

Heathens, 'Hottentots', and *Heimat*:
Colonial Encounters and German Identity in Southwest Africa, 1842-1915

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Introduction:

National Fantasies: German Identity and the African ‘Periphery’

“No One Wanders Beneath Palm Trees Unpunished”:

In 1857, the popular German periodical *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* extolled the positive effects of empire to a sympathetic audience in Germany. “The natural, uncultivated man is and remains a product of the earth, a product of the climate, of landscapes and scenery.”¹ “For himself,” the piece continued, “the educated man requires a meaningful moral strength in order to become master of this dependency. ‘No one wanders beneath palm trees unpunished,’ said Goethe.”²

This broad appraisal of so-called “uncultivated” people, cast by the journal’s editors as subservient to and reliant upon their natural surroundings, divorces Europeans decisively from those living in the world’s “peripheries.” High *Kultur* was the purview of civilized Europeans—a marriage between moral strength and independence from nature. *Die Gartenlaube*’s editors took special care to identify Germans as an especially enlightened community. The reference to Goethe, the quintessential man of rational virtue, underscores this claim in stark cultural terms.

The passage further implies that high *Kultur* was an outcome of education, work, and social conditioning. It was not something that simply occurs in nature, but achieved through personal growth and conviction. Goethe’s assertion that “no one wanders beneath palm trees unpunished” not only served as an example of this contention, but also represented a subtle warning. Taken from his 1809 novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*,

¹ “Die deutschen Fremdenlegion und das Kap der guten Hoffnung,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 3 (1857): 47.

² Ibid. Also see Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 184.

which interrogated the conditions that uphold human relationships, Goethe's passage also seemed to reinforce the claims of contemporary imperialists who argued that Europeans enjoyed a higher culture than African and Asian populations. In the context of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, Goethe's words have a much more complex and consequential meaning, however:

At times when a longing and curiosity about these strange things has come over me, I have envied the traveler who sees such marvels in living, everyday connection with other marvels. But he, too, becomes another person. No one wanders beneath palm trees unpunished; and attitudes are certain to change in a land where elephants and tigers are at home.³

In other words, even those of high culture were susceptible to change in a foreign land.

“Only the naturalist . . . who remains in his own special element, with all that surrounds him” can manage to observe the world free from its influence.⁴

Die Wahlverwandtschaften and the article in *Die Gartenlaube* that invoked its lessons are remarkable for several reasons. First, both appeared long before Chancellor Bismarck united German liberals and conservatives together to forge a sovereign state in 1871. Though they built upon many of the same contemporary understandings of German nationalism, Goethe and *Die Gartenlaube* did so without the political influence of a centralized state authority. Second, each piece alluded to the world's peripheries as harsh and exotic. Strength, integrity, and conviction, values inherent to Europeans, simply did not exist overseas. Instead, the places where “palm trees grew” were home to uncivilized peoples, unexploited resources, and cultural sloth. Travel narratives, merchants, and missionaries cast the world in black and white terms, and not only along racial lines.

³ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, quoted in Buch, “No One Wanders,” 233.

⁴ Ibid.

While militarists and aspiring settler-colonists dreamed of conquest and expansion, many others shared these views, even if they never imagined a life beyond Europe. Isolation created the simultaneous perception of an enlightened and powerful Germany and a backward and weak colonial domain.

By the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, global networks, established through trade systems, foreign conquest, and print media, shattered German isolation.⁵ Steadily, these factors “opened up” the peripheries to German society.⁶ New information was available in a variety of mediums, specifically narratives composed by people who had actually lived abroad. The world’s flora, fauna, and natural resources were suddenly at the fingertips of everyone, at least in literary form. Many of these accounts also provided Germans with descriptions of indigenous peoples. While racist beliefs underlay many of these stories, the prevalence of colonial imagery in Germany encouraged citizens – both implicitly and explicitly – to at least contemplate the world beyond Europe.⁷

After Germany formally entered the “African scramble” in 1884, the colonial domain became an even greater factor in German national life. Whether in the colonies themselves, or in fairs, museums, zoological displays, and other “exotic spectacles” in the metropole, it was suddenly possible to “wander beneath palm trees” in the real world and

⁵ Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2006).

⁶ Notable explorers like Heinrich Barth and Carl Peters, together with missionaries and merchant sailors, exposed Germans to new worlds through their letters, illustrations, reports, and speeches. See Bradley D. Naranch, “Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*: Emigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German National Identity, 1848-71,” in *Germany’s Colonial Pasts*, Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 21-40.

⁷ George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

not only one of imperial fantasy.⁸ Colonial conquest, most notably in what came to be known as German Southwest Africa (DSWA, present-day Namibia), brought the “land where elephants and tigers are at home” to Europe, altering not only how Germans thought of Africans, but also themselves.

How the so-called “colonial world” affected collective understandings of nationalism and Germany’s place in relation to it are important questions because they require us to reconsider German colonialism and its national dimensions in a global context. Conquest gave rise not only to a united German state, but also to the formation of a German overseas empire. Both entities – the state and the empire – influenced German citizens in a variety of ways and were together part of collective national imagination. The shape and orientation of both worlds, in particular, created new views of national belonging, gender dynamics, colonial warfare, and racial difference.⁹ But how, specifically, did colonial Africa become a prominent factor in German national discourses? Why did aspiring colonialists and many nationalist organizations regard imperial conquest as “a truly German affair” by the turn of the twentieth century?¹⁰ How did African peoples, most notably the Herero and Namaqua, inform Germans perception of a world increasingly defined by empire? These queries require a reexamination of the formation of German nationalism in Europe, and how both the colonial imagination and

⁸ Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁹ See Edward Ross Dickinson, “The German Empire: an Empire?” *History Workshop Journal* 66, No. 1 (2008): 129-162, and Jens Jaeger, “Colony as *Heimat*? The Formation of Colonial Identity in Germany around 1900,” *German History* 27, No. 4 (2009): 467-489.

¹⁰ “Die deutsche Expedition nach Mittelafrica und ihre Wissenschaft!” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 5 (1862): 74.

imperial conquest in DSWA informed understandings of *Deutschtum* (Germanness) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In this study I mean to reorient our understanding of the relationship between Imperial Germany and its colonial empire in DSWA. Colonial conquest in DSWA led Germans in Europe to refashion their image of the *Heimat* (Homeland) ideal to include the overseas empire. Though an inherently abstract idea, the concept *Heimat* connoted a local or national sense of place, typically grounded in emotional and cultural attachments to particular surroundings.¹¹ I provide *Heimat* greater rhetorical mobility by exploring how Germans appropriated colonial territories beyond Europe as natural extensions of culture, memory, and tradition.

DSWA offers an ideal case study for assessing how Germans perceived the colonial world. Due to its size, location, and status as Germany's first colony (1884), DSWA assumed an especially important role in collective discourses on German colonialism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rhenish missionaries wanted to bring salvation to the local "heathen" populations. Merchants dreamed of monopolies and profit margins. Aspiring German settlers cultivated fantasies centered on freedom and opportunity.¹² Pro-imperialist nobles imagined plantation-style estates, reminiscent of those in eastern Prussia, stretching across the countryside to the horizon. Pan-Germanists,

¹¹ See especially Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); and Thomas Lekan, "German Landscape: Local Promotion of the *Heimat* Abroad," in *The Heimat Abroad*, Krista O'Donnell, Renate Briendenthal, and Nancy Reagin, eds., (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 141-166.

¹² Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde (hereafter BAB)/Reichskolonialamt (hereafter RKA) 1001/1174: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen, Rud Erpf, "Eingabe an die Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung," 13. April 1907," 5-6.

after the so-called *Herero-Aufstand*, saw a future white-farming settlement with the potential to spread into Africa's interior.¹³

Though German colonial enthusiasts differed in their motives for imperial conquest, they all shared several important similarities by the turn of the twentieth century. Merchants, farmers, colonial officials, and even missionaries all promoted conquest overseas as a significant source of marketable exports. They all viewed DSWA as a site where German emigrants could preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage. The German colonial administration and *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office) prepared newspapers, popular media, novels, travel literature, and official decrees that helped to spread these assertions throughout the empire. In doing so, they fashioned the idioms, perceptions, and collective viewpoints through which Germans viewed the world.¹⁴

Pro-colonial media outlets were not the only sources to shape German perceptions of the world, however. Even more consequential were colonial encounters, which I define as the occasions when Germans and African communities interacted with one another, such as through treaty negotiations, trade networks, written correspondence, and military conflict. Colonial encounters also comprised informal points of contact, specifically those that provided a more accurate portrayal of life abroad. German and international media outlets in DSWA and the British Cape Colony were the principal sources of information about life in Africa. The narratives they spread found a sympathetic audience in Europe. Whether in rural communities or cities, Germans thirsted for illustrations of distant

¹³ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Förderung der Einwanderung von Buren in das deutsche Schutzgebiet Südwestafrika, Juli 1902 – Juni 1903, Conrad Rust, "Der Bur und das Deutschtum in Deutschsüdwestafrika," *Alldeutsche Blätter* No. 23 (6. June 1903): 2-3.

¹⁴ Conrad, *Globalisierung*, 2006. Also see Andreas Eckert, *Herrschen und Verwalten. Afrikanische Bürokraten, Staatliche Ordnung und Politik in Tansania, 1920-1970* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007).

regions and mysterious animals, tales of exploration, and self-congratulatory accounts of scientific discovery and conquest. These sources acted as an informal bridge between metropole and colony, enabling Germans both in Europe and abroad to encounter DSWA without physically leaving the confines of their homes.

Before 1884, seductive impressions of military adventure in Africa created an image of what colonial domination could yield for settlers and German society. These ideas had such credence that they eventually “acquired the status of factual ‘reality’” for a considerable number of German citizens.¹⁵ In a world beyond the imagination, however, conquest for conquest’s sake proved a poor justification for imperial domination. After the Reichstag designated DSWA a German settler colony in 1893, collective rationales for preserving imperial rule became more nationalistic. Settlers and colonial officials, in particular, increasingly relied upon the *Heimat* ideal to preserve their presence in DSWA. As a result, mental pictures and cultural views of Germany and DSWA became interchangeable in the minds of German citizens and settlers. The realities of encounters on the ground had a powerful impact on German society and collective understandings of the nation.

In focusing on colonial encounters in DSWA, I do not rely exclusively upon pre-colonial interpretations of the colonial world or opinion pieces composed by “armchair colonialists” in the confines of Berlin. I emphasize colonial encounters in DSWA as a means to illuminate the multifaceted composition of Germany’s imperial project in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I reveal the other side of colonial domination, in particular, how Africans manipulated German rule and the degree to which they changed

¹⁵ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 3.

the image of colonial life back in Europe. I contend that colonialism strengthened visions of identity that saw cultural difference and national belonging not just as competing phenomena, but also as forces that together fortified Germany's presence abroad. By focusing on colonial encounters in DSWA, I show that African, German, and indigenous people in Southwest Africa were just as integral to Germany's national development as the merchants, soldiers, and settlers who first ventured abroad in 1884.

I make two central arguments in the dissertation. First, I contend that imperial conquest shaped German identity significantly by the turn into the twentieth century. Whether in general discursive practices, the debates in the culture and opinion sections of newspapers, or the ways in which men and women spoke about the world, colonialism had a very real influence on the lives of German citizens. So, too, did depictions of indigenous African communities and their place in the world. Tobacconists, for example, catered to the erotic desires of colonial enthusiasts by printing images of *Hereromädchen* (Herero girls) on their packaging.¹⁶ Coffee companies used portraits of black African women to affirm the quality of their beans.¹⁷ Youth magazines gave children an opportunity to escape into "exotic domains" where different social rules applied.¹⁸ Anthropologists attempted to shift the paradigms of scientific analysis by studying *Naturvölker* ("natural peoples") as faceless objects.¹⁹ Though characterizations like these typify the contemporary colonial discourse on Africa and epitomize Europe's dominance

¹⁶ David Ciarlo, "Picturing Genocide in German Consumer Culture, 1904-10," in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., (New York: Routledge, 2011), 69-89.

¹⁷ Ciarlo, "Picturing Genocide," 70, 80.

¹⁸ Jeff Bowersox, "Boy's and Girl's Own Empires: Gender and the Uses of the Colonial World in *Kaiserreich* Youth Magazines," in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., (New York: Routledge, 2011), 67.

¹⁹ Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 240.

over the continent, they contradict the significant degree to which colonial exchanges in turn influenced modern German history.

There has been a conspicuous lack of attention given to colonized peoples and their place in the history of German colonial rule in DSWA. When they have appeared, African communities are generally cast as tragic victims of a monolithic colonial enterprise undertaken by an industrialized, capitalist power at the height of Europe's imperial era. What the so-called "victims thesis" ignores, however, is that German colonial efforts in DSWA were far from monolithic or efficient, primarily due to the presence and stern resistance of African populations, most notably the Herero and Namaqua. I characterize these communities as active players in the history of German colonial rule in DSWA, as opposed to passive victims.

Second, I show that the integration of race as a category of national belonging overseas led citizens in the metropole to adopt exclusionary views of identity at the start of the twentieth century. This was neither an inevitable outcome nor a natural outgrowth of German colonial expansion. Racism was a fundamental component of European colonialism, of course, but the first German colonists did not justify their actions on the basis of race alone. Rhenish missionaries, for instance, harbored hierarchical views of society, but also believed that God was colorblind. *They* certainly were not colorblind, but missionaries did allege that everyone was equal within the confines of the Christian faith. Settler-colonists also justified their presence in DSWA on the basis of a racist worldview, but that alone did not empower them to kill indiscriminately or to rule with an iron fist.

To the contrary, the first Germans in Southwest Africa quickly realized that Africans commanded the territory. Though their understandings of colonial life proved woefully inaccurate, Germans did negotiate with African leaders on a wide range of topics. Over time, these encounters softened the picture of African peoples for Germans overseas and in the metropole. Race was never absent completely, but colonial leaders accepted that cooperation was the only means to gain a foothold in the colony. Germany's presence in Southwest Africa began not with racial conquest, but with negotiation, religion, and the mercy of African peoples.

By the start of the twentieth century, however, racial exclusion in DSWA developed into a way of colonial life. Settlers sowed it into every social and political dynamic. To show this evolution over time, I place particular importance on the violent conduct of the German-Herero-Namaqua war and the resulting political and social consequences that followed in DSWA. These measures include the passage of racial legislation, specifically bans on mixed-marriages and the construction of "native reservations," an increased effort by colonial officials to encourage white women to emigrate overseas, the racialization of migrating Boers from the British Cape Colony, and the so-called "Hottentot Elections" of 1907 in Germany. I conclude that by the start of the First World War, race affected the political and social landscape of DSWA and the German colonial administration.

Much of the recent scholarship on German colonialism centers on warfare and genocide. This work has raised important historiographical questions concerning the inherent role of violence in European colonial systems and has placed Germany's

overseas empire at the center of debates about the origins of Nazi genocide.²⁰ The violent legacy of the Herero-Namaqua genocide, however, has rendered the pre-1904 period as insignificant for a considerable number of scholars, with many regarding the era as nothing more than a historical footnote to the so-called “Kaiser’s Holocaust.”²¹ This approach too easily dismisses earlier events in DSWA as inconsequential. Colonial encounters throughout the nineteenth century had forged strong connections between metropole and colony. By examining the longer-term influences of imperial domination, I establish that genocide was not an inevitable outgrowth of German colonial policy in DSWA.

Given this study’s wide scope, it converges with two distinct historiographies. In the following section I will discuss the main bodies of literature to which this dissertation contributes. First, I will examine the historiography on German imperialism. Though Germany’s colonial empire has been the focus of intense scholarly interest, much of the existing scholarship ignores how pre-colonial and colonial discourses on nationalism informed collective understandings of the *Heimat* ideal. Within this context I will also

²⁰ Notable examples include Isabel Hull, “Military Culture and the Production of ‘Final Solutions’ in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelminian Germany,” in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, Gellately, Robert and Ben Kiernan, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141-162; Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*, (London: Cornell University Press, 2005), Benjamin Madley, “Patterns of Frontier Genocide 1803-1910,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, No. 2 (2004): 167-192; Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia*, (Münster: 2004); Jürgen Zimmerer, *Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and its Aftermath*, (Wales: Merlin Press, 2008); and Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust*, (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2011).

²¹ David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust: Germany’s Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010). Notable exceptions to this frame of thinking include Gesine Krüger and Jan-Bart Gewald.

examine how the emerging scholarly interest in transnationalism has attempted to overcome this shortcoming.

A second body of literature is the historiography on colonial violence and genocide. This broad field has attracted considerable interest among historians, most especially from those who see German colonial race laws and the Herero-Namaqua genocide as historical precursors to the Holocaust. In this section I will trace how restrictive race legislation affected German citizenship and marriage laws in Europe and DSWA. Colonial encounters between Germans and Africans were complex and did not result in discourses of racial exclusivity over night. But after the realities of colonial rule forced Germans to contemplate what domination would require, many were quick to use racism to justify physical violence and segregation.

Colonial encounters affected collective discourses on colonial rule in several fundamental ways. Though violent, German colonialism was not inherently genocidal. It only became genocidal in response to events on the ground and political changes in DSWA. Without question, the consequences of the Herero-Namaqua Genocide and the so-called “Hottentot Elections” of 1907 extended into the twentieth century. But that reality does not mean that colonial racism permanently shaped German identity. It had an important role to play in German society after the First World War and beyond, but alone does not answer for the Holocaust, for example. The evolution of German colonial policy reflects how citizens changed their impressions of the imperial project over time. German views on race and citizenship were no different. While I agree with those scholars who maintain that colonial racism made the rise of the Nazis possible, it most certainly did not make it inevitable or even likely.

Historiography

Though historians have written extensively about German colonialism, much of the existing scholarship ignores its national implications.²² Historian Mary E. Townsend's *The Rise of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918* (1930) was the first comprehensive study on the German colonial empire to emerge following the First World War. It utilized an extensive array of original source materials, including Reichstag memoranda, documents from *Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, and articles from several notable German newspapers. In this fashion, Townsend's monograph offered a top-down assessment on the evolution of German imperial policy in the nineteenth century. It also presented the most balanced depiction before the Second World War of the German colonial empire.

Townsend dispelled what she regarded as "two historical myths" that arose after Germany ceded its colonial empire to the League of Nation's mandate system.²³ First, she argued that Bismarck developed an intense interest in colonialism after German unification in 1871. His seeming indifference to the issue before 1884, Townsend contended, was actually a calculated policy of "watchful waiting."²⁴ The Franco-Prussian war had rendered Germany a continental pariah, and she maintained that Bismarck did not want to risk a renewed conflict with France or any other European power, most

²² Notable recent exceptions include Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, eds., *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, The German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Jens-Uwe Guettel, *German Expansionism, Imperial Liberalism, and the United States, 1776-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); John Phillip Short, *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); and Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley, eds., *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

²³ Mary Townsend, *The Rise of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918* (New York: 1930), 1-29, 273-304.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 62.

especially Great Britain, over colonial affairs. As a result, Townsend concluded, Bismarck was forced to delay his overseas objectives until international conditions allowed him to act.

Second, she asserted that the German colonial administration was no more brutal toward Germany's various colonialized populations than the other Great Powers of Europe.²⁵ Much to the contrary of international opinion, Townsend provided evidence of instances of German "enlightened" rule in its African colonies. "Nothing, indeed, is more significant of the change for the better," she wrote, "than the fact that there occurred no actual uprisings during the years 1908-1914. Peace prevailed throughout the overseas empire."²⁶ Townsend's generally positive assessment of German colonialism was the first major challenge to the British government's findings in the *1918 Blue Book*.²⁷ In defending German colonial rule, *The Rise of Germany's Colonial Empire* assumed a middle position between the work of German scholars who wished for a return of the overseas empire, and British and South African officials who wanted to preserve their own mandate territories.

Historians in the Federal German Republic (FRG) initially ignored the colonial arena. Their counterparts in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), meanwhile, looked to Germany's imperial tradition with considerable interest. Horst Drechsler's

²⁵ Ibid, 273.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ See 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). Before the publication of *The Rise of Germany's Colonial Empire* in 1930, the British government's *1918 Blue Book* served as the official history of the German colonial sphere. The *Blue Book*, which primarily consists of oral interviews and official testimony from former colonial subjects of Germany, takes a hard-line position against German authorities. In particular, the *Blue Book* amplifies the atrocities committed by German authorities and soldiers during times of war, and portrays German colonialism as exceptionally brutal.

Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft: Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus (1884-1915) (1966) and Helmuth Stoecker's *Drang nach Afrika* (1977) were among the first works to provide a Marxian interpretation of Germany's colonial history.²⁸ They identified unrestrained industrial and military expansion as natural outgrowths of capitalist nation-states, and maligned Germany's nationalist culture as inherently authoritarian and prone to violence.

Drechsler's *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*, in particular, found several instances of German culture's so-called intrinsic barbarism in Africa. He attributed German colonial violence to "a monolithic German administration" that sought "the total expropriation of the indigenous population."²⁹ Drechsler also emerged as the first historian to designate the massacre of the Herero and Namaqua as an act of genocide:

The outcome of the [war] was hardly in doubt, given the Germans' superiority in weaponry and their possibilities of unlimited supply. . . . The war against the Herero and Nama was the first in which German imperialism resorted to methods of genocide, thus earning unenviable notoriety in later years.³⁰

Though scholars today overwhelmingly agree with this argument, Drechsler's use of the term was intentionally polemical for the time period. West German historians took exception to Drechsler's claim that a "monolithic German administration" fostered the conditions that ultimately led to genocide in 1904.

²⁸ Horst Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft: Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus (1884-1915)* (Berlin: 1966) and Helmuth Stoecker, *Drang nach Afrika* (Berlin: 1977). Drechsler's *Südwestafrika* was later translated into English in 1980. See Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting": *The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism (1884-1915)* (London: Zed Press, 1980).

²⁹ Drechsler, *Südwestafrika*, 20.

³⁰ Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 7.

Helmut Bley's *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894-1914* (1968) was the most forceful study from West Germany to challenge Drechsler's conclusions. Bley began his monograph in 1894, the year Kaiser Wilhelm II appointed Theodor Leutwein colonial governor of DSWA. He emphasized the various political and social transitions that occurred in the colony as a result of Leutwein's appointment. In contrast to Drechsler, Bley asserted that insecurity, bureaucracy, and Leutwein's rigid economic agenda did not represent a "monolithic" colonial administration, but instead reflected a system that was constantly forced to change. He also underscored the importance of racism, a factor Drechsler fails to acknowledge in any detail, and its influence on the conduct of German settlers and soldiers toward African peoples.³¹ Bley concluded that DSWA "crossed over into totalitarianism, [confirming] Hannah Arendt's contention that in African colonialism one may find the seeds of modern totalitarian rule."³²

Drechsler's *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft* and Bley's *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* remain fundamental reading in the historiography on German colonialism. They represented the first serious examinations of the German colonial empire written after the Second World War. Drechsler and Bley evaluated Germany's overseas domain on its own terms. They both linked colonial violence to the disastrous policies of the Third Reich, and exposed just how connected Germany was with its overseas colonies.

³¹ Helmut Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894-1914* (Hamburg: Leibniz, 1968).

³² Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft*, 282. He was referencing Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Books, 1951).

My dissertation builds on these studies in several important ways. Contrary to Drechsler, I show that Germany's colonial project was not monolithic or inherently genocidal. It evolved in response to a number of significant factors, including the unification of Germany, the number of settlers overseas, the presence and stern resistance of African communities against colonial rule, and the nationalization of the German colonial project after the turn of the twentieth century. Though my study mirrors Bley's multi-faceted understanding of German colonial rule, I do not categorize DSWA as an example of German totalitarianism. The colony represented an important extension of the German empire for many citizens and settlers after 1884. In this manner, it more closely resembled the colonial projects of other contemporary European states than the imperial dynamics of twentieth century dictatorships, however.

Drechsler and Bley's studies were also notable in that they assessed Germany's colonial empire on its own merit. Indeed, a majority of historians in the 1960s cited German colonialism only as a component of a larger argument. Fritz Fischer's *Griff nach der Weltmacht, Die Kriegszielpolitik des Kaiserlichen Deutschland, 1914–18* (1961), for example, focused on the rise of German nationalism and the outbreak of the First World War in Europe.³³ His principal aim in *Griff nach der Weltmacht* was to contribute “towards the problem of continuity of German policy from the First World War to the

³³ Fischer's work built on Eckart Kehr's *Schlachtflottenbau und Parteipolitik 1894-1901: Versuch eines Querschnitts durch die innenpolitischen sozialen und ideologischen Voraussetzungen des deutschen Imperialismus* (Berlin: 1930) which emphasizes the impact of economic shifts in society over political figures. Also see Kehr, *Economic Interest, Militarism, and Foreign Policy: Essays on German History*, ed. Gordon A. Craig (Berkeley: 1977), x-xi and Robert G. Moeller, “The Kaiserreich Recast? Continuity and Change in Modern German Historiography,” *Journal of Social History* 17, No. 4 (Summer 1984): 656-657.

Second.”³⁴ Two schools of thought emerged in response to *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, both concerned with German national development rather than its contemporary European influences.

One school, championed by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, based its conclusions on German social and political history between 1871 and 1945.³⁵ Wehler and his colleagues introduced a sociological approach to German history. They focused on demographic changes, economics, and social equality as a way to transform “traditional” methods of history centered on “great men.” In contrast, the second main school, led by Andreas Hillgruber and Klaus Hildebrand, accorded primacy to foreign politics (*Primat der Aussenpolitik*).³⁶ In both cases, the German colonial empire faded to the background. At best, historians cited the overseas empire only as a means to support claims of German cultural aggression or military brutality.

Wehler and members of the “Bielefeld School” relied on Fritz Fischer’s continuity thesis by stressing the peculiarities of Germany’s political and social development.³⁷ They principally focused on what they identified as two clear differences

³⁴ Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht, Die Kriegszielpolitik des Kaiserlichen Deutschland, 1914–18* (1961), ix-x.

³⁵ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (Göttingen: 1973).

³⁶ Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitlers Strategie. Politik und Kriegführung 1940-1941* (Frankfurt am Main, 1965) and his collected essays, *Deutsche Großmacht und Weltpolitik im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf, 1977); Klaus Hildebrand, *Vom Reich zum Weltreich. Hitler, NSDAP und koloniale Frage, 1919-1945* (Munich, 1969), and *The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich* (London, 1973).

³⁷ Helmut Böhme, *Deutschlands Weg zur Grossmacht. Studien zum Verhältnis von Wirtschaft und Staat während der Reichsgründungszeit 1848-1881* (Cologne: 1966); Peter-Christian Witt, *Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1903 bis 1913. Eine Studie zur Innenpolitik des Wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Lübeck und Hamburg, 1970); Dirk Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks. Parteien und Verbände in der Spätphase des Wilhelminischen Deutschlands. Sammlungspolitik 1897-1918* (Cologne: 1970); Klaus Saul, *Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung im Kaiserreich. Zur Innen- und Sozialpolitik des Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1903-1914* (Düsseldorf, 1974); and Iris Hamel, *Völkischer Verband und nationale*

in German modernization. First, Hans-Ulrich Wehler's *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (1969), *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs 1871-1918. Studien zur deutschen Sozial-und Verfassungsgeschichte* (1970), and *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (1973) interpreted the development of Germany from the Bismarck era to the Third Reich in terms of "social imperialism."³⁸ Wehler's theory viewed foreign policy as a series of moves intended to meet internal domestic crises, relieve general social tensions, integrate workers against the SPD, and maintain the existing structure of political power. "The diversion outwards of internal tensions and forces of change" by means of an aggressive colonial policy, Wehler wrote, preserved the "political status quo" in Wilhelmine Germany.³⁹

On this basis, Wehler drew a "continuous line" extending from Bismarck to Hitler.⁴⁰ He portrayed Nazism as an "extreme form of social imperialism, the object of which was to 'break through to the East' in order once again to hold up internal progress and distract attention from the lack of freedom at home."⁴¹ Wehler based his conclusions on the premise that German modernization progressed along a *Sonderweg* in comparison to other western European societies.⁴² This theory asserted that authoritarian forces in Germany never relinquished the reins of political supremacy. Pre-industrial and pre-

Gewerkschaft. Der Deutschnationale Handlungsgehilfen-Verband 1893-1933 (Frankfurt am Main: 1967). See Moeller, "The Kaiserreich Recast?" footnote 6.

³⁸ Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969), *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs 1871-1918. Studien zur deutschen Sozial-und Verfassungsgeschichte* (Göttingen: 1970), and *Das Kaiserreich* (1973).

³⁹ Wehler, *Bismarck*, 115. Also see Eley, *Reshaping the German Right*, 2.

⁴⁰ Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*, 122-123.

⁴¹ Wehler, *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs*, 161. Also see Klaus Hildebrand, *Das Dritte Reich* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1979), 158.

⁴² Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*, 1969, and "Bismarck's Imperialism: 1862-1890," *Past and Present* 48 (August 1970): 119-155.

capitalist customs, Wehler argued, remained the foundation of society after German unification. As a result, the country never developed a vibrant middle class or strong democratic tradition.

Bismarck's Germany for members of the Bielefeld School more accurately represented a "Bonapartist dictatorship" than a constitutional monarchy. Wehler wrote that it was "a traditional, unstable social and political structure which found itself threatened by strong forces of social and political change" that sought to defend itself "by diverting attention away from constitutional policy towards economic policy, away from the question of emancipation at home towards compensatory successes abroad."⁴³ He maintained that social elites only adopted overseas expansion as a means to "divert attention away" from domestic problems at home.

An imperial agenda, Wehler concluded, enabled German political and economic elites to stem "the advancing forces of parliamentarization and democratization" until 1945.⁴⁴ My research indicates that colonialism was not a tool of one social faction to maintain control over German society, however. In fact, overseas colonialism evolved into a significant national issue by the start of the twentieth century. Colonialism did not divide social groups apart so much as it spurred a national debate about its place in society. The abundance of contemporary literature on empire, in particular, is among the strongest evidence for this claim. Even opponents of Germany's imperial program had to face the reality of its existence because evidence of it was everywhere. From schools and

⁴³ Wehler, *Bismarck*, 122-123.

⁴⁴ Wehler, "Industrial Growth and Early German Imperialism," in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, R. Owen and B. Sutcliffe, eds. (London: 1972): 87-89. Also see Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck* (New Haven: 1980), 3.

cafes to book stores and clothing boutiques, the German empire was present, accessible, and popular in the metropole.

Supporters of the Bielefeld School also focused on the relationship between political leaders and powerful forces within the economic sector. Hans Rosenberg's *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit. Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft und Politik in Mitteleuropa* (1967), Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann's "Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Expansion under Bismarck" (1969), and I.D. Forges' "Social Imperialism and Wilhelmine Germany" (1979) specifically analyzed variations in the *Kaiserreich's* political and economic structure compared to France and Great Britain.⁴⁵ Rosenberg's *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit* emphasized the 1873 Great Depression and how Germany's social elite responded to its consequences. He argued that the economic downturn allowed urban industrialists and Prussian landowners to strengthen their control over the economic levers of power. A so-called "marriage of rye and iron" not only expanded the political power of these social factions, but also created the conditions for colonial domination overseas.

Pogge von Strandmann's "Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Expansion under Bismarck" made a similar claim about the economic origins of Germany's colonial program, but with one notable difference. He was keen to point out that Bismarck sought an "informal empire" before 1884. In spite of this reality, Strandmann nevertheless

⁴⁵ Hans Rosenberg, *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit: Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft und Politik in Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: 1967); Pogge von Strandmann, "Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Empire under Bismarck," *Past and Present* 42, No. 1 (1969): 140-159; and I.D. Forbes, "Social Imperialism and Wilhelmine Germany," *The Historical Journal* 22, No. 2 (1979): 331-349 and "German Informal Imperialism in South America before 1914," *The Economic History Review* 31, No. 3 (1978): 384-398.

underscored the importance of financial networks for Germany's colonial project.⁴⁶ He also wrote about Bismarck's desire for a corporate empire, specifically one that required only a small commitment from the German military and limited oversight from the Reichstag.

Here again, my research moves beyond economic motivations for empire and instead highlights how DSWA became an important aspect of national life throughout German society. Economic motives were certainly significant aspects of the German colonial project in DSWA, but they alone did not elevate it to a position of national importance in the metropole. My research also relies on source material prepared by African communities during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. These sources illuminate the other side of imperial domination by demonstrating the ways in which Africans influenced German colonial policy in DSWA. The German government, colonial administration, wealthy investors, and merchants all hoped that Southwest Africa would evolve into a rich and prosperous region. But economic initiatives soon gave way to larger national concerns. By the twentieth century, most colonial proponents valued DSWA not for its economic potential, but for its significance to the *Heimat* ideal.

Though members of the Bielefeld School focused their attention on the Third Reich as an endpoint of historical development, Germany's colonial empire assumed an important position for researchers on both sides of the debate. "Social-imperialism" and theories of a German *Sonderweg*, in particular, influenced how historians viewed German colonialism throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. First, they narrowed the

⁴⁶ Strandmann, "Domestic Origins," 142. Cornelius Torp, "The 'Coalition of 'Rye and Iron'' under the Pressure of Globalization: A Reinterpretation of Germany's Political Economy before 1914," *Central European History* 43 (2010): 401-427.

importance of the overseas domain to nothing more than a contributory factor on the road to Nazism. As a result, few researched German colonialism as a topic worthy on its own merit until the 1990s.⁴⁷

Second, historians rarely commented on events in the colonies themselves. Since scholars were only concerned with the impulses behind imperial expansion, the actual history of Germany's overseas empire mattered very little. The one notable exception to this trend was the Herero-Namaqua Genocide, which historians cited as a significant event in German colonial history. Third, many scholars regarded the colonial empire as clear proof of the "continuity thesis." They did not view German colonialism as a contemporary European agenda, but instead as an example of cultural uniqueness that culminated in the rise of the Nazi Party and the horrors of the Third Reich.

