “import” of Boer families, at least initially.<sup>177</sup> Boers were seen as experienced and had proven to be able to cultivate vast areas of “barren” land. German settlers hoped that by bringing in more white people, other Germans and Europeans could be enticed to settle in German East Africa themselves. Some even considered Boer settlement an opportunity to get one over the British: “[i]f the English want to keep the Boers and chain them back to the land once taken from them, they will have their reasons. Therefore, we should – contrary to our previous (now traditional) unfortunate habit – finally take what the English want to keep, but apparently cannot keep. [...] Perhaps we can indirectly make a ‘revanche pour Zanzibar’ out of it.”<sup>178</sup> This appears, however, to have been a minority opinion. Instead, British cooperation was needed for large-scale Boer immigration into German East Africa as the dedicated settlement areas in the interior had to be reached via the Uganda Line. By 1913, more than 250 Boers had settled in German East Africa.<sup>179</sup> Further settlement projects were undertaken that brought German settlers from Palestine and Russo-German families from western Russia to the colony.

However, frustrations soon set in. Those settlers who considered themselves “pure Germans” or “settlers from the beginning” became irritated over the administration’s seemingly

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<sup>175</sup> ‘Die weiße Bevölkerung Deutsch-Ostafrikas’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 August 1913, XV/69 edition.

<sup>176</sup> Franz Ludwig Stuhlmann to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, ‘Zum Bericht vom 22. Januar 1902’, 2 December 1902, fols 24–26, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/25, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>177</sup> ‘Aus Der Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 August 1902, IV/32 edition; ‘Zur Bureneinwanderung’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 June 1905, VII/23 edition.

<sup>178</sup> ‘Die Bureneinwanderung nach Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 29 October 1904, VI/44 edition.

<sup>179</sup> *Deutsches Kolonialhandbuch*, vol. 13 (Berlin: Hermann Paetel, 1913), sec. III. Deutsch-Ostafrika, pp. 1–2 N.B. the Boers are referred to as ‘Kolonial-Engländer’ here.

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preferential treatment for those newcomers.<sup>180</sup> The sentiment was furthered when a British company made public their plans to charter a ship to send fifty Norwegian families to the Pare mountains in the north-eastern part of the colony to staff a newly established timber mill and tree farm.<sup>181</sup> Germans in East Africa questioned why the administration supported these plans, while, at the same time, it did not do enough to attract “proper Germans” to the colony. Similarly, they asked why it was Britain that was undertaking such ventures while German capital remained so reluctant to commit to a colonial future.

The development of German East Africa was thus defined by both national and transimperial processes. Prestige played an important role, and administrators and settlers framed their colonial life and work in national terms by stressing the suitability for colonialism of the German people. At the same time, however, especially in times of difficulty, the same actors looked abroad for solutions. They found help in the experiences and expertise of those empires who had already been developing their colonies for decades. Rather than seeking unique, inventive, or distinctly German colonisation methods, colonisers made do with those methods that were already working abroad. In this way, German East Africa became an amalgamation of different interests and practices.

### Conclusion

With the benefit of some one-hundred-thirty-odd years of hindsight, Germany’s entrance to the colonial stage seems to have been long-coming and hardly surprising. Political, social, and economic trends in Europe made colonial expansion attractive. Private individuals such as Carl Peters took the lead and before long the German Empire held control over a handful of territories on the African continent and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the structures of colonial administration may suggest that the acquisition of overseas territories came as a surprise. Unclear and ill-defined hierarchies within the colonial service meant that lines of responsibility

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<sup>180</sup> For the changing perception of Boer settlement, see ‘Unsere Stellungnahme zur Burenfrage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 29 July 1905, VII/30 edition; for views on settlers coming from Russia, see ‘Pläne zur Ansiedelung in Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 March 1906, VIII/10 edition; ‘Wollen wir die Ansiedelung von Deutsch-Russen in Ostafrika?’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 31 March 1906, VIII/13 edition; for Palestine, see ‘Die Deutschen aus Palästina am Meru’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 6 November 1907, IX/65 edition; ‘Deutsche aus Palästina nach dem Meru’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 3 June 1908, X/41 edition. The collection of primary material in Glenk’s work on German settlers from Palestine is certainly of interest to any scholar of German East Africa, but it must be noted that it lacks contextualisation of the material within critical discussions and analyses of existing scholarship. See Helmut Glenk, *Shattered Dreams at Kilimanjaro: An Historical Account of German Settlers from Palestine Who Started a New Life in German East Africa during the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2011).

<sup>181</sup> ‘Norwegische Ansiedler nach Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 18 April 1908, X/28 edition.

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and accountability were obscure. The governor as head of a colony could do more or less as he pleased; yet colonial officials in Berlin could eventually overrule any decision. Finally, the Reichstag held ultimate powers through its budgetary oversight. All this suggests that the colonial service was set up rather hastily, leading to confused responsibilities. As the next chapter will show, the government sought to clarify these confusions by reorganising the colonial administration in 1907.

German East Africa attracted a wide range of individuals and interests. Missionaries and merchants, settlers and plantation managers, district officials and governors all saw the new colony with great hopes, and they all attempted to shape the territory's development or to carve out a niche for themselves. But the colonised populations, too, saw in the arrival of Europeans an opportunity to improve or manifest their own positions. African leaders consciously and carefully chose alliances or oppositions to extend their power within their own society, or to expand their influence over others. These opportunist manoeuvres could not off-set the fact that colonialism was in its essence exploitative and violent. The following chapters will examine the ways in which colonialism in German East Africa fundamentally changed African societies.

German East Africa was a distinctly German colony in which a distinct German colonialism existed, and colonisers were eager to point to the colonising capabilities of the German *Volk*. At the same time, colonial rule drew on the expertise, experiences, and on the actions of foreign powers. The complex relationship of the *national* and the *global* that played out in German East Africa can be found at all levels in the colony and also in the German motherland. Government, civilians, and different interest groups all sought to find and bring prosperity and development to the new territory, but also, ultimately, were acting for their own individual benefits.

While the actions of many contemporaries illustrate the belief in the value of combining national and global processes, some attempted to reconcile what they perceived to be contradictions inherent in the co-existence of national and global colonialisms. In a pamphlet published in 1912, Carl Meinhof argued that the German Empire in Africa had certain *Rechte* (rights) but could only claim these if it worked towards meeting certain *Pflichten* (obligations) at the same time.<sup>182</sup> According to Meinhof, the German Empire had the right “to make a profit” from its colonies, and had the right “to rule” in its colonies. The financial investments required

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<sup>182</sup> Carl Meinhof (1857-1944) served as the president of the Deutsch-Evangelischer Laien-Missionsbund and held the first chair in African Studies at a German university. He was the great-uncle of Ulrike Meinhof, founding member of the *Rote Armee Fraktion*. See Ernst Dammann, ‘Meinhof, Carl’, in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 1990, <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd116864281.html#ndbcontent>.

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to develop the colony could only be justified if the German Empire was allowed to extract an economic surplus from the colony. Furthermore, if the empire wanted to benefit African populations, it had the right to rule over Africans, since the “obvious racial superiority” of the German people would contribute to the “uplift” of the indigenous populations. These rights, Meinhof argued, ultimately belonged to the German coloniser and ought to be taken to benefit the German nation as a whole. But in order to do so, Meinhof suggested that broader, more universal – or transimperial – obligations had to be met as well. In Meinhof’s view, these included the obligation to contribute to the advancement of scientific discovery, and the obligation to educate Africans. Only by working towards these obligations could and would the rights of profit and rule be justified. In the end, Meinhof argued, these rights and obligations would not lead to eventual parity between coloniser and colonised, however. “It is not equality that Africans need, but education,” Meinhof concluded.<sup>183</sup>

Carl Meinhof’s reflections are illustrative of two things: firstly, that the colonial issue could always be brought back to the central question of how to rule over Africans, and secondly, the simultaneously competing and compatible discourses of distinct national and more global colonialisms. German East African colonialism took an ambiguous shape, combining features of settler, exploitation, and trading colonies. This lack of a clear development allowed different stakeholders, from colonial administrators and individual settlers to African leaders, to attempt to mould the colony according to their own wishes. Some brought forward arguments that alluded to a distinct German character of the colony, and others saw the colony within a global or transimperial context. German East Africa thus took shape as a medley. The colony was hence neither predominantly *national* nor predominantly *transimperial*. Instead, its development was influenced by a combination of processes that were national, global and transimperial, competing and compatible, individualistic and universal, and could all occur at the same time.

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<sup>183</sup> Carl Meinhof, *Deutschlands Pflichten in Afrika* (Hamburg: Deutsch Evangelischer Laien-Missionsbund, 1912), 11; ‘Deutschlands Pflichten in Afrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 15 May 1912, XIV/39 edition; see also Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, ‘Nobody’s People: Colonial Subjects, Race Power and the German State, 1884-1945’ (Doctoral Dissertation, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 2007).

## CHAPTER II: CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES IN TIMES OF COLONIAL CRISIS

### Introduction

In an article published on the front page of the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung* in July 1912, Wilhelm Arning, a delegate to the Reichstag and a fierce pro-colonial advocate, wrote that the change of governors in German East Africa “causes a stir mainly with regard to the one who leaves the post.” Arning referred to Governor Rechenberg, who had just been recalled to Berlin, following increased tensions between his administration and the German East African settler community. Arning continued: “much attacked and little defended outside the government and certain political circles, he has nevertheless lasted longer in Africa than any governor before.”<sup>1</sup> Despite the settlers’ vehement opposition to Rechenberg, the governor had ruled the colony for six years, putting his own mark on German East Africa’s development. So what was Arning’s verdict of these past half-dozen years?

Between 1906 and 1912, Governor Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg had pursued a colonial policy that was founded on principles favouring the economic development of German East Africa. Here, Rechenberg’s administration put a special emphasis on developing indigenous African agriculture and production, and on expanding the business sectors and commercial enterprises in the colony that were largely controlled by Indian merchants. So far, so good: Arning and other colonial lobbyists had long called for increased cultivation and development of the colonial economy. Yet to Arning and to the readership of the DOAZ, it seemed that Rechenberg’s methods were not right. Focusing on the promotion of indigenous agriculture and Indian business necessarily meant that the administration was less committed to creating the “white man’s country” for which the settlers wished. Many settlers believed Rechenberg’s policies to be actively hostile to the “flourishing” of the European populations in the colony. According to the DOAZ, Rechenberg pursued an anti-settler, anti-colonial course, one which followed the mantra, “German East Africa to the negros! Profit opportunities to the Indians!”<sup>2</sup> But even though Rechenberg himself repeatedly rejected these accusations of anti-settler bias, among other places in the budget commission of the Reichstag, Arning and his audience remained sceptical: since the Reichstag’s knowledge of East African conditions was rudimentary at best, there was nobody who could have disputed Rechenberg’s statements or who would have struck a blow for the settlers in the government.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Arning, ‘Alte und neue Gouverneure’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 17 July 1912, XIV/57 edition.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Antikolonialismus’, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Arning, ‘Alte und neue Gouverneure’, 1.

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Rechenberg's appointment as German East African governor in 1906 occurred during the most significant upheaval in the colony and at a time of profound structural changes to the entire colonial administration. The outbreak of the Maji Maji War in July 1905 shocked colonial society to the core. For the first time since the Abushiri Revolt, large parts of the population violently challenged colonial rule. While initially confined to the southern parts of the territory, the conflict had the potential to quickly spread to the entire colony. European inhabitants of larger cities, such as Dar es Salaam or Tanga, questioned "whether enough has been done or prepared [...] to protect the lives and property of individual Europeans or their entire community."<sup>4</sup> They feared that the war might soon reach the European areas of the colony, and that European settlers themselves could be in danger.

This fear was also informed by another war which likely had an even greater impact on Germany's colonialism. In January 1904, the Herero population of German Southwest Africa rose up against the German colonisers. They eventually were joined by the Nama and other peoples. In the first few days, more than 100 German settlers were killed. During the next four years, the colony was engulfed in a state of open warfare. In the course of the war, the actions of the German military and especially general Lothar von Trotha attracted criticism.<sup>5</sup> Trotha had issued an extermination order; it is believed that up to 100,000 people were killed in this genocide.<sup>6</sup> At home, the war was condemned for its brutality, but also for its financial costs.

The outbreak of the Maji Maji War therefore only increased political and public opposition to Germany's colonial project. Amidst the chaos Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow sought to make some concessions but this was not enough to placate the voices that denounced German colonial rule, especially the Social Democrats. When the government sought additional funds to finance the war in German Southwest Africa in August 1906, the pressures that had been building for more than two years burst. The motion failed, the government collapsed, and new elections were scheduled for the beginning of 1907.

In the leadup to these new elections, the reform of the colonial administrative system took a central role. On 10 September 1906, Bernhard Dernburg was appointed director of the AAKA. Dernburg was an outsider to colonial affairs. He previously served as the head of a bank and had become known as an expert in turning around failing businesses. Dernburg went

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<sup>4</sup> 'Ein Vorschlag für unvorhergesehene Fälle', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 19 August 1905, VII/33 edition.

<sup>5</sup> Mads Bomholt Nielsen, *Britain, Germany and Colonial Violence in South-West Africa, 1884-1919 The Herero and Nama Genocide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 25. Trotha reported: 'I believe that the nation as such should be annihilated.' See Jan-Bart Gewald, *Herero Heroes: A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia, 1890-1923* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), 173.

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straight to work and requested the transformation of the AAKA into an independent and equal ministry. When Chancellor Bülow was re-elected in January 1907 and managed to strengthen his coalition, he oversaw the establishment of a new *Reichskolonialamt*. Under Dernburg, the RKA pursued a root-and-branch reform of Germany's colonial rule. Dernburg's reforms were guided by the belief that “today, colonisation can be done through methods of conservation,” in the past, by contrast, he noted that “colonisation [had been] done by methods of destruction.”<sup>7</sup> In German East Africa specifically, Dernburg's reforms took their cue from the ideas of Governor Rechenberg, who believed that the colony would prosper if the agriculture and industry of the indigenous populations and the Indian trade sector were strengthened.

However, even though the changes of the Rechenberg and Dernburg regimes were profound regarding the administration and economic development of German East Africa, what remained consistent was how settlers perceived their government. Before, during and after Rechenberg's governorship, the DOAZ and other settler newspapers continuously raised and debated a range of issues related to the administration: the settlers were frustrated by the general lack of knowledge of colonial affairs, both in the administration and the wider German public. They also criticised the central role of indigenous intermediaries in the administration and questioned why colonial officials did not do more to help their fellow white countrymen. These themes suggest that dissatisfaction with the administration of the colony was not simply due to the personal preferences or directions of an individual governor or colonial secretary. In this respect, the upheavals of 1904 to 1908 appear less all-encompassing than previously thought.

This chapter will therefore argue that the experiences of the wars and the reshuffling of the colonial structure constituted a break only in the upper echelons of colonial administration and colonial policymaking. On the ground in German East Africa, settlers perceived the changes as just another instance of already existing grievances. Similarly, Africans, Arabs, and Indians were able to exploit the new circumstances following the same patterns that characterised previous and later administrations. At the same time, colonial rule of course remained violent and exploitative, and the change in the administration hardly mattered to the day-to-day experiences of the indigenous populations. From the perspective of settler and indigenous societies, then, the transformations and reforms of the mid-1900s were nothing out of the ordinary.

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<sup>7</sup> Bernhard Dernburg, *Zielpunkte des deutschen Kolonialwesens: zwei Vorträge* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 9, <https://www.brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdl/content/titleinfo/1805682>.

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Thus, this chapter will add nuance to claims about the periodisation of colonial administrations of German East Africa.<sup>8</sup> Woodruff Smith, for example, has described different ‘ideologies of German colonialism’.<sup>9</sup> He argued that while earlier governors Liebert and Götzen embraced a settlement-friendly ‘emigrationist ideology’, Rechenberg’s governorship constituted a shift towards an ‘economic ideology’. In a context in which individuals could make such enormous differences, the shifts in policies and outlooks mattered greatly.<sup>10</sup> At least from an official political perspective. But, as we shall see later, the responses of the settler community to such influence in fact remained consistent throughout the colonial period.

Therefore, when viewed from the perspectives of Africans or settlers, continuities between the administrations can be observed that suggest that the paradigm shift of the Rechenberg and Dernburg regimes remained confined mainly to the offices in Berlin and Dar es Salaam. The issues that were on the minds of the indigenous populations or the settlers did not drastically change owing to the appointment of any new governor and the associated policy course. New governors changed indigenous and settlers’ perspectives and experiences to some degree, with certain issues becoming more urgent or less. But grievances ultimately were never abandoned simply because one administrator was replaced by another. In making this argument, this chapter builds on the recent historiographic investigations into continuities, as well as abrupt shifts, in Germany’s colonial past.<sup>11</sup>

Most striking in this respect are the recurring cycles of the settlers’ hope, anticipation, disillusionment, and hostility, which resembled the peaks and troughs that often followed dynastic transitions in European monarchies. The appointment of a new governor elicited excitement and the belief that their situation would finally change for the better. But only shortly after any new governor set foot in the colony, settlers realised that their high demands would not be met, and their excited expectations turned into bitter disappointment. Eventually, these frustrations kindled new hopes for improvement and the cycle repeated itself. This constitutes a hitherto unexplored continuity that persisted also during the Rechenberg years. By examining

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<sup>8</sup> See for example Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, chap. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Woodruff D Smith, ‘The Ideology of German Colonialism, 1840-1906’, *The Journal of Modern History* 46, no. 4 (December 1974): 641–62.

<sup>10</sup> Eckert and Pesek, ‘Bürokratische Ordnung und koloniale Praxis: Herrschaft und Verwaltung in Preußen und Afrika’, 94.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Russell A. Berman, ‘Colonialism, and no End: The Other Continuity Thesis’, in *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany*, ed. Volker Max Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 164–90; Nina Berman, Klaus Mühlhahn, and Alain Patrice Nganang, eds., *German Colonialism Revisited: African, Asian, and Oceanic Experiences* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014); Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe*; Haustein, ‘Strategic Tangles’; Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley, eds., *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

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the daily life of colonists in this framework, this chapter will reveal the multifaceted nature of colonialism: even in a particular colony, colonial experiences differed. “German colonialism” – or any other nationally defined colonialism – is thus a misnomer. Instead, we find differences between individual administrations, but also between administration and colonial civil society. Naturally, the same is true for the colonised societies as well. This recognition is important because it expands our understanding of colonialism in general, and because it allows a more nuanced, careful, and accurate representation of colonial experiences.

This chapter explores the changes and continuities during the colonial crisis of 1904-1908 and analyses the Rechenberg and Dernburg era in reference to the relationships between administration, settler community, and indigenous society. Section I contextualises the events, causes, and consequences of the Maji Maji War. Here, the analysis centres on Africans’ response to colonial rule and suggests that the war was an almost natural consequence of constant German exploitation of the indigenous populations. Section II will examine the appointment of Bernhard Dernburg as head of the colonial administration and the transformation of the AAKA into the *Reichskolonialamt*. This section will also explore the appointment of Rechenberg as governor of German East Africa and investigate how Dernburg and Rechenberg shifted colonial priorities towards indigenous production. The following sections will examine the settlers’ responses to the Maji Maji War and the Dernburg and Rechenberg regime. Section III will introduce and analyse the recurring cycle of excitement and disappointment. Sections IV and V will expand on the cycle further by examining the settlers’ main grievances with the administration: the perceived lack of knowledge of Berlin-based colonial policymakers, and the administration’s reliance on indigenous collaborators. This chapter will thus conclude that the monumental shifts that occurred in the German colonial administration in general and in German East Africa in particular were less absolute than is suggested in the literature.

### Section I: The Maji Maji war

The Maji Maji War was the most significant resistance to German colonial rule in eastern Africa. Maji Maji was quite unlike previous rebellions or resistance movements in that it united peoples across ethnic tribes: “[i]n its organisational scale and its ethnic variety Maji Maji was a movement both different from and more complex than earlier reactions and resistances to the

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imposition of colonial rule.”<sup>12</sup> The uprising was the almost logical conclusion to grievances experienced by virtually all indigenous populations under German colonial rule: brutality and the realisation that this brutality was inherent to the exploitative colonial system.

When Götzen was appointed governor in 1901, he brought with him a new plan to economically advance the colony. The colony’s trade was stagnant and European agriculture was depressed. To overcome these hurdles, Götzen’s administration introduced a scheme that would require Africans to grow cotton on communal plots. Initially devised for the German colony of Togoland, the new scheme failed spectacularly. Low wages, a requirement to work twenty-eight days on communal *mashamba* (fields), and widespread corruption and brutality rendered the cotton project highly unpopular.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the requirement to grow cotton meant that other agricultural products, including foodstuffs could not be cultivated as much. This led to an increase in prices for food, putting pressure on the indigenous populations.<sup>14</sup>

The eruption of the Maji Maji War was a direct response to the cotton growing scheme. The movement was united by a religious ideology that drew on pre-existing practices and beliefs: the peoples of the southern part of the colony, though ethnically different and often standing in conflict with one another, could draw on beliefs of a common ancestry and common cultural practices. This allowed a religious ideology to spread and to be accepted almost universally. The religious ideology came to be centred around the *maji* (water), a medicine imbibed by every follower of the movement and its leader, Kinjikitile Ngwale. Kinjikitile was a spirit medium in the small village of Ngarambe. He asserted that he was possessed by the snake spirit Hongo, who, in turn, served Bokero, one of the main spirits venerated in southern Tanzania. Kinjikitile claimed that the *maji* would turn European bullets into water, protecting the movements’ followers.<sup>15</sup> He also promised unity and leadership by combining various aspects of religious and medical practices into a “new, dynamic synthesis” and thereby created a cult that “possessed exactly the qualities needed to inspire widespread popular rebellion.”<sup>16</sup> Kinjikitile’s influence was supreme and pilgrims and leaders from far afield visited Ngarambe to receive the *maji* medicine. By 1905, most peoples of the south had been united behind Kinjikitile. But because Kinjikitile delayed the declaration of war, some followers of the

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<sup>12</sup> Gwassa, ‘Kinjikitile’, 202.

<sup>13</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> The merchant Hermann Schuller remarked in the *Gouvernementsrat* that ‘the district council’s cotton cultivation is to blame for the food shortage in otherwise rich districts. The yield of cotton in Bagamojo district has been pitiful and there is no way it can compensate for the reduced food production.’ ‘Dritte Sitzung des Gouvernementsrats beim Gouvernement von Deutsch-Ostafrika’, 15 May 1905, fol. 49, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/812, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>15</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 169–70.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

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movement grew restless. The war eventually broke out without Kinjikitile's formal declaration, but due to the *maji*'s uniting quality it nonetheless spread quickly.

The Germans had been largely oblivious to what had been happening. They considered Kinjikitile a "harmless witch doctor" and believed his influence a mere local affair.<sup>17</sup> Colonial control was patchy, especially in the southern parts of the colony where few Europeans lived. Only a few hundred *askari* and police were based in the south, and there were only a very few government agents – *akidas* and *majumbe*.<sup>18</sup> The government had tasked the *akidas* with tax collection and had imposed quotas on cash crops such as cotton. These quotas were virtually unattainable, but that did not matter to the Germans. They threatened to strip the non-complying *akidas* of their titles and authorities, and suggested that they would find other, more loyal collaborators.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in order to retain their position, some of the *akidas* directed the pressure onto the local populations. When this pressure was paired with German colonial oppression, the already united *maji* movement's opposition erupted.

Initially, Governor Götzen did not pay any attention to the reports of the *akidas* that a rebellion had broken out. Only when the coastal town of Samanga was attacked did Götzen realise that something was afoot. But even then, Götzen believed it to be a local affair. He sent troops to the Matumbi area and in early August, Kinjikitile was captured and hanged.<sup>20</sup> By that point, however, the movement had grown beyond the figure of Kinjikitile. The news of his execution spread rapidly and further incited opposition to the German colonisers. Within days, outposts of the colonial administration were attacked hundreds of kilometres apart. On 14 August 1905, a "Ngindo war party" killed five missionaries. News of the murder of white Europeans and the quicker and quicker spreading rebellion sent shockwaves across the colony and Götzen telegraphed to Berlin, asking for assistance.<sup>21</sup>

Over the next two years, the colony was engulfed in more and less intense episodes of war. Only when reinforcements arrived in October 1905 was the colonial administration able to systematically drive back the rebels. At the end, 15 Europeans, 73 *askari*, and 316 auxiliaries had been killed by the rebels. As detailed as the statistics for the colonisers' side are, as unclear

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912* (London: Abacus, 1992), 617.

<sup>18</sup> The *akida* and *majumbe* system will be explored later in this chapter.

<sup>19</sup> The term "collaborator" carries somewhat contentious or hostile connotations that arise especially from its usage with reference to the Second World War. Nevertheless, I believe it a useful expression in its more neutral meaning and will use it to refer to somebody – meaning here an inhabitant of the territories on the east African coast – who cooperated with the German colonisers, either for their own personal gain or for their belief that it was in the best interest of the community he or she represented.

<sup>20</sup> G. C. K. Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War, 1905-1907*, ed. Wolfgang Apelt (Köln: Rüdiger Köppe, 2005), 220ff.; Iliffe, *Modern History*, 171–72; Pakenham, *The Scramble*, 617–19.

<sup>21</sup> Pakenham, *The Scramble*, 618–19.

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is the picture for the Maji Maji fighters. Gilbert Gwassa has estimated that the war and the ensuing famine killed somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000 but the true numbers will never be known.<sup>22</sup> The Maji Maji War had profound impacts on the indigenous societies of southern German East Africa, and it altered relations between coloniser and colonised in many ways. Whole districts had been depopulated. Villages were destroyed, their inhabitants were either dead or had fled. When the survivors returned to their ancestral lands after war and famine had ended, they found their farms and fields overgrown and inhabited by rhino, buffalo, elephants and other game: “the people of southern Tanganyika had lost not only a hope of regaining freedom. They had lost a battle in their long war with nature.”<sup>23</sup>

From a different perspective, however, Maji Maji exhibited continuities and similarities to previous and subsequent colonial conflicts. As colonial oppression had done before, Maji Maji and the German response to it allowed Africans to fill spaces left by others. Alliances with the Germans might have plotted certain leaders against their peers, but supporting the colonisers was ultimately a conscious decision to expand power, influence, and security. As we shall see later (Section V), German reliance on indigenous intermediaries and collaborators allowed the local populations themselves to shape the colony and its relations. This was more than a mere binary of collaboration or resistance, and Africans “attempt[ed] to initiate, accelerate, and control change.”<sup>24</sup>

In the southern highlands, the Wabena were divided into various factions and chiefdoms which in turn were allied to the neighbouring peoples, such as the Wahehe, Wasangu, or Wangoni. In the north, Wabena clans had previously allied with Mkwawa of the Wahehe, whereas in the south alliances lay with Chabruma of the Wangoni. When Mbeyela, the leader of the southern Wabena, accepted the *maji* from Chabruma and committed to fighting the Germans without waiting on the response of his northern compatriots, the rebellion became a “Bena civil war, with Chabruma’s allies pitted against those linked to Hehe and Sangu.”<sup>25</sup> Mpangire, who was Mbeyela’s son and commanded his forces, attacked the Lutheran mission. Previously seen as an ally, the missionaries were now considered agents of the German government. Some time later, Merere of the Wasangu arrived with a large contingent of troops. He and his forefathers had previously allied with Chabruma to fight the Wahehe. But in the recent past, they had benefitted from cooperating with the Germans. When Merere received a

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<sup>22</sup> Gwassa, *The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War, 1905-1907*, 389; Iliffe, *Modern History*, 200.

<sup>23</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 201–2; see also Kjekshus, *Ecology Control & Economic Development in East African History*.

<sup>24</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 189.

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delivery of the *maji* medicine, he faced a difficult decision. Ultimately, he refused the *maji*. He thus decided against Chabruma and the Wabena and instead committed his alliance and forces to the Germans.

The rebellion transformed indigenous political, social, and religious affairs, but they had been transformed before and would again be transformed afterwards. During and immediately after the war, many African aristocrats and leaders who had participated in the fight against the Germans were hanged or fled, including Chabruma. Initially, this led to chaos: “where there are no chiefs and headmen, every man lives by his own law,” commented a missionary.<sup>26</sup> Over time, new leaders emerged or were chosen, even if they did not command the same authorities as their predecessors. But those societies that had been loyal to the German colonisers and had disavowed Maji Maji gained and expanded their influence. The Wahehe, who in the past had fought against the German colonisers, were now rehabilitated. Their previous leader, Mkwawa had been hunted down by the *Wissmann-Truppe*, but now his dynasty was on the verge of being re-established.<sup>27</sup> Other loyalist leaders were appointed to *akida* and *liwali* positions and their power increased significantly.<sup>28</sup> Alliances were thus a means to expand one’s importance and to raise one’s standing within society, and African leaders made conscious decisions to alter, change, and impact these alliances.

The belief in the *maji* medicine and the subsequent defeat of the movement also had impacts on religious affairs in the southern parts of the colony. In some instances, traditional beliefs that had been central to the unifying quality of the *maji* were abandoned. “Many Ngoni chiefs accepted baptism before execution,” and many hundred people attended the first sermon of the returning missionaries after the movement had been defeated.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, other societies turned to Islam, such as the Ngindo, the Zaramo, the Ndendeuli, and the Mwera. But this did not mean that all indigenous beliefs were abandoned. In the following years and even after German colonial rule came to an end, indigenous religions retained their importance. “Witchcraft eradication movements” swept the colony in much of the first half of the Twentieth Century, attesting to the fact that many indigenous beliefs and religious practices were alive and widespread.

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<sup>26</sup> *Missions-Blätter der St Benediktus-Genossenschaft*, July 1907, quoted in Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, 200.

<sup>27</sup> See also Chapter III.

<sup>28</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 200.

<sup>29</sup> Gwassa and Iliffe, *Records*, 25–26 quoted in; Iliffe, *Modern History*, 200–201.

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For the Europeans in the colony, the Maji Maji War prompted two reactions. The straightforward response was utter disbelief and shock. In his recollection of the events, governor Götzen wrote, “in the districts which later rebelled, no one considered our position endangered, not to mention that no side considered it possible that such unity among the tribes was soon to appear.”<sup>30</sup> News of the quickly spreading rebellion soon reached Dar es Salaam’s European population and “the local white population began to display a fear bordering on panic.”<sup>31</sup> To calm the settlers, the government announced the formation of a voluntary self-defence militia. This was met with enthusiastic public acclaim: 226 European men heeded the call and established four divisions under the instructions of *Schutztruppe* Lieutenant Kurt Johannes to defend Dar es Salaam in case of any violent attack. Over the course of the next couple of months these volunteers engaged in military training and drills and forged a cadre of militias.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time, the Maji Maji War did not change the settlers’ general perceptions of the administration and their role within German East Africa. For most settlers and planters, the events of the war were far away. Many planters lived and worked in the Usambara highlands or on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, essentially on the other end of the colony. Even Dar es Salaam was still more than 200 miles to the northeast of where the missionaries had been killed. European life in the colony went on as normal and the settler newspapers engaged in their favourite activity: to criticise the administration and to gloomily compare their own situation to that of settlers in foreign colonies. According to the DOAZ, the rebellion was a consequence of showing too much humanity and empathy to Africans: “if the white man is not tough in his relations with the coloured man, the latter is tough with him.”<sup>33</sup> Other nations, such as France and England, were more successful in colonial governance since they did “not allow themselves to be distracted from their goals by such dazzlers as the words ‘culture and humanity’.”<sup>34</sup> In the eyes of the settlers and the settler press, the only way to win the war and to prevent any future rebellions was to act resolutely and without mercy against the indigenous and Indian populations. Especially in the latter, the settlers found a scapegoat.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> von Götzen, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Aufstand 1905/06*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, Letter, 26 August 1905, fols 107–110, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/722, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Aufruf zur Bildung einer freiwilligen Bürgerwehr’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 August 1905, VII/34 edition, 3.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Vermischtes: Humanität gegen die Eingeborenen’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 14 October 1905, VII/41 edition.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> See Chapter III.

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Undoubtedly, Maji Maji had profound impacts on German East Africa, on its indigenous populations, and on the colonisers. The Germans' brutal suppression of the rebellion led to unimaginable suffering and devastation. The shape and makeup of the movement was new in German East Africa. Never before had so many different indigenous societies joined forces to fight against the colonisers. But to unite that many people, the movement's leaders had to draw upon practices and beliefs that already existed within African society. Maji Maji employed the same means that different resistances and rebellions had used before and others would use later.

### Section II: Bernhard Dernburg and Albrecht von Rechenberg

The second break identified by much of historical scholarship on German East Africa is the appointment of Bernhard Dernburg as head of the colonial offices in Berlin, and the appointment of Albrecht von Rechenberg as governor of German East Africa. Indeed, the tenures of both men brought significant transformations and reforms to the colonial service in general and to German East Africa in particular. By 1906, it had become evident that German colonialism was in a deep crisis and that the entire system was in dire need of an overhaul.

This was not only due to the Maji Maji War. On the contrary, the colonial crisis was initially caused by the uprising of the Herero people in German Southwest Africa in January 1904. The fighting quickly spread across the colony, as the Herero found support from other populations, such as the Nama. The uprising was a response to abusive colonial rule, forced land expropriation, and the aftermath of a devastating cattle plague that had destroyed the livelihoods of many indigenous peoples. Samuel Maherero united the Herero and others and led a concentrated attack against the German colonisers, who were largely unprepared and surprised by the scale and speed of the uprising. More than a hundred German settlers were killed in the first few weeks of the conflict.

The killings sent shockwaves through German Southwest African settler society and many demanded a ruthless counteroffensive. Governor Theodor Leutwein, however, initially favoured a negotiated settlement and opened negotiations with Maherero. Yet, when the letters exchanged between them were leaked to the press, the "jingoistic atmosphere" that the settlers had created led to the collapse of any peaceful solution.<sup>36</sup> The government in Berlin ordered Leutwein to stop negotiations and instead to launch an offensive against the Herero. After a

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<sup>36</sup> Gewalt, *Herero Heroes*, 168ff.

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failed attack, Leutwein was relieved of the military command and Lothar von Trotha – hand-picked by the Kaiser – was sent to the colony.<sup>37</sup>

Trotha had already gained significant colonial war experience: he had fought against the Wahehe in German East Africa, and in the Boxer Rebellion in China. After a costly battle at the Waterberg, the remaining Herero fighters, their dependants, and their cattle fled eastwards into the Omaheke desert. Trotha ordered his troops to pursue the Herero, to chase them away from water and food sources, and to shoot anyone within reach. This was an extermination order.<sup>38</sup> When the Nama under Jakob Morenga and Hendrik Witbooi also rose up against German rule, Trotha ordered his troops to take similar action. Although the exact numbers are unknown, it is possible that up to 100,000 Africans were killed in German Southwest Africa between 1904-1907.<sup>39</sup>

The genocidal war against the Herero and Nama prompted widespread criticism and cast doubts over Germany's colonial project. Many opposed Trotha's conduct: Social Democrat August Bebel declared in front of parliament that “any butcher's servant can wage such warfare.”<sup>40</sup> Others had denounced colonial exploitation more generally. Matthias Erzberger of the Zentrum party took a leading role in demanding “that the native population [be] preserved and allowed to improve its condition.”<sup>41</sup> Erzberger opposed exploitative measures that aimed at reducing worker shortages in German East Africa, which included forced labour, movement restrictions, and physical punishment, and instead demanded “guarantees for the rights of the natives.”<sup>42</sup> Not only were these methods inhumane, they also did not produce the intended results and cost money.

Many of these coercive methods applied in the colonies were brought about through the lobbying of various groups, such as the Colonial Advisory Council or the DKG. They influenced policymaking in the AAKA and were guided by the economic interests of their

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>38</sup> See Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘Bevölkerungsökonomie, Rassenstaat Und Genozid in Deutsch-Südwestafrika’, in *Vorurteil Und Genozid: Ideologische Prämisse Des Völkermords*, ed. Wolfgang Benz (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 15–34, <https://doi.org/10.7767/boehlau.9783205790853.15>.

<sup>39</sup> Jeremy Sarkin, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century: The Socio-Legal Context of Claims under International Law by the Herero against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904-1908* (London: Praeger Security International, 2008), 5.

<sup>40</sup> August Bebel, ‘Verstärkung der Schutztruppe zur Niederwerfung des Eingeborenenaufstandes’ (1905), 4104, [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k11\\_bsb00002812\\_00089.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k11_bsb00002812_00089.html).

<sup>41</sup> Klaus Epstein, ‘Erzberger and the German Colonial Scandals, 1905-1910’, *The English Historical Review* 74, no. 293 (1959): 648.

<sup>42</sup> Matthias Erzberger, ‘Fortsetzung der ersten Beratung des Entwurfs eines Gesetzes, betreffend die Feststellung des Reichshaushaltsetats für das Rechnungsjahr 1906, in Verbindung mit der ersten Beratung der Entwürfe: 1. eines Gesetzes, betreffend die Feststellung des Haushaltsetats für die Schutzgebiete auf das Rechnungsjahr 1906’ (1905), 331, [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k11\\_bsb00002824\\_00305.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k11_bsb00002824_00305.html).

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members. Similarly, economic interest groups in German East Africa pushed their agendas in the *Gouvernementsrat*. This led to administrative decisions that clearly favoured white employers, such as labour contracts that always gave preferential treatment to Europeans.<sup>43</sup> But the imposition of taxes also benefitted white employers: the indigenous populations could often only fulfil their tax duties by working on European plantations. Despite this, private financial investment into the colonies remained scant. Colonial subsidies increasingly devoured public funds without providing any tangible results and the public image of colonial expansion got worse and worse. With the added expenses of two colonial wars, many saw the colonies as a “national loss-making venture”.<sup>44</sup>

Following the negative reactions, Colonial Director Stübel resigned in November 1905 and his successor, Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg followed suit soon after in September 1906. Opposition to the colonial course of the government came mainly from the Social Democrats and the Zentrum. Chancellor Bülow recognised that change and a reform course were needed. He issued a decree that aimed at the abolition of slavery, which had been a further thorn in the sides of anti-colonial campaigners.<sup>45</sup> To overcome the economic problems of the colonial project, Bülow considered economic experience paramount. The aristocratic and military bureaucrats that previously had led the colonial service were no longer useful. The public agreed: the appointment of Dernburg as director of the AAKA on the same day that Hohenlohe-Langenburg wrote his letter of resignation was received with great support and enthusiasm across the board. In his introduction of Dernburg to the Reichstag, Bülow concluded: “with this appointment, gentlemen, an old wish of mine has been fulfilled. [...] when I became State Secretary of Foreign Affairs nine years ago [...] I would have liked to put a man with practical commercial experience at the head of our Colonial Administration.”<sup>46</sup>

Dernburg was a banker from a well-connected and well-respected Jewish family. He had studied law and business and gained experience in America working as director of the *Deutsche Treuhand-Gesellschaft*, before taking over the directorship of the Bank of

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<sup>43</sup> Sören Utermark, “‘Schwarzer Untertan versus schwarzer Bruder’”. Bernhard Dernburgs Reformen in den Kolonien Deutsch-Ostafrika, Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Togo und Kamerun’ (Doctoral Dissertation, Kassel, Universität Kassel, 2011), 110, <https://kobra.uni-kassel.de/bitstream/handle/123456789/2012082441677/DissertationSoerenUtermark.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Deutsch, *Emancipation without Abolition*, 117.

<sup>46</sup> Bernhard von Bülow, ‘Erste Beratung des Entwurfs eines Gesetzes, betreffend die Feststellung eines zweiten Nachtrags zum Reichshaushaltsetat für das Rechnungsjahr 1906, nebst Anlagen, in Verbindung mit der ersten Beratung des Entwurfs eines Gesetzes, betreffend die Feststellung eines zweiten Nachtrags zum Haushaltsetat für die Schutzgebiete auf das Rechnungsjahr 1906, nebst Anlagen.’ (1906), 3959, <https://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00002828/images/index.html?id=00002828&groesser=&fip=193.174.98.30&no=&seite=374>.

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Darmstadt.<sup>47</sup> Dernburg had no practical experience in colonial affairs. But as a man with a commercial background, he was the perfect candidate to follow Bülow's demand to make the colonies profitable.

Dernburg's first step was to tidy up the colonial administration: "unproductive, unproven personnel had to be removed, troublesome contracts had to be resolved."<sup>48</sup> Just weeks after his appointment, Dernburg issued a *Runderlass* (circular decree) to the governors of the German colonies. In the decree, Dernburg set out his long-term plans for the German Empire:

The aim will be to ensure that the colony is able to stand on its own feet as soon as possible and to cover its expenses from its own income. [...] The essential aspects of the work programme are: 1) The development of transport. The development of railways, port facilities and other means of transport. 2) The development of agriculture. Cotton, rubber, maize, etc. 3) Forestry. Exploitation of forest resources, elimination of depletion. 4) Water management where it requires special care. Dams, water developments. 5) The exploration and exploitation of mineral deposits. 6) The native question. The labour question. 7) The settlement question. 8) Customs and taxation issues.<sup>49</sup>

Dernburg's enthusiasm and the fervour with which he went to work did not go unnoticed. In their negotiations, Bülow promised Dernburg to campaign for the creation of an independent RKA. To sell this to the public, in the Reichstag Bülow thus spoke of Dernburg's appointment as the much needed "radical colonial-political change of course."<sup>50</sup>

A chance for such course correction came at the end of 1906 when the government sought an increase in spending for the war efforts in German Southwest Africa. The Zentrum blocked the motion, leading Bülow to order the dissolution of the Reichstag. This prompted new elections which were set to be held on 25 January 1907. In the leadup to the elections, colonial politics became a dominating feature of the electoral campaign so that the elections became known as *Hottentottenwahlen*.<sup>51</sup> Bülow's coalition – the *Bülow-Block* – positioned itself against Zentrum and Social Democrats, and Dernburg did his part to mobilise intellectuals and industrialists for a colonial new beginning:

All in all, the colonial director was able to convince the audience with his remarks for the most part and thus contributed decisively to the later election victory of the *Block*

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<sup>47</sup> The Deutsche Treuhand-Gesellschaft still exists today as KPMG International. Iliffe, *German Rule*, 43–44.

<sup>48</sup> Africanus Minor, *Dernburgs Programm: ein Wendepunkt im Schicksal Deutsch-Ostafrikas; Kolonie Oder Negerland Unter Deutscher Flagge?* (Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1908), 11, [http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BLKZJR265570327/NCCO?sid=gale\\_marc&xid=458928fd&pg=14](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BLKZJR265570327/NCCO?sid=gale_marc&xid=458928fd&pg=14).

<sup>49</sup> Bernhard Dernburg to Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg, Circular Decree, 17 November 1906, fols 113–114, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/767, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>50</sup> Utermark, 'Schwarzer Untertan', 125.

<sup>51</sup> This was in reference to a derogatory term used for the Nama.

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parties. A major reason for his success was his clear line of thought. He skilfully established a link between a sense of *nationalem Pflichtbewusstsein* [national duty] and *Weltmacht* politics: *Weltmacht* politics meant colonial politics and colonial politics was a ‘national question’, a matter of greater national importance.<sup>52</sup>

Bülow’s coalition won the elections and established an absolute majority in parliament.<sup>53</sup> This was the broad basis necessary for colonial reforms, and on 17 May 1907, the emperor decreed the elevation of the AAKA to an independent imperial colonial office. Dernburg was appointed Secretary of State of the new *Reichskolonialamt*.

Dernburg’s colonial plans for German East Africa were to increase the colony’s attraction of private capital for plantation enterprises. To facilitate this, Dernburg deemed it necessary to solve the persistent labour shortages by improving working conditions.<sup>54</sup> He outlined his position in parliament:

I want to make such arrangements that it will be possible to induce people [indigenous workers] to go there [plantations] on the basis of favourable conditions of employment, on the basis of favourable health conditions, on the basis of securing their wages and maintaining their income from work. [...] The development of the Negroes must take place into capable, industrious, willing subjects in their own interest. [...] If you do not show the people that they themselves have an interest in earning wages, in going to work, in working in the plantations, if you do not teach the people that the German administration brings them an advantage, a better standard of living, a healthier home, healthier children, better roads, etc., then you can only maintain this country under the thumb.<sup>55</sup>

In essence, Dernburg’s colonial plans for German East Africa aligned with the development strategy the Germans employed in Kamerun: to make the colony economically viable through the large-scale establishment of plantations, which were run by a handful of Europeans but worked by a large number of indigenous labourers. This would only be possible if they were afforded with basic support, compensation and care. And the right man for the job had already been found, even if it did not appear so at first.

The beginning of Dernburg’s tenure coincided with the appointment of Albrecht von Rechenberg as governor of German East Africa. Rechenberg arrived in Dar es Salaam in September 1906. He had previously gained experience in the colony when he served as

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<sup>52</sup> Utermark, ‘Schwarzer Untertan’, 133.

<sup>53</sup> In the campaign, Bülow and Dernburg were supported by the *Reichsverband gegen die Sozialdemokratie* [imperial association against social democracy], a conservative agitation and lobbying association led by the former governor of German East Africa, Eduard von Liebert.

<sup>54</sup> For a more detailed discussion of labour shortages in German East Africa, see Chapter III.

<sup>55</sup> Bernhard Dernburg, ‘Fortsetzung der zweiten Beratung des Reichshaushaltsetats für das Rechnungsjahr 1908’ (1908), 4078, <https://daten.digital-e-sammlungen.de/bsb00002828/images/index.html?id=00002828&groesser=&fip=193.174.98.30&no=&seite=374>.

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provincial magistrate in Tanga from 1893 and in the Zanzibar consulate from 1896.<sup>56</sup> Rechenberg's aristocratic background and his traditional, militaristic, and bureaucratic Prussian upbringing stood in rather stark contrast to the "new managerial class" embodied by Dernburg.<sup>57</sup> But the biggest ideological gulf between Rechenberg and Dernburg concerned the colonies themselves. Dernburg was clear in his commitment to the colonies and their importance to the empire. Rechenberg, on the other hand, was not convinced. He was known as an expert on *Ostpolitik* and considered the empire's future to lie in eastern Europe. Rechenberg's German East African administration thus was "minimal and reactive, a holding action geared to peace and economy."<sup>58</sup>

Rechenberg's administration was also marked by his personal understanding of the Maji Maji War. He criticised Götzen's cotton scheme and blamed the outbreak of the war on the previous administration's neglect of the economic needs of the indigenous populations: "with an established administration based on false economic principles, the native lacks any means of escaping from oppression; it robs him of even the hope of improvement and leaves him no choice but either to perish or to eliminate it by rebellion. That he decides on the latter is self-evident."<sup>59</sup> Therefore, Rechenberg believed that stability and a prevention of further rebellions were contingent on the economic security of the indigenous population. In this manner, "Rechenberg sought an active policy for defensive reasons."<sup>60</sup>

According to Rechenberg, then, the outbreak of Maji Maji was the result of a misguided administrative policy that had been characterised by compulsory labour, arbitrariness, and widespread oppression and brutality. The governor considered neither a mass settlement of Europeans in the colony – the "white man's country solution" – nor a focused expansion of the plantation sector – the Kamerun solution – sensible. Those workers who were needed for the already existing plantations should no longer be coerced to work. A free labour market and the promotion of *Eingeborenenproduktion* ("native" production) should instead solve colonial economic problems.<sup>61</sup> This was a different solution to the new colonial, plantation-centred course which Dernburg had proposed for German East Africa.

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<sup>56</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 52.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>59</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichs-Kolonialamt, Letter, 21 December 1910, fol. 82, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Bezirksverwaltung, R 1001/237, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>60</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 55–56.

<sup>61</sup> Utermark, 'Schwarzer Untertan', 146.

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In 1907, Rechenberg had the chance to personally convince Dernburg of his plans. As one of his first official acts, Dernburg had announced that he himself would visit the colonies. Since Paul Kayser's visit to German East Africa in 1892, no other colonial *Staatssekretär* (state secretary) had set foot in any colony. Knowledge of the territories in Berlin was minimal, and only very few decisionmakers had ever personally been to Germany's overseas possessions. The purpose of Dernburg's trip was "to ascertain the present state of development of the German East African Protectorate through detailed on-the-spot explorations [...] so that, on the basis of the insight gained, documentation for economic and administrative reforms could be achieved."<sup>62</sup> In other words, Dernburg wanted to observe personally what the failings of previous colonial policy had been, and he wanted to make sure that he could convincingly recommend a new strategy to the chancellor and to the Reichstag.

Dernburg arrived in German East Africa in early August. Over the next two and a half months the colonial secretary followed an itinerary that Rechenberg's administration had carefully planned. Dernburg's party first travelled to Lake Victoria where he visited a number of African plantations. The journalist Otto Bongard who accompanied Dernburg, wrote of the occasion: "one thing has been established beyond doubt on Dernburg's journey from Tabora to Mwanza, namely that in the areas we have come to know there is a densely settled, intelligent and industrious population which already creates significant export values and contributes a large amount to the administrative costs of the colony."<sup>63</sup> Bongard concluded that this was the area's biggest treasure: "we have a valuable asset in the sedentary population working on their land, which must not be squandered under any circumstances. It would be squandered, however, if these farmers were taken away from their homes to other areas as labourers."<sup>64</sup> Rechenberg's hope to convince the colonial secretary of his colonial development plans began to come true.

Dernburg's next stops were European coffee plantations in the Usambara highlands. Here, Dernburg's calculations came to an unsatisfying result: "coffee cultivation [...] is not for Usambara."<sup>65</sup> The European planters and farmers were "blinded by their own interests" and were not seeing the bigger picture of the colonial economy, wrote Dernburg upon returning to Germany.<sup>66</sup> He had been convinced that what was needed in German East Africa was not the

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<sup>62</sup> 'Bericht über eine vom 13. Juli bis 30. Oktober 1907 nach Ostafrika ausgeführte Dienstreise.', 21 November 1907, 1, fols 34–53, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Expeditionen, Inspektionen und Reisen, R 1001/300, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>63</sup> Oscar Bongard, *Die Studienreise Des Staatssekretärs Dernburg Nach Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Wilhelm Süsserott, 1908), 56–57.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>66</sup> 'Dienstreise', fols 41–42.

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Kamerun solution. Instead, he agreed with Rechenberg that the focus of the colony's development should be put on African production. To facilitate this, coercive and violent means ought to be abolished, Africans ought to be paid fair wages, and a more concentrated effort to facilitate the economic and physical well-being of Africans was needed. After all, the indigenous populations were the "most important asset" of the colony.<sup>67</sup>

Having convinced Dernburg, Rechenberg immediately went to work. His reform policy of the German East African colonial economy was informed by his personal experiences and personal understanding of the local conditions. The consequences of the Maji Maji War, and the negative public opinion of the colonial venture were, in Rechenberg's view, attributable to the administrative errors and ill-conceived policies of previous governments. Before coming to the colony, Dernburg, too was convinced that a radical shift in colonial policy was necessary to improve the image of German colonialism. But it was only in the colony that Dernburg began to understand the importance of personal experience. Rechenberg's carefully designed itinerary for Dernburg led the colonial secretary to buy into the governor's plans. Rechenberg was, as his predecessors had been, able to formulate his own clear path for the colony. Yet, as we shall see in the following, the plans of Rechenberg and the reforms of Dernburg would find little enthusiasm in the settlers' circles. However, despite the profound changes brought about by Maji Maji, Dernburg and Rechenberg, the settlers' reaction was hardly extraordinary.

### Section III: Cycles of hope and despair

The perception of the administration in the settler press was best characterised in its response to the appointments of new officials. When Liebert, Götzen, Rechenberg, or Schnee assumed the governorship of German East Africa, they were initially greeted with great expectations, hopes, and confidence. The heads of the colonial offices in Berlin, Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg (1905-1906), Bernhard Dernburg (1906-1910), Friedrich von Lindequist (1910-1911), and Wilhelm Solf (1911-1918) were similarly met with high anticipations. For the DOAZ and other colonial newspapers, new administrators or officials were a clean slate. The settlers identified each one with the faith that things would take a turn for the better.

Yet settlers were conscious of the fact that the colonial decisions made in Berlin, which included the appointment of new colonial officials, were often made without any knowledge of local affairs. The physical distance between colony and metropole precipitated decisions that

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<sup>67</sup> Utermark, 'Schwarzer Untertan', 148.

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were based on very little information. For the settlers, this prompted feelings of disenfranchisement, neglect, and rejection. When it was announced that Dernburg would take over as head of colonial affairs, the German East African settler press could only treat him as an unknown quantity: unfamiliar to the settlers, Dernburg and his appointment were viewed with mixed emotions. Dernburg was another official picked by a chancellor who had no personal experience in colonial affairs. At the same time, however, Dernburg was a newcomer who promised to reform the colonial system. The settlers hoped that this meant that change and improvement were coming their way.

Hence, when Dernburg's colonial administration began their work by drafting various memoranda on the profitability of the colonies, the DOAZ identified this as an opportunity "to demonstrate the value of the colonial possessions and to counter the opposition's objections about the alleged worthlessness of our protectorates."<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, Dernburg was perceived as the harbinger of progress and settler representation. The DOAZ praised Dernburg for bringing about the creation of an independent RKA and saw it as a move of greatest significance towards the colonial development of the territory and to an independently acting colonial administration.<sup>69</sup> The settlers believed that Dernburg would bring Rechenberg into line and encourage further European settlement in the colony.