My research engages with the "continuity thesis" insofar as it recognizes the formative colonial period as far more important to Germany's overseas project than its eventual legacy. German imperial dominations was a violent undertaking that resulted in the death of thousands of Herero and Namaqua people. But instead of looking to the Third Reich as the culmination of this violence, my project assesses its origins in the context of the nineteenth century. I show that Germany's first colonists emigrated overseas for a wide assortment of reasons. These included adventure, discovery, evangelism, economic prosperity, opportunity, and the desire to fashion a German presence in Africa. Though violence is not mutually exclusive to any of these desires, it alone never prompted German settlers to colonize Southwest Africa. In this manner, German colonialism was no different than other European imperial projects. Violence

⁴⁷ Horst Drechsler and Helmut Bley being the notable exceptions.

emerged as a means to an end, but itself was never the end. That reality alone distinguishes Germany's colonial program from the Nazis' *Neuordnung* in stark terms.

Nevertheless, the Herero-Namaqua Genocide casts a long shadow in the history of German colonialism. Hannah Arendt was the first scholar to link German colonial rule and the Holocaust in her path breaking *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951).⁴⁸ “The conception of human rights,” she wrote, “based on the assumed existence of a human being as such, broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all qualities and specific relationships—except that they were still human. The world found nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human.”⁴⁹ Here, Arendt compared African peoples and Jews as victims of the same state apparatus. The nation-state did not recognize their existence politically, and therefore faced the consequences of statelessness.

Woodruff Smith's *The German Colonial Empire* (1978) moved beyond victims and instead compared German colonial officials and Nazi leaders in Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ He emphasized how territorial conquest and “settler-colonialism” led authorities in both occupations to justify mass violence. Smith contended that German colonial ambition never disappeared after the First World War. He showed that the German Colonial Society, after the victorious Entente Powers had stripped Germany of its overseas domain in 1919, supported efforts to regain the lost empire throughout the Weimar period.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Press, 1951), 133-134.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 299.

⁵⁰ Also see Woodruff D. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 231-233.

⁵¹ Ibid, 231.

“Even though the colonies had been lost,” he wrote, “colonialism was not quite dead in German politics.”⁵² Smith concluded that the Nazi Party eventually incorporated the concept of settler-colonialism into its ideological and racial goals for Eastern Europe. For Smith, like Arendt, methods of domination not only made it possible to compare both regimes but also demonstrated a clear line of continuity between colonial and Nazi atrocities.⁵³

The extent to which the Herero-Namaqua Genocide and German atrocities in Europe are linked has received considerable attention in recent colonial scholarship. Jürgen Zimmerer and Benjamin Madley are among the foremost recent historians to compare German colonial and Nazi genocides.⁵⁴ Zimmerer’s *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia* (2004) and *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (2011) argued that the Herero-Namaqua genocide represented the dark

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Also see Smith, “Colonialism and Colonial Empire,” in *Imperial Germany: A Historiographical Companion*, ed., Roger Chickering (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 449-450.

⁵⁴ Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner: Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia*, (Münster: 2004), *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust*, (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2011), and *Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and its Aftermath*, (Wales: Merlin Press, 2008); and Benjamin Madley, “From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Included Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe,” *European History Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (2003): 429-464, and “Patterns of Frontier Genocide 1803-1910: The Aboriginal Tasmanians, the Yuki of California, and the Herero of Namibia,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6 (June 2004): 167-192. For other recent works on colonial genocide see Dirk Moses, *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, (New York: Berghahn Books), 2008; Eric Weitz, “Before the Holocaust: Germany and Genocide in Africa and Anatolia” (unpublished); Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*, (London: Yale University Press, 2007); Joachim Zeller, *Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and its Aftermath* (Wales: Merlin Press), 2008; and Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

potentials of a modernized, non-fascist state.⁵⁵ The “bureaucratic form of extermination,” he contends, reflects other mass murders committed by imperial powers during the modern age.⁵⁶

Zimmerer also maintained that the Herero-Namaqua Genocide effectively changed the course of modern warfare in Europe. After the colonial *Schutztruppe* adopted mass murder as a military strategy, German officials no longer viewed extermination as an “ultimate taboo.”⁵⁷ To the contrary, the Herero-Namaqua Genocide, he asserts, paved the way for future mass atrocities. It represented “neither a localized event of Namibian or German history nor an isolated occurrence of colonial history,” Zimmerer concluded, “[but] a significant event in the global history of mass violence.”⁵⁸ Benjamin Madley’s “From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Included Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe” (2003) advances a similar claim about the violent linkages between hostilities in DSWA and the Holocaust. He focuses on the concept *Lebensraum* and how the Nazis “borrowed” it from German settler-colonists to support their dreams of conquest in Eastern Europe.⁵⁹

Other notable studies have analyzed how German military violence in the colonial sphere influenced armed conflict in Europe. In “Military Culture and the Production of ‘Final Solutions’ in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelminian Germany” (2003) and *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (2005), Isabel Hull argued that the “terrible violence, immense destruction, and mass

⁵⁵ Zimmerer and Zeller, *Genocide in German South-West Africa*, 60.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 60.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 59-60.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 60. Also see Zimmerer, “The Herero and Nama War,” 328.

⁵⁹ Madley, “From African to Auschwitz,” 429.

death” wrought by German forces in DSWA was the product of an unchecked “military culture” in Germany.⁶⁰ She described the German political system in Wilhelmine Germany as one that “consisted of separate, vertical units, integrated, if at all, by the Kaiser, who could choose which unit would dominate policy in a given situation.”⁶¹ Due to the so-called “polycratic” nature of the Wilhelminian political system, Hull concluded, German officials organized “final or total solutions” to problems overseas and later on the European continent.⁶²

Hull also argued that the violent nature of the Herero and Namaqua uprisings in 1904 led military leaders to claim that German settlers were at risk. This proclamation forced Kaiser Wilhelm II to act decisively, thereby granting the German military considerable power overseas. The Kaiser’s appointment of General Lothar von Trotha as Military Governor of DSWA, Hull argued, was the most significant evidence of this reality. She maintained that after the *Schutztruppe* failed to defeat the Herero in August 1904, Trotha moved to “annihilate” the entire Herero community in DSWA.⁶³

Hull emphasized the particular ease with which German soldiers committed acts of brutality against men, women, and children. “One of the most astonishing aspects of the campaign of destruction,” she wrote, “is the cleft between deed and recognition. Neither evidence before their own eyes nor the implacable logic of the situation sufficed

⁶⁰ Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*, (London: Cornell University Press, 2005), and “Military Culture and the Production of ‘Final Solutions’ in the Colonies: The Example of Wilhelminian Germany,” in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, Gellately, Robert and Ben Kiernan, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141-162.

⁶¹ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 12.

⁶² *Ibid*, 12.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 46. Also see Hull, “Military Culture and ‘Final Solutions’,” 157.

to convince the soldiers . . . that the *Schutztruppe* had in fact annihilated the Herero.”⁶⁴

The so-called polycratic system of power, she concluded, allowed soldiers to justify their violent actions to themselves and one another.

The dramatic increase in historical literature on German colonialism in the past fifteen years is principally a result of scholars who advocate the “*Vom Windhuk nach Auschwitz*” thesis. I contend that this thesis too easily dismisses the importance of the pre-colonial period. Genocide did not emerge as a policy until the Kaiser gave a select cadre of military leaders’ power to suppress all threats to German interests in DSWA. These officials dismissed the tactics of their predecessors, most notably Theodor Leutwein, and adopted ethnic cleansing, mass imprisonment, and genocide as reasonable solutions to problems overseas.

Historians who focus exclusively on German colonial policy after 1904 ignore the decidedly non-genocidal policies that enabled DSWA to become Germany’s first African colony. I do not claim that German colonialism was not violent before 1904, but instead argue that genocide was not an inevitable outcome of Germany’s conquest of Southwest Africa. The forces that compelled Rhenish missionaries, merchants, aspiring settlers, and even soldiers to emigrate were based on pre-colonial fantasies that offered hope, wealth, freedom, and boundless opportunity. Even after the *Herero-Aufstand* began in 1904, only a handful of Germans traveled abroad to fight and kill Africans.⁶⁵ Though violence was a

⁶⁴ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 54.

⁶⁵ Gustav Frenssen’s best-selling novel, *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest*, glorified colonial warfare as a just and national cause. Though an unquestionable literary success, few if any Germans joined the colonial *Schutztruppe* out of a compulsion to commit mass murder in DSWA. See Gustav Frenssen, *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest: Ein Feldzugsbericht* (Berlin: 1906).

component of conquest, it did not compel a majority of colonial supporters to colonize DSWA.

Apart from an emphasis on colonial genocide, historians have more recently been drawn to transnational orientations of the German colonial empire. A majority of these studies have tried to think “beyond the nation-state” and its place in modern German history.⁶⁶ Konrad H. Jarausch, in his “Reflections on Transnational History” (2006), wrote that transnationalism “responds to a growing sense of interconnectedness, stemming from the dynamics of the globalization process.”⁶⁷ Though he regarded the theory as a “welcome interest” that has opened “horizons beyond the nation,” Jarausch argued that transnationalism lacks a clear definition, which has led to loose rhetoric and vague conclusions on Germany’s role in the world before 1945.⁶⁸ He cited Jürgen Osterhammel and Sebastian Conrad’s definition in *Das Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914* (2006) as an example of this trend. Jarausch asserted that their analysis of “relations and constellations, which transcend national boundaries” is indeed an interesting framework, but that it posited no clear fixed criteria by which to assess their elevated conclusions.⁶⁹

Jarausch’s worthy criticisms aside, transnationalism calls attention to Germany’s colonial theaters and their role in German national development more than any other recent historical optic. It also illuminates the pre-unification period and the various nationalist movements that developed alongside proto-colonial societies. Between the

⁶⁶ Geoff Eley, “Empire by Land or Sea?” in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 29.

⁶⁷ Konrad H. Jarausch, “Reflections on Transnational History,” H-Net/German List, January 2006.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 2006.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 2006.

Vormärz and the three wars of German unification, national belonging galvanized considerable support among groups who sought to create a centralized state with expansionist capabilities. In an environment already occupied by more established national movements and older traditional hierarchies, the language of transnationalism made sense long before German colonists embarked on a program of overseas conquest.⁷⁰

Bradley Naranch's "Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*: Emigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German National Identity, 1848-71" (2005) and "Beyond the Fatherland: Colonial Visions, Overseas Expansion, and German Nationalism, 1848-1885" (2006) argued that expansionist notions saturated the German-speaking lands of Central Europe long before 1871.⁷¹ After considering the "discursive linkages between the fantasies of colonial conquest . . . and contemporaneous debates over mass emigration in precolonial Germany," Naranch contended that the image of the *Auslandsdeutsche* linked imagined communities of Germans abroad with those at home in Europe.⁷² He endeavored to show that constructions of German identity before 1871 "were neither restricted to the geographical area of central Europe nor based exclusively on local customs, regional loyalties, or religious traditions."⁷³

Matthew Fitzpatrick made a similar argument in his monograph, *Liberal Imperialism in Germany: Expansionism and Nationalism, 1848-1884* (2008).⁷⁴ He

⁷⁰ Eley, "Empire by Land or Sea?" 30.

⁷¹ Bradley Naranch, "Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*: Emigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German National Identity, 1848-71," in *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 21-40, "Beyond the Fatherland: Colonial Visions, Overseas Expansion, and German Nationalism, 1848-1885," PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2006.

⁷² Naranch, "Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*," 22-23.

⁷³ Ibid, 23.

⁷⁴ Matthew Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism: Expansionism and Nationalism, 1848-1884* (New York: Berghahn, 2008).

maintained that “contrary to the idea that imperialism was a late nineteenth century deviation from liberalism’s true ideals, German liberals had, by 1848, reached a broad consensus that expansionism was an integral part of liberal foreign policy and national identity.”⁷⁵ Like Naranch, he focused primarily on liberal nationalists in the Frankfurt National Assembly and popular media outlets that viewed statehood and colonial conquest as inherently reinforcing objectives. Naranch and Fitzpatrick conclude that regions beyond the confines of central Europe had a profound impact on shared perceptions of German identity. In doing so, both authors expanded upon Celia Applegate and Alon Confino’s important examinations of German nationalism by incorporating ideas, peoples, and events in the world’s distant peripheries into their scholarship.⁷⁶

Applegate’s *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (1990) and Confino’s *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (1997) explored the ways in which nationalist groups utilized the concept *Heimat* to construct a shared German national identity. Applegate centered her study on the small *Bundesländer* that comprised the unified state of Germany. She concluded that the “*Heimat* myth” made it possible to forge a centralized state, as “it was the term that called forth a vision of common good . . . obligations, duties, and values implied by a ‘feeling of belonging together’.”⁷⁷

Confino’s *The Nation as a Local Metaphor* utilized the *Heimat* concept in a similar fashion, though unlike Applegate, emphasized nationalist, political, and religious

⁷⁵ Ibid, 27.

⁷⁶ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁷⁷ Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, 149.

groups in Württemberg exclusively. He showed that local nationalist forces co-opted regional myths and holidays as a means to construct a national German identity in the image of Württemberg and not of Prussia.⁷⁸ Though confined by the geographical delineations of Europe, Applegate and Confino's studies provided the jumping off point for these kinds of examinations.

The extent to which the colonies themselves affected Europe is also at the center of recent transnational scholarship. Historians Sebastian Conrad, Jürgen Osterhammel, and Andreas Eckert are the principal German scholars to situate the history of German colonialism in the larger context of global history.⁷⁹ Conrad's *Globalisierung und Nation im deutschen Kaiserreich* (2006), *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (2008), and "Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique" (2012) asserted that nationalism and globalization are not two mutually exclusive developments, but rather are symbiotic forces that create the conditions for the other to emerge.⁸⁰ "Globalization contributed," he wrote, "to the popularity of ideas about distinct national characteristics because and not in spite of the fact that it was creating upheavals in the political, economic and discursive orders of the world of nations."⁸¹ "Instead of dissolving national borders," Conrad concluded, "mass mobility in the late nineteenth century can actually

⁷⁸ Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, 52-72.

⁷⁹ Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2006), Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2009), Andreas Eckert, *Herrschen und Verwalten. Afrikanische Bürokraten, Staatliche Ordnung und Politik in Tansania, 1920-1970* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), and "Afrikanische Nationalisten und die Frage der Menschenrechte", in *Moralpolitik: Geschichte der Menschenrechte im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 312-336.

⁸⁰ Conrad, *Globalisierung; Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2008); and "Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique," *American Historical Review* (October 2012): 999-1027.

⁸¹ Conrad, *Globalisierung*, 4.

help to explain the intensity of nationalist movements and the focus of national states on ideological nation-building in the years prior to World War I.”⁸²

Eckert’s *Herrschen und Verwalten. Afrikanische Bürokraten, Staatliche Ordnung und Politik in Tansania, 1920-1970* (2007) and Osterhammel’s *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (2009) advanced this argument further by de-centering Europe’s place in the world. Above all, they contend that the movement of people, goods, ideas, art, and science effectively “flattened the world.”⁸³ Far from an exclusively European phenomenon, Eckert and Osterhammel show how speedier connections on the ground, faster and more reliable ships, and communication networks such as telegraph lines, postal services, and print media “transformed the world” by linking metropole and periphery together.

Andrew Zimmerman’s two recent monographs exploring the effect of globalization on the German academic community provide concrete examples of Osterhammel’s conclusions. In *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (2001), Zimmerman stated that German anthropology arose “as a modernist critique of traditional academic humanism in a moment of transformation marked by the rise of imperialism, mass culture, and natural science.”⁸⁴ He showed that German anthropologists, instead of adopting traditional humanistic methods, embraced a research methodology based exclusively on “objectivity” and “unbiased fact.”

For Zimmerman, the humanist tradition led German anthropologists to adopt new approaches to their own discipline. “Anthropology offered Europeans a modern identity

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Osterhammel, *Verwandlung*, 234.

⁸⁴ Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 239.

as a cultured people whose status depended less on humanist *Bildung*,” he wrote, “than on the development of the natural sciences—including the study of natural peoples.”⁸⁵ Contemporary scholars viewed so-called “*Naturvölker*” as those who “supposedly lacked writing, culture, and history.”⁸⁶ In this manner, Zimmerman asserted, German anthropologists believed that “they would be able to glimpse human nature directly, unmasked by the complications of history or culture.”⁸⁷ Moreover, the objectification of indigenous populations abroad led many scholars to support the German imperial project. “The people of Africa and the Pacific ruled by Europeans,” he explained, “were simultaneously recognized as human and denied full humanity; they were understood both as human and as less than human.”⁸⁸ Zimmerman’s study demonstrates how institutional ambition and transnational exchange altered German academic practices at the turn of the twentieth century.

Zimmerman’s embrace of transnational developments and mutual influences is most notable in his *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, The German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (2010), which examined the complex interrelations between slavery, race, social science, and colonialism.⁸⁹ Specifically, he exposed linkages between Germany, Africa, and the United States, notably on views of political economy, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Zimmerman argued that transnational history “allows historians to apply microhistorical cultural methods . . . to macrohistorical

⁸⁵ Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism*, 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

political-economic questions.”⁹⁰ Such methods, he concluded, frees scholars from writing nationally specific, “exceptional” histories that disassociate peoples, ideas, and communities from one another.⁹¹ Zimmerman’s transnational study effectively brought previously separated histories together in a compelling way.

Ultimately, this dissertation follows in the footsteps of Conrad, Eckert, Osterhammel, and Zimmerman as it builds on this transnational literature by exploring how colonial exchanges in DSWA affected the *Heimat* ideal in Europe. In doing so, I argue that colonialism strengthened visions of identity that saw cultural difference and national belonging not just as competing phenomena, but also as forces that together fortified Germany’s presence overseas. Thus, I contend that German nationalism developed in a larger global context.

Sources and Methodology

The history of modern Germany is inextricably tied to Germans living outside of the traditional European “homeland.”⁹² I establish that Germany and DSWA share an entangled history, one defined by cultural exchange, colonial domination, migration, and genocide. I emphasize colonial exchanges between German settlers and indigenous African communities that have largely been depicted in a monolithic, unidirectional fashion. My approach demonstrates that Germany’s presence in DSWA, however short or inglorious, forged consequential relationships between colonizers and the colonized. In doing so, I show the composite nature of *Deutschtum* and its formation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 3.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² O’Donnell, Bridenthal, and Reagin, *The Heimat Abroad*, 1.

Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper have shown in their important article on the terminological limitations of “collective identity” that some scholars use “identity” broadly and without contextualization.⁹³ They can invoke it, for example, to discuss individuals and collectives, an external body, and as something that is simultaneously fluid, contextual, immutable, and primordial.⁹⁴ In order to avoid this shortcoming, I treat *Deutschtum* as a collective rather than an individual concept. Similar to Alexander Maxwell and Sacha E. Davis, I also frame *Deutschtum* as neither immutable nor ephemeral, but as an idea constructed within a specific historical context.⁹⁵

Chapter one explores how captured imaginations of the African periphery acted as dynamic forces in society before and after German unification. I demonstrate that following a long history of indifference, skepticism, cultural anxiety, and aristocratic hostility, views about imperial expansion grew into a consensus about the world beyond the political delimitations of Europe.⁹⁶ Visions of Germany’s status abroad, specifically its role as a world power carving out a “place in the sun,” replaced earlier fears that it had arrived too late to the colonial scramble. As Germans imagined themselves outside and inside continental Europe, they created an image as overseas colonizer.⁹⁷

⁹³ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’,” *Theory and Society* 29, No.1 (2000): 1-47.

⁹⁴ Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’,” 2000. Also see Alexander Maxwell and Sacha E. Davis, “Germanness beyond Germany: Collective Identity in German Diaspora Communities,” *German Studies Review* 39, No.1 (2016): 1.

⁹⁵ Maxwell and Sacha, “Germanness beyond Germany,” 1-15.

⁹⁶ For a similar interpretation on colonialism and its effects on class conflict in nineteenth-century Germany see John Phillip Short, *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

⁹⁷ See Bradley Naranch, “Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsch*: Emigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German National Identity, 1848-71,” in *Germany’s Colonial Pasts*, Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2005), 21-40.

In this chapter I emphasize the rhetoric of several important members in the Frankfurt National Assembly, popularity of geographic magazines and travel narratives in the 1850s and 1860s, and the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) demonstrate how imperial desires evolved in German society between 1848-1884. Whether in general discursive practices, the debates in the culture and opinion sections of newspapers, the ways in which men and women spoke about the world, or the imperial leagues that sprang up seemingly over night, colonial fantasies created imperial desires long before 1884.⁹⁸

Chapter two focuses on Rhenish missionaries after their arrival in Southwest Africa in 1842. Though the RMG found some initial success with some communities, the Herero showed little interest in missionary activity from the start. In response, the RMG embraced a new kind of evangelism based on what I term “religious nationalism.” As a practice, religious nationalism integrated two seemingly distinct motives. On the one hand, it promoted an inclusive dogma that viewed all people as equal before God.⁹⁹ Rhenish missionaries believed that Christianity was not “inherently limited and sovereign,” but a *limitless* belief system that relied upon conversion, expansion, and evangelism.¹⁰⁰ It did not thrive on the exclusion of others, but instead sought to expose the “light of Christianity” to a world of non-believers.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, Rhenish missionaries agreed that faith alone was not enough to guarantee Africans salvation. The

⁹⁸ Birthe Kundrus, “From the Periphery to the Center: On the Significance of Colonialism for the German Empire,” in *Imperial Germany Revisited*, Müller and Torp, eds., 253-265.

⁹⁹ Jeremy Best, “Godly, International, and Independent: German Protestant Missionary Loyalties before World War I,” *Central European History* (forthcoming) and *Heavenly Fatherland: German Missionary Culture between Globalization and Nationalism* (manuscript under revision).

¹⁰⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

¹⁰¹ Oremann, *Mission, Church and State*, 32.

RMG regarded Bible study and religious custom as vital components of Christianity, of course, but also believed that German culture was not a mutually exclusive entity. A thorough acceptance of the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of Mark also required western clothing, literacy, a rigid division of male and female social practice, and a diligent work ethic. I conclude that missionaries utilized religious nationalism as a justification to spread their influence in Africa. As a result, the RMG not only helped to lay the foundation for German colonial domination in 1884, but also emerged as the first European institution to establish a permanent locus of power in Southwest Africa.¹⁰²

Chapter three exposes the entangled history of Germany and DSWA during the formative colonial period. News about the colonial world expanded collective views of the *Heimat* ideal after 1884. I argue that DSWA not only helped to shape German national identity, but that it also reflected that *Deutschtum* was not merely a virtue that the metropole exported abroad.¹⁰³ Colonial conquest instead widened how society interacted with the overseas empire. It not only strengthened those forces that saw expansion as tantamount to survival, but also signified why Germans conflated colony and *Heimat* together by the turn of the twentieth century.

I utilize several venues of discussion to expose how colonial discourses affected collective impressions of identity: official reports sent between political officials and the *Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung* (AAKA), colonial *Eingaben* (petitions) written by aspiring settler-colonists, and nationalist media promotions in Germany. These media made profound impressions on German colonial discourse. The everyday presence of

¹⁰² Wolfram Hartmann, “Sexual Encounters and their Implications on an Open and Closing Frontier: Central Namibia from the 1840s to 1905” (Ph.D. Dissertation: Columbia University, 2002).

¹⁰³ Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 1-5.

DSWA in newspapers and propaganda campaigns normalized colonial rule in every social stratum after 1884. As a result, aspiring colonialists, together with the institutions that encouraged and supported them, integrated DSWA into a collective discussion about the place of empire in German society. This process not only expanded the *Heimat* ideal, but also entangled the colonial and national worlds together in ways that had profound consequences in the early twentieth century.

Chapter four explores interactions between the Witbooi Namaqua and German settlers between 1884-1905. This chapter draws on materials that are not entirely predicated on pre-colonial interpretations of Africa. Sources published by so-called “armchair colonialists” with no lived experience overseas, therefore, do not represent the only archival foundation of this chapter. Instead, I reference newspaper articles, correspondence, and political decrees written by people in DSWA as direct responses to actual moments of colonial contact.

Illustrations of distant regions and exotic animals, tales of exploration, self-congratulatory reports of scientific discovery, and accounts written by African leaders all acted as informal links to DSWA. These networks allowed Germans who had never left the metropole to encounter the so-called “periphery” without actually travelling overseas. In focusing on colonial encounters in DSWA, I show that people in Windhoek, Swakopmund, and Otjimbingwe were just as integral to Germany’s national development as the merchants, soldiers, and settlers who first ventured abroad in 1884.

Chapter five shows how state-condoned acts of mass violence and an increased reliance on “racial thinking” together enabled exclusionary notions of German belonging to dominate collective impressions of *Deutschtum* in the German Empire. Racial thinking

had a long trajectory in DSWA. Rhenish missionaries, for instance, acknowledged the presumed certainty of racial hierarchy as a means to spread Christianity in pre-colonial Southwest Africa. It also acted as a key component in the political relationship between Theodor Leutwein and Hendrik Witbooi. Indeed, Leutwein had a clear, racially specific vision for the colony after he became Governor in 1894. He routinely complained that DSWA was on the verge of turning into a “bastard colony” and publically appealed for more white women to emigrate from Europe.¹⁰⁴ Social and racial difference together operated as the guiding principles of Leutwein’s worldview.

But what I demonstrate in this chapter is that race did not act as the *sole* category through which German settlers framed their relationship with Africans before the turn of the twentieth century. It was certainly a central dynamic in colonial society, but alone was not enough to justify excessive violence, theft, rape, or mass murder. That changed after the start of the so-called *Herero-Aufstand*. After hostilities began in 1904, racial epithets saturated German political rhetoric, altering national-colonial policy up to the start of the First World War.

I emphasize four instances in this chapter to characterize how German identity became a racially-exclusive institution after the turn of the twentieth century: the passage of racial legislation, specifically bans on mixed-marriages and the construction of *Eingeborenenwerften* (“native” settlements); the increased effort at encouraging white women to emigrate overseas; the racialization of Boers migrating from the Cape Colony; and the political landscape leading up to the “Hottentot Elections” of 1907 in Germany.

¹⁰⁴ Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 232-233.

After the conclusion of the Herero-Namaqua Genocide, the qualities that comprised an ideal settler also defined the boundaries of *Deutschtum* throughout the German empire.

Chapter 1:

Colonial Aspirations and the German Nation, 1848-1884

Fantasies and Realities

The recent exploration of the German colonial project has been an exciting development in the historiography of modern Germany.¹⁰⁵ In particular, the study of German national identity outside the confines of Europe has offered an especially rich topic for discussion.¹⁰⁶ Unlike the past generation of historians, which tended to focus on continental grounds, new examinations of German identity and its formation have increasingly looked to the “peripheries” of Germany’s overseas empire.¹⁰⁷ All interpretive roads no longer inescapably lead to the fertile expanses of “the East,” but instead veer in multiple directions.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Edward Ross Dickinson, “The German Empire: an Empire?” *History Workshop Journal Issue* 66, No. 1 (2008): 129-162; Birthe Kundrus, “Die Kolonien – ‘Kinder des Gefühls und der Phantasie’,” in *Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*, Birthe Kundrus, ed. (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2003), 7-18; Jens Jaeger, “Colony as *Heimat*? The Formation of Colonial Identity in Germany around 1900,” *German History* 27, No. 4 (2009): 467-489; Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagan, eds., *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., *German Colonialism and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im deutschen Kaiserreich* (München: C.H. Beck, 2006); Andreas Eckert, *Herrschen und Verwalten. Afrikanische Bürokraten, Staatliche Ordnung und Politik in Tansania, 1920-1970* (München: Oldenburg, 2007); and “Afrikanische Nationalisten und die Frage der Menschenrechte”, in *Moralpolitik: Geschichte der Menschenrechte im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stefan Hoffmann, ed. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 312-336.

¹⁰⁶ Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley, eds., *German Colonialism in a Global Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) and Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp, eds., *Imperial Germany Revisited: Continuing Debates & New Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ See especially Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) and Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁸ For recent scholarship on Germany’s “*Drang nach Ostens*” see David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust: Germany’s Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber

Indeed, the historical journey itself, to quote historian Bradley Naranch, has become just “as significant as the final destination,” and has prompted an explosion of inquiries on German imperial policy, colonial societies, gender roles and empire, warfare, comparative genocide, and post-colonial dynamics in Weimar and Nazi Germany.¹⁰⁹ Such an influx of innovative scholarship requires a reconsideration of the nature and complexion of German nationalism in Europe, and how imperial fantasies and realities affected German identity in the nineteenth century. It also demands a clearer explanation of exactly what kind of empire the *Kaiserreich* was, and how imperial aspirations related to popular views of German nationalism before and after 1871.

Colonial conquest and the so-called “dark continent” had a place in German national discourses long before a formal empire existed. This chapter explores how imaginations of the African periphery acted as dynamic forces in society before and after German unification. I argue that following a long history of indifference, skepticism, cultural anxiety, and aristocratic hostility, views about imperial expansion grew into a consensus about the world beyond the political delimitations of Europe.¹¹⁰ Visions of Germany’s status abroad, specifically its role as a world power carving out a “place in the sun,” replaced earlier fears that it had arrived too late to the colonial scramble. As

& Faber, 2010; and Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz?: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011). Bradley Naranch, “German Colonialism Made Simple,” in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, Naranch and Eley, eds., 9.

¹⁰⁹ Naranch, “German Colonialism,” 9.

¹¹⁰ For a similar interpretation on colonialism and its effects on class conflict in nineteenth-century Germany see John Phillip Short, *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

Germans imagined themselves outside and inside continental Europe, they created an image as overseas colonizer.¹¹¹

This image as colonizer effectively laid the groundwork for the formal colonial period, an era that began with the acquisition of Southwest Africa in 1884. It also upset the cultural delineation of what the German nation-state would ultimately look like, both in the collective imagination of citizens and the political dynamics of the state that emerged in 1871. Scholars commonly define a “nation-state” as a polity founded on national and popular sovereignty, equality before the law, and a shared ethno-linguistic cultural heritage.¹¹² By its very nature, it is a state that has clearly defined borders and relies upon political and cultural exclusion.¹¹³ Foreigners and all proscribed “others,” therefore, are forbidden from taking part in the institutions that uphold the state’s national integrity. The “national core,” as Sebastian Conrad has called it, serves as the uncorrupted bedrock and perceived ideal of the nation’s citizenry.¹¹⁴ A “universal-occidental and national character” unites citizens together and instills within them one common purpose: serving the nation.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ See Bradley Naranch, “Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsch*: Emigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German National Identity, 1848-71,” in *Germany’s Colonial Pasts*, Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2005), 21-40.

¹¹² Dickinson, “The German Empire,” 143.

¹¹³ Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, eds., Geoff Eley and Grigor Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 42-56; Ann Stoler, “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia,” in *Becoming National*, Eley and Suny, 286-324; Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹¹⁴ Sebastian Conrad, *The Quest for the Lost Nation: History Writing in Germany and Japan in the American Century* (University of California Press, 2010), 37.

¹¹⁵ Georg Smolk, “Die deutsche Revolution 1848,” *Frankfurter Hefte*, vol. 3 (1948): 401-414.

Historians have generally regarded the turn of the nineteenth century as the beginning of Europe's national age.¹¹⁶ It marks the moment, to paraphrase Eric Hobsbawm, when nationalism transformed from a passive idea into a dominant and violent expression.¹¹⁷ What we have perceived as European nation-states were instead federations that developed out of a "collision" between national ambitions and political realities.¹¹⁸ Thinking the nation was one thing, but living it was an entirely different matter.¹¹⁹

Edward Ross Dickinson's thesis in his 2008 article "The German Empire: an Empire?" offers a useful lens through which to consider German colonial history. Unlike other European states, German imperial and national aspirations evolved together.¹²⁰ This is not to say that imperial and national dialogues were any less nuanced in other European states, or that Germany developed along a unique imperial-national *Sonderweg*. Rather, I argue that the process of state building and colonial conquest intersected in the German national imagination precisely because neither entity existed before 1871. If we acknowledge that the German state that formed on 18 January 1871 was nothing more

¹¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage, 1962).

¹¹⁷ Eric J. Hobsbawm, "The transformation of nationalism, 1870-1918," in *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Eric J. Hobsbawm (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 101-130.

¹¹⁸ Dickinson, "The German Empire," 144.

¹¹⁹ See Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997) and Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990).

¹²⁰ For more on the ethnic identity and the absence of a state see Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagan, eds., *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 1-14.

than a “heterogeneous [body of] dynastic conglomerates,” what does that say about the potential of overseas territories and their place in the German nation?¹²¹

Just as its future colonies were never empty spaces that Germans crafted into one single national image, the *Kaiserreich* was never a self-contained empire devoid of foreign and external contact. Desires for statehood and illusions of empire led many Germans to fashion a national identity rooted in imperialist aspirations before and after 1871.¹²² The lack of a unified state and of an overseas empire allowed citizens to construct a collective image that could potentially make both scenarios possible. Nationalists heralded strength, power, and cultural heritage as German attributes precisely because they perceived them as the only qualities that could turn national fantasies into realities.

With the publication of *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*, Susanne Zantop interrogated the study of German colonialism in an innovative manner. She broke away from the tendency to stay within the formal colonial period, 1884-1919, and instead focused her research on Germany’s pre-colonial era. Zantop found that a “pervasive desire for colonial possessions” created a sense of “national entitlement” in the minds of many Germans by the mid-nineteenth century.¹²³ Out of this desire, she concluded, developed a colonial discourse that not even a genuine colonial setting could challenge. The *Koloniallegende* (“colonial legend”) of

¹²¹ Ronald Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, eds., Ronald Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 27.

¹²² For an early examination on German imperial and national movements see Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop’s introduction in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy*, Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox, and Zantop, eds. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 1-29.