It was thus with great enthusiasm that the DOAZ announced to its readership that the new secretary would travel to the colonies in order to further his understanding of local conditions and to seek solutions to the most pressing colonial questions.<sup>70</sup> A special edition was printed and in the following regular issue of 2 March 1907, the newspaper expressed the hope that German East Africa would present itself to Dernburg "in its natural everyday guise, with its faults and its good sides," and that Dernburg, in turn, would "know how to distinguish appearances from reality with his sharp commercial eye [*mit scharfem kaufmännischem Blick*]."<sup>71</sup> A few weeks before Dernburg's arrival in eastern Africa, the settlers' expectations grew even further. The DOAZ published an article that sought to draw attention to the question of schooling of European children in the colony.<sup>72</sup> This was prompted by Rechenberg's radical decision to close the only government school for European children in Dar es Salaam, as he

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<sup>68</sup> 'Tätigkeiten des neuen Kolonialdirektors', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 1 December 1906, VIII/48 edition.

<sup>69</sup> 'Die Kolonie verabschiedet sich vom Auswärtigen Amt', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 5 May 1906, VIII/18 edition, 1.

<sup>70</sup> 'Der Kolonialdirektor kommt nach Deutsch-Ostafrika', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 2 March 1907, IX/9 edition, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> 'Wir möchten Exzellenz Dernburg für die Schul-Erziehung der europäischen Kinder in der Kolonie interessieren', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 1 June 1907, IX/22 edition, 1.

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considered it a waste of much needed funds – only a dozen or so European children attended the school at that time. Naturally, the settlers' dismay was intense. But with the new colonial secretary, settlers hoped that they would be able to sway the direction of their colony in their favour.

Rechenberg was already exhibiting anti-settler tendencies and the settlers' expectations for Dernburg were thus high. No settler – bar a very few exceptions – had ever had the opportunity to talk to a high-ranking colonial politician. Even fewer had ever met someone whose jurisdiction extended beyond the confines of German East Africa. Dernburg's arrival and subsequent itinerary, however, revealed to the settlers how difficult it would be to win over the secretary for their causes, let alone speak to him personally. Rechenberg's administration had carefully planned Dernburg's visit. Only very few occasions were slotted in for exchanges and engagements with private European colonists.<sup>73</sup> But it would not take long until even those opportunities were further restricted.

When Dernburg unceremoniously announced that he was changing the itinerary of his visit, it was not due to the desire to meet with more "ordinary" Europeans. The opposite was true. The imminent departure of the Sultan of Zanzibar with whom Dernburg hoped to meet at the tail end of his journey forced the colonial secretary to alter his plans so that he could accommodate the sultan earlier. The new plan was adapted even further on Dernburg's insistence to prioritise the study of the interior over visiting the southern coastal parts of the territory where a considerable number of Europeans had recently settled.<sup>74</sup> And while the DOAZ, upon hearing about the new routing, still clung to the hope that Dernburg would change his mind again and spend sufficient time on the southern coast, "for there is something to see," it became clear that the high expectations vested in the new colonial official would not be met.<sup>75</sup>

Instead of concentrating on the southern parts of the colony, Dernburg travelled to the north-western districts. Here, Dernburg became convinced of Rechenberg's plan to develop the territory through the promotion of African production. Unsurprisingly, this was a source of profound irritation to the settlers. Not only had Dernburg skipped much of the European areas,

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<sup>73</sup> Pesek has suggested that the few, disappointing meetings between Dernburg and settlers caused tensions that characterised German colonial policy up until the outbreak of the First World War. See Michael Pesek, 'Praxis Und Repräsentation Kolonialer Herrschaft: Die Reise Des Staatssekretärs Bernhard Dernburg Nach Ostafrika, 1907', in *Die Ankunft Des Anderen: Repräsentationen Sozialer Und Politischer Ordnungen in Empfangszeremonien*, ed. Susann Baller et al., *Eigene Und Fremde Welten 5* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008), 224.

<sup>74</sup> Bongard, *Die Studienreise Des Staatssekretärs Dernburg Nach Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 24–25.

<sup>75</sup> 'Der ursprüngliche Reiseplan des Kolonialsekretärs Exzellenz Dernburg', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 August 1907, IX/40 edition, 3.

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but he had fallen for Rechenberg's ideas. At a meeting with settlers in Tanga, Dernburg refrained from making any significant promises to them.<sup>76</sup> Thus, immediately after Dernburg left the colony on 13 October 1907, the DOAZ wrote about "unsolved questions" regarding the treatment and rights of Africans.<sup>77</sup> They criticised that the colonial secretary had signed a decree that strictly regulated the right of European employers to chastise their African employees. This cast into doubt, the DOAZ wrote, the authority and supremacy of the colony's white population.<sup>78</sup> Shortly after that, the matter was discussed in even gloomier tones. The paper proclaimed that from the administration's focus on indigenous production and the concomitant extension of rights to Africans necessarily followed "the breeding of a further German East African uprising."<sup>79</sup>

Dernburg and Rechenberg ushered in a new colonial course that sought an effective and efficient utilisation of the colonial territory: "I have become convinced," Dernburg wrote after returning back to Germany at the end of 1907 "that the economy of East Africa cannot depend only on the work of plantations (numbering perhaps 50 or 60) and settlers, that this country must develop on the strength of its native products and the experience of its native population."<sup>80</sup> As this approach to colonial development came at the expense of the settler community, they felt betrayed by Dernburg. The high hopes vested in Dernburg and his new colonial office were dashed less than a year into his tenure.

In his justification for his "African-friendly" policy decisions, Dernburg frequently invoked arguments or explanations that originated in foreign colonial contexts. The plan to promote indigenous agriculture with the assistance of European teachers stemmed from the successful implementation of the scheme in British Uganda. Dernburg himself had observed the practice during his visit.<sup>81</sup> This reaffirmed his conviction that, with a targeted effort to "educate the native to work", the colonies could eventually become economically viable. At the

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<sup>76</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 80.

<sup>77</sup> 'Von ungelösten Fragen', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 October 1907, IX/59 edition, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> 'Zur Züchtung des zweiten deutsch-ostafrikanischen Aufstandes', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 November 1907, IX/66 edition, 1.

<sup>80</sup> Bernhard Dernburg to Paul Voith, Letter, 31 December 1907, fol. 15, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/120, Bundesarchiv Berlin; this reference and translation is taken from Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 258; Dernburg's impact on German East Africa cannot be denied, however, Marcia Wright already in 1968 cautioned to treat him as 'the sole fount of creativity.' Instead, Wright argues that 'any close student of the administration in German East Africa will agree that Dernburg gave forceful expression to policies, but to imply that he was more important in initiating them than were Governor von Rechenberg and others of the seasoned administration in Dar es Salaam is to suggest that the tail wagged the dog.' Marcia Wright, 'Local Roots of Policy in German East Africa', *The Journal of African History* 9, no. 04 (October 1968): 622, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700009075>.

<sup>81</sup> John Francis Charles de Salis to Edward Grey, Letter, 12 November 1907, fols 495–497, Foreign Office, African Department, General Correspondence, FO 367/43/37637, National Archives.

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1907 extraordinary general meeting of the DKG that marked the celebration of the society's twenty-fifth anniversary, Dernburg addressed the audience and stated that patience was the most important virtue of a colonial people: "the English, from long experience, calculate a period of 30 years before a colony can become active. For us, these 30 years have not yet passed." But Dernburg showed himself optimistic that recent developments and his vision for the future of the colonies would mean that "we will not have to wait these 30 years in some of our colonies."<sup>82</sup> For the settlers, however, this development went against their interests. They were no longer able to cling to any prospects of Dernburg improving their situation. Worse, he seemed to be aggravating the Europeans' position in the colony by following Rechenberg's plans. The settler press thus treated the remaining years of Dernburg's tenure with criticism, disappointment, and frustration. Dernburg's anti-settler, pro-African, and pro-Indian course seemed to have won out.

And while Dernburg's colonial reforms certainly heralded a new intensity in critical reporting from the settler press, they did not fundamentally alter the settlers' view on the colonial administration. Other colonial dignitaries, too, undertook journeys to German and foreign colonies as fact finding missions, and they, too, were initially lauded and quickly denounced. In June 1910, Dernburg stated that his job had been done and he submitted his letter of resignation to Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg. In many respects, however, Dernburg's promises had not been realised, and his resignation should be seen as a response to increased opposition in the Reichstag.<sup>83</sup>

Dernburg was replaced by Friedrich von Lindequist, Dernburg's undersecretary and the former governor of German Southwest Africa.<sup>84</sup> In the settlement question, Lindequist was the exact opposite of his predecessor. Stemming from his personal experience in German Southwest Africa, Lindequist saw the German territories as destined for European settlement.<sup>85</sup> Unsurprisingly, German East Africa's settlers were ecstatic. They had met Lindequist already

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<sup>82</sup> 'Tagung zu Frankfurt a.M. - Fünfundzwanzigjähriges Jubiläum der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft', *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 14 December 1907, XXIV/50 edition, 516.

<sup>83</sup> Utermark, 'Schwarzer Untertan', 328–29.

<sup>84</sup> See Heinrich Schnee, *Als Letzter Gouverneur in Deutsch-Ostafrika / The Last Governor of German East Africa*, trans. John W. East (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1964), original 105-106, translation 93-94.

<sup>85</sup> 'It is assumed, however, that the development of our colonies is still in the early stages in many cases and that the settlement by whites, which is closely connected with it, has from the very beginning claimed the greatest interest from many colonial-political points of view. [...] Taking such aspects into account, the increase in the white population in East Africa in the year under review is particularly gratifying.' Reichskolonialamt, *Die deutschen Schutzgebiete in Afrika und der Südsee 1910/1911* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1912), iv, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdk/periodical/pageview/2113327>.

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in 1908 and 1909 when the then-undersecretary travelled through the colony.<sup>86</sup> The settlers' appreciation for Lindequist was also strong because it was an open secret that Lindequist and Rechenberg were enemies.<sup>87</sup> Thus, when Lindequist was announced as new colonial secretary, the German East African settlers believed that their situation would improve without too much delay: "that two men with such diametrically opposed views could work together fruitfully in the long run is probably out of the question; and so Dernburg's resignation and Lindequist's appointment necessitate Rechenberg's fall."<sup>88</sup>

Yet, the settlers' hopes came to nothing. Lindequist lasted for a little more than a year before he resigned in protest over the Morocco-Congo Treaty between Germany and France. Lindequist was succeeded by Wilhelm Solf, hitherto the governor of German Samoa. Even though Solf's personal conviction in the settler question was more closely aligned with that of Dernburg, his appointment was received by the settlers with the same high expectations as Lindequist's. Solf, too, travelled to the African continent, wanting to gain personal insights to formulate appropriate colonial policies. During a trip in 1912, Solf travelled from German Southwest Africa to eastern Africa, stopping in South Africa and Portuguese East Africa, before landing in Dar es Salaam.<sup>89</sup> At this occasion, Solf visited not only German East Africa, but also British Uganda and British East Africa. In his personal diary, Solf recorded all he saw in minute detail: he was keen to identify those practices that had proven successful and to micromanage any colonial shortcomings by offering advice from his observations. One such example may be found in Solf's surprise when, upon his arrival in Mombasa, troops of the King's African Rifles carried out their drills barefoot. When questioning the British commander at a dinner about this, Solf was told that boots – such as worn by the Askaris in the German colony – proved more of a hindrance than a benefit to the indigenous soldiers. In his diary, Solf suggested that he would pass on this information to the *Schutztruppe* commanders.<sup>90</sup>

Later, after meeting with various German merchants in Mombasa, Solf remarked on the friendly relations between the different Europeans that he "like[d] these customs of the English better, who live and let live and treat the stranger fairly and justly, even though they do not approve of him in their innermost hearts."<sup>91</sup> Clearly, in the view of the colonial secretary, such

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<sup>86</sup> See the reports in the DOAZ, starting with 'Zur Reise des Unterstaatssekretärs', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 31 December 1908, X/100 edition.

<sup>87</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 119.

<sup>88</sup> 'Dernburgs Glück und Ende', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 11 June 1910, XII/46 edition.

<sup>89</sup> Solf had once briefly been district judge in Daressalam in 1898.

<sup>90</sup> Entry on 01 September 1912, Wilhelm Heinrich Solf, 'Ost-Afrika' (Diary, 1912), fol. 262, Nachlässe und Sammlungen, Nachlässe, N 1053/35, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

<sup>91</sup> Entry 02 September 1912, *ibid.*, fol. 350.

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behaviour was admirable and it was hard to imagine that a similar treatment would be extended to British merchants if they were to expand their operations to Dar es Salaam. Solf also commented on the Uganda Railway, on which he and his delegation travelled. Detailed analyses of the advantages and disadvantages of the British railway line over those in the German colony fill dozens of pages in Solf's diary, and his suggestions on how to construct, route, equip, promote, maintain, or manage the proposed new lines in German East Africa are meticulous.<sup>92</sup>

In Nairobi, Kampala, and Entebbe, Solf discussed settlement schemes and potentials for the eastern African colonies as "white man's countries", contemplating administrative hurdles and possibilities for increasing the European populations in Africa.<sup>93</sup> But Solf was cautious. He, too, believed that East Africa's greatest quality was not as a haven for European settlers. Settlement conditions in the highlands of eastern Africa ought not be over-promised and over-idealised, wrote Solf in his diary. Instead, it was necessary "to have more respect for the white race and to admit the challenges settlement in eastern Africa brought with it."<sup>94</sup> After a private conversation with the Acting Governor of British East Africa, Charles Bowring, on the matter of white settlement and other administrative affairs, Solf concluded "that some of the African issues need an international solution."<sup>95</sup> This was in line with his overall assessment gleaned from the entire journey: "the whole thing again fitted into the colonial framework of the endeavour that was becoming evident everywhere; to help and promote each other and to keep each other in high spirits."<sup>96</sup>

The settler press showed great interest in Solf's visit. Every station and every act of his visit were chronicled. All in all, the verdict on the secretary's trip was positive. Solf was praised

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<sup>92</sup> Entries from 02 September 1912 onwards, *ibid.*, fols 350–413.

<sup>93</sup> Elsewhere on the continent, Solf also discussed administrative matters and their implications for the German colonies. After returning from a trip to West Africa, during which he also visited British Nigeria, Solf wrote to Governor Frederick Lugard: "You have probably gathered from the reports of colonial debates in the Reichstag that on several occasions I have quoted Nigeria in connection with the future development of Cameroon and referred to the wonderful results of your work in West Africa. I think I have benefited very much from the valuable information I received during my interesting stay in your colony and have already put it into practice in several cases of our West African government." Solf also found British strategies for dealing with the conditions in South Africa extremely stimulating and he reported extensively on his experiences in his diary. Solf was so taken with his travels that he sent his Under-Secretary of State, Peter Conze, on African trips to gain inspiration from the other colonial powers. This makes it particularly clear what a great influence foreign, especially the British, colonies had on those of the German Empire. Wilhelm Heinrich Solf to Frederick Lugard, Letter, n.d., *Nachlässe und Sammlungen, Nachlässe, N 1053/41, Bundesarchiv Koblenz*; also Peter J Hampenstall and Paula Tanaka Mochida, *The Lost Man: Wilhelm Solf in German History* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), especially chapter 4; and Colin Newbury, 'Partition, Development, Trusteeship: Colonial Secretary Wilhelm Solf's West African Journey, 1913', in *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, ed. Prosser Gifford and WM Roger Louis (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 455–78.

<sup>94</sup> Solf, 'Ost-Afrika', fol. 368.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, fols 368–369.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 369.

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for his engagement with different settler interest groups and for his wide-reaching itinerary.<sup>97</sup> During a reception in Tanga, shortly before leaving for British East Africa, Solf addressed the gathered administrators, officials, settlers, merchants, and other Europeans. In his speech Solf reminisced about his first stint in the colony and affirmed his conviction that exchanges with other empires were the key to lasting, positive colonial development. Solf also reminded settlers that they should be cognisant of what had already been achieved in German East Africa:

In the 15 years that have passed since I had the honour of serving this *Schutzgebiet* as a civil servant, we have witnessed the emergence of something entirely new. What has happened and been done here was not expected back then. In other words, I have learned something new here. But not only here. I have also seen and learnt many things on the journey from German South West Africa to here, through South Africa and Portuguese East Africa. I only regret that one or the other of you, gentlemen, could not have accompanied me on this journey. I firmly believe that the opportunities for comparison would have given you a new confidence in this beautiful *Schutzgebiet*.<sup>98</sup>

Thunderous applause followed Solf's speech. It had struck the right chord with the settlers, who, after years of perceived anti-settler politics of Dernburg and Rechenberg saw in Solf a new hope for their own advancement and for more commitment by the colonial administration to the wellbeing of overseas settlers.

The settlers' exhilaration was, however, at the same time both remarkable and entirely to be expected given the experiences over the last decade and a half. The positive reception for Solf was remarkable because the previous years were marked by fervent opposition to the colonial administration. Bernhard Perrot's posthumously published work *Die Zukunft Deutsch-Ostafrikas* took issue with the administrative corps – although it had been written in 1903, it was only published and then discussed in the DOAZ in late 1907, a signal that the main tenets of the essay applied not only to the years of its writing. The “ordinary” settler was in a bad situation because of the “the colonial bureaucracy's profound aversion to European settlers in general,” Perrot claimed.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the settlers' view seemed to be that the colonial administrators were power-hungry egoists who cared little for the advancement of the German, or European, or white settler. They only followed their own desires for authority, influence, and career progression and disregarded how such goal might be achieved. To this effect, administrators had almost always acted against the interests of the settlers. The tendency for officials to revel in their own self-importance, to “act out the *bwana mkubwa*”, had detrimental

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<sup>97</sup> See the reporting in the DOAZ from 14 August 1912 (XIV/65) onwards.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Exzellenz Dr. Solf in Tanga’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 4 September 1912, XIV/71 edition, 1.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Die Bürokratie Und Die Behandlung Der Farbigen. Teil I.’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 21 December 1907, IX/78 edition, 1.

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effects on the colony.<sup>100</sup> Prospectors and miners would not come to German East Africa, even if the colony was wealthy in valuable minerals. Instead, according to the DOAZ, they would go to British or Portuguese East Africa, where they and their work would be welcomed and supported, and where their efforts to contribute to the colonial economy would not be questioned by authority-obsessed low-level officials.<sup>101</sup>

On the other hand, the settlers' enthusiasm over Solf's speech was nothing out of the ordinary. Less than one year into the post, Solf's appointment was still treated with great expectations and hope when he visited the German East African colony. After the perceived mismanagement of the Rechenberg and Dernburg regime, the settlers' view seemed to be that Solf could only do better. Indeed, the settler press suddenly was happy to report on the administration in a positive light. In an article from early 1913, the DOAZ relayed the account of two British travellers who had crossed German East Africa on foot in 1910.<sup>102</sup> According to the newspaper, the two adventurers, Frank Melland and Edward Cholmeley, praised the German administration for its "thoroughness in exploring and trying out the developmental possibilities of the colony" which presented "a rather marked contrast to the usual haphazard British methods."<sup>103</sup> While not directly stating as such, the DOAZ's article seems to suggest the paper's approval and agreement; on previous occasions of foreigner's praise, the paper would at least have tried to take a swing at the German administration.<sup>104</sup>

Yet, later in 1913, after the excitement over Solf's appointment had died down, the settler press reverted to the old formula. Solf no longer was the messiah-like saviour of the settler community who would divert huge sums of imperial funds to the colony while at the same time would let the Europeans in the colony do as they pleased. Some articles appeared in the settler press that suggested that British administration was preferable over a German one.

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<sup>100</sup> "Bwana mkubwa" is Swahili for "big man" and referred to somebody - predominantly Europeans - who was in charge or in power.

<sup>101</sup> 'Ein guter berechtigter Wink', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 18 January 1908, X/5 edition, 1.

<sup>102</sup> The crossing of German East Africa was only part of a much larger itinerary. See Frank H. Melland and Edward H. Cholmeley, *Through the Heart of Africa: Being an Account of a Journey on Bicycles and on Foot from Northern Rhodesia, Past the Great Lakes, to Egypt, Undertaken When Proceeding Home on Leave in 1910* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912), <http://archive.org/details/throughheartofa00mell>.

<sup>103</sup> 'Ein Urteil englischer Kolonialbeamten über die Verwaltung Deutsch-Ostafrikas', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 22 January 1913, XV/7 edition, 2; see Melland and Cholmeley, *Through the Heart of Africa*, 101 for the quoted, original passage.

<sup>104</sup> In February 1908, for example, the DOAZ criticised Dernburg's push to improve rights of indigenous workers. While Dernburg claimed that the precarious position of African workers led to mass-emigration to the neighbouring British colonies, the settlers opposed the measures on grounds of racial hierarchies: African labourers should not be given more rights and protections as it would undermine the superiority of the white Europeans. But the settlers also lambasted the colonial administration by suggesting that they did not know the realities on the ground: "Don't they know in Berlin that the 'humanely' treated British East African workers are of no use?" 'Staatssekretär Dernburg und seine treuen schwarzen deutschen Unterthanen', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 22 February 1908, X/14 edition, 1.

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This sparked an intense discussion about national consciousness and patriotism. Again, the settlers' general dissatisfaction was linked back to the administration, and Solf was made the scapegoat.<sup>105</sup> Even the almost non-existence of the tourism industry in German East Africa was attributed to the administration's neglect: while British East Africa was promoted and advertised as a tourist country, such provisions were lacking in the German territory. Not only did the colony thereby forgo significant revenue from hunting licences and other opportunities, but the colony continued to be unknown at home.<sup>106</sup>

Examining the settler press' reactions to the tenures of Dernburg, Lindequist, and Solf reveals that settlers saw each colonial secretary in a similar fashion. Rather than perceiving Dernburg's anti-settler policies as a marked shift from previous and subsequent officeholders, the reporting of the DOAZ and other press organs exhibits a continuous cycle of settler reactions to new administrators. The initial announcement of a new appointment was followed by feelings of excitement, enthusiasm, hope, and elation. Any new administrator was identified as the bringer of improvement to the settlers' situation. Not long after the assumption of duties, however, the new administrator's policies and course seemed not to satisfy the settlers. Hope gave way to disillusionment and incomprehensibility, and then to outright anger, criticism, and hostility. The settlers longed once again for the day when an incumbent would be replaced by a more suitable, more settler-friendly candidate. And thus began anew the cycle that was continuously recurring and did not change with any specific colonial official.

The following sections will provide further insights into these cycles and explain why the settlers' opposition to the administration was constant and not contingent on the personality or political course of any single official. Settlers always felt that their interests were not adequately represented. They resented the lack of specific knowledge of local colonial conditions by officials in metropolitan Germany. But they were also frustrated by the governor's ambiguous position; essentially powerless in wider colonial affairs, the governor nonetheless held supreme power in the colony. To maintain this power within the colony, the administration relied on indigenous collaborators, which furthermore infuriated the settlers. Indigenous collaborators blurred the lines of the otherwise seemingly so clearly define racial hierarchies. Settlers therefore often believed themselves in a position in which their standing,

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<sup>105</sup> 'Kolonie und Reichstag'.

<sup>106</sup> The British East African colonial administration allegedly earned up to one million Reichsmark per year from issuing hunting licences alone. See Oskar Karstedt, 'Deutsch-Ostafrika als Touristenland', *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 28 March 1914, XXXI/31 edition, 1–2; see also 'Deutsch-Ostafrika als Touristenland', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 29 April 1914, XVI/35 edition, 2.

representation, and power were impugned and undermined. The outlet for their frustrations was the settler press, and their scapegoat was the administration.

### Section IV: The administration's ignorance

The settlers' dissatisfaction with the German East African government stemmed from the complex circumstances in which the administration found itself. Wedged firmly between the demands of settlers for increased representation and autonomy, and a colonial office that was subordinated to the German government and Reichstag, the German East African colonial administration was frequently the subject of disregard or criticism. While policymakers in Berlin were quick at ignoring requests from the colonies, the settler press was unrestrained in lashing out against governors or colonial officials who were not "delivering the goods".

As the semi-official mouthpiece of the settlers, the DOAZ was the most fervent narrator of colonial lamentations in German East Africa. In 1901, the paper despairingly stated that "no other colony is the subject of such erroneous judgments as German East Africa."<sup>107</sup> Indeed, complaints over misrepresentations, unawareness, and even tactlessness, were a staple of the settler press. A main target of scapegoating attempts were other news outlets in mainland Germany which were attacked for their role in creating a supposedly false image of the colony among Germans. In an aptly-titled article, the DOAZ examined the importance of accurate and correct representation of the colony in Germany.<sup>108</sup> Despite acknowledging improvements in reporting over the preceding years – which, "after decades of disinterest" might already have been a cause for jubilation – the DOAZ remained unimpressed, calling for the exclusion from debates of anyone who had never been to the colonies themselves.<sup>109</sup> It was, according to the newspaper, of utmost importance for the sustainable and long-lived development of the colony that only those who could speak from first-hand experience – even better, only those who were physically present and actively engaged in the colony – were to publish opinions and reports for dissemination by a wider audience. But since this was entirely impracticable, the DOAZ suggested an alternative. To improve the legitimacy and image of the colony among the general public a colonial press office should be created. This office would have access to all reports sent by local officials to Berlin, would extract pertinent and appropriate information, and

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<sup>107</sup> 'Wie steht es um unsere Kolonie?', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 2 November 1901, III/43 edition, 1.

<sup>108</sup> 'Die Presse ein Hauptfaktor für die Entwicklung unserer Kolonie', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 April 1907, IX/17 edition, 1.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

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distribute it to German and international news outlets.<sup>110</sup> To reduce the strain on the new office, the DOAZ suggested that the governor, in conjunction with the local press, would “pre-sift” the material.<sup>111</sup> Unsurprisingly, the proposal was not picked up and shortly afterwards the DOAZ complained again about misrepresentations of the colony in the German press, this time accusing the *Kolonialpolitische Korrespondenz* of “disrupting the harmony between the individual colonial sectors.”<sup>112</sup>

Yet it was not only the metropolitan press that was attacked for a lack of colonial understanding. Even those who had spent time in eastern Africa came under fire when their reports contradicted the settler press’ idealised image of the colony. Scholars, academics, journalists, and others who went to the colony to study local conditions were vilified if their accounts were not positive enough. A lack of colonial “successes” was thus attributed to a “colonial pessimism” that pervaded German society. This in turn had been generated by those reports, essays, opinions, and papers that repeatedly and continuously questioned the viability of the colonial project. For the DOAZ, this created a vicious circle:

When one of our German professors [...] traverses the territory in hasty marches, and when it then finds no grace before his eyes, then he sits down at his desk, describes everything in the blackest of colours and declares to his listening compatriots at home that he is in despair about the future of the colony. Immediately, all the pessimists, even those who have never seen Africa with their own eyes, take his side, and the colony itself is damaged in the most serious way. Parliament does not approve or is irresponsibly late in approving the means to open up the country through railroad construction and to make it accessible to civilisation. Big capital becomes suspicious, our financiers declare all colonial ventures “rotten” and seal their pockets even tighter than before.<sup>113</sup>

Negative characterisations of the colony were thus treated with a mixture of doom-and-gloom scenarios, ridicule, and outright anger. Still in 1914, the DOAZ printed a letter that criticised a recently published book on the colonies, alleging that the description of Dar es Salaam was wrong and thus misleading the German public and undermining the colonial effort.<sup>114</sup>

Yet, while the ignorance of German news outlets was perceived as perhaps most threatening to creating pro-colonial sentiments among the wider German population and to depicting the colony as worthy of public support, more aggravating still to the settlers was the

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Coincidentally, this would also allow the DOAZ access to all official reports and messages so that they could more easily be relayed to the local European populations.

<sup>112</sup> ‘Sensationslust der Heimatpresse’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 2 May 1908, X/32 edition, 1.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Kolonialer Pessimismus’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 20 July 1901, III/28 edition, 1.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Wie das deutsche Volk über die Verhältnisse in unseren Schutzgebieten unterrichtet wird’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 May 1914, XVI/43 edition, 3.

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lack of colonial knowledge in the halls of politics in Berlin. When the DOAZ discussed the settlers' hope for parliamentary representation – one non-voting delegate in the budget commission – their anger was directed at the *Reichstag*'s stalling and patronising attitude: “particularly depressing is the disdainful way in which expressions of opinion by experienced colonial Germans are shrugged off and how even the appointed representatives of the colonial government are often enough dismissed.”<sup>115</sup> For those Germans resident in the east African colony, it seemed as if parliament was not interested in the wellbeing of those citizens for which it was immediately responsible.

Few members of parliament, policymakers, or administrators had visited the colony over the course of its existence and even fewer had come to German East Africa in an official capacity. Over the years, some individual delegates travelled to Africa for pleasure, engaging in hunting expeditions in the east African colony. But those individuals never stayed long enough to immerse themselves in the questions and concerns of the European population or in any administrative aspects of the territory. The 1905 visit to the colony by the second Vice President of the *Reichstag*, Hermann Paasche, was brief and hardly sufficient to get a “feeling” for the local conditions. The outbreak of the Maji Maji War further meant that Paasche's visit was inopportune: “as luck would have it, the visit takes place at a time when parts of German East Africa do not show their true colours and when the otherwise quiet and peaceful work of the colonists is interrupted by riots and the clatter of weapons,” wrote the DOAZ.<sup>116</sup>

A dedicated effort to study local conditions had been undertaken only once, when in 1906 a group of seven *Reichstag* delegates toured German East Africa. The mission was led by the colonial advocate Otto Arendt, a delegate to the *Reichstag* of the Free Conservative Party, and otherwise included a cross-party and geographically diverse delegation. Travellers of the German Conservative Party were Ludwig von Massow-Parnehen – whose daughter Magdalene had married Tom von Prince, a notorious officer of the *Schutztruppe*, who had participated in the violent suppression of the Abushiri Revolt and the defeat of Mkwawa, and with whom she now lived on a plantation in the Usambara highlands – and Hermann Dietrich, a solicitor from Potsdam. Heinrich Brunstermann was a member of the Free Conservative Party, and Paul Lehmann belonged to the National Liberal Party. Lastly, Richard Kalkhof and Wilhelm Schwarze were delegates for the *Zentrum*.

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<sup>115</sup> ‘Kolonie und Reichstag’, 1.

<sup>116</sup> ‘Der Vicepräsident des Deutschen Reichstags in Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 September 1905, VII/37 edition, 1; see also Hermann Paasche, *Deutsch-Ostafrika: Wirtschaftliche Studien*, 2nd ed. (Bremen: Outlook, 2011, originally 1913).

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The purpose of the journey was to study the colonial economic conditions to render more accurate decisions and verdicts after having returned to the Reichstag. But, as Arendt noted in his account of the trip, the delegates sincerely hoped that their journey would set an example and that colonial fact-finding missions would become annually recurring events.<sup>117</sup> With financial support from the DKG, free travel arrangements provided by the *Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie* (German East Africa Line, DOAL), and great anticipation by the settlers, the delegation arrived in Dar es Salaam on 29 July 1906. For roughly the next three months the group toured the colony. They visited the coastal urban centres of Dar es Salaam, Kilwa, Lindi, Bagamoyo, Saadani, and Tanga, but also travelled inland along the railway lines. The journey was complemented by excursions to Zanzibar and to British East Africa. In the British colony, the party travelled from Mombasa to Lake Victoria on the Uganda Railway Line, crossing the lake by boat to arrive in Mwanza, the northern-most town of German East Africa.

A particular highlight, as Lehmann recounted, was the visit to the plantations of the Usambara highlands. Lehmann's detailed descriptions of the plantation economy and the cultivation of sisal, rubber, and coffee, illustrate the degree to which the delegation was invested in acquiring colonial-economic knowledge. Regarding the untapped potential of the forestry industry, Lehmann wrote after his return to Germany, "on the Amani plantations lay the felled giants, which in Germany would constitute a small fortune, useless, at best a hindrance to cultivation. No one removes them, no one can remove them. One's heart bleeds at such short-sightedness."<sup>118</sup> To Lehmann and his fellow journeymen, this was just one example of the lacking provisions for entrepreneurs and the hesitancy by industrialists to exploit the natural wealth and potential of the German East African colony.

The appointment of Rechenberg as new governor in 1906, the promotion of Dernburg to director of the AAKA in the same year, and the reformation of Dernburg's agency into the RKA in 1907, all shifted direction towards more economic development of the overseas territories. Yet, Arendt and the other delegation members continued to lobby for pro-colonial, pro-settler policies, invoking their experience in the colony as evidence of their colonial expertise. In the debates about the budget for the German East African colony, Wilhelm Schwarze painted an increasingly rosy picture:

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<sup>117</sup> Otto Arendt published his account originally in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, but the DOAZ and other outlets printed his remarks, too. See Otto Arendt, 'Bericht über die Studienreise der Reichstagsabgeordneten nach Deutsch-Ostafrika', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 1 September 1906, VIII/35 edition, 5–6 and the following editions.

<sup>118</sup> Paul Lehmann, 'Unterm Äquator', *Usambara Post*, 1906, V/58 edition, fols 85–86, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Expeditionen, Inspektionen und Reisen, R 1001/298, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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Gentlemen, a number of years ago I described German East Africa as the pearl of the German colonies. I found during my trip there that East Africa is indeed a pearl, and I also believe that developments since that time prove again that I was correct in my judgement at the time. As far as financial development is concerned, everything is improving there. In terms of the budget, revenue is improving; trade is improving; customs revenue is increasing enormously. The hut tax is increasing and the railway revenues – the best factor for the economic development of a country – are also increasing considerably, so that one can say: the development in this respect is very good, and if it continues in this way, we will have reached the point where revenues and expenditures are in balance.<sup>119</sup>

Heinrich Brunstermann, speaking directly after Schwarze, too began his remarks by stating that he had seen and experienced the German East African local conditions first-hand and that this experience had fundamentally altered his appreciation of colonial matters and those Germans living the colonial life.<sup>120</sup>

The ground-breaking nature of the journey of Arendt and his colleagues briefly manifested itself also among the public. Notable was the commencement of all-inclusive guided tours for wealthy individuals. Offered by the *Hamburg-Amerika-Linie*, these trips would bring up to fifteen tourists to eastern Africa. The package deal included travel to and from eastern Africa aboard specially chartered steamers, thirty-five nights in the major cities in the German colony, and excursions to Zanzibar and British East Africa. For the settler press, this was a hopeful development, allowing “colonial friends the opportunity to see the East African colony with their own eyes [and] to gather interest in the new Germany overseas, which unfortunately is still an ‘unknown country’ for many today.”<sup>121</sup>

Yet, despite the efforts to make the colony more accessible to policymakers and private individuals, the settler population in German East Africa remained aggrieved over what they perceived as administrative restrictions and side-lining of their interests. Especially in the years after Maji Maji, settlers’ “primary political motivation was fear, both for their interests and for their physical security.”<sup>122</sup> In early 1910, Rechenberg advocated reducing the number of European members of the *Schutztruppe* for cost saving reasons. The settlers were furious, and the settler press characterised the governor as “displaying autocratic tendencies.”<sup>123</sup> In an

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<sup>119</sup> Wilhelm Schwarze, ‘Second Hearing Regarding the Budget for the Colonies, Specifically for German East Africa’ (1908), 4137.

<sup>120</sup> Heinrich Brunstermann, ‘Second Hearing Regarding the Budget for the Colonies, Specifically for German East Africa’ (1908).

<sup>121</sup> ‘Gesellschaftsreisen zum Besuche der deutschostafrikanischen Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 30 March 1907, IX/13 edition, 2.

<sup>122</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 82.

<sup>123</sup> ‘Die Sicherheit der Kolonie bedroht?’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 8 January 1910, XII/2 edition; ‘Generalissimus von Rechenberg. Teil I.’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 29 January 1910, XII/7 & 8 edition parts II and III in the following editions.

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environment in which rebellion by the indigenous populations was widely considered a possibility, and in which memories of Europeans killed by Africans were fresh, downsizing the *Schutztruppe* meant jeopardising the settlers' safety. Rechenberg's insistence on African agriculture and Indian trade was one thing, but openly threatening the European populations was another offence altogether.

As important to the settlers, however, if not more so, was the sense that the administration did not take them seriously or that it treated them condescendingly. One case that exemplifies the settlers' perception of stubbornness of the German East African administration is relayed by the director of a sawmill in Ambangulu in the Usambara mountains, Eugen Wiese.<sup>124</sup> According to an official complaint that Wiese sent to the colonial government, difficulties arose over the construction of a sanatorium near the sawmill in 1902-03. To develop the area, the government had requisitioned a private road that linked the sawmill to wider transport links and had cost the sawmill a significant amount of money. To make up for investment, the government offered road maintenance at no cost. Additionally, the government signed a contract to buy construction material from the Ambangulu sawmill for the sanatorium and for other building projects in the area at a predetermined price. Just a few months later the construction project went over budget, and the government sought to renegotiate the supply conditions. But Wiese remained firm and insisted that the agreed price was contractually binding.

As the dispute dragged on, the government let the access road fall into disrepair and blocked any maintenance efforts by the sawmill, virtually cutting it off from the colony's market. Wiese alleged this was out of spite, also because the government then attempted to source the wooden construction material from Zanzibar. Not only would this have bypassed and ignored other European businesses within the colony, but transport costs and the associated delays would also have meant that the costs for the whole undertaking were to rise about fifty percent.<sup>125</sup> The government meanwhile insisted that the road in question was not built on private land and therefore was public property, that the arrangement regarding construction materials

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<sup>124</sup> Wiese was a partner in the company Wilkins & Wiese.

<sup>125</sup> Eugen Wiese to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 'Unterstützung deutscher industrieller Unternehmen durch das Gouvernement in Deutsch-Ostafrika', Letter, 15 November 1903, fols 3-8, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/814, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

in fact did not constitute a binding contract, and that the material provided was of bad quality.<sup>126</sup> After a long back-and-forth the two parties reached a settlement.<sup>127</sup>

To improve government-settler relations, the colonial office in Berlin and the German East African administration sought to make certain concessions; however, these did little in terms of placating the settler community. Shortly after taking control of colonial affairs, Dernburg had promised to reform the colonial administration by appointing settlers and especially merchants to administrative positions. But the settlers complained that this was not enough. In August 1909, the DOAZ published the first half of a lengthy article that discussed the composition and role of the colonial administration and evaluated what this meant for the prospects of settlers' political participation. Acknowledging that a few merchants had been appointed to the colonial offices in Berlin and Dar es Salaam, the paper continued to clarify that those were not serving in any meaningful capacity and were relegated to the lower and less important levels. This had the "unfortunate but predictable" consequence that "nothing else was to be expected of them but to be absorbed into the bureaucratism sanctified by tradition."<sup>128</sup> In other words, the belief that Dernburg would reform the colonial service to benefit settlers was mistaken. The few settlers that were co-opted into the administration were buried with menial tasks and had no influence on the German East African settlers' situation. Many settlers thus continued to feel undervalued and considered their treatment at the hands of the administration as patronising.

### Section V: Reliance on indigenous intermediaries

The settlers' frustrations with the administration also stemmed from the necessity to employ indigenous intermediaries. At the heart of the matter was the *Eingeborenenfrage* ("native" question). This was a problem with which every colonial power wrestled. One view held that "the first duty of the administration is [...] to the natives, and it is essential that their rights to the soil, wherever they can beneficially use it, must be preserved."<sup>129</sup> But not all saw a duty to "uplift" Africans as the defining feature of colonial policymaking. For others the issue was, at

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<sup>126</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 'Angelegenheit betreffend Holzlieferung für den Bau des Sanatoriums in Wugiri', Letter, 6 January 1904, fols 11–14, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/814, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>127</sup> Lucan, 'Zivilprozesssache Firma Wilkins & Wiese gegen den Kaiserlichen Gouverneur von Deutsch-Ostafrika' (Bezirksgericht Daressalam, 3 August 1904), fol. 70, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/814, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>128</sup> 'Von der deutsch-ostafrikanischen Verwaltung. Teil I.', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 11 August 1909, XI/63 edition, 1, part II in the following edition.

<sup>129</sup> Cana, 'German East Africa and Its Future', 130.

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a basic level, a question of security for the European populations. How could a European minority rule over an African majority when for every European there were one and a half thousand Africans? Navigating the already contrary interests of motherland and colony in this instance also had to be balanced against whatever was feasible regarding the indigenous populations: “the ‘governability’ [*Regierbarkeit*] of the colonised was a constantly renegotiated question of power.”<sup>130</sup> As we have seen earlier, Maji Maji was one of the catalysts for a shift in German policy vis-à-vis the “native question”. The post-war change regarding indigenous policy by the German administration was in part a response to African initiative. The war brought existential threats directly to the colonisers, illustrating to them the precariousness of their rule.<sup>131</sup> Kinjikitile Ngwale and other leaders of the resistance sought to rid themselves of the Germans once and for all: “German rule was no rule. It was impossible to wait and live under such torturous rule.”<sup>132</sup>

Dernburg and Rechenberg recognised the necessity to improve relations with the indigenous populations if Germans wanted to remain in East Africa. But earlier administrations had also considered methods to safely develop and keep control over the territory. On the one hand, the German East African administration employed and relied on indigenous collaborators who would extend state control directly to the African and other non-European populations. Colonial expansion was thus “at times a European-African joint venture.”<sup>133</sup> And while “Africans may not have had influence on the structures of the colonial state,” as intermediaries and government agents, they “had a great influence on its practices.”<sup>134</sup>

The colonial territory was divided into twenty-two districts, which, in turn, were subdivided into *Akidate*. These were administered by a combination of African *Majumbe* – often tribal chiefs or elders – and largely Arab *Akidas*. To some extent, the *Akida* system was a remnant of prior Arab rule; the Germans co-opted the system and moulded it to their needs.<sup>135</sup> In most cases, already established *Akidas* were simply absorbed into the German colonial administration, though sometimes certain sultans or other influential leaders were appointed as *Akida* to areas where no suitable *Jumbe* was available. The *Akidas* were educated and directly

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<sup>130</sup> Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 29.

<sup>131</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 5.

<sup>132</sup> From interviews with Mzee Kibilange Upundu, 22 October, 1968, Nandete, Matumbi, and Mzee Nduli Njimbwi, 23 October, 1967, Kipatimu, Matumbi. Quoted in Gwassa, ‘Kinjikitile’, 214.

<sup>133</sup> Maderspacher, ‘European Colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Germans, French, and British in Cameroon, 1884-1939’, 47.

<sup>134</sup> Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 300.

<sup>135</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 180; A. H. J. Prins, *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast*, vol. 12 (London: Routledge, 2019), 96.

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paid by the colonial government. Most were concentrated in the coastal districts.<sup>136</sup> Subordinate to the *Akidas* were the *Majumbe*, who operated at the lowest level of the colonial system. In certain areas a *Liwali* might occupy a further position in-between *Akida* and *Jumbe*. The *Jumbe* position was not remunerated by the German administration, the title purely honorary. The *Majumbe* were the direct link between the African populations and the government. While most of the *Majumbe* carried a great extent of legitimacy with the African populations over which they ruled – often they had been the traditional leader for decades – some were installed, similarly as the *Akidas*, by the German rulers. Quick to play out competing leaders against each other, the Germans could choose more or less freely which representative to give the *Jumbe* authority, depending on whomever they saw as most obedient. The system was thus characterised by an increasing level of foreign authority the further one progressed along the administrative hierarchy. The *Majumbe* were often locals and the *Akidas* often were non-locals.

To exert some direct control over the *Majumbe* and *Akidas*, the German administrators frequently held *Jumbentage* (*Majumbe* days) – large public gatherings to which the government invited local *Majumbe* and *Akidas* to discuss colonial policy and to inform them about new directives, to remind them of their responsibilities – especially tax collection – or to assess an individual's fitness to carry out the *Jumbe* tasks. Over 400 *Majumbe* and other local leaders came together for the event in June 1900, discussing a range of topics from slavery to street cleaning, from crop cultivation to taxes. The *Jumbentage* were the ideal opportunity for the German colonisers to introduce and spread bureaucracy and administrative processes to a wide African audience, and, at the same time, to attempt to “show the representatives of the indigenous populations the power and the capacity for work and creativity of the European population for imitation, and to take away their fear of the ‘white people’.”<sup>137</sup> In this way, the *Jumbentage* were not only an official bureaucratic gathering, but furthermore served both as an opportunity to remind African and Arab leaders of their position in the administrative hierarchy, and to identify areas of potential concern.<sup>138</sup>

Undoubtedly, for the administration, the system had many advantages and the Germans were able to extend some form of colonial rule over the entire territory without posting

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<sup>136</sup> The *Akida* system might be considered the ideal-typical manifestation of the indirect rule system. However, as Bald and others have described, the system of colonial rule in German East Africa was neither direct nor indirect, as those systems employed by the French and British empires. The German system could not be clearly classified. Detlef Bald, ‘Afrikanischer Kampf gegen koloniale Herrschaft: Der Maji-Maji-Aufstand in Ostafrika’, *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 19, no. 1 (1 June 1976): 25, <https://doi.org/10.1524/mgzs.1976.19.1.23>.

<sup>137</sup> ‘Der Jumben-Tag in Daressalam’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 28 July 1900, II/29 edition, 1.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Die Jumbentage in Daressalam’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 7 December 1901, III/48 edition; ‘Die Jumbentage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 14 June 1902, IV/24 edition; ‘Jumbentage in Lindi’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 September 1902, IV/39 edition.

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European officials to every village. The reliance on intermediaries allowed the colonial state to operate and control virtually the entirety of the colony, with *Majumbe* and *Akidas* assuming a range of responsibilities from collecting taxes to providing labour for European plantations and infrastructure projects. At the same time, the system had its shortcomings. The institution of foreign *Majumbe* and Arab *Akidas* was seen by many locals as an injustice. In many ways, the outbreak of the Maji Maji War was a reaction to the imposition of the system.<sup>139</sup> The appointment of foreign Arab *Akidas* put “excessive pressures” on many Africans.<sup>140</sup> Unsurprisingly, some of the earliest targets of the Maji Maji fighters were thus facilities and institutions of the government that were administered by foreign *Akidas*.<sup>141</sup> And, unsurprisingly, too, some of the earliest leaders of the rebellion were local *Majumbe*.<sup>142</sup>

Governor Götzen became aware of the problems surrounding the *Akida* system even before the outbreak of war, though he recognised that the intermediary was a “necessary evil”. High costs and unavailability of sufficiently trained, European administrative personnel left no other option but to rely on loyal *Akidas*. In the end it was the *Akidas*’ responsibility to deal with opposed and unfriendly populations, at least so claimed the government. Nevertheless, Götzen eventually suggested a reformation of the system to replace the *Akidas* with trained officials emanating from the local populations.<sup>143</sup> However, with the outbreak of the war, the system was scrapped altogether, replacing *Akidas* with European administrators.<sup>144</sup> Another reversal was then undertaken by Governor Rechenberg, mere months after his arrival in German East Africa. While the supplanting of Arab *Akidas* with educated *Majumbe* was deemed “an almost noble” long-term goal, the financial realities suggested to Rechenberg that for the time being, *Akidas* were necessary.<sup>145</sup> The system then remained in place largely unchanged, so that after the

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<sup>139</sup> Bald, ‘Afrikanischer Kampf gegen koloniale Herrschaft’, 24–31; see also Becker and Beez, *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg*; Becker, ‘Traders, “Big Men” and Prophets’; Iliffe, ‘The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion’; Karl-Martin Seeberg, *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg gegen die Deutsche Kolonialherrschaft: Historische Ursprünge nationaler Identität in Tansania* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989).

<sup>140</sup> Bald, ‘Afrikanischer Kampf gegen koloniale Herrschaft’, 26.

<sup>141</sup> Becker, ‘Traders, “Big Men” and Prophets’, 17.

<sup>142</sup> See footnote 31 in Bald, ‘Afrikanischer Kampf gegen koloniale Herrschaft’, 27.

<sup>143</sup> See footnote 3 in Iliffe, *German Rule*, 181.

<sup>144</sup> ‘Sitzung des Gouvernementsrats beim Gouvernement von Deutsch-Ostafrika’, 18 May 1906, fols 96–162, here 118f., Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/812, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>145</sup> ‘Denkschrift über die Entwicklung der deutschen Schutzgebiete in Afrika und der Südsee, Berichtsjahr 1906/07’, Annual report (Berlin: Reichstag, 30 January 1908), [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k12\\_bsb00002855\\_00000.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k12_bsb00002855_00000.html); see also Iliffe, *German Rule*, 182.

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takeover of the colony by the British, Charles Dundas, the acting administrator, remarked that “the Akida system has many good points.”<sup>146</sup>

One of the most famous Arab collaborators was Soliman bin Nassor al-Lemki, who at times was *Liwali* of Pangani, Bagamoyo, and finally of Dar es Salaam.<sup>147</sup> During the Abushiri Revolt, Soliman bin Nassor was sent to Bagamoyo by Zanzibar's Sultan Khalifah bin Said. Internal disputes among the Arab business classes had broken out and the Sultan worried that his grip on power was diminishing. Bin Nassor, young but already influential from his time as *Liwali* of Pangani, went to Bagamoyo to consult with local Arab businessmen. These complained to bin Nassor that the Abushiri Revolt had destroyed their possessions, plantations, and investments, and that they were at a great disadvantage over the slavery question compared to their peers on Zanzibar.<sup>148</sup> As a consequence, the Arabs of Bagamoyo feared that they were unable to recover from the grave effects of the Revolt. Bin Nassor promised to consult with the Germans and wrote a draft proclamation which he handed to the chief of station in Bagamoyo.

This almost resulted in a diplomatic crisis between the British and German empires. In early September 1890, the British consul on Zanzibar received a letter containing a proclamation written in Arabic authorising “everybody who has got land in Bagamoyo and Shenzi to recover and retain their slaves, and everybody who possesses slaves, has permission to sell his slaves to the people of Bagamoyo.”<sup>149</sup> Consul Charles Euan-Smith informed the German consul on Zanzibar, Gustav Michahelles, that he had received note that the proclamation had been affixed to the building of the German administration in Bagamoyo and bore an official signature. Euan-Smith continued to explain that the news of the proclamation had sent shockwaves through Zanzibar’s business circles, and that Arab businessmen were now preparing to move their slaves to the East African coast for sale in Bagamoyo. In light of the slavery question “in which England is so deeply interested,” Euan-Smith continued, “I am

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<sup>146</sup> Charles Dundas, ‘Die Deutsche Verwaltung in Ostafrika. Bericht Eines Englischen Kolonialbeamten’ (Report, 1919), 63–64, *Zeitzeugnisse*, ZSG 158/38, Bundesarchiv Koblenz; see also Donald Cameron, ‘Native Administration in Tanganyika and Nigeria’, *Journal of the Royal African Society* 36, no. 145 (1937): 3–29.

<sup>147</sup> NB: throughout the sources and literature, the name of Soliman bin Nassor al-Lemki is spelled with small differences. *Liwali*, were a further administrative position, and might be described as a mayor for the non-European populations. *Liwali* were mostly Arab, paid directly by the government, and served as consultants and advisors on customary law and traditions for the administration.

<sup>148</sup> The British had forced the Sultan of Zanzibar to abolish the slave trade. The Sultan’s decree did not extend to the mainland, however. Paradoxically, however, in practice the situation was in reverse. The merchants claimed that no one policed slave trading operations on Zanzibar, whereas in Bagamoyo no effort was spared to prohibit the slave trade.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Translation of a Proclamation’, 6 September 1890, fol. 25, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Sklavensachen, R 1001/1003, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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apprehensive that grave results may follow should Arabs be allowed to retain their present belief that the decree was issued, or that the sale of slaves is allowed under German authority.”<sup>150</sup>

In his response, Michahelles expressed surprise: no such proclamation had been authorised by the German administration and neither had it been officially signed nor affixed to the administration’s building. Michahelles replied that the information circulating on Zanzibar was “a malicious propagation of untruthful facts” and that he wished to be told who was responsible for spreading the lies.<sup>151</sup> After a lengthy back-and-forth between Michahelles and Euan-Smith, which was further escalated to officials in Berlin and London, the issue was resolved. The Germans accepted that Euan-Smith had made sufficient assurances and that he had thoroughly repudiated the validity of the proclamation among Zanzibari Arabs. Soliman bin Nassor meanwhile assured the consuls that he had drafted the proclamation but not published it, and the German chief of station, too, expressed that he had received the proclamation but simply filed it away without pursuing the matter further.<sup>152</sup>

In the meantime, bin Nassor had become a close friend to Hermann von Wissmann and acted as his agent and contact person.<sup>153</sup> Uniting the wealthy and powerful Arab and Swahili elites behind him in a “Peace Party”, bin Nassor began working on supporting the Germans, to whom the embarrassment of having been expelled from the East African coast during the Abushiri Revolt was a thorn in the side. Soliman bin Nassor knew how to tap into the confusions around the Revolt, and the Germans, eager to regain their position in eastern Africa, agreed to bin Nassor’s stipulations.<sup>154</sup> Bin Nassor’s collaboration with the Germans led some of his compatriots to characterise him as “more German than the Germans themselves.”<sup>155</sup> Regarding the Bagamoyo proclamation, Euan-Smith acknowledged that bin Nassor’s reverence from both Arabs and Germans meant that, “anything emanating from Suliman bin Nassur [*sic*], whether in Bagamoyo or elsewhere, would inevitably have the same effect in the eyes of the Arabs as if it had been signed and sealed by the Imperial Commissioner himself.”<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Charles Euan-Smith to Gustav Michahelles, Letter, 13 September 1890, fols 23–24, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Sklavensachen, R 1001/1003, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>151</sup> Gustav Michahelles to Charles Euan-Smith, Letter, 18 September 1890, fols 26–27, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Sklavensachen, R 1001/1003, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>152</sup> ‘Vermischtes - Ostafrika’, *Deutscher Reichs-Anzeiger*, 1890, 254 edition, fol. 47, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Sklavensachen, R 1001/1003, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>153</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 208.