¹²³ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 7.

the German “as the best colonizer and cultivator” prevailed in spite of the brutal actions later taken by Carl Peters in German East Africa or Lothar von Trotha in German Southwest Africa.¹²⁴ Imaginary colonialism not only helped make imperial domination possible, she argued, but also perfected it in every way after 1884.

I maintain that reality eventually did catch up with the imagination and had a tangible impact on German perceptions of the colonial empire, however. German colonialism, for instance, produced economic power relationships on a domestic and geopolitical scale that lasted well into the twentieth century. Industrial and urban elites viewed the empire as a way to strengthen their already tight grip on Germany’s commerce.¹²⁵ It should come as no surprise that colonial expansion began as a merchant enterprise. Adolf Lüderitz, the prospecting tobacco merchant who purchased Angra Pequena (*Lüderitzbucht*) in 1883, envisioned an agricultural utopia upon which he could build a lucrative and permanent legacy.¹²⁶ Lüderitz’s venture ultimately failed, but what replaced his project, the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika* (German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa, DKGSWA), shared his same dream.¹²⁷

The prospect of an overseas landed aristocracy offered nobles and wealthy industrialists hope that their economic and political dominance would continue into the

¹²⁴ Heinrich Simonsfeld, *Die Deutschen als Colonisatoren in der Geschichte* (Hamburg: Richter, 1885), 49. For a discussion on the repression of Germany’s brutal colonial policies see Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 7-14. For more on Lothar von Trotha see chapter five of this dissertation.

¹²⁵ John Phillip Short, “World of Work, World of Goods,” in *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in Germany*, John Phillip Short (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 36-56.

¹²⁶ Heinrich Loth, “Die Konzessionsperiode,” in *Die christliche Mission in Südwestafrika: zur destruktiven Rolle der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft beim Prozess der Staatsbildung in Südwestafrika (1842-1895)*, Heinrich Loth (Berlin: Akademie, 1963), 97.

¹²⁷ The DKGSWA was an organization comprised of financial leaders in Germany. They included the German bankers Gerson von Bleichröder and Adolph von Hanseemann, industrialists Count Guido Henckel von Donnersmarck, and politician Johannes von Miquel (Mayor of Frankfurt am Main).

twentieth century. Workers and rural farmers, meanwhile, envisioned open spaces free of social hierarchy and urban strife. Rud Erpf fondly imagined life on a “Southwest African farm where plenty of opportunity awaited.”¹²⁸ Otto Seyfarth, a field worker from Malheim, had a “sincere interest in [the] Southwest African colony [and] wished to see activity in the protectorate come to fruition.”¹²⁹ Aspiring colonists like Erpf and Seyfarth, though representative of a decidedly different social class than men like Lüderitz, forged remarkably similar impressions of what awaited them abroad. Expansion offered hope of economic mobility for some *and* preservation of the status quo for others.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the future colonial world was seemingly everywhere in the German states. Depictions of lions, elephants, and ostriches filled travel narratives and helped to familiarize students with an “exotic” world.¹³⁰ In response to slow conversion rates, Rhenish missionaries described African peoples as “garrulous, trifling, laughing, quarrelsome, boastful, crawling, at one moment in the highest rage and anger, in others brave where there is no resistance.”¹³¹ Colonial enthusiasts boasted that the “exploitation of a [colony’s] soil, its natural resources, the flora and fauna, and above

¹²⁸ Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde (hereafter BAB)/Reichskolonialamt (hereafter RKA) 1001/1174: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen, Rud Erpf, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 13. April 1907,” 6.

¹²⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1181: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen., Otto Seyfarth, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 15. June 1907, 14.

¹³⁰ Lessons like these became even more commonplace after Germany acquired Southwest Africa and other colonies after 1884. See Jeff Bowersox, “Boy’s and Girl’s Own Empires: Gender and the Uses of the Colonial World in *Kaiserreich* Youth Magazines,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., (New York: Routledge, 2011), 57-68.

¹³¹ Carl Hugo Hahn, *Tagbücher, 1837-1860 Diaries: A Missionary in Nama- and Damaraland, Part I: 1837-1845*, ed. Brigitte Lau (Windhoek: Windhoek Archives, 1984),

all the people” would transform Germany into a world Great Power.¹³² These dynamics all informed German society at a base level.

In this chapter I will focus on three examples that reflect the growing significance of imperial conquest for many Germans before and after 1871. The rhetoric of several important members in the Frankfurt National Assembly, popularity of geographic magazines and travel narratives in the 1850s and 1860s, and the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) demonstrate how imperial desires evolved in German society between 1848-1884. Whether in general discursive statements, the debates in the culture and opinion sections of newspapers, the ways in which men and women spoke about the world, or the imperial leagues that sprang up seemingly over night, colonial fantasies created imperial desires long before 1884.¹³³

Imperialism and the Frankfurt National Assembly, 1848-1849

On 16 June 1848, Johann Tellkamp, a liberal delegate from Bückeburg, spoke on the floor of the *Paulskirche*, the seat of the Frankfurt National Assembly in Frankfurt am Main, in favor of creating a German fleet.¹³⁴ Like many of his colleagues before him, Tellkamp cited ongoing regional conflicts, most notably with Denmark, as justification for building and maintaining a powerful German navy.¹³⁵ As he spoke, however, his support for a *Deutsche Marine* became more forward-looking and ambitious.

However it is not merely the present war that we must have before our eyes. A fleet is also incredibly important in times of peace. I would like to

¹³² Bernhard Dernburg, *Zielpunkte des deutschen Kolonialwesens: Zwei Vorträge gehalten von Bernhard Dernburg* (Berlin: Mittler, 1907), 5.

¹³³ Birthe Kundrus, “From the Periphery to the Center: On the Significance of Colonialism for the German Empire,” in *Imperial Germany Revisited*, Müller and Torp, eds., 253-265.

¹³⁴ The *Paulskirche* acted as the seat of the Frankfurt National Assembly (1848/1849).

¹³⁵ For a detailed examination of the German Navy and the Frankfurt National Assembly see Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 27-42.

point out that without protection of a fleet we will find it far more difficult to obtain and maintain trade contracts than if we had one. We have seen it everywhere that other nations obtain far more favorable terms . . . where their flag is already known and respected. A fleet is also required for the removal of trade tariffs and for the establishment and maintenance of a colony . . . if we have a fleet, we will thereby open up for ourselves once more sales to overseas lands.¹³⁶

Tellkamp's speech advocating gunboat diplomacy was met with loud applause and fanfare.¹³⁷ So was his insistence that a fleet could make the National Assembly's domestic and imperial objectives a genuine possibility. "By granting the proposed funds," he asserted, "we give the world through our deeds the clearest proof that the unity of Germany is a reality."¹³⁸

Two days earlier, Joseph von Radowitz, a conservative representative from Prussia, expressed similar sentiments about the prospects of a German fleet and what it would mean for Germany on the world stage. In particular, he viewed the creation of a navy as an emblem of nationhood:

We wish to establish the unity of Germany. There is no sign for this unity that announces this decision inside and outside Germany to the same degree as the creation of a Germany fleet. . . . This indicates that she is strong and vigorous and in this moment proves it in more than one place. . . . The creation of the fleet is not merely a military question, a commercial question but overwhelmingly a national question.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Johann Tellkamp, in Franz Wigard, ed., *Reden für die deutsche Nation. Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt am Main: Sauerländer, 1848), Vol I., 309.

¹³⁷ After the National Assembly approved the *Marine-Ausschuß* (Naval Committee), the entire congregation shouted "Very good" and "Bravo!" See Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 33.

¹³⁸ Tellkamp, in Wigard, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. I, 309.

¹³⁹ Radowitz, in Wigard, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. I, 251. Also see Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 34.

Imperial aspirations and national unity, at least for Tellkamp and Radowicz, were linked. A navy, as a cultural initiative and as a military force, had the potential to make national and imperial desires possible.

The Frankfurt National Assembly was a political outgrowth of the French Revolution and liberal uprisings of 1848. It represented the end of the *Vormärz*, a period commonly associated with Austrian and Prussian dominance in the German Confederation, political and literary censorship, divinely-sanctioned sovereign authority, and regional factionalism. Though Austro-Prussian dualism remained a potent factor until 1866, the Frankfurt National Assembly effectively symbolized a new era that saw liberal-nationalist sentiments spread throughout the German lands.

The parliamentarians who convened at the *Paulskirche* were the vanguard of the post-*Vormärz* period. Their rise exemplified the overthrow of the “old political order” that started at the turn of the nineteenth century. To paraphrase Thomas Nipperdey, it all began with Napoleon.¹⁴⁰ The phenomenon of state power and the collective attention accorded social movements were all direct results of the reforms ushered in by the French Revolution.¹⁴¹ The Frankfurt National Assembly was as much a liberal experiment as it was a symbol of collective national aspirations.

¹⁴⁰ Nipperdey begins Volume I of his classic study on German history with the words “Am Anfang war Napoleon.” See Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1800-1866*, 11.

¹⁴¹ Such a general statement, of course, requires considerable explanation that space will not allow in this present chapter. The existing literature on this subject is exhaustive and thorough, and has produced considerable interventions on the role of the French Revolution in modern German history. Some notable examples include Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1800-1866*, (1983); Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006). The reforms of the French Revolution that I reference here include the end of structural inequality within the legal system, the abolishment of feudalism, the limitation of social and noble status on political fortunes, and the emergence of equal rights doctrine.

In spite of the religious and regional differences that divided them during the *Vormärz*, parliamentarians often did agree on the conflation of national and imperial issues. The lack of a unified state and overseas empire together enabled delegates to focus on ambition and potential rather than results and substance. A naval fleet, for example, was an issue on which members found common ground.¹⁴² Continentalists could point to the war against Denmark in 1848 as a natural justification for its creation, while aspiring imperialists could imagine a distant empire protected by powerful German flagships.¹⁴³ One vision favored the integrity of German central Europe. The other looked to prosperity and lands beyond the shores of the continent. What united them was not a monolithic view of nationhood, but rather a discourse that favored national-imperial expansion. Distinct interpretations of the desired outcome flourished, but were largely variations on the same theme.

Debates about the role of the German navy followed a similar pattern. Article III., Clause 19 of the *Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches* dictated that authority over the fleet would lie with the German government:

The naval force is under the exclusive authority of the Reich. No other state is allowed to keep warships or issue letters of marque. . . . The appointment of officers and officials of the navy is the Reich's alone. The government cares for the equipment, training and maintenance of the fleet and the construction, equipment and maintenance of naval bases and naval arsenals abroad.¹⁴⁴

Though the views of Johann Tellkamp and Joseph von Radowitz were among the most prominent, other members claimed that a German navy would provide citizens greater

¹⁴² Tellkamp, in Wigand, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. I, 1057.

¹⁴³ Prince Heinrich Adalbert, *Denkschrift über die Bildung einer deutschen Kriegsflotte*, quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 31.

¹⁴⁴ *Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches*, in *Die beiden Deutschen Reichsverfassungen*, Wigand, 26-27.

freedom and access to the outside world. Friedrich Wilhelm Schlöffel, a manufacturer from Halbendorf, for instance, appealed to recent history, specifically to the Hanseatic League (*Hansa*):

It is not hard to expect from the planned German navy complete salvation, if we look back to the patriotic Hansa. The state of emergency, which has developed for the German people, and especially for German freedom . . . must be understood; the navy emerged from the will of the people and not from the will of one or more families.¹⁴⁵

Schlöffel expressed a romantic vision of a German navy that united a free, common people with markets overseas. His reference to the Hanseatic League gave his message some historical credibility.

Herr von Balle, a citizen from Beuthen whom President Heinrich von Gagern asked to speak before the Assembly, reminded delegates that “Germany’s wings, whose feathers drink in the North- and Baltic Sea and in the Mediterranean Sea, want Germany to unite. But this can only be achieved when [the Nation] agrees to stand strong and powerful.”¹⁴⁶ In Balle’s mind, a navy would serve as evidence of such an agreement. As with the German military, members of the National Assembly debated the orientation of the navy, but it never became so decisive that the formation of a fleet was ever in peril.

The Frankfurt Constitution also addressed the topic of German emigration. Section VI., Clause 136 established that all Germans had the right to travel freely and without interference from the state: “The liberty of emigration is not restricted by the state; exit fees may not be applicable. The emigration matter is under the protection and

¹⁴⁵ Schlöffel, in Wigard, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. I, 310.

¹⁴⁶ Herr von Balle, in Wigard, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. I, 312.

welfare of the German Empire.”¹⁴⁷ On the surface, this law and its significance might not seem as noteworthy as the orientation of the future German military or government. Emigration was at the heart of the contemporary debate concerning overseas imperialism, however. Though the navy would make colonialism *possible*, emigration was the issue that made colonialism *necessary*.¹⁴⁸

Supporters were particularly concerned about the rate of German emigration to destinations outside of Europe, notably the United States and South America.¹⁴⁹ Members introduced a wide variety of proposals to address the issue. Tellkampf, for instance, championed a program designed to extend national privileges to Germans who lived overseas. He argued that such a program would benefit not just former citizens, but also the future German state:

If we were to now extend our German emigrants protection, we could win the adoration of all emigrants; they would then be more favorably disposed toward supporting trading regulations that were equally advantageous to North America and Germany through their votes. As we unfortunately do not have any colonies, this would be for our nation a use for emigration that is not to be overlooked.¹⁵⁰

In lieu of its own colonial empire, Germany could look to its national populations abroad to cultivate positive economic agreements and social changes in Europe. Tellkampf’s pronouncement also provided him the opportunity to remind the assembly of colonialism’s potential. “The youth overseas, in the colonies, in the to-be-cultivated lands, find free room for the development of their energy, that possibly could have been ruined

¹⁴⁷ *Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches*, in *Die beiden Deutschen Reichsverfassungen*, Wigand, 111.

¹⁴⁸ Günther Wollstein, *Das “Grossdeutschland” der Paulskirche: Nationale Ziele in der bürgerlichen Revolution 1848/49* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1977).

¹⁴⁹ Schulz, in Wigard, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. III., 4779.

¹⁵⁰ Tellkampf, in Wigard, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. I., 1057. Also see Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 39.

by the overpopulated Fatherland. Overseas these energies are developed and a free, worthwhile field of activity is offered,” he concluded.¹⁵¹

Sentiments like this were also expressed outside of the *Paulskirche*. Kurt Hassert, a geographer and early proponent of imperial expansion, professed his desire for “a Germany able to accommodate its population surplus in its own colonies rather than losing it as cultural fertilizer to others.”¹⁵² A strong and worthy people, Hassert concluded, needed to expand so as to maintain its national character. Though proponents of German expansion later employed similar arguments to justify conquest in Eastern Europe, the National Assembly was actually more concerned with Germany’s national interior.¹⁵³ Tellkampf and Hassert were not advocating a program of conquest for conquest’s sake.

They were, more accurately, advancing a political vision that saw colonial expansion and national unity as the same enterprise. Unity and expansion were initiatives that reinforced the capabilities of the German people. The Constitution of the German Reich (1849) embodied that discourse throughout its pages. More than any other treatise to emerge from the *Paulskirche*, the Frankfurt Constitution represented a national pledge to explore and advance an imperial program.

On 16 March 1849, Friedrich Schulz, a delegate from Hesse, spoke before the *Paulskirche* about the relationship between German national unity and imperial conquest.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Kurt Hassert, “Johann Joachim Becher, ein Vorkämpfer deutscher Kolonialpolitik im 17. Jahrhundert.” *Koloniale Rundschau. Zeitschrift für Weltwirtschaft und Kolonialpolitik* (Berlin, 1918): 264.

¹⁵³ *Lebensraum* theory asserts that a nation’s survival requires the acquisition of territory to supplement the political, economic, and social needs of the State. Friedrich Ratzel, a German geologist heavily influenced by nineteenth-century imperial fantasies, coined the term in 1884. It later became the ideological basis for pro-colonial groups in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and for the Nazi Party’s territorial thinking after the First World War.

Though his speech was not the first to raise the issues of German statehood and colonial expansion, Schulz captured the spirit of the Frankfurt National Assembly:

On the great ocean a powerful, ruling New Germany can blossom, which will significantly strengthen the natural friendship with the United States. However, if we do not hurry, we will also come to Western America too late, at least for extensive settlement which might be in a position to exercise an independent influence. . . . There on our border is our Texas, our Mexico. I hope that the Foreign Office . . . will come to an understanding with the Austrian government about a regulated system of colonization for the Danube regions.¹⁵⁴

This message not only positioned overseas colonialism as a national necessity, but also identified it as a solution for the so-called “*Deutsche Frage*.” Schulz believed that Germany – like the United States – could adopt colonialism as a means to settle both agendas instead of identifying them as mutually exclusive operations. A consensus within the National Assembly viewed expansion and colonial domination as a national priority. As a political mechanism, overseas conquest provided parliamentarians a means to unite citizens and independent German states together behind a shared national agenda. As a cultural issue, expansionism also offered common cause to liberals and nobles, Catholics and Protestants, city dwellers and rural farmers, and even Prussians and Austrians alike by appealing to fantasies of German unity.

Though the National Assembly ultimately failed to establish a unified state in 1849, the tenets of the Frankfurt Constitution continued to influence Germans long after Friedrich Wilhelm IV figuratively left the German crown in “the gutter.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the image of Germany as a united, powerful, and expansionist state did not fade with the

¹⁵⁴ Friedrich Schulz, in Wigard, *Steno. Bericht.*, Vol. III., 5721-5722.

¹⁵⁵ Franz Herre, *Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Der andere Preußenkönig* (Berlin: Casimir Katz Verlag, 2007).

collapse of the liberal revolutions of 1848. Outside the walls of the *Paulskirche*, citizens found new venues in which to read and promote the “German as colonizer” discourse. Popular geographic magazines and pro-colonial literature were among the most prominent. As a voice for and of the people, print media would advance the National Assembly’s pledge that “Germany will be one!” more than any other medium in the immediate years before 1871.

Popularizing the Imperial Nation: Geographic Magazines and Colonial Literature

In the period between the dissolution of the *Paulskirche* and German national unification, neither a formal German state, nor an actual overseas empire existed to test the colonial fantasies that circulated throughout German-speaking communities. Though the breakdown of the Frankfurt parliament left the national-imperial ambitions of its members unrealized, other media emerged to carry the “spirit of 1848” forward into a new era. The most prominent among these were of a literary variety.

Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt (*Garden Arbor – Illustrated Family Journal*), for instance, was a popular contemporary periodical before and after German unification. Founded by Ernst Keil and Ferdinand Stolle in 1853, *Die Gartenlaube* embodied the liberal sentiments and tradition of the 1848 revolutions.¹⁵⁶ It called for the guarantee of individual rights and freedoms and the unification of all German people into one universal homeland. Though it began as a magazine for the *Bildungsbürgertum*, *Die Gartenlaube* quickly grew into the most popular periodical in the entire German Confederation.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ For more on Keil’s personal biography and early publishing background see Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation*, 12-14.

¹⁵⁷ See Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation*, 16.

In 1853, Keil began by printing a modest 5,000 copies of the magazine at his small firm in Leipzig. Ten years later, circulation had grown to 180,000, and in 1867, 230,000.¹⁵⁸ By 1875, *Die Gartenlaube* reached its peak with a circulation of 382,000 copies, making it the only periodical in the *Kaiserreich* with a potential to make contact with at least five percent of the total population.¹⁵⁹ In addition to promoting a liberal-national agenda, Keil's primary goal was to "entertain and teach in an entertaining way."¹⁶⁰

He did so by emphasizing "genuine, well-written narratives [that] introduced readers to the history of the human heart and of peoples, [and] to the struggles of human passions and past times."¹⁶¹ *Die Gartenlaube* thus was filled with both factual and fictional narratives about human bravery, love, mystery, and emotional struggle, and numerous elaborate illustrations to bring each story to life. In this way, *Die Gartenlaube* contributed to the construction of a national German identity by introducing readers to global and national issues in a personal and familial manner.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Dieter Barth, *Zeitschrift für Alle* (Münster: Institut für Publizistik der Universität Münster, 1974), 473.

¹⁵⁹ Germany's total population in the mid-1870s was just over 40 million people. See Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation*, 16.

¹⁶⁰ "An unsere Freunde und Leser," *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* (1853): x, quoted in "Popular Presentations of History in the Nineteenth Century: The Example of *Die Gartenlaube*," Sylvia Paletschek, in *Popular Historiographies in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Cultural Meanings, Social Practices*, ed., Sylvia Paletschek (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 41.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Marcus Koch, *Nationale Identität im Prozess nationalstaatlicher Orientierung; dargestellt am Beispiel Deutschlands durch die Analyse der Familienzeitschrift Die Gartenlaube von 1853-1890* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2003). Also see Matthew Fitzpatrick, "Narrating Empire: 'Die Gartenlaube' and Germany's Nineteenth-Century Liberal Expansionism," *German Studies Review* No. 1, 30 (February 2007): 97-120.

The most prevalent accounts in *Die Gartenlaube* were stories of German communities living overseas, notably in the colonies of other global powers.¹⁶³ In publishing these kinds of articles, Keil highlighted how Germans abroad epitomized colonial rule in spite of the absence of a state-organized colonial program. For instance, in 1869, subscribers were greeted by a “smiling beautiful bright spring morning” from atop the Acropolis in Athens.¹⁶⁴ Germans living in Greece described a “cloudless sky, the transparent southern air, the outlines of the objects from afar as completely clear” to the naked eye.¹⁶⁵

Four weeks later, the same audience read about “*Robinson’s Insel – eine deutsche Ansiedelung*.”¹⁶⁶ Adventure, opportunity, and freedom narrated this particular story, a style that would become familiar to *Die Gartenlaube’s* audience:

Hardly three days journey from Valparaiso in Chile and almost at the same latitude with this central port on the west coast of South America lies the island of Juan Fernandez, where Alexander Selkirk during his four years of exile collected the materials for Defoe’s “Robinson Crusoe.” This island, which is paid little attention by the trade-zealous inhabitants of the Chilean coast, has notably in recent times earned, through its importance and history, much attention from us Germans after the famous Saxon engineer Robert Wehrhan leased it in December.¹⁶⁷

After this introduction, readers followed along as Wehrhan described his first interaction with his new Chilean domain. “The island,” he began, “which rises abruptly from the waves, had been spotted at a distant range, but two long days passed before we were able

¹⁶³ Belgum, *Popularizing the Nation*, 1998; Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism in Germany*, 2008; Fitzpatrick, “Narrating Empire,” 2007; and Naranch, “Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*,” 2005.

¹⁶⁴ “Ein Morgen auf der Götterburg der Athener,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 8 (1869): 123.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ “Robinson’s Insel – eine deutsche Ansiedelung,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 14 (1869): 224.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

to achieve the primary goal of our journey.”¹⁶⁸ “During many curious glances to the coast, the reader will like to believe,” he continued, “passed the poetic thought that we would enter the same shore which often wandered through our youthful dreams.”¹⁶⁹ After landing, Wehrhan detailed everything that he saw, both familiar and exotic:

We have found European fruit trees such as sour cherry, peaches, plum, and even grapevines, and vegetables such as cabbage, potatoes, corn, onions, lettuce and several types of beets. The few houses still standing were in a very dilapidated state, but have since been made more or less inhabitable. We also visited Robinson’s cave, [which is] high and vaulted, but not deep and about sixty steps away for the seashore.¹⁷⁰

Wehrhan cast Robinson’s Island as a land of fantasy and tranquility. Indeed, the rich descriptions of fruits, vegetables, striking landscapes and animals (wild boar), and seemingly endless coastline not only intrigued German readers, but also made them want to see it for themselves. Even more importantly for some, the reality that Robinson’s Island now stood as an extension of the German *Heimat* (Homeland) meant that the dream of imperial expansion was within grasp. Wehrhan’s conclusion, in particular, spoke to and for this particular audience. “And so the fertile Germania has once again spread a seed for the future! Small and remote, but nevertheless represents a deep meaning and great diligence. May God let it grow!”¹⁷¹

Die Gartenlaube also shared the stories of Germany’s explorers, geographers, missionaries, and surveyors, heroic individuals who were engaged in “opening up” new lands *for* Germans.¹⁷² Among the most celebrated was Dr. Heinrich Barth, a German-born

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² For a similar argument see Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 177-204.

pioneer who was praised for “bringing light” to the so-called “dark continent.” In 1855, *Die Gartenlaube* credited Barth as the first person to extend civilization to Africa.¹⁷³

“While the lion as king of the desert roars through the night, and by day, the black and brown tribes rob, steal, and trade from each other,” the piece opened, “half a hundred Europeans have forged the first cultural avenues (*Kulturstraßen*) through the desert toward the interior.”¹⁷⁴ “Soon the Bible and the cotton bales, the missionary and the palm oil travelers will follow and offer the spirit of sailing or the demon of the steam ship, so that new and inquisitive strains of culture may improve [native] lives and develop their human dignity,” the article concluded.¹⁷⁵

Barth’s intrepid expeditions to the African continent made all of this possible, or so *Die Gartenlaube* wanted its readers to believe. Both intentionally and otherwise, stories like these elevated Barth and others like him to the forefront of the national conversation. They stood as models not only for those who might benefit financially from merchant trade and expansion, but also to citizens who championed the “German as colonizer” worldview. In this manner, Barth simultaneously personified the enlightened “spirit of 1848” and the potential of the German *Volk*.

He represented the core strength of Germany’s national dream in descriptions of his expeditions to Timbuktu and other distant locales. “A hero of physical and moral force, he fought not only the climate, but also with the Islamic religious fanaticism [*muhamedanisch-religiösen Fanatismus*] of the inhabitants, against their religious bloodlust, only letters from African heads of state and the rumor that he was an Envoy of

¹⁷³ “Dem Andenken zweier deutschen Eroberer,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 14 (1855): 185-187.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 185.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*.

Allah and Mohammed saved him,” *Die Gartenlaube* instructed.¹⁷⁶ “The German expedition is a German affair,” confirmed another article.¹⁷⁷ “It will be a fine victory in a field in which we have never been surpassed; in addition it will contribute to Germany attaining new honor and glory abroad.”¹⁷⁸

Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde was another popular contemporary magazine. Like *Die Gartenlaube*, *Globus* devoted its pages almost exclusively to the world beyond the European continent.¹⁷⁹ In spectacular detail, it provided readers a forum to peruse and discuss the latest news from abroad. One could, for instance, read about international expeditions into distant regions in Africa, Asia, and the Arctic. The same issue might then detail a scientific discovery or how the latest technological innovation of the day enabled “civilization” to expand in new and exciting directions. Germans also read about the world’s so-called *Eingeborene* (native) populations, specifically how and where they lived and how they interacted with Europeans.¹⁸⁰ “Once again,” *Globus*’ editors confidently announced in an August 1870 issue, “we take the reader to those continents, from which one already has been accustomed for more than two thousand years to learn something ‘new’.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ “Dem Andenken zweier deutschen Eroberer,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 14 (1855): 185.

¹⁷⁷ “Die deutsche Expedition nach Mittelfrika und ihre Gegner,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 5 (1862): 74. “Die deutsche Expedition ist eine deutsche Sache.”

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Also see Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 185.

¹⁷⁹ *Globus* first appeared in 1862 and quickly became one of the most popular magazines among the middle and upper classes in Germany. For more on *Globus*’ readership see Naranch, “Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*,” 27.

¹⁸⁰ Karl Andree, a journalist and successful geologist, served as the magazine’s chief editor. Before founding *Globus*, he worked in Bremen as a news reporter, founding the *Bremer Handelsblatt* in 1851.

¹⁸¹ “Die Buschmänner. Ein Beitrag zur südafrikanischen Völkerkunde,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, (August 1870): 65.

And teach it did. In the same August edition, *Globus* gave its readers much to consider and imagine, including colonial conquest, civilization, scientific inquiry, ancient history, and national prominence:

It is wonderful: that part of the world [Africa], in the north, under the Pharaohs, developed a rich civilization, so that it even transplanted the first seeds of human civilization to Greece [Hellas], from whose bosom we drink nourishment daily for our spirit. That part of the world is still to a large extent a ‘veiled image.’ Do there still yet prevail stranger conceptions concerning people’s geography on the continent [?] ¹⁸²

From the Pharaohs of Egypt to the British in India, *Globus* portrayed the “dark peripheries” of the world in an adventurous light—as if they were challenges to overcome. In doing so, it evoked the image of the German colonist without formally advocating overseas colonialism. Scores of articles followed a similar pattern. Germans read “that in Africa, both north and south of the equator, large tracts of land suitable for the cultivation of [cotton] existed, and that the Negro used cotton for his own needs.” ¹⁸³ They discovered that in California “their compatriots [enjoyed] a magnificent selection of Christmas trees . . . in more than thirty species of evergreen,” and that “Chinese people love to reflect their traditions in novels as much as we do.” ¹⁸⁴

Germans also read about violence, death, and annihilation. In July 1864, *Globus* published a story, “*Ausrottung der Buschmänner in der Kapregion*” (“Extermination of the Bushman in the Cape Region”). Readers learned that “The work of ‘civilization’ in South Africa takes a similar edifying [*erbaulichen*] progress, just as among the Redskins

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ “Baumwolle in Afrika,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, (May 1863): 160.

¹⁸⁴ “Deutsche Weihnachtsfeier in Californien,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, (May 1863): 349; “Bilder aus dem chinesischen Leben, nach dem Roman king-ping-mei,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, (May 1863): 143.

of North America.”¹⁸⁵ “The Civil Commissioner of Namaqualand,” the story continued, “stresses that for about a dozen years the settlers on the Orange River and the town of Beaufort have followed a planned extermination system [*Ausrottungssystem*] against the Bushman.”¹⁸⁶ “Korannas from Orange, natives [*Kaffern*] from Schietfontain, Colored and Whites in Namaqualand, Bokkeveld and Roggefeld, in the districts Fraserburg, Victoria and Hopetown, all of them without exception seem to have agreed to annihilate these Bushman,” the article told.¹⁸⁷ Exploration and fantasy did not feature in this particular story. Instead, the difficult realities of colonial rule – in this case, the extermination of an indigenous population – captured the attention of *Globus*’ audience.

Though we will never know with certainty the collective reception by Germans of stories like these, we can at least assume they had a significant impact on readers for two reasons. First, *Globus* enjoyed a broad and diverse readership.¹⁸⁸ Between 1862-1910, Karl Andree, *Globus*’ founder and chief editor, published a new edition of the magazine on a weekly basis.¹⁸⁹ As print technology improved over the course of the nineteenth century, subsequent editions incorporated more illustrations and exotic tales to appeal to a wider audience. The consistent—seemingly immediate—availability of accounts about adventure, colonial conquest, and scientific discovery took advantage of a public that thirsted for more and more information about the global periphery. Simultaneously, it also helped to *create* the market for these kinds of stories. From palm trees in the distant

¹⁸⁵ “Ausrottung der Buschmänner in der Kapregion,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, (July 1864): 188.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 188-189.

¹⁸⁸ Kirsten Beltrum, *Popularizing the Nation: Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xi-xxx. Also see her forthcoming book *Geographical Imagination or How the World Shrank in the Nineteenth Century*.

¹⁸⁹ After Andree’s death in 1875, Richard Kieperl took over as chief editor of *Globus*.

Pacific Ocean to the completion of a telegraph network linking Smyrna with Syria, Germans wanted to know more about the world abroad.¹⁹⁰ *Globus* thus acted as both a disseminator of real and sensationalized stories about life overseas and as a medium for readers to participate in the construction of a global German identity.

Second, Andree and subsequent editors followed the same thematic narrative in every addition of *Globus*. Page after page, issue after issue, *Globus* presented its audience with illustrations of distant regions and mysterious animals, thrilling tales of exploration, ethnographic descriptions of “uncivilized” and culturally “underdeveloped” societies, and self-congratulatory accounts of scientific discovery. In a relatively short period of time, this framework became familiar to readers, allowing them to absorb a story’s content with ease and regularity.¹⁹¹ Familiarity and consistency thus became the hallmark of *Globus*’ commercial and thematic strategy. It appealed to a broad readership *precisely* because it was reliable, interesting, and immediately recognizable. Over time, so, too, was the world beyond Europe. “From the Cape of Good Hope” to “Goldmines in Finland,” from “The Bengal Province of Assam” to “Mountain Railroads in Chile,” Germans acquired an awareness of the world while enjoying their morning coffee.¹⁹² In doing so,

¹⁹⁰ “Telegraph zwischen Smyrna und Syra,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, (May 1863): 156.

¹⁹¹ Anderson makes a similar argument in his discussion on the role of common languages and the formation of imagined national communities in the modern era. He argues that with the rise in literacy, “it became easier to arouse popular support, with the masses discovering a new glory in the print elevation of languages that they had humbly spoken all along.” Accessibility and familiarity, Anderson contends, allowed individuals from across social and economic classes to “think” as one over time. See Anderson, “Old Languages, New Models,” in Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 67-82.

¹⁹² “Vom Vorgebirge der Guten Hoffnung,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* (October 1870): 208; “Goldwäschereien in Finnland,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* (December 1870): 320; “Die bengalische Provinz Assam,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* (July 1870): 16; and “Eisenbahn über das Hochgebirge nach Chile,” *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde* (August 1870): 46.

popular conceptions of German identity expanded beyond the geographical boundaries of central Europe.

In addition to periodicals like *Globus* and *Die Gartenlaube*, other forms of popular literature invoked the world overseas and German identity as components of the same national cause. Travel narratives and novels about heroic emigrants, in particular, attracted audiences in search of outlets for their dreams of conquest and national unity, as Tracey Reimann-Dawe and Juliane Mikoletzky have shown.¹⁹³ Short historical stories about contemporary events, namely the so-called “Wars of Liberation” against Napoleon and the revolutions of 1848, also captured the attention of Germany’s politically engaged citizenry.¹⁹⁴ *Quer durch Afrika: Reise vom Mittelmeer nach dem Tschad-See und zum Golf von Guinea*, for example, chronicled Gerhard Rohlfs’ two-year journey through the Sahara desert to Lagos.¹⁹⁵ A self-described product of the age of scientific discovery, Rohlfs viewed Africa as a site of exploration.

Rohlfs’ narrative begins with his arrival in North Africa in 1865. After disguising himself as a “Muslim Arab,” Rohlfs navigates across the Sahara in search of adventure, all the while regarding his surroundings as a place of freedom, exoticism, and relief.¹⁹⁶ “After two short hours,” one entry begins, “[I] reached the eastern border of the Mschia-Oasis, in the vicinity of the city of Tripoli, which is sharply delimited by the sea in the north and a ring of dunes in the south. . . . The Mschia like the Tadjura are a sedentary

¹⁹³ Reimann-Dawe, “German Travel Writing on Africa, 1848-1914,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, 21-32 and Juliane Mikoletzky, *Die deutsche Amerika-Auswanderung des 19. Jahrhunderts in der zeitgenössischen fiktionalen Literatur* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988).

¹⁹⁴ Examples include “Ein deutsches Heldenmädchen,” *Die Gartenlaube* (1863): 596-600 and “Aus den Zeiten der schweren Noth,” *Die Gartenlaube* (1863): Nr. 3, 8, and 9.

¹⁹⁵ Gerhard Rohlfs, *Quer durch Afrika: Reise vom Mittelmeer nach dem Tschad-See und zum Golf von Guinea* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1874).

¹⁹⁶ Rohlfs, *Quer durch Afrika*, 19. Also see Reimann-Dawe, “German Travel Writing,” 24-25.

population.”¹⁹⁷ The manner in which Rohlf identifies himself in relation to local communities is decidedly hierarchical. As the “enlightened” observer, he depicts his interactions with Africans through a lens of superiority. Rohlf’s audience is presented with the same image, thus allowing them to observe the innate German characteristics driving his expedition forward. Simultaneously, they are also offered an illustration of the periphery, in this case, northern Africa, in which to verify and confirm their own “supremacy” and sense of national potential.

Another work in this genre was Otto Ruppius’ *Der Pedlar: Roman aus dem Amerikanischen Leben*, which first appeared in 1867. After the dissolution of the Frankfurt parliament, Ruppius’ central protagonist, Herr von Helmstedt, was forced to flee Europe in order to avoid prosecution for his radical liberal sentiments.¹⁹⁸ Helmstedt’s search for freedom led him to the United States, a land that embodied his republican beliefs. In Ruppius’ story, the ideals of the National Assembly once again provide a framework for Germans to reflect upon and consider.

Friedrich Gerstäcker’s *Unter den Penhuenchen* followed a similar narrative, though focused instead on colonial landscapes. For Gerstäcker, Germans were natural colonizers. In fact, they were more adept at colonial conquest and rule than all other global powers:

[N]o other nation gains such attachment to the soil it cultivates as the German, none is so hard working and tireless in their work. . . . Wherever they get to work fertile fields and charming small estates [*chagras*] emerge under their hands; the forests are thinned, swamps are drained,

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Otto Ruppius, *Der Pedlar: Roman aus dem Amerikanischen Leben* (Berlin: Franz Dunkler Verlag, 1867), 31.

roads are built and thriving trade arises, that the lazier Spanish race never achieved.¹⁹⁹

Like many of the Frankfurt parliamentarians before him, Gerstäcker shared his conviction that colonization would unite Germans abroad and strengthen the national community in Europe.

Though the revolutions of 1848 did not end in the formation of a united German state, geographic magazines and pro-colonial literature circulated its vision in sweeping fashion throughout the 1850s and 1860s. Just as liberal parliamentarians in Frankfurt advocated a joint national-imperial program, German print media promoted stories that celebrated the prospect of unity and colonial adventure in the immediate years before 1871. In the absence of a formal national state, colonial fantasies flourished, most notably among the *Bildungsbürgertum*.²⁰⁰ News stands and books stores stocked their shelves with tales and illustrations of the world abroad on a weekly basis. In nearly all cases, these publications cast famous explorers and geographers as exemplars of the German *Volk*.

An Imperial Reality: The Berlin Conference, 1884-1885

In a speech before the *Reichstag* in 1881, Otto von Bismarck asserted his opposition to German colonial expansion in strong terms. “As long as I am chancellor,” he declared, “we will not pursue a colonial policy. We have a fleet that cannot sail . . . and we should not possess any vulnerable parts of the world, that would fall prey to the

¹⁹⁹ Friedrich Gerstäcker, *Unter den Penhuenchen*, quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 195.

²⁰⁰ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 7.

French as soon as it gets going.”²⁰¹ Later that same year, he remarked that German colonies were “exactly like a sable fur for Polish noble families that have no shirts.”²⁰²

Yet within three years, Bismarck seemingly reversed his entire anti-colonial position. To the satisfaction of many liberals, nationalists, and merchant adventurers, he had ostensibly become a champion of imperial expansion. No other occasion marks this sudden transformation more clearly than his invitation to host the West Africa Conference in November 1884.²⁰³ Attended by representatives from each of the European colonial powers and the United States, the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 formalized the so-called “scramble for Africa” and officially denoted Germany’s entry into Europe’s imperial club.²⁰⁴ Indeed, after the conference finally adjourned, Germany’s political and cultural reach extended beyond the borders of continental Europe.

Bismarck’s unexpected interest in colonies in 1884 has been a topic of considerable debate among historians. Since the late 1960s, scholars have postulated that imperial conquest was a far-reaching scheme to compensate for domestic economic crises, an attempt to quell internal political discontent, a national ploy to limit the rising influence of Social Democracy, and a foreign venture to stabilize Bismarck’s imperial

²⁰¹ Bismarck, “Rede im Deutschen Reichstag,” quoted in *Bismarck und die Parlamentarier*, Beide III, Heinrich von Poschinger (Breslau, 1896), 54. Also see Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 55.

²⁰² Bismarck, quoted in Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism*, 116.

²⁰³ The West Africa Conference is more commonly known as the “Berlin Conference of 1884-1885.”

²⁰⁴ Germany had already declared Southwest Africa and East Africa as German protectorates earlier that year. Though already committed to affairs overseas before the start of the Berlin Conference, Bismarck convened the meeting in order to affirm Germany’s imperial claims in the eyes of other powers. He also sought to formalize imperial conquest so as to avoid a major European conflict in the future. See Konrad Canis, *Bismarcks Aussenpolitik 1870 bis 1890: Aufstieg und Gefährdung* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 85-108.

control within the German Empire.²⁰⁵ His shift in attitude is indeed notable, but the causes and forces behind Bismarck's supposed conversion represent the more significant aspect of the story. The wide appeal of colonialism among many prominent members in society, political parties, and economic interest groups, together with independent nationalist associations, social clubs, and patriotic leagues, indicated that the future of German imperial conquest did not rest exclusively on the whims of Chancellor Bismarck. These pressure groups reveal the significant political influence of overseas expansionism and its place in German society after 1871.

The Berlin Conference brought colonialism to the forefront of national politics. In November 1884, *Die Gartenlaube* defined the moment as "a new era in colonial policy."²⁰⁶ "There was a time, barely a few years behind us when zealous patriots raised their voice to warn that a 'living danger to German nationality' was the increasing colonial expansion of the English," *Die Gartenlaube* declared.²⁰⁷ Against the wishes of "politicians of the old school," the periodical continued, however, "Germans today herd together all the nations to deliberate on a peaceful solution to pending colonial

²⁰⁵ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1969); Helmut Böhme, *Deutschlands Weg zur Großmacht: Studien zum Verhältnis von Wirtschaft und Staat während der Reichsgründungszeit 1848-1881* (Köln: Verlag, 1966); Helmuth Stoecker, *Drang nach Afrika* (Berlin: Akademie, 1977); Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, "Domestic Origins of Germany's colonial Expansion under Bismarck," *Past and Present* 42 (1969): 140-159; Ian L. D. Forbes, "German Informal Imperialism in South America before 1914," *The Economic History Review* 31, New Series, No. 3 (1978): 384-398, and "Social Imperialism and Wilhelmine Germany," *The Historical Journal* 22, No. 2 (June 1979): 331-349; Woodruff D. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Peter-Christian Witt, *Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1903 bis 1913: Eine Studie zur Innenpolitik des Wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Lübeck und Hamburg, 1970); and Dirk Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks* (Köln: 1970).

²⁰⁶ "Robinson's Insel – eine deutsche Ansiedelung," *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 14 (1869): 224. "Die Insel, welche schroff aus den Wellen aufsteigt, wurde schon auf große Entfernung gesichtet, doch verstrichen zwei lange Tage, ehe es uns gelang, das Ziel unserer Reise zu erreichen."

²⁰⁶ "Die neue Aera der Kolonialpolitik," *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 49 (1884): 805.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

questions . . . most have come as friends, even the traditional Gallic enemy has appeared as an ally [and] the German community has taken the first steps at the Conference.”²⁰⁸

Über Land und Meer, a contemporary entertainment magazine, meanwhile, noted the many prominent celebrities in attendance at the conference. An entire article, for example, celebrated the distinguished career of Henry Morton Stanley, a renowned journalist, explorer of central Africa, and delegate from the United States.²⁰⁹ “The man whose name is now on the lips of the whole educated world” [and regarded as the] intellectual initiator of the conference,” the magazine lauded, has been called to Berlin for “the founding and promotion of a civilizing task that is among the noblest goals of human knowledge and civilization.”²¹⁰ Years later, Stanley hailed the Berlin Conference as a moment “of unparalleled munificence and grandeur of ideas.”²¹¹ National prominence, scientific discovery, and civilization all crystallized into a collective justification for colonial expansion. The Berlin Conference thus represented an opportunity for political leaders and colonial supporters to establish “order and justice in the place of arbitrariness and violence.”²¹²

Participants at the Berlin Conference also sought to prevent colonial rivalries from destabilizing political affairs in Europe, expand trade markets, and define various “civilizing” standards for colonial rule.²¹³ Within Germany, interest groups provided a cacophony of justifications for imperial expansion. Commercial enterprises, for instance,

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ “Die Kongokonferenz zu Berlin,” *Über Land und Meer* 53, No. 14 (October 1884-1885): 307.

²¹⁰ Ibid. Also see Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 9.

²¹¹ “The Congo Free State,” *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 1, (Volume 1885): 304.

²¹² “Die neue Aera der Kolonialpolitik,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 49 (1884): 807.

²¹³ Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*, 29-30.

focused on the lure of untapped markets and raw materials.²¹⁴ Merchants championed new trade networks as a solution to “boom and bust” economic cycles and periods of recession. Carl Peters proffered the Malthusian-inspired beliefs of men like Friedrich List, who alleged that German emigration to foreign lands sapped the cultural strength of the nation.²¹⁵ Historian Heinrich von Treitschke made a similar plea in 1884, declaring that for “a people who suffer from constant overproduction and each year send some 200,000 of their children overseas, colonization has become a question of survival.”²¹⁶

Taken together, colonial advocates offered imperial expansion as the answer for every real and perceived social problem of the era. They guaranteed economic prosperity and collective devotion to the *Kaiser*. Other colonial advocates, Carl Peters most notably, advocated an ethnic justification for expansion. Peters rationalized in 1885 that unlike migrants who left for the United States and South America, future German settler-colonists would retain their national identity rather than adapt to the cultural mores of their host nations.²¹⁷ As Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann and Shelley Baranowski have shown, Peters personified the Social Darwinist view that colonialism and national survival were not mutually exclusive.²¹⁸ To the contrary, Peters and his allies maintained that a failure to pursue colonialism would result in the extinction of the German people.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ Conrad, *German Colonialism*, 25-29.

²¹⁵ Friedrich List, *Das nationale System der politischen Ökonomie*, in *Friedrich List. Schriften / Reden / Briefe*, A. Sommer, ed. (Aalen: Scientia, 1971), 422-426.

²¹⁶ Heinrich von Treitschke, “Die ersten Versuche deutscher Kolonialpolitik,” in *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*, Karl Martin Schiller, ed. (Meersburg: Hendel, 1929), 670.

²¹⁷ Arne Perras, *Carl Peters and German Imperialism 1856-1918: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 31-99.

²¹⁸ Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, “Consequences of the Foundation of the German Empire: Colonial Expansion and the Process of Political-Economic Rationalization,” in *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition*, Stig Förster, Wolfgang Mommsen, and

German colonialism enjoyed broad support from across the political and social spectrum. The justifications for colonial conquest resolved in their own minds, participants focused much of their attention on the so-called “General Act of the Berlin Conference.”²²⁰ The General Act bound the Great Powers of Europe to specific conventions on trade rights, navigation, and occupation standards.²²¹ It also established “safeguards” for the preservation and protection of indigenous African populations.²²² In this manner, the General Act created a genuine international standard for colonial rule.

Article 1 recognized that “The commerce of all nations shall enjoy complete liberty . . . and [that] the transit of all [represented] nations [will receive] the most favorable conditions.”²²³ At a time when other colonial powers wanted more direct control of territories, Bismarck envisioned an indirect and inexpensive empire operated by private interests. An open market promised to make Bismarck’s desires a reality, as well as satisfy the agenda of colonial enthusiasts in Germany.

Article 9, meanwhile, appealed to moralists who both supported and opposed colonial expansion. It stated that “according to the principles of the law of nations, as

Ronald Robinson, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 105-120 and Baranowski, *Nazi Empire*, 32-33.

²¹⁹ Perras, *Carl Peters*, 67, 97-99.

²²⁰ Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Robinson, eds., *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference, 1884-1885, and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford: 1988) and Eric D. Weitz, “From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions,” *American Historical Review* 113, No. 5 (December 2008): 1313-1343.

²²¹ See “General Act of the Conference of Berlin Concerning the Congo,” *The American Journal of International Law* 3, No. 1, Supplement: Official Documents (January 1909): 7-25.

²²² Article 6 states “All Powers exercising rights of sovereignty or an influence in the said territories engage themselves to watch over the conservation of the indigenous populations and the territories of their moral and material conditions of existence and to strive for the suppression of slavery and especially of the negro slave trade; . . .” See “General Act,” *International Law*, 12.

²²³ Article 1, quoted in “General Act,” *International Law*, 11.

they are recognized by the signatory Powers, the slave trade [shall be] interdicted, and as the operations which, by land or sea, furnish slaves to the trade [shall be] equally considered as interdicted.”²²⁴ Though this clause banned the slave trade in its entirety, signatories principally sought to address the practice as it related to African populations themselves. The racial undercurrents of this act are difficult to ignore. By passing this regulation, Europeans in essence relegated Africans to the legal status of children who simply “did not know any better.” Article 9, therefore, not only legitimized colonialism as a moral cause in the eyes of Europeans, but also asserted a strictly enforced racial hierarchy.

The so-called “principle of effective occupation” represented the most consequential aspect of the General Act, however. Article 35 mandated that “signatory Powers of the present Act recognize the obligation to assure . . . the existence of an authority sufficient to cause acquired rights to be respected and, the case occurring, the liberty of commerce and of transit in the conditions upon which may be stipulated.”²²⁵ The “principle of effectiveness,” as it was subsequently known, specified that colonial powers needed to demonstrate genuine occupation of a colony for other international powers to recognize it as sovereign territory.

This standard also extended to the economic domain. If a European power did not effectively administer or utilize a colony’s natural resources, signatory nations could appeal the legality of the occupation.²²⁶ The principle of effectivity thus became the basis by which states could “legally” gain territorial sovereignty in Africa. Most

²²⁴ Article 9, quoted in “General Act,” *International Law*, 13.

²²⁵ Article 35, quoted in “General Act,” *International Law*, 25.

²²⁶ Article 34, quoted in “General Act,” *International Law*, 24-25.

consequentially, it authorized colonial powers to assert their dominance using all means necessary. Twenty years later, Herero and Namaqua peoples in Southwest Africa discovered the extent to which German authorities would affirm their control.

Though many within the *Bildungsbürgertum* regarded imperial conquest as an important consideration before 1884, the Berlin Conference ushered in a new era of national possibilities for supporters of colonial expansion. Expansion overseas could finally take place in the real world and not exclusively one of fantasy. In this sense, the nation acquired an empire in Africa to fashion itself as an imperialist power. For many German nationalists, *Deutschtum* was no longer a sentiment tied exclusively to the European continent. After 1884, it was also a cultural marker linked to a German overseas periphery.

Conclusion

Colonial conquest enjoyed a significant place in German national discourses long before a formal empire existed in Africa. Whether in general discursive practices, the stories in geographical and popular illustrated journals, the mission statements of independent nationalist societies, or the stenographic record of the Berlin Conference, references to the world beyond Europe influenced how many Germans saw themselves in relation to other global powers. “Now we stand before the future,” an article in *Die Gartenlaube* declared in 1883.²²⁷ “Is it too bold if we imagine this as rosy and propitious,” it continued, “if we assume that in the future, under Wilhelm and for our naval base in the

²²⁷ “Deutschlands erster Kriegshafen,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 8 (1883): 136. “Jetzt stehen wir vor der Zukunft.”

well-suited Fatherland, something still more important awaits? This we believe in; long live the new era!”²²⁸

Die Gartenlaube, like many other contemporary periodicals, amplified the imperial hopes and dreams of German citizens living in the post-unification period. Many national advocates also aspired to gain an overseas empire long before the formation of a German state in 1871. Both before and after German unification, members of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, merchant adventurers, Protestant missionaries, geographers, and political leaders promoted colonial conquest and German statehood as solutions to the political, social, and cultural troubles of the day. For many in German society, dreams of empire and desires for statehood produced a collective national consciousness rooted in imperialist aspirations.

The next chapter will focus on Rhenish missionaries after their arrival in Southwest Africa in 1842. After the Protestant *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (Rhenish Mission Society, RMG) arrived in Southwest Africa, its members tried to convert local African populations to Christianity. Though the RMG found some initial success with other communities, the Herero showed little interest in missionary activity from the start. I conclude that missionaries utilized religious nationalism as a justification to spread their influence in Africa. As a result, the RMG not only helped to lay the foundation for German colonial domination in 1884, but also emerged as the first European institution to establish a permanent locus of power in Southwest Africa.

²²⁸ “Deutschlands erster Kriegshafen,” *Die Gartenlaube – Illustriertes Familienblatt* 8 (1883): 136.

Chapter 2:

“Between *Heimat* and Heathens”: The Rhenish Mission and Religious Nationalism in Southwest Africa, 1842-1884

A Nation under God

In 1853, missionary Heinrich Schöneberg wrote a disparaging account about the Herero at his mission station in Otjikango. “Human emotion is still unknown to them,” he argued. “God is exterminating the Herero because of their doglike nature, sharing of wives, their sodomy, their incest and sins with animals. The Hottentots are the stick with which God is striking them.”²²⁹ Schöneberg’s comments were indicative of how a majority of Rhenish missionaries regarded the Herero in the period before German colonization. Indeed, of all the African communities in the region, the Herero were the least likely to convert to Christianity. This only started to change after Germany colonized Southwest Africa in 1884—forty-two years after the *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (Rhenish Mission Society, RMG) established its first mission station in the region.

After the RMG arrived in Southwest Africa in 1842, its members tried to convert local populations to Christianity. Though the RMG found some initial success with other communities, the Herero showed little interest in missionary activity from the start. Schöneberg’s negative account in 1853 was a reflection of this reality. His inability to spread God’s word to the “heathens of the unenlightened world” led him to regard the

²²⁹ Heinrich Schöneberg, *Berichte der RMG* 10 (16, 1853): 241. Also see George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 131.

Herero as a lost people.²³⁰ Schöneberg was not the only missionary to take such a hard stance against the Herero. Carl Hugo Hahn, the RMG's first missionary in Southwest Africa, wrote often about their resistance to Christianity. He eventually concluded in his diary that the Herero were a "less capable civilization" that would "likely die out" in the near future.²³¹

In his important book *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*, George Steinmetz argues that racial hatred was the basis for Rhenish missionaries' aversion to the Herero.²³² Though contemporary racism certainly influenced the attitudes of many Rhenish missionaries, it was not the only factor to shape their outlook on African peoples, however. What Steinmetz construes as racial hatred was also institutional frustration. The RMG had come to Southwest Africa to spread the gospel, only to achieve marginal success for its efforts. Over time, missionaries expressed their irritation in racist and nationalist language. In the process, they also changed their rationales for converting Africans to Christianity. This transition was most clearly marked by the development of what I call "religious nationalism."

Religious nationalism was a practice that integrated two seemingly distinct motives of Rhenish missionaries to establish a foothold in Southwest Africa. On the one hand, missionaries were motivated by a theological desire to convert Africans to

²³⁰ For a similar observation see Nils Ole Oremann, *Mission, Church and State Relations in South West Africa under German Rule (1884-1915)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999).

²³¹ Carl Hugo Hahn, *Tagbücher, 1837-1860 Diaries: A Missionary in Nama- and Damaraland, Vol. IV: 1837-1845*, ed. Brigitte Lau (Windhoek: Windhoek Archives, 1984), 929-930. For a detailed biography of Missionary Hahn see Wolfram Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters and their Implications on an Open and Closing Frontier: Central Namibia from the 1840s to 1905" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Columbia University, 2002), 56-64.

²³² Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 124-133.

Christianity. From its inception, the RMG's formal charge was religious in nature. It promoted an inclusive dogma that viewed all people as equal before God.²³³ Christianity was not "inherently limited and sovereign," but a *limitless* belief system that relied upon conversion, expansion, and evangelism.²³⁴ It did not thrive on the exclusion of others, but instead sought to expose the "light of Christianity" to a world of non-believers.²³⁵

On the other hand, Rhenish missionaries agreed that faith alone was not enough to guarantee Africans salvation. The RMG regarded Bible study and religious custom as vital components of Christianity, of course, but also believed that German culture was not a mutually exclusive entity. A thorough acceptance of the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of Mark also required western clothing, literacy, a rigid division of male and female social practice, and a diligent work ethic. In order to accept Christianity fully, Rhenish missionaries understood that Africans also needed to mirror Germans' example.

Religious nationalism emerged from these two divergent principles. It became the catalyst for the RMG's activities in Southwest Africa before the advent of the colonial period in 1884. When missionary Knudsen declared the Bethany people a "nation under God," in January 1847, he in effect demonstrated that Rhenish missionaries were capable of more than preaching the Christian gospel.²³⁶ Knudsen also asserted that evangelism could serve as a means to bring new peoples and territories under the RMG's domain.

²³³ Jeremy Best, "Godly, International, and Independent: German Protestant Missionary Loyalties before World War I," *Central European History* (forthcoming) and *Heavenly Fatherland: German Missionary Culture between Globalization and Nationalism* (manuscript under revision).

²³⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

²³⁵ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 32.

²³⁶ Missionary Knudsen, *Buch der Grund-Gesetze und Rechte*, cited in Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 48.

From a theological standpoint, religious nationalism was decidedly inconsistent with the RMG's pledged mission. After its formation in Barmen, Westphalia in September 1828, the RMG pledged to advocate works of charity and religious morality around the world.²³⁷ By 1884, its institutional aims had expanded in a variety of ways. In Southwest Africa, for example, the RMG owned a monopoly on all merchant activities.²³⁸ It controlled the sale of weapons and ammunition, limited access to cattle, and took advantage of African communities through trade contracts that favored the RMG.²³⁹

These economic agreements later proved so valuable that missionaries fought to maintain them even after Germany colonized Southwest Africa in 1884. In times of war, many Rhenish missionaries also supported violent reprisals against Herero and Namaqua populations, including imprisonment, beatings, and forced labor.²⁴⁰ Though these actions ran contrary to the RMG's official pledge of neutrality, individual missionaries found virtue in the conduct of the colonial *Schutztruppe*.

Numerous studies have shown how the RMG acted as a destructive agent in pre-colonial Southwest Africa.²⁴¹ I cite the instances above only to note the RMG's critical

²³⁷ L. von Rohden, *Geschichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft* (Barmen: D.B. Wiemann, 1888), 1.

²³⁸ Heinrich Loth, "Die Konzessionsperiode," in *Die christliche Mission in Südwestafrika: zur destruktiven Rolle der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft beim Prozess der Staatsbildung in Südwestafrika (1842-1895)* (Berlin: Akademie, 1963), 9.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

²⁴⁰ Stephen Morgan, "Shepherds of a Dying Flock: The Rhenish Mission, the Herero, and German Colonial Conquest in South-West Africa (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2014).

²⁴¹ Johannes L. De Vries, *Namibia-Mission und Politik (1880-1918). Der Einfluß des deutschen Kolonialismus auf die Missionsarbeit der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft im früheren Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Neukirchen-Vyuhn, 1980); Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 1999; Lothar Engel, *Kolonialismus und Nationalismus im deutschen Protestantismus in Namibia 1907-1945. Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen evangelischen Mission und Kirche im ehemaligen Kolonial- und Mandatsgebiet Südwestafrika* (Bern-Frankfurt am Main, 1976); Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," (Ph.D. Dissertation: Columbia University, 2002); Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (München: C.H. Beck, 2006); and Morgan, "Shepherds of a Dying Flock," 2014.

place in the formative history of German colonial rule. No other religious or merchant society enjoyed a more prominent role in Southwest Africa before 1884. No other institution provided German society with as vivid a portrayal of life overseas.²⁴² No other European organization could boast to have lived longer among African communities than the RMG.

Religious nationalism provided the basis for the RMG's dominant presence in Southwest Africa. If Africans failed to see the benefit of Christian civilization voluntarily, Rhenish missionaries felt justified to bring civilization to them in the form of churches, schools, farms, and marketplaces. *Christliche Kolonisation* (Christian Colonization), as missionary Hahn called this policy, was the precursor to German colonial rule. Though it was fundamentally a religious society, the RMG embraced German nationalism as a means to extend Protestantism to Southwest Africa's "heathen populations."²⁴³ Missionaries utilized nationalism and religion in accordance with one another to spread their religious influence and eventually Germany's presence in Africa. As a result, the RMG not only helped to lay the foundation for German colonial domination in 1884, but also emerged as the first European institution to establish a permanent locus of power in Southwest Africa.²⁴⁴

Religious Nationalism in a Pre-Colonial Empire

Religious nationalism differed from other contemporary national movements in several notable ways. For one, it was a far more inclusive enterprise than other forms of

²⁴² Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*, 2006.

²⁴³ Rhenish missionaries used "heathen" to describe peoples not yet exposed to Christianity. See Philipp Prein, "Guns and Top Hats: African Resistance in German Southwest Africa, 1907-1915," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, No. 1 (March 1994): 99-121.

²⁴⁴ Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 2002.

nationalism that centered on cultural, ethnic, or religious difference.²⁴⁵ Though religious nationalism still embraced German culture as a preeminent condition, it did provide Rhenish missionaries room to bring diverse peoples into the Christian fold.

Religious nationalism also afforded the RMG and not the state more control over affairs in Southwest Africa. Whether in Barmen or Windhoek, missionaries attempted to reshape the societies in which they lived “on the terrain of everyday practice,” according to a specific Christian and European model of godliness.²⁴⁶ In doing so, Rhenish missionaries advocated salvation that rested not only in faith, sexual morality, and abandonment of “amoral” practices, but also the adoption of German customs, traditions, and social practices.²⁴⁷ The RMG evolved into an influential social network that ran educational institutions, hospitals, businesses, mission stations, and trade centers in Southwest Africa.²⁴⁸

The RMG’s initial focus was the expansion of its Christian mission around the world. This reality, though disputed by some scholars, inspired Rhenish missionaries to travel far and wide, often without any guarantee of success or security.²⁴⁹ By the mid-nineteenth century, the steady rise of German nationalism in Europe led individual missionaries to embrace their identity as Germans in greater numbers, however. The

²⁴⁵ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 83-111 and Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

²⁴⁶ Marion Wallace, *A History of Namibia: From the Beginning to 1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 63.

²⁴⁷ Prein, “Guns and Top Hates,” 1994.

²⁴⁸ Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 108-109. Also see Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 53.

²⁴⁹ Horst Drechsler argued that the RMG was an imperialist society from its inception. The RMG, he asserted, used religion only as a cover to justify its true colonial motives. See Horst Drechsler, *“Let Us Die Fighting”: The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism (1884-1915)* (London: Zed Press, 1980).

unification of Germany only heightened this reaction.²⁵⁰ After 1871, Rhenish missionaries who embraced religious nationalism found an increased level of support from Barmen and the German public, especially from proponents of overseas colonialism.

Friedrich Fabri's *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien? Eine politisch-ökonomische Betrachtung* (Does Germany Need Colonies? A Political-Economic Analysis) offers a clear example of this development.²⁵¹ Fabri, the Chief Inspector of the RMG, argued in *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?* that a nation could survive only if it promoted a cultural, economic, and national mission in the world.²⁵² Unlike a majority of RMG missionaries, Fabri had no formal theological training and never served at a mission station overseas. What he lacked in personal experience, he made up in his extensive knowledge of British missionary activity, however. Fabri was convinced that the RMG could act as an essential agent for the German nation just as various other societies had for Great Britain. He concluded that Rhenish missionaries needed to make culture and religion necessary preconditions to German colonial expansion.²⁵³

The same year he published *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?*, Fabri founded the *Westdeutscher Verein für Kolonisation und Export* (West German Association for Colonization and Export). Four years later, he became vice-president of the *Deutscher Kolonialverein* (German Colonial Society), an unofficial organization that promoted German imperialism.²⁵⁴ Though Fabri never adopted the strident nationalist tone of the

²⁵⁰ Oermann, *Mission, Church, and State*, 68.

²⁵¹ Friedrich Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien? Eine politisch-ökonomische Betrachtung* (Gotha, 1879).

²⁵² Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?*, 107. Also see Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 31-32.

²⁵³ Klaus Bade, *Friedrich Fabri und der Imperialismus in der Bismarckzeit: Revolution-Depression-Expansion* (Freiburg: Atlantis Verlag, 1975), 68-79. Also see Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 31.

²⁵⁴ Bade, *Friedrich Fabri*, 102-105.

Alldeutscher Verband (Pan-German League) or the *Deutscher Flottenverein* (German Navy League) in his publications, he nevertheless believed that an overseas empire would benefit the RMG and German nation-state together.²⁵⁵

Though Fabri was the most outspoken advocate of religious nationalism, other prominent figures embraced missionary expansion in Southwest Africa in the immediate period before 1884.²⁵⁶ Gustav Warneck, founder of the *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift* (*General Missionary Journal*), for example, echoed Fabri's initiatives in a variety of instances.²⁵⁷ He championed the belief that dutiful Christians should preach and disseminate the gospel around the world. Over time, this view led him to become a vocal supporter of German colonial expansion. He also established the field of "missiology," a discipline that gave Warneck authority to scrutinize missionary work beyond the European continent.²⁵⁸

Religious nationalism also elevated the RMG in German society. Pro-colonial associations, in particular, regarded Rhenish missionaries as allies both at home and overseas.²⁵⁹ Germans often read their missionary *Berichte* with considerable interest, not for news about religious affairs, but instead to learn about and affirm their respective colonial fantasies.²⁶⁰ Catholic missions, nationalist clubs, anthropologic and ethnographic

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 80-84.

²⁵⁶ Not every Rhenish missionary promoted Fabri's nationalist views. Fabri, in fact, became such a vocal proponent of overseas conquest that officials in Barmen eventually forced to reign in position as chief inspector. See N.P. Moritzen, "Koloniale Konzepte der protestantischen Mission," in *Imperialismus und Kolonialmission*, Klaus Bade, 56.

²⁵⁷ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 32.

²⁵⁸ Dieter Becker and Andreas Feldtkeller, eds., *Es begann in Halle. . . Missionswissenschaft von Gustav Warneck bis heute* (Neuendettelsau: Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Koumene, 1997).

²⁵⁹ Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 23.

²⁶⁰ Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 79. Also see Conrad, *German Colonialism*, 24.

societies, and various military leagues all participated in this practice.²⁶¹ As a result, missionaries provided a wealth of information to people who wanted more information about the world beyond the European continent.

As future German colonists would discover after 1884, Rhenish missionaries were reliant on African communities to succeed in Southwest Africa.²⁶² This power dynamic proved unproblematic at first. In some districts, most especially in southern Damaraland, the RMG flourished, even if conversion rates remained low. Over time, the growing presence of German and other Europeans led Rhenish missionaries to embrace a more nationalist variant to their religious charge. This culminated in missionary Hahn's endorsement of *Christliche Kolonisation* in 1863.²⁶³ Religious nationalism allowed missionaries to embrace religious virtue and German nationalism simultaneously. As a result, the RMG not only helped lay the foundation for colonial rule, but also emerged as staunch supporters of the imperial project before and after 1884.

A Reluctant Imperialist: The Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft

The RMG was not the largest German-speaking mission society in the nineteenth century.²⁶⁴ And yet, its importance to German colonial expansion makes it among the most significant actors in the imperial narrative.²⁶⁵ A series of religious movements at the

²⁶¹ Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

²⁶² Vereinte Evangelische Mission (hereafter VEM)/Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft (hereafter RMG) 1.576: Hahn, Carl Hugo – Schriftwechsel aus der Nachlaß, Friedrich Fabri, "Brief an Bruder Carl Hugo Hahn," 28. May 1870, 75-84.

²⁶³ VEM/RMG 1.577a: Hahn, Carl Hugo (1841-1866) – In Kommagas, Windhoek, Otjikango, Othimbingue, Carl Hugo Hahn, "Abschrift eines Schreibens von C.H. Hahn," 5. February 1863, 21-22.

²⁶⁴ Horst Gründer, "Das deutsche Kolonialreich," in *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, Gründer (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012), 121.

²⁶⁵ L. von Rohden, *Geschichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft* (Barmen: D.B. Wiemann, 1888), 1.