<sup>154</sup> Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1995), 7.

<sup>155</sup> Charles Euan-Smith to Marquis of Salisbury, Letter, 25 September 1890, fols 258–269, here 263, Foreign Office, Slave Trade Department, FO 84/2064, National Archives.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, fols 263–264.

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The historian Jonathon Glassman has suggested that bin Nassor's handling of the Bagamoyo situation was the "beginning [of] a brilliant career of collaboration that would continue for over twenty years."<sup>157</sup> As a shrewd entrepreneur, Soliman bin Nassor amassed wealth and political influence over the decades, becoming one of the largest landowners on the East African coast and an important sugar planter.<sup>158</sup> Though he retired from his *Liwali* post over disputes with the administration in 1903, his collaboration with the German colonisers brought him significant fame and respect. One of the main roads of Dar es Salaam bore his name, and he commissioned the construction of two market halls in the city at a cost of circa 20,000 rupees.<sup>159</sup> He also owned a similar facility in Tanga.<sup>160</sup> Soliman bin Nassor charged fees for selling products in the covered markets and was thus able to make a healthy profit off his investment, which the German administration estimated at 7,500-8,000 rupees annually.<sup>161</sup> Eager to partake in the spoils, the German East African government eventually pressured bin Nassor into selling the *Markthallen* (covered market building) in Dar es Salaam to the administration at a price of 25,000 rupees.<sup>162</sup>

Soliman bin Nassor's fame was not only constrained to German East Africa. In 1891, bin Nassor travelled to Europe and was received by Emperor Wilhelm II. A few years later, in 1899, he again visited Europe and again was received in audience by the emperor. This time he was decorated with the Order of the Red Eagle.<sup>163</sup> After touring Germany – he visited Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, Dresden, Munich, and Hamburg, among other places – bin Nassor continued his journey to London, exclaiming that he had learned a lot during his stay, and that he was keen to reorganise his administration according to the German model. The DOAZ took this statement with a mixture of amusement and loathing:

We are very much looking forward to the forthcoming blessed activity of Mr Soliman bin Nassor in Dar es Salaam; indeed, we would not have thought it possible that in the short time of his stay in Germany this man would succeed in gaining the confidence of

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<sup>157</sup> Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*, 7.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>159</sup> Lusugga Kironde, 'The Evolution of the Land Use Structure of Dar Es Salaam 1890-1990: A Study in the Effects of Land Policy' (PhD Dissertation, Nairobi, University of Nairobi, 1994), 137.

<sup>160</sup> 'Aus unserer Kolonie. Tanga.', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 20 May 1908, X/37 edition, 2.

<sup>161</sup> Eduard von Liebert to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, Letter, 21 July 1899, fols 116–117, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/796, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>162</sup> See the sources in BArch R1001/796, for example Soliman bin Nassor to Wilhelm von Natzmer, Letter, 21 June 1899, fols 202–203, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/796, Bundesarchiv Berlin; 'Kaufvertrag Markthalle' (Kaiserliches Bezirksgericht Daressalam, 13 July 1899), fol. 211, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/796, Bundesarchiv Berlin; See also 'Unsere Markthalle', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 7 April 1900, II/13 edition.

<sup>163</sup> 'Politische Übersicht', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 21 October 1899, I/34 edition, 1.

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the relevant circles to such an extent that he would be entrusted with the thorough reorganisation of the administrative branches in our East African colony?!<sup>164</sup>

Over the next years, bin Nassor continued to wield influence in German East African politics, but also continued to gain fame abroad. On one occasion, bin Nassor accused a subordinate of stealing 60,000 francs from him. An international warrant was issued shortly after the accused, a man named Said ben Joub, was spotted in Karlsbad in Bohemia, where he was lavishly spending his – or rather, bin Nassor’s – fortunes. Before the arrest could be made, however, ben Joub vanished.<sup>165</sup>

From the mid-1900s, bin Nassor established friendly relations with Governor von Rechenberg. On various occasions bin Nassor invited Rechenberg to his home for opulent receptions, praising the accomplishments of the administration.<sup>166</sup> Bin Nassor approved especially of the new railway lines, relaying the commendations of “all circles of the natives, regardless of tribe.”<sup>167</sup> Even in 1913, the DOAZ still reported on bin Nassor’s whereabouts; in this case announcing the return of the former *Liwali* from a trip around the world.<sup>168</sup>

Soliman bin Nassor’s position as *Liwali* carried significant influence with the Arab and African populations and certainly benefitted the German administration and their control of the colony. Bin Nassor recognised both the practical and symbolic dimensions of his power, seeking to expand his influence both among Dar es Salaam’s population and among the administration.<sup>169</sup> For example, by financing the construction of a new Mosque in 1892, bin Nassor directly contributed to the improvement of the religious life of Muslims in Dar es Salaam. As bin Nassor was an agent of the administration, the positive reception of his investment also rubbed off onto the colonial government. At the same time, bin Nassor used his position within the colonial government to influence the administration, calling for the postponement of a trial, or to expedite dubious land acquisitions.<sup>170</sup> While bin Nassor certainly was not the only collaborator who recognised the chances arising from working together with the Germans, his influence and prominence were likely unmatched across the German East African colony.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> ‘No title’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 13 January 1900, II/2 edition, 2.

<sup>165</sup> ‘Der Kurgast in Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 1 September 1900, II/34 edition, 2.

<sup>166</sup> ‘Lokales’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 4 December 1909, XI/96 edition, 3.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Der Gouverneur bei Soliman bin Nassor’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 June 1908, X/48 edition, 3.

<sup>168</sup> ‘Lokales: Soliman bin Nassor’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 5 April 1913, XV/28 edition, 3.

<sup>169</sup> Franck Raimbault, ‘Les Stratégies de Reclassement des Élités Arabes et Indiennes à Dar-Es-Salaam Durant la Colonisation Allemande (1891-1914)’, *Hypothèses* 4, no. 1 (2001): 112, <https://doi.org/10.3917/hyp.001.0109>.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 112–13.

<sup>171</sup> Others included family relations, such as Amer bin Suleiman al-Lemki, *Liwali* of Tanga, and Nassor bin Soliman al-Lemki, *Liwali* of Bagamoyo, who was Soliman bin Nassor’s father. See Steven Fabian, *Making Identity*

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Settlers treated bin Nassor with apprehension. They were unsure what to make of bin Nassor and other collaborators. They recognised the administration's need to cooperate with local leaders to maintain a firm grip of control. Yet, on the other hand, the success and role of bin Nassor caused dissonances: racial hierarchies and the "civilising mission" had justified European colonial expansion, but Soliman bin Nassor's elevated position in the administration did not fit into this picture. The pages of the DOAZ therefore are filled with articles that treat bin Nassor critically, such as questioning why he was shown the courtesy to meet with the emperor and other German high dignitaries.<sup>172</sup>

### Conclusion

Two events are usually identified as breaks in the colonial administration of German East Africa. The first was the outbreak of war in 1905. The Maji Maji movement had a profound impact on the future of the colony. German administrators in the colony and in the colonial metropole had to rethink their approach to colonial questions. In combination with the genocidal war in German Southwest Africa, Maji Maji fundamentally threatened the German colonial system. From this threat emerged the second watershed moment. The appointment of Dernburg as new colonial secretary and the posting of Rechenberg as new governor of German East Africa heralded a new colonial course. The development of the colony changed. Between 1905 and 1912, German East Africa's trade increased threefold. At the same time, the imperial subsidy almost halved from 6.9 million marks to 3.6 million marks.<sup>173</sup> The administration made concessions to the local populations to harness their economic potential. These innovations appear to have had a stabilising effect: after Maji Maji, no further major rebellion occurred in German East Africa until the outbreak of the First World War.

Yet, for many, these developments were only of secondary importance. The colonial system exploited and oppressed Africans, Arabs, and Indians, regardless of who stood at the head of the colonial administration. Maji Maji was a reaction to this system. It united African societies in unprecedented ways. At the same time, it was an outburst of the same grievances that had existed ever since Germans first took control over the territory. This also meant that

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*on the Swahili Coast: Urban Life, Community, and Belonging in Bagamoyo*, African Identities: Past and Present (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 200, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108590853>.

<sup>172</sup> 'Lokales', 4 December 1909, 3; 'Die Flotille und Soliman', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 15 September 1909, XI/73 edition, 3; 'Politische Übersicht', 1.

<sup>173</sup> Iliffe, *German Rule*, 120; Reichskolonialamt, *Die deutschen Schutzgebiete in Afrika und der Südsee 1912/1913* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 122, 401, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdl/periodical/pageview/1941219>.

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opportunities for personal gain remained the same. By allying with the German colonisers, some African leaders were able to expand their authorities significantly, or to usurp power from their rivals. The eventual defeat of the resistance also meant that continuities characterised German East Africa in many ways.

Maji Maji, Dernburg, and Rechenberg certainly impacted the daily life of settlers to some extent, but ultimately, it was all only a corollary to a larger struggle for recognition and representation. Throughout the colonial phase, settlers showed their dissatisfaction in the pages of the press and accused all administrations of enacting anti-settler policies. In this, their perceptions underwent recurring cycles of excitement and disappointment. That the governors or colonial secretaries could not get it right, the DOAZ and other outlets claimed, was due to the structural difficulties of the colonial system. The ambiguous position of the governor meant that settlers could not effectively bring up their issues with their government. This was exacerbated by the general lack of colonial awareness in the offices in Berlin that was not ameliorated even when representatives visited the colony. But the settlers also felt pressured from the standing of African and Arab leaders. Even though they held no authority over Europeans, the collaboration with Soliman bin Nassor and others was questioned by many settlers. The racial hierarchies that defined much of the settlers' self-image and identity seemed at odds with the notion of indigenous administrators.

The colonial period in German East Africa was thus defined both by changes and by continuities. With Dernburg and Rechenberg, the administration entered a new course that focused on indigenous agricultural production and trade through intermediaries. This new course brought stability and economic success. But for Africans and for European settlers, the new regime did not turn colonial life on its head. Settlers' opposition to the administration was continuous and stemmed from objections and uncertainties that ran deeper than any individual administrative appointment.

## CHAPTER III: LABOUR, IMMIGRATION, AND VIOLENCE

### Introduction

At the heart of the difficulties between the settler community and the colonial government stood a conceptual, ideological dichotomy that permeated the entirety of German colonialism in eastern Africa. In its most basic form, this difference was found in the colonial goals for which settlers and government respectively were aiming.<sup>1</sup> The settlers were primarily concerned with the practical implementation of racial and civilisational theories, and the subsequent maintenance of the racial hierarchies that placed themselves – the European settlers – at the top. For the government, on the other hand, economic and developmental concerns carried the day. Unsurprisingly, these goals and the methods to achieve them frequently clashed, and disagreements between settlers and government characterised many aspects of colonial life in German East Africa.

Yet, despite clashes over these questions, it appears that settlers and government sometimes also took similar positions and engaged in the same discourses. This chapter seeks to understand how, when, and why settler and government interests aligned. On the settler side, this was done by consciously altering their language when engaging with the government. They carefully disguised their goals of racial hierarchy by adopting the administration's economic priorities. Instead of confronting the government head on over the racial question, the settlers rather tried to influence the government to make economic decisions that converged with or ultimately supported their race-hierarchical goals. The settlers did not waver in their position; they maintained their firm convictions. But the articles of the settler press reveal that they pursued their aims by subtly altering their language and framing their goals in terms of the economic priorities set by the government. In this way, the settlers hoped to work around what they saw as counter-productive administrative policy that was antipathetic to settler interests.

Settlers saw themselves primarily as part of the white European race and therefore frequently compared their experiences and situations to those faced by white Europeans in other empires and colonies. The settlers' horizon was a global one; one in which transimperial

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<sup>1</sup> In his famous book *Citizen and Subject* the Ugandan scholar Mahmood Mamdani has argued that labour shortages and the inability to recruit a sustainable and productive workforce for the colonial economy arose from conflicting priorities. Measures that aimed at successful economic development of a colonial territory frequently clashed with policies that sought the establishment and preservation of racial divisions. According to Mamdani, labour shortages were a common occurrence because "territorial segregation [...] rendered racial domination unstable: the more the economy developed, the more it came to depend on the 'urbanized or detribalized natives'." See, Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 6.

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exchanges, cooperation, and comparisons alluded to a colonial character that transcended the boundaries of German East Africa. The government, on the other hand, acted mainly within the confines of “the national”. The administration’s drive to improve the economic development of the colony ultimately aimed at creating profits for the German Empire. Undoubtedly, transimperial processes occurred and mattered to the German colonial bureaucrats; especially problems arising from the late arrival on the colonial stage were solved quickly by observing what was happening in other European empires. This was done, however, not out of concern for acting in tandem with other empires and “presenting a united front”, but rather sought to emulate the best solutions and to adapt them to the German East African context. At the bottom line then, the colonial government in conjunction with the imperial metropole pursued policies which served the national entity to which it belonged. Transimperial considerations in many cases only took a subordinate role or were a tool for specific national or imperial considerations.

To illustrate how the settlers attempted to relate their transimperial thoughts and goals to an adverse and nationally focused government, this chapter will examine the interconnected aspects of labour and immigration, violence, and the police. In these areas a subtle but still recognisable shift occurred whenever settlers attempted to bring colonial officials and administrators round to their way of thinking about race, racial theories, and racial hierarchies. It is necessary to acknowledge that the settler community itself seemed to be of different opinions at times – plantation owners, for example, were in favour of importing Chinese and Indian labourers, whereas merchants and other artisans clearly favoured the restriction of “coolie immigration”. Owners of small businesses, on the other hand, recognised that Indian merchants were necessary for the colonial economy, while many non-traders saw Indians as a threat to society. Despite these disagreements over specific issues, it can be seen from the reporting of the settler press that the belief in racial prestige and race consciousness served as an overarching ideological and conceptual priority to which practical debates – such as questions around corporal punishment, policing, or regulating the trade sector – always returned.

Thus, this chapter will provide further nuance and support to the idea that colonists – whether administrators, settlers, merchants, or planters – acted alternately within national, transimperial, or global paradigms depending on the goal they sought to achieve. Settlers and administration were not confined to only one framework. German East Africa was thus an entity in which national, global, white, European, transnational and transimperial, or otherwise

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localised identities coexisted at the same time.<sup>2</sup> The articles and reports in the DOAZ, DKZ, and other colonial newspapers reveal the delicate mechanisms that brought together the opposing perspectives of government and settler community. Section I will analyse the labour and immigration questions and further outline the respective groups' priorities. This section will explain where administration and settlers stood, and how other interests attempted to navigate the divergences between them. Section II will examine the issue of violence and analyse how settlers and government thought and acted about it, and how violence related to both racial hierarchies and economic development. By drawing on the example of policing in the colony, Section III will show that the settlers' racial thinking overrode any practical or pragmatic strategies. Lastly, Section IV will explore how settlers adapted their discourse and language on these themes when relating their concerns to the colonial government to bring about the changes for which they campaigned.

### Section I: Labour and immigration

As we have seen in the previous chapters, German colonialism was tied to economic principles and justifications. Imagined as a capitalist venture, the land acquisitions of Peters' DOAG aimed at extracting large profits from a hitherto – at least in the eyes of the Germans – untapped area. After the failure of the DOAG and the rising financial burden of maintaining the colony, the German empire explored various avenues of revenue generation. But neither concessionary policies, cash crop agriculture, nor mineral resource exploitation seemed to stop or reverse the haemorrhage of government money. Policies that sought the promotion of indigenous agricultural production, coupled with increased and universal taxation, managed to increase the colonial state's revenues somewhat, but also brought questions around labour to centre stage.<sup>3</sup> It was here that the opposition between administration and settler perspectives emerged in its purest form.

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<sup>2</sup> German History, 'Forum on The German Colonial Imagination'; Ulrich van der Heyden has called for more targeted studies of colonisers: 'It is also important to explore what the colonial everyday life of the colonial actors looked like, how they perceived their role in Africa. How did they influence the image of Africa and its inhabitants? And how did they see and evaluate the autochthonous population with its "foreign" culture that was completely unfamiliar to them? What patterns of thought underlie their descriptions and evaluations? Many such and similar questions still need to be asked and answered, despite some noteworthy individual research results.' See Ulrich van der Heyden, ed., *Kolonialer Alltag in Deutsch-Ostafrika in Dokumenten*, Cognoscere Historias 18 (Berlin: Trafo, 2009), 10.

<sup>3</sup> Koponen has stated that taxation alone increased from 244,000 to 1,274,000 Marks between 1898 and 1905. See Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 222.

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All throughout German East Africa's existence, managers of large plantation enterprises and chartered companies, infrastructure contractors, and the colonial administration itself were faced with difficulties surrounding the acquisition and provision of an adequate labour force. Extensive infrastructure projects, such as the construction of various railways that sought to link the coast to the interior, required a large number of workers for deforestation, earthworks, and laying down of rails. Building and maintaining roads, too, required a constant supply of workers in all parts of the colony. Similarly, plantations required hundreds of workers to carry out the low-skilled but labour-intensive processes to produce primary resources and goods to drive the export-oriented economy of German East Africa. To top it all off, thousands of porters were constantly ferrying agricultural and primary products from inland areas to the coastal marketplaces, and carried equipment and construction material to building sites, plantations, and other outposts of the colonial state.<sup>4</sup>

Solving these labour issues was a deeply complex task and by the time Germany lost possession of the colony a satisfying answer had not been found. But what made the question even more complicated, or prolonged the search for an answer, were diverging opinions on the very nature of indigenous labour. Settlers and administration stood at opposite ends of an attitudinal spectrum, with business representatives caught somewhere in between. For private settlers and many planters who employed Africans, the issue boiled down to racial difference: Africans were lazy, childlike, and uncivilised, and therefore unlikely to work to European standards unless they were forced to do so.<sup>5</sup> Africans stood at a lower, inferior level of civilisation and the racial theories propagated by colonial advocates suggested that Africans “[are] and will always remain the servant in the white man's house.”<sup>6</sup> They were generally opposed to work and even if they had been “successfully recruited”, their languid nature militated against meaningful and productive labour, the DOAZ claimed. Therefore, the only

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Edward Alpers, *Ivory & Slaves in East Central Africa: Changing Patterns of International Trade to the Later Nineteenth Century* (London: Heinemann, 1975); Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770-1873* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987); Thaddeus Sunseri, *Vilimani: Labor Migration and Rural Change in Early Colonial Tanzania* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Magdalene von Prince wrote of the ‘angeborene Faulheit’ [inborn laziness] of her African servants, echoing the predominant view among private settlers in German East Africa. See von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 58. Similarly, Frieda von Bülow, too, wrote in her diary that ‘you wouldn’t believe how little work these people [Leutchen] do!’ See van der Heyden, *Kolonialer Alltag*, 184–85. Consider also Helmuth Stoecker’s suggestion that the racial theories were not newly developed in Germany, but rather imported from England, the US, and France. Stoecker argues that in Germany the racist hypotheses were supplemented with the ‘pseudo-biological raciology of social Darwinism.’ In turn, this justified to the colonial powers ‘inhumane [and] barbaric subordination and exploitation’ which had been curtailed in Europe. See Stoecker, *Drang nach Afrika*, 168–69.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Vermischtes: Humanität gegen die Eingeborenen’, 6.

way to successfully engage the indigenous populations in work was by imposing forceful measures.

The administration, on the other hand, considered Africans not inherently lazy but rather lacking incentive. In the government's view, work was a way to secure subsistence for the African, but not one for economic development or advancement. African societies were less civilised because, among other things, work was not valued as a means for progress. The lack of readily available workers in large numbers, the government argued, was thus in part due to the indigenous populations not understanding what to do with any earnings. Count Pfeil, one of the early colonists and a companion of Peters, wrote that "the Negro lacks the basis for the provision of European labour - the acquisitive instinct."<sup>7</sup> Others, too, did not attribute the problems of labour acquisition to the "Negro's intrinsic aversion to work," but found it in "his humility [*Bedürfnislosigkeit*]."<sup>8</sup> This lack could be overcome, however, by "educating" the African to work, and by providing goods for consumption.<sup>9</sup> As one commentator described in the DKZ: "without the imposition of obligations, we will never be able to educate and cultivate the black. Of all the obligations, however, work has always been the most effective; it develops people, it develops nations."<sup>10</sup>

Yet how exactly this should be undertaken was much debated. Direct and indirect forms of compulsion or coercion were brought forward. The settlers favoured a direct approach, demanding forced labour for Africans to work on communal *mashamba* and on European plantations, or to build and maintain roads. More indirect means of coercion were favoured by the administrations of Governors Liebert and Götzen, who saw taxation as the most promising strategy to "educate" the indigenous populations to work. Governor Rechenberg went even further and compared African and European workers. In a letter to the RKA, Rechenberg commented on a memorandum on the causes of the outbreak of the Maji Maji war.<sup>11</sup> He wrote:

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<sup>7</sup> Joachim Graf Pfeil, *Vorschläge zur praktischen Kolonisation in Ost-Afrika* (Berlin: Rosenbaum & Hart, 1888), 62.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Meyer, *Ostafrikanische Gletscherfahrten: die Ersteigung des Kilimandscharo und Forschungsreisen im Kilimandscharo-Gebiet* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1893), 304, <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/dsdk/content/titleinfo/9345465>.

<sup>9</sup> This 'Erziehung zur Arbeit' was ubiquitous in any German colonial writing, lecture, or thought. But in the colonial context, 'work' had a very specific meaning and referred to something that Koponen has described as the 'sustained physical toil for production geared to satisfy non-local, external needs.' See Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 322.

<sup>10</sup> F. Wohltmann, 'Die Beamten- und Arbeiterfrage in unsern Kolonien', *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 13 February 1902, XIX/7 edition, sec. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Götzen's memorandum was made available as a document for the Reichstag. See Gustav Adolf von Götzen, 'Denkschrift über die Ursachen des Aufstandes in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1905', Pub. L. No. Aktenstück 194, 3080 (1906), [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k11\\_bsb00002832\\_00458.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k11_bsb00002832_00458.html).

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One aspect that is only touched upon in the memorandum, but to which I attach the greatest importance, is the attention paid to the economic and working lives of the natives. The memorandum seems to hold the view that without coercion the Negro does not work. I consider this view to be inaccurate; rather, I am convinced that, with the exception of a few pastoral tribes, the Negro works everywhere, even without pressure, where he sees sufficient results from his work. Where the work is not profitable, he does not work, but neither would the European.<sup>12</sup>

According to Rechenberg, this meant – and Dernburg meanwhile had arrived at the same conclusion – that the lack of an adequate workforce was to be solved by raising wages and bettering working conditions on plantations and thereby enticing African labourers to work. Rechenberg's labour policies aimed at such improvement but were met with hostility from the settler press: "every alleviation or abolition of any of the means of coercion which have hitherto been customary and mostly recognised as expedient through centuries also makes increasingly impassable the paths to the solution of the general labour question."<sup>13</sup>

While this antagonism was playing out, those companies in need of workers also pursued different strategies. One solution lay in the recruiting and importing of foreign workers. In 1906, one of the contractors for building the central railway line, the company of Philipp Holzmann & Co., was in negotiations with Chinese representatives over a deal that would send 2,000 Chinese labourers to German East Africa. The company's representatives engaged with German diplomats, as well as various foreign experts and intermediaries who were interested by the project.<sup>14</sup> And while the general expert opinion seemed to hold that the Chinese government would oppose any worker recruitment by a German company for as long as the German and Chinese governments had not negotiated and signed a convention on adequately regulated terms and procedures – something already in effect between the British and Chinese – others suggested less formal strategies.<sup>15</sup> The German ambassador to Beijing remarked that he did not attach any high expectations to such bilateral conventions and thought the venture more likely to succeed by circumnavigating the official channels:

My experience on the ground is that when Chinese contract workers are recruited and when they emigrate from China, the local knowledge and personal influence of European entrepreneurs is more important than agreements between the Chinese and

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<sup>12</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichs-Kolonialamt, Letter, 15 July 1907, fol. 50, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Steuersachen, R 1001/1056, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>13</sup> 'Allgemeines und Aktuelles', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 28 September 1907, IX/54 edition, 1.

<sup>14</sup> The Dutch Minister of Colonial Affairs, Dirk Fock, for example, was interested to learn from the German colonial administration which legal provisions had been made in the German colonies in regards coolie recruitment and potential contract breaches, and requested to be informed about the negotiations. See M.F.C. de Rappard to Heinrich von Tschirschky, 20 August 1906, fol. 59, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/6286, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>15</sup> Alfons Freiherr Mumm von Schwarzenstein to Bernhard von Bülow, 8 February 1906, fol. 41, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/6286, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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foreign governments. The handling of the existing Chinese regulations varies so much from one provincial authority to another as well as from one Chinese commissioner to another, that the legal regulations are more or less on paper. I therefore do not expect much from the conclusion of a convention to regulate the recruitment of Chinese workers.<sup>16</sup>

In the view of the German diplomat, the recruitment of workers was a messy business under any circumstances. Long-winded negotiations and potentially negative publicity would only bring the issue more into focus and rekindle conflicts that had arisen already years earlier.

In collaboration with larger plantation companies, the German East African administration had imported Asian labourers from Singapore into the colony starting first in the early 1890s. This was a truly transimperial process: around 500 Chinese and Javanese – the latter of whom were Dutch East Indian subjects – were recruited by British firms in the Straits Settlements colony to work on German East African plantations. These “coolies” primarily worked on large coffee and tobacco plantations of the DOAG and were envisioned as a cheap and reliable solution to the problems of labour shortages.<sup>17</sup> Significant transportation costs, wages that were higher than those of comparable African workers, and copious cases of illness quickly, however, provided a reality check: “[t]he results of the experiment were embarrassing.”<sup>18</sup>

The situation in the early 1890s was further aggravated by the excessive flogging of the imported “coolie” labourers at the hands of the plantation supervisors. When eighty-two workers returned to Singapore in October 1894, no less than sixty of them officially complained about ill-treatment, leading the Assistant Protector of Chinese, George Thompson Hare, to exclaim: “I have never seen a batch of coolies so utterly broken down in spirits and depressed.”<sup>19</sup> Hare continued his report, stating that the Chinese workers disclosed that “nine of their number had died on the plantation, five of them from natural causes and four from the effects of the flogging they received.” Even more fatalities were reported by the Javanese contingent, who reported that “15 of their number and about 50 Chinese had died on the tobacco plantation.”<sup>20</sup> Yet, despite these accounts of brutality, it appears that the workers’ main objection to the treatment at the hands of the German colonists was less about the actual physical violence.

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<sup>16</sup> Alfons Freiherr Mumm von Schwarzenstein to Bernhard von Bülow, 16 February 1906, fol. 45, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/6286, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Gosselin to Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein, 28 October 1894, fol. 138, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/112, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>18</sup> Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 337.

<sup>19</sup> Report by George Thompson Hare, attached to a letter by Charles B.H. Mitchell to Lord Kimberley, n.d., fol. 139, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/112, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, fols 140–141.

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Rather, grievances had to do with unpaid salaries, as one “coolie” stated: “I was beaten on the estate about 40 times because I was always asking for my wages. An [*sic*] European beat me. [...] I have still two marks on my back which were caused by the flogging I received. I want chiefly to complain about not receiving my full wages.”<sup>21</sup>

The British were exasperated over the German treatment. As a consequence of the abuses, the permission to export labourers from Singapore to German East Africa was withdrawn in 1896, and labour import numbers fell sharply.<sup>22</sup> During the Maji Maji years, however, plans to address the labour question through importing Asian workers were revisited at the urging of large merchant houses, plantation companies, and individual small-scale planters.<sup>23</sup> Despite the earlier failures, Chinese labour was still seen as cheap and reliable – the fiasco of the 1890s was attributed merely to the mismanagement of a few individual plantation owners and overseers. One planter explained in the DOAZ that Chinese workers were needed since wages for the indigenous workforce had risen so exorbitantly that plantation owners could not afford them anymore.<sup>24</sup>

By the time Philipp Holzmann & Co. was trying to source workers, labour conditions in the colony had also worsened due to European penetration inland. As the rural heartlands of the indigenous populations became more and more connected to the outside world, the necessity to travel to the coast for business waned. Goods were now more readily available via the railways – especially the British Uganda railway across the border – or around the military stations and outposts that dotted the country. The “natural” flow of workers to the coastal urban centres dried up, leaving businesses and plantations unable to centrally recruit a necessary workforce. Chinese labour thus came to be seen as the solution to overcome the dearth of workers. At the same time, Chinese immigrants could contribute to the cultivation and education of African workers: “the Chinese, with his better understanding for approximately the same wages, would force the Negro to finally put his brains and not only his two lame sleeves at the disposal of the European and to actually learn to work,” asserted the DOAZ.<sup>25</sup>

The administration under Governor Götzen had similar ideas for the “*Erziehung zur Arbeit*” (education to work) of Africans. The governor implored the AAKA to come to an

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<sup>21</sup> Statement by Hassan II. in *Ibid.*, fol. 143. These statements are corroborated by two further “coolies” who also complain about missing wages.

<sup>22</sup> Letter by Lord Salisbury to Count Hatzfeld, 24 December 1896, attached to letter by Paul von Hatzfeld to Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, 28 December 1896, fols 228–229, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/115, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>23</sup> Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 338–39.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Arbeiter Kalamität’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 February 1906, VIII/6 edition.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

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agreement with the British for the import of Indian workers. According to Götzen, railway construction might temporarily bind thousands of indigenous workers, drawing them away from plantations and potentially upsetting and financially endangering European planters.<sup>26</sup> But, even more importantly, Götzen also believed that Indian “coolies” could be seen as a solution to cultivate rural areas of the colony. Once their contracts to work on infrastructure projects or on plantations had ended, Götzen argued, they would settle in all corners of the territory in large numbers. This would increase economic activity and would thereby rope African populations into the global economic system, furthering the economic development of the colony. Götzen observed that similar measures had successfully been applied to some British and Dutch territories, such as Trinidad, Jamaica, Suriname, Natal, and Mauritius.<sup>27</sup> The scientist and administrator Franz Stuhlmann, too, saw Indian workers as potentially conducive to the cultivation of African workers. Stuhlmann had experienced first-hand the conditions and circumstances on the ground in British and Dutch India, conversed with officials in both colonies about their views, and now sought to draw beneficial lessons from his observations and apply them to German East Africa.<sup>28</sup>

However, while the administration was keen to economically advance the colony and its indigenous populations, these views were hardly universal. From the settlers’ perspective, opposing voices dominated German East African opinion. In the DOAZ of 19 May 1906, two articles appeared that warned of the dangers of importing Chinese workers to the colony. While the first article discussed the previous experiences with Chinese “coolies” and pondered on the question how, in a colony of more than eight million Africans, scarcity of labour could be a problem, the second article adopted a more combative tone.<sup>29</sup> The author, a settler only identified by his initials R. L., lambasted the plans of Philipp Holzmann & Co. and the complicity of the colonial administration, rhetorically posing the question, “has the German East African government taken the necessary precautions to reinforce the white police force of the colony at least three times as soon as this sputum of humanity arrives here, in order to

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<sup>26</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, ‘Im Anschluss an die Korrespondenz über indische Ansiedlung und über die Centralbahn-Frage’, 27 July 1901, fol. 3, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/28, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> See Stuhlmann’s report on his journey to British and Dutch India, in Franz Ludwig Stuhlmann, ‘Bericht von einer Reise nach Indien’ (Diary, 1901), Nachlässe und Sammlungen, Nachlässe, N 2303/1, Bundesarchiv Berlin. Stuhlmann’s report is also published in the DOAZ, with the first instalment appearing in ‘Studienreise nach Niederländisch- und Britisch-Indien’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 17 August 1901, III/32 edition. See also ‘Über die Einführung indischer Arbeiter in unsere Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 28 September 1901, III/38 edition.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Chinesische Arbeiter’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 19 May 1906, VIII/20 edition.

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prevent robbery and lust killings?”<sup>30</sup> The deeply entrenched xenophobia of the European settler population was further kindled by reports from British South Africa that purported that crime and violence propagated by Chinese immigrants was increasing day by day, and that an alleged flourishing opium trade poisoned both the imported and indigenous workforces.<sup>31</sup>

In the end, it would be a stretch to suggest that the opposition of the DOAZ and the settlers in general led Philipp Holzmann & Co. to abandon its plans to recruit Chinese labourers for the construction of railways. The company’s failure to import workers instead resulted from foreign imperial governments’ unwillingness to risk their subjects being exposed to the same treatment that the German East Africans had administered in the 1890s. This is evidenced by the fact that firms operating in the German colonies of the southern Pacific, for example, were able to acquire Chinese labourers directly.<sup>32</sup> The reports of earlier mistreatment of “coolies” carried great weight with Chinese administrators; German East African companies were treated with deep suspicion and seemingly no negotiations could facilitate any labour export after the horrific accounts of the 1890s. Eventually, Philipp Holzmann & Co. were successful in recruiting the necessary workforce locally in eastern Africa, and abandoned further plans of importing foreign workers.

The DOAZ’s opposition to Chinese workers, while vocal and unabating, was part of farther-reaching discourse around immigration. This discourse grew even more drastic and hostile regarding the matter of Indian immigration. This was due to the settlers’ firm belief in racial theories that had risen to great popularity among colonists. In the racist hierarchy of the time, the settlers placed Indians between Europeans and Africans.<sup>33</sup> As the link between coloniser and colonised, the Indians fulfilled the role of irreplaceable intermediaries. Simultaneously, however, they were accused of immoral profit-seeking, shady business practices, and deceitful behaviour.

Many thousands of Indians lived and worked in the colony, primarily as traders, businessmen and craftsmen, and had arrived on the east African coast long before the first

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Zur Chinesenfrage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 19 May 1906, VIII/20 edition, sec. Briefkasten.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> See the report by Krause and the draft of regulations regarding the recruitment of Chinese workers for Nauru in Krause to Bernhard von Bülow, ‘Die Auswanderung nach Nauru betreffend’, 31 January 1907, fols 140–145, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/6286, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>33</sup> Voigt-Graf cautions to use the term “Indian” too loosely. For the purpose of this dissertation, however, I will maintain the term, as it was specifically used by German (“Inder”) and English colonial administrators. See Carmen Voigt-Graf, *Asian Communities in Tanzania: A Journey Through Past and Present Times*, vol. 7, Hamburg African Studies (Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 1998), 1.

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Germans set foot there.<sup>34</sup> In the early years of the colony, Indians were often employed as the broker between the German coloniser and the local African populations, acted as agents for European firms and missionaries, and provided an inexpensive but extensive trading network.<sup>35</sup> With European expansion and the spread of German control inland, Indian merchants, too, extended their businesses and catchment areas by mostly following the newly constructed railways or by establishing themselves around governmental outposts. Up until the outbreak of the Maji Maji war, German settlers treated the Indian population with suspicion, but largely recognised that their presence was “a necessary evil”.<sup>36</sup>

The *Inderfrage* (Indian question) was a common theme in the settler press and prompted numerous and diverging opinions.<sup>37</sup> One respondent – a naval staff surgeon based in Berlin – went as far as calling the Indian population “the cancer of East Africa,”<sup>38</sup> but was quickly shut down by a more Indian-friendly voice from the European merchant circles, just a few issues later.<sup>39</sup> Most traders believed that the repression of the Indian population was counterproductive, if not altogether destructive. The DOAL and the DOAG warned of the dangers of being too harsh against the Indian merchants, suggesting that any short-term benefits of exiling the Indian population would quickly be overshadowed by negative economic and social developments. Instead, the DOAL and DOAG observed that “in most, if not all, tropical areas of Africa, the European merchant trades with the natives of the country through an intermediary who is of a different race or a foreigner.”<sup>40</sup> The companies summarised that “these elements are considered unwelcome, but the fact that they must nevertheless be endured, and that they exist at all, leads us to conclude that they are indispensable.”<sup>41</sup> The European

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<sup>34</sup> The population numbers of Indians continually increased under German rule, despite all opposition. Their numbers in German East Africa can be pinned down with seeming accuracy. The DOAZ reports that the first census in which Indians were counted totalled 6,748 Indians in 1910. Iliffe states that in 1912 there were 8,698 “Asians” in German East Africa, and Burton puts the number at 8,784 in 1913. ‘Die Inder in Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 18 March 1911, XIII/22 edition; Iliffe, *Modern History*, 138; Eric Burton, “...what Tribe Should We Call Him?” The Indian Diaspora, the State and the Nation in Tanzania since ca. 1850’, *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift Für Kritische Afrikastudien* 13, no. 25 (2013): 10. More detailed information, including population breakdowns by district, can be found in ‘Bevölkerungsstatistik für Deutsch-Ostafrika’, 1896-1937, Reichskolonialamt, Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Statistik, R 1001/7428-7429, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>35</sup> Hatim Amiji, ‘The Bohras of East Africa’, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 7, no. 1 (1975): 39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1594834>.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Der Ruin des Schwarzen’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 June 1899, I/15 edition, 1.

<sup>37</sup> See for example ‘Der Ruin des Schwarzen’; ‘Zur Inderfrage in Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 September 1899, I/29 edition; ‘Zur Inderfrage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 18 July 1903, V/29 edition; ‘Zur Inderfrage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 12 September 1903, V/37 edition.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Zur Inderfrage’, 18 July 1903.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Zur Inderfrage’, 12 September 1903.

<sup>40</sup> Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie and Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft to Bernhard Dernburg, 12 March 1908, fols 98–103, here 100, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/28, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

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merchants were a lot more positively inclined towards the Indians and often blamed other settlers as “sore losers” or suggested a lack of motivation or a self-defeating sense of racial pride as the factors that made some Europeans economically unsuccessful, as one German trader from Moshi harangued: “that a German merchant is too good and his time too precious to haggle with the Negro is one of those fables that slyness and stupidity have brought into the world.”<sup>42</sup>

While the DOAZ recognised the concerns of the German merchant circles, a general hostility towards the Indian population remained, and the paper justified its resentment by evoking gloomy visions of a disintegrating German East Africa. Various ideas were printed to constrain the Indian populations: at times, the newspaper called for the imposition of immigration and business restrictions, quoting the example of the southern African colonies. The paper also reported on the latest developments in British East Africa, where European merchants had formed an association campaigning against Indian immigration and demanding the territory’s commissioner, Charles Eliot, to issue a formal explanation of the government’s current policy and future plans regarding the “Indian Question”.<sup>43</sup> Eliot’s reply that Indian immigrants were not as detrimental to the development of the colony as the merchants made it out to be was rejected by the DOAZ. But while the paper took the view that the “Indian element” continued to be an unpleasant feature of the present conditions in the German colony, it realised that it was a necessary one.

This changed with the outbreak of the Maji Maji War in July 1905, and with the appointment of Rechenberg as the new governor of German East Africa in 1906. Following these two events, the settler press’ rhetoric against the Indian populations quickly grew more hostile. In the urban centres, the Maji Maji War led to an increased sense of “Europeanness”. But, almost paradoxically, the war agitated the settler population more against the Indian population than against the rebellious indigenous one. For many settlers, Indian business practices had triggered the war; Africans were responding primarily to unfair treatment at the hand of Indian merchants, and only incidentally to German colonial rule.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> ‘Ein deutscher Kaufmann über die Inderfrage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 7 August 1909, XI/62 edition.

<sup>43</sup> The highest governmental office of the British East Africa Protectorate was Commissioner. Only in December 1905, with the appointment of Sir James H. Sadler, did it become Governor. ‘Die indischen Kleinkaufleute’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 15 March 1902, IV/11 edition.

<sup>44</sup> In 1905, the German East African administration revised the hut tax that the indigenous populations had to pay since 1897. The hut tax was designed to incentivise Africans to work and, of course, to raise funds for the colonial administration. The amendment came, in parts, as a response to the request of plantation owners who suffered from a lack of workers. Whereas the old hut tax applied to households with more or less four members subject to paying taxes, the new tax was rather levied per head, leading essentially to a fourfold increase of the tax burden of the African population. Furthermore, the new tax could no longer be paid in kind or compensated by working for

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In an article published just weeks after the outbreak of war, the DOAZ rejected a demand by *The Hindi*, a Zanzibar-based newspaper written in Gujarati, that called upon the German East African administration to ensure the safety of the Indian population. Instead, the DOAZ exclaimed: “for one thing is already clear to us: among all the causes that led to the dissatisfaction of the natives, their economic exploitation by the Indians is at the top of the list.”<sup>45</sup> Similar articles were published at high frequency throughout the Maji Maji years, attributing all problems within the colony to the “pernicious” influence of the Indian population. In the eyes of the settler press, the rebellion was incited by “deceitful” Indians who wanted to overthrow German colonial rule.

The paper believed its view confirmed when, just after New Year 1906, a case was brought before the district court in Tanga. Eleven Indian merchants, aged between thirty and sixty-five years old, were accused of supplying gunpowder to members of the Maji Maji insurgency and had thereby contributed to the attempted overthrow of the German colonial administration. For many settlers, this *Pulverschmuggelprozess* (gunpowder smuggling trial) encapsulated all negative aspects of the Indian population and caused a stir throughout the colony. The case swiftly took on the character of a show trial. After only brief deliberation, the Tanga court convicted all defendants on charges of high treason. The verdict had to be confirmed by Governor Götzen, who enacted even tougher sentences however: five convicts received prison sentences of eight years (up from four and five years as per the verdict of the Tanga court), the other six had their sentences extended to six years (up from two years). All were also to be exiled from the colony after serving their sentences. An appeal by the defence lawyer that the governor did not possess the right to unilaterally increase prison sentences – indeed, the governor only had the right to reduce, pardon, or refuse sentences and send it back to the court for reconsideration – was simply rejected over the prevailing state of emergency.<sup>46</sup> The German East African government justified its measure by pointing to the deterrent effect

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the government. Instead, aside from paying off the tax fully in rupees, workers were now required to work on plantations. Further financial incentives were given to those who continued to work on plantations voluntarily. The change in taxes led to a drastic change in the socio-economic activities of the indigenous populations, often upsetting traditional customs and practices. See specifically Seeberg, *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg*, 54ff.; Thaddeus Sunseri, ‘Famine and Wild Pigs: Gender Struggles and the Outbreak of the Majimaji War in Uzaramo (Tanzania)’, *The Journal of African History* 38, no. 2 (1997): 235–59; Rainer Tetzlaff, *Koloniale Entwicklung und Ausbeutung: Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Deutsch-Ostafrikas 1885-1914*, Schriften zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte 17 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), sec. I, chapter 3; section III, chapter 2.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Eine indische Preßstimme über den Aufstand in unserer Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 September 1905, VII/36 edition.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Th. Schmidt to Bernhard von Bülow, 19 March 1906, fols 3–4, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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of an increase in the severity of punishment.<sup>47</sup> The editors of the DOAZ were satisfied – even though some thought the punishment still was not enough.<sup>48</sup>

Indeed, the settlers grew irritated again when articles appeared in metropolitan Germany that criticised Götzen's decision. Kurt Töppen, the Dar es Salaam correspondent of the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, condemned the harsh treatment and emerged as an advocate of the Indian convicts. His cause was widely reported on in Germany but decried by the German East African settler press and initially met with rejection also by the colonial government. Töppen had been in east Africa from the early days of the German colonial endeavour and was considered an expert of the local conditions and circumstances. His articles were published not only in the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* but taken up by various other newspapers to provide information on the German East African colony in the German motherland.<sup>49</sup> Thereby, Töppen provided one of the very few direct links between the imperial centre and one of its colonies. But for the DOAZ, Töppen was a mere *Inderfreund* (friend of the Indians) who published “almost exclusively untruths and personal slander.”<sup>50</sup>

After the gunpowder smuggling verdict, Töppen kept in close contact with the convicts and lobbied the German East African government and the colonial administration in Berlin on behalf of the imprisoned Indians. In a letter from 31 October 1907, Töppen implored Dernburg to revoke the sentence and to pardon the Indians.<sup>51</sup> It appears that this petition remained unsuccessful, and even had negative effects: in an urgent telegram just a few weeks later, Töppen alleged that the district council in Kilwa, where some of the Indians were serving their sentences, toughened the confinement provisions of Mohamed Visram, an aged merchant, by shackling and hard labour.<sup>52</sup> Töppen suggested that Visram would die of the ordeal and begged Dernburg to pardon him and his fellow convicts.<sup>53</sup> Yet again, Dernburg and the German East African government refused the plea, instead providing medical assessments which seemingly attested to Visram's good health. Behind the scenes, the district officer of Kilwa suggested that

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<sup>47</sup> Eduard Haber to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 16 June 1906, fol. 8, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin. Also transmits a copy of the verdict of the Tanga district court, fols. 9-16.

<sup>48</sup> See for example ‘Verlorene Liebesmüh’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 February 1906, VIII/8 edition.

<sup>49</sup> Other newspapers included the Hamburgischer Correspondent, the Berlin-based Der Tag, and the Deutsche Kolonial-Zeitung.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Verlorene Liebesmüh’, 1. The DOAZ even threatened to file criminal complaints against Töppen. See ‘Ein offener Brief an die “Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung”’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 March 1906, VIII/10 edition, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Kurt Töppen to Bernhard Dernburg, 31 October 1907, fol. 19, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>52</sup> In the exchanges, as well as in the DOAZ, Mohamed Visram is also referred to as Mohamed Wisram, Mahamed Visram, Mahamed Visu, and other alternative variations of the name.

<sup>53</sup> Kurt Töppen to Bernhard Dernburg, Telegram, 27 January 1908, fol. 21, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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Visram's confinement provisions were too lenient and that any further easing of the conditions would act contrary to punishment and deterrence.<sup>54</sup>

For a while, the situation appeared to deteriorate. In early April 1908, Dernburg received an explicit telegram that read: "Another imprisoned Kilwa-Indian has died. Töppen."<sup>55</sup> The prisoner in question was Seliman Gulam who had succumbed to pneumonia. He was the second prisoner to die, after Gudu Nanji had been struck on the head by a falling tree branch, killing him instantly just shortly after the beginning of his prison sentence in Moshi.<sup>56</sup> After the two deaths the prison conditions were slightly eased. Shackling was employed less and less commonly, and on 27 January 1910, Governor Rechenberg pardoned the now seventy-years old Mohamed Visram. A year later, all remaining *Pulverschmuggel*-convicts were released from prison and pardoned by Rechenberg. The governor stated that the original sentences of two, four, and five years respectively, had been fulfilled in good conduct, and that Götzen's "earlier increase to six and eight years at the time of the confirmation of the sentence was largely for the purpose of deterrence, which was considered necessary under the circumstances at the time and appears to have been achieved now that the prisoners have served more than five years of the sentence."<sup>57</sup>

Rechenberg's pardoning of all convicts caused great irritation among the European settler population. In their disbelief, the UP managed to publish only a few short lines, calling for caution: "we would like to wait for an authentic confirmation of this highly conspicuous and unpleasant news."<sup>58</sup> Yet, soon after, the news was picked up widely. Everywhere notions of incredulity prevailed. When the UP's article reached Germany, the *Hamburger Nachrichten* reacted shocked: "for the time being, we still cannot really believe that the news is correct, because such a measure, to which the governor himself is undoubtedly entitled, goes too far

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<sup>54</sup> See the remarks of the governor's deputy and the attached medical report in Detlev von Winterfeld to Reichskolonialamt, 18 March 1908, fols 27–29, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>55</sup> Kurt Töppen to Bernhard Dernburg, Telegram, 4 April 1908, fol. 25, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>56</sup> Again, the names of Seliman Gulam and Gudu Nanji are frequently spelled in slightly different ways. Zenke to Kaiserliches Gouvernement Daressalam, 25 May 1908, fol. 36, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>57</sup> See Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichs-Kolonialamt, 14 July 1911, fols 48–49, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Bernhard Dernburg, 22 August 1911, fols 50–51, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/4826, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>58</sup> 'Begnadigung der indischen Pulverschmuggler', *Usambara Post*, 8 April 1911, 14 edition.

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against common sense and so soon after the events [of Maji Maji] should almost be seen by the natives as an encouragement to further similar heroic deeds.”<sup>59</sup>

For the DOAZ, the news was to equal extents shocking and expected. It was shocking because it appeared unbelievable that criminals who had been convicted of high treason were to go free and would not even be exiled from the colony. It was expected because the government around Rechenberg had already infuriated the settler communities with its Indian-friendly course for the duration of its tenure. In that way, the pardoning of the Indians was only another event in a long series of what the settlers considered anti-European politics. Rechenberg had allowed the expansion of the Indian business sector to expedite the economic development of the colony. A proponent of non-interventionist economic policy, Rechenberg aimed only at promoting the fastest possible economic growth in German East Africa. Rechenberg’s economics were “non-racialist” because they were fully driven by market forces only.<sup>60</sup> All this, the settlers argued, came to the detriment of ordinary Europeans. They saw as most outrageous what they perceived as a degree of favouritism towards an Indian population which most considered utterly disingenuous, corrupt, and at the heart of the Maji Maji War.

The labour and immigration questions thus occupied a prominent position in German East African colonial society. While government and various business interests looked towards foreign and indigenous workers with hope to solve the problems of inadequate workforces and as a driver of economic growth, settlers and small-scale merchants saw in Chinese and Indian labourers a threat to their belief of a supreme European race. Where government and trading companies pushed for immigration of foreign workers, settlers renounced the plans as jeopardising the prestige of the white population in the colony. In a few instances the dichotomy between government and settlers was less clear – such as in the case of Kurt Töppen and his advocacy for the imprisoned Indians. Ultimately, however, settlers maintained their quest to deepen the racial divide while the government pursued economic development. The position of outliers was not treated as significant, and any discourse quickly reverted to bolstering one’s own position.

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<sup>59</sup> ‘Begnädigung der indischen Pulverschmuggler?’, *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 14 May 1911.

<sup>60</sup> In a letter to the district official of Moshi, Rechenberg wrote: “[...] wage levels are regulated according to supply and demand, living and working conditions without regard to whether the employers are European or coloured, because in German East Africa there may be social and political privileges for Europeans, but no economic ones.” Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Wilhelm Methner, 24 October 1907, fols 105–108, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/120, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 277.

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The next section will examine this dichotomy between administration and settlers further by analysing how the two sides perceived the issue of violence, how they formulated their ideological goals in relation to it, and how violence was the ubiquitous, underlying feature of colonial German East Africa. While the rhetoric of the settler press against Indian immigrants was extreme, it remained confined to print. Africans, on the other hand, were subject to much more direct and physical forms of abuse, as we shall see on the following pages.

### Section II: Violence

In 1994, the sociologist Trutz von Trotha wrote: “for colonial historiography the following sentence applies: in the beginning was violence.” He continued: “the path of conquest and ‘pacification’ is a path of massacres, of plundered and burned villages and huts, of the slain, of captured women and children and refugees.”<sup>61</sup> Von Trotha’s harrowing description perfectly encapsulates the disturbing and brutal mechanism that buttressed colonial rule: colonialism was always intricately connected to violence, regardless of whether colonial conquest occurred in Antiquity, during the discovery of the “New World”, or at the height of European imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Violence made colonialism possible, since by its very nature, colonial control manifested a minority rule of those who believed themselves superior over a majority of perceived inferiors.<sup>62</sup> For the colonial system to work, it was necessary that violence was exerted; or, at least, that there was a credible threat of it. Violent colonial rule sought to keep safe the few and secure their position against the masses. For the colonisers, violence was the best means to stymie opposition and resistance, and, in effect, to prevent violence flowing the other way. True to the phrase “attack is the best form of defence”, the colonisers employed violence to achieve their goal of conquering those territories they had set eyes on, and to preserve and maintain their position and rule after conquest had been accomplished successfully. Violence was the ubiquitous language of the colonisers also because it was self-explanatory and did not have to be translated; violence just had to be enacted.<sup>63</sup> Thus, violence was a tool to manifest colonial rule, to thwart resistance, and to provide for safety, security, and stability.

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<sup>61</sup> Trutz von Trotha, *Koloniale Herrschaft: zur soziologischen Theorie der Staatsentstehung am Beispiel des ‘Schutzgebietes Togo’* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994), 33.

<sup>62</sup> Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 191.

<sup>63</sup> See von Trotha, *Koloniale Herrschaft*; Trutz von Trotha, *Soziologie Der Gewalt* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997); The technological underpinnings of colonial violence have been discussed at great lengths for nearly every imperial context. Technology was the most tangible aspect of violence that illustrated the colonisers’ dominance. For an overview, see Daniel R. Headrick, ‘The Tools of Imperialism: Technology and the Expansion

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Where Europeans came across indigenous populations that refused to sign dubious contracts to subject themselves to foreign “protection”, violence was the *modus operandi* to meet European goals.<sup>64</sup> Colonial wars occurred on every continent, involving every imperial power.<sup>65</sup> But they were also temporally continuous: colonial wars arose in the first encounters between colonisers and the local populations, but persisted throughout the colonial period. Resistance to colonial rule culminated in armed uprisings that were more often than not violently subdued – yet, eventually, many also led to the twentieth-century independence and liberation movements which brought the imperial and colonial age to at least an official end. Hence, violence and wars did not stop after the conquest of a territory, but characterised the entirety of colonial rule, and arguably the postcolonial period as well.