²⁶⁵ Wolfram Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 40-42.

end of the eighteenth century inspired the formation of the RMG. German Pietism represented by Phillip Jakob Spener and Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, were among the most important.²⁶⁶ Spener and Zinzendorf believed that conversion was a central component of Christian life. They maintained that evangelism alone had the best potential to instigate works of charity and religious morality around the world.²⁶⁷

In that vein, the Elberfeld Missionary Society, Barmen Missionary Society, Wesel Missionary Society, and Cologne Missionary Society merged together to form the RMG on 23 September 1828.²⁶⁸ From the beginning, the RMG's management committee considered two aims paramount: training its own missionaries and spreading the gospel around the world.²⁶⁹ Missionary training was vital given the RMG's revivalist nature. The RMG's first large-scale project was the establishment of a teaching *Seminar* in Barmen. This institution later became the official training body for all Rhenish missionaries who sought appointments overseas.²⁷⁰ Entrants were required to have had practical and artisanal training upon entering the *Seminar*, in addition to a useful vocation that would be beneficial over the course of their missionary career.²⁷¹

²⁶⁶ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 29.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 29.

²⁶⁸ Gustav Menzel, *Die Rheinische Mission: Aus 150 Jahren Missionsgeschichte* (Wuppertal: Vereinte Evangelische Mission, 1978), 18-25.

²⁶⁹ The original founders of the RMG consisted of local Westphalian commercial and industrial elites. For an excellent overview see Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 40-51 and Rohden, *Geschichte der Rheinischen*, 15.

²⁷⁰ Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 42.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

Evangelism was the primary focus for a majority of missionaries who entered the RMG. After its establishment, the RMG focused on central Europe.²⁷² The advisory committee wanted to address the needs of local Europeans before allocating resources overseas. The *Hilfsvereine* (Mutual Aid Society) and *Kollektengesellschaften* (General Collection Agency) provided a majority of the financial support for these projects and remained influential throughout the nineteenth century.²⁷³

By 1839, the RMG had grown into the largest Protestant mission society in the German Confederation. It also enjoyed an emergent presence abroad, with four mission stations in the Cape Colony and one in Borneo.²⁷⁴ In total, 129 Rhenish missionaries were sent to Southwest Africa between 1842 and 1914.²⁷⁵ A majority of missionaries joined the RMG in their early twenties.²⁷⁶ Sixty-four came from an artisanal background, twenty-one worked as small landholders, seven were qualified theologians, five trained as accountants, three as civil servants, and two as teachers.²⁷⁷ Nearly all came from large families, and only a limited few enjoyed advanced education beyond the age of fourteen.²⁷⁸

²⁷² Edward Snyder, "Work not Alms: The Bethel Mission to East Africa and German Protestant debates of Eugenics, 1880-1933" (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Minnesota, 2013). Also see Rohden, "Rheinische Missionare in der Heimat," in *Geschichte der Rheinischen*, Rohden, 61-65.

²⁷³ These funding agencies primarily operated in the Rhineland and Westphalia and enjoyed a substantial following in these regions. See Rohden, *Geschichte der Rheinischen Missions*, 52.

²⁷⁴ Horst Gründer, *Christliche Mission und deutscher Imperialismus* (Paderborn, 1982), 27.

²⁷⁵ Before missionaries left Barmen, they were required to write a curriculum vitae detailing their family life, education, choice of profession, and personal conversion experience. These are rich primary sources that are housed at the VEM/RMG in Wuppertal, Germany. This section will rely heavily on these materials. For a detailed analysis of this source base see Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 33-44.

²⁷⁶ Deputation of the RMG/Barmen, *Allgemeine Vorbedingungen für die Aufnahme in das Missionshaus zu Barmen*, No. 6., Barmen 1907, in Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 38.

²⁷⁷ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 38.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

I list these details here to demonstrate the diverse make-up of the RMG at the time of its formation. Though its members came from a heterogeneous background, historians have traditionally argued that the RMG had imperialist objectives from the start.²⁷⁹ The Cold War, in particular, looms large in the historiography. Heinrich Loth and Horst Drechsler, for instance, claimed that Southwest Africa was a “classic example of how . . . a Christian missionary society over several decades [paved] the way for colonial subjugation.”²⁸⁰ Though the RMG eventually played a central role in the German colonial project, Loth and Drechsler too quickly dismiss the theological motives of individual Rhenish missionaries in their respective studies.

As Nils Oermann and Jeremy Best have shown, missionary service in Africa did not carry a high level of social or national prestige before 1884.²⁸¹ On the contrary, it meant working in solitary conditions and a hostile environment. It also put considerable limitations on one’s family life. As a result, national and colonial agendas had only a partial influence on missionary practice in the early 1840s. An individual’s devotion to Christianity and the necessity to spread God’s message were much more important. Missionary Carl Hugo Hahn personifies this argument in a number of ways.²⁸² His background reveals that religious conviction was always the basis for Rhenish missionaries to serve in Southwest Africa. Hahn’s experience, moreover, exposes how evangelism grew into a nationalist endeavor by the early 1860s.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*”, 18.

²⁸⁰ Loth, *Die christliche Mission in Südwestafrika*, 9; Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*,” 18.

²⁸¹ Best, *Heavenly Fatherland: German Missionary Culture between Globalization and Nationalism* (manuscript under revision).

²⁸² See his extensive five-volume *Tagebücher 1837-1860 Diaries: A missionary in Nama- und Damaraland*, ed. Brigitte Lau (Windhoek: Namibia Department of National Education, 1984).

²⁸³ Rohden, *Geschichte der Rheinischen*, 232-240.

He was born into a bourgeois German family in Lettland (Latvia) in 1818. After finishing his formal schooling, Hahn moved to Riga where he studied engineering at the Engineering School of the Russian Army. He remained in Riga until 1837, when he began to contemplate life as a Protestant missionary. In 1838, Hahn applied for admission into the RMG and moved to Elberfeld, Westphalia. After his ordination in 1841, the RMG charged Hahn the task of establishing a presence in Southwest Africa.²⁸⁴ Over the course of his thirty-year career, Hahn returned to Europe only twice. He became the longest serving Rhenish missionary in Africa.²⁸⁵

Before immigrating to Southwest Africa, Hahn's upbringing was similar to many European in the nineteenth century. He grew up speaking multiple languages, for example. As with a majority of contemporary Europeans, language did not serve as a barrier that distinguished one nationality apart from another.²⁸⁶ In a similar manner, when Hahn moved to Westphalia, his motives were almost purely professional. Later, after he

²⁸⁴ VEM/RMG 1.577a: Hahn, Carl Hugo (1841-1866) – In Kommagas, Windhoek, Otjikango, Othimbingue, Carl Hugo Hahn, "Betreff Hugo Hahn und die Wesleyaner auf Windhoek," 8 September 1844, 2-3.

²⁸⁵ Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 56.

²⁸⁶ Gary B. Cohen, Jeremy King, and Pieter M. Judson, for example, have all written on the fluidity of national identity in Central Europe before 1914. In many locales, it was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that large parts of the population accepted the nationalist argument that language demarcated distinct national differences between German, Czech, Hungarian, and French citizens. See Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008); Jeremy King, "The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond," in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, Nancy Wingfield and Maria Bucur, eds. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001); and Pieter M. Judson, "Nationalizing Rural Landscapes in Cisleithania, 1880-1914," in *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, Nancy Wingfield, ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003). For more scholarship on this point see Tara Zahra, "'The 'Minority Problem' and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands," *Contemporary European History* 17, No. 2 (2008): 137-165, Eagle Glassheim, "National Mythologies and Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Czechoslovak Germans in 1945," *Central European History* 33, No. 4 (2000): 463-486, and Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

moved to Southwest Africa, Hahn treated the experience as he did when he left Lettland. He wrote that “as far as God has commanded people to preach and live the Gospel to others, He has also given the *possibility* that they will *accept* and *live it*.”²⁸⁷ Hahn only cared to integrate *wilde Beölkerungen* (“wild populations”) into the Christian fold, not about national strength or devotion to the German people.²⁸⁸ As far as he was concerned, Southwest Africa’s “wild populations” were lost and in need of salvation. In his capacity as a servant of God, Hahn dedicated his life to spreading Protestantism in Africa.

Evidence of his strict commitment to spiritual practice is also present in his conversations with African communities. In a diary entry dated 8 July 1844, Hahn described a meeting he had with representatives from the Namaqua:

[Missionaries R. Haddy, J. Tindall, and I] asked the natives what gave them the right to sell Damaraland after they asked us whether we believed all places and resources [in Southwest Africa] belonged to us. We tried to make it clear that land and resources were not [our] focus, but instead the souls of men.²⁸⁹

Hahn made it clear that he was an outsider with no territorial claims or imperial demands. His only concern was to provide the Namaqua a means to accept and practice Christianity.

Hahn’s attitude toward nationalism changed the longer he was in Southwest Africa, however. By the early 1860s, he had come to regard it as a vital component of the Rhenish mission. At the same time, Rhenish missionaries also contended that a more visible missionary presence would curb the power of European merchants and

²⁸⁷ VEM/RMG 1.577a: Hahn, Carl Hugo (1841-1866) – In Kommagas, Windhoek, Otjikango, Othimbingue, Carl Hugo Hahn, “Abschrift eines Schreibens von C. Hugo Hahn an die Deputation,” 5. February 1863, 20-21. My emphasis.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 21.

²⁸⁹ VEM/RMG 1.577a: Hahn, Carl Hugo (1841-1866) – In Kommagas, Windhoek, Otjikango, Othimbingue, Carl Hugo Hahn, “Betreff Hugo Hahn und die Wesleyaner auf Windock,” 8. July 1844, 2.

prospectors.²⁹⁰ Hahn, in particular, was wary of their violent tendencies toward indigenous peoples. In February 1859, he singled out the English as especially dangerous:

In general I must say that from previous experience, the so-called educated English, being beyond the reach of law, are an extremely rude people and treat the natives like animals. They direct their lust toward women and girls, and rudeness toward men.²⁹¹

Two years before Hahn wrote this entry, missionary Johannes Rath made a similar claim. “The other whites, who [are] mostly British and have had a shorter time in Otjimbingue, deprave the natives, and not only set a bad example, but also, being already corrupt, [are] tempted by fornication and drunkenness,” he argued in the 1857 *Stationschronik* (Mission Station Chronicle).²⁹²

As these entries reveal, Southwest Africa’s first Rhenish missionaries regarded “non-Christian temptations” as a greater a threat to the RMG than any other factor.²⁹³ Missionaries also paid little regard to geo-political affairs during the RMG’s formative years in Southwest Africa. Only after it became apparent that their religious society faced sizable obstacles, including a hostile environment, limited resources, and an abundance of “non-Christian” elements, did missionaries begin to stress the inherent virtue of European culture. This represents a direct contrast to German colonial authorities in 1884. As opposed to the settler-colonialists who followed in their wake, Rhenish missionaries accepted that Africans were “*kulturfähig*” (“capable of civilization”).²⁹⁴ They simply

²⁹⁰ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 49.

²⁹¹ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 4, 1133.

²⁹² Johannes Rath, *Otjimbingwe: Stationschronik 1840-1924*, quoted in Hartmann, “Sexual Encounters,” 99.

²⁹³ VEM/RMG 1.577a: Hahn, Carl Hugo (1841-1866) – In Kommagas, Windhoek, Otjikango, Othimbingue, Carl Hugo Hahn, “Abschrift eines Schreibens von C. Hugo Hahn an die Deputation,” 5. February 1863, 20.

²⁹⁴ Wilhelm Schneider, *Die Kulturfähigkeit des Negers* (Frankfurt, 1885), 321-324. Also see Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*, 84.

needed guidance and instruction. An alliance of “kitchen and altar,” to quote Hahn, promised to stand as a bulwark against non-Christian temptations and lead to a general expansion of Christianity in Southwest Africa.²⁹⁵

The RMG in Namibia: From “National Agents” to “Agents of Nationalism”

In May 1842, missionaries Hahn, Kleinschmidt, and Knudsen crossed the Orange River into Southwest Africa.²⁹⁶ The expedition attracted little public interest.²⁹⁷ Hahn also described the event with little fanfare:

I rode in the afternoon after four o’clock with a Kookfonteiner who had brought Brother Knudsen home, and with a boy named Daniel. [...] My best student from the [mission] school in Komaggas, the said boy Daniel, in whose heart are the unmistakable traces of the Holy Spirit, I took as an assistant and associate because being alone is often too difficult and it is my intention to train him as a national agent for Damaraland.²⁹⁸

Though casual in tone, this passage nevertheless offers a clear depiction for how the first Rhenish missionaries in Namibia planned to spread the gospel in Southwest Africa. They believed that Africans were capable of experiencing God’s grace, as Hahn’s reference to Daniel clearly suggests. Hahn and his colleagues also contended that Africans had the skills to work as agents on behalf of the RMG.²⁹⁹ All these “lost souls” needed was an introduction to Christianity. The rest would unfold naturally as time moved forward.

The RMG had already extended its influence to the Cape Colony by the time Hahn, Kleinschmidt, and Knudsen crossed the Orange River into Southwest Africa. In 1811, missionary Heinrich Schmelen of the London Missionary School (LMS)

²⁹⁵ Carl Hugo Hahn, quoted in Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 50.

²⁹⁶ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, 77.

²⁹⁷ One notable exception is the London Missionary School (LMS), which assisted Hahn and Kleinschmidt before their journey north.

²⁹⁸ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, 77.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

established a mission station at Steinkopf (Kookfontein) near Southwest Africa's southern border. Over the next two decades, he founded several religious schools, and also planned multiple expeditions along Southwest Africa's coastline. After 1828, Schmelen served as an unofficial emissary for the RMG.³⁰⁰

His extensive experience in southern Africa also enabled Schmelen to meet regional leaders. This proved fruitful, as he was the first person to introduce Hahn to Captain Jonker Afrikaner of the Orlam Afrikaners, arguably the most powerful figure in southern Namaqualand.³⁰¹ Shortly after their introduction, Hahn and Afrikaner signed a peace treaty in December 1842.³⁰² In addition to formalizing relations between both sides, the treaty also granted the RMG permission to build a mission station near Windhoek.³⁰³ This station would eventually become one of the most important Rhenish centers in Southwest Africa.

The LMS made a profound impression on Hahn before he traveled to Southwest Africa. No other external organization had a stronger influence on his method of evangelism. While in Steinkopf, Hahn rejoiced in what he saw. Schmelen's work with local communities, in his view, had transformed Steinkopf into a Christian stronghold. Hahn was especially impressed by the LMS school system. He wrote in his diary about how the Germany system could produce a similar outcome in Southwest Africa. "One cannot believe what a great benefit it is to have a practical knowledge of the German

³⁰⁰ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 47.

³⁰¹ Lothar Engel, *Die Stellung der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft zu den politischen und gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen: Südwestafrikas und ihr Beitrag zur dortigen kirchlichen Entwicklung bis zum Nama-Herero-Aufstand 1904-1907* (Hamburg, 1972), 16.

³⁰² Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, 96-98.

³⁰³ Ibid.

school system. Mere theory is not enough,” he wrote.³⁰⁴ Though “the wanderings [Umherziehen] of the people” were a potential obstacle, Hahn felt strongly that mission schools were necessary to accomplish “anything decent and lasting in the community.”³⁰⁵

Education and language instruction became the foundation of the RMG’s evangelical work in Southwest Africa. Hahn wrote at length about schools and their potential in the region. On 23 June 1842, for example, he praised the mission school in Bethanie (Damaraland), which Schmelen had initially erected in 1814. “It draws more and more hungry souls. Our school, which we hold every day in the open air, has about 70 students.”³⁰⁶ On another occasion, he celebrated the completion of a school that could serve several hundred children at one time:

Our schools, namely the men’s school directed by Kleinschmidt, the women’s school directed by Sister Kleinschmidt and the children’s school directed by me and [Brother Jan] Bam include 280 to 300 students, of which about 170 children are between four and ten years old. The zeal [Eifer] of the school is extraordinarily great.³⁰⁷

Hahn’s only regret was the severe lack of supplies, especially books and paper tablets.³⁰⁸ In spite of material shortages, he still regarded these initial achievements as substantial. By the end of 1842, the mission school at Bethanie reached its maximum capacity of students.³⁰⁹

Bethanie was not the only location where the RMG’s first efforts bore fruit. In 1845, Kleinschmidt and Schmelen traveled to Glenelg Bath, a small settlement in central

³⁰⁴ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, 80.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 89.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 241.

Namaland, to found a new mission station. After his arrival, Kleinschmidt renamed the settlement Rehoboth and started to baptize the local inhabitants. Before the end of that same year, Kleinschmidt converted a total of eleven adults and six children. Among them was Willem Swartbooi, Chief of the Red Nation, as well as his brother and father.³¹⁰

These numbers grew steadily for the remainder of the 1840s. In 1846, Kleinschmidt received permission from Swartbooi to build a “spacious new church” with the capacity “to hold several hundred people.”³¹¹ After its completion, the *Jungfrauverein* (Young Women’s League) in Cape Town donated a large bell for the church’s steeple. This was a momentous occasion for the RMG. Indeed, according to Heinrich Vedder, Rehoboth’s church bell was likely the very first to chime on Sundays in Southwest Africa.³¹²

As a result of the high conversion rate, Rehoboth’s school system flourished. By 1849, Rhenish schools in Rehoboth catered to over 150 students, in addition to forty girls who trained as seamstresses.³¹³ Like Hahn, Kleinschmidt believed that Africans should assume leadership roles in the church. To meet this goal, he arranged for Swartbooi’s son to attend school in Cape Town.³¹⁴ Swartbooi’s son later became teachers as a result of this experience.³¹⁵

Kleinschmidt also prepared lessons for people who were unable to attend school and Sunday service. The mission society at Rehoboth became an exemplar for all other

³¹⁰ VEM/RMG 1.573: Kleinschmidt, Franz Heinrich (1812-1864)-(1840-1842)-im Kapland; 1843-1864 in Kommagas, Windhoek, Rehoboth, Otjimbingue.

³¹¹ Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 242.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid., 243.

³¹⁴ VEM/RMG 1.573: Kleinschmidt, Franz Heinrich (1812-1864)-(1840-1842)-im Kapland; 1843-1864 in Kommagas, Windhoek, Rehoboth, Otjimbingue. Also see Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 243.

³¹⁵ Also see Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 243.

Rhenish stations in Southwest Africa. Kleinschmidt regarded it as a major success. More importantly, he believed that Rehoboth was only the first step.³¹⁶ By the early 1850s, evangelical work spread to other neighboring settlements, thanks in large part to the donations that missionaries received from local converts.

Aside from school enrollment numbers, the RMG measured progress by the rate of religious conversions. Rhenish missionaries initially had more success in Namaland, given its proximity to the Cape Colony and local groups' familiarity with the LMS. Early on, missionaries also had reason to hope that their religious message would gain traction in the north as well. After Jonker Afrikaner and Herero leaders signed the "Christmas Peace" on 24 December 1842, Hahn was confident that Windhoek would become a new Christian stronghold.³¹⁷ "Never in my life have I experienced such a Christmas evening. [The peace] was the greatest gift that could be given to us," he wrote in his diary.³¹⁸

Hahn crossed into Damaraland the following year. He ventured as far north as Windhoek and Otjimbingue. In October 1844, he and Kleinschmidt founded the first Christian mission station in Damaraland near Otjikango (Okahandja), which they named Neubarmen (Gross Barmen).³¹⁹ "The people are exceptionally friendly and accommodate us with wild onions [*uintjies*] and sour milk. The name of the [local] captain is Kasupi," Hahn wrote.³²⁰ Afrikaner, he continued, "has done much good among his people and

³¹⁶ VEM/RMG 1.573: Kleinschmidt, Franz Heinrich (1812-1864)-(1840-1842)-im Kapland; 1843-1864 in Kommagas, Windhoek, Rehoboth, Otjimbingue, Franz Heinrich Kleinschmidt, "Bericht an Bruder Eggert," 16. August 1854, 407.

³¹⁷ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, 96-98.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 198.

³²⁰ Ibid., 194.

provided a good role model.”³²¹ By the end of 1850, nearly 280 students had enrolled in German language and religious classes.³²² “The zeal at the school is great,” Hahn remarked proudly in his diary.³²³ As a result of this progress, Frau Kleinschmidt was invited to open a school for girls based on the model in Rehoboth. For the RMG, the basis upon which a Christian community could grow was in place.

These early triumphs proved token victories in an otherwise hostile environment, however. Initial cooperation between Herero and Namaqua leaders deteriorated steadily after the “Christmas Peace” of 1842. Though his contributions to the RMG had proven invaluable, Afrikaner was unwilling to provide Rhenish missionaries further access to Herero communities after 1851. Renewed hostilities between Herero and Namaqua made the RMG’s situation even more perilous.³²⁴ Though missionaries faced no real physical danger, the success of their evangelical charge hung in the balance.³²⁵ War meant that Hahn and Kleinschmidt could affect very little on the ground. The Herero, moreover, started to develop an extreme aversion to the Rhenish mission. This led to a sharp decrease in the overall conversion rate.

These factors led Hahn and other missionaries to develop a general contempt for Herero peoples the longer he stayed in Damaraland. Over time, Hahn focused more of his attention on the “negative” qualities of Africans than their religious potential. “The natives,” he wrote, “steal one thing after another, today, for example, a rod of iron and a large round metal bowl, the latter of [the] Kaspupis people. Katjari sent messengers after

³²¹ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, quoted in Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 243.

³²² Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 243.

³²³ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, quoted in Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 243.

³²⁴ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 48.

³²⁵ The lone exception occurred in 1853 when Afrikaner razed Otjimbingue to the ground, forcing Missionary Rath to flee. See Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 63.

the thief, which meant that we later received the bowl. The piece of iron was found buried in the sand.”³²⁶ Apart from acts of thievery, Hahn also found Herero culture distasteful. In October 1845, he drafted a two-page report on the “*Charakter der Ovaherero*” (“The Character of the Ovaherero”) for Rhenish officials in Barmen:

The Ovaherero appear to have more in common with the French than any other nation in Europe: garrulous, trifling, laughing, quarrelsome, boastful, crawling at a moment in the highest rage and anger in others; brave where there is no resistance. All want to attack, to learn everything, but are especially lacking in stamina. [If] the Ovaherero [had] journalists, then their newspapers would surely bear the character of the French, full of lies, bragging and false rumors. They fornicate more than almost all other African people, as the French over all other Europeans. In vanity they are second to none.³²⁷

Though this passage suggested that Hahn resented the Herero, it is important to note that he never once invoked racial superiority as a reason for his contempt. His remarks were instead driven by what he perceived to be lewd and offensive behavior. Like the French, the Herero could still reach salvation. They just needed their character “purified and sanctified through Grace.”³²⁸

The problem for Hahn, however, was that few Herero were interested in “purification.”³²⁹ Although missionaries had cultivated good relationships with local communities, only a handful of individuals actually converted to Christianity during the RMG’s first years in Southwest Africa. Indeed, there were only three Otjiherero-speaking converts in all of Damaraland before 1871.³³⁰ Most of the people who gathered at

³²⁶ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. 1, 194.

³²⁷ Ibid., 243.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ For an extensive description of the RMG during this period see Loth, *Christliche Mission*, 46-51.

³³⁰ Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 63.

Neubarmen comprised Africans interested only by the prospect of food and work.³³¹

These realities took an especially heavy toll on Hahn. In March 1854, his mental state had changed radically from ten years earlier:

This whole period from [March] 15th I have been physically and mentally ill, but the latter more. My mind is depressed and broken and in constant battle, with only a few lucid moments. Although I have felt advances by the devil, I cannot say that I feel abandoned by the Lord. My path, my obligation, [however] is dark.³³²

In spite of his depression, Hahn remained loyal to his religious duties. He prepared the first Otjiherero grammar book for publication while on temporary leave in Europe, and moved to construct a mission station in Ovamboland upon his return to Southwest Africa in 1857.³³³

The scale of Hahn's transformation is difficult to capture. In a relatively short period of time, he had lost his purely evangelical motives. Though he remained faithful to his biblical charge, as his diary suggests, Hahn's determination to convert Africans became more of a personal obsession the longer he was in Southwest Africa. His commitment became so strong, in fact, that it took the form of a new evangelical doctrine that he called *christliche Kolonisation* (Christian Colonization).³³⁴

Hahn's stated goal was the creation of an autonomous Christian society centered on trade, enterprise, and European culture. "Civilizing the wild barbarians," he wrote in

³³¹ Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 63; Loth, *Christliche Mission*, 48; Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 59.

³³² Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. III, 727.

³³³ Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 58-59.

³³⁴ VEM/RMG 1.577a: Hahn, Carl Hugo (1841-1866) – In Kommagas, Windhoek, Otjikango, Othimbingue, Carl Hugo Hahn, "Abschrift eines Schreibens von C. Hugo Hahn an die Deputation," 5. February 1863, 18-24.

1863, “cannot be achieved by preaching the gospel alone.”³³⁵ “An individual missionary living an exemplary life is not an adequate approach either. Through our current practices they still have not learned how to build houses, sew dresses, and build gardens. It is here that Christian morality, trade and enterprise are needed.”³³⁶ The meager conversion rate threatened the legitimacy of the RMG’s presence in Southwest Africa.³³⁷ If Southwest Africa was ever going to enter the “civilized world,” Hahn concluded, the RMG needed a larger presence in the region.

Hahn’s new approach was emblematic of the growing influence of religious nationalism in the 1860s. Rhenish missionaries became increasingly convinced that a larger commitment would lead to better results. “The natives understand and value culture, [even] before they are capable of grasping the Gospel and use of education,” Hahn wrote while stationed in Otjikango.³³⁸ “A national orientation, he continued, will also assist in combating the anarchic conditions that they face, [and] it would be in [their] interest to respect our position.”³³⁹

Along with the Herero, Rhenish missionaries viewed European merchants as the most dangerous “anarchic” factors in Southwest Africa. The Walvis Bay Mining Company (WBMC) founded the region’s first large trading center in 1856.³⁴⁰ Though it never became an economic success, it still helped to change the demographic make-up of central Southwest Africa. It drew, in particular, large numbers of European men to

³³⁵ Ibid., 21.

³³⁶ Ibid., 21-22.

³³⁷ For a detailed list of religious conversions in Namibia see Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 129.

³³⁸ VEM/RMG 1.577a: Hahn, Carl Hugo (1841-1866) – In Kommagas, Windhoek, Otjikango, Othimbingue, Carl Hugo Hahn, “Abschrift eines Schreibens von C. Hugo Hahn an die Deputation,” 5. February 1863, 21-22.

³³⁹ Ibid., 22.

³⁴⁰ Hartmann, “Sexual Encounters,” 79.

Damaraland. By the 1860s, their presence began to threaten the RMG's moral authority. Merchants also engaged in various acts of sexual predation against local communities and were also violent toward African peoples.

Rhenish missionaries had long feared the negative impact of other Europeans in Africa. Long before the WBMC appeared in Walvis Bay, Hahn had written extensively about the danger of white non-Christian elements in Southwest Africa:

Sunday evening, 25 June 1842 was a day of judgment. The seducer of Wimmer's daughter, a European [named] Karl Meyer, was referred to on this occasion as a troublemaker by the community. A missionary should never tolerate Whites to be among his heathen parish [*Heidengemeinde*], because they would soon gain the upper hand.³⁴¹

Incidents like this, together with the WBMC, prompted the RMG to found a Christian trade network.³⁴²

In 1870, Rhenish authorities inaugurated the *Missions-Handelsgesellschaft* (Mission Trade Society, MHG).³⁴³ Missionaries planned to shield Africans from European traders, and to secure a share of goods and profits for the RMG.³⁴⁴ The MHG also encouraged the local communities to plant gardens, wear cloth clothing, and exchange their traditional shelters for European-style housing.³⁴⁵ Though missionaries had always hoped to spread "civilization" through religion, the MHG introduced a financial incentive to the operation. With few exceptions, a majority of Rhenish

³⁴¹ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. I, 89-90.

³⁴² Dag Henrichsen, *Herrschaft und Alltag im vorkolonialen Zentralnamibia: Das Herero- und Damaraland im 19. Jahrhundert* (Windhoek: Basler Afrika Bibliographien Namibia Resource Center, 2011), 167-168.

³⁴³ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 49.

³⁴⁴ Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 91.

³⁴⁵ Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 127.

missionaries accepted the merits of this strategy.³⁴⁶ As the 1865 *Konferenz-Protokoll* noted, “It will take generations before [Africans] begin to understand Christianity and appropriate it for themselves, even after they have been baptized.”³⁴⁷

The MHG also had an important role in the growth of religious nationalism in the region. Indeed, as historian Wolfram Hartmann has noted, the initiative to convert the RMG into a merchant society resulted in the transition of Damaraland “into a thoroughly German settlement.”³⁴⁸ Missionary Carl Gotthilf Büttner, who first arrived in Otjimbingue in 1873, for example, argued that missionaries should market German imports exclusively. He believed that it would be possible “to supplant the English trade marks” and provide for “the introduction of civilized trading practices” in Damaraland.³⁴⁹

The adoption of this program represented a clear break from previous efforts to convert African communities in Southwest Africa. Though the RMG always regarded Christianity and European culture as congruent, Rhenish missionaries started to embrace their German identity more and more by the 1860s. They started, for instance, to incorporate German symbols and national celebrations into the fabric of their Christians teachings. The assumption of a German national identity provided Rhenish missionaries an indirect way to exercise more political authority.³⁵⁰ In the wake of German unification

³⁴⁶ The exact cause of Hahn’s resignation in 1872 remains a mystery. We can speculate, however, that the RMG’s choice to concentrate on economic development and trade in Namibia played an important role in his decision. For more on Hahn’s departure see Hartmann, “Sexual Encounters,” 62-63.

³⁴⁷ “Ein Konferenz-Protokoll aus Hereroland,” 4. December 1865, quoted in Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 127-128.

³⁴⁸ Hartmann, “Sexual Encounters,” 106.

³⁴⁹ Carl Büttner, *Das Hinterland von Walfischbai und Angra Pequena. Eine Übersicht der Kulturarbeit deutscher Missionare und der seitherigen Entwicklung des deutschen Handels* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter’s Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1884), 280. Also see Hartmann, “Sexual Encounters,” 106.

³⁵⁰ It is important not to overstate this point, however. Rhenish missionaries remained at the mercy of African communities well into the formal colonial period. See Theo Sundermeier, “Die christliche Mission

in 1871, religious nationalism emerged into the operational catalyst behind every RMG decision in Southwest Africa.

After their arrival in 1842, Rhenish missionaries focused on the construction of churches, mission stations, and schools to spread Christianity. They viewed these “representations of European civilization,” as Hahn referred to them, as necessary preconditions to save the souls of Africans in Southwest Africa.³⁵¹ Missionaries also endeavored to set good examples in their own lives. They took great pains to erect European-style homes, cultivate gardens, and promote family life. Such were the conditions of the path toward salvation. An alliance of “kitchen and altar,” the RMG hoped, would usher in a new Christian era in southern Africa.

This strategy initially yielded positive results, particularly in the south and other areas where the LMS had introduced local communities to Protestantism decades earlier. Further north, however, the RMG continued to have difficulties with the Herero. In the face of these setbacks, Hahn and other Rhenish missionaries looked to more aggressive methods of conversion, most notably *christliche Kolonisation*. Though missionaries still believed that Africans were “capable of civilization,” they nevertheless came to the conclusion that the RMG needed a stronger presence to evangelize the population. Religious nationalism acted as both cause and method to propagate Christianity.

in Südwestafrika. Zum gleichnamigen Buch von H. Loth,” in *Evangelische Missions-Zeitschrift* (1964): 29-33.

³⁵¹ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 50.

“Throne and Altar”: Religious Nationalism and the Genesis of German Colonial Rule

In 1869, the RMG had 150 Herero members registered in Damaraland.³⁵² By 1876, however, that number had grown to 983. Seven years later, the number had grown to 1448.³⁵³ The steady growth in membership was largely in response to programs started by Hahn and other missionaries during the early 1860s. Though a majority of African leaders continued to express unwillingness to convert to Christianity, many started to send their children to churches and enrolled them in the *Augustineum*, an RMG institute devoted to German language and religious instruction. Given the significant hardships Rhenish missionaries faced after their initial arrival in Damaraland, leaders in Barmen viewed these developments as positive signs.³⁵⁴ Some communities also started to produce crops and look to missionaries for guidance on a variety of topics.

These advances were decisive for two distinct reasons. First, the extension of Christianity enhanced the RMG’s influence throughout Southwest Africa.³⁵⁵ A new peace accord between Herero Chief Maharero and Jan Jonker and the emergent mission in Namaqualand together helped to transform the RMG into a robust regional authority by the 1870s.³⁵⁶ Second, this newfound power coincided with the unification of Germany and establishment of the MHG. Though it was a nationalist-oriented trade society, Rhenish missionaries operated the MHG in spite of their stated evangelical goals.

³⁵² Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 109.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 70; Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 109.

³⁵⁵ Heinrich Loth overstates the political influence of the RMG during this period, going so far as to claim that missionaries paralyzed African initiatives and paved the way for German colonization. Missionaries certainly exercised more authority when compared to earlier periods, but they still remained a subservient body to Namibian communities. For more see Sundermeier, “Die christliche Mission in Südwestafrika,” 29-33 and Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 52.

³⁵⁶ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 53.

At the same time, Friedrich Fabri also established the *Missions-Handels-Aktiengesellschaft* (Mission Trade Stock Company, MHAG), an action that not only broadened the RMG's authority, but also Germany's presences overseas.³⁵⁷ A passionate supporter of colonialism, Fabri believed that the MHAG could blunt British interests in Southwest Africa. The MHAG imported firearms, foodstuffs, alcohol, and tobacco, and exported cattle and various exotic goods for German consumers in Europe.³⁵⁸ The expanding missionary network and national trade enterprise together exposed German society to Southwest Africa at the precise moment when Germany consolidated into a united state. These trade societies demonstrate the rising power of religious nationalism in the immediate period before German colonial expansion in 1884.

After the death of Jonker Afrikaner in 1861, Jan Jonker assumed leadership of the Orlam in 1863. His transition to power did not stabilize relations between Rhenish missionaries and Orlam Afrikaners, however. Jonker was suspicious of the RMG's intentions for the Herero. As a result, he often raided Rhenish mission stations, sacked churches and schools, and attacked Herero communities in southern Damaraland.³⁵⁹ In 1863, Hahn accused Jonker of "disgusting hypocrisy" and that he had an "inner and exterior decay."³⁶⁰ Jonker's actions against the RMG only exacerbated these sentiments. Since this atmosphere was hardly conducive to evangelism, many Rhenish missionaries looked to mediate a new era of peace between Herero and Orlam Afrikaners.

It is important to note that Herero and Orlam Namaqua communities had their own interests that were entirely independent of the RMG. Previous examinations of this

³⁵⁷ Bade, *Friedrich Fabri*, 108.

³⁵⁸ Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 109.

³⁵⁹ Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 52.

³⁶⁰ Hahn, *Tagebücher, 1837-1860*, Vol. IV, 1131.

period have generally ignored this reality.³⁶¹ Jonker, for example, wanted to extend his paramount chief status to the entirety of Southwest Africa. Europeans and Africans regarded him as the most consequential leader in southern and central Namibia. As a result, he sought pledges of support from all other African communities. The Herero, meanwhile, desired more sovereignty in the areas surrounding Windhoek and Okahandja, as well as an end to the violent raids on their cattle herds.³⁶²

Rhenish missionaries strengthened their position in the region once they helped mediate a peace between both sides. Known as the Okahandja agreement, the peace ushered in a new era of stability in Southwest Africa. It declared Jonker the paramount chief of Damaraland and recognized the Herero communities as independent peoples.³⁶³ The RMG managed to remain neutral throughout this process.³⁶⁴ In doing so, Rhenish missionaries assumed a veneer of political ambivalence, and solidified their role in pre-colonial society.³⁶⁵

The RMG extended its network to Gibeon and the Witbooi Namaqua during this period. Missionary Johannes Olpp established the first mission station at Gibeon in 1868.³⁶⁶ Like many of his predecessors, Olpp regarded the Witbooi as equal to Europeans in a religious context. He considered the term “Hottentot” a gross and prejudicial label,

³⁶¹ See Heinrich Loth, *Die christliche Mission in Südwestafrika* and Heinrich Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*.

³⁶² Wallace, *A History of Namibia*, 72.

³⁶³ Article 2 read as follows: “Die Herero sind eine selbständige Nation und haben so gut wie alle andern Nationen das Recht, Missionare unter sich zu haben, ihr Land zu besitzen und zu bearbeiten, ebenso wie auch der Stamm der Afrikaner ein Recht dazu hat, der bereits um einen Missionar gebeten hat.” For the entire text see Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 472-473.

³⁶⁴ Vedder, *Das alte Südwestafrika*, 472 and Oermann, *Mission, Colony and State*, 52.

³⁶⁵ A second treaty signed in September 1870 stands as a further indicator that Rhenish missionaries acted as influential operators during this period.

³⁶⁶ Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 119.

and took great aims to expand the role of the church throughout Gibeon.³⁶⁷ Over time, Olpp developed a strong relationship with Hendrik Witbooi, Chief Moses Witbooi's eldest son. Hendrik Witbooi became a devout member of the RMG mission station at Gibeon, and professed to follow the example of Jesus Christ in all of his endeavors.³⁶⁸ Witbooi later justified his campaign against the German colonial administration in the early 1890s on religious grounds.

In the north, too, the situation looked better for the RMG after the Okahandja agreement. Missionary Kleinschmidt, in particular, was especially confident. He had always considered the Herero a "handsome" people.³⁶⁹ With the peace in place, Kleinschmidt now had a chance to spread Protestantism in Damaraland. Though Herero leaders remained hesitant to convert to Christianity, Rhenish missionary officials nevertheless made significant strides between 1870-1880. What had been a vulnerable mission society had evolved into an influential power broker. Though its growth does not necessarily constitute a "*Sieg der Mission*," as Heinrich Loth called it, the RMG had at least reached a point of strength and relevance in Southwest Africa³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Olpp, "Zur Charakteristik der Namas (Namaquas)," *Berichte der RMG* 32 (3, 1876): 78, quoted in Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 119.

³⁶⁸ Hendrik Witbooi, 20. Witbooi an Olpp," 3. January 1890, in *Afrika den Afrikanern! Aufzeichnungen eines Nama-Häuptlings aus der Zeit der deutschen Eroberung Südwestafrikas 1884 bis 1894*, Hendrik Witbooi (München: JHW Dietz), 73-77.

³⁶⁹ Kleinschmidt, "Aus Kleinschmidt's Tagebuch," *Berichte der RMG* 3 (6, 1846): 44, quoted in Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 128.

³⁷⁰ Loth, *Die christliche Mission*, 80.

In 1870, Thure Johan Gustav Een, a Swedish merchant from the Cape Colony, went to work as a trade apprentice with Axel Wilhelm Eriksson in Damaraland.³⁷¹ After his arrival, he noted how the region had suddenly taken on a German appearance:

Already before I had undertaken the journey to Ovamboland, I had learnt through the newspapers from the Cape of the great war between France and Germany. All whites who were not of German nationality wished the French army to be victorious and we awaited news from the front with intense interest. When the victories of the German forces became known, the Germans, in their usual manner of course, started bragging and blustering and behaving arrogantly. Of course these wonderful victories with all their bloody deeds, which have taken the European civilization a step backward, also had to be observed and celebrated with German thoroughness here in the wilderness.³⁷²

Een's description offers a critical perspective on how the RMG received information about the Franco-Prussian War. He noted how German nationals exhibited a nationalist attitude, and also cited Hahn as a chief proponent of these displays. "To begin with, Mr. Hahn, the High Priest of the missionaries, took down the mission flag, a red cross on a white background, and raised the flag of the North German Federation instead. The holy sign of the cross had to be replaced by the standard of '*das grosse Vaterland*'.³⁷³ Een concluded his entry with a reference to this moment. "The common symbol of peace of the Celestial Empire *for all peoples* had to give way to the German nation's flag of victory," he wrote.³⁷⁴

The RMG laid the foundation for Germany's colonial conquest in 1884, but the RMG used German nationalism as a means to evangelize in Namibia, as opposed to the

³⁷¹ Thure Johan Gustav Een, *Memories of several years in south western Africa*, trans. Jalmar Rudner (Windhoek: Namibia Scientific Society, 2004), 14.

³⁷² Een, *Memories*, 14, quoted in Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 107.

³⁷³ Een, *Memories*, 14, quoted in Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 107.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. My emphasis.

other way around. Many certainly welcomed the idea of a strong German nation, as Hahn, Kleinschmidt, and Een's diary entries all showed, but German nationalism did not drive their motives exclusively. Instead, they deployed it as a tool to better the position of the RMG. If the state needed to intervene to help missionaries "save" Africans, then so be it. By 1884, "throne" and "altar" had become part of the same project.

After the Franco-Prussian War, for instance, missionaries celebrated German holidays with fireworks and extended church services.³⁷⁵ *Sedantag* was among the largest annual festivals. Hahn integrated young Herero children into the fanfare by teaching them to march and to reenact battles.³⁷⁶ Missionaries also passed out patriotic memorabilia to African communities. On every notable diplomatic or national occasion, Rhenish missionaries flew the Imperial German flag. By the 1870s, most Europeans regarded Damaraland and Namaqualand as German enclaves. The RMG used the power of the state to enhance its own place in the region.

Fabri also took the opportunity to declare Rhenish missionaries as national agents of the German state.³⁷⁷ This served two purposes: to secure an independent locus of power in a German colonial state, and to warn other international powers that the RMG was a German institution. Fabri's effort went a long way to nationalize the work of Rhenish missionaries. While Fabri's message was more imperial in tone, Rhenish missionaries started to operate more and more as German agents in the region. If a stronger German presence meant that missionaries could preach without fear of violence and regional

³⁷⁵ Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters," 108.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 107.

³⁷⁷ Fabri, "Brief an die Auswärtiges-Amt," 3 June 1869, quoted in Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 55.

conflict, then the decision was simple. Rhenish missionaries valued security, and the state could secure it for them.

While Fabri reminded missionaries of their religious charge, he attempted to influence the larger imperial project:

For the mission clearly a new, significant era has begun due to the fact that a strong and unified Germany has recently started to take its share in the ever expanding and final race of the European nations to dominate the world, in other words: that Germany starts to claim colonial possessions.³⁷⁸

Fabri left little doubt about his position with respect to German overseas expansion.

Rhenish missionaries, however, only supported these initiatives so long as the sanctity of their theological mission remained intact. Aware of their status, some missionaries appealed to the German government in national terms, but for institutional purposes.

Missionary Büttner's report to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in June 1885 exemplified this argument perfectly.³⁷⁹ Büttner not only expressed the RMG's vital function to Germany's colonial program, but also its successful record in during the pre-colonial period:

I have made an official display to [Mah]arero regarding the upcoming visit of German special commissars to Okahandja. [I] felt that the delicate questions on the etiquette of the Herero could reset [*zurückgesetzt*] relations A large seal to [Mah]arero has since been prepared, which is written in both Herero and German languages and will be presented to the King of the Herero.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ Fabri, *Berichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft*, quoted in Oermann, *Mission, Church and State*, 57.

³⁷⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1468: Expedition des Pastors Dr. Karl Gotthilf Büttner, Büttner, "Brief an die Bismarck," 26. June 1885, 74-79.

³⁸⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1468: Expedition des Pastors Dr. Karl Gotthilf Büttner, Büttner, "Brief an die Bismarck," 26. June 1885, 75-76.

Büttner's message was clear. Only RMG missionaries had the expertise, linguistic ability, and trust of local populations to make German colonial rule a possibility. In his capacity as a political liaison, Büttner strengthened Germany's claim to Southwest Africa. He also demonstrated that the RMG would continue to work as an independent entity, regardless of German colonial politics.

Religious nationalism was at its heart a catalyst for the RMG to increase its authority in Southwest Africa. After German unification, Rhenish missionaries embraced nationalism as a means to support the state and RMG simultaneously. Though some missionaries embraced their German identity more than others, Friedrich Fabri most notably, their nationalism was still rooted in a religious purpose. The RMG sought peace and security in the region above all other things. In the end, German colonial ambition in Europe promised to accomplish that goal. Rhenish missionary support of Germany's annexation of Southwest Africa was never an a priori given, but rather an outgrowth of a religious-national program that benefited both agendas equally.

Conclusion

Germany's relationship with Southwest Africa has a long history. It did not begin with the genocide of the Herero and Namaqua in 1904.³⁸¹ Neither did it start in 1894, when large numbers of German colonists began immigrating to southern Africa in search of adventure and a fresh start. It even predates the arrival of Adolf Lüderitz, the prospecting tobacco merchant who purchased Angra Pequena (*Lüderitzbucht*) from

³⁸¹ Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, eds., *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* (Berlin: C.H. Links, 2004).

Captain Josef Frederiks in May 1883.³⁸² To find the origin of Germany's foothold in Africa, one must go back to the pre-colonial era, specifically to a non-state actor whose presence in Southwest Africa preceded the unification of the *Kaiserreich* by twenty-nine years. When missionaries Carl Hugo Hahn, Franz Heinrich Kleinschmidt, and Hans Christian Knudsen entered Klein Namaqualand in May 1842, they did so as representatives of the first European institution that sought to establish a permanent locus of power in Southwest Africa.³⁸³

After the RMG arrived in Southwest Africa in 1842, its members tried to convert local populations to Protestantism. Though the RMG found some initial success with other communities, the Herero showed little interest in missionary activity from the start. Their inability to spread God's word to the "heathens of the unenlightened world" led Rhenish missionaries to regard the Herero as a lost people. Though contemporary racism certainly influenced their attitudes to a degree, it was not the only factor to shape their outlook on African peoples. Institutional frustration also played a prominent role.

The RMG had come to Southwest Africa to spread the gospel, only to achieve marginal success for its efforts. Over time, missionaries expressed their irritation in racist and nationalist language. In the process, they also changed their rationales for converting Africans to Christianity. In this manner, religious nationalism gave rise to *Christliche*

³⁸² Heinrich Loth, "Die Konzessionsperiode," in *Die christliche Mission in Südwestafrika: zur destruktiven Rolle der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft beim Prozess der Staatsbildung in Südwestafrika (1842-1895)*, Heinrich Loth (Berlin: Akademie, 1963), 97.

³⁸³ Carl Hugo Hahn, *Tagbücher, 1837-1860 Diaries: A Missionary in Nama- and Damaraland, Part I: 1837-1845*, ed. Brigitte Lau (Windhoek: Windhoek Archives, 1984), 77-78. For a detailed biography of Missionary Hahn see Wolfram Hartmann, "Sexual Encounters and their Implications on an Open and Closing Frontier: Central Namibia from the 1840s to 1905" (Ph.D. Dissertation: Columbia University, 2002), 56-64.

Kolonisation and other policies that relied on an increased presence of Germans in Southwest Africa.

It also provided the basis for the RMG's presence in the future German colony. If Africans failed to see the benefit of Christian civilization voluntarily, Rhenish missionaries felt justified to bring civilization to them in the form of churches, schools, farms, and marketplaces. Missionaries utilized nationalism and religion in accordance with one another to spread their religious influence and eventually Germany's presence in Africa. As a result, the RMG not only helped to lay the foundation for German colonial domination in 1884, but also emerged as the first European institution to establish a permanent locus of power in Southwest Africa.

Chapter 3:

Language, Empire, and Nation: Aspiring *Auslandsdeutsche* and the *Heimat* Ideal, 1884-1912

Empire was far from a marginal interest for Germans during the imperial era. Rather than an inconsequential enterprise of the few, colonial conquest influenced how Germans defined their national identity in a globalizing world. Whether in the official correspondence of colonial administrators and the *Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung* (Foreign Office – Colonial Division, AAKA), colonial *Eingaben* (petitions), or nationalist newspapers, colonial conquest infiltrated discourses on nationalism before the end of the nineteenth century. Even if everyone did not agree with German overseas expansion, one still had to reconcile with the reality of colonial domination by the conclusion of 1884.

For proponents, meanwhile, colonial expansion brought with it new opportunities. Indeed, many aspiring German colonists believed that DSWA was just as integral to national prosperity as the Rhine, or the harbor at Swakopmund as vital as at Kiel. In a perceived age of boundless opportunity, settler-colonists considered themselves the standard bearers of the German nation. Hubert Janson, a settler-farmer in DSWA, for example, argued that “the man who easily loses the desire, who is fearful and accustomed to good living and social life, who always must have spiritual refreshment and cannot endure loneliness and exertion [should] remain with mother at home.”³⁸⁴ Janson praised the difficulties of colonial life, celebrating them as challenges for worthy colonialists to

³⁸⁴ Hubert Janson, “Aus dem Farmerleben in Südwest,” *Kolonie und Heimat: im Wort und Bild* 1, No. 23 (1907/1908): 3, quoted in Daniel Joseph Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and National Identity in Namibia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 29-30.

overcome. “In [DSWA],” he argued, “one must be everything, gardener, livestock breeder, farmer . . . hunter, trapper, smith, cartwright mason, plumber, glassblower, yes even photographer.” Even in spite of these conditions, he concluded, Germans must never allow “the entrepreneurial spirit and the humor to disappear—even on days when there is only thick rice and a piece of dry bread with coffee [to eat].”³⁸⁵

In the metropole, many aspiring colonialists regarded Janson as the personification of the ideal German man. He represented not only an example of what Germany could do in DSWA, but also how imperial conquest had grown into a national issue by the turn of the twentieth century. Collective discourses on colonialism, together with official reports and popularized testimonials, helped to define the characteristics of a model German colonist. They also provided links between *Auslandsdeutsche* (Germans abroad) and citizens in the metropole. In the process, these media enabled Germans to develop a greater familiarity with an untamed world defined by empire.³⁸⁶

Due to its size and status as Germany’s first colony, DSWA assumed an especially important role in the colonial discourse.³⁸⁷ Colonial advocates portrayed it as a future source of marketable exports and a place where German emigrants could preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage. Newspapers, books, advertisements, and political posters all disseminated variations of these assertions about the colonial world. In doing so, these outlets not only created a market for news about Africa, but also fashioned the

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 30.

³⁸⁶ Bradley D. Naranch, “Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*: Immigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German Identity, 1848-71,” in *Germany’s Colonial Pasts*, ed. Eric Ames (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 21-40.

³⁸⁷ DSWA officially encompassed 835,100 cubic kilometers. At its height in 1914, nearly fourteen thousand Europeans lived in the colony. For geometric and population statistics see Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (Stuttgart: Paderborn, 2012), 121.

framework in which Germans viewed the colonial empire. They also helped to determine the virtues that most clearly exemplified *Deutschtum* (Germanness) in colonial society.³⁸⁸

DSWA also inspired German society to perceive the metropole and empire as one joined unit—as a global *Heimat* that extended beyond the confined political and spatial boundaries of continental Europe.³⁸⁹ *Heimat* (Homeland) is an inherently abstract term. It connotes a local or national sense of place, typically grounded in emotional and cultural attachments to particular surroundings. Germany's conquest of Southwest Africa infused *Heimat* with greater rhetorical flexibility. After 1884, many Germans started to appropriate DSWA as an extension of culture, memory, and tradition. Colonial expansion effectively expanded the *Heimat* ideal to include a distant, peripheral landscape by the turn of the twentieth century.³⁹⁰

This chapter exposes the entangled history of Germany and DSWA during the formative colonial period. News about the colonial world expanded collective views of the *Heimat* ideal after 1884. DSWA not only helped to shape German national identity, but also reflected that *Deutschtum* (Germanness) was not merely a virtue that the

³⁸⁸ *Deutschtum* eludes a precise translation. Generally, it means Germandom or Germanness, and connotes broad characteristics that constitute German culture, national identity, and tradition. It may either refer to German character, or the belonging to the German people and nation. By the late nineteenth century, it also referred to German communities living outside of Germany.

³⁸⁹ "Nation" as a concept continues to generate interest among scholars. This is especially true among those who seek to incorporate the impact of globalization and colonialism into their studies. Some excellent examples of this research are Birthe Kundrus, "Die Kolonien – 'Kinder des Gefühls und der Phantasie'," in *Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*, Birthe Kundrus, ed. (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2003); Jens Jaeger, "Colony as *Heimat*? The Formation of Colonial Identity in Germany around 1900," *German History* 27, No. 4 (2009): 467-489; Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, eds., *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); and Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., *German Colonialism and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

³⁹⁰ Jens Jaeger has made a similar argument about images of colonial landscapes and infrastructure and their effect on German national discourses. See Jaeger, "Colony as *Heimat*? The Formation of Colonial Identity in German around 1900," *German History* 27, No. 4 (2009): 467-489.

metropole exported abroad.³⁹¹ Colonial conquest instead widened how society interacted with the overseas empire. It not only strengthened those forces that saw expansion as tantamount to survival, but also signified why Germans conflated colony and *Heimat* together by the turn of the twentieth century.

Several venues of discussion expose how colonial discourses affected collective impressions of identity: official reports sent between political officials and the AAKA, colonial *Eingaben* written by aspiring settler-colonists, and nationalist media promotions in Germany. These media made profound impressions on German colonial discourse. The everyday presence of DSWA in newspapers and propaganda campaigns normalized colonial rule in every social stratum after 1884. As a result, aspiring colonialists, together with the institutions that encouraged and supported them, integrated DSWA into a collective discussion about the place of empire in German society. This process not only expanded the *Heimat* ideal, but also entangled the colonial and national worlds together in ways that had profound consequences in the early twentieth century.

“Gardens of Abundance”: Political Fantasies and Realities after 1884

A diverse array of official and unofficial sources fueled public awareness of the colonial empire. Dr. Heinrich Ernst Göring, the first *Reichskommissar* in DSWA, for example, sent regular reports to the AAKA about the colony’s agricultural and economic potential. He used these missives to promote large-scale farming in the colony:

Hoachanas and areas around Lietfontein, Kalkfontein and other places are water-rich and is an area with fertile soil that would be most suitable for settlement by white people. The local missionaries grow wheat, corn,

³⁹¹ Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 1-5.

potatoes and all garden fruits in abundance, cultivate large-scale beekeeping and have very impressive herds of cattle.³⁹²

Göring wanted DSWA to have an agricultural, commodity-based economy.³⁹³ As a means to facilitate this goal, he promoted stories about the colony's agricultural promise to entice German citizens to emigrate overseas.

Colonial prospects in the region were not as favorable as officials would claim, however. This was especially true during Göring's first years as *Reichskommissar*.³⁹⁴ Indeed, his appointment in May 1885 came amid fears that DSWA was politically ungovernable.³⁹⁵ Two months before he assumed his position, the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika* (German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa, DKGSWA) purchased all of the territory in DSWA owned by Adolf Eduard Lüderitz, the Bremen tobacco merchant who was the driving force behind German imperial expansion in Africa.³⁹⁶

³⁹² BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutsche Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Dr. Heinrich Göring, "Bericht an Auswärtiges Amt-Kolonial Abteilung," 7. July 1890, 20-21.

³⁹³ BAB/RKA 1001/1522: Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika, Dr. Göring, "Bericht an Fürst von Bismarck," 15. May 1887, 74-75.

³⁹⁴ Chancellor Otto von Bismarck appointed Heinrich Ernst Göring Reichskommissar of DSWA after it became apparent that a state-financed colonial administration was needed to support the new German protectorate. Göring's official duties were to administer justice, negotiate with indigenous Africa populations, issue proclamations, and negotiate protection treaties with Namibian communities. He was also the father of future Nazi leader, Hermann Göring. For more on Göring's colonial career see Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (Stuttgart: Schöningh, 2012), 88-89, and George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 147-156.

³⁹⁵ Historian Wilfried Westphal went so far as to call German colonial authority in 1885 "a great fiction," with political sovereignty existing only on paper. See Wilfried Westphal, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (München: C. Bertelsmann, 1984), 34.

³⁹⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1532: Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrika. – Gebietserwerbungen der Gesellschaft und Festsetzung der Grenzen des Gesellschafts-Gebiets, G. von Bleichröder an die Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck," 30. March 1885, 3-6. The territory purchased by the DKGSWA stretched along the coast from the Orange River to the Kunene River and reaching twenty miles inland.

Though Lüderitz acquired monopoly rights over vast stretches of land in 1882, he went bankrupt after financing an unsuccessful gold expedition in 1884.³⁹⁷ The DKGSWA was comprised of several notable interests in Germany, including bankers, industrialists, and politicians.³⁹⁸ In many respects, the DKGSWA embodied Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's vision of colonial expansion. Private investors assumed all of the financial risk, while the German government controlled political affairs of state.³⁹⁹

Over the next seven years, two developments helped to transform Southwest Africa from a private economic boondoggle into a German settler-colony. The first came with the passage of the *Statut der Deutschen Colonial-Gesellschaft für Südwest-Afrika* (Statute of the German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa) in April 1885. This decree granted the DKGSWA monopoly control over all private enterprise.⁴⁰⁰ It also established the first colonial legal code and laid plans for how the Company would allocate its initial investment of 800,000 Marks.⁴⁰¹ Most significantly, however, the *Statut* marked

³⁹⁷ Lüderitz first arrived to Southwest Africa in 1882. After meeting with African leaders, he sought political support from the German government. In April 1884, Bismarck agreed to extend German "protection" to the areas under his control, formally ushering in the German colonial era. After he was forced to sell his territorial rights to the DKGSWA, Lüderitz went on another expedition to the Orange River in search of gold. While sailing near the conjunction of the Fish and Orange Rivers, Lüderitz drowned after his boat capsized. His body was never recovered. For more on Lüderitz see Max Ewald Baericke, *Lüderitzbucht 1908-1918* (Namibia Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft: Windhoek, 2001).

³⁹⁸ Among them were the German bankers Gerson von Bleichröder and Adolph von Hanseemann, industrialists Count Guido Henckel von Donnersmarck, and politician Johannes von Miquel (Mayor of Frankfurt am Main).

³⁹⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1532: Bismarck, "Bericht an des Kaisers und Königs Majestät," 12. April 1885, 16-20.

⁴⁰⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1522: *Statut der Deutschen Colonial-Gesellschaft für Südwest-Afrika*, 7. April 1885, 18-24.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

Germany's first attempt to dispossess African communities of their land and access to free-range cattle.⁴⁰²

This effort, which will be discussed at length in the following chapter, proved unenforceable as the great majority of African communities took little notice of German directives before 1894. No German *Schutztruppe* (protection force) yet patrolled the countryside, RMS missionaries provided little or no help, and only a small contingent of European settlers lived in the colony.⁴⁰³ Heinrich Vogelsang, an employee of Lüderitz's merchant enterprise, described how German authority was almost nonexistent during the formative colonial period:

During my stay in Damaraland, Jan Jonker [Afrikaner], who is currently nothing more than a robber chief . . . shot a [native] shepherd, which has spread general turmoil and fear in the country. . . . The fear of the natives is so great that I could hardly get people for my wagon to travel from Otjimbingue to Rehboth [sic]. I tried to get Jan Jonker [Afrikaner] to meet me, but my attempts were in vain.⁴⁰⁴

Both national and international newspapers were quick to echo Vogelsang's allegations. An article appearing in Great Britain, for example, described DSWA as nothing more than a "shadow protectorate" that would disappear sooner or later.⁴⁰⁵ Even the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* (DKZ) complained that "up to now the German Protectorate over [Southwest Africa] has existed only in name. People are being told so many things about the might of the German Empire, but no one ever sees it applied. . . . Either the German

⁴⁰² BAB/RKA 1001/1532: Hugo Fürst zu Hohenlohe, Herzog von Ujest, Dr. Hammacher, and W. Weber, "Bericht an die Geheimen Ober. Regierungsrat Rommel," 10. April 1885, 13-16.

⁴⁰³ The first contingent of *Schutztruppen* arrived in 1889. See Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 156.

⁴⁰⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/2151: Gebiet des Häuptlings Jan Jonker Afrikaner, Heinrich Vogelsang, "Bericht an die AAKA," 4. March 1885, 3-4.

⁴⁰⁵ *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, Vol. 1, 1888, quoted in Horst Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting": *The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism (1884-1915)* (London: Zed Press, 1980), 33.

Empire makes a move to maintain its prestige or it will have to abandon the territories it has gained. The current situation is one of which Germany must feel ashamed.”⁴⁰⁶

As these statements make plain, DSWA was at best nominally under German control between 1884-1894. The relative few on the ground, moreover, represented big business and members of the political echelon of society. In spite of this reality, negative stories in the DKZ and international press generated interest about colonial affairs in German society. Even if the vast majority of the population had nothing to gain from corporate expansion overseas, the fact that Southwest Africa was an official German colony meant that national pride was at stake. “Rebellious natives” and a skeptical press created the perception that *their* colony was under threat. Embarrassment and national pride inspired a collective discussion of Germany’s colonial project in Africa.⁴⁰⁷ Though not everyone supported colonial conquest in Africa, it nevertheless evolved into a national issue due to both its perceived instability and promise.

The second major factor to transform Southwest Africa into a national story was the period of *relative* stability in the colony after 1889. Though the Witbooi Namaqua challenged the German colonial administration for supremacy between 1884-1894, journalists, missionaries, and politicians had some reasons for hope after the appointment of Göring in May 1885. Göring had the authority as *Reichskommissar* to administer justice, issue proclamations, and negotiate treaties with Africans. As I will show in the

⁴⁰⁶ *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, Vol. 4, 1887, quoted in Horst Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*”, 33.

⁴⁰⁷ John Phillip Short has made a similar argument about the affect of “enchantment” on bourgeois colonists and the subaltern “others” in German society. See Short, *The Magic Lantern*, 79.

next chapter, Göring's most consequential power was the right to negotiate "protection treaties" with local African populations.⁴⁰⁸

On the surface, protection treaties were nothing more than attempts by the colonial administration to establish amity with African leaders. Stability, after all, was the cornerstone of German settlement in the colony.⁴⁰⁹ In actuality, however, German authorities planned to use protection treaties as "speedy actions [to secure] certain areas for future colonial purposes . . . at a minimum cost."⁴¹⁰ For men like Sigmund Israel, an employee in Adolf Lüderitz's merchant enterprise, protection agreements would eventually make it possible to "achieve the accession of Damaraland or, at least, of a portion of territory large enough to open up a route to Central Africa."⁴¹¹

From the start of his appointment, Göring was dubious that mining exports alone could sustain the colony.⁴¹² In May 1887, for example, he wrote that there was "very little prospect of German [mining] interests ever asserting themselves again in the first German colony. If a corporation of merely sounds and names, such as the German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa, can only be operated at a loss, then it will be hard to find any German capitalists who will invest purely for the enthusiasm of doing so."⁴¹³ These sentiments inspired Göring to promote large agricultural projects.⁴¹⁴ He believed that this

⁴⁰⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/2151: Gebiet des Häuptlings Jan Jonker Afrikaner.

⁴⁰⁹ The Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 required colonial powers to "effectively administer" overseas territories in order to establish international recognition. Given this reality, peace in the protectorate was vital to German economic and political interests in DSWA.

⁴¹⁰ *Koloniales Jahrbuch*, Vol. 2, 1889, referenced in Horst Drechsler, *"Let Us Die Fighting": The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism (1884-1915)* (London: Zed Press, 1980), 27.

⁴¹¹ Sigmund Israel, quoted in *Cape Argus*, 7. February 1885. See Drechsler, *"Let Us Die Fighting"*, 26.

⁴¹² BAB/RKA 1001/1522: Göring, "Bericht an die Bismarck," 15. May 1887, 74-75

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴¹⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Göring, "Bericht an Auswärtiges Amt-Kolonial Abteilung," 7. July 1890, 20-21. Also see Alvin Kienetz, "Nineteenth-Century South West Africa as a German Settlement Colony," Ph.D.

new focus would not only appeal to a wider segment of the public, but also increase DSWA's economic potential for the entire German empire.

Görling's announcement could not have come at a more opportune time.⁴¹⁵ Indeed, news of increased stability led a chorus of supporters to advocate settler programs in the early 1890s. As officials became more concerned about international legitimacy and costs, settler-colonialism seemed like a viable solution to imperial enthusiasts in Germany. Reports from those on the ground only seemed to support the need for a larger national effort in Africa. Major Curt von Francois, one of the first members of the *Schutztruppe* to arrive in Southwest Africa, endorsed settler-colonialism as the only prospect for the colony. After he arrived to DSWA, he conducted a series of studies with the intention of promoting the colony's agricultural prospects.

In August 1890, for example, Francois wrote a detailed essay on DSWA's terrain, climate, soil quality, cattle prices, and colonial life. After its completion, he sent a copy of the report to Chancellor Leo von Caprivi.⁴¹⁶ He even included a facsimile of a prospective German garden along with his report, including plots for "tobacco, cabbage, peas, melon, and grapes."⁴¹⁷ Francois also sent copies of his study to the AAKA and German media outlets.⁴¹⁸ Heinrich Bokemeyer, General Secretary of the German Colonial

dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1976; and Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978).

⁴¹⁵ Drechsler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 34.

⁴¹⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Major Curt von Francois, "Brief an die Reichskanzler von Caprivi," 25. August 1890, 21-28.

⁴¹⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Major Curt von Francois, "Garten der südwestafrika Schutztruppe," June 1890, 29. "Tabak, Kopfsalat, Erbsen, Melonen, und Wein." Major Francois arrived with a contingent of twenty-one soldiers in 1889.

⁴¹⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Major Curt von Francois, "Brief an die Reichskanzler von Caprivi," 25. August 1890, 21-28.

Society, also supported settler-colonialism in DSWA.⁴¹⁹ “The question of colonization in our colony Southwest Africa,” he wrote in 1891, “is of crucial importance, where it is possible, to locate a closed community so the strength of the settler community is physically powerful enough to live without risk of any violent incidents.”⁴²⁰

Bokemeyer had long been an advocate of German colonial expansion. In fact, he was deeply suspicious of anyone who did not support Germany’s imperial initiatives. “The greatest difficulty which has hitherto impeded the development of the South West African colony, the ignorance of the true value therein,” he wrote in 1890, “is on the wane: the scoffers begin to fall silent [and] their dubious friends take heart.”⁴²¹ “[An] extensive colonization of German Southwest Africa was now a given,” he concluded.⁴²² To achieve his goal, Bokemeyer proposed an ambitious financial assistance plan aimed at middle-class citizens. “It is really only a question of organization,” Bokemeyer wrote in 1890. “[We] have the option of using more resources to transfer garden land to the settlers themselves. Without exception, the homes must be the free property of the settler; he must fully use the land belonging to him.”⁴²³ He thought so highly of this initiative that he deemed it “a cultural task and a work of peace.”⁴²⁴

A select few chose to form their own opinion about affairs overseas and traveled to the colony themselves. Dr. Karl Höpfner, an electrochemist from Frankfurt am Main, for instance, was interested in large-scale mining at its feasibility in DSWA. Höpfner

⁴¹⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Heinrich Bokemeyer, “Die erste Ansiedelung einer deutschen Gemeinde in Südwest-Afrika,” 29. May 1891, 66-82.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 66.

⁴²¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Heinrich Bokemeyer, “Ueber Ansiedelungsverhältnisse in Südwest-Afrika vom Gesichtspunkte der organisierten Kolonisation,” *Deutschen Kolonialzeitung* Nr. 27 (December 1890): 100.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid., 98.