Violence in German East Africa, as everywhere, was employed as a tool to establish control over a territory and its indigenous peoples and sought stabilisation and security.<sup>66</sup> To

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of European Colonial Empires in the Nineteenth Century’, *The Journal of Modern History* 51, no. 2 (1979): 231–63. See also Dierk Walter and Birthe Kundrus, *Waffen Wissen Wandel: Anpassung und Lernen in transkulturellen Erstkonflikten* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition HIS, 2012); Dierk Walter, *Organisierte Gewalt in der europäischen Expansion: Gestalt und Logik des Imperialkrieges* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition HIS, 2014). Andrew Zimmermann has found that scientific progress and violence were logically connected within colonial expansion, where “[s]cience was an integral part of colonial sovereignty, a cause and an effect of the permanent violence that constitutes the peace of the state.” See Andrew Zimmermann, ‘Ruling Africa: Science as Sovereignty in the German Colonial Empire and Its Aftermath’, in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, ed. Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 95. Yet, this is not to say that colonialism instinctively followed from new weaponry or improved transportation. Hans-Ulrich Wehler has stated that “if one points to technological progress as the main factor of expansion, thereby defining imperialism as a sort of unavoidable ‘natural’ consequence of technological innovations, one is led astray.” See Hans-Ulrich Wehler, ‘Industrial Growth and Early German Imperialism’, in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972), 72. Violence through technologically superior weapons was one of the means that drove colonialism and imperialism, but it was not the prime motivation. Instead, these motivations were largely of economic and political nature. Although, other scholars such as Henning Melber have suggested that the colonial state’s inherent weakness was the catalyst for violence and brutality. See Henning Melber, ‘Ein deutscher Sonderweg? Einleitende Bemerkungen zum Umgang mit dem Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika’, in *Genozid und Gedenken. Namibisch-deutsche Geschichte und Gegenwart*, by Henning Melber, 1st ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2005).

<sup>64</sup> Wesseling suggests that the “spurious treaties” were not challenged by other European empires, because all imperial powers acted in the same way. A challenge to another power’s legitimacy over a territory would cast into doubt one’s own rule. See Wesseling, *Divide and Rule*, 127. See also Falola and Agbo, ‘Colonial Administrations and the Africans’, 84.

<sup>65</sup> By and large, all colonial wars have received at least some scholarly attention. It would be futile to attempt to refer to just one work for any particular case – this alone illustrates how violent colonial conquest was. It might therefore be more adequate to mention some more general scholarship: Tanja Bühner, Christian Stachelbeck, and Dierk Walter, *Imperialkriege von 1500 bis heute: Strukturen, Akteure, Lernprozesse* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011); David Killingray and David E. Omissi, *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers C. 1700-1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Jaap A. de Moor and H. L. Wesseling, *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1989).

<sup>66</sup> Contemporaries and subsequent historians have long debated over the question whether the brief period of official German colonial rule constituted a unique or even deviant variety of colonialism, one which was an outlier from the colonialisms of other European powers. Frederick Cooper cautions to recognise different colonialisms and imperialisms, in order to analyse the importance ‘of the specific forms of colonization that spread out from Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.’ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 52–53. In this way, German colonialism has also been described as a precursor to the later actions and policies of the Third Reich, adding an element of continuity to the discussions around the legacy of the German colonial empire. Hannah Arendt’s work

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achieve this, colonial violence took many forms. Direct, physical, state-sanctioned oppression was the most obvious, the most foundational, and the most persuasive. When the Sultan of Zanzibar protested against the establishment of a German protectorate over the East African coast, the German navy threatened violence by deploying several warships and pointing their canons at the Sultan's palace.<sup>67</sup> The Abushiri Revolt, the Hehe War (1891-1898), the Maji Maji War and various other armed conflicts all were violently suppressed in order for the German colonisers to extend and secure their control over the colony.

An example was often made of the rebels, so as to send out a warning to any other factions that resisted colonial troops and administration. In 1898, German colonial troops surrounded Chief Mkwawa, the leader of the Wahehe who had been resisting Germany's colonial expansion. Not wanting to fall into the hands of the German troops, in a last act of resistance, Chief Mkwawa told one of his remaining fighters to shoot him. An hour and a half later, the bodies of Chief Mkwawa and his companion were found by the encroaching German soldiers.<sup>68</sup> Mkwawa's head was cut off, sent to Germany, and later became an object of mystery, international diplomatic negotiations, and scholastic inquiry. Indeed, Article 246 of the Treaty of Versailles stipulated specifically the return of the skull to the Wahehe – a condition that was only met in 1954, with the repatriation process even then fraught with problems.<sup>69</sup>

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on contextualising colonialism was, albeit potentially more abstract, the first attempt at linking colonial methods and the later genocidal practices of totalitarian states. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New ed / with added prefaces. (New York, London: Harcourt Brace, 1973). For some more recent debates, consult Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Erichsen and Olusoga, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*; Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust.*, vol. 15, Periplus Studien (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2011). See also Klaus Bachmann, 'From German South West Africa to the Third Reich. Testing the Continuity Thesis', *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture* 23 (6 July 2018): 29–52. Other scholars, such as Ulrike Lindner, have shown that an imperial study of Africa reveals that German colonialism "appears less marginal, but rather as a phenomenon typical of the time," in which "[m]any of the alleged peculiarities rather turn out to be gradual differences." See Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 465. Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, too, have criticised "the alleged 'exceptional' character of the German colonial wars," and argued that German colonial brutality "was in fact very much in line with common European colonial standards." See Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, 'Der Holocaust Als »kolonialer Genozid«?: Europäische Kolonialgewalt Und Nationalsozialistischer Vernichtungskrieg', *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 33, no. 3 (2007): 439, <https://doi.org/10.13109/gege.2007.33.3.439>.

<sup>67</sup> 'Sansibar', 1881 to 1901, RM 5 Admiralstab der Marine, 5B Außereuropäische Abteilung, 5.1.13.3 Afrika, RM 5/5445 Sansibar, Bundesarchiv Freiburg.

<sup>68</sup> Martin Baer and Olaf Schröter, *Eine Kopffagd: Deutsche in Ostafrika: Spuren Kolonialer Herrschaft*, 1. Aufl. (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2001), 58.

<sup>69</sup> Chief Mkwawa's skull was eventually repatriated by governor of Tanganyika, Edward Twining, who privately travelled to the Overseas Museum in Bremen to collect the skull. It is unclear, however, if the skull he brought back to Tanganyika was the actual one. See for example Garsha, 'Expanding <i>Vergangenheitsbewältigung?</i>' See also especially the introduction of Frances Larson, *Severed: A History of Heads Lost and Heads Found* (London: Granta Books, 2014). Larson examines how looted skulls take on the character of both person and thing simultaneously, and how this impacts the colonial and postcolonial context.

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Chief Mkwawa's head served both as an object of scientific study and as a reminder of the German colonialists' power. The ritualistic decapitation of the defeated rebel, as well as the destruction of Wahehe burial grounds and sacred places, was intended to signal complete domination by the colonisers over the local populations: "[t]he Germans' destruction of the grave site attempted to disconnect the Hehe from their royal past and lead to implementation of a new colonial authority."<sup>70</sup> In this way colonial domination worked across time: it sought to negate the local populations' historical connections, it suppressed contemporary resistance, and it indicated that any future oppositional struggle would be met with extreme force and violence. Therefore, the defeat of the Wahehe was not only a military operation that sought to subjugate Africans. Instead, the extreme act of chopping off Mkwawa's head served also as "a symbolic conquest" that projected the manifestation of the German colonial state's claim to power through space and time.<sup>71</sup>

However, the war against the Wahehe and the violent subduing of other revolts were state-sanctioned military operations that aimed at destroying an enemy that was opposed to German colonial rule. Direct physical violence was also part of the day-to-day governing of German East Africa and was aimed at the oppression of the non-European populations. The government had "legitimised" violent caning and flogging as a security mechanism and applied it to the spheres of criminal justice and punishment. While physical punishment had been abolished in metropolitan Germany, in the colonies it was considered an indispensable tool: "all criminal law was geared towards the rapid establishment of order [...] the sentence *nullum crimen sine lege* did not apply."<sup>72</sup> The colonial period was violent not because of a lack of regulations and laws, but rather because "law proved central to the articulation of violent, racist colonial societies."<sup>73</sup>

According to the criminal law code of German East Africa, a convict could receive physical punishment only through caning with a governmentally-approved rod or crop – aside from being sentenced to death by hanging. First and foremost, only African males could receive physical punishment; women, Indians, and Arabs were excluded from caning. Similarly, juveniles under the age of sixteen could receive no more than twenty strokes with a rod. At maximum, a convict could receive fifty strokes, however, he was not to receive more than

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<sup>70</sup> Jesse Bucher, 'The Skull of Mkwawa and the Politics of Indirect Rule in Tanganyika', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, no. 2 (2 April 2016): 288, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2016.1184835>.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 110.

<sup>73</sup> H. M. Schwirck, 'Violence, Race, and the Law in German South West Africa, 1884-1914' (Doctoral Dissertation, Ithaca, Cornell University, 1998); quoted in Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 22.

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twenty-five strokes with a rod or crop in one sitting. A period of two weeks had to pass before the second set of strokes could be administered. The punishment was only to be delivered by a European specifically designated by the governor or the responsible district officer. If possible, a doctor had to be present and had to examine the convict for any medical condition. Before and during the procedure, the doctor had the right to prohibit or stop the punishment if the health situation of the convict required it.<sup>74</sup>

Aside from violent conduct as criminal punishment, violence was also employed in line with civilisational and “educational” theories. Many settlers believed that the superiority of their race legitimised colonial rule. Colonial thinkers argued that Africans lagged behind on a developmental ladder. Therefore, it was necessary to “educate” and to “uplift” Africans to a European level of civilisation. The European civilising mission thus sought to combat a state of savagery, to spread civilisation, and to “improve” Africans. Tactically employed violence was the tool to achieve this, as one commentator remarked in the DOAZ in 1902:

The negro is a big child. From the original uncritical enjoyment of life, the natural inclination to do nothing, to joke and play up to mostly subconscious cruelty, none of the character traits of the specifically childlike are missing in his character picture. It is not for nothing that the old saying warns: ‘If you love your child, you chastise it,’ and many a German man who has achieved something in life tends to say at a mature age, gratefully remembering his father's cane, ‘A pity for every blow that missed’.<sup>75</sup>

Caning and flogging were the most commonly employed violent forms of chastisement that were available to the German coloniser. Settlers favoured physical punishment for African employees in case of neglect of duty, idleness, insubordination, unexcused absence, or any other “significant transgression” of the employment contract.

In line with the government’s approach to “educate natives to work”, violent and physical measures were only permitted as a strictly pedagogical tool. As the indigenous populations and workers were considered not fully civilised, and because an employment contract could be seen as an obligation to educate within the broader premise of the civilising mission, constitutional lawyers interpreted the German Civil Law Code to permit employers to administer physical violence as a form of disciplining, but not as an explicitly punitive measure.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> “13. Verfügung des Reichskanzlers wegen Ausübung der Strafgerichtsbarkeit und der Disziplinargewalt gegenüber den Eingeborenen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten von Ostafrika, Kamerun und Togo, vom 22. April 1896” in Johannes Gerstmeyer, *Das Schutzgebietgesetz* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 1910), §§1-16, pp.168–72, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111665337>.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Schärfere Maßnahmen Gegen Die Eingeborenen!’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 15 February 1902, IV/7 edition.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Spruch Nr. 6: Über Das Züchtigungsrecht Des Dienstherrn’, *Amtlicher Anzeiger Für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 4 March 1914, XV/17 edition.

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Thus, the law held that planters, traders, and supervisors of governmental building projects were allowed to exert violence over the indigenous workforce if it fell within the broader remit of “education” or “civilisational uplift”.<sup>77</sup> In the end, however, it made of course little difference to the whipped whether he was beaten in an act of “educational disciplining” or for punitive reasons. But for European plantation owners this phrasing of the law had great significance. It allowed an interpretation or imagination of the law that could be stretched and could hardly be disproven in court. Many took the application of direct physical violence to great extents.

Despite the detailed regulations regarding flogging, or perhaps because of them, there are ample cases relating to the disproportionate and illicit use of violence by private persons against Africans. In one instance, a planter who was only referred to by his initial, T., was fined 5 Mark and sentenced to one day in prison for physical injury resulting from negligence. According to the opinion of the high court of Dar es Salaam, T. had hit his “boy”<sup>78</sup> Lelo multiple times across back, left arm, and left hand with a *kiboko*.<sup>79</sup> While the court was under the impression that T. acted deliberately – allegedly, T. had similarly assaulted an African woman just weeks before, inflicting a 14cm long and 2cm wide wound on the back – it could not find him guilty of premediated malicious injury for a lack of evidence. The wounds on Lelo’s back, arm and hand were the result of him not remaining still while receiving physical punishment, T. claimed. The court decided that “at the very least there was negligence, for if [Lelo] was so stubborn and restless that the accused was no longer able to direct the blows to his buttocks alone, he had to refrain from chastising with such a dangerous tool.”<sup>80</sup> The verdict was thus not a judgement on the legality of physical violence, but was confined rather to technicalities and the “proper” way to administer such violence.

A similar case of violent abuse is relayed by Charles Dundas, who, at the time of writing in 1919, was the acting administrator of the former German East African territory. Dundas

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<sup>77</sup> In the German metropole, this specific law was intended to regulate the education of children. See ‘Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch’ in *Deutsches Reichsgesetzblatt*, 18 August 1896, §1631 section 2, p. 474. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutsches\\_Reichsgesetzblatt\\_1896\\_021\\_474.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutsches_Reichsgesetzblatt_1896_021_474.jpg)

<sup>78</sup> The term *boy* was used by the German colonisers to refer to a male servant of any age. The term carried racist and derogatory connotations. Timm Ebner, “‘Natur’. Authentizität Und Krieg in Der “Wahren Echten Berichterstattung” Paul Ettighoffers’, in *Nationalsozialistische Kolonialliteratur: Koloniale Und Antisemitische Verräterfiguren ‘Hinter Den Kulissen Des Welttheaters’*, by Timm Ebner, Genozid Und Gedächtnis (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2016), 91; see also the entry ‘boy’ in Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsches Koloniallexikon* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920), also available online: <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/lexikon.htm>.

<sup>79</sup> *Kiboko* is the Swahili word for hippopotamus and in this context refers to a heavy leather whip that is made of hippopotamus hide and was commonly used for whipping in colonial times, not only in German East Africa. Later, *kiboko* became synonymous with any form of corporal punishment. Paul Ocobock, ‘Spare the Rod, Spoil the Colony: Corporal Punishment, Colonial Violence, and Generational Authority in Kenya, 1897—1952’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45, no. 1 (2012): 29–56.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Spruchchecke Nr. 6: Über Das Züchtigungsrecht Des Dienstherrn’.

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reports that in 1912 an unspecified number of African prisoners were lent to a sisal plantation to carry out harvesting work. Under the supervision of a European named Luis, an ex-*Askari* by the name of Alfani was instructed to routinely whip the prisoners, often for arbitrary reasons or even for no reason at all: “he [Luis] generally had half a dozen of the convicts flogged before breakfast and they never received less than 25 lashes. This, he said, gave him a better appetite for his breakfast.” The report continues to outline the sheer barbarism of the procedure: “Alfani knew his business, with the first stroke he drew blood and with the last one the convict’s buttocks looked like a beefsteak à la Tartar.”<sup>81</sup>

As these two examples show, it is evident that direct extreme violence very often was not purely a means for “educational purposes”, but rather came as a consequence of brutality, punishment, anger, or simply served entertainment purposes. This was, however, virtually impossible to prove in court as the concept of disciplining for educational purposes had no specific and concrete definition and thus could be stretched to cover almost any incident of violence for as long as it was confined to the legal limitations. But even the legal limitations carried only marginal weight. Naturally, in case of any doubt, the voice and opinion of a white European defendant usually overrode the testimony of an indigenous plaintiff in German East African courts, as it did in colonial courts all around the world.<sup>82</sup> Excessive violence was thus an easy way for the European settler to translate his or her racial convictions into action and to confirm one’s position or standing in the racial hierarchies of the time.

These and other examples of abuse were the subject of heated discussions. The question of whether the disciplinary penal power of private employers ought to be curtailed not only occupied the German East African European population, but also saw debate in the German

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<sup>81</sup> It is unclear if this specific case was ever brought to the attention of the German authorities, and whether it is factually correct. As mentioned earlier, during the First World War and immediately after, especially the British attempted to discredit German colonialism. All in all, the report of Dundas contains many hundred pages of observations of practices of the German colonisers, which have been relayed by imprisoned Europeans and by figures of authority of the indigenous population. It provides an interesting insight into the perception of British and German colonial rule, though it must be noted that it is likely to be biased and carefully curated to make a nationalist argument. That being said, it is certainly not outside the realms of possibility that the incident took place as reported. The routine whipping of workers and prisoners at the hand of German administrators, police, and civilians is well documented, and, naturally occurred in other colonial contexts as well. Dundas, ‘Die Deutsche Verwaltung in Ostafrika. Bericht Eines Englischen Kolonialbeamten’, 101–2.

<sup>82</sup> The German government was particularly interested in this question and sent an official inquiry to Janssen and the ICI. According to Stübel’s information, the testimony of one European witness equated to that of seven ‘natives’ in the Dutch East Indies, but such arrangements were not applicable in the British African colonies. Janssen should be tasked to explore the question further and to report back to the German colonial offices in due course. See Oscar Wilhelm Stuebel to Nikolaus von Wallwitz, 5 October 1903, fols 3–4, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5367, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

metropole and beyond.<sup>83</sup> Chancellor Bülow and AAKA director Wilhelm Stübel communicated with Camille Janssen, a Belgian former Governor-General of the Congo Free State, who had founded the *Institut colonial international* (International Colonial Institute, ICI) in Brussels in 1894. As an organisation, the ICI sought to promote colonial knowledge among imperial powers and actively contributed to a transimperial exchange of all information relating to colonialism.<sup>84</sup> The ICI was set up to facilitate transimperial developments and processes and quickly became an important forum for exchange for the imperial powers. In 1901, Bülow sent an enquiry to Janssen (via the German ambassador to Brussels), asking whether employers retained the right to use disciplinary corporal punishment against African employees in British and French colonies, as well as in the Congo Free State.<sup>85</sup> In his reply, Janssen explained that none of the territories had granted such rights: the French colonial ministry outright refused such demands by settlers on “the principle of national sovereignty.”<sup>86</sup> Yet, Janssen also suggested that under certain conditions, such disciplinary rights, as well as the right to form a protection force, should be granted to private individuals. In areas where the colonial state lacked authority – that is, where there was no physical presence of the state through a regular police force or military stations – plantation owners and trading companies ought to be allowed to establish an indigenous armed security force to guard business operations against potential attacks and unrest.<sup>87</sup> However, Janssen conceded that this should only be done in exceptional circumstances and had to include a state-sponsored safeguarding mechanism to prevent any abuses.<sup>88</sup>

The colonial administration in Berlin took Janssen’s information as an argument to consider the further regulation and eventual repeal of the practice of “educational” caning and flogging. In German East Africa, however, Governor Götzen cautioned about plans to curtail the disciplinary powers of plantation managers and traders. In 1903, the German East African government informed the AAKA that “the abolition of the right of chastisement would be an

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<sup>83</sup> David Killingray, ‘The “Rod of Empire”: The Debate Over Corporal Punishment in the British African Colonial Forces, 1888–1946’, *The Journal of African History* 35, no. 2 (July 1994): 201–16, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700026396>.

<sup>84</sup> Ulrike Lindner has shown that German, British, French and other European colonial officials used the facilities of the ICI to communicate and exchange knowledge, to debate plans, and to brainstorm solutions to the most pressing colonial problems. See Ulrike Lindner, ‘New Forms of Knowledge Exchange Between Imperial Powers: The Development of the Institut Colonial International (ICI) Since the End of the Nineteenth Century’, in *Imperial Cooperation and Transfer, 1870-1930: Empires and Encounters*, by Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

<sup>85</sup> Bernhard von Bülow to Nikolaus von Wallwitz, 7 December 1901, fol. 86, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5378, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>86</sup> Camille Janssen to Nikolaus von Wallwitz, 20 December 1901, fol. 93, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5378, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>87</sup> Zollmann, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> Janssen to von Wallwitz, 20 December 1901, fols 91–92.

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economically unjustifiable interference [...] and [that] the government would be accused, not wrongly, by the planters of having abolished a tried and tested institution for doctrinal reasons.”<sup>89</sup> For Götzen, the economic advantages of the occasional whipping outweighed the moral benefits of abolition. He also recognised that planters and settlers saw chastisement as their prerogative. Consequently, Götzen did not want to upset the feeble economic development of the colony and was equally wary to antagonise European planters and settlers, especially over an issue that held only moral virtues. The settlers regarded Götzen’s stance with favour, seeing the governor as a settler-friendly ally in the quest to push back the “imprudent” plans made in Berlin.

In 1907 however, Rechenberg adopted new regulations shortly after his arrival in German East Africa. The DOAZ wrote that Rechenberg’s “new flogging code, which has triggered a feeling of total resignation among the settlers, this ‘non-flogging ordinance’ is yet another further step in the evil act of putting a spanner in the works of the white man’s authority over the native, which will undoubtedly take its revenge.”<sup>90</sup> To the newspaper and its readership, Rechenberg’s restraining of physical disciplining signalled an act of sabotage. Outlawing this privilege of the European race, which had signified dominance and superiority over the subordinated African populations, signalled a significant threat to the racial hierarchy in the colony. This was an early indication of the Rechenberg course that would incense the settler community for the years to come.

Violence was a ubiquitous aspect of the colonial period. It was employed by the state initially to manifest its rule over the newly annexed territories and was maintained as a tool to instil obedience, to squash any resistance, to portray the government as the effective and powerful claimant to control, and to create a usable African workforce. All this aimed at the fostering of a stable environment in which the economic development of the territory could proceed without difficulties. For settlers, planters, and other non-governmental actors, violence served a different purpose. Here, violence was the means to implement segregation and a racial hierarchy. In the eyes of the settlers, violence was the unambiguous symbol of white European racial supremacy. Any regulations that would pose a challenge to the violent conduct settlers had somewhat gotten accustomed to or were expecting, thus directly put into question their role and position in the colony. Further challenges, however, were also mounted regarding the police force, as the next section will explore.

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<sup>89</sup> Franz Ludwig Stuhlmann to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 15 January 1903, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5378, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Allgemeines und Aktuelles’, 1.

### Section III: Police

The crushing of resistance and opposition during the Abushiri or Maji Maji wars had served to cement the colonial state's power and to subjugate those populations living in the areas now claimed by the German Empire. Nevertheless, the German East African colonial state was characterised by a degree of weakness and fragility.<sup>91</sup> The arrival of European colonisers on the shores of the African continent did not immediately change the position or agency of indigenous populations. The historian Hermann Hiery has asserted that "the idea that the hoisting of German flags and the proclamation of colonial superiority or inferiority meant that German supremacy, German ways and German nature had taken hold everywhere is only found in consciously national works before 1945 or in explicitly anti-national works after 1945."<sup>92</sup> Throughout the colonial period, power and control in many cases did not stretch further than the urban centres, or, at least, lost its impact with every kilometre one moved away from the centres of European colonisation. German East Africa was characterised by "islands of rule", in which the German authorities failed to permeate African societies and "ruled over a population about which they hardly knew anything."<sup>93</sup> Thus, while colonial control existed "on the maps of the European diplomats, [...] what emerged on East African soil was far from being a territory of domination."<sup>94</sup> Establishing administrative offices, importing German laws and customs, and increasing European population numbers "did not automatically mean that German power was established."<sup>95</sup>

To advance its control over the colonial territory, the government invested heavily in the creation of a colonial police force that ought to project, display, and enact the state's power and authority. This colonial police force exhibited the tensions between Europeans and Africans in different ways, but, as we shall see, symbolised the administration and settlers' diverging opinions. The police acted as an extension of the colonial government, directly projecting and displaying power and control. Policemen "stood at the cutting edge of colonial rule," meaning that the state's power and authority were transmitted by the police force as it was "the most

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<sup>91</sup> Glassman has concluded that "the colonial state rarely 'commanded' history in eastern Africa." See Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1995), 269.

<sup>92</sup> Hermann Hiery, 'Der Einfluß der Deutschen auf Leben und Kultur der indigenen Südsee', in *Emil Nolde. Expedition in die Südsee*, by Magdalena M. Moeller (München: Hirmer, 2002), 35.

<sup>93</sup> Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 215.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>95</sup> Maderspacher, 'European Colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Germans, French, and British in Cameroon, 1884-1939', 31.

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visible public symbol of colonial rule.”<sup>96</sup> Yet, the few European police officers that generally served in superior roles were mostly limited to the urban centres or to the single outposts that dotted the territory. Policing or just a showing of presence in the peripheral countryside where most Africans lived was rare and fraught with difficulties.<sup>97</sup> Thus, enforcing the “power monopoly of the state” was often left to individual *Schutztruppe* expeditions or to rare instances of the police “touring the country.”<sup>98</sup> In this way, the colonial state often did not reach the entirety of the territory which it claimed, and colonial rule came to be measured “by availability of bodies in which colonial rule [was] inscribed.”<sup>99</sup> Crucially, this meant not only white European police officers or administrators, but also Africans, Indians, and others who had been integrated into the colonial state or police force.

With only a few dozen European police officers, the German East African police force had to rely on recruiting Africans to carry out the majority of the groundwork. Primarily deployed to the indigenous neighbourhoods of the big coastal cities, these African policemen were the intermediaries of the German colonial government. Indigenous police forces extended the power of the colonial state to those areas Europeans had little access to, or to those they simply did not want to enter. Therefore, power and control were imposed on larger shares of the population through different means.

The colonial state sought to extend its control by issuing identity cards and passbooks to better understand local conditions and thus to increase security. In response to a series of

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<sup>96</sup> David Anderson and David Killingray, *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 1–2.

<sup>97</sup> In an attempt to establish at least some appearance of being in control of their entire territories, the German, British and French colonial administrations throughout the continent agreed to mutually share information regarding the movement of indigenous populations. See Colonial Office, ‘Information Exchange between British and French Officers in West Africa Respecting Native Movements’, 20 November 1906, Foreign Office, African Department, General Correspondence, FO 367/7/108-130, National Archives; This aimed not only at the manifestation of security, but also served as a diplomatic tool. Especially Governor von Rechenberg was enthusiastic about the prospects to show goodwill to the British neighbours by agreeing to exchange information. The potential to conclusively monitor the indigenous Maasai societies, who were perceived as a potential threat to both German and British colonial control, appealed to Rechenberg only incidentally. See Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichskolonialamt, ‘Nachrichtenaustausch zwischen Deutsch- und Britisch-Ostafrika’, 5 February 1909, Reichskolonialamt, Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Innere Angelegenheiten, R 1001/6884, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Yet, despite these good intentions and provisions, it appears that neither British nor German officials ever made use of the new agreement. Both Rechenberg and Schnee reported to the Colonial Office in Berlin that an information exchange had not taken place, but it is unclear whether this was due to a simple lack of reportable material, or whether both colonial administrations were hesitant to actually provide information to the other. See Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichskolonialamt, ‘Nachrichtenaustausch zwischen deutschen und englischen Behörden’, 30 May 1911, Reichskolonialamt, Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Innere Angelegenheiten, R 1001/6884, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Heinrich Schnee to Wilhelm Heinrich Solf, ‘Nachrichtenaustausch zwischen deutschen und englischen Behörden’, 16 August 1912, Reichskolonialamt, Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Innere Angelegenheiten, R 1001/6884, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>98</sup> Maderspacher, ‘European Colonialism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Germans, French, and British in Cameroon, 1884-1939’, 31.

<sup>99</sup> Pesek, ‘The Boma and the Peripatetic Ruler’, 236.

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burglaries in Dar es Salaam in 1899, the colonial government instituted a curfew and a colony-wide directive that required European employers to furnish their African servants with a passbook if these were released from their work after 10pm at night. Anyone found outside without such permit was to be subjected to arrest.<sup>100</sup> Such systems of control were common across all colonial contexts. At the same time, they allowed Africans to engage in new discursive practices, subverting and resisting the colonial state's control: "Africans leveraged themselves into the characters that Europeans defined, playing the characters delineated in court records and government writs."<sup>101</sup> Attempts to bypass the structures of colonial control quickly emerged in German East Africa. In response to the administration's curfew, a flourishing trade in passbooks and other permits developed, allowing many Africans to easily circumvent governmental restrictions.

While the colonial government was concerned with the establishment of control over the territory, the settlers voiced their objection. The DOAZ suggested that the patrolling indigenous officers could not read and were thus satisfied to see any slip of paper that visually resembled the passbooks as legitimation to be outside after the curfew. Indigenous police officers therefore were unable to verify the date stamp of the permit, allowing the dodging of the curfew and undermining the state's control.<sup>102</sup> The settlers were fiercely opposed to the employment of indigenous police on racial grounds and altercations between Europeans and indigenous police officers were a common occurrence in colonial German East Africa.<sup>103</sup> At the heart of the matter stood the question whether black Africans should be allowed to give orders to white Europeans, to touch them, or to arrest them.<sup>104</sup> Naturally the settlers responded to these questions in the negative, fearing that any authority given to indigenous policemen would undermine the supremacy and dominating position of white Europeans, even if provisions were made to ensure that European police officers would remain in control.

The DOAZ quoted a pamphlet by the *Deutscher Kolonialbund* (German Colonial League), exclaiming that "the role of the coloured police force must be seen as a systematic subversion of European prestige and as a branding of European private citizens as second-class white people."<sup>105</sup> To this effect the president of the DKG, the Duke of Mecklenburg, wrote to

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<sup>100</sup> 'Bekanntmachung', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 7 May 1899, I/10 edition.

<sup>101</sup> Derek R. Peterson, 'Morality Plays: Marriage, Church Courts, and Colonial Agency in Central Tanganyika, ca. 1876–1928', *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 4 (1 October 2006): 987, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.111.4.983>.

<sup>102</sup> 'Der 8 Pesa-Chec', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 14 June 1902, IV/24 edition.

<sup>103</sup> See for example 'Aus Daressalam und Umgegend', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 11 July 1903, V/28 edition.

<sup>104</sup> Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*, 19.

<sup>105</sup> 'Eingeborene im Polizeidienst', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 October 1903, V/43 edition.

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Chancellor Bülow to request the German government to make provisions to “protect the image of the Europeans.”<sup>106</sup> Assurances ought to be made, the Duke wrote, “that the native, even if he is entrusted with official functions, must show respect for the white man as such.”<sup>107</sup>

Concerning this matter, the settler lobby advocated for a study of other European imperial powers and their solutions to the policing question. The DKG asked the colonial administration to make inquiries across all continents to understand which rights and authorities were held by indigenous policemen. They requested reports from the German embassies and consulates in different colonial territories on the treatment of indigenous police and their authorities, highlighting the importance of the issue to Germany’s own colonial conduct.

Soon, information came in from every corner of the world, representing a wide spread of approaches. Diplomats reported that in British West Africa, the lower police ranks were made up entirely of indigenous officers and held the same authorities vis-à-vis Africans and Europeans, and the same was reported from British Fiji. As for the French colonies, a distinction was made between *les vieilles colonies* – acquired before 1815 – and *les nouvelles colonies* – after 1815. In the old colonies, only European policemen were employed, whereas in the new colonies indigenous police officers had some authority vis-à-vis Europeans but always had to remain under the supervision of a higher-ranking European.<sup>108</sup> No distinction between whites and non-whites was made in the American colony of the Philippines. Here, all policemen held the same rights and authorities.<sup>109</sup> A special case was reported by the German consul in Tianjin, where many European empires and the Japanese empire imposed different regulations on their individual areas of concession. In the British, German, and Japanese municipalities, non-European policemen were furnished with emergency powers, such as to prevent crimes from happening or to catch criminals in the act. Otherwise, any matters outside these emergency authorities ought to be resolved by the Chinese or Indian police forces only through consultation with the superior European officers under whose instructions they had to act. A similar but more restrictive arrangement was true for the French concessions: here non-Europeans were prohibited to arrest Europeans at all. Even if an Indian or Chinese policeman had observed a crime being committed, the only course of action they were authorised to take was to prevent

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<sup>106</sup> Johann Albrecht Herzog zu Mecklenburg to Bernhard von Bülow, 1 October 1903, fol. 2, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., fol. 4.

<sup>108</sup> Letter to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, ‘Die Befugnisse farbiger Polizisten gegenüber Europäern in fremden Kolonien’, 14 January 1904, fols 63–66, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>109</sup> Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat Manila to Bernhard von Bülow, 2 December 1903, fols 50–62, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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the criminal from escaping. The arrest then had to be made by a European officer. In the Austrian and Russian concession areas, policing was largely done by navy officers and Cossacks, with a few Chinese assistants who however held no authority vis-à-vis Europeans altogether.<sup>110</sup>

In German East Africa, the colonial administration observed these inquiries with great interest. Governor Götzen rejected the claims by the colonial associations and settlers that indigenous police were undermining the supremacy of the white race and denied that African police officers had acted against Europeans with detrimental effects. Instead, Götzen reported that the demands of the DKG were not only met, but “exceeded the extent of the wishes expressed in the petition.”<sup>111</sup> Indigenous police were only permitted to act against Europeans as a preventative measure or to arrest those who had been caught committing an offence in the act. This resembled the arrangement in some of the Tianjin concession areas. A similar report was also made from Zanzibar.<sup>112</sup>

Another administrator, Hans Zache, published an essay on the relationship between indigenous policemen and the ruling white race, directly speaking to the settlers’ concerns. Here, Zache argued that the “prestige” of the state had to override racial prestige in some instances. Therefore, the employment of indigenous police officers against Europeans in cases where inaction would lead to the escape of a suspect or criminal was allowed and warranted. Zache continued to explain that under the supervision of a European police officer, an African officer could be instructed to use violent physical means to constrain or coerce a European. Self-defence in case of attack likewise was allowed and even required. All this was necessary to create security and stability in the colony. But aside from these few instances, Zache conceded that the indigenous policeman should have to treat any European with appropriate respect and thus should not be authorised to take any further policing measures against the white populations.<sup>113</sup> Zache’s remarks sparked wide-spread discussion even internationally. The Dutch East Indian newspaper *Locomotief*, for example, suggested that Zache’s arrangement

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<sup>110</sup> Kaiserlich Deutsches Konsulat Tientsin to Bernhard von Bülow, 3 December 1903, fol. 29, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>111</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 10 January 1904, fols 75–76, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>112</sup> See the report by Graf von Hardenberg to Gustav Adolf von Götzen, 4 January 1904, fol. 88, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>113</sup> Hans Zache’s essay was published in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, but no further bibliographical information on the publication can be found. Some of his key points are relayed in a report by the German consulate in the Dutch East Indies. See Kaiserlich Deutsches General-Konsulat für Niederländisch Indien in Batavia to Bernhard von Bülow, 4 July 1906, fols 117–120, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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was misguided: if Africans were employed in the police service, they ought to hold the same authorities and rights as their European counterparts. This would, in fact, be beneficial to the supremacy of Europeans: “by not attributing any special rights to European criminals,” the newspaper argued, “the prestige of the European race is increased.”<sup>114</sup>

While these discussions were held, Götzen had to acknowledge that no official, colony-wide regulation of the indigenous police force had been established. The districts were acting individually, and indigenous police officers were tacitly expected to navigate the obscure and often competing demands for order, security and safety, and the racist and hierarchical convictions of the European populations. While it seemed that this approach satisfied neither side, Götzen argued that this was in fact in line with the arrangements in Mombasa in British East Africa, where official stipulations were lacking by design.<sup>115</sup> There, the non-governance of police affairs had allowed for flexibility, provided stability and security, and on the whole had worked conveniently for the administration, a model Götzen hoped to emulate.<sup>116</sup>

Yet it was perhaps this lack of guidance that upset the settler community the most. The British system of codifying racial equality on paper but practicing something else on the ground was far from being a practical and flexible solution. To the contrary, any ambiguity over the role and position of the indigenous police would undermine the validity of any claims of a racial hierarchy, the settlers suggested.<sup>117</sup> That the white race “had not been surrounded by a certain nimbus that conveyed the character of the ‘unapproachable’ to the natives,” would come to the detriment of the colony. The DOAZ warned that “what will be lost in this respect will not be recovered easily.”<sup>118</sup> The only solution was, according to the newspaper, to increase the number of European police officers. This would free up indigenous police officers so that they could be limited to carry out more “menial” tasks –meaning anything that was unrelated to the policing of Europeans.<sup>119</sup>

The oppositional attitude between settlers and administration was thus manifested in the diverging opinions on the police service and its related issues. The colonial government saw in the recruitment of indigenous policemen a practical solution to the dissemination of state power

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Walter Rößler to Gustav Adolf von Götzen, 2 January 1904, fol. 89, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>116</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 11 February 1904, fol. 87, Reichskolonialamt, Rechtssachen, R 1001/5377, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>117</sup> ‘Die Befugnisse schwarzer Polizisten gegenüber den Weißen’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 8 April 1905, VII/14 edition.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Eingeborene im Polizeidienst’.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Etwas vom Polizeiwesen der Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 22 April 1905, VII/16 edition.

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and control. It did not share the settlers' concerns over racial consciousness. Nonetheless, the government sought guidance from other imperial contexts in recognition of the importance of the issue. For the settlers, on the other hand, the need for clear racial segregation overruled virtually all other questions: any impracticality of two coexisting police forces was ignored. But even though settlers continued to campaign for a strict division of European and African policing, they recognised that the government remained firm. To overcome the government's position, the settlers pursued different strategies. The next section will therefore explore how settlers attempted to steer the administration into adopting policies that would ultimately serve their racial hierarchies, even if the government was reluctant to act on settlers' concerns.

### Section IV: Immigration bans and repatriation

As the examples of labour, immigration, violence, and policing have shown, the settler community and government often were at odds. Different ideologies pitted the settlers and the settler press against the governor and the colonial administration. Which colonial policies or strategies should be employed depended on the respective priorities or goals. The government sought stability and the economic development and exploitation of the territory, while the commitment to racial supremacy stood above everything else for the settlers. This divide was firmly carved out and neither government nor settlers seemed overly sympathetic to the opposing side or appeared willing to make compromises.

To achieve their goals nevertheless, the settlers employed different tactics to overcome the divisions with the government. One means by which the settlers attempted this was by adopting the government's language and applying it to their own cause. Here, the settlers consciously engaged in an economic discourse which, on the surface, seemed to suggest that measures taken by the government for the economic advancement of the colony were economically unsound. On closer inspection, however, this discourse served the ultimate purpose of deepening the racial divide, manifesting European supremacy, and fulfilling the demands of the settler population.

On the issue of Indian immigration into the colony, the settlers were irked, among other things, by the simple fact that the Indian merchants were not part of the German Empire but were British subjects. The settlers insisted that Indian merchants swindled the state and its economy by sending their earnings abroad to India. The German colonial economy would not and could not benefit from this, the settlers claimed. On the contrary, they cautioned that any

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remittances sent to India would only contribute to the economic development of the British Empire. This sentiment was explained clearest in the DOAZ: “we do not want German East Africa to be flooded by a people under the rule of the foreign power that is our fiercest economic rival. We do not want this people, the Indians, to usurp all trade with the natives through unfair business practices [...] and we do not want the money earned in this way to go outside the country to a foreign territory from where it will not flow back.”<sup>120</sup> The settlers attempted to appeal to the economic and national interests of the colonial state, suggesting that the current system benefitted solely the British and exploited the Germans. Regulations and restrictions therefore ought to be adopted to ensure the success of German East Africa and the German Empire.

Of course, all this worked towards the settlers’ goal of entrenching their commitment to and their belief in racial supremacy. Placing more regulations on Indian merchants, the settlers claimed paradoxically, meant greater freedom, greater equality, and a greater, longer-lasting progress of the colonial economy in German East Africa, and thus for the German Empire in general. To give their suggestion more credence, the settlers also made comparisons to British, Dutch, and French policies vis-à-vis the cultivation of the local colonial economy, and to that effect praised, for example, the immigration restrictions in southern Africa.<sup>121</sup>

Concrete proposals to curtail the Indian populations were a common feature found in the articles of the settler press. Following a row over shipping services, Indians were treated with further hostility and the policies of Governor Rechenberg were attacked. When Indians protested the DOAL’s refusal to sell them first- and second-class tickets, a boycott was initiated. This caused a major disruption to the company’s operations, as the DOAL made great profits from running scheduled passages between German East Africa and India. Two of the company’s directors travelled to Bombay to rectify the situation, offering better terms and improvements. For the DOAZ, Rechenberg’s Indian-friendly policies and the Indians’ crooked nature had brought about this caving-in: “hopefully, it will now be clear where the principle of *laissez faire, laissez passer* has led us: Indians, who were able to develop more and more into

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<sup>120</sup> ‘Verlorene Liebesmüh’.

<sup>121</sup> For some comparisons with British East Africa, Natal, French Madagascar, Australia, and others, see ‘Die “Inderfrage” in Britisch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 May 1906, VIII/21 edition; ‘Unsere deutschen Ansiedler über die Inder’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 14 July 1906, VIII/28 edition; ‘Die Indergefahr in Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 20 July 1907, IX/34 edition; ‘Die Inderfrage in den britischen Kolonien’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 November 1910, XII/94 edition.

a factor in our economic life, struck a blow at the very moment when they became aware of their power.”<sup>122</sup>

The settler press demanded that the government act by restricting the immigration of further Indians and making it harder for them to succeed economically.<sup>123</sup> Concrete but paradoxical suggestions were made. A settler from the interior asked: “does the Indian in German East Africa have more rights than the German settler?”<sup>124</sup> These sentiments were taken up by another settler in a letter to the DOAZ. The author proposed conditions that ought to be imposed on the Indian population in order to make the situation “fair” to everyone:

- 1) Trade tax of about 1,000 rupees per year; 2) prohibition of roaming trade; 3) regulation to build a massive stone house of European style at the trading sites; 4) obligation to use German language for commercial bookkeeping; 5) abolition of the legal enforceability of black people's credit debt; 6) rejection of any new applications for a trading permit; 7) in case of declaration of bankruptcy or fraudulent manipulation, withdrawal of the trading licence and immediate expulsion from the country; 8) expiration of the trading licence on the death of the business owner. The licence is also not transferable. 9) Prohibition of sale of beer and spirits.<sup>125</sup>

Especially the fourth point was seen as crucial. The German settlers, merchants, and planters saw Indian bookkeeping in Indian languages as promoting fraudulent activities, as no European could expected to be able to confirm contracts or orders in a language they could not understand – an awareness of the irony of this situation, given the circumstances under which eastern Africa had come under German rule in the first place, naturally did not feature in these deliberations. Unintelligible Indian bookkeeping proved an economic disadvantage for European merchants and ought to be stopped. But the settlers’ attempt to appeal to the state’s economic priorities by asserting that the lawlessness around Indian businesses defrauded the state of much needed tax revenues was unsuccessful.

The government was weary of accommodating such demands for immigration restrictions and refused to consider the outright banishment of Indians. The colonial administration reasoned that any move against imperial British subjects would have negative effects on Anglo-German relations. The European settlers’ anti-Indian sentiment could transcend colonial affairs and antagonise Britain, thereby endangering important trade relations between the two empires generally, and between German East Africa and India more specifically. An official of the Foreign Office thereto informed Dernburg of the adverse reaction

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<sup>122</sup> ‘Indische Masseneinwanderung’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 17 April 1909, XI/30 edition, 2.

<sup>123</sup> ‘Lokales’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 17 June 1911, XIII/48 edition.

<sup>124</sup> ‘Hat der Inder in Deutsch-Ostafrika mehr Rechte wie der deutsche Ansiedler?’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 3 September 1904, VI/36 edition.

<sup>125</sup> ‘Unsere deutschen Ansiedler über die Inder’.

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in India that was evoked by anti-Indian policy by the British colonial administration in the Transvaal. If British policymaking already elicited such opposition, what would happen if a foreign empire were to impose similar restrictions?<sup>126</sup>

In German East Africa, Governor Rechenberg agreed; any drastic restrictions on the immigration of Indians, or even the exiling of them, would have overly detrimental effects. But while the RKA had planned to implement the requirement of a formal written application to immigrate to German East Africa, orienting itself on the example of Southern Rhodesia, where similar measures had been taken, Rechenberg disagreed.<sup>127</sup> The measure was rejected by the governor on the grounds that no provisions existed to handle those whose application had been rejected upon arriving at any of the ports of entry, not to mention the financial and labour efforts required to enforce such measures.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, Rechenberg reminded colonial officials that the matter had been codified in international law and therefore ought not be challenged owing to the nationalist sentiments of a few settlers. A German-British agreement over settling colonial disputes from July 1890 stipulated that subjects of both empires were free to settle in both territories, thus allowing Indians to immigrate to German East Africa.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1885 had also regulated the protection of trade and the equality of all merchants within any colonial territory of the Congo Basin area, which included German East Africa.<sup>130</sup>

To that effect, Rechenberg could only envision one concession to the settlers' demands: restricting the immigration of Indians to those areas that showed potential for permanent settlement by Europeans.<sup>131</sup> But even this was a contentious issue. Firstly, because hardly any Indians lived in those areas anyway. Most had settled in the coastal urban centres and along the railroad and its outposts. Secondly, no one was entirely sure which areas were suitable for permanent and sustained European settlement, given that, at maximum, settlers had only been

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<sup>126</sup> Hamm to Bernhard Dernburg, 'Betreffend die indische Bevölkerung in Deutsch-Ostafrika', 19 February 1908, fols 88–89, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/28, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>127</sup> Department of the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, 'Asiatics Ordinance, 1908', 158 British South Africa Company Government Gazette (1908), fols 142–145, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/28, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>128</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichskolonialamt, 2 December 1908, fols 135–138, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/28, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>129</sup> See article VIII of 'Vertrag zwischen Deutschland und England über die Kolonien und Helgoland' in, Das Staatsarchiv, *Sammlung Der Offiziellen Aktenstücke Zur Geschichte Der Gegenwart*, vol. 51 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1891), 151ff., [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/deu/606\\_Vertrag%20zw%20Deut%20u%20Eng\\_110.pdf](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/deu/606_Vertrag%20zw%20Deut%20u%20Eng_110.pdf).

<sup>130</sup> See Article 5 of 'General-Akte der Berliner Konferenz. Vom 26. Februar 1885.' (Deutsches Reichsgesetzblatt, 20 June 1885), 215–46, Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutsches\\_Reichsgesetzblatt\\_1885\\_023\\_215.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Deutsches_Reichsgesetzblatt_1885_023_215.jpg).

<sup>131</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichskolonialamt, 14 September 1908, fols 121–126, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/28, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

there for some twenty-odd years. And even then, many European settlers spent some extended period of time on *Heimurlaub* (home leave) in the temperate zones of Europe at least every few years to recover from the tropical climate. For many, this proved another factor that made it difficult to succeed economically, a factor that they nimbly linked to the anti-Indian agitation: roundtrip tickets from German East Africa to Europe were staggeringly expensive, they argued, and this was a disadvantage the Indian merchant did not have.

Contrary to these European lamentations, Rechenberg held the position that “small-scale trade is hardly likely to maintain the social superiority of the European, which must always be maintained in the colony,” and therefore further underlined the need for Indian merchants.<sup>132</sup> In his exchanges with the colonial metropole, Rechenberg proposed two measures to reduce the reliance on Indians: putting agency at the hands of the Europeans and market forces. Rechenberg reasoned that German industry ought to produce and provide more consumer goods for the indigenous populations, so that Indian traders would come under competitive pressure. In addition, plantation owners should be encouraged to improve conditions around the plantations for European shopkeepers. The small shops that were mostly operated by Indian businessmen were “the essential nexus of the colonial economy,” only because they provided the contact and product sales point for the indigenous African populations.<sup>133</sup> If plantation owners – many of which were large German companies or holdings and whose boards of directors were often filled by delegates of the German Reichstag – were to offer more favourable terms and support to European shopkeepers, the Indian might soon not be able to compete.<sup>134</sup>

Furthermore, concerns over British reprisals remained. The British vice-consul of Zanzibar, a Mr. Young, visited German East Africa for two weeks in December 1908 to get a clearer understanding of the situation faced by the Indians. While Young found nothing to complain about, Rechenberg accordingly wrote to Berlin, stating “that the agitation against the Indians and their treatment in German East Africa is being followed with great attention by the British government.”<sup>135</sup> For the advocate of free-trade, non-intervention, and freedom of movement, the racialist and nationalist discourses propagated by the settler communities held little weight. German East Africa was, for the governor, essentially an economic vehicle that worked at the behest of the German Empire. To achieve this, any means was fair: the

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., fol. 123.

<sup>133</sup> “Duka” is the Swahili word for “shop”. Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, 152.

<sup>134</sup> von Rechenberg to Reichskolonialamt, 14 September 1908, fols 125–126.

<sup>135</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichskolonialamt, 22 December 1908, fols 148–149, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ansiedlungswesen, R 1001/28, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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encouraged immigration of Indians and the reliance on the Indian business sector were pragmatic solutions to achieve economic growth. Consciousness of and adherence to the “racial hierarchy” were unimportant, and the demands of a nationalist vocal but numerically minor settler community – if compared to the “profitable” indigenous or Indian labour force in German East Africa – amounted to nothing more than background noise in Rechenberg’s economic engine.

As their efforts seemed to not yield the desired results, the settlers chose different tactics. They claimed that Indian merchants deceived Africans with dishonest business practices, sabotaging the government’s attempts to “educate the native to work”. This, the settlers suggested, prevented the cultivation of a strong and sustainable indigenous labour force, which in turn obstructed solving the labour question and ultimately hindered economic development of the colony.<sup>136</sup> The only logical conclusion and way forward was, to the settlers, the unequivocal replacement of Indian merchants with a trained cadre of European and indigenous traders. This would retain funds in the colony, economically improve African populations, and lead to the colony’s more rapid economic progress.<sup>137</sup>

The DOAZ, however, referred not only to the long-term detrimental effects on the economy brought about through the presence of Indian merchants, but also pointed at the direct costs the adverse business practices of the Indian merchant were causing the German taxpayer:

If a native – who can be called wealthy by Negro standards – falls into the hands of an Indian trader, one can certainly expect that the latter will not rest until the entire fortune of the black has passed into his possession in a relatively short time. The Indian cunningly knows how to use the weaknesses of the Negro to induce him to buy far beyond his means. If the black who enters the shop of an Indian does not have enough money to pay for the articles he has bought – 90 per cent of which are useless and have literally been hung onto him – then, if he is known to be wealthy, credit is readily granted to him and he is thereby enticed to make even larger purchases. The Indian continues this procedure until the black man's debt exceeds his wealth; then the Indian tightens the net, and the German courts must help him to take the last penny from the debtor, whereby it can be safely reckoned that the Indian has earned cleanly at least 75 per cent of the debt sum.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> ‘Indische Völkerwanderung nach Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 28 October 1905, VII/43 edition, 1–2; ‘Indische Schachzüge’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 11 August 1906, VIII/32 edition, 2.

<sup>137</sup> Similarly, Chinese labourers were seen not just as a hindrance to the cultivation of Africans, but also as contributing to a further degradation of African civilisation – and therefore contributing to a further hindrance to ever solving the labour issue. Asian labour could not be the solution to the problem of labour shortages and would bring about new race conflicts and exacerbate existing ones, claimed the DOAZ. See also the reporting on an article by Henry Hamilton Johnston (1858-1927), a leading figure of British colonialism in Africa: ‘Wie man den Schwarzen zur Arbeit erzieht’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 15 February 1908, X/12 edition.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Die Indergefahrr in Deutsch-Ostafrika’, 1.

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This procedure, the DOAZ explained, not only had clear negative effects on the economic development and progress of the indigenous population, and thus on the German East African economy, but it caused additional expenses for the colonial administration. Financial and personnel resources were committed to minor matters and tied to resolving the Indians' grievances against the African populations. This would hinder the implementation of projects or execution of policies that could have a much stronger economic impact for the colony. For the settlers, the short-term economic costs of denying more Indians to immigrate to German East Africa and by imposing tighter regulations on their businesses so that they would give up eventually were outweighed by the long-term benefits of thus creating a European merchant class and an African society that trusted the colonial administration.

These examples were also invoked regarding opposition directed at European immigrants who would not or could not uphold the high standards of racial prestige. Throughout the German colonial period, many poor and destitute Europeans landed in the port cities of Dar es Salaam, Tanga, and elsewhere. For some, German East Africa was already the second or third attempt to establish themselves in Africa. Many had sought a new life unsuccessfully in southern Africa, where climate and a longer history of colonial exploitation had permitted the emergence of "Europeanised" settler societies. But high economic costs proved a difficult hurdle to overcome.<sup>139</sup> Soon, German East Africa was seen as a cheaper and more promising option, one where people believed themselves "to be able to eat their fill or gather riches undisturbed on their new home soil."<sup>140</sup> And while some indeed found employment and the imagined "paradise", a great majority of destitute whites remained in their role of economic – and increasingly social – outcasts.<sup>141</sup>

In the eyes of the colonial administration, poor immigrants endangered the stability and security of the colony, and by implication, posed a threat to the economic development of German East Africa. The government therefore considered the question of how to reduce the number of destitute in the colony. A first solution was found in the forced repatriation of "undesirables". Discussions with the DOAL soon stalled, however. The government had requested the shipping line to ensure that its passengers were in financially stable conditions already in the European ports of embarkation and to repatriate back to Europe any immigrants

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<sup>139</sup> 'Der kaufmännische Angestellte in der Kolonie'.

<sup>140</sup> 'Von einem Ansiedler in Uhehe', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 5 July 1902, IV/27 edition.