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 100.

arrived in 1882 and started work as an employee for Lüderitz. While on location, he composed some of the most influential accounts of the colony's African communities.⁴²⁵ Höpfner eventually went on to work at a gold mine in the Transvaal and later started his own mining operation.⁴²⁶ Graf von Schweinitz, a lieutenant in the *Schutztruppe*, meanwhile, journeyed to Otjimbingue to assess the colony's soil quality.⁴²⁷ After completing a "thorough examination," he concluded that "tobacco can completely cover" the landscape.⁴²⁸ Schweinitz eventually went on to serve under General Lothar von Trotha during the so-call "*Herero-Aufstand*" in 1904.⁴²⁹

Reports about DSWA's potential prompted the AAKA to commission an expedition in 1892 to ascertain whether the colony could support a large settler population.⁴³⁰ The Foreign Office discovered that Klein-Windhoek, located in central Damaraland, was among the most favorable areas for settlement with space to support "between 30 to 40 families."⁴³¹ Though the AAKA recommended that German "settlement should proceed gradually, beginning with German families who are already familiar with conditions in South Africa," its endorsement proved especially important among figures in the German government.⁴³²

⁴²⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1470: Reisebericht von Dr. Höpfner über die Verhältnisse in Südwestafrika, Höpfner, "Bericht an die Auswärtiges-Amt," 25. January 1885, 20-33.

⁴²⁶ *Stimmen aus Elsass-Lothringen: illustrierte Unterhaltung-Beiträge für den "Elsässer"* (Straßburg: 1901): 39.

⁴²⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1135: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutsche Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Graf von Schweinitz, "Eindruck von Deutsch Süd-West-Afrika," 29. September 1892, 25-28.

⁴²⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1135: Graf von Schweinitz, "Eindruck von Deutsch-Süd-West-Afrika," 29. September 1892, 28.

⁴²⁹ Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 195.

⁴³⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1135: Rnpfer, "Bericht die Besiedelung des südwestafrikenischen Schutzgebiet," 6. February 1892, 46-65.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 53.

Chancellor von Caprivi, encouraged by the flurry of official studies and public sentiment, announced in the Reichstag on 1 March 1893 his decision to declare DSWA a settlement colony.⁴³³ “We do not intend to make war,” he argued, “but wish to become masters of the country and to consolidate our sovereignty without bloodshed. We possess South-West Africa once and for all; it is German territory and must be preserved as such.”⁴³⁴ Though Caprivi still aspired to keep the state’s financial commitment to a minimum, his decision to designate DSWA a settler-colony would have profound national consequences.⁴³⁵ After 1893, profit margins no longer served as the sole measure of success. International prestige and the fate of a new German *Heimat* were now at stake.

Governor Theodor Leutwein personified DSWA’s new designation more than any other figure. Leutwein, who went on to become the colony’s longest serving German governor, shaped imperial policy more than any other colonial official.⁴³⁶ Like Göring, his vision for the colony favored large-scale agriculture.⁴³⁷ He dreamed of plantation-style estates stretching across the countryside, reminiscent of those in eastern Prussia. Leutwein’s plan was dependent on a specific class of German settlers, however: rich, propertied white families. If a family could not afford to create a comfortable life overseas, he did not want them to make the journey.

Leutwein understood economic prosperity and social stability as intimately linked categories. He claimed that propertied Germans stood a better chance of retaining their cultural characteristics than “the lonely white farmer who can easily enter into

⁴³³ *Stenographische Berichte des deutschen Reichstags* (hereafter *SBVdR*), Vol. 128, 1. March 1893.

⁴³⁴ *SBVdR*, Vol. 128, 1. March 1893.

⁴³⁵ Helmut Bley, *South-West Africa under German Rule, 1894-1914* (London: Heinemann, 1971), 3.

⁴³⁶ See Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907).

⁴³⁷ Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, 411-412.

concubinage with a native woman.”⁴³⁸ Leutwein intended to organize DSWA along rigid class divisions, which would serve as a counterbalance against the “adventurous and unpredictable elements” that drove the colony in its pioneering days.⁴³⁹

Leutwein also aspired to create a robust colonial administration. Though he contended that the “personal needs of new settlers [should] be taken into account,” Leutwein doubted that the colonial project could succeed without a powerful colonial state.⁴⁴⁰ He contended that a robust central authority could better assist settlers build homes, write and fulfill farming and mining contracts, and protect colonists from the inherent dangers of colonial life. In addition, Leutwein also recognized that a centralized colonial administration would provide the chief executive with almost unchecked power to fashion the political and economic direction of DSWA.

Given these circumstances, Leutwein had the ability to define what characterized an ideal settler in official correspondence and the German press. Along with having financial flexibility, for instance, Leutwein argued that desirable colonists were people who could make difficult decisions about family affairs. He recommended that husbands should travel to the colony alone in order to provide them ample time to build a suitable home and livelihood. After a period of “six months to one year later,” women and children could follow their husbands to DSWA.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, 412.

⁴³⁹ Bley, *South-West Africa*, 109.

⁴⁴⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1138: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutsche Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Leutwein, “Berichte an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 13. June 1903, 130.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

Leutwein promised that the “magnificent advantages” of this process would “amply compensate for the unmistakable unpleasantness [*Übelstand*] of separation.”⁴⁴²

“The man who establishes his farm and house, built with the help of the government in an appropriate place, can effectively offer his family much more support than if he arrives with his family, expecting the government to mother him from his first moment,” he asserted.⁴⁴³ By discouraging those incapable of such separation, Leutwein was presenting a clear message: colonialism was not for the weak of heart. DSWA needed colonists like Hubert Janson, not those who needed to be “mothered” by the colonial administration. That was the only way, Leutwein concluded, that DSWA could build a “country that could compete in world markets.”⁴⁴⁴

Paul Rohrbach, Germany’s *Ansiedlungskommissar* (Commissar for Settlement) in DSWA, agreed with Leutwein. He wrote that “Hoffnung, Ondekaremba, Ommjereke, Thalheim, Wiese, Seeis, Neudamm, Frankenstein, Soigtland, Haris, Salgras, [and] Lichtenstein” were all potential cattle-farming districts, and offered German settlers boundless potential.⁴⁴⁵ Rohrbach was confident that cattle farming would not only forge a strong economic foundation, but also divest African communities of their land and influence.⁴⁴⁶ “The native element,” he argued, “will maintain its place next to the white one . . . because the African natives are adaptable to the European economy and similarly

⁴⁴² Ibid., 131.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, 410.

⁴⁴⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1138: Paul Rohrbach, “Bericht über die Informationsreise durch das Farmgebiet östlich und südlich von Windhuk bis zum Nosob und bis Salgras vom 7. bis 13. und 15. bis 19. October 1903,” 28. October 1903, 224.

⁴⁴⁶ Paul Rohrbach, *Der deutsche gedanke in der welt* (Düsseldorf: Langewiesche Verlag, 1920).

necessary.”⁴⁴⁷ These assertions led *Der Tag* to declare that “livestock and the excellent climate [are] where the value and the future of the country rests.”⁴⁴⁸ “If the colony is to keep its German character,” the paper concluded, “it will be necessary to push the settlement of German families most zealously.”⁴⁴⁹

In a perceived age of boundless opportunity, Leutwein and Rohrbach failed to consider the potential negative consequences of their respective messages. After 1893, *all* aspiring settlers thought of themselves as ideal standard bearers of the German nation. Karl Cremer, a barber from Düren, Westphalia, certainly did.⁴⁵⁰ Though he was only “twenty-nine years old [with] one thousand Marks in savings,” he looked to Southwest Africa as a land of promise.⁴⁵¹ So, too, did Herr Decker on behalf of his twenty-four year old son who, he claimed, would prosper “on a small farm in the Karibib District of D.S.W. Africa.”⁴⁵² Even Julius Asser, an upholsterer and decorator from Hamburg, was “not timid” in the face of new “work [in DSWA].”⁴⁵³

Cremer, Decker, and Asser all shared more than a general curiosity about Germany’s first African colony. For them, DSWA represented a place where they could reach their fullest potential. It also symbolized an extension of the *Heimat* ideal, a region where they could preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage beyond the European

⁴⁴⁷ Paul Rohrbach, *Der deutsche gedanke*, 1920.

⁴⁴⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1138: “Zur Besiedlung Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Der Tag*, 16. June 1903, 96.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1172: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen, Karl Cremer, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt,” 25. February 1913, 65.

⁴⁵¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1172: Karl Cremer, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt,” 25. February 1913, 65.

⁴⁵² BAB/RKA 1001/1173: Herr Decker, “Eingaben an die Auswärtiges-Amt,” 23. March 1914, 136.

⁴⁵³ BAB/RKA 1001/1170: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen, Julius Asser, “Eingaben an die Auswärtiges-Amt,” 28. August 1907, 12.

continent. We know that a majority of aspiring German colonists shared these beliefs thanks to their colonial *Eingaben* to the AAKA.

In 1902, the Colonial Office opened the *Zentral-Auskunftstelle für Auswanderer* (Central Information Bureau for Emigrants, ZAfA). This site soon became a focal point for a broad section of aspiring German colonists.⁴⁵⁴ Young unmarried men and citizens with few prospects for employment were especially active. In its first year, over twenty-three hundred artisans, workers, miners, and farmers contacted the ZAfA about colonial emigration.⁴⁵⁵ Figures in subsequent years showed little change, while emigration to North America actually slowed to pre-unification levels.⁴⁵⁶ Colonial *Eingaben*, though often brief, offer a fantastic record of their imperial aspirations.

Applicants like Decker and Asser, for instance, wrote about their occupational experience as a justifiable rationale to seek new opportunities in DSWA. Others chose to emphasize nationalism and their connection to Southwest Africa's *Auslandsdeutsche*. J. Christ of Nuremberg wrote in his *Eingabe* how he “would leave no stone unturned to be German and remain Germans” in DSWA.⁴⁵⁷ Christ was not concerned about Leutwein's class-oriented definition of an ideal settler. Nor did he care that he and his family were not independently wealthy. Indeed, he freely admitted that he would need financial

⁴⁵⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1170-1196: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika – Anfragen. John Phillip Short has recently written about a similar collection in *Magic Lantern Empire*. See Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 57-79.

⁴⁵⁵ Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 64.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 64-65.

⁴⁵⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1172: J. Christ, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 27. November 1910, 47.

assistance to make the long journey in his petition.⁴⁵⁸ Christ believed that his German identity was enough to justify his wish to emigrate to DSWA.

From the hopeful father, to the despondent artisan, to the struggling factory worker, to the aspiring farmer, colonialism became a panacea for many German citizens. Leutwein and his contemporaries had so successfully cast overseas expansion as a feat for the strong and fiscally responsible that they changed the entire national discourse on colonial expansion. It evolved into an enterprise that any German citizen could undertake if he chose. Germans no longer regarded DSWA as the bastion of rich merchants or investors, or as a place for those who had “a little bit of the devil” in their bodies.”⁴⁵⁹ Instead, it was a land for citizens who espoused the same virtues of *Deutschtum* as those in the metropole. The language of imperialism, perhaps more than any other instance, reflects just how vital DSWA had become to the *Heimat* ideal by the turn of the twentieth century.

Aspiring “Auslandsdeutsche”: Colonial Petitions and the Language of Imperialism

The prospect of a fresh start in a resource-rich land offered Germans a compelling reason to emigrate overseas after 1884.⁴⁶⁰ On 13 April 1907, Rud Erpf, a twenty-year old “healthy and strong” student from the *Hohenheim landwirtschaftliche Hochschule* in Stuttgart, for example, wrote to the ZAfA about his desire to work on a “Southwest

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁵⁹ Hubert Janson, “Aus dem Farmerleben in Südwest,” *Kolonie und Heimat: im Wort und Bild* 1, No. 23 (1907/1908): 3. Also see Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 29-30,

⁴⁶⁰ See Thomas Schwarz, “Die Kultivierung des kolonialen Begehrens – ein deutscher Sonderweg?,” in *Kolonialismus als Kultur: Literatur, Medien, Wissenschaft in der deutschen Grunderzeit des Fremden*, Alexander Honold and Oliver Simons, eds. (Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2002), 85-104.

African farm or plantation where plenty of opportunity awaited.”⁴⁶¹ To demonstrate his commitment to the imperial project in DSWA further, Erpf requested that the government allow him to fulfill his one-year conscription duties in the colonial *Schutztruppe*.⁴⁶² The same year, Karl Freimüller, a dentist from Mannheim, contacted the AAKA on behalf of two families who “longed to get to German Southwest Africa.”⁴⁶³ He acknowledged that a story on the optimistic “outlook of settlers in DSWA” in the *Mannheimer Tagesblatt* inspired him to write the petition. Freimüller also took the occasion to inquire about the colony’s “surrounding conditions” and what settlers could expect upon their arrival.⁴⁶⁴

Colonial *Eingaben* are among the strongest evidence that Germans perceived DSWA as an extension of the *Heimat* ideal by the start of the twentieth century. As historians Jens Jaeger, Celia Applegate, and Alon Confino have all shown, the emergence of unofficial movements like the *Heimabewegung* (Heimat Movement) indicate the significance of the *Heimat* ideal for German nationalism after 1871.⁴⁶⁵ Citizens looked to join organizations like the *Deutscher Bund Heimatschutz* (German Federation for the Protection of Heimat) and the *Dürerbund* (Dürer Federation), in addition to countless local and regional societies.

Popular settler accounts, newspaper stories, novels, and images of the distant *Heimat* abroad were just as important to German views of nationalism, however. Indeed,

⁴⁶¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1174: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen, Rud Erpf, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 13. April 1907,” 5-6. “Gesund und kräftig.”

⁴⁶² BAB/RKA 1001/1174: Rud Erpf, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 13. April 1907, 6.

⁴⁶³ BAB/RKA 1001/1175: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika – Anfragen, Karl Freimüller, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 7. November 1907, 55-56.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁶⁵ See especially Jaeger, “Colony as *Heimat*? The Formation of Colonial Identity in Germany around 1900.” Also see Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*; Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*; and Lekan, “German Landscape: Local Promotion of the *Heimat* Abroad.”

the overseas empire had emerged as a central component of national identity after 1884. The societies that comprised the *Heimatabewegung* made no formal distinction between Germany and DSWA. From illustrations to photographs to propaganda, pictures of *Heimat* afforded people something that they could actually see and defend.⁴⁶⁶ As a result, citizens regarded both entities as integral components of the German Empire.

The *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten* wrote in December 1901, for example, that DSWA “would not in and of itself be considered a German colony . . . if not for the excellent strength and inner unity of *Deutschtum* at the southern end of the old world.”⁴⁶⁷ Hermann Hesse, a colonial official stationed in German Qingdao, meanwhile, expressed that the “basis of state power is the territory, both at home and in the colonies. Who owns the land is lord, the medium of political force.”⁴⁶⁸ “Faith in a prosperous future,” he continued, “will increase the determination to keep the country and to develop and build a strong bulwark of *Deutschtum* in South Africa.”⁴⁶⁹ In other words, DSWA, whether for land, prosperity, or *Auslandsdeutschtum*, was worth the effort.

Public awareness of the overseas empire had a substantial impact on how people fashioned an image of the ideal German colonist. In their *Eingaben*, colonial applicants underscored their educational background, familial circumstances, age, health, occupational interests, job prospects, and enthusiasm to emigrate overseas. Each of these qualifications reflected a specific interpretation of what they believed was necessary to

⁴⁶⁶ Hermann Bausinger, “Auf dem Weg zu einem neuen, aktiven Heimatverständnis. Begriffsgeschichte als Problemgeschichte,” in *Landeszentrale für politische Bildung*, (Stuttgart: 1984), 11-27 and Jaeger, “Colony as *Heimat*?” 475.

⁴⁶⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1136: “Die Zukunft Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten*, 15. December 1901, 91-92.

⁴⁶⁸ Hermann Hesse, *Die Schutzverträge in Südwestafrika. Ein Beitrag zur rechtsgechichtlichen und politischen Entwicklung des Schutzgebietes* (Berlin: Wilhelm Suuferrott, 1905), Vorwort.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

live in DSWA. Through their own individual experiences, applicants tried to portray themselves as strong representatives of Germandom. Such a vague standard, however, meant that aspiring colonialists could point to any “German virtue” as a sign of their qualifications. Identity became a common denominator, even if each person wanted to emigrate for different reasons.⁴⁷⁰

The appeal of colonialism, driven by collective national appeal, spread throughout German society. Those who desired to emigrate did not originate from any single social category or class, but instead represented a heterogeneous mass of factory workers, mechanics, artisans, merchants, servicemen, soldiers, and farmers.⁴⁷¹ What united them, apart from their German identity, was a common belief that life would be better in DSWA. From the young woman who had a “huge desire to go,” to the dairy farmer “with eight children of which four [could] help work,” *Deutschtum* and *Heimat* were ideals that they all could relate to on a national level.⁴⁷²

Walther Heinemann, a merchant from Erfurt Nord, for example, emphasized his youth, education, and military service in his *Eingabe*.⁴⁷³ He explained that he was also a recipient of a “graduate certificate (*Zeugnis*), including seven classes in university,” and

⁴⁷⁰ Alon Confino’s important study of Württemberg following German unification is among the best examples of this argument. He shows how local identity was co-opted by nationalist forces as a means to create a national German identity in Württemberg. Regional holidays like Sedan Day were appropriated as German celebrations by the conclusion of the twentieth century. In effect, therefore, local authorities created a national history by using regional memory as their instrument. See Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, 1997.

⁴⁷¹ Also see Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 64-79.

⁴⁷² BAB/Reichskolonialgesellschaft (hereafter RKG) 8023/171: 145. BAB/RKA 1001/1173: Fridolin Dreher, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 6. September 1907, 15.

⁴⁷³ BAB/RKA 1001/1177: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika – Anfragen. Walther Heinemann, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 27. May 1912, 114-117.

that he had a friend “who had the same credentials” interested in DSWA as well.⁴⁷⁴ Johann Andrae, a resident of Hamburg, chose to stress his excellent health and military service in the colonial *Schutztruppe*.⁴⁷⁵ Andrae stated that “during [his] entire period of service [he] never once contracted a disease,” a fact that he attributed to his youthful vigor and natural healthy demeanor. He wrote that he was “currently on military leave [in Hamburg], which expires on 20 October 1907, and would like to return to Southwest Africa for the purpose of settlement.” Given the choice, Andrae aspired to return to DSWA “as soon as possible!”⁴⁷⁶ Gustav Engelke, a machinist and member of the Northern Railway Service in Cologne, meanwhile, underscored his technical abilities.⁴⁷⁷ A husband and father of five, Engelke wrote that representatives from the *Frauenbund* encouraged him to apply for colonial settlement earlier that year.⁴⁷⁸ He noted that he had been “with the Northern Railway Service since 1893 and [was] particularly knowledgeable about working with machines and possesses very good credentials.”⁴⁷⁹ All he needed was financial assistance from AAKA to bring his entire family to DSWA.

Colonial organizations adopted similar language in their promotion campaigns. The *Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation* (Society for German Colonization, GDK), founded by Carl Peters, was among the strongest proponents of German settler-

⁴⁷⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1177: Walther Heinemann, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 27. May 1912, 114-116.

⁴⁷⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1170: Johann Andrae, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 16. October 1907, 13.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1174: Gustav Engelke, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 6. June 1909, 77-78.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 77.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 77-78.

colonialism. German identity was a major component of the organizations central message:

For centuries, a heavy stream of German emigration flowed across the borders of the empire into foreign lands. In every land and among all peoples it was the Germans, who have, in outstanding numbers, taken part in the great cultural task of civilizing and cultivating our earth. . . . Germandom across the whole world begins once more to think seriously of its great common fatherland, and the urge for a closer union with their countrymen at home comes everywhere to life.⁴⁸⁰

This message spoke to a broad cross-section of German society, from aspiring colonialists to fiery nationalists tired of seeing other countries use *Deutschtum* as “cultural fertilizer” for their own national purposes. Most importantly, however, it spoke for the thousands of apolitical colonial aspirants who simply wanted a fresh start, but not in a foreign land that would threaten their heritage.

Otto Seyfarth, a field worker from Malheim, was among the many who fit this description. In his *Eingabe* to the AAKA, Seyfarth conveyed that he had the “greatest interest in our Southwest African colony [and] wished to see activity in the protectorate come to fruition.”⁴⁸¹ Seyfarth wrote that he viewed “colonization in terms of enlightenment” and that a powerful nation like Germany deserved a place in the sun.⁴⁸² He detailed his “excellent health” and listed all of his occupational qualifications and familial information (“happily married with three children”).⁴⁸³ Like so many others

⁴⁸⁰ Program of the General German Congress, quoted in *Magic Lantern Empire*, Short, 67.

⁴⁸¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1181: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen., Otto Seyfarth, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 15. June 1907, 14.

⁴⁸² BAB/RKA 1001/1181: Otto Seyfarth, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 15. June 1907, 14.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 15.

before him, Seyfarth concluded his petition with a request for financial assistance to cover the costs of the long voyage to DSWA.⁴⁸⁴

What makes Seyfarth's *Eingabe* significant is its utter lack of uniqueness. Just like countless others before him, Seyfarth believed that he would succeed in DSWA simply because he was German. It did not matter that organizations like the *Syndikat für Südwestafrikanische Siedlung* (Syndicate for Southwest African Settlement) and the *Zentrale Auskunftsstelle für Auswanderer* (Central Information Office for Emigrants) discouraged working-class citizens from making the journey. What mattered most were the cultural virtues that united aspiring colonialists like Seyfarth. Together, they could look to a prosperous future as they fortified Germany's presence in Africa. The language of imperialism reflects just how vital DSWA had become to the *Heimat* ideal. A peripheral *Heimat* was no longer just an imaginable possibility. By the beginning of the twentieth century, it had become a national reality.

“Patriotic Advice”: Media as Messengers of German Colonialism

In March 1910, *Kolonie und Heimat* reprinted an article from *Der Farmer*, a complementary organ of the *Windhuker Nachrichten*, to extol the virtues of tobacco farming in DSWA. “Tobacco growing is of satisfactory quality,” the piece explained, “especially in protected areas where it spends time in cultivated soil and has sufficient irrigation water, etc. Groundwater is present and quality care is abundant. Nature has done its part; now it is important that the planters do their best.”⁴⁸⁵ As a result, *Kolonie*

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ “Neues vom Tabakbau in Südwest,” *Kolonie und Heimat: in Wort und Bild* 3, No. 13 (13. March 1910), 6.

und Heimat concluded that citizens “may justifiably hope that [they] will get to smoke German-Southwest African brands in the *Heimat* in the not too distant future.”⁴⁸⁶

Eight years earlier, the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (RWZ) celebrated the German government’s increased attention on colonial affairs. “For years,” the RWZ wrote, “we have advocated for the Reich Government to awaken from its deafness toward the national press and [our] urgent requests to support German colonization in our colonies so as to make the territories really German.”⁴⁸⁷ “[We can] now affirm that [the Government] has at last opened its ears,” the paper proclaimed.⁴⁸⁸ The RWZ’s praise was in response to the German colonial administration’s decision in 1902 to provide settlers with free land and financial aid upon their arrival in DSWA.⁴⁸⁹ This decision, according to the RWZ, assured “national settlement of the country.”⁴⁹⁰

These two articles represent how mass media fueled public interest in Germany’s colonial empire after 1884. Though the content of each story inspired general interest, more significant was the fact that newspapers discussed colonialism at all. At a time when Germans struggled to define their collective identity, information about the colonial empire was everywhere. In addition to books, periodicals, newspapers, and advertisements, imperial memorabilia filled museums, public exhibitions, schools,

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1136: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, “Deutsches Reich,” *Rheinische-Westfälische Zeitung*, 16. September 1902, 215. A similar article appeared the previous day in the *National Zeitung*. See BAB/RKA 1001/1136: *National Zeitung*, 15. September 1902, 214.

⁴⁸⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1136: “Deutsches Reich,” *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 16. September 1902, 215.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

political clubs, parks, and zoos.⁴⁹¹ These mediums created a public familiarity with the German empire.⁴⁹² They also established a clear link between colony and metropole.

The creation of an overseas *Heimat* ideal was as a mass-media process.⁴⁹³ Newspapers and colonial propaganda not only printed accounts about political emissaries and colonial officials abroad, but also helped to craft the image of an ideal settler-colonialist. They also served as a vehicle for both pro-colonial and anti-colonial forces to spread their respective messages. The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (DKG), for example, regularly advocated an imperialist agenda in the press. Stories about the necessity of “spreading *Deutschtum* across the Earth” and how “land would be distributed to settlers” filled the *Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung* (DKZ), the DKG’s primary media outlet.⁴⁹⁴ In June 1903, the DKZ extolled Southwest Africa as a land of agricultural abundance:

We have there, apart from the coastal belt, which will yield very little in the foreseeable future, a plateau that is excellent for livestock. We have a breed of cattle in German Southwest Africa that are equally as good as those that exist in British South Africa. We also have small livestock, such as wool sheep and Angora goats, and have good prospects.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹¹ See Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁴⁹² Bowersox, “Boy’s and Girl’s Own Empires,” 58.

⁴⁹³ Among the most active major German newspapers to feature stories on the colonial empire were the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung*, *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Deutsche Zeitung*, *Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung*, *National Zeitung*, and the *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*. Popular magazines and illustrated pamphlets also played a significant role in bringing news from abroad “home.” The most influential include *Die Gartenlaube*, *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, and *Kolonie und Heimat: in Wort und Bild*.

⁴⁹⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1137: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Alfred Kirchhoff, “Eine neue Zeitschrift über die Verbreitung des Deutschtums auf Erden,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, Nr. 40 (1902): 400-401, 15. “Verbreitung des Deutschtums auf Erden.” BAB/RKA 1001/1137: “Die Verteilung des Landsbesitzes in Deutsch-Südwestafrika und die Besiedlungsfrage,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, No. 39 (1902): 386-387, 8.

⁴⁹⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1138: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, “Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung unserer westafrikanischen Kolonien,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, No. 24 (1903): 244, 23.

The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (NAZ) wrote in 1902 about its desire for Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow to build more schools in DSWA. The NAZ was concerned that German settlers were “drowning in the middle of conversations filled with all sorts of peculiar, barbaric words.”⁴⁹⁶ In a German colony, the paper argued, “German must be [the only language] spoken between Germans and the native servants.”⁴⁹⁷

The *Deutsche Worte*, meanwhile, declared the colonial mission a success. “The German Colonial Congress,” it maintained, “has sufficiently proven that the alleged colonial fatigue, which should affect even the most active and optimistic in Germany, in truth does not exist. The exchange of ideas and thoughts clearly reveals that one has to make sacrifices for colonial purposes.”⁴⁹⁸ These sacrifices must continue, the *Deutsche Worte* argued, “not only because of Germany’s great power, but also in the hope that an economic boom will occur in the protected areas over time.”⁴⁹⁹ Even industrialization served the pro-colonial agenda, most notably in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. “That the railway to Windhoek is now open and the pier in Swakopmund looks very solid [are] encouraging facts. The one improves the value of the other, and both make for substantial improvements and transportation facilitation in the colony,” the paper concluded in September 1902.⁵⁰⁰

Descriptions of “coastal belts,” “open plateaus,” and “Angora goats,” and “prosperous farmland” all made colonialism real for citizens in the metropole. For most,

⁴⁹⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1136: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, “Sprachverwilderung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3. May 1902, 151.

⁴⁹⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1136: “Sprachverwilderung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3. May 1902, 151.

⁴⁹⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1139: “Die Zukunft Deutsch-Südwest-Afrikas,” *Deutsche Worte*, 23. October 1902, 63.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1139: “Die Aussichten in Südwestafrika,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 1. September 1902, 64-65.

it did not matter that the coast offered only limited prospects, or that settlers could only obtain land after they emigrated to DSWA. By the turn of the twentieth century, colonial conquest was no longer a fantasy that teased the imagination of aspiring imperialists. They helped make the *Heimat* abroad a reality for everyone, even prominent anti-colonialists like Chancellor Otto von Bismarck.⁵⁰¹

“Prince Bismarck is at the helm,” the DKZ wrote in 1889, “and steers with a master’s hand the vehicle of Germany’s foreign policy. But the sails must be swelled with a national enthusiasm and fresh determination when it comes to advancing our colonial enterprises [We must] stand together in colonial issues that affect the entire nation.”⁵⁰² Two years later, Bismarck confirmed his support in a letter to Göring:

The question of the settlement of the protectorate through immigrants . . . is of the greatest importance for [DSWA’s] future. A speedy settlement of the areas suitable for farming would contribute to a faster development of the country. . . . On the other hand, one cannot overlook that also here exists the danger of the prevalence of non-German interests in the protectorate.⁵⁰³

“The immigration of Boers and Cape colonists in large numbers would present serious impediments to a future German settlement,” Bismarck concluded.⁵⁰⁴

Publications about the world overseas brought the experiences of those living abroad to Germany. They also defined DSWA as an ideal instrument for the metropole to

⁵⁰¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1135: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutsche Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, “Fürst Bismarck und die deutsche Kolonialpolitik,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, Nr. 27 (6. July 1889), 68. For more on Bismarck’s initial opposition to German colonial expansion see Udo Kaulich, *Die Geschichte der ehemaligen Kolonie Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1884-1914): Eine Gesamtdarstellung*, 2nd Edition (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003).

⁵⁰² BAB/RKA 1001/1135: “Fürst Bismarck und die deutsche Kolonialpolitik,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, Nr. 27 (6. July 1889), 68.

⁵⁰³ Jeremy Sarkin-Hughes, *Germany’s Genocide of the Herero: Kaiser Wilhelm II, His General, His Settlers, His Soldiers* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2011), 62. Also see Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 10.

⁵⁰⁴ Sarkin-Hughes, *Germany’s Genocide of the Herero*, 62.

manifest a presence on the global stage. The media provided colonialists, aspiring and otherwise, an arena in which to consider a new life. Stories about distant mountain ranges, roaming herds of cattle, and African peoples gave Germans in the metropole an opportunity to encounter the *Heimat* abroad without actually leaving Europe. After 1884, the expansion of the *Heimat* ideal promoted the overseas empire and made it a known entity throughout German society.⁵⁰⁵

Conclusion

The overseas empire was far from a marginal interest for Germans during the imperial era. Rather than an inconsequential enterprise of the few, colonial conquest helped to define how Germans understood themselves in a globalizing world. Indeed, even if one did not agree with colonial expansion, one still had to reconcile with the reality of its existence. DSWA assumed an especially important role in the colonial discourse. Colonial advocates portrayed it as a future source of marketable exports and a place where German emigrants could preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage. Newspapers, books, advertisements, and political posters all disseminated variations of these assertions about the colonial world. In doing so, these media not only created a market for news about Africa, but also fashioned the framework in which Germans viewed the colonial empire. They also helped to determine the virtues that most clearly exemplified *Deutschtum* in colonial society.

DSWA also inspired German society to perceive the metropole and overseas empire as one joined unit—as a global *Heimat* that extended beyond the confined political and spatial boundaries of continental Europe. After 1884, many Germans started

⁵⁰⁵ Jaeger, “Colony as *Heimat*?” 2009.

to appropriate the colony as an extension of culture, memory, and tradition. Colonial expansion effectively expanded the *Heimat* ideal to include a distant, peripheral landscape by the turn of the twentieth century. Official reports sent between political officials and the AAKA, colonial *Eingaben*, and nationalist media promotions in Germany all expose this process. They provided links between *Auslandsdeutsche* and citizens in the metropole. In the process, these media enabled Germans to develop a greater familiarity with an untamed world defined by empire.

Chapter 4:

“*Mein Lieber Theodor*”: Hendrik Witbooi and German Perceptions of the Colonial Project in Southwest Africa, 1884-1905

“I Appeal to You!”

In March 1889, Captain Hendrik Witbooi, leader of the Witbooi Namaqua, sent a letter to the *Reichskommissar* of DSWA, Heinrich Ernst Göring.⁵⁰⁶ “I appeal to you,” he began, “be so good as to distance yourself from chiefs working treachery [against me]. I consider it ill-judged of Your Excellency to cooperate with those who cannot make peace, and are therefore envious of me.”⁵⁰⁷ “Stay neutral,” Witbooi continued, “and give us ammunition so [Jan Afrikaner and I] can fight it out together.”⁵⁰⁸

Witbooi’s call for German neutrality was in response to the effort of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft für Südwestafrikas* (German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa, DKGSWA) at enlisting indigenous African populations into so-called “protection treaties.” On the surface, protection treaties were nothing more than attempts by the colonial administration to establish amity with African leaders. Stability, after all, was the cornerstone of German settlement in the colony.⁵⁰⁹ In actuality, however, German authorities planned to use protection treaties as “speedy actions [to secure] certain areas

⁵⁰⁶ Hendrik Witbooi, “14. Witbooi an Göring vom Hornkranz,” 23. March 1889, in *Afrika den Afrikanern! Aufzeichnungen eines Nama-Häuptlings aus der Zeit der deutschen Eroberung Südwestafrikas 1884 bis 1894*, Hendrik Witbooi (München: JHW Dietz, 1982), 60-61. Hendrik Witbooi’s was called Knaob !Nanseb / Gabemab by the Namaqua, which means “The captain who disappears in the grass.” His Herero name was Korota.

⁵⁰⁷ Witbooi, “14. Witbooi an Göring vom Hornkranz,” 23. March 1889, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 60-61.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁰⁹ The Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 required colonial powers to “effectively administer” overseas territories in order to establish international recognition. Given this reality, peace in the protectorate was vital to German economic and political interests in DSWA.

for future colonial purposes . . . at a minimum cost.”⁵¹⁰ For Sigmund Israel, an employee in Adolf Lüderitz’s merchant enterprise, these agreements would make it possible “to achieve the cession of Damaraland or, at least, of a portion of territory large enough to open up a route to Central Africa.”⁵¹¹ C. G. Büttner, a former Rhenish missionary, was even more frank, writing in the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* that “the significance of [DSWA] will only become fully manifest if one does not take a narrow look at the situation, but looks upon it as a way of gaining access to Africa’s interior.”⁵¹²

Each treaty negotiation followed the same general framework. In exchange for political recognition, access to land, and trade rights, German leaders promised to protect friendly rulers against their regional adversaries.⁵¹³ Colonial officials additionally pledged to recognize a Chief’s jurisdiction over his people and to respect the customs of that community.⁵¹⁴ On the surface, protection agreements appeared to benefit both sides—colonist and colonized—at a “minimum cost.”⁵¹⁵ Africans could maintain a degree of national and social sovereignty, while German merchants and settler-colonists could economically exploit the region without fear of rebellion.⁵¹⁶ With peace and security

⁵¹⁰ *Koloniales Jahrbuch*, Vol. 2, 1889, referenced in Horst Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*”: *The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism (1884-1915)* (London: Zed Press, 1980), 27.