<sup>141</sup> Philippa Söldenwagner has argued that the realities of German East African settlement were frequently "characterised by insecurity, failure and ineptitude, thereby constantly negating the image of the successful colonizer that was so essential for the justification and maintenance of European settlement." See Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 10.

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found in destitute conditions up to four weeks after arrival in German East Africa. But while the DOAL agreed to the government's petition, the situation hardly changed. Most poor were immigrating into German East Africa from South Africa, and here the DOAL refused to make any guarantees for operational reasons.<sup>142</sup>

Yet, the situation was further complicated by the unclear conditions surrounding the questions as to who would receive those exiled from German East Africa. While German officials believed that "it will have to be regarded as a principle of international law that a state cannot refuse to receive its own nationals who have become in need of assistance abroad," it seemed that adherence to these principles was not universal, and not profitable on the long run.<sup>143</sup> According to the Foreign Office, more German destitute were receiving support in Britain and its colonies than British destitute were being supported by the German Empire. Similar conditions prevailed with regards to the United States. The Foreign Office therefore rebuffed the Colonial Office's plans to request foreign states to take back their nationals on the grounds that it would be too costly to take care of helpless Germans abroad.<sup>144</sup>

Without the chance of enacting such arrangements, and with the need to find someone to foot the bill, the government decided to delegate responsibility to employers.<sup>145</sup> Rechenberg issued a decree to come into force on 1 April 1909, according to which employers would be responsible for either financially supporting or eventually repatriating back to Europe those workers who arrived in an unfit state in the colony, or who were unable to secure other employment after having been dismissed from the company for which they originally had been recruited to work. The decree stipulated that the administration could hold employers responsible to pay for the return of white employers "if the contractual relationship is terminated due to expiration of the employment contract, by dismissal or by termination on the part of the employer or if the employee is forced to leave the colony due to illness or disability."<sup>146</sup>

Unsurprisingly, this plan left many employers enraged. Opposition and disapproval over the issue were so profound that individual cases were escalated to the highest governmental levels. The lawyer Horst von Nostitz wrote to chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, asking him "to

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<sup>142</sup> Gerhard von Buchka, 'Denkschrift, betreffend die Beschränkung der Einwanderung mittelloser Personen in Deutsch-Ostafrika' (Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 1 October 1898), fol. 52ff., Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Armensachen, R 1001/129, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>143</sup> von Frantzius to Friedrich von Lindequist, Letter, 29 August 1910, fol. 184, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Armensachen, R 1001/129, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., fols 184–185.

<sup>145</sup> 'Heimbeförderung mittelloser Weißer', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 12 December 1908, X/96 edition, 1.

<sup>146</sup> 'Verordnung betreffend der Heimbeförderung mittelloser Weißer', *Ämtlicher Anzeiger für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 28 February 1909, X/6 edition, 1.

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examine the decree, and to order its repeal.”<sup>147</sup> Nostitz had been appointed to act in the defence of the company of Wilkins und Wiese which had been ordered to pay for the repatriation of a dismissed engineer named Marchlewski. But the company protested that the new decree was inapplicable and that the engineer was wealthy enough to fund his own return. Nostitz argued that the administration could not prove that Marchlewski was destitute since the district itself did not have the necessary resources to carry out the formally required research. Nostitz therefore implored the chancellor to revoke the decree as it would otherwise set a dangerous precedent.<sup>148</sup> The case was representative of the grievances filed against the administration, but also of the colonial state’s – often misguided – attempts to minimise costs. Employers were only unburdened when Heinrich Schnee assumed the governorship following Rechenberg.

Meanwhile, the long-established European settlers of German East Africa saw new arrivals in economically precarious positions as worse than no European immigration at all. Despite the frequent demands for the colonial government to support European settlement, settlers were also convinced that not every means was a solution in itself. An increase in the quantity of Europeans in the colony should not be pursued at any cost, and destitute and poor Europeans who threatened to undo the carefully constructed position of white settler supremacy ought to be prevented from immigrating into German East Africa.

The influx of Europeans into the colony had hailed from the Reichstag’s approval of the construction of the central railway line, as well as the general economic improvement of conditions in German East Africa. Many saw the colony in rosy terms, taking externally visible projects, such as railway construction, as a sign of healthy economic and social conditions. But when European immigration increased, established settlers soon realised that many of the eagerly-awaited new arrivals were in fact bringing a range of problems. Many proved to be the exact opposite of what settlers had hoped for. Poor Europeans defied the social norms the “old” settlers had imported to and established in German East Africa. They thereby undermined the race hierarchical image they so meticulously had sought to set up and to communicate to the Africans. The DOAZ reported:

In Dar es Salaam one can now observe scenes that defy description. Often only dressed in shirt and trousers, bareheaded and barefoot, one sees white people walking through the streets of the city, sees how they buy bread and bananas for 1 or 2 pesas from the black street vendors and take their meal in the streets. At the wells you can watch them

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<sup>147</sup> Horst von Nostitz to Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Letter, 10 March 1910, fol. 164, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Armensachen, R 1001/129, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., fols 164–166.

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mingling uninhibitedly with the black water carriers, helping them to pull up the filled water buckets.<sup>149</sup>

This behaviour was unacceptable to the established settlers who feared that the thoughtless actions of these “tramps” subverted the prestige of the European population.<sup>150</sup> If some whites were seen to fraternise with the deemed inferiors, and were seen to not possess the great riches, civilisation, and sacrosanctity the racial theories called for, how could other whites, who for so long had preached to the Africans about the superiority of the white race in wealth and status, maintain their prestige and dominating position? To present their concerns to the government, the “old” settlers tactically employed the administration’s economic language again.

All throughout the colony’s existence, settlers attempted to capitalise on the government’s faltering attempts to find a solution for the immigration issue. The settler press increased its efforts to lobby for the outright ban of those who would undermine the racial supremacy of the settlers, trying to unite economic and race criteria. Again and again, the DOAZ cried out over the high costs of having to return destitute immigrants back to Europe. These costs fell onto the colonial government, by extension onto the German East African taxpayer, and by further extension onto the German Empire as a whole. The issue seemed clear for the settler community: an outright immigration ban was needed to ensure that only suitable persons who would develop the colonial economy – and would maintain racial prestige – were to settle in German East Africa. According to the DOAZ, such experiences had been made in French Madagascar and North America, and both ought to serve as models for the German East African government.<sup>151</sup> A further comparison was made with England, where a law was to be passed that would keep unwanted immigrants, “such as the sick, the crippled, and the destitute, who work for starvation wages” out of the country.<sup>152</sup>

The DOAZ quoted these plans to make demands for a law that would make it compulsory for white persons to register with the district administration, so that their background and movements could be checked, and, if necessary, actions could be taken to safeguard the interests of German East Africa. Yet, it would take many years for such regulation to come into effect. Only the appointment of Schnee gave the settlers a brief moment of jubilation. The Immigration Act of 1913 instituted a duty for immigrants to report to the administration, loosened the obligations of employers to account for the repatriation of immigrant employees, and imposed proof of an asset minimum of 450 rupees for non-

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<sup>149</sup> ‘Eine ernste Gefahr für unser Prestige’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 25 March 1905, VII/12 edition.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> ‘Ein Wort zur Mahnung’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 15 April 1905, VII/15 edition.

<sup>152</sup> ‘Nochmals die Fremdenpolizei’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 June 1905, VII/25 edition.

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indigenous and 150 rupees for indigenous immigrants. As this placed restrictions on Indian immigration as well, the new decree found a very positive reception in the settler press.<sup>153</sup> Nonetheless, by the end of the year the DOAZ already complained about the steadily increasing immigration of Indians, suggested that officials did not comply with the new decree, and urged the government to put an end to “attracting coloured people of any race to the protectorate, who are and want to be nothing but a nuisance to the national economy.”<sup>154</sup>

Undoubtedly, the DOAZ and its readership were concerned with the financial aspects of immigration of destitute Europeans, or with the alleged negative effects to the economic development of the colony brought about by Indian merchants or Chinese workers. Yet, above all else, the articles in the colonial newspapers reveal that the “economic side” of colonial matters was mostly a tool to get the government’s attention, and to influence the administration to adopt policies that – aside from economic benefits – also manifested those racial theories in which the settlers wholeheartedly believed.

#### Conclusion

“Colonial and settlement policy are always and everywhere justified by the right of the fittest, that is, the superior race” wrote the DOAZ in March 1914.<sup>155</sup> For the settler community, this belief in racial consciousness and in the superiority of the German or European civilisation was still central thirty years after the first Germans had settled in German East Africa. Settlement was driven by racial theories throughout Germany’s colonial history. Yet unsurprisingly, this was far from the entire story. What the settlers viewed as prime justification and objective of colonial expansion was not always mirrored by the colonial state. Different ideologies clashed frequently; with settlers wishing to carve out a position of racial primacy, whereas security and the economy trumped other priorities in the government’s eye.

This chapter has analysed the ways and means in which settlers and state stood in opposition and examined why and how overlaps and agreements occurred. Labour and

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<sup>153</sup> ‘Die Melde- und die Einwanderungsverordnung für das deutschostafrikanische Schutzgebiet’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 October 1912, XIV/83 edition; Franz Josef Sassen and Philipp Zorn, eds., ‘Einwanderungsverordnung für das deutsch-ostafrikanische Schutzgebiet vom 10. Oktober 1912’, in *Deutsche Kolonialgesetzgebung: Text-Ausgabe mit Anmerkungen und Sachregister*, 2nd ed., vol. 49, Sammlung Guttentag (Berlin: Guttentag, 1913); ‘Anwendung der Einwanderungsverordnung auf Farbige’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 November 1912, XIV/90 edition, 2.

<sup>154</sup> ‘Lokales: Einwanderung von mittellosen Indern und Arabern’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 25 October 1913, XV/86 edition, 3.

<sup>155</sup> ‘Besiedelung’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 4 March 1914, XVI/19 edition, 1.

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immigration were contested issues because settlers and administration had different opinions about the very nature of these matters. Settlers firmly believed that they stood at the apex of a fixed racial pyramid, which gave them permission to exploit Africans. The immigration of Indian and Chinese workers was seen as a threat to the composition or validity of the racial pyramid and therefore ought to be restricted. For the German administration – and for owners of large, government-subsidised enterprises – Indians and Chinese were “tools” of economic progress. Similarly, the government believed that Africans could be “civilised.” This necessitated a concentrated effort to “educate the natives”.

Equally, violence and the application of violent means were disputed. For the government, violence was a method of subjugating and securing the territory, of crushing resistance, and of demonstrating the state’s might. Yet with increasing control and development, violence became more of a hindrance to the economic progress of the territory. Violence increased the potential for resistance and rebellion. Excessive abuse of labourers at the hands of plantation owners had negative implications for the procurement of much needed workers and was frowned upon by other empires, even if violent practices characterised all colonies. The colonial state therefore sought to limit and curtail its application. On the other hand, violence was utilised as an everyday technique of the broader European population to reinforce its belief in racial supremacy. For many, frequent and arbitrary lashings or floggings of workers were a display of European superiority and any reneging on this privilege automatically meant a sabotage of racial positions.

Policing exhibited similar tensions. The government recruited indigenous police officers as a pragmatic solution to questions of security and stability. Ultimately, these impacted how successfully the territory’s economy could be developed. Settlers, on the other hand, opposed the deployment of African policemen against Europeans. In their view, the racial sacrosanctity of the white race overrode any concerns for security, and safety concerns had to be addressed by employing only European police.

All throughout, settlers and government related their thoughts, concerns, and beliefs to wider transimperial and transnational contexts. But while the government sought foreign exchanges for inspiration and confirmation, it did not do so due to a sense of sharing a common European or white goal. Information gathering about British, Dutch, or French colonial practices served the purpose of solving distinct German East African problems, and therefore

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benefitted the German nation. Settlers, meanwhile, observed and engaged with different imperial contexts as members of an imagined community of Europeans or whites.<sup>156</sup>

Often, settlers tried to bypass their struggles with the colonial government. They attempted to engage in the same discourses as the administration, adopting a language that was characterised by economic arguments. This aimed not at overtly convincing the government of racial goals or demands. Neither did it constitute a renunciation or departure of these goals. Instead, the fundamental divergence of opinions, expectations, objectives, and assumptions between settlers and government afforded the settler press an opportunity to engage with the government. Through the adoption of the government's discourse – security, stability, economic growth – the DOAZ and other settler-friendly colonial newspapers attempted to disguise their objectives in the administration's language. Thereby, the settlers hoped to make the administration more amenable to deploying the policies or plans the settlers wanted. In the end, these efforts were only marginally successful and the antagonism between settlers and government remained an abiding feature of colonial administration.

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<sup>156</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

## CHAPTER IV: LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, CULTURE AND *DEUTSCHTUM*

### Introduction

On 21 September 1901, the DOAZ asked “should the natives of our colony learn German?”<sup>1</sup> This was hardly a clear-cut “yes” or “no” question. Proponents of the spread of the German language suggested that the colony would benefit if all its inhabitants spoke the same language and could follow the same orders. Communication with the indigenous populations would be improved and “German values” – crucial to the “education of the native” – could be conveyed more easily. Equally, Germans in the colony would benefit from being addressed in their own language, leading to a “strengthening of the national consciousness.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, more critical observers pointed to a loss of German supremacy. If Africans were to learn the German language, private conversations would become impossible, and Africans would lose respect for the German ruler. Instead of the indigenous populations learning German, Germans themselves should learn the languages of eastern Africa.

Many colonial stakeholders had great interest in this *Sprachenfrage* (language question). There were two key elements to this question: whether there should be a standardised lingua franca across the colonies, and what that language should be. Colonial government officials pointed to the necessity of a lingua franca in order to strengthen state rule. Yet they did not advocate for German to fill that role. Governor Götzen, for example, favoured the promotion of Kiswahili, which was already widespread in the colony.<sup>3</sup> Many European and Indian merchants and planters also already spoke Kiswahili. Equally, despite their nationalist outlook, settlers were not in favour of introducing German as the colony's lingua franca and favoured the spread of Kiswahili. Unlike the government, however, settlers did not pursue Kiswahili out of practicality. Instead, they suggested that German-speaking Africans would indeed lose respect for the colonisers: “it is of elementary importance with respect to the black man that he should not become aware of the greater or lesser weaknesses of his rulers and their circles of acquaintances, for the moral superiority of the white man, who is quite naturally believed to be infallible, is based in no small part on this.”<sup>4</sup> Were Africans to speak German, colonial rule would soon crumble, the argument went. In the same vein, settlers also emphasised

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Sollen die Eingeborenen unserer Kolonie Deutsch lernen?’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 21 September 1901, III/37 edition, 1–2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, Letter, 9 May 1905, fols 5–6, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/820, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Sollen unsere Schwarzen Deutsch lernen??’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 August 1904, VI/35 edition, 1.

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German aptitude for learning languages and suggested that “the necessary respect for the ‘white intruder’ will only exist when the latter can communicate with the natives in the language of the country and the better he masters this language, the more respect he gains.”<sup>5</sup> This was an indication of their belief in the superiority and exclusivity of German culture – a theme settlers returned to frequently. On the other side of the debate, missionaries considered German as the ultimate answer to the language question. The missions had taught and spread the gospel in regional languages, but fundamentally considered Kiswahili the “language of Islam”.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, the *Sprachenfrage* was only part of a much larger discussion around what it meant to be German. The establishment of German colonial rule was accompanied by the spread of German culture and what might be called a distinct German identity or *Deutschtum*. This chapter will explore how different colonial actors used, spread, limited, and engaged with ‘Germanness’, and how the idea of being German came to be central to settler identity. Settlers used German culture to demarcate themselves further from Africans and others. They portrayed their *Deutschtum* as a form of superiority. As we shall see, the settlers’ economic and political situation did not live up to their own idealised and utopian beliefs: settlers were struggling to make ends meet while Indian merchants and other European planters succeeded. The arrival of Rechenberg and Dernburg saw further prioritisation of indigenous agriculture and Indian trade. Settlers continuously felt neglected by their government, also because they were side-lined from any colonial policymaking. As a consequence of these frustrations, identity and culture became the distinguishing feature of the German settler, a last effort to claim some form of superiority. Culture was something that could easily be exhibited but could not be taken away.<sup>7</sup>

But this claim of a superior German culture also led to a dissonance. On the one hand, settlers claimed that German values, practices, and traditions had made the German Empire: German culture gave rise to German civilisation. Africans were not civilised because their cultures were inferior. They did not possess “inherently German” values, such as diligence and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Missionsmonatsschau’, *Kreuz Zeitung*, 21 March 1905, 135 edition, fol. 3, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/820, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>7</sup> “Culture” is, of course, an incredibly broad and fluid concept. Scholars have struggled over definitions for the term for centuries. In this chapter, I use the term “culture” to refer to those practices, characteristics, artifacts, and traditions, that contemporary Germans would have described as culture or *Kultur*. When German settlers spoke or wrote of “German culture”, they understood it as those aspects that characterised their identity and life. This meant anything from German bread, cold cuts, or beer, to the literary works of Goethe and Schiller; from classical music by Beethoven and Bach, to virtues of organisation, prowess, and efficiency. Naturally, this interpretation of “culture” was highly exclusive and was formulated in relation to those cultures of other peoples in which one might not find the exact same aspects. In this way, the German settlers’ interpretation of culture was delimitative and essentialist. Especially in its comparison to “African cultures”, German culture was highly demarcated. It was equally descriptive and prescriptive: German culture could only be what was not also African. Similarly, Germans thought that African cultures were fundamentally different from their own culture.

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conscientiousness, and did not value labour as a means for progress. Yet, German colonisers believed that this could be overcome. The civilising mission suggested that Germans could lift Africans out of their savagery by exposing them to those inherently German, civilised, and productive values.

But while Germans sought to extend some of their values to the colonised population, they equally ensured that Africans were excluded from other aspects of cultural and social life. The carefully planned, military exhibition drills performed by *Askaris* during the celebrations of the Emperor's birthday had a disciplining function, and the rehearsals and performances of German folk songs by African school choirs were just as "beneficial" to "cultivating" Africans. Yet, at the same time, Africans were strictly forbidden from joining the country clubs in Dar es Salaam, Tanga, and elsewhere. But this incongruous blend of acculturation and exclusion was not a one-way process. Africans also communicated their cultural traditions and practices to the colonisers. The performance of Germanness was impossible without the concomitant absorption of elements of 'Africanness'.

Section I of this chapter will examine the different cultural practices and artifacts the German colonisers brought to eastern Africa. The Germans celebrated the birthdays of the Kaiser and Kaiserin, consumed *Kaffee und Kuchen* (coffee and cake) in the hotels and inns of the colony's larger cities, displayed flags and other insignia, or founded and became members of various clubs and societies. All these imports were highly visible, were intended to communicate to the local populations the "sophistication" of the German rulers, and created a sense of shared *Deutschtum* among the colonisers.

The next section analyses the colonial government's attempts to use cultural artifacts and objects as a practical tool. The administration, keen as ever to increase security and revenues, considered certain practices as "educational" and "civilising", or at least as a way of gaining Africans' trust. Yet, the government did not intend "to make Germans of the Africans but rather to produce Africans capable of German definitions of work."<sup>8</sup> Section III explores how settlers identified themselves within a shared *Deutschtum* and suggests that the belief in an exclusive German culture tended to become more and more entangled with the presumption of (or at least with arguments for) racial supremacy. This development created tensions between the settler's worldview and the government's objectives.

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<sup>8</sup> Arie J. van der Ploeg, 'Education in Colonial Africa: The German Experience', *Comparative Education Review* 21, no. 1 (February 1977): 106, <https://doi.org/10.1086/445923>.

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Sections IV and V examine the cultural exchange between Europeans and Africans. Not only did Germans and Europeans attempt to shape, alter, and replace African cultural practices for their own goals, they also defined what practices and artifacts were suitable for wider dissemination and which ones were European privileges. On the flipside, Africans themselves consciously altered their cultural practices in order to exploit the colonial system for their own benefit. They thereby influenced and transformed colonial European culture. The last section will suggest that the ensuing convergence of cultures led to fears of a “degeneration” of *Deutschtum*. Responses to these fears again pitted settlers against the administration.

This chapter as a whole, then, reveals the disparity between government and settler understandings of German culture. The German authorities were willing to support the cultural demands of the settlers for as long as they had a positive effect on the development of the colony. The settlers, on the other hand, sought to create a conservative utopia in which cultural practices conformed to social and racial hierarchies. This often stood at odds with the government’s plans for development and frictions between the two parties therefore characterised the colonial system in German East Africa. The indigenous populations, meanwhile, were subjected to the consequences of this dispute, but were also able to influence the processes of cultural exchange.

### Section I: German culture in East Africa

Most Europeans believed Africans to be inferior: racially, morally, culturally, and intellectually. This gave rise to the idea that Africans ought to be “educated” and “uplifted” onto a European level of civilisation. At the same time, however, Europeans were anxious to distinguish themselves from the populations over which they ruled. Spatial and legal segregation were the foundation of the colonial system. But this meant that German colonialism was a constantly renegotiated paradox of the striving for assimilation and separation: on the one hand, Africans should “act more German” and should reach a European level of civilisation. On the other, colonisers wanted nothing to do with the colonised and race hierarchies justified colonial exploitation and abuse.<sup>9</sup> This was an unsustainable contradiction, and the colonisers grew weary of the instability of their own position.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 75.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

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Cultural practices and artifacts in German East Africa illustrate this contradiction. German culture was everywhere in German East Africa, at least where there were Germans. When colonial Germans spoke of their *Kultur* (culture), they referred to a wide array of material and immaterial objects that could be inscribed with what colonisers perceived were essential German features. In the *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon* the editors explained that “a culture represents the epitome of fixed forms for language, custom, law, technology, economy, governmental and social conditions, art, science, religion, etc.”<sup>11</sup> Practices and artifacts were reminders of and links to life in the metropole. But they also signified “civilisation”, colonial rule, and served as a marker between coloniser and colonised. Germans were trying to portray their culture as prerequisite for progress and were simultaneously trying to prevent Africans’ access to it. Settlers, in particular, performed their German culture with much fanfare. They formulated a colonial identity that revolved around membership in German culture.

This *Deutschtum* took many forms and was both private and public. Flags adorned administrative buildings, and public notices or circulars bore the emblem of the governor of German East Africa. In Dar es Salaam, memorials to Otto von Bismarck, Hermann von Wissmann, and Wilhelm I stood prominently in the centre of town. Butchers and bakers produced bread, cakes and sausages that were near identical to what one might buy in the German metropole. German cafes and pharmacies in Dar es Salaam were located on one of the main streets, named *Unter den Akazien* with reference to Berlin’s popular boulevard. Wilhelm Schultz’s brewery served lager, wheat beer, brown beer, malt beer, and stout in a beer garden furnished with electric lighting, but also shipped its bottles throughout the colony. For those that preferred drinks made in Germany, the German East Africa Company, Wm O’Swald & Co., and other trading houses imported anything from Münchner Hofbräu to Rotkäppchen Sekt.

In the social sphere, settlers founded country clubs, singing societies, tennis and football clubs, cyclist associations, a Kilimanjaro alpine club, and theatres. Sailing and rowing competitions were a popular amusement and drew hundreds of spectators to the harbour of Dar es Salaam. The harbour also housed a marine aquarium that served both touristic and scientific purposes. The photographers Carl Vincenti and Walther Dobbertin had their own studios and produced anything from passport photos and postcards to decorative prints and art pictures.<sup>12</sup> Moschi and Wilhelmstal were home to public libraries established by the FDKG.<sup>13</sup> Anywhere

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<sup>11</sup> See the entry ‘Kulturwandel’ in Schnee, *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, 389–90.

<sup>12</sup> Walther Dobbertin’s photographs are collected in Walther Dobbertin, 1906-1918, Photographs, Nachlässe und Sammlungen, Bilder, Plakate, Karten, Pläne, Töne, BILD 105 Nachlass Walther Dobbertin, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Bibliotheken für Deutsch Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 April 1913, XV/34 edition, 2.

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Germans established themselves, they were keen to secure access to the conveniences and staples of home. All this aimed at establishing a new *Heimat* (home) abroad that was modelled on the German homeland.

Interestingly, the appeal to a shared Germanness trumped any reference to the individual German fatherlands. Bavarians and Swabians came to the colony, and so did people from Berlin, Hamburg, or Saxony. They all had their own regional traditions and cultures, but aside from a few practices like birthday celebrations for their individual royals, such as the prince regent of Bavaria, the colony was a cohesively German entity.<sup>14</sup> One explanation for this uniformity might be found in the similar union along religious lines: in German East Africa, settlers were Christian and the distinction between Protestant and Catholic was applied only seldom. Whereas in the German metropole religious denominations gained prominence and sectarian contrasts consolidated in German society in the Nineteenth Century, in the colony allusions were made to the unified Christian and German character of the colonisers.<sup>15</sup> The traditionally more Protestant *Deutschtum* of the metropole was a Christian *Deutschtum* in the colony.

That German settlers seemed to care little about the confessional divide is indicated by the complete absence of the *Benediktinerstreit* (Benedictine dispute) in the DOAZ and other colonial newspapers. The conflict went to the core of German missionary activity and led to strong disagreement between Catholic and Protestant missionary societies.<sup>16</sup> Yet, for settlers in German East Africa, this dispute was entirely ignored. Settlers engaged in religious practices – especially Christmas and Easter celebrations – but these were Christian, not specifically Catholic or Protestant. Dar es Salaam and other German East African cities also housed Catholic and Protestant churches, but there is no indication for any conflict between the two confessions where white settlers were concerned. Rather than “religious infighting”, settlers were more concerned with Christianity countering the influence of Islam. This “common enemy” united German settlers in a similar way that their life and experience on the edge of

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Aus Daressalam und Umgegend’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 March 1901, III/10 edition, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Olaf Blaschke, ‘Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Zweites Konfessionelles Zeitalter?’, *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 26, no. 1 (2000): 40. See also Wolfgang Altgeld, *Katholizismus, Protestantismus, Judentum: über religiös begründete Gegensätze und nationalreligiöse Ideen in der Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1992), 78ff.; Stan M. Landry, *Ecumenism, Memory, and German Nationalism, 1817-1917*, vol. First edition, Religion and Politics (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), <https://ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=714612&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>16</sup> Best, *Heavenly Fatherland*, chap. 4.

“European civilisation” strengthened their identification with the German Empire, rather than any individual local allegiances.

Yet, aside from living a comfortable and convenient life in the colony, settlers “performed Germanness” for two practical reasons. Firstly, behaving like ordinary Germans strengthened the bond between metropole and colony. Despite the often-proclaimed resentment towards parliamentary misrepresentation, settlers recognised that only Berlin could provide financial and military support, especially in the early years of German East Africa. Settlers believed that they could garner sympathies from metropolitan Germany by maintaining German traditions and practices in the colony. But even more important to German identity was the necessity to perform German culture in order to not be accused of “going native”. The administrator Wilhelm Külz wrote that the much-held conviction that *Deutschtum* “shines particularly brightly and clearly far away from the German fatherland [...] is not true without exceptions.” He went on to clarify that “there are many cases in which Germans in the colonies ‘verkaffern’.”<sup>17</sup> This was a considerable fear of any colonist with a shred of self-respect, and, as we shall see later, relations between Europeans and Africans incited heated arguments and discussions around race, identity, and patriotism.

One of the most visible enactments of *Deutschtum* were the celebrations of holidays or birthdays of important Germans. The settler newspapers reported extensively on Christmas and Easter festivities in an attempt to relay to the German metropole how “ordinary” German East Africa could be, even if decorated Christmas trees were not Nordmann firs but rather mangroves or similarly “exotic” trees.<sup>18</sup> Further staples of the German East African social calendar were the birthdays of the Kaiser and the Kaiserin. First and foremost, the imperial couple was the perfect representation of *Deutschtum* in the eyes of the settlers. They saw Kaiser Wilhelm II as a supporter of their cause; a pro-colonial antithesis to the anti-colonial sentiments propagated by parliament.<sup>19</sup> Even more so, Wilhelm II embodied a new German identity: “it is only thanks to the incessant personal activity of our now ruling emperor and the influence of his powerful

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<sup>17</sup> Wilhelm Külz, *Deutsch-Südafrika im 25. Jahre Deutscher Schutzherrschaft: Skizzen und Beiträge zur Geschichte Deutsch-Südafrikas* (Berlin: Süsserott, 1909), 238, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdl/content/titleinfo/2160062>.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Albrecht to Frau Albrecht, ‘Weihnachten in Afrika’, Postcard, 25 December 1907, Archivalien | Archiv MK Berlin | Bildpostkarten, Ansichtspostkarten, Gruß- und Glückwunschkarten, Museumsstiftung Post und Telekommunikation, <http://emp-web-09.zetcom.ch/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=390018&viewType=detailView>; ‘Ein heiliger Abend in Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 December 1902, IV/51 edition.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Neujahr’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 28 December 1901, III/51 edition; see also Corinna Schäfer, ‘The German Colonial Settler Press in Africa, 1898-1916: A Web of Identities, Spaces and Infrastructure’ (Doctoral Dissertation, Brighton, University of Sussex, 2017), 121–22, <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/72559/>.

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individuality that even the last barrier of narrow-minded *Kleinstaaterei* (regionalism) fell everywhere in German lands when great common goals were at stake.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, the emperor was the creator and pinnacle of Germanness and the settlers’ veneration was incessant.

In the colony, Wilhelm II’s birthday on 27 January was a carefully planned, multi-day event that usually began with a military parade or exercise on the preceding evening, followed by casual get-togethers in hotels or inns to celebrate well into the night. In Dar es Salaam, the festivities continued the next morning with Catholic and Protestant church services. They were followed by further military drills.<sup>21</sup> All European inhabitants of the city were invited to observe the military parade, and large numbers usually heeded the call.<sup>22</sup> People and the city itself had dressed up: “the city showed itself in splendid festive decorations. The houses were draped in palms and flags. The ships in the harbour had flown flags over the topmasts.”<sup>23</sup> The festivities would continue into the afternoon with “*Volksbelustigung* (peoples’ amusement) for the African populations.”<sup>24</sup> In the evening, the governor hosted a garden party for high-ranking military officers and important individuals of the colony, but other restaurants, hotels, or taverns also hosted special events for the European population. Every year, the governor sent a congratulatory telegram on behalf of the whole colony to the Kaiser and a formal reply would usually arrive the next day.

These festivities were a prime opportunity to celebrate and reaffirm one’s membership in the German *Volk*. But the celebration of Germanness was not a once-a-year event only. In the officers’ mess and in the clubs of Dar es Salaam, Tabora, Tanga, and elsewhere, Germans got together in the afternoons and evenings to exchange news, gossip, and stories of colonial life. In light of the harsh climatic conditions, tropical diseases and difficulties of colonial life, the clubs offered a means of escapism: a place where Germans and Europeans could be amongst themselves, where they could enjoy European meals, and where drinking bouts were daily fare.

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Zum Geburtstage unseres Kaisers’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 25 January 1902, IV/4 edition, 1.

<sup>21</sup> See for example ‘Zur Feier des Geburtstages Ihrer Majestät der Kaiserin’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 October 1900, II/42 edition; ‘Zur Feier des Geburtstages Sr. Majestät’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 January 1901, III/3 edition; ‘Zum Geburtstage des Kaisers’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 January 1901, III/3 edition; ‘Kaisers Geburtstag im fernen Innern unserer Kolonie’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 March 1901, III/9 edition; ‘Zum Geburtstage unseres Kaisers’, 25 January 1902; ‘Aus Daressalam und Umgegend’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 25 October 1902, IV/43 edition; ‘Zum Geburtstage unseres Kaisers’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 January 1903, V/4 edition; ‘Unserem Kaiser!’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 January 1906, VIII/4 edition; ‘Die Feier von Kaisers Geburtstag in der Hauptstadt von Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 1 February 1908, X/8 edition. The *Kaisergeburtstag* was such an important event in the social calendar of the colony that celebrations and reporting on it continued throughout the First World War. See for example ‘Zum 27. Januar’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 27 January 1915, XVII/9 edition.

<sup>22</sup> Walther Dobbertin’s photographs show the military parades. See for example Bild 105-DOA6492 in Dobbertin.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Die Feier von Kaisers Geburtstag in der Hauptstadt von Deutsch-Ostafrika’, 1.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Aus Daressalam und Umgegend’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 25 January 1902, IV/4 edition, 3.

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Drink was a central component of social life to the extent that alcohol was the third most important import item after food and building materials.<sup>25</sup> As we shall subsequently see, alcohol consumption was both a marker of civilised and uncivilised culture. Settlers excluded Africans from European alcohol culture, but drinking bouts also undermined authority. The ensuing administrative reports sent to Berlin did not help to clear up any tensions between parliamentarians and settlers.<sup>26</sup>

Other examples illustrate the confluence of cultures. Music and musical performances were a significant part of the German East African cultural scene, leading the ethnographer Karl Weule to write in 1908 that “where there are Germans, there is also music.”<sup>27</sup> This music was primarily military and was often played by sailor bands of the ships lying at anchor in the harbour of Dar es Salaam. But in the early years of the colony, the government had also contracted a group of Goanese musicians. They were instructed by Sergeant Knaust and played at any social event or celebration. This *Goanesenkapelle* was a beloved institution in Dar es Salaam. Hiring the *Goanesenkapelle* made it easy for the government to provide treats for settler society. When the contract ran out in October 1899 and the musicians returned to India, Dar es Salaam’s German population was dejected. The DOAZ wrote in heavyhearted fashion: “our Goanese musicians have been gone for months [...] and a few more or less out-of-tune pianos had to suffice in the musically increasingly barbarised German East African capital.”<sup>28</sup> The longing for the *Goanesenkapelle* grew stronger and only a few months later the DOAZ reported that a group of sixteen musicians, including six original band members, had arrived in German East Africa and were once again preparing concerts under Knaust’s conductorship.<sup>29</sup>

By that time, however, Knaust had already begun to remedy the music-deprived situation. He trained a group of *Askari* soldiers and directed a school band in cooperation with headteacher Blank from Tanga. The *Askari* brass band in particular quickly won approval by the European population, not only because of their musical talents, but also because these talents seemed synonymous with the successful projection of German culture and values. When the contract with the *Goanesenkapelle* was due to be renewed for the year 1903, the government

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<sup>25</sup> Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 212–13.

<sup>26</sup> Winfried Speitkamp, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 118. See also Ulrich van der Heyden, ‘„Besoffen wie ein Deutscher“: Das Deutschlandbild von Afrikanern zur Zeit der direkten Kolonialherrschaft’, *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 65, no. 4 (1 January 2013): 357–93, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700739-99000085>.

<sup>27</sup> Karl Weule, *Negerleben in Ostafrika: Ergebnisse einer ethnologischen Forschungsreise* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1908), 500.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Doppel-Konzert der Tangaer Schülerkapelle und des hiesigen Askari-Musikkorps am 28. Juni 1900 in Daressalam’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 30 June 1900, II/25 edition.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Lokales: Die Goanesenkapelle’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 4 August 1900, II/30 edition, 3.

pointed to the successes of the *Askarikapelle* and did not further extend the contract.<sup>30</sup> German settlers agreed with the decision; they had grown fond of “their” African musicians. The band even attracted interest from European promoters: a Viennese agency sought to book the musicians for concerts in the Austrian capital. A few years later the band was booked to play at the 1907 colonial exhibition in Berlin.<sup>31</sup> This was a clear confirmation of the “educational” and “civilising” power of European culture: “European music represented a world of order in contrast to the inexplicable monotonies and sudden passions of African drumming; musical ability was taken as a sign, a promise of potential for civilization.”<sup>32</sup>

German culture in East Africa thus served many functions. It was, of course, entertainment: concerts and clubs were opportunities to flee the monotony of colonial life. But German culture in the colony also served as a form of identification and belonging to a wider community. It strengthened the urgently needed bonds with the metropolitan home by portraying how “normal” life in the colonies was. As shall be further explored, culture served as a form of distinction and segregation, but on the flipside, was also a tool for assimilation and “native uplift”. In the next section, we shall turn to the administration’s perspective on German culture and examine in which ways culture was used to secure and develop the colony.

### Section II: Government views on German culture

For the colonial administration, culture served a practical role above all else, and other concerns such as identity or patriotism carried little weight to political decision making. *Deutschtum* was thus first and foremost a tool to “improve” Africans and to ensure that colonial rule would remain secure. The *Sprachenfrage* was crucial to the colonial administration’s strategy, but German culture also influenced labour and taxation regimes, or was employed as a method to wring more funds from the imperial government.

German East African colonial policy sought to “mould” Africans into workers for the colonial economy. The racial theories that legitimised colonialism supposed a symbiotic relationship between labour and civilisation: “lazy” Africans had to work in order to become “civilised”, but “civilisation” was needed to teach Africans to work. This was what Germanness could accomplish. Colonisers prided themselves in what they believed were specifically

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Die hiesige Goanesen-Kapelle’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 25 October 1902, IV/43 edition, 3.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Der gute Ruf unserer Askari-Kapelle’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 29 September 1900, II/38 edition, 3; ‘Die Tangaer Schüler-Kapelle’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 23 February 1907, IX/8 edition, 2.

<sup>32</sup> Terence O. Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 13.

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German values for work, persistence, and thoroughness. Communicating these values to the colonised populations became the cornerstone of the German East African colonial policy of “educating the natives to work”.

Aside from the particulars of what exactly to teach the indigenous populations or who should be the carrier of education, one of the main questions was which language to employ. This *Sprachenfrage* shaped colonial policy towards education and general administration especially in the years when German rule became entrenched in all areas of the territory. Just before the outbreak of the Maji Maji war, Governor Götzen wrote to his superiors in Berlin that the “Babylonian tangle of the many Bantu languages” was not conducive to an “orderly administration” and that this “onerous state of affairs” ought to be abolished for a single and appropriate language.<sup>33</sup>

Hardly anybody disagreed with this, but the particularities of such a lingua franca proved more divisive. When German colonial rule was established, much of the coastal population spoke Kiswahili and many peoples further inland had at least a basic knowledge of the language. Sometime in the Ninth Century, Kiswahili had emerged as a distinct language, clearly rooted in local African language traditions.<sup>34</sup> From the Sixteenth Century onwards, Kiswahili acquired its extensive Arabic vocabulary thanks to increased contact with traders and travellers from the Arabian Peninsula: up to forty percent of Kiswahili vocabulary is rooted in Arabic, especially in prose and poetry.<sup>35</sup> Also in areas such as jurisprudence, trade, and religion Kiswahili amassed a vast Arabic lexicon.<sup>36</sup> Swahili culture and language “travelled up and down the coast, participating in a maritime culture that embraced a diversity of dialects, ethnicities, and occupations in the cultural practices of each town and village.”<sup>37</sup> By the Nineteenth Century, Swahili language and culture had adopted many Arabic features: Kiswahili was written in Arabic script and Islam had become a significant religious, social, and political force in Swahili society.<sup>38</sup> Kiswahili became increasingly formalised along the coast where contact with Arab traders was strongest, but it also spread to the interior along trading and caravan

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<sup>33</sup> von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 9 May 1905, fol. 5.

<sup>34</sup> For an overview, see Derek Nurse and Thomas Spear, *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800-1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 52.

<sup>35</sup> Abdulaziz Y. Lodhi, ‘Oriental Influences in Swahili: A Study in Language and Culture Contacts’ (Doctoral Dissertation, Göteborg, University of Göteborg, 2000) quoted in; Abdul Sheriff, ‘The Swahili in the African and Indian Ocean Worlds to c. 1500’, in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, by Abdul Sheriff (Oxford University Press, 2017), 23, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.152>.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Spear, ‘Early Swahili History Reconsidered’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 2 (2000): 259, <https://doi.org/10.2307/220649>.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>38</sup> Spear refers to the “Islamization” of Swahili societies’ beginning between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. *Ibid.*, 281.

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routes. By the time Europeans arrived on the shores of eastern Africa, Kiswahili had become widespread. Regional dialects and languages certainly remained the main forms of communication, but Kiswahili was already a lingua franca of sorts and was understood by many, not only on the coast.

The widespread knowledge of Kiswahili by the indigenous populations led the government to adopt the language in lower-level administration. The government hired political agents, such as *Majumbe* and *Akidas*, but also civil servants, teachers, and tax collectors who spoke Kiswahili in order to act as the intermediaries between administration and locals. In December 1892, the first government school was opened in Tanga, and further schools in Dar es Salaam (April 1895) and in Bagamoyo (October 1895) followed. These aimed at training Africans in reading, writing, and mathematics so that they could be employed in the administration.

In these early years of the colony, missionary societies, too, maintained schools that provided a basic level of education, but were of course also following a theological curriculum. Here, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa and other Roman Catholic Missions taught in Kiswahili, whereas German Evangelical-Lutheran missions objected to the use of the language. Instead, these missions favoured local languages and dialects, or even considered German as the language of instruction.

This opposition was driven by an older, more conservative missionary tradition and stemmed from the fear that Kiswahili was too closely connected to the Arab world and thus to Islam. Indian Ocean trade had brought African and Arab cultures into close contact and Arab influence on Swahili culture manifested itself strongly in religious practices. Islam arrived on the East African coast primarily as an accompaniment to commercial sea trade. Mosques and Islamic architecture began to characterise East African townscapes on the shore, but as trade routes expanded further inland, Islam and Islamic teaching followed: "Swahili civilization was capped by Islam, and it was widely spread along the Swahili coast by the Twelfth Century. It had come across the sea, not through military conquest but through commercial and cultural processes; and it was not the adoption of a whole system of beliefs, lock, stock, and barrel, but rather a syncretic assimilation of Islam and local belief systems."<sup>39</sup> Swahili culture thus emerged as a fusion of local Bantu traditions, Arab commercial activity and Islamic religious practices. The association of Kiswahili and Islam was thus a burden, if not a danger for missionaries seeking to spread the Christian faith. In an article in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* a missionary cautioned

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<sup>39</sup> Sheriff, 'The Swahili in the African and Indian Ocean Worlds to c. 1500', 24.

that “Kiswahili is the language of Islam. The spread of Kiswahili will promote the spread of Islam.” The author continued to warn about the threat to German colonial rule: “Islam, with its fanatical power, is the most dangerous enemy that European colonial empires can ever have in Africa.”<sup>40</sup>

Many missionaries therefore attempted to curtail the use of Kiswahili. Gustav Warneck, “the foremost theologian of evangelical missions”, wrote to Governor Wissmann about the need to educate Africans in their own tribal languages.<sup>41</sup> Wissmann and his administration wrongly believed, Warneck explained, that Africans could only be “cultivated” through disciplining. The proper way – that the missions were already following – was to firstly reach out to Africans on an emotional level by tribal identification. This could only be done through instruction and communication in local languages such as Kishambaa, Kidigo, Kipare, or others. Tribal languages were the key to Christianisation. And only Christian Africans could be “cultivated”. The success of the colonial endeavour therefore rested on those missions whose operations were conducted in local African languages.<sup>42</sup>

But not all evangelical missions resisted the use of Kiswahili. The *Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Protestant Missionary Society for German East Africa, EMDOA) had been founded in 1885 and thought Kiswahili a pragmatic and efficient solution to the *Sprachenfrage*. The EMDOA followed an “internationalist vision”, seeking to instruct Africans in African languages “to stimulate the development of *Volkskirchen* (peoples’ churches) and Christian communities.”<sup>43</sup> At the same time, the EMDOA hoped to counter those secular colonisers advocating for German language schools. The missionary and theologian Karl Axenfeld therefore proposed closer cooperation between missionary societies and colonial administration. Axenfeld recognised the already strong position of Kiswahili in German East Africa and in the administration and consequently advocated for the missions’ commitment to the language. He dispelled fears that Kiswahili would further spread Islam by proposing a colony-wide language reform.<sup>44</sup> Axenfeld advocated for a “practical consensus on a common orthography for the East African languages,” a development from which both missions and

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<sup>40</sup> ‘Missionsmonatsschau’, fol. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Marcia Wright, ‘Swahili Language Policy, 1890-1940’, *Swahili* 35, no. 1 (1965): 41.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 41–42; Gustav Warneck, *Zur Abwehr und Verständigung: offener Brief an Herrn Major von Wissmann* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1890), 9–11, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdk/content/titleinfo/1838660>.

<sup>43</sup> Best, *Heavenly Fatherland*, 78.

<sup>44</sup> Karl Axenfeld, ‘Die Sprachenfrage in Ostafrika vom Standpunkt der Mission aus betrachtet’, *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 35, no. 12 (December 1908), fol. 22ff, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/820, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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government would benefit.<sup>45</sup> The other missionary societies criticised Axenfeld and the EMDOA for these proposals, but also for the mission's close personal ties with colonial-political circles and for its lack of deep connection to the church.<sup>46</sup>

The government had already undertaken first steps to streamline Kiswahili. In 1899, Governor Liebert curtailed the use of Arabic by decreeing that officials no longer were allowed to accept any documents, letters, and other papers written in the language.<sup>47</sup> The government next attempted to latinise Kiswahili, but this proved difficult because of a general mistrust in government schools.<sup>48</sup> Eventually, however, latinised Kiswahili became the widely accepted lingua franca of German East Africa. The administration also promoted the creation of Kiswahili newspapers, such as *Kiongozi*. These quickly gained popularity and were a testament for the successes of Kiswahili education.<sup>49</sup>

When Rechenberg was appointed as governor of German East Africa, government schools with Kiswahili curricula were further expanded. Rechenberg recognised the importance of a loyal cadre of indigenous low-level officials, tax collectors, teachers, etc. in order to safely develop the colony. He considered the outbreak of the Maji Maji War a direct consequence of his predecessors failing to employ loyal and educated collaborators.<sup>50</sup> The government schools occasionally stood in direct competition with missionary schools. This led to conflict between the administration and Lutheran missions. But the missions also suffered from general “social disintegration” which resulted from economic development, infrastructure construction, and increased mobility.<sup>51</sup>

In order to improve government-mission relations, the administration offered financial rewards for the mission schools that were most successful in training Africans. Especially those schools that could teach their students German were remunerated. The colonial government recognised that some German speaking Africans were needed to work in colonial and district

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<sup>45</sup> Karl Axenfeld to Bernhard Dernburg, Letter, 15 February 1909, fol. 15, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/820, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>46</sup> Best, *Heavenly Fatherland*, 77–80.

<sup>47</sup> See for example ‘Runderlaß an sämtliche Bezirksämter und Stationen, sowie an sämtliche Ressorts’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 14 October 1899, I/33 edition, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Wright, ‘Swahili Language Policy’, 44; Reichskolonialamt, *Schutzgebiete 1910/1911*, 11.

<sup>49</sup> Reichskolonialamt, *Schutzgebiete 1910/1911*, 11. For a recent discussion of the impact of the switch from Kiswahili written in Arabic script to Kiswahili written in Latin script, see Fabian Krautwald, ‘The Bearers of News: Print and Power in German East Africa’, *The Journal of African History*, 8 March 2021, 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853721000049>.

<sup>50</sup> Ludwig Gerhardt, ‘Swahili: Eine Sprache Als Faktor Der Politischen Integration’, *Africa Spectrum* 12, no. 3 (1977): 277.

<sup>51</sup> Wright, ‘Swahili Language Policy’, 45.

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offices, as translators or in other assistant roles.<sup>52</sup> These specific rewards were later cancelled in favour of more general subsidies for missions. The colonial budgets from 1910 onwards included benefits for missionary societies that were not tied to the instruction of German or any other specific language.<sup>53</sup>

Despite the old Lutheran missionaries' opposition to Kiswahili, hardly anybody ever seriously considered the introduction of German as the colony's *lingua franca*. While the *Kolonialrat* adopted a resolution to lobby the government for "the introduction of the German language by establishing appropriate schools and [to] work towards gradually replacing Kiswahili with German as the *lingua franca*," only few ever saw it as a viable and practical project.<sup>54</sup> At the German Colonial Congress of 1905, the overwhelming majority of speakers on the topic rejected the introduction of German. August Wilhelm Schreiber, the missionary inspector of the North German Missionary Society, declared to the participants that "[i]t would be an overstretching of the national position if, in general, of all the languages spoken in the colonies only those of the ruling people were to be taught."<sup>55</sup> Carl Meinhof, a Protestant missionary, likewise believed that the general introduction of German was "not advisable" and that only "exceptionally intelligent and dependable natives" should be taught German.<sup>56</sup>

The *Sprachenfrage* revealed most clearly that the colonial government in German East Africa was, above all else, driven by practical considerations. The decision to use Kiswahili as the colony's *lingua franca* was not made for ideological or idealist reasons, but rather because it was the easiest and most straight-forward thing to do. Neither religion nor the aspiration to consolidate *Deutschtum* in the colony influenced colonial government policy. Even though missions attempted to steer the government away from its commitment to Kiswahili, they ultimately had to acquiesce: proselytising in local languages and dialects, or even in German was not a viable option. The missions could only try to shape language policy through encouraging the Latinisation of Kiswahili and standardising orthography.

Yet, in other areas the government did try to create a sense of Germanness within the colony. This was, however, also more out of a sense of practicality than for any deeply held ideological convictions. Especially in schools did the government experiment with ideas that

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<sup>52</sup> See for example 'Bekanntmachung', *Amtlicher Anzeiger für Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 29 October 1904, V/27 edition, 1.

<sup>53</sup> Wright, 'Swahili Language Policy', 45.

<sup>54</sup> 'Protocol of Kolonialrat. VII. Sitzungsperiode 1904/1907', 30 June 1905, fol. 10, Reichskolonialamt, Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Innere Angelegenheiten, R 1001/6877, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>55</sup> August Wilhelm Schreiber in *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongresses 1905* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1906), 486, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdk/periodical/titleinfo/2009567>.

<sup>56</sup> Carl Meinhof in *ibid.*, 359.

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sought to facilitate the training of a reliable and mendable labour force. From the early years of the government schools, pupils received singing lessons. Here, they learned traditional German *Volkslieder* (folk songs) – also with Kiswahili text. At many social occasions, such as *Kaisergeburtstag* (emperor's birthday) or the dedication of monuments, students sang in front of the celebrating crowds.<sup>57</sup> The government schools' task in these ways was “to equip its pupils with a sense of order, cleanliness, industriousness and loyalty to duty, while at the same time awakening faith in authority and working towards the penetration of German culture into the people, so that German ways and German customs become known and understood,” wrote Governor Götzen to the AAKA.<sup>58</sup>

But the German East African school system did not aim at “Germanifying” Africans. Ultimately, education and the introduction of German culture, customs, and practices served practical purposes: “the German colonial administrator was less interested in making the African into a quasi-German than in having at hand Africans capable of German definitions of work.”<sup>59</sup> Reading, writing, and basic arithmetic could fulfil these demands, but singing, calligraphy, drawing, gymnastics, or drawing could equally convey useful virtues such as discipline and patience: “[t]he German definition of work required skills not traditionally accessible to the African. Literacy was a prime need, as were orderliness, punctuality, and regularity. These the school, as a transmitter of cognitive skills and as an organizational form, could help introduce.”<sup>60</sup>

The colonial administration, however, also recognised the demands and wishes of the settler community for greater national identification. *Kaisergeburtstag* and other events were meticulously planned affairs that included many instances of government sponsored exhibitions of *Deutschtum*, including the official hoisting and displaying of the imperial flag, twenty-one gun salutes, military exercising and parading, and a *Bierabend* formally organised by the Dar

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Die Grundsteinlegung des Bismarck-Denkmal in Tanga’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 1 July 1899, I/18 edition.

<sup>58</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, ‘Lehrplan der Regierungsschule in Bagamoyo’, Letter and Report, 22 April 1901, fol. 38, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Schulsachen, R 1001/990, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>59</sup> van der Ploeg, ‘Education in Colonial Africa’, 91.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

es Salaam district office.<sup>61</sup> The colonial administration was eager to offer some concessions to the settlers in order to keep settler society at bay.<sup>62</sup>

In German East Africa, language, education and *Deutschtum* were intricately connected. For the colonial administration, the issues had a practical purpose: to develop and improve the economy of the colony and to ensure that colonial rule remained secure and stable in the future. Rather than being driven by ideological or national concerns, the colonial government pursued a strategy of practicality. The next section will explore how settlers perceived German culture and *Deutschtum* and reveal that settlers – similarly to their confidence in racial hierarchies – believed themselves as the vanguard of European and German civilisation in Africa. They were largely driven by ideology, rather than practicality, leading to further frictions with the government.

### Section III: Settler views on German culture

German settlers in East Africa were eager to exhibit their national identity whenever they got the chance to do so. Germanness and being part of a German culture became a means to legitimise racial hierarchies and to “feel good about oneself.” Economically and politically, settlers remained side-lined throughout the existence of German East Africa. Settlers never managed to achieve the ideals that racial theories suggested they should be able to accomplish. Far from being economically successful and being able to enjoy a relaxed life in the colony, settlers faced the harsh reality that they were poorly equipped for life in the colonies. The government’s focus on making the colony economically viable, especially under the Rechenberg and Dernburg regime, contradicted the settlers’ conviction that any white man was predestined to live like a king in Africa. The limited influence of settlers on colonial decision-

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<sup>61</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg, ‘Verfügung an sämtliche Dienststellen in Daressalam’, 18 October 1910, fol. 127, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Vereine, R 1001/1068, Bundesarchiv Berlin. In 1910, the district council voted to reject further official *Bierabende* for all Europeans because drinking bouts, physical confrontations and other unpleasantries had increased over the previous years and consequently led to embarrassments. German settlers feared that the actions of a few ignorant individuals could seriously undermine racial relations and negatively taint Africans’ image of Europeans. The government was happy to oblige, and Governor Rechenberg reported to Colonial Secretary Dernburg that any provisions for future events had been removed. Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Reichskolonialamt, Letter, 25 October 1910, fols 123–126, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Vereine, R 1001/1068, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>62</sup> The reporting in the DOAZ suggests that the settler community appreciated the official exhibitions of Germanness: “The black-white-red flag flew from all the Europeans’ buildings and also from many of the Arabs’ and Indians’ houses, while the fronts of the buildings and also those of most of the Negro huts in the city were decorated with large palm branches and flowers, for even the natives knew that this day was to be regarded as a day of celebration for all the German Landeskinder.” Similarly, a correspondent from Tabora wrote of the district official’s hospitality “that it was beyond praise.” See ‘Zur Feier des Geburtstages Ihrer Majestät der Kaiserin’, 3; ‘Kaisers Geburtstag im fernen Innern unserer Kolonie’, 2.

making further contributed to feelings of abandonment and weakness. *Deutschtum* and its performance became the one remaining opportunity to distinguish oneself from other Europeans and Africans. More crucially, however, Germanness was a way to prove racial superiority and civilisation other than relying on the obvious visible differences between Europeans and the African, Indian, or Arab populations.

German settlers believed their German culture superior to that of any other *Volk*. The diaries of Germans in the colony, for example, reveal that many believed to be the vanguard of Germanness and civilisation. In her observations, Magdalene von Prince wrote of the privilege to colonise East Africa: “We are still at the beginning [...] but when German enterprise will be more and more active [...] we will not lack any rewards. [...] Truly, it is a beautiful fate to be allowed to take a place in this triumphant march of German culture!”<sup>63</sup> Before her return to metropolitan Germany, Frieda von Bülow remarked similarly on the importance of colonisation through Germans: “I leave with the wish that my place may be filled only by a truly good man or woman in the interest of the further development of our cause. Then there can and will grow up from the weak germs laid by my hand a blessing-giving endeavour for the honour of the German nation.”<sup>64</sup> Authors and readers alike relished in these “successes” of German *Kulturarbeit* (cultural work).<sup>65</sup>

Central to the settlers’ discussions of *Deutschtum* was the language question. But while settlers had strong opinions in almost all matters and frequently stood in opposition to the colonial government, in the *Sprachenfrage* settler opinion was much more ambivalent. Most agreed with the government and held the opinion that Kiswahili ought to be the colony’s lingua franca. Official business between colonial administration and indigenous societies should be conducted in Kiswahili and not in German or even Arabic. At the same time settlers also recognised the government’s need for a certain number of German speakers to fill positions in the administration. They supported the government’s rewards for missions that offered courses and successfully trained pupils in German. The settlers were also in favour of a decree that Governor Solf had issued in German Samoa. This stipulated that Samoan was the colony’s language, that missions should conduct their education in Samoan, and should only offer

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<sup>63</sup> von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 5.

<sup>64</sup> von Bülow, *Reiseskizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 196.

<sup>65</sup> Writing from the Iringa region in October 1896, Magdalene von Prince remarked that the cultural work of the Germans had already borne fruit: “you can already see the cultural progress here: everyone is already wearing at least some clothes!” See von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 59.

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German classes where those would curtail the use of English to eventually minimise the tangle of languages.<sup>66</sup>

A significant difference between settler and government position concerned justifications and motivations for the language decision. While the government's championing of Kiswahili was informed by practicality, the decision was one of identity and ideology for settlers. One settler suggested in the DOAZ that an introduction of German would be a sign of weakness: "We Germans are known to be good linguists, why should we slap ourselves in the face and willingly surrender our natural advantage?!"<sup>67</sup> Many settlers, merchants, traders, and planters consequently began to learn rudimentary Kiswahili.<sup>68</sup>

Of course, amongst themselves settlers, traders, and administrators spoke German. But especially for children the German language was an important, identity-defining part of life. Mothers had to ensure that their children cultivated and used German; it became "a metaphor for culture."<sup>69</sup> Being able to speak and understand German made access to German culture and German ideology possible. This was then translated into German identity: "language equalled national identity, an identity based on cultural prerequisites."<sup>70</sup> In this way, speaking German meant being German.

The few children that had been brought to German East Africa or had been born there were initially taught privately. In Dar es Salaam teaching was carried out by a pastor named Mr. Roloff and a teacher Mr. Urban.<sup>71</sup> However, after steady increases in the number of European children and the departures of Roloff and Urban, settlers started to demand a dedicated school for Europeans.<sup>72</sup> In mid-1904, Dar es Salaam was already home to over fifteen children of school age. Their only makeshift education was provided by a sister of the city's Catholic mission for two or three hours a day.<sup>73</sup> Settlers lamented the insufficient provisions

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<sup>66</sup> 'Sollen die Eingeborenen unserer Kolonie Deutsch lernen?', 1.

<sup>67</sup> 'Sollen unsere Schwarzen Deutsch lernen??', 1.

<sup>68</sup> von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 9 May 1905, fol. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Daniel Joseph Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Namibia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 54.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> 'Schulunterricht an europäische Kinder', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 January 1904, VI/3 edition, 3; 'Warum keine Schule für europäische Kinder?', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 September 1904, VI/37 edition, 3.

<sup>72</sup> 'Warum keine Schule für europäische Kinder?', 3.

<sup>73</sup> 'Schule oder keine Schule für Europäerkinder?', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 17 September 1904, VI/38 edition, 3.

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and theological focus and asked the government for the creation of a *Europäerschule* (European school).<sup>74</sup>

Within weeks of the first demands, the DOAZ reported that a reliable source had informed them that Dar es Salaam would open its first school for European children before Christmas. A designated teacher had already been instructed to travel to East Africa.<sup>75</sup> The reliability of the DOAZ's source, however, must be questioned; the school was only opened in July 1906 after much back and forth.<sup>76</sup> It is equally likely that the DOAZ never had a source in the first place and used the announcement as a tool to put pressure on the government. The paper repeated its questions about when the school would open on many occasions in 1905 and 1906.<sup>77</sup>

The long mail delivery times between the colony and metropolitan Germany, as well as the high level of bureaucratisation of the colonial offices render it highly unlikely that the creation of a new school for European children could be accomplished within a few months. Indeed, Governor Götzen reported to the AAKA on the number of children in Dar es Salaam only in August 1905 – almost a year after the DOAZ had first claimed the imminent opening of the school. According to Götzen, the colony's capital was home to thirty-eight European children of which seventeen would be of school age (six years and older) the following year.<sup>78</sup> When the school finally opened on 2 July 1906 the situation seemed resolved. An initial class of seven children participated in the lessons held by a teacher named Friedrich Dudzus and settler society appeared mollified.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> I am unsure why the settlers demanded a school for Europeans, rather than one for Germans at this point. Given their attempts to spread their German culture, the calls for a *Europäerschule* seem uncharacteristically inclusive. One reason for this choice of words may be the fact that a contingent of Boer settlers arrived in German East Africa at around the same time. More than fifty settlers, including women and children, arrived in Dar es Salaam and travelled onwards to Tanga in order to settle in the Kilimanjaro and Meru areas. Given the overall low numbers of whites, the settlers might also not have been able to exclude them on principle. See 'Bureneinwanderung', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 July 1904, VI/28 edition, 2. See also Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 238.

<sup>75</sup> 'Wir bekommen eine Gouvernementsschule für Europäerkinder!', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 22 October 1904, VI/43 edition, 3.

<sup>76</sup> 'Eröffnung der Europäerschule', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 7 July 1906, VIII/27 edition, 3.

<sup>77</sup> 'Wo bleibt die Schule für europäische Kinder?', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 28 January 1905, VII/4 edition, 3; 'Schule für Europäerkinder', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 12 May 1906, VIII/19 edition, 3.

<sup>78</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, Letter, 8 August 1905, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Schulsachen, R 1001/990, Bundesarchiv Berlin. Unfortunately, I was unable to find further references to the *Europäerschule* in the period leading up to 1906. Götzen's three page report is the only mention of it in the exchanges between the German East African government and the Colonial Department of the Foreign Office. Given the extensive exchanges between Dar es Salaam and Berlin on other matters, it is likely that the planning for a European school preceded the demands of the settlers published in the DOAZ. There is no doubt, however, over the unrealistic reporting of the newspaper: the suggested inauguration of the school before Christmas 1904 was far too soon after the initial call for the establishment of the school on 10 September 1904. Colonial bureaucracy did not move that fast.

<sup>79</sup> 'Eröffnung der Europäerschule', 3.

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All this changed almost immediately when Governor Rechenberg arrived in Dar es Salaam. On 13 October 1906, less than two months into Rechenberg's governorship, the DOAZ announced that the government was considering the closure of the *Europäerschule*.<sup>80</sup> Rechenberg had visited the school a few days before and had not been impressed. Neither the quality of the education, nor the costs accrued justified the school's operation, the governor concluded. Rechenberg's calculations came to such an unfavourable result that he reported it would even be more cost-effective to send German children to Germany and provide them with free schooling in the metropole. He consequently wrote to the AAKA: "I would therefore like to ask you to consider whether the school for European children should not be closed as soon as possible. [...] I cannot expect any benefit from the school in question, while the expenditure is disproportionately high."<sup>81</sup> Rechenberg further claimed that the high costs would ultimately "give rise to justified attacks in the Reichstag" – a situation the AAKA and its newly appointed head Dernburg wanted to avoid if at all possible.<sup>82</sup> Dernburg wrote to Rechenberg on 15 November 1906 to temporarily close the school.<sup>83</sup> A few days later the district council voted in favour of Rechenberg's plan and on 01 April 1907 the *Europäerschule* shut its doors.<sup>84</sup>

The settler press reacted with immediate disapproval: "we must describe this as a most regrettable fact and as an alarming step backwards, both with regard to the creation of public and cultural institutions, which are so necessary for the good of the colony and its European population, and with regard to the consolidation and promotion of the German character of our colony," wrote the DOAZ in its last issue of 1906.<sup>85</sup> The government's decision was a direct "attack on German culture" and settlers urgently had to act for the welfare of the colony.<sup>86</sup> In an appeal to Dernburg, the DOAZ tried to convince the colonial secretary to reconsider the decision and expressed the wish that the German metropolitan press would take an interest in the matter as well.<sup>87</sup> In the meantime, a Protestant pastor and the Catholic mission offered their

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<sup>80</sup> 'Über die beabsichtigte Schließung der Europäerschule', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 13 October 1906, VIII/41 edition, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, Letter, 5 October 1906, fols 87–88, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Schulsachen, R 1001/991, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Dernburg to von Rechenberg, 17 November 1906, fol. 89.

<sup>84</sup> Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, Letter, 25 April 1907, fol. 125, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Schulsachen, R 1001/991, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>85</sup> 'Ein bedauerlicher Rückschritt', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 29 December 1906, VIII/52 edition, 1.

<sup>86</sup> 'Zur Aufhebung der deutschen Schule in Daressalam', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 20 April 1907, IX/16 edition, 1; 'Zur Schließung unserer Europäerschule', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 March 1907, IX/10 edition, 3.

<sup>87</sup> 'Wir möchten Exzellenz Dernburg für die Schul-Erziehung der europäischen Kinder in der Kolonie interessieren', 1.

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support for the education of German children, though Rechenberg reported that three and a half weeks after the school's closure, no parents had taken up the offer.<sup>88</sup>

When the news of the closure made its way to metropolitan Germany, pro-colonial politicians tried to rectify the situation. The chairman of the National Liberal Party, Ernst Bassermann, wrote to Dernburg that he had concluded that maintaining the school was “in the best interest of the colony.”<sup>89</sup> Dernburg, who was preparing to depart for his first inspection of German East Africa, replied that he agreed in principle. The school issue put him in a difficult position. On the one hand, Dernburg had to justify any colonial expenditure to the budget commission of the Reichstag. In an environment in which the tremendous financial costs of the Maji Maji War and the war against the Herero and Nama in German Southwest Africa still loomed large, Dernburg was careful to keep colonial expenditures within reasonable bounds.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, pro-colonial politicians and parties, such as the National liberals, wielded significant influence as supporters of Chancellor Bülow, who had just appointed and tasked Dernburg with the reformation of the German colonial offices.

After his visit to the colony, and further campaigns for the school, Dernburg had to bow to the pressure of the *Reichstag*. The delegates Arning, Arendt, Hagemann, Lattmann, Richthofen-Damsdorf, Schweickhardt and Wiemer had drafted a resolution to “request the Imperial Chancellor to ensure that the school for children of Europeans in Dar es Salaam is immediately reopened and permanently maintained.”<sup>91</sup> The resolution was adopted without much resistance and Dernburg subsequently telegraphed to Rechenberg with instructions to reopen the school.<sup>92</sup> On 1 April 1908 – exactly one year after its closure – the school reopened under the supervision of a new teacher named Rudolf Sendtke.<sup>93</sup> Even though the DOAZ bemoaned the fact that the school would be housed inadequately in a former granary, settlers were satisfied with the outcome.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> von Rechenberg to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 25 April 1907, fol. 125.

<sup>89</sup> Ernst Bassermann to Bernhard Dernburg, Letter, 9 July 1907, fol. 179, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Schulsachen, R 1001/991, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>90</sup> Bernhard Dernburg to Ernst Bassermann, Letter, 10 July 1907, fol. 180, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Schulsachen, R 1001/991, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>91</sup> Johannes Semler, ‘D. Resolution zum Etat für das Ostafrikanische Schutzgebiet’, Pub. L. No. Aktenstück Nr. 782, § Kommission für den Reichshaushalts-Etat, 4691 (1908), 4691, [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt\\_k12\\_bsb00002887\\_00593.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k12_bsb00002887_00593.html).

<sup>92</sup> Bernhard Dernburg to Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg, Telegram, 19 March 1908, fol. 198, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Schulsachen, R 1001/991, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Die Schule für Europäerkinder wird wieder eröffnet’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 21 March 1908, X/20 edition, 1.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Die Schule für Europäerkinder in Daressalam wird nach einjähriger Schließung wieder eröffnet’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 March 1908, X/21 edition, 1.

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The schooling issue was not only of central importance to Dar es Salaam's European parents; it was also emblematic of the administration's position on the promotion of *Deutschtum* and the settler's response to it. Settlers criticised the government's attitude towards Germanness in the same ways that they grew frustrated over the administration's disappointing economic and political course. Especially Rechenberg and Dernburg were attacked for their "anti-German" plans. The colonial writer Paul Rohrbach called Germany's colonial project into question if it was only driven by trade and business interests. According to Rohrbach, the state had to ensure that "Germanness was sown" in the colonies, otherwise there was no point in having colonies at all:

We know, or at least should know, that no nation can be great and powerful without the will to greatness and power. In our present age, however, it is no longer Europe, no longer any single part of the world that provides the yardstick for what is great and what is small, but only the world. If we want to be counted among the great peoples of the world, we must also inhabit the world, we must be able to plough our soil as well on Kilimanjaro, on the highlands of Cameroon or in Rwanda, we must know how to feed our children as well in Herero and Namaland as we do at home between the Alps and the North Sea. What does it help us that millions of our blood live in North America and Russia, hundreds of thousands in Brazil and elsewhere in foreign lands? We will only be a *Weltvolk* when a rich and true German people, which is firmly rooted in the soil on both sides of the sea, honours its leader, the German Emperor.<sup>95</sup>

Rohrbach's critique of Dernburg and Rechenberg's colonial policy was adamant and all-encompassing. He saw the focus on indigenous production and African agriculture as a hindrance to German expansion. Rohrbach demanded that "on every piece of African soil, where the superior German people, who are more valuable for the world and the development of humanity, can flourish, the inferior indigenous people must cede rule and possession."<sup>96</sup> The German colonies ought to be treated as an integral part of the *Kaiserreich*. Equally, the colonies had to show their commitment to the emperor and to the *Deutschtum* that he represented.

The racist deliberations of Rohrbach were well received in the settler press. The DOAZ printed the entire essay on the frontpages of three consecutive editions.<sup>97</sup> Other settlers took inspiration from Rohrbach's article and published their own opinion pieces. A settler named Förster explained that he believed that Germans ought to assert their *Deutschtum* in order to succeed in the colony:

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<sup>95</sup> Paul Rohrbach, 'Ist ein Ostafrikanisches Deutschland möglich? (I)', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 3 February 1909, XI/9 edition, 1.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Rohrbach, 'Ist ein Ostafrikanisches Deutschland möglich? (I)'; Paul Rohrbach, 'Ist ein Ostafrikanisches Deutschland möglich? (II)', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 6 February 1909, XI/10 edition; Paul Rohrbach, 'Ist ein Ostafrikanisches Deutschland möglich? (III)', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 February 1909, XI/11 edition.

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Just as seldom as at home, one finds among the Germans in the colony the awareness that it is their right, indeed more than that, their highest duty, to prevail in their own way against foreign *Volkstum*, to develop their own kind to the highest perfection. There are few attempts to practise the *Herrentum* here, which belongs to the German and to him alone in his own colony, as leader in culture and as leader in economic possessions. Hardly does one begin to realise that German *Volkstum* and *Herrentum* and a leading economic role in this country are inseparable.<sup>98</sup>

In the opinion of the author, German East Africa would only develop into a successful colony if economic policy was paired with measures to protect and prioritise Germanness in the colony. Settlers who saw themselves as economically and politically marginalised under Rechenberg attempted to influence the colonial course by focusing on their German culture. They believed their *Deutschtum* to be superior and consequently wanted a colonial policy that paid attention to this fact.

Rohrbach and Förster were not alone in their beliefs. German settler society performed Germanness in order to distinguish itself from other Europeans in the colony, to maintain a connection with the colonial metropole, and to further manifest their claim to racial superiority. Performing and belonging to this *Deutschtum* distanced colonisers from the colonised on another level: spatial, legal, political, and economic privileges naturally already existed in the colonial system. Yet Germanness and German identity added a cultural layer that settlers were eager to use as evidence of their racial superiority. Nevertheless, wherever Germans and Africans came into contact, there was an exchange of cultural practices, traditions, and ideas. The next two sections examine this encounter.

### Section IV: German influences on African culture

Due to the power imbalance between coloniser and colonised, German culture was often projected onto Africans, whether they wanted it or not. At other times, Africans were deliberately excluded from taking part in German culture. Examples may be found in the dedication celebrations of various monuments or at the festivities for *Kaisergeburtstag* and similar events. Here, Africans often took part in minor roles. At the dedication of a monument to the *Wissmann-Truppe* in Bagamoyo, pupils of the local missionary school performed songs in German, including *Heil dir im Siegerkranz* and *Deutschland über alles*.<sup>99</sup> In this way,

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<sup>98</sup> E. Th. Förster, 'Das Deutschtum am Kilimandscharo', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 April 1910, XII/30 edition, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Kolonial-Abtheilung des Auswärtigen Amts, ed., *Deutsches Kolonialblatt: Amtsblatt für die Schutzgebiete des Deutschen Reichs*, vol. 6 (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1895), 246, <https://books.google.it/>

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Africans performed German culture to celebrate and entertain the colonisers. Similarly, the monument that was dedicated to Herrmann von Wissmann in Dar es Salaam in 1909 included a larger than life-size statue of Wissmann on a granite pedestal. At the base of the pedestal, a figure of an Askari soldier – only life-sized – planted the German black-white-red flag on a slain lion. Through such arrangements the indigenous populations were symbolically assigned their place in the colonial system.<sup>100</sup> They were simultaneously part of German culture and excluded from it.

Most of the colonial statues and memorials stood in the European centre of town and in close proximity to government buildings. Others were sealed off behind walls and fences, excluding Africans from any engagement with the monuments. The import of German “monument culture” to Africa was primarily aimed at the German community. Germans furnished their settlements symbolically and separated themselves from the “hostile” environment with the help of commemorative signs. The German colonial monuments therefore had an effect primarily within the German population. Africans were only granted access on special occasions – such as during dedications, anniversaries, or public fairs – and were expected to show their support, amazement, and submission to the coloniser and his monuments.<sup>101</sup>

The same notion could be found in the clubs of the colony’s major cities. Intended to “create facilities through which the various social circles are to be given the opportunity to come together for common recreation,” these clubs presented further opportunities to display German culture to Africans, while at the same time excluding them from partaking as equals.<sup>102</sup> While the constitution of the Dar es Salaam club did not directly prohibit Africans becoming members based on race, the club remained highly exclusive: membership was granted only through written invitation by the board, a guarantee for segregation.<sup>103</sup> The constitution of the club in Tabora was similar.<sup>104</sup> The club’s members were therefore exclusively white and almost exclusively male.

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books?id=GmDiAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA544-IA1&source=gbs\_selected\_pages&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false; Speitkamp, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 121.

<sup>100</sup> Speitkamp, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 120–21.

<sup>101</sup> Winfried Speitkamp, ‘Kolonialherrschaft und Denkmal: Afrikanische und deutsche Erinnerungskultur im Konflikt’, in *Architektur und Erinnerung*, ed. Wolfram Martini, vol. 1, Formen der Erinnerung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 176.

<sup>102</sup> ‘Satzung des Klubs “Dar-es-Salâm”’, 1903, fol. 6, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Vereine, R 1001/1068, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., fols 6–9.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Satzungen des Klub Tabora zu Tabora’, 10 December 1913, fol. 14, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Vereine, R 1001/1068, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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That Africans could not become members in the clubs did not mean, however, that Africans were not present. On the contrary, the functioning of the club depended on Africans, as diners brought their own servants to the club every evening. The traveller, geographer, and founding member of the Tabora club Clement Gillman recounted one such occasion: “Everybody brings his own boy to serve on him and so the big dining room makes a fine picture with all the Europeans dressed in white with their black *Boys* standing behind them in their long nightshirt-like gowns, ready every moment to follow their masters’ orders.”<sup>105</sup> The arrangement was a prime example of the settlers’ exhibition of German culture and the simultaneous exclusion of Africans from it. Africans were “shown” civilised and honourable German culture; they had to dress in servants’ uniforms, adhere to the proper table etiquette, and tend to their masters’ wishes. Aside from the “entertaining” aspects of such dinners for the German guests, Africans should become familiar with such practices, because they marked a truly “civilised nation” or “civilised culture”. At the same time, Africans were excluded from partaking in such culture as equals.

While colonisers thought that the display of culture in clubs, monuments, and celebrations, and the concurrent exclusion of Africans from it would buttress colonial rule and racial divisions, it is doubtful whether it caused much more than pure indifference from Africans. The predominantly staged pictures of indigenous people standing around monuments “convey above all the foreignness of the two cultures.”<sup>106</sup> The cultural institutions and monuments generally remained alien and incomprehensible to Africans and “they neither impressed nor provoked.”<sup>107</sup> When the First World War expelled the German colonisers from East Africa and other territories, monuments were toppled by the invading British or French forces, but not by Africans. This was not due to any sense of respect towards German colonial rule and cultural artifacts such as monuments, but rather because the statues and memorials lacked any political context.<sup>108</sup>

Elsewhere, however, German culture had lasting impacts on the indigenous populations and Africans fully participated in this culture. On the one hand stood the German language itself. For the German colonisers, education of Africans and training them in German served an “allocative function”: Africans should be instructed to fulfil German definitions of work, not

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<sup>105</sup> Clement Gillman, *Diary* (21 October 1905), Oxford University: Bodleian Library, Special Collections, MSS. Afr. s. 1175. See also Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation*, 230.

<sup>106</sup> Dobbertin; Speitkamp, ‘Kolonialherrschaft und Denkmal’, 177.

<sup>107</sup> Speitkamp, ‘Kolonialherrschaft und Denkmal’, 177.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

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become quasi-Germans.<sup>109</sup> Africans very quickly realised that learning German was a route to success:

Faced with an unintelligible language and an advanced military technology, the African quickly grasped the need to communicate if he were to be able to assert himself at all. Schooling provided the means to language, and to positions of some power: the African interpreter, the African clerk, the African soldier, the African catechist, all controlled a resource available to few others, African or European. For the individual African, success in school could be transformed into a position not previously available. The new positions provided satisfactions of power over and within traditional African authority systems, of at least some prestige vis-a-vis the German, and of income. Most importantly, the new positions provided alternative means to goals in accordance with traditional values.<sup>110</sup>

Yet, knowledge of German proved an asset even outside the workplace. In December 1901, Konrad Negusie, an Askari and a translator in the Dar es Salaam detachment of the *Schutztruppe*, became the first African to subscribe to the DOAZ.<sup>111</sup> This allowed him, albeit on very unequal footing, to participate in German culture.

Another area that deeply influenced African cultures was the introduction of new products from Germany. European style clothing quickly became ubiquitous, as diary entries by various Germans in East Africa reveal. Hans Paasche described a sewing room where “half a dozen hard-working Swahili sit at sewing machines in small open stalls, sewing caps and hemming cloth. A strange taste is often developed, e.g., imitation of the shirts of the Europeans with cuffs, which are worn without buttons, however, and are a hindrance to any work.”<sup>112</sup> In similar fashion, Magdalene von Price detailed in her diary a performance of war games by Chief Kiwanga and 800 of his fighters: “The Sultan led the whole thing himself, dancing and jumping with a dexterity and a solemn seriousness that had something unspeakably comical in the European clothes [that he was wearing]. It was only when his new shoes, which were not made for this kind of warfare, burst on his feet, [...] that he asked me [...] for permission to stop the war game.”<sup>113</sup> Africans adopted European clothing and adapted it to local circumstances because it offered them an opportunity for distinction and an attempt to relate to the coloniser.

Many Germans saw Africans dressed in European style clothing with little more than bemusement, however. Frieda von Bülow commented that “the black beauties are like our

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<sup>109</sup> van der Ploeg, ‘Education in Colonial Africa’, 91.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Aus Daressalam und Umgegend: Des ersten Sohnes’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 14 December 1901, III/49 edition, 3.

<sup>112</sup> Hans Paasche, *Im Morgenlicht. Kriegs-, Jagd- und Reise-Erlebnisse in Ostafrika*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1907), 26, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/63601/pg63601-images.html>.

<sup>113</sup> von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 127.

country girls. They look best in their folk costume [...] If, on the other hand, the Swahili women are dressed in European clothes [...] they are usually a ridiculous sight.”<sup>114</sup> But for Africans themselves, European dress was a matter of prestige and, often, association with the colonisers. This frequently led to fault lines among African communities when employees of the colonial administration disassociated themselves from other workers by shunning traditional dress, adopting European clothing, and a more European way of life.<sup>115</sup>

Especially those Africans who had collaborated with the Germans in the early years of colonial expansion developed a taste for the imported new culture. Kahigi of Kianja was the chief of the Wahaya people in the north-western parts of German East Africa. He adopted German culture in order to increase his power. His palace was modelled after the German fortress-like outposts of the colonial state in the hinterlands of the territory, known as *boma*. Kahigi lived and held court in a massive stone house, with rooms spread over two floors and a reception room that was furnished with many of the accoutrements of German good living, from clocks and gramophones to a picture of Emperor Wilhelm.<sup>116</sup> Colonial secretary Bernhard Dernburg was received by Kahigi on his tour of the colony in 1907, and other European travellers, such as the missionary Ernst Johanssen were received by Kahigi, too. Johanssen described how Kahigi, dressed in a white German tropical suit with boots and a golden watch, painted a picture of indeterminacy: “outwardly, he may have appropriated the European styles a little, he is ashamed of his old customs, but inwardly he has remained a pagan Negro, the transformation is only apparent, only outward, this new culture is not deeply ingrained in him.”<sup>117</sup> But even if Kahigi appeared neither properly African nor European to Johanssen, his dress and demeanour were carefully orchestrated.

On the one hand, by receiving Dernburg and other colonial administrators with ceremonial honours, and by offering them German and European food, drink, and other comforts, Kahigi sought to demonstrate his loyalty to the German colonisers: “his conformist behaviour and his adaptation of colonial worlds of representation and European consumer

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<sup>114</sup> von Bülow, *Reiseskizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 89.

<sup>115</sup> Speitkamp, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 115.

<sup>116</sup> Michael Pesek, ‘Ruga-ruga: The History of an African Profession, 1820-1918’, in *German colonialism revisited: African, Asian, and Oceanic experiences*, ed. Nina Berman, Klaus Mühlhahn, and Alain Patrice Nganang, Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 92.

<sup>117</sup> Ernst Johanssen, *Ruanda: Kleine Anfänge - Große Aufgaben der Evangelischen Mission im Zwischenseengebiet Deutsch-Ostafrikas* (Bielefeld: Verlagshandlung der Anstalt Bethel, 1912), 21, <https://www.sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/dsdk/content/pageview/9344251>.

goods became evidence of a successful colonial subject formation.”<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, Kahigi’s riches were clearly conducive to his power consolidation among indigenous societies in the area. His good relations with the colonial administration allowed him to recruit a cadre of *ruga-ruga* that were accountable and bound only to the chief himself.<sup>119</sup> Kahigi’s adoption of European culture was thus a conscious strategy that allowed him to occupy a position of power within the colonial system.

The introduction of German and European goods into the colony and to the colony’s populations was part of the original motivation for German colonial expansion: to open up new markets for German industry. But from it emerged what the historian David Ciarlo has described as a “colonial cargo cult” which manifested itself in all colonial empires in similar fashion.<sup>120</sup> According to Ciarlo, the introduction of new products caused wonder and excitement, in other words a cargo cult: “What is so fascinating is the modern commodity itself— a shorthand, as we have seen, for Western civilization. [...] The native has stumbled across an artifact of modern civilization and is simultaneously overawed, overjoyed, and unable to entirely understand what he sees.”<sup>121</sup> In their introduction of new goods, Germans associated themselves and their products with civilisation. They saw Africans as uncivilised since they did not know of or possess any of the advertised products. But by introducing specific products to

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<sup>118</sup> Michael Pesek, ‘Praxis Und Repräsentation Kolonialer Herrschaft: Die Reise Des Staatssekretärs Bernhard Demburg Nach Ostafrika, 1907’, in *Die Ankunft Des Anderen: Repräsentationen Sozialer Und Politischer Ordnungen in Empfangszeremonien*, ed. Susann Baller et al., *Eigene Und Fremde Welten 5* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008), 222. Kahigi’s loyalty was praised by Adolf Zimmermann, who accompanied Dernburg in 1907 and published a report on the expedition: “not a single one [of the chiefs] was drunk at the reception of the secretary, an extraordinary circumstance by African standards.” See Adolf Zimmermann, *Mit Dernburg nach Ostafrika* (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1908), 62, <https://www.sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/dsdk/content/pageview/9334201>.

<sup>119</sup> Ruga-Ruga referred to “Africans, who served as armed guards in coastal caravans or for chiefs who participated in the [caravan] trade” and could also mean ‘mercenaries’. See Pesek, ‘Ruga-ruga’, 92.

<sup>120</sup> Ciarlo’s study analyses advertisements of consumer goods in imperial Germany and examines the impact of stylised images of Africans. By showing an African’s amazement at a certain product, for example snuff tobacco, these advertisements prompted an array of conscious and subconscious reactions by the reader – Germans in the imperial metropole: “In this cargo-cult tableau the commodity represents the fruits of modern Western civilization itself— as underscored by the native’s fascination. Since the savage is uncivilized, the product must therefore already be familiar to any “civilized” viewer— even if it is not. The disassociation facilitates a two-tiered interpretation; it places the viewer and potential consumer in a position of subordination to the advertising image and of superiority to the African in the image. The first interpretation (that the snuff is the best) is masked by the second (displacing the effect of the “realization” onto an unmistakable social subordinate). In this way, the advertising image can simultaneously command and flatter the consumer.” See David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany*, *Fulcrum.Org*, vol. 171, Harvard Historical Studies (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), 203, <https://www.ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/CAM/reader.action?docID=3300927&query=>.

<sup>121</sup> Yes, Ciarlo’s examination concerned advertisements for products sold in Germany that made use of colonial stereotypes in order to draw in the reader or viewer. But his analysis reveals a larger truth, namely the encounter of European and African cultures. *Ibid.*, 171:202.

Africans, the indigenous populations could gradually overcome their “status of savagery”. The colonial cargo cult and German consumer good culture could thus help to “civilise the native”.

Yet one of the most widespread German and European imports was more conducive to accusations of savagery than to the spread of civilisation. Alcohol played a highly problematic role in colonial German East Africa. In the early years of colonial annexation and expansion, many “agreements” were achieved after *Branntwein* (spirit) was introduced to tribal chiefs and other local leaders. Shortly afterwards, the selling of spirits to Africans was prohibited.<sup>122</sup> Africans were thus largely excluded from imported forms of alcohol. *Pombe* – beer made from fermented millet or banana – and palm wine were staples of African alcohol consumption instead.<sup>123</sup>

For Europeans in the colony, however, alcohol was imported in all imaginable forms, as the colonial soldier Rochus Schmidt recounted: “everything one can wish for is available: wine from Moselle and Rhine, red wine, various spirits and beers of all sorts. [...] In all the coastal places, in the very short twilight, you see the Europeans sitting in front of the bars or on the broad roofs, drinking their vermouth or soda with whisky or the like.”<sup>124</sup> Many Europeans also drank *pombe* and the beers brewed by Wilhelm Schultz’s brewery in Dar es Salaam.

The effects of alcohol on the colony and its populations were profound. At his first visit in 1905 Clement Gillman described Dar es Salaam as “one of the most beautiful spots in the world”;<sup>125</sup> just one year later he summed up that it was simply “a place full of drunkards.”<sup>126</sup> Europeans imported and consumed so much alcohol that it was the third most significant import article of the German East African economy.<sup>127</sup> After returning from his trip to the colony, Dernburg calculated that the annual per capita expenses for alcohol in the north-eastern districts of Tanga and Wilhelmsthal exceeded 500 marks – double that when factoring in customs and vendors’ profit margins. With costs of less than 2 marks for a bottle of Moselle wine or 0.7 mark for a bottle of beer, the “significant needs of the white settlers” were evident.<sup>128</sup> In the

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<sup>122</sup> Rochus Schmidt, *Deutschlands Kolonien: ihre Gestaltung, Entwicklung und Hilfsquellen* (Berlin: Verlag des Vereins der Bücherfreunde, 1895), 92, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdbk/content/titleinfo/1958971>.

<sup>123</sup> Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 214–15.

<sup>124</sup> Schmidt, *Deutschlands Kolonien*, 90, 92.

<sup>125</sup> Gillman, *Diary*, 21 October 1905.

<sup>126</sup> Gillman, *Diary*, 9/10 February 1906. See also Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation*, 213.

<sup>127</sup> Tetzlaff, *Koloniale Entwicklung*, 74.

<sup>128</sup> Bernhard Dernburg to Emil Zimmermann, Letter, 25 January 1908, fols 69–72, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Arbeitersachen, R 1001/126, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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DKZ of 22 March 1913 an article stated that German East Africa had a per capita consumption of *Branntwein* that was three times higher than in metropolitan Germany.<sup>129</sup>

High alcohol consumption was thus part of the staging of German culture. Settlers and colonial society referred to popular cultural stories in which alcohol intoxication was highly stylised as a “Germanic-German heritage”.<sup>130</sup> To an extent, the stereotype of the *trinkfester Deutscher* (hard-drinking German) served to somewhat legitimise the unrestrained consumption of alcohol in the colony. But alcohol consumption was also medically excused. Hermann von Wissmann’s advice was that every administrator sent to the colonies should be supplied with “one bottle of good cognac per week, and, in case of illness, a bit of port or Madeira and good sparkling wine in half bottles.”<sup>131</sup> Throughout the period of German rule in East Africa, European alcohol consumption remained at a very high level.

Alcohol consumption led to countless altercations, abuses and crimes and Africans frequently suffered from the alcohol excesses of Europeans.<sup>132</sup> But the alcohol consumption and drunkenness also undermined colonial authority. Many Africans looked at intoxicated Europeans with bemusement, as a Danish planter recalled:

We sat in front of the house in the shade of a large tree. The entire street was packed with people there to look at us. When we clinked our glasses before we drank, they howled to the sky with laughter and slapped their thighs, and poked each other with their elbows in order to express their amazement over such a manner of drinking. I believe that both the Blacks and ourselves were greatly amused with each other. Many other witty remarks were made on both sides, which, however, were not understood. It was only through our guide that I learned how much the Negroes had been amused by us.<sup>133</sup>

Otto Arendt, one of the members of parliament who travelled to German East Africa on a fact-finding mission in 1906, relayed a similar story. According to Arendt, the north-eastern town

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<sup>129</sup> Warnack, ‘Der Alkoholkonsum in den deutschen Kolonien’, *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 22 March 1913, XXX/12 edition, 196–97.

<sup>130</sup> Bettina Zurstrassen, ‘Die Steuerung und Kontrolle der kolonialen Verwaltung und ihrer Beamten am Beispiel des “Schutzgebietes” Togo (1884-1914)’ (Doctoral Dissertation, München, Universität der Bundeswehr München, 2005), 59.

<sup>131</sup> Hermann von Wissmann, *Afrika: Schilderungen und Rathschläge zur Vorbereitung für den Aufenthalt und den Dienst in den deutschen Schutzgebieten* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1895), 6, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hn3m8r&view=1up&seq=14&skin=2021>.

<sup>132</sup> The excessive consumption of alcohol paired with violence and brutality are also recounted by Josef Weinberger, a sergeant in the Schutztruppe: in his diary, Weinberger notes on 14 August 1894: “Day without news. Jaenke returned in the evening; he encountered enemy patrols on the way, shot 4 men dead and brought 3 captured women. In the evening a cosy barbecue. Cheers dear mother, cheers comrades.” See Josef Weinberger, *Josef Weinberger aus Tölz: Ein bayerischer Unteroffizier als Sergeant bei der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1891-1896*, ed. Wolfgang Hubach (Haßloch: Wolfgang Hubach, 2004).

<sup>133</sup> Christian Lautherborn, *The Practical Imperialist: Letters from a Danish Planter in German East Africa 1888-1906*, ed. Jane L. Parpart and Marianne Rostgaard, vol. 4, *Sources for African History* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 52, <https://brill.com/view/title/11719>.

of Wilhelmstal was initially supposed to be called Wilhelmsroda. Only when locals began to refer to the town as “Whisky-Soda” – in reference to the favourite beverage consumed by officers at the station – was the name altered and Wilhelmstal was chosen.<sup>134</sup>

German alcohol culture thus had its intended and unintended effects. On the one hand, Germans used alcohol as a way to enact *Deutschtum*. Imported beverages and the consumption of alcohol in clubs, combined with the simultaneous exclusion of Africans from a large share of these drinks and localities, were intended to foster a German community spirit and to distinguish the settlers from the indigenous populations. This “alcohol culture” was equated to civilisation. But on the other hand, these claims to civilisation were also undermined by Europeans’ excessive consumption of alcohol.

Germans believed their culture to be superior to any other culture.<sup>134</sup> The indigenous populations of German East Africa came into contact with German goods and practices such as the celebrations for the birthday of the Kaiser. The cultural values attached to these imports were identity-establishing for Germans. They allowed settlers to believe that they were superior to Africans, Indians, and Arabs and that their racial theories were in fact still valid. In their performance of *Deutschtum*, settlers found an alternative superiority that seemed able to lessen the economic and political disappointments brought about by the administration’s colonial course. The influence of German culture on Africans remained superficial, and Africans often exploited Germans’ cultural expectations for their profits. German culture primarily seemed to reinforce Germans’ communal spirit. As we shall see in the next sections, African cultures also influenced German East African identity. This led to fierce discussions around *Deutschtum* among the colonisers.

### Section V: African influences on German culture

German colonists could scarcely avoid coming into contact with African cultures. This encounter did not take place on an equal footing. The colonial system was formulated on a power imbalance that relegated Africans to a subordinate position. Nonetheless, exchanges between coloniser and colonised exposed the colonists to the influence of African cultures. The power imbalance also had effects on the production of source material, a difficulty with which historians must grapple and for which they need to find original solutions. Therefore, the influences of African cultures on Germans must be reconstructed in ways that are not as

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<sup>134</sup> Otto Arendt, ‘Bericht über die Studienreise der Reichstagsabgeordneten nach Deutsch-Ostafrika’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 17 November 1906, VIII/46 edition, 13.

straightforward as reading official administration reports or public notices. Instead, by examining pictures, diaries or letter correspondence, it is possible to catch a glimpse of the influences of African culture on the colonisers' culture. It is important to note, however, that these materials must be used with care. The "sources" generated by the colonisers inevitably largely excludes the voices, ideas, and positions of the colonised populations. Germans readily "appropriated" features of African cultures as a means of demonstrating partial adaptation to local conditions. Even though settlers believed in the superiority of their German language, for example, they also realised that Kiswahili was a more practical and beneficial method of communication. These cultural appropriations were not considered dangerous to the separation of colonisers and colonised, at least as long as "they remained 'pragmatic adoptions' of native practices."<sup>135</sup>

One example that illustrates this argument is the practice of *shauri*. The *shauri* was a method of administration which might even be described as an art form.<sup>136</sup> Its roots were based in centuries long caravan cultures. The *shauri* encompassed distinct sets of behaviours, expectations, and strategies that colonisers employed when engaging with indigenous leaders. During his "explorations" of eastern Africa, Carl Peters drew on the local knowledge of porters and guides to prepare for meetings with those leaders whose lands he wanted to claim for the German Empire: "Peters' *shauri* thus reassembled ceremonies, which were common in the world of the caravan trade. It started with the ceremonious entry of the expedition with enrolled flags and muskets that were fired, and ended with the exchange of gifts."<sup>137</sup> Peters appropriated the *shauri* practices in order to achieve his goals. In the following years, the *shauri* became the *modus operandi* of German colonial rulers. It was, by and large, a performance that Germans adopted for colonial expansion and for the consolidation of their rule.

The importance of the *shauri* furthermore largely stemmed from the Germans' inability to converse in the indigenous languages of eastern Africa. This left tribal leaders and other African diplomats with a significant opportunity to influence colonial rule. While Götzen recounted a "pompous reception" that "befitted" the German colonial rulers at the palace of the *kigeri* of Rwanda, one of his African assistants remarked that "the expedition was politely received with all honours that were usual when coastal traders arrived at a chief's residence."<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 204; See also Jürgen Osterhammel, *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats: Studien zu Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich*, vol. 147, Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 230.

<sup>136</sup> Michael Pesek, 'Cued Speeches: The Emergence of Shauri as Colonial Praxis in German East Africa, 1850–1903', *History in Africa* 33 (ed 2006): 402, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hia.2006.0020>.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 405–6.

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While the reception might not have been anything out of the ordinary for the *kigeri*, the reception's extravagance became a mantra for Governor Götzen: during his governorship he instructed the district official responsible for Rwanda to "not abstain from displaying a certain amount of pomp" when receiving and engaging with local leaders.<sup>139</sup>

For district officials, too, the *shauri* became the standard procedure of colonial rule. But according to Pesek, the *shauri* transformed "the bureaucratic patterns of the colonial state [...] into a theatrical spectacle—a transformation that watered them down."<sup>140</sup> The practice of *shauri* became an opportunity for African translators and other administrative assistants to influence colonial rule, as German colonisers relied on the cooperation of such intermediaries. Africans were able to introduce knowledge and practices from caravan culture and other local traditions for their benefit. These influences then "prefigured the knowledge that colonial rule was able to produce. Ceremonial arrangements were taken as expressions of social and political facts, and the willingness of the African rulers to participate was taken as expressions of loyalty."<sup>141</sup> The expansion of colonial rule in German East Africa was thus not a one-directional imposition purely elaborated and enacted by German colonisers. As the practice of *shauri* reveals, colonial rule in many ways was equally shaped and directed by Africans and their cultures.

Aside from political cultures of rule, German colonisers' cultures were influenced by African cultures especially in the social sphere. One example was the homestead. Germans decorated their houses with African objects ranging from warrior shields and spears to hunting trophies. A series of photographs taken in the house of *Schutztruppe* officer Kurt von Schleinitz in Dar es Salaam reveals such items: skulls of antelope, rhinoceros and other "exotic" animals are mounted on the walls in Schleinitz's study and in the dining room. An elephant's tusk rests precariously on another elephant figurine. Behind Schleinitz's desk are no fewer than eleven spears and a collection of arrows. There are also clay jugs and calabashes on a wall-mounted shelf. A large shield and two long spears sit above a cabinet in the dining room, while the adjacent wall is covered with more than fifty hunting trophies. Further rooms are decorated with even more shields, sculptures, hatchets and other cooking and farming equipment.<sup>142</sup> These items sit side by side with German beer jugs, crockery, pictures of Schleinitz's family, rifles, paintings, candlesticks, mirrors, and other objects presumably imported from the German

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<sup>139</sup> Eduard Haber and Gustav Adolf von Götzen to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, 'Die innerpolitischen Verhältnisse im Bezirk Bukoba', Letter and Report, 4 July 1905, fols 104–105, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Stationen, R 1001/1029, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Pesek, 'Cued Speeches', 406.

<sup>140</sup> Pesek, 'Cued Speeches', 409.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>142</sup> All pictures have been digitised by the Johann Christian Senckenberg Universitätsbibliothek in Frankfurt am Main. See <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Bildsammlung/Bildsammlg.htm>.

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metropole. Schleinitz's home thus houses a collection of objects of different cultures: objects from his surroundings and memories of the German *Heimat*. They are fused together, giving the rooms a distinctly colonial atmosphere.

Many houses of Germans in East Africa were similarly furnished.<sup>143</sup> The homestead was one arena in which women could make the biggest impact within the structures of social tradition. On the plantation of the von Prince family, Magdalene von Prince laid out a flower garden. She recorded in her diary: "German favourites such as violets and roses have been blooming and fragrant there for a long time, but among them there is also a beautiful African flower, a lily-like amaryllis with a splendid wreath of five large, white-glowing, brownish-red striped leaves."<sup>144</sup> Vegetable gardens and fruit orchards were home to further eclectic mixtures of imported European and local African varieties.<sup>145</sup> The fusion of European and African objects in the colonisers' homes and gardens therefore influenced colonial identity: *Deutschtum* was paired with African culture, and it was here that women were an active part of the cultural exchange.

Contact between Europeans and Africans was most frequent and most intimate in the colonial home. In her work on colonialism and gender, the historian Heike Schmidt has suggested that propriety and honour, especially amongst German men, were crucial features of the colonisers' identity and culture.<sup>146</sup> German colonial men believed propriety and honour to be the foundation of white civilisation "with German manliness at its very core."<sup>147</sup> This obsession with "manliness" stemmed from a "crisis of masculinity" that was brought about by societal changes in the colonial metropole, which was in turn exported to German East Africa by those colonial officials who had trained in Berlin and witnessed this crisis first-hand. In the colony, challenges to such propriety, honour, and masculinity had to be prevented or dispelled in whichever ways possible.

Governor Götzen instructed all Europeans to behave "appropriately" when in the presence of Africans. He wrote to all district offices and military stations that "it was dangerous to the colony that [Africans] paid *heshima* (respect) to administrative officers and soldiers but

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<sup>143</sup> Specifically refer to the pictures in von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau*, 115, 224.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> Heike Ingeborg Schmidt, 'Who Is Master in the Colony?: Propriety, Honor, and Manliness in German East Africa', in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, ed. Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 109–10.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

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not as much to private citizens.”<sup>148</sup> Götzen implied that officials should not hide behind their uniforms and status, and that private citizens should do everything to keep up propriety and honour as befitted German culture. This was especially important in the colonial household where African servants were “omnipresent”.<sup>149</sup> African servants and European masters lived in close proximity and Europeans “found themselves constantly under the gaze of Africans.”<sup>150</sup> In a way, the German masters’ colonial experience resembled the position of the prisoner in Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon: in the household, they always had to act honourably and with propriety as they did not – and could not – know if or when they were being watched by their servants. This very often led to exhaustion, nervousness, and mental breakdowns. Governor Rechenberg’s deputy, Wilhelm Methner, suggested in his memoirs that officials needed biennial leave not due to the physical strains of living in the tropics, but because an extended time away from the colony “was the best medicine against [such] nervous disorder.”<sup>151</sup>

While the European masters hardly knew anything about the lives of their African servants, these servants gained profound and intimate knowledge of colonial society. In various court cases, testimony of African servants was heard that originated from first-hand experiences and observations in the household.<sup>152</sup> In one of the most spectacular cases, allegations of impropriety rested on such observations. In 1910, the editor of the DOAZ, Willy von Roy was sued for libel by Rechenberg. Roy had accused Rechenberg of having maintained a homosexual relationship with one of his servants. The allegation led to lengthy court battles and to the eventual expulsion of Roy from German East Africa.<sup>153</sup> Roy’s allegation rested on information gathered from an African employee of the DOAZ named Theodor. Theodor in turn had “learned” of the scandal from a fellow lodger, Mhando, who worked as a sentinel at the governor’s palace. While the accuracy and substance of the story may be debatable, it is evident that African employees very often possessed intimate and “explosive” knowledge that could

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<sup>148</sup> Gustav Adolf von Götzen, ‘Runderlaß an alle Militärstationen und Militärposten’, Circular Note, 7 July 1902, fols 100–103, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Stationen, R 1001/1026, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Schmidt, ‘Who Is Master in the Colony?: Propriety, Honor, and Manliness in German East Africa’, 120.

<sup>149</sup> Schmidt, ‘Colonial Intimacy’, 53.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>151</sup> Wilhelm Methner, *Unter drei Gouverneuren: 16 Jahre Dienst in deutschen Tropen / Under Three Governors: The Memoirs of a German Colonial Official in Tanzania 1902-1917*, trans. John W. East (Wrocław: W. G. Korn, 1938), 60. Schmidt suggests in this respect that Frantz Fanon’s observations on the emotional state of the colonised could be extended to apply to the coloniser suffering from a nervous condition, too. See Schmidt, ‘Colonial Intimacy’, 59.

<sup>152</sup> Schmidt, ‘Colonial Intimacy’; Schmidt, ‘Who Is Master in the Colony?: Propriety, Honor, and Manliness in German East Africa’.

<sup>153</sup> For an exhaustive account of the case see Schmidt, ‘Colonial Intimacy’.

lead to sensational disputes and could shake colonial society to its core. In this way Africans were able to significantly influence German culture and behaviour, especially in the household.

And while the influence of African cultures on German culture were most strongly felt in the colony, they did not stop at the territory's borders. African's impact on *Deutschtum* was also felt directly in the colonial metropole. Here, goods and products were advertised and sold with racist and essentialised depictions of Africans. Products were advertised in such a way that "the casual passer-by or the distracted reader spotting the advertisement [would] follow the eyes of the African to [the product being advertised]."<sup>154</sup> Anything from soap and snuff tobacco to coffee and chocolate soon featured images of Africans and other colonial subjects. But *Völkerschauen* and circuses also brought African culture and Africans themselves to Germany. All this contributed to an increased "orientalising" or "othering" of the African territories and its people. On the flipside, however, it also led to new understandings of Germany's position in the imperial world.<sup>155</sup> "It is to be hoped that the possession of colonies with inhabitants far below our race will have an educating influence on us," wrote a commentator in the *Deutsche Zeitung* in 1909, indicating the mutual influences and effects of the cultural encounters between Europe and Africa.<sup>156</sup> The next section will examine the reactions to these encounters.

### Section VI: Reactions to cultural exchanges

Colonisers in German East Africa saw the cultural exchanges and the contemporaneous maintenance of cultural distinction in largely positive terms. While the government prioritised those aspects of German culture that could be used to facilitate the "development" of the colonised and the colonial economy, German settlers emphasised those aspects of their culture that they could construe as superior to African cultures. Africans, meanwhile, were consciously adopting those German cultural practices that proved advantageous, such as learning German to be employed in the colonial administration. On the other hand, Germans adopted some practices and artifacts from African cultures that lent themselves to colonial life, all the while aware of the stifling gaze of the supposedly inferior Africans.

The closest contact between German and African cultures occurred in mixed-race relations and marriages. It was here, however, that many Germans became concerned about the

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<sup>154</sup> Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire*, 171:202.

<sup>155</sup> Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 88.

<sup>156</sup> Fagus quoted in *Politisch-Anthropologische Revue: Monatsschrift Für Das Soziale Und Geistige Leben Der Völker*, vol. 8 (Hildburghausen: Thüringische Verlags-Anstalt, 1910), 435–37.

“purity” of their *Deutschtum*: mixed-race marriages unsettled the settlers because the carefully constructed racial boundaries suddenly crumbled or became porous. Discussions returned to the question of race and racial theories, but they also played out with a distinct focus on German culture. Even though mixed-race marriages were exceptional in German East Africa, the colony experienced long and vociferous debates about “racial mixing”. This was due, in part, to frequent cases of extramarital sexual relations between male German colonisers and female African colonised. But discussions in other German colonies, such as German Southwest Africa and German Samoa, where there were more instances of marriages between Germans and indigenous persons, also contributed to a fierce discourse in German East Africa.<sup>157</sup> These debates were ignited further by German East Africa’s two instances of mixed-race marriages.

The first case concerned the intended return of an African man to German East Africa. Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari of Bagamoyo had been a tax collector for the German East African administration before the German linguist Carl Velten asked him and other Swahili men to compile an encyclopaedia on Swahili customs. Velten next invited Bakari to lecture at the *Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen* (Institute for Oriental Languages) and he moved to Berlin in 1900. A few years later, Bakari intended to marry a German woman named Bertha Hilske. The news spread quickly and students began to insult Bakari constantly, “making further teaching impossible.”<sup>158</sup> Velten and Eduard Sachau, the director of the Institute, unsuccessfully tried to dissuade him from his marriage plans. Without any institutional support and unable to teach, Bakari was forced to resign from his position in August 1904. He married Hilske in October without any bureaucratic difficulties from the German registry office.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Mixed-race marriages were far more common in German Samoa than in eastern Africa. German men often married Samoan women because they held significant property and trading connections. Marriage to a Samoan woman was therefore frequently a move to expand one’s own power. See Wildenthal, *German Women*, 121. According to Levine, such mixed-race marriages did not necessarily undermine sexual and racial power relations, as long as they took place between a German man and an indigenous woman. See Levine, ‘Sexuality, Gender, and Empire’, 140. German Samoan Governor Solf initially took a relaxed approach to mixed-race marriages. He did not oppose “Samoan-style” marriages per se. These marriages were not marked by official Christian or state ceremonies and therefore appeared more like cohabitation or concubinage to the Germans. Solf only changed his position after Bernhard Dernburg took office as colonial secretary. Beginning in 1907, Solf condemned mixed-race marriages. For fear of backlashes in the colony, he did not decree a ban on the practice, however. Only in 1912, after Solf had already taken over as colonial secretary, was an official ban issued for German Samoa. The colony thereby followed other German colonies: mixed-race marriages were banned by decree in German Southwest Africa in 1905 and in German East Africa in 1906. These colonies were the only ones of any European imperial power to ban mixed-race marriages for all their European populations; other colonies solely banned marriages between European women and indigenous men. Wildenthal, *German Women*, 125–26; see also Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen*, 323–24.

<sup>158</sup> Wildenthal, *German Women*, 112.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 112–13. See also the exchanges regarding Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari in Reichskolonialamt, Recht und Verwaltung, Rechtssachen, Eherecht, Mischehen und Mischlinge, R 1001/5422 fols. 3-7, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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Velten and Sachau opposed the marriage of a Swahili man to a German woman and ostracised Bakari. He was unable find meaningful employment and struggled to make a living in Berlin. He and his wife therefore decided to move to Bagamoyo in German East Africa where his family owned some land. Yet, when Bakari and Hilske arrived in eastern Africa in September 1905, they were prevented by the colonial authorities from disembarking, both in Tanga or Dar es Salaam. In fact, Governor Götzen ordered that only Hilske be barred from entering German East Africa; Bakari was free to proceed to Bagamoyo by himself.<sup>160</sup> The idea that a German woman could voluntarily enter marriage with an African man was too much for the colonial administration; they believed it would only create unwanted tensions. Bakari eventually refused Götzen's preposterous plan, and the couple had to return to Germany where they were to live a miserable life.<sup>161</sup>

The German settlers celebrated Götzen's course of action. They could not comprehend why a German woman would marry an African man and they feared that the image of the couple would signify a breakdown of the colonial system. The UP howled:

The self-preservation instinct of us colonists resists the imposition of seeing a compatriot as a nigger's "Bibi", however well bathed he may be. [...] But many a colonist will have met their *Boy* the next day wearing a hitherto unknown grin that seems to say: Well, Bwana, when are you and I going to become brothers-in-law? [...] What position should Madame Mtoro take here? We Europeans would scrupulously avoid even the most distant contact. Does she want to go to the shamba with "Mr." Mtoro and pound rice in the mortar while dressed in a kanga? Does she want to work in the field with a hoe or how should the strange couple live? In a few years, shall we see the children of a white woman on the rubbish heap of a bush village? We resist this probability and thank our authorities for their quick and energetic intervention.<sup>162</sup>

But not only a relationship between a German woman and an African man enraged patriarchal colonial society. When Götzen intervened in a second case, the settler press again praised the

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>161</sup> See Wimmelbücker, *Mtoro Bin Mwinyi Bakari*. Kundrus states that colonial mixed marriages have received the "greatest attention of all colonial phenomena". Aside from the obvious racial implications and analyses, Kundrus also discusses the issue through a gender perspective. She suggests that contemporaries interpreted the marriage of a white German woman to a black African man as treason against the German people, whereas marriages or sexual relations between a German man and an African woman were treated as "unpleasant" if they did not have any juridical consequences or "dangerous to social order" if they were publicly recognised. Mixed-race couples in which the man was African and the woman was German were perceived as far more dangerous to the political power relations in the colony. The expulsion from a territory or the denied entry of such couples subsequently led, however, to the settlement in the colonial metropole. Kundrus explains that Germans perceived mixed-race couples in which the woman was German as more threatening because such couples caused a role-reversal of the colonial hierarchy: "In accordance with the image of the man as conqueror, the colonised suddenly annexed the space of the imperialist. Due to this reversal of the colonial power relations, the white women living in this relationship caused a loss of reputation for the white Germans in the public opinion more substantially than any white 'impoverished' man who could return to the territory of the empire and 'regenerate' there. See Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, 220–25.

<sup>162</sup> 'Auch etwas zur Eingeborenenpolitik', *Usambara Post*, 1905, IV/45 edition, fol. 10, Reichskolonialamt, Recht und Verwaltung, Rechtssachen, Eherecht, Mischehen und Mischlinge, R 1001/5422, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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governor's actions. A few months after the attempted immigration of Bakari and Hilske, a merchant from Tanga intended to marry an African woman. Werner Thiel worked for a local Protestant mission and had approached the local district offices to gain permission to marry a woman from the mission's congregation.<sup>163</sup> But both the Tanga district officer and the Tanga district judge refused Thiel's request. When Thiel wrote to Götzen, he too denied the appeal and threatened Thiel with expulsion from the colony should the intended marriage proceed.<sup>164</sup> Götzen escalated the situation further and used Thiel's case as precedent to issue a colony-wide decree to ban all mixed-race marriages, much to the satisfaction of the settlers.<sup>165</sup> Thiel ultimately had to resign from his post with the Protestant mission.<sup>166</sup>

To further combat the spread of mixed-race marriages and relations, the German East African government, the RKA and other colonial stakeholders sought to provide incentives for German men to marry German women. The RKA established a fund to pay for the travel of German women who intended to marry German administrators in the colony but were prevented from travelling to the colony due to high costs.<sup>167</sup> This proved highly popular. Similar projects were pursued by the FDKG. The FDKG sought out single women and organised their transportation to German Southwest Africa with the intention to increase the population of German women in the colony.<sup>168</sup> Similar plans were formulated for German East Africa beginning in 1911, but the First World War eventually interrupted the project.<sup>169</sup> Other organisations included the *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (Association for German Cultural Relations Abroad), which sought to promote German language and education among emigrant populations.<sup>170</sup>

Despite the lobbying of pro-colonial stakeholders, metropolitan Germany held rather contradictory positions on mixed-race marriages (*Mischehen*). Missionary societies rejected the ban on mixed-race marriages. Marriage was a holy sacrament and therefore much more

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<sup>163</sup> Wildenthal, *German Women*, 117.

<sup>164</sup> See the exchanges in Reichskolonialamt, Recht und Verwaltung, Rechtssachen, Eherecht, Mischehen und Mischlinge, R 1001/5422, fols. 14-16, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 6, 16-17.

<sup>166</sup> Werner Thiel returned to Germany shortly after Götzen's decree in 1906. He travelled to German East Africa once more in May 1908, but left the colony for good in 1911 after he had been unable to re-establish himself.

<sup>167</sup> 'Zur Erleichterung der Eheschließung', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 23 August 1911, XIII/67 edition, 2.

<sup>168</sup> Else Frobenius, *10 Jahre Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft: Festschrift zum 11. Juni 1918* (Berlin: Kolonie und Heimat, 1918), 21–24, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdk/content/titleinfo/1951735>.

<sup>169</sup> Wildenthal, *German Women*, 163–68; Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*, 81.

<sup>170</sup> See *Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland von 1881-1911* (Berlin: Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland, 1911), <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdk/periodical/titleinfo/1929519>; Christian Friedrich Weiser, *Der nationale Wiederaufbau und der Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland* (Berlin: Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland, 1919), <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdk/content/titleinfo/2034838>.

important than any supposed racial differences or similar concerns.<sup>171</sup> The Social Democrats opposed the directives issued in the colonies, too. They sought a further limitation of the governors' decree authorities, but also were concerned about the problems of how to treat children born to mixed-race couples – whether in marriage or extramarital.<sup>172</sup> When Colonial Secretary Solf banned all mixed-race marriages in German Samoa, the Social Democrats introduced a resolution to the budget commission of the Reichstag “to request the government to introduce a bill which ensures the legitimacy of marriages between whites and natives in all German colonies.”<sup>173</sup> This would solve the legal status of mixed-race children by placing them under German jurisdiction. Against the protests of Solf, the resolution was adopted on 08 May 1912.

The resolution quickly prompted ferocious attacks by the German East African settler community. Settlers spoke of the *Verkafferung* (“going native”) of their German culture.<sup>174</sup> In German East Africa, settlers now feared that the *Mischehenresolution* would accelerate the “problem” of *Verkafferung*. They criticised Berlin’s policymakers for their “racial and patriotic oblivion”:

Do white women and men want to put up with this, do they want to give the coloured woman the same social rights as their own later on? My race consciousness rebels against this. A woman who does not know European culture and customs, who has never learned to read, write or count, a woman who has never held a cooking spoon or knitting stocking, a woman who smells more of sesame oil and rotten fish than of good soap and toothpaste, she is to become the partner of a white man and accompany him on his journey through life and draw him down to her? And further, dear editor, the moment the black woman is married in a civil ceremony, she also enters into the rights of every white woman. Who would want to sit at a table with such a creature at a public party, with the black woman on the left and a white woman on the right? Imagine that during the festivities the door opens and in wobbles an old, half-naked, wrinkled Negro smelling of *pombe* with his wife carrying a *mtoto* on her back. There are shouts: “Out with them!” Then the race-contaminating spouse rises indignantly and says: “But allow me, ladies and gentlemen, these are my parents-in-law!”<sup>175</sup>

The colonisers claimed that the *Verkafferung* of German East Africa was an instance “cultural neglect”. Sexual relations between coloniser and colonised led to the breaking apart of German values, manifested itself in the mismanagement of farms, plantations and businesses, and also

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<sup>171</sup> Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, 251.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 234–50.

<sup>173</sup> See the discussions of the *Reichstag*, sessions 53 to 56 (02 May 1912 to 08 May 1912), 1648-1747.

<sup>174</sup> ‘*Verkafferung*’ was a pejorative term that originated in German Southwest Africa. Here, the colonisers called the indigenous Bantu-speaking population *Kaffer* and consequently understood *Verkafferung* as the acceptance and adoption of the ways of life and ways of thinking of the colonised by Europeans. Refer to the entry ‘*Verkafferung*’ in Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsches Koloniallexikon* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920), 606.

<sup>175</sup> ‘Zur Mischehenfrage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 8 May 1912, XIV/37 edition.

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“degenerated” the German language by an excessive adoption of African expressions.<sup>176</sup> For the settlers, the adoption of the budget commission’s resolution was therefore an insult. Once again they saw the *Reichstag* as treacherous and entirely oblivious to the conditions on the ground. In response, the *Gouvernementsrat* passed a counter-resolution demanding the colonial administration to enact measures to prevent any further mixed-race marriages.<sup>177</sup> Over the next two years, nothing further happened. The resolution did not go beyond the resolution stage and mixed-race marriages remained prohibited until the outbreak of the First World War pre-empted any further debates on the issue.

The debates around the *Mischehen* illustrate the fears and dissatisfactions of the German population of East Africa. Many settlers were concerned that the legitimisation of mixed-race marriages would upend their plans for a “white utopia” – a colony of white people, for white people. Dernburg and Rechenberg had already sent a clear signal with their economic reforms: the plans for German East Africa were not focused on the expansion and prioritisation of the settler community. Connected to this economic side-lining was political side-lining. Settlers’ demands for political representation and for an expansion of their privileges against the indigenous populations were ignored and often turned on their heads, citing economic and civilisational reasons. At least in the cultural sphere, German settlers wanted to be able to point to their customs and artifacts and construe them as superior to the cultures of the colony’s other populations. Germans rejoiced in their *Deutschtum* and were eager to use it as a distinguishing feature of their colonial identity. But *Mischehen*, the adoption of Kiswahili words and phrases into the German language, alcohol abuse, and many other “uncivilised” practices endangered their *Deutschtum* – and by extension their perceived racial superiority.

### Conclusion

The institution of German colonial rule in East Africa brought momentous changes to daily life, political systems, social relations, and the economy of the indigenous populations. Indigenous cultures, too, were fundamentally altered by the arrival of Germans and German culture. But the culture of the colonisers was also impacted by the encounter with African populations and cultures. The lasting effects of this encounter are still visible today. Kiswahili vocabulary

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<sup>176</sup> Walgenbach, ‘Weiße Identität’, 1711.

<sup>177</sup> ‘Gouvernementsrat und Mischehenfrage’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 26 June 1912, XIV/51 edition, 2; Wilhelm Methner to Wilhelm Heinrich Solf, ‘Protokoll über die Sitzung des Gouvernementsrats am 20. Juni 1912’, Letter and Report, 10 July 1912, fols 173–174, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/813, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

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includes the words *shule* and *mashine*, both deriving from the respective German words for “school” and “machine”. At the same time, Kiswahili words like *Jenga* (derived from *kujenga*, meaning “to build” and mostly associated with the game of skill of building a tower from fifty-four wooden blocks) and *Safari* (meaning “journey”, mostly associated with wildlife viewing, but also popular through the internet browser of the Apple company) are common words in the German language, even if most people likely do not know the historic origin of the terms.

These vestiges are some of the least grave cultural impacts of German colonialism in eastern Africa. From the beginning of colonial rule, the government used culture as a tool for bolstering economic development, and as a means to ensure African subjugation and European control. In this way, the administration saw German culture predominantly in practical terms. Where the promotion of German culture did not serve an ulterior motive, for example to strengthen colonial control, it was not pursued further.<sup>178</sup> On the other hand, German culture was a lot more significant to settlers. They fostered a sense of *Deutschtum* through importing cultural values, traditions, practices, and artifacts. *Kaisergeburtstag*, alcohol, or clubs all served to distinguish settler society from indigenous populations. At the same time these institutions appealed to broader German commonalities and thereby helped to unite Germans in the colony. Germanness was also the aspect of colonial life that settlers could point to in regard to racial hierarchies. Since many settlers struggled economically, and as political representation remained limited, settlers had to look elsewhere for affirmation of their racial theories. This they found in their Germanness.

According to the historian Ulrich van der Heyden, German colonisers “acted with a claim to superiority and thus did not recognise African cultures as equal and did not want to acknowledge them as equal.”<sup>179</sup> Indeed, the settlers believed their German culture to be superior to that of any other *Volk* and they used it as legitimisation for the colonial system. References to and performance of *Deutschtum* were thus crucial to settlers’ identity and their position within the colony. In contemporary writing Germans referred to themselves as members of a *Kulturvolk*, whereas Africans and other non-Europeans were treated as *Naturvölker*.<sup>180</sup> The terms suggested a binary of “cultured” and “natural” peoples, which colonisers, racists, and

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<sup>178</sup> The identification with the colonial metropole is evident from the letterhead of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft: the organisation states its address as “Mutterland”. See Seidel to Otto Kersten, Letter, 29 May 1894, fol. 70, Reichskolonialamt, Recht und Verwaltung, Bücher und Zeitschriften, R 1001/4550, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>179</sup> van der Heyden, ‘Besoffen wie ein Deutscher’, 362.

<sup>180</sup> See the entry ‘Naturvolk’ in Herrmann Julius Meyer, *Meyers grosses Konversations-Lexikon: Ein Nachschlagewerk des allgemeinen Wissens*, 6th ed., vol. 14 (Leipzig and Vienna: Bibliographisches institut, 1906), 459, [http://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_uwMjQAAlAAJ](http://archive.org/details/bub_gb_uwMjQAAlAAJ).

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pseudo-scientists used as a legitimisation for colonial exploitation and as a justification for the “civilising mission”: “natural”, “uncultured”, “uncivilised” peoples could be and should be lifted up to a “civilised”, “cultured” stage. To achieve this, the colonisers needed to extend their German culture and values to Africans.

At the same time, the German colonisers and especially the settler community were careful to maintain cultural distance. They effectively barred Africans from becoming members in clubs, from partaking in “manly” and “civilised” alcohol culture, and campaigned against a colony-wide institution of the German language. They specifically voiced their opposition to mixed-race marriages and lobbied the administration to withhold rights from children of such mixed-race relations. All this served the ultimate goal to maintain racial hierarchies and to demonstrate the superiority of Germans. *Deutschtum* was thus central to identity formation of Germans in East Africa and in its performance Germans could portray themselves as racially superior.

Africans, meanwhile, adopted German culture wherever it served them. Learning German provided employment opportunities and allowed Africans to access German culture. Naturally, not all of this was voluntary – but Africans carefully filled those gaps that the colonisers created through their lack of knowledge and their own inconsistencies. The practice of *shauri* or the intimate knowledge learned from working in the colonisers’ homes and offices served to expand power, prestige, and opportunities. The interactions of and influences between African and German cultures were thus mutual, albeit profoundly unequal.

## CHAPTER V: THE END OF GERMAN EAST AFRICA

### Introduction

On 22 July 1912, Heinrich Schnee arrived in Dar es Salaam on board the *Hapag* steamer *Windhuk*. Hundreds of spectators, dressed in their finest festive attire, gathered at the harbour of the colony's capital to greet the new governor. While any change of governors was a momentous political and social event in German East Africa, settlers were particularly excited to welcome Schnee. The policies of his predecessor, Rechenberg, had alienated many settlers and Rechenberg was consequently detested by many Germans in the colony. Settlers saw Schnee as a fresh start and hoped that the anti-settlement policies of Rechenberg were a thing of the past. The district official of Dar es Salaam, Vollbach, expressed the wish that Schnee would become "a strong supporter of Dar es Salaam and the colony" and that the settlers, in turn, would "faithfully support [the governor's] work for the good of our city of Dar es Salaam, for the prosperity of our *Schutzgebiet* and for the blessing of our German fatherland."<sup>1</sup>

After Schnee disembarked, he was received by the head of the *Schutztruppe*, Kurt von Schleinitz. Schnee inspected the guard of honour, greeted the students of the *Europäerschule* and a group of women, and observed the ceremonial military parade. He then made introductory remarks to various exclusive audiences, such as to the officials of the central administration, and in the officers' mess. Up to this point, Schnee was following the familiar protocol. But when it came to welcoming Dar es Salaam's settler society in the city's club, Schnee departed from the carefully constructed plan. He omitted the club and instead granted an audience to Arab and Indian delegations in front of the governor's mansion. This would have been a significant affront to the settlers, had Schnee not promised to attend instead the *Bierabend* for the general population later that evening. He thereby resolved any immediate discontent the settlers might have felt from being snubbed at the club. In the richly decorated hall of the city's school for craftsmen, Schnee addressed the crowd and promised to be a representative and supporter of all those who worked for the benefit and progress of the colony.<sup>2</sup>

Over the course of the following years, Schnee worked towards reconciling the interests of settlers, businesses, and the proponents of indigenous production.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to all his predecessors, Schnee was neither an aristocrat nor a member of the military, but a career

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<sup>1</sup> 'Empfang und Begrüßung unseres Gouverneurs', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 July 1912, XIV/59 edition, 3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Exzellenz Dr. Schnee über seine Aufgabe', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 July 1912, XIV/59 edition, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*; Söldenwagner, *Spaces of negotiation*.

colonial public servant. Unsurprisingly, expectations were high all around.<sup>4</sup> Schnee recognised the importance of settler society and attributed great economic significance to it. He attempted to strike a balance between expanding settler privileges and continuing the development of indigenous agriculture that Rechenberg had championed.<sup>5</sup> Schnee also sought to increase the popularity of the German East African colony in the metropole and abroad: the *Landesausstellung* (country exhibition) that was planned for 1914 – but cancelled due to the outbreak of war – sought to demonstrate the business and settlement potential of the territory, while, at the same time, provided an opportunity for “the desire of the entire population of German East Africa to show the Motherland at this very moment what has been achieved so far under difficult economic conditions.”<sup>6</sup>

Schnee's governorship seemed poised to deconstruct the tripartite divisions of German colonialism. He sought to improve relations between the settler community and the administration in the colony, and worked towards aligning the interests of the German government with the realities of German East Africa. The outbreak of the First World War put a stop to Schnee's policy of reconciliation and ended official German rule in eastern Africa. The war and subsequent loss of the colonies did not, however, end German colonial ambitions, nor did it unite these ambitions. Instead, the tripartite divisions that characterised the official phase of German colonialism continued into the 1920s. (Former) settlers longed for a return to their colonial *Heimat*, (former) administrators pursued vocal revisionist campaigns, and the German government considered the (former) colonies a bargaining tool only.

This chapter examines the last years of German East Africa, and the first years of Germany's post-colonial phase. Section I explores how the new governor sought to overcome the tripartite divisions that had characterised the entirety of German colonialism so far. Section II situates the colony within the First World War and suggests that the experience of war similarly exposed long-standing tensions in German East Africa. The settlers and their return to Germany are the focus of Section III. Here, I argue that immediately after arriving in Germany, settlers wanted to return to Africa as they were dissatisfied with metropolitan society. Section IV analyses the experiences of former colonial officials who emerged as vocal revisionists after the war. They formed a movement that demanded the return of German colonies and considered anyone objecting to their goal a traitor. Lastly, Section V shows that

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<sup>4</sup> Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee*, 321.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 327–28.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Winke für die Beteiligung an der zweiten Allgemeinen Landesausstellung in Daressalam im August 1914’, 1913, fol. 191, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Ausstellungen, R 1001/161, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

the German government hardly cared about the colonial question. In contrast to the revisionists' firm belief of the importance of colonies for Germany, the government viewed the issue pragmatically and used any revisionist claims as a bargaining chip only.

As a whole, this chapter suggests that the tripartite divisions of German colonialism continued through and even after the caesura of the First World War and the subsequent loss of colonies. Even though the settler community disintegrated with their return to Germany, they still objected to social and political trends in the metropole. Only few actively cared about recouping the colonies for Germany; most simply wanted to return to their African *Heimat*. Colonial revisionists were unable to persuade former settlers to join their cause, and neither did they successfully convince the government to focus on the colonial question. The revisionists' failures exhibited tendencies that were similar to relations between administration, settlers, and metropole during the period of actual colonial rule. Equally, the German government's position on the colonial question remained a consistently pragmatic indifference. The inability of the revisionists to overcome these continuing tripartite divisions, which had complicated Germany's colonialism all throughout, eventually led to the failure of their ambitions, and Germany remained excluded from the circle of colonial powers.

### Section I: Tripartite divisions and Heinrich Schnee

Heinrich Schnee was born in February 1871, just two weeks after the proclamation of the German Empire. He studied law in Heidelberg and afterwards entered public service. In 1898 he was appointed judge and deputy governor of German New Guinea, two years later he was transferred to German Samoa. When Emperor Wilhelm II, or rather Reichskanzler Bethmann-Hollweg, appointed Schnee as Governor of German East Africa in 1912, Schnee became the colony's first governor from neither an aristocratic nor a military background.<sup>7</sup> Albeit shortened due to the outbreak of the First World War, Schnee's governorship seemed to ring in a new era of colonial life. He attempted to pacify the incensed German settler society, but also to balance it with the economic development of the colony and its indigenous populations.

Schnee arrived in German East Africa in mid-1912, accompanied by his wife Ada. This was already unusual: hardly any official had brought his wife to the tropics, let alone the governor. But while Heinrich claimed "simply wanted to have his wife by his side", Ada's

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<sup>7</sup> Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee*, 321.

presence in the colony represented much more than that.<sup>8</sup> During the debates around mixed-race marriages and *Deutschtum*, the simple fact that the colony had a “first couple” – rather than a bachelor governor, like Rechenberg – was also a signal to those who wished for more commitment towards the German colonies. The Schnees arrived in Dar es Salaam with their own personnel and many crates of household and personal effects, including a grand piano specifically adapted to tropical conditions. They sought to create a comfortable and familiar home for themselves while maintaining and performing “a bourgeois-Wilhelmine” lifestyle.<sup>9</sup>

Immediately upon his arrival, the new governor took up his work. Schnee had studied Kiswahili in Germany prior to his departure and was well-informed about the grievances of German East Africa’s settler society. He was anxious to improve relations with the settlers and began to pursue a policy of reconciliation: “He considered the settlers economically important and sympathised with them. He probably also saw them as supporters and bearers of ‘Germanness’ and even felt connected to them.”<sup>10</sup> From his very first moment in the colony, Schnee considered German East Africa a territory large enough to accommodate everyone:

The nature of the colony, with its different and very diverse areas, meant that, in my opinion, it was a mistake to develop it in one direction only, whether that be native agriculture or plantation agriculture. I considered that there were certainly many parts of the colony where the only prospect of success lay in native agriculture, and the trade which depended upon it. On the other hand, there were other areas where it was possible for European plantations to use the land effectively, and such plantations were the only option for certain crops, like sisal, which required machinery to extract the sisal hemp. In other elevated healthy areas, farming and pastoralism, with the permanent settlement of Europeans, seemed to me to be appropriate.<sup>11</sup>

To support this impression, Schnee set out on a trip across the colony just days after his arrival. He wanted to study local conditions, to meet Europeans, Africans and Indians, and to come up with a colonial policy that would reconcile settler interests with the economic progress of the colony.

Schnee’s first inspection tour coincided with the arrival of Colonial Secretary Wilhelm Solf in German East Africa. Already after the first few meetings Schnee and Solf appeared to be on the same wavelength. Solf noted in his diary that he was “pleased to be able to agree with the Governor on all the points that came up.”<sup>12</sup> Solf shied away from publicly making promises to settler society, however, and instead proposed expanding the responsibilities of the governor.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 318–19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 319.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>11</sup> Schnee, *Als Letzter Gouverneur in Deutsch-Ostafrika / The Last Governor of German East Africa*, 103.

<sup>12</sup> Solf, ‘Ost-Afrika’, 172.

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In this way, the governor would be able to better mediate between settlers and administration. Solf metaphorically referred to the “parallelogram of black and white forces in which the governor ought to draw the diagonal.”<sup>13</sup> When the two departed Dar es Salaam for the interior, they generally seemed to agree on a colonial course that aimed at a balanced development of German East Africa.

Over the following weeks, Schnee and Solf visited the major cities and plantations of the colony. In geographically diverse colony, the far-dispersed settler groups all had their own interests and their own realities. Coffee planters in the Usambara mountains had different concerns from an innkeeper in Tanga. Everywhere the two colonial administrators went, they were consequently received with euphoric expectations and long wish-lists. The *Wirtschaftlicher Verband vom Kilimandscharo* (Economic Association Kilimanjaro), an association of settler businessmen, presented a memorandum to the two administrators, demanding a range of pro-settler measures. They lamented the constant shortage of workers and called for the extension of compulsory labour. The settlers also proposed the continuation of the Usambara rail line and demanded more say in administrative matters.<sup>14</sup> Solf and Schnee did not want to make specific commitments that would be difficult to roll back later, but they nonetheless knew how to respond to the settlers. In Tabora, Kilossa, Morogoro, or Tanga, both officials gave speeches that were followed by thunderous applause and prompted favourable reports in the settler press.<sup>15</sup> After the tense Rechenberg years, it seemed that Schnee could tell the settlers anything and be well received – as long as he did not directly oppose the interests of the settlers.

Schnee presented Solf to the settlers as a signal of increased support from the German government for the colonies. He assured his audiences that together they would always make every effort to promote the plantations and settlements as far as possible with the support of the

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<sup>13</sup> Wilhelm Heinrich Solf to von Huhn, Letter, 9 October 1912, Nachlässe und Sammlungen, Nachlässe, N 1053/34, Bundesarchiv Koblenz quoted in; Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee*, 329.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Denkschrift. Ihren Excellenzen dem Herrn Staatssekretär Dr. Solf und dem Herrn Gouverneur Dr. Schnee überreicht vom Wirtschaftlichen Verband am Kilimanjaro.’, August 1912, Nachlässe und Sammlungen, Nachlässe, N 1053/33, Bundesarchiv Koblenz; see also Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee*, 331–32.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Der Kolonialstaatssekretär in Morogoro’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 August 1912, XIV/68 edition, 2–3; ‘Der Kolonialstaatssekretär in Kilossa’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 28 August 1912, XIV/69 edition, 2–3. On the occasion of Solf’s visit to Tanga, a commentator wrote: “The fact that the State Secretary had found the right tone in the right place with this speech probably needs no further explanation. The rapturous applause that the speech received may give him the conviction on his way home that he has won the trust of the East Africans in his leadership of the Colonial Office. This conviction may strengthen him for the struggle for the weal and woe of the protectorates that surely lies ahead of him.” See ‘Exzellenz Dr. Solf in Tanga’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 4 September 1912, XIV/71 edition, 1–2.

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metropole.<sup>16</sup> The governor also informed Solf about the local conditions, seeking to paint as accurate a picture of the colony as possible, and to clear up any misunderstandings. Schnee seemingly succeeded. After a long discussion with Schnee, Solf issued a statement in defence of the German East African civil servants; this came in the wake of a perjury process against Freiherr von Wächter, a high-ranking administrator, that had captivated colonial society and made waves even in Germany.<sup>17</sup> At the end of his stay in German East Africa, Solf noted in his diary: “in long conversations with him [Schnee] I have found that we definitely have one and the same view on the most burning questions.”<sup>18</sup> Armed with these new impressions of the colony, Solf embarked on his homeward journey.

After saying their goodbyes on 30 August 1912, Schnee continued alone and visited the Kilimanjaro, Meru, and Arusha areas. Here he assessed the potential of country and climate for further European settlement. Schnee concluded that the area was not ideal for small-scale settlement, contradicting the settlers’ beliefs: “practical experience with the whites living there [has shown that] the men have retained their productivity, the women their fertility, the growing generation has remained physically, intellectually and morally fit.”<sup>19</sup> To placate the settlers, Schnee offered measures to control cattle disease and other pests. Schnee’s strategy was “to provide concrete support through competent experts.”<sup>20</sup> When he returned to Dar es Salaam, the governor wrote accounts of his experiences and sought to formulate new, well-balanced policies. He authorised a much-requested immigration act that would require new immigrants to register with the administration and only allow them entrance into German East Africa if they could prove themselves to be in possession of a certain amount of capital.<sup>21</sup> This sought to restrict the immigration into the colony of “unwanted elements” – in other words, Indians and poor and “racially unconscious” Europeans. The settlers were happy with this “welcome step in the right direction.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Reise Seiner Exzellenz des Herrn Gouverneurs in den Nordbezirken’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 20 December 1913, XV/102 edition, 2.

<sup>17</sup> C. Storz, ‘Der Prozeß gegen Frhrn. Eberhard von Wächter in Daressalam’, *Schwäbischer Merkur*, 19 April 1912, 180 edition.

<sup>18</sup> Solf, ‘Ost-Afrika’, fol. 255.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Bedeutende Rede des Kolonialstaatssekretärs’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 3 August 1912, XIV/62 edition, 1–2.

<sup>20</sup> Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee*, 336.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter III.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Die Melde- und die Einwanderungsverordnung für das deutschostafrikanische Schutzgebiet’, 3.

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Schnee also sought to make political concessions to the settlers. He increased the number of nonofficial members of the governing council from five to twelve.<sup>23</sup> Schnee also bowed to settlers' demands and allowed the public to attend the sessions of the council, clearly signalling that he sought to include every colonist in the policy- and decision-making of the colony. Ultimately, Schnee hoped to replace the governing council with a *Landrat* – modelled on the German Southwest African example. With this Schnee wanted to increase and improve representation of the colony as a whole, as the current *Gouvernementsrat* was dominated by and skewed towards planter representatives from the territory's north.<sup>24</sup> The *Gouvernementsrat* furthermore was also only an advisory entity; Schnee proposed that the *Landrat* should hold decision making and resolution powers.<sup>25</sup> These measures aimed at cultivating better relations between settlers and administration and were in line with the governor's approach to develop the colony "for everyone".

The same compromises between promoting settler interests, while also strengthening the colony's businesses and economies can be seen in the preparations for the Second General German East African Country Exposition.<sup>26</sup> The *Landesausstellung* promised to exhibit and highlight the colony's potentials for further settlement and business opportunities.<sup>27</sup> Exhibitors from the German metropole and almost all parts of the colony confirmed their participation, members of parliament announced their visit, and representatives of German industry and trade provided their financial backing.<sup>28</sup> Even Crown Prince Wilhelm planned a visit.<sup>29</sup> The *Landesausstellung* was set to be the largest publicity event of any German colony, and German East Africans were excited about the opportunity to represent their colony to metropolitan and international audiences. Some former settlers and officials – led by the retired administrator

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<sup>23</sup> 'Verhandlungen des Gouvernementsrats des Deutsch-Ostafrikanischen Schutzgebiets vom 21. bis 26 Juni 1913' (Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung, 1913), 3, fol. 227, Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/813, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>24</sup> See 'Verhandlungen des Gouvernementsrats des Deutsch-Ostafrikanischen Schutzgebiets vom 20. bis 23. Januar 1913' (Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung, 1913), fol. 227ff., Reichskolonialamt, Deutsch-Ostafrika, Allgemeine politische Angelegenheiten, R 1001/813, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>25</sup> 'Verhandlungen des Gouvernementsrats des Deutsch-Ostafrikanischen Schutzgebiets vom 21. bis 26 Juni 1913', fol. 265ff.

<sup>26</sup> The first exposition took place in 1904.

<sup>27</sup> See for example Oskar Karstedt, *Deutsch-Ostafrika 1914: Denkschrift*, Electronic ed. (Berlin: Koch, 1914), <https://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/dsdk/content/titleinfo/9343980>.

<sup>28</sup> 'Besuch der Landesausstellung Daressalam', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 11 July 1914, XVI/56 edition, 1.

<sup>29</sup> 'Reise des Kronprinzen nach Deutsch-Ostafrika zur Einweihung der Tanganikabahn?', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 10 August 1912, XIV/64 edition, 1; Schnee, *Als Letzter Gouverneur in Deutsch-Ostafrika / The Last Governor of German East Africa*, 108.

Oskar Karstedt – planned to produce a general travel guide to German East Africa with the intention of further promoting the colony.<sup>30</sup>

The outbreak of the First World War just a few weeks before the grand opening of the *Landesausstellung* threw a spanner into the works of governor Schnee. The initial hope of simply postponing the opening until the situation had cleared soon faded as the colony itself became embroiled in the war.

### Section II: German East Africa in the First World War

The First World War in East Africa broke out amid widespread confusion. Days after the German declaration of war, the colonial administration was unsure whether the war would soon engulf German East Africa as well. This was due to the firm belief in the validity of the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1884/85. In his account of the war, Schnee explained that many in German East Africa believed “that in our modern times there would be no more colonial warfare [and that] such wars [...] seemed to belong to a less enlightened past [because] the Congo Act would guarantee that England would not unleash a colonial war.”<sup>31</sup> Article 11 of the Act stipulated that colonies belonging to powers engaged in war should remain neutral and that “the belligerents thenceforth [should abstain] from extending hostilities to the territories thus neutralised, and from using them as a base for warlike operations.”<sup>32</sup>

In hindsight, the colonial government’s belief that the colonial powers would adhere to Article 11 was naïve. But German colonial officials had good reason to seek the territories’ neutrality. In the north and southwest, German East Africa bordered British territories, in the west was the Belgian Congo, and to the south the Portuguese. The only telegraph line between German East Africa and Europe connected the coastal town of Bagamoyo with Zanzibar – notably a British protectorate. Otherwise, the colony was largely cut off from the outside world.<sup>33</sup> Schnee attempted to establish a postal link between Udjidji on Lake Tanganyika and

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Lokales’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 13 December 1913, XV/100 edition, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkriege: Wie wir lebten und kämpften* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1919), 28, <https://brema.suub.uni-bremen.de/dsdk/content/pageview/1906228>.

<sup>32</sup> Demetrius Charles Boulger, ed., ‘Appendix - General Act of the Berlin Conference’, in *The Congo State: Or, the Growth of Civilisation in Central Africa*, Cambridge Library Collection - African Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), art. 11, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139248587.021>.

<sup>33</sup> Schnee, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkriege*, 23–26, 43.

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the Belgian Congo, but the officer ordered to implement the measure was soon interned as a prisoner of war of the Belgian Congo.<sup>34</sup>

Not all German East Africans shared Schnee's confidence in the colonial treaties. The DOAZ had discussed the question of colonial neutrality already in October 1911, casting doubt over the validity of Article 11 of the General Act. According to Hans Zache, the Article's provisions could be interpreted in such manner that neutrality could only be guaranteed if all colonial signatory powers – specifically Germany, Britain, and France – agreed on the matter. Zache doubted that this would be possible in times of conflict.<sup>35</sup> With the outbreak of the war, the paper warned again that the neutrality of German East Africa was not a given. Even if the General Act was legally incontestable, there was no guarantee that eastern Africa would remain peaceful: "the Congo Act is basically just a piece of paper. It cannot be doubted that the enemy, if he expects an advantage from it, will cold-bloodedly disregard the provisions of this agreement."<sup>36</sup>

Confusion about the beginning of war and the colony's status increased with every arriving telegram. Since the Germans transmitted their messages through British cables, instantaneous communication soon decreased, and all messages that were relayed first had to go through the Zanzibar censors.<sup>37</sup> On 29 July 1914, Colonial Secretary Solf instructed the governors of all German colonies to "calm down settlers, as our protectorates are in no danger of war."<sup>38</sup> Three days later, the government received news of the outbreak of war in Europe, followed by an assurance of the Berlin offices that the colonies would not be involved in the war.<sup>39</sup> On 2 August, the British administration prevented the transmission of coded messages to the German East African government, and the following day cut all essential telegraph communication.<sup>40</sup> On 5 August, German radio operators intercepted a message which confirmed the state of war between Germany and Britain.<sup>41</sup> A few days later the British navy conducted the first bombardments of German East African cities, including Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam. While the damages remained modest, Schnee again appealed to the neutrality

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<sup>34</sup> Ada Schnee, *Meine Erlebnisse während der Kriegszeit in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1918), 15.

<sup>35</sup> Hans Zache, 'Ist Deutsch-Ostafrika im Kriegsfall neutralisiert?', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 21 October 1911, XIII/84 edition, 2.

<sup>36</sup> 'Die Kongo-Akte', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 22 August 1914, XVI/68 edition, 1.

<sup>37</sup> 'Reuter-Meldungen', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung Extra-Blatt*, 13 August 1914, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ludwig Boell, 'Der Krieg in den deutschen Kolonien' (n.d.), fol. 51, Kriegsgeschichtliche Forschungsanstalt des Heeres, Abteilung B, Gruppe III (Kolonialkrieg), RH 61/40, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Pesek, *Das Ende Eines Kolonialreiches: Ostafrika Im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2010), 41.

<sup>40</sup> Schnee, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkriege*, 26–27.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

provisions. He declared the colony's ports open to prevent future attacks. Schnee similarly guaranteed safe passage to any nationals of enemy powers who were living in the colony.<sup>42</sup>

Schnee's attempts to find a temporary, pragmatic solution were upended, however, by the commanding officer of the *Schutztruppe* Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck.<sup>43</sup> Lettow-Vorbeck had no intention of surrendering the colony without a fight. Even though the governor was the formal commander-in-chief of the *Schutztruppe*, Schnee hardly had any *de facto* power. The troops' solidarity lay with their commanding officer. Many volunteer fighters followed Lettow-Vorbeck because they perceived his strategy as a "defence of their *Heimat*" whereas they objected to Schnee's attempts at neutrality.<sup>44</sup> However, Lettow-Vorbeck formulated his plan less out of conviction that the war could be won in the colony, but more as a tactical consideration. He simply wanted to tie up as many British troops as possible in eastern Africa, preventing them from fighting in Europe, India, or elsewhere.<sup>45</sup> Instead of abstaining from combat and following Schnee's instructions for neutrality, Lettow-Vorbeck defied the governor's orders. The First World War in German East Africa thus began with a "military coup."<sup>46</sup> Under the aegis of the military, foreign nationals were imprisoned, sent to concentration camps, and eventually repatriated.<sup>47</sup> The military effectively prevented any private travel from the colony. The *Schutztruppe* led a guerrilla-style campaign that lasted for the duration of the war, defending the colony against the Allied Powers and launching counterattacks against neighbouring territories.

The East Africa campaign caused widespread destruction and famine among the indigenous populations. This can be attributed directly to the actions of the *Schutztruppe*.

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<sup>42</sup> Pesek, *Das Ende Eines Kolonialreiches*, 47; see also 'Maßnahmen der Engländer vor Daressalam', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 12 August 1914, XVI/65 edition, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika* (Leipzig: K.F. Koehler, 1920); Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Heia Safari!: Deutschlands Kampf in Ostafrika* (Leipzig: K.F. Koehler, 1920).

<sup>44</sup> Bührer provides a good overview of the composition of the *Schutztruppe*. According to her analysis, more than 3,600 'whites' served in the *Schutztruppe* during the war, of which 312 held the rank of officer. Included in these numbers are most of the colony's white men and naval soldiers of various ships that had been around the East African coast when the war broke out. See Tanja Bührer, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika: Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegführung, 1885 bis 1918* (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2011), 431ff.

<sup>45</sup> 'I knew that the fate of the colonies, as of all other German possessions, would only be decided on the battlefields of Europe. To this decision every German, regardless of where he might be at the moment, must contribute his share. In the Colony also it was our duty, in case of universal war, to do all in our power for our country. The question was whether it was possible for us in our subsidiary theatre of war to exercise any influence on the great decision at home. Could we, with our small forces, prevent considerable numbers of the enemy from intervening in Europe, or in other more important theatres, or inflict on our enemies any loss of personnel or war material worth mentioning? At that time I answered this question in the affirmative.' The quotation is taken from the translation of Lettow-Vorbeck's *Meine Erinnerungen*. See Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1921), 1, <http://archive.org/details/myreminiscences00lettuoft>.

<sup>46</sup> Pesek, *Das Ende Eines Kolonialreiches*, 47; Bührer, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe*, 473–77.

<sup>47</sup> Pesek, *Das Ende Eines Kolonialreiches*, 266–78.

Lettow-Vorbeck and his troops, followed by thousands of *askari* and porters, cut a swath of destruction through the colony and the surrounding territories. Without regular supplies, the *Schutztruppe* had to sustain itself in the field. They seized and confiscated grain and cattle, leaving behind only burned fields and scorched earth to slow the advance of Allied troops. In late 1917 and in 1918, droughts devastated the civilian populations. Additionally, the absence of hundreds of thousands of porters who had been forcefully recruited from villages and rural areas on both sides, put further strains on labour availability and compounded famine. Iliffe has estimated that the British alone recruited more than one million porters, of whom over 100,000 died during the war.<sup>48</sup> Oliver Janz assumes that in German East Africa alone, more than 650,000 people died.<sup>49</sup> These numbers are even more extraordinary when one considers that the *Schutztruppe* recorded a total of 745 white casualties.<sup>50</sup>

In the neighbouring British territory of Nyasaland – present-day Malawi – the war led to the Chilembwe Uprising. The recruitment of thousands of porters for the British colonial army compounded the already existing economic pressures on the local populations. In protest, the American-educated pastor John Chilembwe led an attack against white plantations, seeking to destabilise the colonial system in Nyasaland.<sup>51</sup> Chilembwe preached a “mixture of Christian pacifism and natural law,” which resonated with the local African elites.<sup>52</sup> His tactics somewhat bore resemblance to the Maji Maji movement in that they united local societies and overcame tribal divisions. Even though the uprising was defeated and Chilembwe killed just days after it had broken out, its motivation and ideology quickly spread across the area, leading to continued resistance against colonial rule.<sup>53</sup>

While Lettow-Vorbeck's campaign devastated much of the colony, German East Africa's European civilian population experienced increased isolation. The British blockade limited exchanges with the German metropole. Mainly Reuter telegrams arrived in the colony, but, as a British company, their reporting on the war was skewed towards the Allies.<sup>54</sup> Supply

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<sup>48</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 250.

<sup>49</sup> Oliver Janz, *'14 - Der große Krieg* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013), 165.

<sup>50</sup> Statistisches Reichsamts des Deutschen Reiches, ed., *Statistisches Jahrbuch Für Das Deutsche Reich*, vol. 1923 (Berlin: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1924), 25, [http://www.digizeitschriften.de/dms/toc/?PID=PPN514401303\\_1923](http://www.digizeitschriften.de/dms/toc/?PID=PPN514401303_1923).

<sup>51</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 131–32.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>53</sup> See Pesek, *Das Ende Eines Kolonialreiches*, 314ff.; see also Landeg White, “‘Tribes’ and the Aftermath of the Chilembwe Rising”, *African Affairs* 83, no. 333 (1984): 511–41; Jane Linden and Ian Linden, ‘John Chilembwe and the New Jerusalem’, *The Journal of African History* 12, no. 4 (1971): 629–51; Robert I. Rotberg, ‘Psychological Stress and the Question of Identity: Chilembwe’s Revolt Reconsidered’, in *Protest and Power in Black Africa*, ed. Ali Al’Amin Mazrui and Robert I. Rotberg (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 337–73, <http://archive.org/details/protestpowerinbl00rotb>.

<sup>54</sup> Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe*, 442.

lines were interrupted, and food prices quickly rose as essentials such as butter and potatoes became scarce. The DOAZ suggested to its readers to find suitable alternatives to their usual products: “Bacon and lard from hippopotamus are said to be excellent; oil from peanuts is on the market. On the coast coconuts are now plentiful and cheap; making palm wine is a very simple matter and can be done by any cook.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Wilhelm Schultz’s brewery pivoted away from beer towards “an impeccable, good-tasting, and digestible whiskey substitute.”<sup>56</sup> The DOAZ itself felt the strains of paper shortages and increased the prices for placing advertisements by fifty percent while halving such advertisements’ size.<sup>57</sup>

Even though German East Africa was increasingly isolated from the rest of the world, information and news still made it to the colony. Boats coming from Zanzibar brought reports of the latest developments in eastern Africa, but also of the European theatre of war. The settlers celebrated the quick advances and successes of the German army, and many believed the war to be won soon.<sup>58</sup> But the initial optimism soon made way for uncertainty and fear. The inhabitants of Dar es Salaam did not know what was happening in Tanga, Bagamoyo, or Mwanza and vice versa. Rumours of Allied advances in the colony, of battles and ultimatums became the daily fare of settlers.<sup>59</sup> In their lack of knowledge and information, German settlers soon turned against other Europeans, such as Greek merchants.<sup>60</sup> But especially the Indian populations once again came under general suspicion and many settlers called on the government to do something against them.<sup>61</sup>

Here, the same grievances that had already flared up in the wake of Maji Maji and during the Rechenberg years manifested themselves again. The war in the colony only contributed to the settlers’ continuous disaffection with their administration. Being virtually cut off from the metropole similarly heightened tensions only further. The next sections consider the effects of the end of the war and the end of German colonial rule on the tripartite divisions within the colonial system, starting with the settlers.

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<sup>55</sup> ‘Eingeborenenchakula in der europäischen Küche’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 12 December 1914, XVI/100 edition, 1–2.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Anzeige’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 7 March 1916, XVIII/19 edition, 4.

<sup>57</sup> ‘An unsere geehrten Leser’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 May 1916, XVIII/37 edition, 1.

<sup>58</sup> See for example ‘Die Deutschen im Anmarsch auf Paris’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung Extra-Blatt*, 7 September 1914.

<sup>59</sup> See for example ‘Gerüchte’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 20 January 1915, XVII/7 edition, 2; ‘Gefahr in Verzug’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 24 July 1915, XVII/60 edition, 1.

<sup>60</sup> See the notice by Leonidas Grammatikas, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 December 1914, XVI/101 edition, 5.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Maßnahmen gegen die Inder’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 30 December 1914, XVI/105 edition, 3.

Section III: The settlers and the end of the war

With the war in full swing and increasing British naval presence along the coast, the German populations gradually moved to the interior. The German East African government relocated to Tabora on 18 January 1915 and many settlers – especially women and children – followed.<sup>62</sup> Tabora was a malaria prone area and Ada Schnee recalled how inadequate provisions led to hardship and the deaths of children.<sup>63</sup> The advance of British and Belgian troops led to the capture of German East African towns. Allied prisoners of war were freed and replaced with Germans. Subsequently, all Germans were interned and eventually sent abroad to India, Egypt and South Africa. Michael Pesek has interpreted this reciprocal internment of Europeans in prisoner of war camps as “an almost unprecedented space in 19th century colonial history in which the colonial order of Europeans was temporarily suspended or downright inverted.”<sup>64</sup>

The war in German East Africa and the settlers’ expulsion from it also resulted in the end of the DOAZ. The newspaper that had represented settler interests in the colony and metropole for almost two decades printed its last issue on 18 August 1916 after relocating to Morogoro. The discontinuation of the DOAZ heralded the end of a unified settler interest. Individuals were unable to publicly claim that their demands or concerns were representative of a large group of likeminded fellow settlers; opinions no longer appeared in the pages of the newspaper for all of German East Africa, but in books written by individuals. Even though these individual accounts hint at common interests and concerns – such as the rejection of German social and political trends, or the need for financial assistance – a public settler interest was no longer visible. When the settler group disintegrated, its collective bargaining power ebbed too. Without a singular point of reference, both the German government and (former) colonial administrators found it difficult to address common settler grievances. While settlers’ disaffections remained, the divisions between settlers and metropolitan government, and settlers and colonial administration were thus less pronounced than they had been during German colonial rule.

Nevertheless, a few individual accounts reveal settlers’ common experiences of internment and exile, and their grievances. Conditions in the internment camps were austere but not terrible. German prisoners chiefly complained about humiliations and indignities. Karl Roehl, a missionary and administrator of a military hospital, wrote in his memoirs of the

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<sup>62</sup> ‘Zeitweise Verlegung des Gouvernements’, *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 9 January 1915, XVII/4 edition, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Schnee, *Meine Erlebnisse*, 37, 48–50.

<sup>64</sup> Pesek, *Das Ende Eines Kolonialreiches*, 266–67.

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Belgians' goal to undermine the Germans' status as colonial rulers: "our Germans were made to do the most menial work, if possible in full view of the blacks. They had to clean lavatories, fetch water, carry loads to the railway station, carry railway tracks through the town and so on."<sup>65</sup> This was, however, by and large the same treatment that the Germans had inflicted on their prisoners just a few months and weeks earlier. Overall, however, the situation in the camps was hardly devastating. The Red Cross visited and oversaw camp operations in Egypt and India, and many prisoners complained only about banalities, such as bad food or boredom.

Albert Prüsse, the settler and manager of a mica mine, had similar recollections. After capture by British forces, Prüsse and other Germans were interned in a concentration camp in Dar es Salaam. On 12 January 1918, he and around one thousand internees boarded the British steamer *Briton* and set course towards the Suez Canal.<sup>66</sup> Prüsse described the cramped conditions, heat and meagre but tasty meals. Some prisoners died during the journey aboard the *Briton*, but the British buried them at sea with military honours – for Prüsse a sign of British respect despite the conditions of the war.<sup>67</sup> A few days later, the prisoners arrived in Egypt and were transferred to adjacent internment camps at Maadi and Tura. Prüsse spent around eighteen months at these camps. He complained mainly about insufficient living conditions – "we had to sleep on the bare, wet ground," – the climate – "in the draughty halls, the thermometer stood at nine degrees Celsius, while shortly before we had been lying in the sun at over fifty degrees in Dar es Salaam," – and the terrible food provisions – "beans and winged beetles."<sup>68</sup>

When the news of Germany's defeat broke in the internment camps, the prisoners reacted with resignation. Prüsse did not want to believe the reports of the November Revolution and the military defeat: "mutiny among German units, mutiny among the German fleet, who of us believed that! If enemy superiority had finally destroyed [us], it would not have surprised us. But betrayal and treason on a large scale in Germany?"<sup>69</sup> Prüsse's incredulity reveals how distant colonial society and metropole had become – or perhaps, had always been. The German (ex-)settlers were like mosquitos trapped in amber: they were stuck in an older version of the empire and had drifted out of touch with the changing sensibilities at home.

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<sup>65</sup> Karl Roehl, *Ostafrikas Heldenkampf* (Berlin: Martin Warneck, 1918), 150, <http://idb.ub.uni-tuebingen.de/opendigi/FoXXIV371/pdf/FoXXIV371.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> Albert Prüsse, *Zwanzig Jahre Ansiedler in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder, 1929), 257.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> In the original German language, Prüsse writes of '*Bohnen mit Geflügel*'. *Geflügel* is the German word for *poultry* and its etymology is of the word *Flügel*, meaning *wings* in English. Prüsse therefore uses the word *Geflügel* sarcastically to invoke images of poultry, whereas in reality it refers to the wings of the beetles that had damaged the bean crop and had now found their way into the prisoners' dinners. *Ibid.*, 259–61.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

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After the armistice, the Prüsse and his fellow prisoners were allowed to make excursions to Cairo, albeit only in groups of fifty and under strict watch of British guards.<sup>70</sup> Finally, in late September 1919, the German internees learned that they would soon be repatriated. On 23 November 1919, Prüsse reached Hamburg, where he reunited with his wife and child. He recalled that the festive reception of the internees – a band playing music and children singing, a warm dinner and cold beer – left him unimpressed: “Certainly these good people who wanted to make our welcome in the old homeland friendly did their best, and we were grateful to them. But the majority of the German people who offered us this welcome were no longer the loyal people we had known in the past, and therefore we could not rejoice with all our hearts.”<sup>71</sup> Many other ex-settlers felt the same.<sup>72</sup> They were disillusioned by “progressive” societal trends – such as women’s emancipation and suffrage – and claimed that through their life in the colonies they had maintained a superior form of Germanness.

The settlers here invoked the same images and rhetoric that originally had led many to emigrate to the colonies. Many German East Africans had initially left the German metropole because they resented recent social developments. They hoped the colonies would offer an opportunity to return to “traditional German values” and to create a “conservative utopia” in which “men could still be men”.<sup>73</sup> Now back in Germany, they again loathed what they saw. For many colonial settlers, life in the metropole was irreconcilable with the patriarchal, traditional system that they had cultivated in the colony. They also bemoaned the abolition of the empire and the Kaiser, whom many had seen as a personal hero and patron of their colonial existence. Lastly, in metropolitan Germany, former settlers could no longer act out their belief of racial superiority.<sup>74</sup>

Unsurprisingly, many exiled settlers longed for an immediate return to Africa. Yet, it did not seem to matter whether this return would be to a German colony or not. The previous experiences of German East African administration were hardly positive, even if the years under Schnee had started promisingly. One former settler wrote to the British journal *East Africa* for information regarding potentially settling in the Eldoret region of British Kenya. He closed his inquiry with the following remarks: “I was a farmer and planter in German East Africa and perhaps you can sympathise with the yearning I have to own once more a threshold of my own

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 262–65.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 268–69.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, the accounts of Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe, and Heinrich Langkopp, all discussed in Wempe, *Revenants*, chap. 2.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter I.

<sup>74</sup> Wempe, *Revenants*, 81.

and to shake off the filth (Dreck) of this place [Germany]. Our children shall not grow up in this nation!”<sup>75</sup> These were the same sentiments that Prüsse – albeit more moderately – had pointed out upon his return to Germany.<sup>76</sup> For Prüsse, the unnamed settler writing to *East Africa*, and for many others, it was all about physically returning to eastern Africa, and not about politically returning eastern Africa to the German state.

It was another group that campaigned for the reclamation of German colonies. The next section analyses how the colonial revisionist movement sought to rebuild the German colonial empire. With prominent supporters, significant personal connections, and unlimited access to channels that would disseminate their colonial interests, the revisionists were poised to shape Germany's colonial narrative after the war. They pursued their own agenda, disconnected from the desires of the settlers and saw colonial revisionism as a means to bring glory upon themselves and Germany as a whole.

### Section IV: The colonial revisionists

The quest for colonial restitution was driven primarily by former colonial officials and administrators, well-connected business and political elites, and leading members of larger colonial organisations, such as the DKG or the *Koloniale Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* (Colonial Reich Working Group, KORAG). Their ambitions to reclaim the colonies resulted predominantly from their rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, which had formally ended the war and stipulated that Germany was to forgo all its overseas possessions. The revisionists attempted to lobby the government and the public to prioritise the reclamation of Germany's overseas territories. Through their extensive networks and access to popular media, the revisionists connected the colonial issue to broader dissatisfactions with the post-war settlement. Thereby, they could accuse anyone who opposed their colonial goals as supporters of the Treaty and its conditions as a whole. In this way, the revisionists were highly vocal. Yet, their political campaign never gained mass support, nor did it ever culminate in any tangible or concrete results.

Whereas many ex-settlers clung to the memories of their lost homes and sought to leave the German metropole as soon as possible, former colonial officials and administrators

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<sup>75</sup> ‘Does Eldoret Want Germans? They Yearn for a Place in the Sun.’, *East Africa*, 30 April 1925, fols 112–113, Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, Kolonialpolitik, R 8023/529, Bundesarchiv Berlin; see also Wempe, *Revenants*, 69.

<sup>76</sup> Prüsse, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 268–69.

perceived their own premature return to Germany as a chance. They did not share the settlers' connection to the physical space of the colonies, but rather pursued more idealistic goals. This may be explained by the fact that the revisionist movement was chiefly comprised of former administrators and those that carried out colonial policy. Whereas settlers – aside, obviously, from the colonised populations – were the objects of colonial policy, administrators and others had been the agents of official German colonial expansion. By and large, they were driven by their belief in the correctness of those policies that they were trying to implement on the ground. Back in Germany, they now believed it was their duty to implement a colonial policy of revisionism again.

The former governors Theodor Seitz (Kamerun and German Southwest Africa) and Heinrich Schnee naturally had personal stakes in the quest for colonial restitution. They had just lost their highest positions in a career that both men considered perfectly fitted to their aptitude and interests.<sup>77</sup> Unsurprisingly then, Schnee and Seitz became some of the leading figures of the colonial revisionist movement in Germany. In 1920, Theodor Seitz was elected president of the DKG, and Schnee succeeded him in 1931. Under Seitz's aegis, the organisation adopted an agenda to “enforce the realisation that Germany cannot do without colonial activity which corresponds to its population, its needs and its capacity, and that it must possess colonies.”<sup>78</sup> Seitz also became president of the newly formed KORAG, while Schnee was elected to the Reichstag as delegate for the national-liberal *Deutsche Volkspartei* (German People's Party).

Asides from their personal stakes in a colonial career, both men were predominantly driven by a sense of patriotic duty. The Treaty of Versailles had placed the burden of war guilt on the Germans: Article 231, stated that “Germany accepts the responsibility [...] for causing all the loss and damage [...] by the aggression of Germany and her allies.”<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, the Allies claimed that Germany had committed countless atrocities against and abuses of the indigenous populations over which they ruled. They suggested that this was in clear violation

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<sup>77</sup> Abermeth, *Heinrich Schnee*.

<sup>78</sup> Gertrud Rettenmaier, ‘Der Kolonialist Theodor Seitz, 1863 - 1949’ (Arbeitskreis Kolonialgeschichte Mannheim, August 2021), 8, <https://kolonialgeschichtema.com/theodor-seitz-1863-1949/>.

<sup>79</sup> The inclusion of Article 231 has spurred academic and public discussions around the successes and failures of the Versailles settlement for the last century. The literature is too large to make any specific references. As Christopher Clark has summarised, “by asserting that Germany and her allies were morally responsible for the outbreak of war, Article 231 of the Versailles Peace Treaty ensured that questions of culpability would remain at or near the centre of the debate over the war's origins. The blame game has never lost its appeal.” See Christopher M. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 560; ‘Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany’, 28 June 1919, Art. 231, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Versailles](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles).

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of the tenets of the civilising mission which assumed that white, developed civilisations had a responsibility to “uplift” those peoples that were perceived as uncivilised. The British published a Blue Book, which sought to discredit German colonial rule by collecting testimony on abuses of power.<sup>80</sup>

The Treaty therefore also stipulated that Germany was to be stripped of its colonies. Article 119 stated that “Germany renounces in favour of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers all her rights and titles over her oversea possessions.”<sup>81</sup> Additionally, Article 120 specified that all German property in the colonies would pass into the hands of the Allied Powers, and Article 122 stipulated that the territories’ new governments would oversee the “conditions upon which German subjects of European origin shall, or shall not, be allowed to reside, hold property, trade or exercise a profession.”<sup>82</sup> The Treaty thereby formally ended official German rule and excluded Germans from continuing their thirty-odd years old colonial project.

These stipulations came as a shock to many former colonial administrators. Many had believed that the colonies would be sacrosanct, or that German authorities at least would have a say in a new division of the world. They referred to American President Woodrow Wilson, who prominently had called for the “free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable government whose title is to be determined.”<sup>83</sup> According to the revisionists, Germany had not been consulted on the future of the colonies. Consequently, an “impartial adjustment of all colonial claims” had not taken place and the Allies had broken their promise.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=253708>. The Blue Book detailed German atrocities and was frequently brought forward during the peace negotiations to support the dissolution of German colonial control. Yet, Bomholt Nielsen notes that while the events outlined in the report are equally horrific and truthful, the publication had “propagandist aims” at the same time, attempting to sway opinion against Germany. See Mads Bomholt Nielsen, ‘Selective Memory: British Perceptions of the Herero–Nama Genocide, 1904–1908 and 1918’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 43, no. 2 (4 March 2017): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2017.1286843>.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany’, 28 June 1919, Art. 119, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Versailles](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles).

<sup>82</sup> The Treaty makes only one mention of the indigenous populations of the colonies. Article 127 states that “the native inhabitants of the former German oversea possessions shall be entitled to the diplomatic protection of the Governments exercising authority over those territories.” ‘Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany’, 28 June 1919, Arts. 120, 122, 127, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Versailles](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles).

<sup>83</sup> Woodrow Wilson, ‘Address of the President of the United States’ (Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress, Washington, 8 January 1918), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000440597>.

<sup>84</sup> See Peter Krüger, ‘German Disappointment and Anti-Western Resentment, 1918-19’, in *Confrontation and Cooperation: Germany and the United States in the Era of World War I, 1900-1924*, by Hans-Jürgen Schröder (Providence, RI: Berg Publishers, 1993), 323–35; Sally Marks, ‘Mistakes and Myths: The Allies, Germany, and

The “deceitful” handling of the colonial issue was an injustice to German prestige, Schnee, Seitz and other revisionists claimed. They harked back to the original motivations for Germans to enter the colonial stage in the 1880s. In his study of the colonial revisionist movement in Germany, Sean Wempe has recently suggested that “[i]t was imperative for colonial officials to re-establish not only the legality of Germany’s claims to its colonies, but also its moral standing as a civilized, European power. [...] Respectability as a liberal imperial European power rested on colonial rule based in [...] the moral and civilizational development of colonized regions and peoples.”<sup>85</sup> The reclamation of the colonies was therefore a goal for which any patriotic, duty-bound German should strive.

Not only were the revisionists frustrated with the Allies, but they were also dissatisfied with their own government and blamed it for the “colonial disaster”. The German delegation at the peace conference in Paris did not include any representatives of colonial affairs, even though the DKG had recommended six colonial experts, including Hans Zache and Karl Axenfeld. The German government had simply ignored the wishes of the colonial advocates, at least so the DKG claimed. Furthermore, when the DKG inquired about the matter, the RKA’s answer took two months, was signed by a subordinate clerk, and was ultimately dismissive of the issue.<sup>86</sup> Even more frustrations set in when the RKA was disbanded, and all colonial matters were transferred to the ministry of reconstruction.<sup>87</sup> For revisionists such as the former administrators Schnee and Seitz, this was both a complete disgrace and a continuation of the government's inconsideration for colonial affairs that had existed throughout the tenures of both men.

Schnee’s perhaps greatest and most lasting impact came in his role as one of Germany's leading pro-colonial writers, and in particular in his coining of the term *koloniale Schuldliüge* (colonial guilt lie).<sup>88</sup> This phrase encompassed all the aforementioned sentiments of shame at loss of prestige, rage at perceived colonial theft, governmental lack of consideration, and resentment of Allied oppression. The Blue Book, the Treaty’s Article 119, and the general conviction that Germany was unfit for colonial rule, all were based on or manifestations of Allied lies, Schnee claimed. He also accused the Allied powers of annexing the German colonial territories for profit:

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the Versailles Treaty, 1918–1921’, *The Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 3 (September 2013): 632–59, <https://doi.org/10.1086/670825>.

<sup>85</sup> Wempe, *Revenants*, 46.

<sup>86</sup> See Joachim Nöhre, *Das Selbstverständnis der Weimarer Kolonialbewegung im Spiegel ihrer Zeitschriftenliteratur* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1998), 114.

<sup>87</sup> The *Reichsministerium für Wiederaufbau* officially liquidated Germany’s colonial empire, among other things. It was housed on the same premises as the now defunct Imperial Colonial Office.

<sup>88</sup> See Schnee, *Die koloniale Schuldliüge*.

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In presentation, these states [the Allies] did not describe the seizure of the German colonies as being influenced by a set of geopolitical considerations, but instead as being driven by moral considerations for the natives in an effort to free them from the alleged tyranny of the Germans and bring them into more favourable conditions. This deception was hidden in a lie, or rather a complex of lies that can be collected under the name of the “Colonial Guilt Lie.” It was stated that we Germans [...] had forsaken colonial civilisation, proving through bad native policy that we were incapable and unworthy of being colonisers.<sup>89</sup>

The dissolution of the German colonial empire, according to Schnee, was a ploy of the Allies to discredit Germany as a whole. The Treaty was a *Diktat* and overcoming it and all its provisions was necessary in order to restore German national pride.<sup>90</sup> The colonial issue was part of this. It followed that anyone who would not espouse colonial restitution was seen as a supporter of the Allies and the provisions of the Versailles Treaty.

To combat the “colonial guilt-lie”, the colonial revisionists pursued a twofold strategy. On the one hand, Schnee tried to discredit the Allied allegations by demonstrating that German conduct was not out of the ordinary, and that all colonial powers acted and had acted violently towards the colonised populations: “There is enough in the annals of every colonising Power to warn all nations of the folly and danger of throwing stones at each other and trying to pose as immaculate; for however ingenious such attempts may be, the fact remains that it is *mere posing all the time*.”<sup>91</sup> Yet, Schnee did not want to criticise the Allies, especially not Britain. Instead, he sought to “normalise” colonial violence. Attacks against indigenous populations or quelling uprisings all were part of the “pacification” of a colony. A change for the better from a Hobbesian anarchy towards a “civilised” order “could not take place,” Schnee wrote, “without scenes of bloodshed between the native tribes which had hitherto dominated and their new rulers.”<sup>92</sup>

On the other hand, Schnee and Seitz attempted to direct attention to the more positive aspects of German colonialism. Seitz invoked the contributions of Germany in the colonial sphere dating back to the Crusades, and suggested that the “successes” of British and Dutch

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<sup>89</sup> Heinrich Schnee, ‘Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldfrage’, in *Koloniale Volksschriften* (Berlin: Kolonialverlag Sachers & Kuschel, 1924), 20–21 quoted in Wempe, *Revenants*, 43.

<sup>90</sup> On the tenth anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles, Schnee wrote that “the Versailles Dictate is a document of the worst violation of the law.” See Heinrich Schnee, ‘Der Kampf um die Kolonien’, in *Zehn Jahre Versailles*, ed. Heinrich Schnee and Hans Draeger, vol. 1 (Berlin: Brückenverlag, 1929), 116, <https://archive.org/embed/dr.-dr.-h.-c.-heinrich-schnee-dr.-h.-c.-hans-draeger-10-jahre-versailles-band-1>.

<sup>91</sup> Heinrich Schnee, *German Colonization Past And Future: The Truth About The German Colonies* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1926), 113, <http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.60914>, italics in original.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 112–13; see also Wempe, *Revenants*, 46ff.

colonialism between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries were largely due to the support of Germans:

If we follow the colonial history of the development of the Americas, we repeatedly come across the fact that the colonial power of the English and the Dutch was, for the most part, built with German blood. To give a few examples: In the mid-eighteenth century, three-fifths of the population of Pennsylvania was German. The first Bible to arrive in the Americas, in Germantown in 1743, was printed in Germany. Also, in the state of New York, a large percentage of the population was German.<sup>93</sup>

Schnee, too, frequently offered revisionist remarks that sought to highlight the benefits of German colonial rule. According to Schnee, the Germans had decisively acted against slavery practices as soon as they established themselves in eastern Africa.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, he emphasised the scientific discoveries of tropical physicians and microbiologists, such as Robert Koch: “Some diseases that used to be a terrible scourge of the native peoples and caused untold deaths, such as smallpox, had almost lost their significance in the German colonies thanks to the excellent achievements of German medical science and practice.”<sup>95</sup>

The image of the “loyal *askari*” was a further popular method that colonial revisionists frequently invoked to clearly illustrate the good relations between German coloniser and African colonised.<sup>96</sup> The narrative of the “loyal *askari*” suggested that the former African soldiers of the *Schutztruppe* eagerly awaited the return of the German colonisers. Far from being an argument for the Allied claims of German colonial unfitness, the devoted *askari* signified the success of German colonisation: “the loyal black soldier was the result and living proof of the achievements of the German male colonizer. Without the heroic character, the military abilities, and the disciplinary power of the latter, there would be no devoted colonial male subject.”<sup>97</sup>

The colonial revisionists were organised in the larger German colonial associations and used their far-reaching links, financial backing, and political contacts to pursue the ultimate goal of returning Germany to the status of a colonial power. The main associations were the

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<sup>93</sup> Theodor Seitz, ‘Heft I: Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen’, in *Koloniale Volksschriften* (Berlin: Kolonialverlag Sachers & Kuschel, 1924), 12–14 quoted in Wempe, *Revenants*, 42.

<sup>94</sup> Schnee, *German Colonization*, 129ff.

<sup>95</sup> Schnee, *Die koloniale Schuldlüge*, 56.

<sup>96</sup> Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*; see also Michelle Moyd, ‘Askari’, *1914-1918-Online International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.15463/IE1418.10570>.

<sup>97</sup> The image of the “loyal askari” simultaneously served as propaganda to incite opposition against the Allied occupation of the Rhineland where French African soldiers were stationed on German soil. This ‘schwarze Schmach’ signified a total inversion of the colonial hierarchies that had been so precious to the German colonisers. See Susann Lewerenz, “‘Loyal Askari’ and ‘Black Rapist’: Two Images in the German Discourse on National Identity and Their Impact on the Lives of Black People in Germany, 1918–45”, in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, by Jürgen Zimmerer and Michael Perraudin, Routledge Studies in Modern European History (New York: Routledge, 2011), 175; Michels, *Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten*, 116–21.

DKG, headed by Theodor Seitz, its closely associated partner society, the FDKG, and the KORAG, a newly formed umbrella organisation, also headed by Seitz, that sought to unite and represent colonial business interests. DKG and FDKG had already existed long before the First World War. Initially, they campaigned for the German acquisition of colonies, and later worked towards publicising the colonies in the metropole. The FDKG sought to convince and then instruct young Germans, especially women, to emigrate to the colonies with the aim of establishing new generations of colonisers.<sup>98</sup> Both organisations had tens of thousands of members, though most had never been to the colonies themselves.<sup>99</sup> By the end of the war, the two organisations pivoted their activities towards the reclamation of the colonies. The KORAG, meanwhile, was only founded in the immediate aftermath of Germany's imperial phase to "coordinate and streamline efforts" of the colonial enthusiasts.<sup>100</sup> But with Seitz at its head, the KORAG's position and activities were closely aligned to those of DKG and FDKG.

The organisations combined two related aims: to preserve German colonial legacy and memory, and to reclaim the lost colonies. DKG, FDKG, and KORAG produced whole range of colonial-inspired entertainment, including songs like *Heia Safari!*, poetry books, films, calendars and other art.<sup>101</sup> The organisations also hosted numerous events, including the *Kolonialwoche*, a large public celebration that commemorated German colonial rule and exhibited colonial wares.<sup>102</sup> The FDKG organised an annual *Kolonialball* that drew thousands of guests.<sup>103</sup> But other events were held in private so that economic and political elites could meet colonial "heroes" such as Lettow-Vorbeck.<sup>104</sup> Through their own publications, the organisations printed and disseminated colonial revisionist essays, attempting to form public opinion in favour of reclaiming the lost colonies. Heinrich Schnee's contributions were especially popular.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See Wildenthal, *German Women*.

<sup>99</sup> Wempe notes that membership numbers in the larger colonial associations dropped directly after the war, owing to the inability of members to pay their dues. They often reorganised in smaller, more individual groupings. From the early to mid-1920s, the larger colonial associations again saw an increase in their membership numbers. See Sean Andrew Wempe, 'Peripheral Players? German Colonial Interests, The Press, and the Spirit of Locarno', *The International History Review* 40, no. 1 (January 2018): 179–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2017.1298530>.

<sup>100</sup> Christian Rogowski, ed., 'The "Colonial Idea" in Weimar Cinema', in *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, by Volker Langbehn, Routledge Studies in Modern European History 13 (London: Routledge, 2010), 223, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=481106>.

<sup>101</sup> Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 43ff., <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198703464.001.0001>.

<sup>102</sup> See Christian Rogowski, "'Heraus mit unseren Kolonien!'" Der Kolonialrevisionismus der Weimarer Republik und die "Hamburger Kolonialwoche" von 1926', in *Phantasiereiche: zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*, ed. Birthe Kundrus (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003), 243–62.

<sup>103</sup> Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 44–45.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>105</sup> Schnee's *Koloniale Schuldlüge* for example was translated into English, Spanish and Italian.

In their leading positions in the colonial organisations, Seitz, Schnee, and other colonial advocates cultivated close contacts with German politicians and civil servants. The relations between DKG and Foreign Office, for example, produced thousands of correspondences in the interwar years.<sup>106</sup> But the DKG and other organisations also had close contacts in the *Reichstag*, and almost all parties had colonialists in their ranks.<sup>107</sup> The national-liberal *Deutsche Volkspartei* was the most committed pro-colonial party and a natural choice for Schnee's political career. But the national-conservative *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (German National People's Party), the liberal *Deutsche Demokratische Partei* (German Democratic Party), and the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party) also entertained colonial revisionist programmes and were in constant contact with the colonial organisations.

Despite their concentrated efforts to dispel the “colonial guilt-lie”, to refresh metropolitan memories of Germany's colonial history, and to reclaim the colonies, the colonial revisionists achieved little. They were never able to persuade the government to prioritise the colonial question and they never achieved broad public support. As we shall see in the next section, the government simply humoured the colonialists when it was prudent to do so, without ever seriously pursuing the objectives they held so dear. As long as the government could keep the colonial lobby at bay and dispel any allegations of being pro-Versailles, nothing more needed to be done in colonial terms. Other matters were more important.

### Section V: The government's position

While it might appear from the writings of Schnee, Seitz, and other colonial revisionists that the recovery of German colonies was a pressing, if not crucial, concern for the future of the German state, the truth is that the colonial issue was only an ancillary matter to high state politics. The government engaged with the revisionists' agenda only pragmatically, namely, to dispel any accusations of being anti-colonial which would be perceived as being in favour of the Versailles settlement. In reality, the Weimar governments did not want colonial restitution and had far more important priorities. Balancing the demands of the revisionists with the actual “needs” of the state was a difficult task for German statesmen. They found a convenient arena to stage this balancing act in the leadup and negotiations over the Treaties of Locarno. Overall,

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<sup>106</sup> Wempe, ‘Peripheral Players?’, 184.

<sup>107</sup> Wempe, *Revenants*, 130–32.

the official German position on the colonial matter mirrored the pragmatic approach to the acquisition of colonies in the 1880s.

Laden with the stipulations of the Armistice, peace negotiations, and eventually the Treaty of Versailles, the just-born Weimar Republic was confronted with difficulties everywhere one looked. Unsurprisingly, the loss of colonies was hardly the most pressing issue. Demilitarisation, reparations, new borders, and the need to rebuild cities, economy, international relations, and political capacities trumped the revisionist agenda. That is not to say, however, that the government simply ignored all colonially related demands.

Many settlers that arrived back in Germany were in a state of destitution. They faced a new reality in which poverty and reliance on the state and on charitable support was the order of the day. Those that had lost their livelihoods in German East Africa turned to the government to seek financial compensation. The company of Wilkins & Wiese, for example, sued the German government in 1920 for reparations: during the war, the *Schutztruppe* had requisitioned Wilkins & Wiese's hemp and sisal plantation in Korogwe for strategic reasons. The company claimed that the requisition had been unreasonable and lasted far too long, leading to crop failures equivalent to 713 tonnes of hemp. According to the court papers, Wilkins & Wiese requested the government, represented by the *Reichsministerium für Wiederaufbau* (Ministry for Reconstruction), to pay more than 7 million marks in compensation.<sup>108</sup> After a lengthy battle over procedural matters, the two parties reached a settlement. On 18 October 1923, the ministry agreed to pay. Owing to the quickly accelerating hyperinflation in the Weimar Republic, the total compensation for Wilkins & Wiese rose to a staggering 1.653 trillion marks.<sup>109</sup> Similar lawsuits were mounted by private settlers, businessmen, and companies.<sup>110</sup> The government sought to fulfil all settler claims, but, for the lack of a single, unified settler point of reference – such as the DOAZ had been in German East Africa – the efforts did not attract much public attention. The revisionist movement therefore continued to demand the full reclamation of the colonies.

Colonial critics pointed to the economic struggles of the overseas territories just before the war: only the smallest and economically least significant colonies – Samoa and Togo – had

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<sup>108</sup> L. Schimmelpfeng, Certified copy, 13 December 1921, fols 6–8, Reichskolonialamt, Etats- und Rechnungswesen, Entschädigungen, R 1001/9439, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>109</sup> The postage stamp on the official settlement note was 30 million Marks alone. See H Bauer, 'Vergleich', Copy, 29 October 1923, fols 169–170, Reichskolonialamt, Etats- und Rechnungswesen, Entschädigungen, R 1001/9439, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>110</sup> See for example, Deutsche Nyanza Schifffahrts-Gesellschaft in Reichskolonialamt, Etats- und Rechnungswesen, Entschädigungen, R 1001/9408-9 and R 1001/9417).

ever achieved a balanced budget.<sup>111</sup> Opponents of the annexation of new or old colonies explained that it was simply too expensive, and that the maintenance of overseas territories would not be profitable.<sup>112</sup> Additionally, owing to the limitations placed on the German army and navy, maintaining and even defending a colony was out of the question. The Maji Maji or Herero and Nama wars had required significant personnel and financial expenditures. In its present state Germany could not counter another indigenous-led resistance to colonial rule.

The revisionists, however, downplayed the economic realities of German colonialism or argued that more time had been needed to make the colonies profitable.<sup>113</sup> They also pointed to the colonies as a solution to overpopulation: the colonies could absorb German excess population – a problem that had been intensified by the territorial stipulations of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>114</sup> The colonial revisionists portrayed the acquisition of colonies therefore as the natural solution to all the negative and restricting effects of the Treaty. From this followed that anyone objecting this natural solution – colonies – must in turn be in favour of the Treaty and its stipulations.<sup>115</sup>

Due to the revisionists' propaganda, the question of colonial restitution quickly became one over which almost all political parties and actors agreed – at least on the surface. Following the DKG's lobbying, the *Reichstag* adopted a resolution objecting the “theft of colonies” by 414 to just 7 votes: “We solemnly protest against this injustice and declare that we will not stop demanding a change in the violent order of the colonial question with the revision of the entire peace treaty.”<sup>116</sup> The new constitution of the Weimar Republic also included in Article 80 the provision that “colonial affairs are exclusively a matter for the Empire.”<sup>117</sup> Many colonial proponents took this as motivation to continue their recovery attempts. One commentator wrote of Article 80 in the DKZ as a chance “to point out again and again that these provisions exist

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<sup>111</sup> Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte*, 61.

<sup>112</sup> See for example Martin D. Hoffmann, *Keine Kolonien!: eine Kampfschrift gegen den neuen, deutschen Imperialismus*. (Windischleuba: Hans Schumann, 1927); Susanne Heyn, ‘Der kolonialkritische Diskurs der Weimarer Friedensbewegung zwischen Antikolonialismus und Kulturmission’, *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien* 5, no. 9 (2005): 29; Toussaint, *Dem kolonialen Blick begegnen*, 65.

<sup>113</sup> See for example Arthur Dix, *Was Deutschland an seinen Kolonien verlor* (Berlin: Verlag der Werbestelle ‘Wieder Kolonien’, 1926), <http://archive.org/details/was-deutschland-an-seinen-kolonien-verlor-te-0803>.

<sup>114</sup> See the revisionist novel of Hans Grimm. Grimm, *Volk ohne Raum*.

<sup>115</sup> Wilhelm Ziegler, ‘Die deutsche Volksbewegung um die Revision des Versailler Vertrags’, in *Zehn Jahre Versailles*, ed. Heinrich Schnee and Hans Draeger, vol. 1, 3 vols (Berlin: Brückenverlag, 1929), <https://archive.org/details/dr.-dr.-h.-c.-heinrich-schnee-dr.-h.-c.-hans-draeger-10-jahre-versailles-band-1/page/n131/mode/2up?ui=embed&wrapper=false>.

<sup>116</sup> ‘Protest der Nationalversammlung gegen den Kolonialraub’, 1919, fols 22–23, Reichskanzlei, Betreffserien in der Ordnung des Aktenplans, Kolonien (1919-1935), R 43-I/624, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>117</sup> The constitution specified in Article 1 that the German Empire is a republic. See [https://www.jura.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/02160100/Elektronische\\_Texte/Verfassungstexte/Die\\_Weimarer\\_Reichsverfassung\\_2017ge.pdf](https://www.jura.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/02160100/Elektronische_Texte/Verfassungstexte/Die_Weimarer_Reichsverfassung_2017ge.pdf)

and to press for them to be given substance.” The author continued: “Article 80 must become reality again. Not to leave the new constitution on paper, but to implement it, that is the main task of German politics for the next few years, and this also includes, as soon as an opportunity presents itself, the recovery of our old colonies, or the acquisition of new ones.”<sup>118</sup>

The successful propaganda efforts of the revisionists connected the question of colonial restitution intricately to questions about the Treaty of Versailles as a whole. Anyone who spoke out against renewed German colonialism was quickly accused of agreeing with the sentiments and provisions of the Treaty. The government therefore could not openly adopt an anti-colonial position, even if colonial activity was neither economically feasible, nor politically desirable. The government therefore pursued a pragmatic position. This was best represented by Gustav Stresemann, who briefly served as chancellor in 1923 and then as foreign secretary until his death in 1929. Personally, Stresemann was a colonial advocate.<sup>119</sup> He was a member of the DKG and on various occasions argued for the importance of colonies to Germany’s future.<sup>120</sup> But Stresemann recognised the precariousness of the German position: reparations and international exclusion made it near impossible to compete in the international economy or to garner any diplomatic power. The pursuit of a colonial empire, even if the colonial revisionists campaigned for it as passionately as they could, simply was not a priority nor an option at this point.

As foreign secretary, Stresemann sought to strengthen Germany’s role in Europe, which included the revision of the Treaty of Versailles by finding a “negotiated rather than enforced application.”<sup>121</sup> Stresemann’s priorities were the Allied withdrawal from the Rhineland and an end to military control, a more bearable solution to the reparations question, and territorial revision – excluding the colonies.<sup>122</sup> This was deemed necessary if Germany should ever become a great power again. But to achieve the Treaty revisions and consequently great power status, Stresemann – and Germany – had to satisfy the other powers’ need for security.<sup>123</sup> To accomplish this, he proposed a new security pact between the main European powers – France, Britain, and Germany – to tie Germany’s politics and economy more tightly to western Europe.

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<sup>118</sup> F Jacobi, ‘Artikel 80 der Reichsverfassung’, *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 20 September 1919, XXXVI/9 edition, 105.

<sup>119</sup> Woodruff D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 215.

<sup>120</sup> See for example Oskar Karstedt, ‘Ein Großer Tag Der Deutschen Kolonialgeschichte’, *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 20 June 1916, XXXIII/6 edition, 86–87.

<sup>121</sup> Andrew J. Crozier, ‘The Colonial Question in Stresemann’s Locarno Policy’, *The International History Review* 4, no. 1 (February 1982): 38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.1982.9640266>.

<sup>122</sup> Patrick O. Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace after World War I: America, Britain and the Stabilisation of Europe, 1919–1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 228, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=261125>.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

A Germany that was closely connected to and interlinked with other European countries, the reasoning went, could not cause another war.

To this end, Stresemann campaigned for German membership in the League of Nations, seeking further rapprochement especially with France. The Treaty of Versailles had established the first worldwide intergovernmental organisation dedicated to the maintenance of world peace.<sup>124</sup> Headquartered in Geneva, the League of Nations sought to bring together the world's nations to resolve disputes diplomatically and to prevent another great war. As main culprit of the war, Germany had, however, been excluded from the League.<sup>125</sup> Yearlong international negotiations held in Locarno about German ascension to the League eventually culminated in a set of treaties in 1925.

In the leadup to the Locarno Treaties, Stresemann and the German Foreign Office were pressured by the colonial revisionists to use the negotiations as a platform for advancing German colonial restitution. Part of the League's institutions was the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) which effectively oversaw the transfer and subsequent administration of the ex-German colonies. These were now under the oversight of the PMC, held in "sacred trust" for future generations of indigenous peoples. The League's Covenant suggested – harking back to the original legitimisation of colonialism – that Africans and other colonised peoples were not yet civilised or developed enough to administer themselves. Paragraph 2 of Article 22 of the Covenant stated "that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League."<sup>126</sup> The former German colonies were thus divided into Class B (African territories, excluding German Southwest Africa) and Class C mandates (Pacific territories, including German Southwest Africa).<sup>127</sup> As such, they

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<sup>124</sup> The League of Nations' Covenant was Part I of the Treaty of Versailles and was therefore signed into effect on 28 June 1919 and became effective together with the rest of the Treaty on 10 January 1920. Qizhi He, 'The Crucial Role of the United Nations in Maintaining International Peace and Security', in *The United Nations at Age Fifty: A Legal Perspective*, ed. Christian Tomuschat (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1995), 77.

<sup>125</sup> The outbreak of the Second World War less than two decades later has suggested, however, that the League's aims and operations remained largely idealistic. See Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); David Petruccelli, 'The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism: The Legacies of the League of Nations Reconsidered', *Journal of World History* 31, no. 1 (2020): 111–36, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2020.0004>.

<sup>126</sup> 'The Covenant of the League of Nations', 1919, Art. 22, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/leagcov.asp#art22](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art22). See also Nele Matz, 'Civilization and the Mandates System under the League of Nations as Origin of Trusteeship', in *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law*, ed. Armin von Bogdandy, Rüdiger Wolfrum, and Christiane E Philipp, vol. 9 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 47–95.

<sup>127</sup> Class A mandates, solely referring to territories formerly controlled by the Ottoman Empire, had reached, in the assessment of the League's members, "a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognised subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory

were, in many ways, colonies of the mandatory powers. German East Africa was divided: Belgium became mandatory power of the kingdoms of Ruanda-Urundi in the northwest of the territory, and the rest came under British mandate as Tanganyika Territory.

The revisionists were adept in directing public opinion and successfully inserted their political agenda of German colonial participation into the negotiations.<sup>128</sup> They lobbied the government to make German participation in the League system dependent on the transfer of mandatory power, hoping that this would be a first step in the recovery of all German ex-colonies. Seitz wrote to both Stresemann and to Chancellor Hans Luther, urging them to consider “the ‘colonial question’ as integral to Germany’s recovery of Great Power status.”<sup>129</sup> At the same time, the revisionists spread their propaganda in their own publications.<sup>130</sup> The domestic and international press jumped on it and debated the colonial and mandates questions, taking their cue from the revisionists’ campaigning.<sup>131</sup> Through the revisionists’ propaganda, a picture soon emerged in the public that saw German entrance to the League contingent on the simultaneous acquisition of mandatory power.

Yet, despite his personal sympathy for the colonial issue, Stresemann recognised that improving the geopolitical and economic situation of Weimar Germany within Europe was far more important than paying heed to the revisionists’ demands. German membership in the League of Nations could improve Germany’s power. But membership in the League had its

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until such time as they are able to stand alone.” Class B mandates, meanwhile, were “at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic, and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League.” Lastly, Class C mandates “owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory.” ‘The Covenant’, Art. 22.

<sup>128</sup> See Wempe, ‘Peripheral Players?’

<sup>129</sup> Theodor Seitz to Hans Luther, Letter, 13 November 1925, fol. 30, Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, Kolonialpolitik, R 8023/541, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Theodor Seitz to Gustav Stresemann, Letter, 13 November 1925, fol. 33, Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, Kolonialpolitik, R 8023/541, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Wempe, ‘Peripheral Players?’, 185.

<sup>130</sup> See for example Wilhelm Schwarze, ‘Die öffentliche Meinung Deutschlands über die koloniale Frage und der Friedensvertrag im Spiegel des Camille Martin’, *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 20 February 1921, XXXVIII/2 edition, 13–16 and in the following DKZ editions.

<sup>131</sup> The prospect of Germany becoming a Mandatory Power caused international outcry. The British newspaper *The Morning Post* wrote: ‘The report that Germany has been promised a Colonial Mandate as a quid pro quo for entering the League of Nations will fill former victims of Prussian Weltmacht with mild alarm. Germany was deprived of her colonies not only as a check to Prussian military ambition, but also because of the brutality with which they were administered. I recall some photographs taken by a young Frenchman in German East Africa about ten years before the war. One showed a large tree with about a score of natives hanging to the boughs. The other showed a company of German soldiers each with the head of a native spitted on his fixed bayonet.’ See Sean Andrew Wempe, ‘Peripheral Players? German Colonial Interests, The Press, and the Spirit of Locarno’, *The International History Review* 40, no. 1 (January 2018): 187, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2017.1298530>.

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price, too. Especially Article 16 of the Covenant – which prescribed participation in embargoes and military support for one another – appeared fraught with danger, as it could lead to confrontation with the Soviet Union.<sup>132</sup> Stresemann sought exemption from this requirement and offered the issue of colonial restitution as a bargaining chip.<sup>133</sup>

Britain and France, too, appeared reluctant to elevate Germany to the status of mandatory power. Both countries recognised the need to strengthen European cooperation and considered German League membership a necessary first step. But domestically, they could not afford to be seen to enable German colonial recovery.<sup>134</sup> They, too, considered the colonial matter a bargaining chip at best. Aristide Briand of France grudgingly accepted the military withdrawal from the Rhineland in exchange for putting a stop to German colonial reclamation attempts.<sup>135</sup> Britain's Neville Chamberlain rejected a potential mandate for Germany as well, fearing opposition from the dominions, especially South Africa and Australia.<sup>136</sup>

Against this backdrop, it is unsurprising that the Locarno Treaties did not include any colonial provisions. To nevertheless offer the revisionists some sort of an affirmation of their wishes, the German government declared that their demands had been heard and would be considered in due time.<sup>137</sup> Chancellor Luther declared to the Reichstag that “Germany's right to colonial mandates has been expressly recognized” and that he expected that “this claim will also be taken into practical consideration.”<sup>138</sup> Stresemann, meanwhile asserted that “the claim to colonies [...] has been recognised by the other side. The colonial guilt lie is thereby disposed of. The contention that Germany is not capable of administering colonies is replaced by the claim that no one in the world can contest the moral right of Germany to possess colonies.”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> David Cameron and Anthony Heywood, ‘Germany, Russia and Locarno: The German-Soviet Trade Treaty of 12 October 1925’, in *Locarno Revisited: European Diplomacy 1920-1929*, ed. Gaynor Johnson, Diplomats and Diplomacy (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 122–45.

<sup>133</sup> Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe 1918–1933*, The Making of the 20th Century (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1976), 67. For more discussions about the use of colonies as bargaining chips, especially during the Nazi regime, see Robert D. Venosa, ‘Arnold J. Toynbee, the Colonial Question, and “Peaceful Change”’, *Britain and the World* 14, no. 1 (March 2021): 22–46, <https://doi.org/10.3366/brw.2021.0360>; Wolfe W Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919-1945*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

<sup>134</sup> Wempe, ‘Peripheral Players?’

<sup>135</sup> Marks, *The Illusion of Peace*, 73–82; Wempe, ‘Peripheral Players?’, 189–90.

<sup>136</sup> Wempe, ‘Peripheral Players?’, 190.

<sup>137</sup> Crozier, ‘Stresemann’s Locarno Policy’, 50–51.

<sup>138</sup> Hans Luther, ‘Erste Beratung des Gesetzentwurfs über die Verträge von Locarno und den Eintritt Deutschlands in den Völkerbund’ (1925), 4478–79, [https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt2\\_w3\\_bsb00000072\\_00040.html](https://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt2_w3_bsb00000072_00040.html).

<sup>139</sup> Gustav Stresemann, *Gustav Stresemann: His Diaries, Letters, and Papers*, ed. Eric Sutton, vol. 2 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935), 198.

## Chapter V

The signing of the Locarno Treaties seemed to signal the advent of a new era of European security.<sup>140</sup> For the colonial revisionists, Locarno was not a success, however. They continued their campaign for colonial restitution, but, frustrated by the stalling tactics of Stresemann and the German government, increasingly began to look elsewhere for help.<sup>141</sup> The German government, meanwhile, used the colonial issue as a pragmatic tool to achieve other, more pressing goals. By stalling on the question of colonial recovery, the government managed to defeat the colonial revisionists for the time being. The revisionists would continue their quest for restitution in the League of Nations and its PMC.<sup>142</sup>

### Conclusion

The official end of empire, as stipulated by the Treaty of Versailles, did not put an end to colonial dreams, memory, and imagination of those Germans that had previously lived in overseas territories or were otherwise involved with German colonialism. On the contrary, defeat in the First World War and the subsequent loss of colonies gave rise to a strong campaign for the return of the lost colonies. Suddenly, the colonies were more present in the public eye than they had been in the previous few years. In 1919, the DKG organised a petition protesting the Allied “theft of colonies”. Almost four million people offered their signatures.<sup>143</sup> Such widespread engagement with and for German colonialism was unprecedented.

Naturally, this was the work of the colonial revisionists. For the most engaged and most prolific colonial advocates the seizure of Germany’s colonies meant finding a new way to pursue their colonial goals. Instead of trying to formulate colonial policy that benefitted business interests or German international prestige, they now faced the challenge of conducting colonialism without colonies. Pivoting towards colonial revisionism, however, was a straightforward and welcome alternative. Individuals such the former governors Heinrich Schnee and Theodor Seitz found restitution a meaningful alternative for their colonial careers:

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<sup>140</sup> See Marks, *The Illusion of Peace*.

<sup>141</sup> Hildebrand, *Vom Reich Zum Weltreich : Hitler, NSDAP Und Koloniale Frage 1919-1945*; Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism*; Karsten Linne, *Deutschland Jenseits Des Äquators?: Die NS-Kolonialplanungen Für Afrika* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2008); Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*; Sandler, *Empire in the Heimat: Colonialism and Public Culture in the Third Reich*; Otis Illert, ‘Reclaiming the Empire: The Colonial Movement’s Quest to Recover the German Colonies during the Weimar Republic and Third Reich’, in *The Frustrated Peace? The Versailles Treaty and Its Political, Social and Economic Impact on Europe*, ed. Václav Horčíčka et al. (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2021), 229–47.

<sup>142</sup> Wempe, *Revenants*, chaps 5–6.

<sup>143</sup> Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft to Philipp Scheidemann, Letter and Petition, 17 March 1919, fols 5–16, Reichskanzlei, Betreffserien in der Ordnung des Aktenplans, Kolonien (1919-1935), R 43-I/624, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

“If Schnee – as the most persistent propagandist calling for German colonial restitution – was the vocal chords of the German Colonial Society, Seitz was the colonial lobby’s nervous system, sensing, collecting, and responding to every scrap of information that might possibly aid or threaten German colonial irredentism.”<sup>144</sup> Both ex-governors used their far-reaching personal links and contacts to bring the colonial issue to the public.

But while Schnee, Seitz, DKG, KORAG, and other colonial agitators were vocal and shrewd, their lobbying ultimately did not achieve anything. Germany never recovered its colonies. The German colonial advocates were not even granted mandatory power, although Germany acquired a seat on the League’s PMC in 1927.<sup>145</sup> For the German government, other factors played a more important role: European cooperation and security, and the end of the Rhineland occupation trumped the issue of colonial restitution. Politicians such as Gustav Stresemann viewed the colonies as nothing more than a bargaining chip in the short run.

Even though the settlers vanished as a homogenous group with the loss of the colonies, they were still united by common desires and concerns. Most simply wanted to return to their colonial *Heimat* and cared little about the political ramifications. Belonging to a colony that was controlled by the German state was less important than belonging to a community of likeminded individuals that sought to preserve traditional values in the face of a “hostile, African environment”. Former German East Africans recorded a first victory in 1925 when they were allowed to re-enter what now had become the British Tanganyika Territory. More than 2,000 Germans used the opportunity and by the 1930s they accounted for about half of the white population in the territory.<sup>146</sup>

The tripartite divisions that had characterised German colonialism through its official phase thus continued into its afterlife. The desires of the settlers conflicted with those of the colonial administration, who, in turn, felt abandoned by the central government in Berlin. Now, without any colonies, these same patterns repeated. Former settlers wanted to return to Africa, revisionists sought colonial restitution for reasons of prestige, equality and morality, and the German government did not ascribe too much importance to the issue altogether. As the connecting link between settlers and metropolitan government, the revisionists were in the

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<sup>144</sup> Wempe, *Revenants*, 129.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., chap. 5; Pedersen, *The Guardians*.

<sup>146</sup> Wempe, *Revenants*, 139; Lora Wildenthal, ‘Gender and Colonial Politics after the Versailles Treaty’, in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in The 1920s*, ed. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 350, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/yale-ebooks/detail.action?docID=583663>.

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prime position to unify Germany's colonial ambitions. However, they never managed to fuse the different interests into a single and coherent colonial project.

## CONCLUSION

10:45 am on the morning of Tuesday 26 January 1943: the exact moment that German colonial ambitions came to an end. In a telegram, Martin Bormann, the head of the chancellery of the Nazi Party, relayed to Franz Ritter von Epp that the Führer had ordered all activities that were not essential to the war effort to cease. Despite the loss of its colonies in the First World War, Germany's colonial ambitions had continued for another two-and-a-half decades, and Epp was a colonial enthusiast through and through. He had led the Colonial Political Department of the Nazi Party and also stood at the front of the *Reichskolonialbund* (Reich Colonial League, RKB). Epp had campaigned for Germany's moral right to colonies, for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, and for a new colonial overseas expansion. Yet, in early 1943, the cause for which Epp had fervently worked for over a decade was lost. The KPA and RKB suspended all their operations by 17 February 1943, and the issue of German colonialism came to its final, uneventful close.<sup>1</sup>

Until then, the colonial question had continued its life in a similar fashion than it had since the first raising of the imperial flag in Africa. Some enthusiasts, such as Epp or Schnee, dedicated their lives to create a German empire that stretched beyond the equator. But the political heavyweights and decisionmakers in Berlin – from Bismarck to Stresemann, and later to Adolf Hitler – saw German colonialism with little more than calculating eyes. Hitler had already outlined in *Mein Kampf* that the *Lebensraum* problems of Germany could not be solved overseas, but only in Europe:

For it is not in colonial acquisitions that we must see the solution of this problem, but exclusively in the acquisition of a territory for settlement, which will enhance the area of the mother country, and hence not only keep the new settlers in the most intimate community with the land of their origin, but secure for the total area those advantages which lie in its unified magnitude.<sup>2</sup>

Reclaiming the colonies was ruled out. Nevertheless, Hitler did not dismiss the issue altogether. Already in May 1933, mere months after the seizing of power, the Nazis hosted a large colonial exhibition in Berlin. They restructured the DKG and eventually coordinated the entire colonial movement under the RKB umbrella organisation. The colonial revisionists excitedly exclaimed that the hope for the “realisation of the colonial goal” was finally coming.<sup>3</sup> But all this was only a distraction. The Nazis approached the colonial question pragmatically; it was subordinate to

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<sup>1</sup> Illert, ‘Reclaiming the Empire: The Colonial Movement’s Quest to Recover the German Colonies during the Weimar Republic and Third Reich’.

<sup>2</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 653, <http://archive.org/details/mein-kampf-by-adolf-hitler-ralph-manheim-translation>.

<sup>3</sup> Linne, *Deutschland Jenseits Des Äquators?: Die NS-Kolonialplanungen Für Afrika*, 26.

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other, more pressing concerns. Only the successes of the early Second World War briefly elevated German colonial expansion overseas to more than sheer pragmatism, before Bormann's telegram put an end to the issue altogether.<sup>4</sup>

How the colonial question was approached during the Nazi regime resembled the colonial course of the preceding half century. This dissertation has analysed the manifold relations between different colonial actors. The government in the German metropole, more often than not, considered the colonies and related issues only from a pragmatic standpoint, with a view to achieving other goals or appeasing colonial enthusiasts. The most genuine engagement with colonial affairs in Berlin came in response to the crisis years of 1904-1908, with the reformation of the colonial service under Bernhard Dernburg. Even this colonial service, however, was seldom able to satisfy the demands of those people who actually lived, worked, and travelled to the colonies. The relations between the colonial offices in Berlin, and the governors and administrators in the field were often characterised by slow communication prone to misunderstandings. Furthermore, the ill-defined structures of the colonial service also meant that questions repeatedly arose over responsibility and authority. Governors in the colonies could act more or less as they wanted, making a coherent colonial policy almost impossible.

Quarrels with the colonial administration and metropolitan government were the daily fare of the settlers. They believed that Germany's colonial future should lie in the creation of settlement colonies in which whites should be able to live in great comfort and to lead a life that reflected their racial superiority to the locals. In other words, settlers believed the colonies were destined to become "white man's lands". But the administration's discouragement of white settlement, encouragement of Indian trade, investment in indigenous agriculture, and drive to improve legal rights of the colonised populations made it clear to the settlers that their realities of colonial life were increasingly at odds with their utopian vision. This incongruence manifested itself especially strongly during the Rechenberg years, but settlers took issue with virtually all the administrations of the colonial era.

These dynamics characterised the entirety of official German colonial rule in eastern Africa, but they also continued through the war and into the post-war period. In fact, the "great colonial caesuras" – the period of crisis and the First World War – have concealed, with all their upheavals and changes, underlying continuities that have received too little attention. The

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<sup>4</sup> See Linne, *Deutschland Jenseits Des Äquators?: Die NS-Kolonialplanungen Für Afrika*; Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*; Sandler, *Empire in the Heimat: Colonialism and Public Culture in the Third Reich*.

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tripartite divisions between metropole, administration, and settlers were a constant feature of colonial life. So was the recurring cycle of settler hope and despair over the appointments of new governors. These continuities suggest two conclusions. They suggest, firstly, that Germany never formulated or communicated a coherent plan or intention for its colonial possessions. When the German Empire acquired overseas territories, this was usually in response to a flurry of motivations: migration, *Lebensraum*, foreign markets, natural resources, geopolitical strategy, prestige, civilising mission. All these reasons incited debates about German colonial expansion. While they were not necessarily mutually exclusive, the lack of focus made it near impossible for the German Empire to decide what to do with the colonies once they had been acquired.

The second conclusion arises from the first. A single, homogenous “German colonialism” did not exist. Settlers, colonial administration, and metropolitan government had diverging interests and priorities. A planter in the Kilimanjaro area therefore would have had a totally different experience than a governor in Dar es Salaam. Not only because of their different locations or occupations, but also because their ambitions, frames of reference, self-images, or values differed. Instead of a “German colonialism”, there existed multiple “German colonialisms”, even within the same colony and at the same time.<sup>5</sup> Thus recognising the plurality of German colonialisms will allow us to chart more accurately the processes of colonisation and colonial rule.

The findings of this dissertation therefore open other lines of inquiry. Further study should put the experience of the colonised populations within these different German colonialisms at the centre. Illuminating work has already been done to uncover how the indigenous populations of German East Africa experienced colonial rule, especially in recent years.<sup>6</sup> But the recognition of the divisions within German rule allows to discover further insights about the motivations, opportunities, responses, and agency of the colonised populations, as they interacted with the various German stakeholders.<sup>7</sup> Equally, further work about the role of women within the colonial project is warranted. Just as the largely male, ‘public’ colonialism was characterised not by homogeneity, but by distinct and often opposing

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<sup>5</sup> Frederick Cooper has alerted historians to recognise different forms of colonialism in order to precisely analyse colonial processes. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 52–53. See also Klaus Mühlhahn, ‘A New Imperial Vision? The Limits of German Colonialism in China’, in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, ed. Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 143.

<sup>6</sup> Gwassa and Iliffe, *Records*; Iliffe, *German Rule*; Iliffe, *Modern History*; Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries*; Berman, Mühlhahn, and Nganang, *German Colonialism Revisited*.

<sup>7</sup> Jürgen Zimmerer has already identified diverging state aspirations and realities in German Southwest Africa and related this mismatch to the experiences of the colonised populations. See Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner*.

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incentives, it is likely that the alternative forms of political participation through which various groups of women – as missionaries, wives, nurses, and more – engaged in colonialism were equally riven by differing aims and motivations. This dissertation has shown that much is still left to discover about the history of German colonialism in eastern Africa; about the forces that united and divided its individual actors; about the German experience vis-à-vis those of different empires; about the ways in which indigenous people exploited the divisions of the colonisers.

Only recently has Germany begun to confront its colonial past. The German government, for example, recognised the atrocities against the Herero and Nama as a genocide only in 2015 and negotiations over official apologies, reconciliation, and reparations are still ongoing.<sup>8</sup> Various barracks of the German military still bore the name of Lettow-Vorbeck until the mid-2000s.<sup>9</sup> Controversies over Germany's colonial past also arose in the course of the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace. Part of the new building is the so-called Humboldt Forum, a museum for non-European art. Historians and ethnologists have criticised the museum for insufficient provenance research and spoken of Germany's "colonial amnesia".<sup>10</sup>

Germany's colonial history is only just beginning to occupy a prominent position in the public and political arena. A comprehensive and holistic understanding of German colonial history is urgently needed to adequately address current and future questions, and to find appropriate solutions to historic wrongs. It is of vital importance to recognise the different processes and currents within the phenomenon in order to make sense of the experience as a whole. By breaking down the phenomenon into its constituent parts, the dissertation has aimed to contribute to this endeavour.

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<sup>8</sup> Steven Geyer, 'Entschuldigung, aber keine Entschädigung', Frankfurter Rundschau, 13 July 2016, <https://www.fr.de/politik/entschuldigung-aber-keine-entschaedigung-11093754.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Birgit Morgenrath, 'Lettow-Vorbeck: Korrektur eines zweifelhaften Heldenepos', Deutschlandfunk, 5 April 2014, <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/lettow-vorbeck-korrektur-eines-zweifelhaften-heldenepos-100.html>.

<sup>10</sup> See the opening remarks in Jürgen Zimmerer, ed., *Kein Platz an der Sonne: Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013).

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