⁵¹¹ Sigmund Israel, quoted in *Cape Argus*, 7. February 1885. See Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*”, 26.

⁵¹² C.G. Büttner, quoted in *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* 1884, 303. See Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*”, 26.

⁵¹³ They also stipulated that Namibian communities could not sign treaties with other foreign governments or alienate land with “a different nation or member thereof” without the consent of the German colonial government. See Wolfgang Werner, “A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, No. 1, Special Issue: Namibia: Africa’s Youngest Nation (March 1993): 137.

⁵¹⁴ Horst Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*”: *The Struggle of the Herero and Nama against German Imperialism (1884-1915)* (London: Zed Press, 1980), 27.

⁵¹⁵ Horst Drechsler argues that protection treaties “constituted the minimum colonial program of the German Government.” For more on German protection treaties see Drechsler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*” 26-29.

⁵¹⁶ In the context of a colonial state, rebellion construes an unwarranted uprising by indigenous peoples against the colonial government. I use the term here to represent the language that German authorities used during the colonial period.

seemingly assured, a significant number of African peoples, including the so-called Red Nation, Reheboth Basters, Ovaherero (Herero), Bethanie people, the Topnaars under Piet Haibib, and the Berseba, negotiated some form of protection agreement during the formative years of German colonial rule.⁵¹⁷

It is important to note that German authorities were not simply taking advantage of communities unversed in modern views of diplomacy. On the contrary, most Africans viewed protection treaties as a way to remain independent from a weak, ineffective, and marginal German colonial administration. By acquiescing nominally to German officials, African peoples could continue their way of life insulated from threats or the prospect of violence.

Hendrik Witbooi and the Namaqua, however, categorically rejected every German protection treaty. Instead, they chose to ignore the colonial administration's authority and to challenge its presence in the region using all means at their disposal.⁵¹⁸ Indeed, their numerical superiority and reputation allowed the Witbooi Namaqua to defy the colonial government in several important ways. They attacked rival groups, raided those who cooperated with German officials, forbade white settlers from prospecting on their land, and refused to sell cattle, supplies, and land to the colonial government.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁷ Hendrik Witbooi, *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, translated by Annemarie Heywood and Eben Maasdorp, annotated by Brigitte Lau (Windhoek: National Archives of Namibia, 1989), 19-23. Also see H. Melber, "Das doppelte Vermächtnis der Geschichte: Nationwerdung, Kolonisierungsprozess und deutsche Fremdherrschaft in Namibia (ca. 1890 bis 1914)," *Diskurs. Bremer Beiträge zu Wissenschaft und Politik* (Bremen, 1982), 73-74.

⁵¹⁸ Similar approaches were taken by the Bondelswarts, Veldschoendragers, Fanzmanns, and Khauas.

⁵¹⁹ Christian Bochert, "The Witboois and the Germans in South West Africa: A Study of their Interaction between 1863 and 1905," (M.A. Thesis, University of Natal, 1980), 45 and George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 45 and 148.

Though regarded as masters of DSWA internationally, German authorities could affect very little on the ground during the first years of the colonial period.⁵²⁰

Land ownership, for example, was an issue that plagued German leaders from the start. Although colonial officials dispersed large tracts of land after 1884 to various industrial and agricultural enterprises, very little colonization actually took place before the turn of the twentieth century. Africans were wary of selling land to Europeans wholesale. The notion of private land ownership was little known in Southwest Africa before German colonialists arrived in 1884. Historically, local populations utilized the land on a communal basis.

Rigid territorial boundaries did not exist in DSWA formally before the arrival of German officials. Only after a series of natural disasters upset the balance of power, particularly the infamous rinderpest pandemic of 1897, did local African leaders start to sell land to German authorities. On one occasion, *Reichskommissar* Göring had to personally make a request to Witbooi for the restitution of his horse, which Namaqua forces had captured in a raid.⁵²¹ As a result of such actions, tensions between Germans and Namaqua increased steadily throughout the 1880s, eventually culminating in a series of violent clashes between 1889-1894.

Although Witbooi contested the German administration's authority at every turn, he corresponded with colonial officials on a regular basis, beginning with Göring in March 1886.⁵²² These diplomatic exchanges allowed Witbooi to defend Namaqua sovereignty beyond the battlefield. They also provided him a means to appeal his case to

⁵²⁰ See Werner, "A Brief History of Land Dispossession in Namibia," 138.

⁵²¹ Witbooi, "15. Witbooi an Göring," 11. April 1889, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 61. Also see Dreschler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 34.

⁵²² Jan Jonker Afrikaner, "11. Afrikaner an Witbooi," 20. March 1889, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 54.

an international audience.⁵²³ In spite of their confrontational tone, Witbooi's letters were often filled with religious undertones that reflected his pious background. As a child, he had temporarily enrolled as a student at a Rhenish Mission school.⁵²⁴ This experience led him to develop a deep, personal belief in Christianity. In a letter to Captain Hermanus van Wyk, the first leader of the Reheboth Basters, for example, Witbooi wrote that "we humans cannot make peace [but] can only pray earnestly that God who is the very foundation of peace, may in His own time let it come to pass that one of the two combatants shall ask for peace from his own heart."⁵²⁵

This blend of political realism and religious devotion enabled Witbooi to capture the attention of a wide audience. Moreover, given his fluent command of German, Witbooi attracted the interest of citizens in the metropole, as well. After reading excerpts of his messages in newspapers and travel accounts, Germans were exposed to an altogether different picture of colonial life than they had likely envisioned beforehand. Suddenly the lurid descriptions of the Africans in colonial fantasy seemed inadequate, if not entirely false.

By March 1889, Witbooi had become a well-known and respected figure among the German leadership. As a result, Göring and subsequent German leaders were forced to treat the Namaqua as serious rivals that they could not simply ignore. Witbooi's letter

⁵²³ Witbooi also recorded his interactions with German and Namibian leaders in a private journal. German soldiers captured this, along with a substantial collection of notes and personal messages, after an attack at Hornkranz in April 1893. These materials are now kept in a public collection at the National Archives of Namibia (NAN).

⁵²⁴ Witbooi was a devout Protestant who dedicated his life to the church. He and his wife Katharina (!Nanses) were baptized by RMS Missionary Johannes Olpp in 1868. The following year, he became a church elder and sought guidance through divine revelation only. Even as his political aspirations grew in the years before he became chief of the Namaqua, Witbooi never forgot his religious teachings. See Witbooi, "20. Witbooi an J. Olpp," 3. January 1890, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 73-77.

⁵²⁵ Witbooi, "69. Friedensverhandlung," 6. August 1892, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 150.

of 23 March 1889, therefore, did not go unnoticed. “I truly do desire peace,” he avowed, “but not such a treacherous peace as this [treaty] clearly is. Furthermore, you must know that I harm no one who has not harmed me; but whoever harms me will be harmed in return.”⁵²⁶

Colonial Encounters and Wilhelmine Germany

African populations helped to establish new perceptions of Germany’s colonial project for German citizens throughout the global empire. In contrast to sociologist George Steinmetz, who maintains that pre-colonial ethnographies shaped German colonial policy exclusively, the evidence here shows that interactions between Germans and Africans created new impressions of colonial domination beyond the confines of Europe.⁵²⁷ An emphasis on colonial exchanges in DSWA reorients our understanding of the relationship between the German nation-state in Europe and its African empire.

I define colonial encounters as the moments when Germans and Africans interacted with one another, such as through treaty negotiations, trade networks, written correspondence, and military conflict. They also comprised informal points of contact, notably those between metropole and colony made possible by national and international media outlets. Illustrations of distant regions and exotic animals, tales of exploration, self-congratulatory reports of scientific discovery, and accounts written by African leaders all served as informal links to DSWA. These networks allowed Germans who had never left the metropole to encounter the so-called “periphery” without actually travelling overseas. In focusing on colonial encounters in DSWA, I show that people in Windhoek,

⁵²⁶ Witbooi, “14. Witbooi an Göring vom Hornkranz,” 23. March 1889, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 61.

⁵²⁷ Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 2007.

Swakopmund, and Otjimbingwe were just as integral to Germany's national development as the merchants, soldiers, and settlers who first ventured abroad in 1884.

Hendrik Witbooi altered German perceptions of the colonial project in several fundamental ways. First, he revealed that pre-colonial discourses on colonialism were woefully inaccurate.⁵²⁸ Though stories of territorial and sexual conquest filled the imaginations of many colonial enthusiasts before 1884, colonial *realities* produced an entirely different picture. DSWA was not a land where imperial ambition could easily penetrate. To the contrary, it was a place of extremes. The climate was hostile, the resources were scarce, and the indigenous African populations, who in some cases had lived there for centuries, were worthy adversaries. It was a place not suitable for everyone, regardless of his or her social station in Germany. By 1894, ten years after Germany occupied the colony, colonial encounters had effectively exposed pre-colonial German notions exactly for what they were—fantasies.

Second, African peoples did not exhibit the same traits as those ascribed to “the redskins” of pre-colonial ethnographies.⁵²⁹ They were neither submissive to Europeans, nor uncontrollably violent or incapable of comprehending “enlightened reason.” Instead, many communities, including the Ovaherero and Witbooi Namaqua, were well versed in European languages and practiced Christianity. They also possessed advanced weaponry and were capable of supplanting Germany's colonial authority, at least initially, at any time. The professed “empty spaces” of Southwest Africa were not empty at all. Powerful communities capable of defending themselves occupied the territory instead. In 1893,

⁵²⁸ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 2.

⁵²⁹ Karl Dove, *Südwestafrika. Kriegs- und Friedensbilder aus der ersten deutschen Kolonie*, in *The Devil's Handwriting*, Steinmetz, 146.

when Margarete Witbooi, Hendrik Witbooi's daughter, warned German soldiers to "hurry back to the big ships," authorities on the ground did not take her words lightly. German colonists were well aware that Witbooi had the means to "chase all of the white men out of the country." That fear, above all, acted as *the* most influential factor to shape German colonial policy during the 1890s.

Finally, colonial encounters forced German citizens and settlers to question their motivations for supporting the colonial project in Africa. Before 1884, seductive impressions of conquest created an image of endless potential for those adventurous enough to make the journey overseas. These ideas were so meaningful that they shaped the collective view of colonialism until it "acquired the status of factual 'reality'" in German society.⁵³⁰ In the world beyond the imagination, however, conquest for conquest's sake quickly proved a poor justification for imperial domination. After the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* designated DSWA a settler colony in 1894, rationales for maintaining the colonial state became even more important.

Settlers, in particular, increasingly looked to nationalism and the *Heimat* ideal to justify their presence in DSWA. They altered popular images of "the nation" to include the colonial empire. Traditional German myths, songs, and stories, together with photographs and newspaper accounts, incorporated a colonial dynamic. Suddenly desert landscapes were just as German as lush forests and snow-capped mountains. Over time, German settlers and citizens increasingly viewed the overseas *Heimat* as an extension of the national domain.⁵³¹ At the turn of the twentieth century, colonial encounters had

⁵³⁰ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 3.

⁵³¹ Alon Confino has made a similar argument about collective memory in Württemberg and the formation of German nationalism after 1871. See Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg*,

effectively transformed imperial domination into a national issue, signified most clearly by the so-called “Hottentot Elections” of 1907 in Germany. Imperial ideas of national self-understanding replaced those that looked to the confines of the European continent exclusively. “The boundaries between *Heimat* and the world of heathens,” Gustav von Bodelschwingh, the well-known German protestant minister, would later say, “ran together.”⁵³²

My focus on colonial encounters expands the source base of this study. This chapter draws on materials that are not entirely predicated on pre-colonial interpretations of Africa. Sources published by so-called “armchair colonialists” with no lived experience overseas, therefore, do not represent the archival foundation of this study. Instead, I reference newspaper articles, correspondence, and political decrees written by people in DSWA as direct responses to actual moments of colonial contact.

In addition, I also use sources written by Africans themselves, particularly Witbooi’s correspondence with German officials and excerpts from his personal journal. Although cultural and political biases remain in these accounts, these materials effectively illuminate the multifaceted quality of Germany’s imperial project in Africa. They also reveal how Namaqua peoples manipulated colonial rule and the degree to which they changed the image of colonial life back in Europe.

The Herero were another powerful community that had a major impact on German colonial policy in DSWA. Led by paramount chief Samuel Maharero, the Herero

Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 9.

⁵³² Gustav von Bodelschwingh, *Friedrich von Bodelschwingh. Ein Lebensbild*, quoted in Jens Jaeger, “Colony as *Heimat*? The Formation of Colonial Identity in Germany around 1900,” *German History* 27, No. 4 (2009): 471.

cooperated with German leaders during the early years of colonial rule. By the end of the 1890s, the brutal nature of the German occupation culminated in hostilities between the sides, however. Most of the recent scholarly literature on German colonialism in Africa has focused on this history, most notably the German-Herero-Namaqua War and simultaneous genocide between 1904-1907.

I will focus my study to interactions between the Witbooi Namaqua and German settlers exclusively. My intention is not to downplay the historical importance of the Herero simply to elevate the status of another community, but rather to unfold the tangled relationships between colony and metropole that existed beyond racial segregation and genocide. By exposing the perspective of the colonized, I demonstrate that people in Windhoek, Swakopmund, and Otjimbingwe were just as integral to German colonial history as the missionaries, merchants, and settlers who first ventured abroad during the mid-nineteenth century.

Hendrik Witbooi and German Perceptions of Colonial Rule

Hendrik Witbooi's diplomatic relationship with colonial leaders offers an ideal case to analyze how colonial encounters influenced German perceptions of the imperial project overseas. In the late-nineteenth century, Witbooi was arguably the most famous African leader in DSWA. Even before Germany colonized Southwest Africa, he had interacted extensively with Germans, most notably Protestant missionaries of the *Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft* (RMG). Along with receiving some schooling at a

mission station during his adolescence, Witbooi learned a variety of trades, such as carpentry and various artisanal skills, and also German.⁵³³

In 1868, missionary Johannes Olpp baptized Witbooi and his wife, which inspired him to dedicate his life to the church.⁵³⁴ By his own admission, Witbooi vowed to act in terms of divine revelation. He also promised to abjure all non-Christian principles that threatened to undermine his political and religious destiny.⁵³⁵ Though he eventually vacated his position as a church elder in 1883, Witbooi remained a devout man for his entire life.⁵³⁶ After becoming leader of the Namaqua in 1884, he entered into a protracted military campaign against the Herero, who earlier that year had finalized a protection agreement with the German colonial administration.⁵³⁷ Witbooi's campaign against the Herero was the first sign of his total disregard for German authority.⁵³⁸ At no time did the supposed threat of German military might dissuade Witbooi from challenging the Herero for access to land, cattle, and trade rights.⁵³⁹

For this reason, above all, Witbooi personified the greatest threat to German overseas expansion in the minds of most citizens and settlers before 1904. A variety of

⁵³³ See the *Kirchenbuch Gibeon* collection at the Archives of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church (ELC) in Windhoek, Namibia. Brigitte Lau remains the leading authority on Witbooi's early life, and is the only historian to investigate this collection thoroughly. See Lau "The Oppressed as Oppressors – Unsolved Issues of Namibian Historiography," in *Africa Collected Papers*, Spiegel 5 (1985) and "Kleine Zusammenfassung zur Dokumentation des Ortsnamens Windhoek," in *Mitteilungen der SWA, Wissenschaft und Geschichte* 29 (1988). Also see Lau, *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, iii.

⁵³⁴ Witbooi's wife's name was Katharina (!Nanses). "20. Witbooi an J. Olpp," 3. January 1890, in Witbooi, *Afrika den Afrikanern!* 73-77.

⁵³⁵ "20. Witbooi an Olpp," 3. January 1890, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 73-77.

⁵³⁶ Johannes Olpp, "Beitrag zur Geschichte des Witbooi Stammes, für die Barmer Missionsgesellschaft," referenced in Witbooi, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, Lau antn., iii.

⁵³⁷ Dreschler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 33.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 34.

⁵³⁹ Dreschler convincingly points out that Germany's inability to protect the Herero during this period eventually convinced Samuel Maharero to cancel his treaty with Germany.

media expressed their contempt for Witbooi, often concentrating on his physical appearance and the Namaqua's supposed "pre-modern" culture. First Lieutenant Franz Joseph von Bülow, who was among the first German officers to arrive in DSWA, for example, argued that Witbooi never overcame "the animal instincts of [his] primitive people, which had inherited very rudimentary moral concepts from its crude ancestors."⁵⁴⁰ His propensity for violence, Bülow concluded, made him a perpetual threat in the region.

Hugo von Francois, another soldier in the German colonial *Schutztruppe*, advanced a similar portrayal of Witbooi. In his memoirs, Francois likened him to an "animal-like" creature with an "unpleasant skin-color" and a "pronounced ugliness" that was incapable of extinguishing the "fanatical fire" underlying his ruthless demeanor.⁵⁴¹ Though accounts like these found their way into popular narratives about colonialism in Germany, former soldiers were not the only ones to publish racist exposés about the Witbooi Namaqua.

Members of the academic community, for instance, used colonial subjects for their own purposes, as well. Unlike military personnel, these institutions maintained that their conclusions were based on "objective analysis" and scientific reason, thereby establishing an air of legitimacy within certain sectors of society.⁵⁴² Hans Schinz, a Swiss botanist, for instance, claimed in 1891 that because the "Hottentots" were an incomplete form of civilization "on the road to extinction," Witbooi was incapable of modern forms

⁵⁴⁰ Franz Joseph von Bülow, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Drei Jahre im Lande Hendrik Witboois* (Berlin, E.S. Mittler, 1896), 156.

⁵⁴¹ Hugo von Francois, *Nama and Damara*, quoted in Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 154. He was also the brother of Curt von Francois, who served as Governor of DSWA from 1889-1893.

⁵⁴² For an excellent study on the origins of anthropology in Imperial Germany see Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

of reason.⁵⁴³ In his travel narrative, *Nach Deutsch-Namaland. (Südwestafrika)*, Dr. R. F. Ludloff described Witbooi as a “clever, diplomatically cunning fox,” likening him to Richard III, “the bloodiest figure in the Shakespearian royal dramas.”⁵⁴⁴ He also described him as a “man of middle height, well proportioned and built with a Mongol’s head that [was] no different from his fellow tribesmen.”⁵⁴⁵

Many colonial and international news organizations also regularly portrayed the Witbooi Namaqua as dangerous agents with no regard for civil order. The *Cape Times*, for instance, threatened in February 1894 that Witbooi would “fight [the Germans] to the end,” even if he only has “one man left.”⁵⁴⁶ In a similar fashion, the *Süd Afrikanische Zeitung* (SAZ) identified him as the root cause of every trouble confronting the German colonial administration, lamenting that Witbooi “uses periods of peace . . . to recruit new allies in order to plunge the country into more unrest.”⁵⁴⁷ Some outlets even advocated extreme measures against Witbooi. The *National Zeitung*, a nationalist newspaper in Germany, printed that it hoped the *Schutztruppe* would “soon eliminate Hendrik Witbooi and thereby ensure peace and order in the protectorate forever.”⁵⁴⁸ So, too, did some members of the RMG. Missionary August Schreiber, for instance, privately clamored in a

⁵⁴³ Dr. Hans Schinz, “Vortrag des Herrn Dr. Hans Schinz über die Bedeutung von Südwestafrika als Kolonie,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* 4 (July 1891): 105. Also see Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 156.

⁵⁴⁴ Dr. R.F. Ludloff, *Nach Deutsch-Namaland. (Südwestafrika)* (Coburg: Dietz Hofbuchdruckerei), 91-92.

⁵⁴⁵ Ludloff, *nach Deutsch-Namaland*, 91.

⁵⁴⁶ Bundesarchiv-Lichterfelde (hereafter BAB)/Reichskolonialamt (hereafter RKA) 1001/1485: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Witbooi Interviewed. He Will Fight To The End,” *The Cape Times*, 3. February 1894, 87.

⁵⁴⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Deutschland und Wittbooi,” *Süd Afrikanische Zeitung*, 15. September 1894, 132.

⁵⁴⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1485: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *National Zeitung*, 9. January 1894, 56.

letter to his superiors for the German colonial administration to “put an end to Hendrik Witbooi’s business once and for all.”⁵⁴⁹

Taken together, supporters of colonial expansion used these reports to spread doubt among those who claimed that Witbooi was not a threat to Germany’s imperial goals in Africa. Lurid descriptions, however, were only part of a larger colonial discourse that proliferated between colony and metropole during the era. Assessments of colonial life, as I showed in chapter three, had a profound impact on how Germans viewed the empire and their position in the world. With portrayals of DSWA seemingly everywhere, including books, newspapers, periodicals, political testimonials, social clubs, museums, schools, and zoos, the links between the colonial and European worlds loomed large in the minds of many German citizens. From colonial officials like Hermann Hesse who viewed overseas conquest as “the bulwark of *Deutschtum* abroad,” to field workers like Otto Seyfarth, who simply wished to “see activity in the protectorate come to fruition,” colonialism had a very real impact on the lives of German citizens by the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵⁰ Apart from fueling colonial or political debates exclusively, these commentaries also shaped how Africans were represented in the German public discourse.

Tobacconists, for example, catered to the erotic fantasies of colonial enthusiasts by printing images of *Hereromädchen* (Herero girls) on their packaging.⁵⁵¹ Coffee companies used portraits of black African women to affirm the quality of their beans.⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁹ Missionary August Schreiber, “Brief an Dr. Kayser,” quoted in Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 155.

⁵⁵⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1181: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen., Otto Seyfarth, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 15. June 1907, 14.

⁵⁵¹ David Ciarlo, “Picturing Genocide in German Consumer Culture, 1904-10,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., (New York: Routledge, 2011), 69-89.

⁵⁵² Ciarlo, “Picturing Genocide,” 80, 70.

Youth magazines gave children opportunities to escape into “exotic domains” where different social rules applied.⁵⁵³ Anthropologists attempted to shift the paradigms of scientific analysis by studying *Naturvölker* (“natural peoples”) as faceless objects, enabling them to assert the abnormality of Africans scientifically.⁵⁵⁴ Popular novelists used reports of war and violence overseas to publish romanticized accounts of faraway battles, making the realities of colonial bloodshed tangible for a continental audience.⁵⁵⁵ Though characterizations like these typify the contemporary colonial discourse on Africa and epitomize Europe’s dominance over the continent, they belie the significant degree to which Africans in turn influenced modern German history. They also tell us little about how Germans altered their perceptions of the colonial project in response to news of events in DSWA.

Though Hendrik Witbooi and the Namaqua are implicated in a decisive period of German colonial history, scholars have generally ignored their contribution to the formative period of Germany’s occupation. Colonial warfare and genocide have attracted the most significant attention from historians. DSWA’s pre-genocide era is more than just a footnote to the German-Herero-Namaqua War, however. Though 1884 marked the formal beginning of German rule in Africa, colonial leaders were hardly masters of the

⁵⁵³ Jeff Bowersox, “Boy’s and Girl’s Own Empires: Gender and the Uses of the Colonial World in *Kaiserreich* Youth Magazines,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., (New York: Routledge, 2011), 67.

⁵⁵⁴ Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 240.

⁵⁵⁵ Among the post popular novels at the turn of the twentieth century was Gustav Frensees’s *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest: Ein Feldzugsbericht*, which tells the story of a young German youth who goes to fight Herero during the German-Herero-Namaqua war. By 1940, over 400,000 copies had been sold in Germany. See Jörg Lehmann, *Fraternity, Frenzy, and Genocide in German War Literature, 1906-1936 German Colonialism and National Identity*, Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., (New York: Routledge, 2011), 115-125.

region. All of the northern territory, including a majority of Ovamboland (central DSWA), remained outside the so-called “police zone” until 1905.⁵⁵⁶ No sizable *Schutztruppe* yet roamed the territory. No African population welcomed German colonists voluntarily. To paraphrase a member of Adolf Lüderitz’s merchant enterprise, German authority was “simply nonexistent” in 1884.⁵⁵⁷

German supremacy in Southwest Africa, therefore, was never an inevitable certainty. In fact, the evidence more accurately suggests that “German” Southwest Africa did not even constitute a formal German colony before 1894. The territory only began to assume the characteristics of a European colony, such as the development of a capitalist economy and colonial-political infrastructure, after Hendrik Witbooi signed a protection treaty in September 1894.⁵⁵⁸ In the ten-year period between German colonization in 1884 and Witbooi’s defeat in 1894, neither a robust colonial administration, nor a small moneyed cadre directed imperial policy in DSWA. Colonial encounters, most especially those between Germany’s first colonial governors and Hendrik Witbooi, shaped the national perception of colonialism more than any other factor.

In the remainder of this chapter I will examine two examples of how colonial encounters generated new perspectives of the German colonial project: Witbooi’s interactions with colonial officials between 1884-1904 and stories published in colonial, German, and international newspapers during the same period. Witbooi was well aware

⁵⁵⁶ Brigitte Lau, *Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner’s Time* (Windhoek: Documentary Publications, 1987), especially chapter’s two and three.

⁵⁵⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/2151: Gebiet des Häuptlings Jan Jonker Afrikaner, Heinrich Vogelsang, “Bericht an die Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 4. March 1885, 3-4.

⁵⁵⁸ Witbooi was eventually signed a protection treaty with colonial officials after a series of protracted battles against German forces in September 1894. See Theodor Leutwein, *Die Kämpfe mit Hendrik Witboi 1894 und Witbois Ende* (Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, date unknown).

that his actions had a major impact on German colonial policy. On numerous occasions, he acted to shape events in decisive ways. In August 1892, he wrote a letter to the British Magistrate in Walvis Bay. It later appeared in a number of German and international presses:

It now appears that the German himself is that man who is of another nation, and is doing exactly what he said we would be protected from. He rules autocratically, enforcing his government[']s laws. Right and truth do not interest him; he does not consult the country's chiefs; for he himself makes the laws for our country, following only his own judgment.⁵⁵⁹

In sweeping prose, Witbooi described Germany as the true aggressor in DSWA. "Their whole bearing is military; they have all the instruments of war; they have brought firearms and cannons, they build fortifications; they have soldiers: in a word, they have come to this country prepared for war," he concluded.⁵⁶⁰ The sophistication of Witbooi's indictment demonstrated that he was a worthy adversary for an international audience. The weight of its impact was not lost on Germans in the metropole. Not only did this letter and others like it compel citizens to question the future of Germany's colonial project in Africa, but it also forced them to question the imperial fantasies that gave rise to overseas expansion in the first place.

"I Am Still Your Friend!"

After becoming leader of the Namaqua in 1884, Witbooi started a protracted campaign for supremacy in southern DSWA.⁵⁶¹ Though he initially focused his attacks against the Herero, Witbooi also fought with other communities in the region, including

⁵⁵⁹ Witbooi, "68. Witbooi an die Engländer in Walfischbucht," 4. August 1892, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!* 143-148.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 146.

⁵⁶¹ Dreschler, "Let Us Die Fighting," 33.

those who signed protection agreements with the German colonial administration. These early conflicts established the foundation of all future talks between Witbooi and German colonial authorities. They also allowed each side to determine what inspired the actions of the other and to try to navigate into a more favorable diplomatic position.

In 1886, for example, Göring sent a letter to Witbooi intended to end the war between the Herero and Namaqua:

I have always heard, and read too, that you are a reasonable man. So act reasonably now; realize that the best course is to return home and live in peace with your old father and your tribe. To recapitulate: The German Government cannot permit chieftains, who have placed themselves under German protection, to support your enterprise of plunging a protected chiefdom into war. . . . I trust you will attend my words.⁵⁶²

Witbooi ignored the letter entirely. Though we cannot ascertain his motives with certainty, Witbooi likely deemed Göring's demands as unenforceable and chose not to respond. On another occasion in September 1886, Witbooi received a message from Göring's deputy, Louis Nels, who invited him to a conciliatory meeting in Walvis Bay.

Witbooi took the opportunity to establish himself as the true power in DSWA:

I understand that you want to negotiate peace, you who call yourself a "deputy." How shall I respond? You are someone else's representative and I am a free and autonomous man answering to none other but God. So I have nothing further to say to you. A deputy is less powerful than someone fully authorized to act, so I have decided not to comply with your request."⁵⁶³

⁵⁶² Göring, "Göring an Witbooi," quoted in *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism*, David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen (London: Bloomsbury House, 2010), 50.

⁵⁶³ Witbooi, "Witbooi an Nels," 27. September 1886, quoted in *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, Olusoga and Erichsen, 50. Also see Dreschler, "Let Us Die Fighting!" 34.

Three years later, Witbooi captured a German flag after defeating Noreseb Manasee, leader of the so-called Red Nation, at his headquarters in Hoachanas.⁵⁶⁴ After the battle, Witbooi wrote to Göring and explained that he should not view his actions as a premeditated effort “intended to kill people,” but as a military attack designed to “destroy [Manasse’s] Headquarters.”⁵⁶⁵ Witbooi then asked how he should care for the flag, as he admitted it was “an alien object” to him.⁵⁶⁶ Given such events, it is unsurprising that Göring described the situation in DSWA as “not very encouraging” to German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck.⁵⁶⁷

German leaders followed suit with their own diplomatic reproaches. Göring, in particular, found it difficult to show Witbooi any measure of respect at all. On 21 November 1885, for example, Göring demanded that Witbooi cease his hostile movements in the colony. He went so far as to argue in his letter that they do not befit a “civilized nation”:

It is now in the interest of both tribal nations, and of Germany, that the country shall be fully pacified. . . . In the first place you are not an autonomous chief and are therefore not entitled to make war under the customary laws of the country. In civilized countries you would be regarded as a rebel and dealt with accordingly.⁵⁶⁸

Göring’s contempt for Witbooi principally stemmed from his own inability to mount an effective strategy against him. With no sizable settler community or *Schutztruppe* to

⁵⁶⁴ Witbooi, “15. Witbooi an Göring,” 11. April 1889, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 61.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/2126: “Göring an Bismarck,” 21. June 1888, in Dreschler, “*Let Us Die Fighting*,” 34.

⁵⁶⁸ Göring, “8. Göring an Witbooi,” 21. November 1885, in *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, Annemarie Heywood and Eben Maasdorp, eds. (Windhoek: Springwell Books, 1990), 11-12. By “autonomous chief,” Göring means a recognized and, therefore, legitimate chief by German authorities.

enforce his pronouncements, Göring hoped that bluster and resolve alone would pressure Witbooi to submit to German rule.

On another occasion, Göring responded to a letter from Witbooi by threatening violence. He wrote that the “German government can no longer tolerate your constantly threatening territories and people – again and again – that are under German protection. Work, trade, and development all suffer as a result of your actions.”⁵⁶⁹ “We will try to prevent this with every means at our disposal,” he concluded.⁵⁷⁰ Witbooi answered the following week. He derided Göring’s tone and his dismissive outlook for Witbooi’s situation:

I have received your letter and heard what Your Honor says. But my dear Sir! – This letter in which Your Honor raises great, weighty, and grave topics astonishes me. . . . You have not left me room and scope to ponder all in my heart, so that I might answer you from my own good judgment and free choice. You have not approached me as an impartial peacemaker, but uttered abrupt orders as to what I should do.⁵⁷¹

Witbooi then identified Göring as the actual threat to peace in DSWA, commenting that he “cannot fully penetrate the depth of [Göring’s] motives, or what [his] intentions are.”⁵⁷² The Herero, he continued, “came and killed my women and children, as you probably have heard. And it may be that in order to guide this inhuman disposition of the Herero to a genuine recognition of the truth and to the fear of divine justice, God afflicted these Herero with the rod of war.”⁵⁷³ His conclusion left few guessing who was the real power in DSWA:

⁵⁶⁹ Göring, “24a. Göring an Witbooi,” 20. May 1890, *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 85.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Witbooi, “25. Witbooi an Göring,” 29. May 1890, *Afrika den Afrikaner!*, 86.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 88.

I say all of this, dear Sir, not in arrogance or as a challenge or by my own human authority. Pray understand this well because I cannot put the matter in any other way than as it stands before me. Hoping that Your Honor will give this careful consideration and that we may come to live together in mutual understanding. I remain your friend and captain.⁵⁷⁴

As Witbooi's correspondence with Göring shows, the Namaqua were anything but passive figures in the face of the German colonial administration. Witbooi's actions, moreover, presented German settlers and citizens alike with a glimpse of the realities of colonial life. The Namaqua, having lifted the veil of colonial fantasy, forced Germans to reconsider their station in the new *Heimat* abroad.

Aside from published reports from the *Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung* (Foreign Office – Colonial Division, AAKA), newspapers were the most common way that people in the metropole learned about events in DSWA. By the early 1890s, multiple German presses reported on the colonial sphere on a daily basis. Though DSWA was not the only German overseas colony, it received considerable attention due in no small part to Witbooi. On 23 October 1893, for example, the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (WAZ) published an account on Germany's seeming perpetual state of war in DSWA. Titled "Bad News from Damaraland," the article explained that "because Major [Curt von] Francois had to wait for an expected steam ship from Hamburg, Witbooi [has] remained unmolested and has found time to occupy Baiweg, a result that we have long feared."⁵⁷⁵ "Two days journey from [Baiweg] to Horebis" the piece continued, "[Witbooi] fell upon thirteen wagons whose leaders quietly took the road without any clue of danger. The ambush took place in a narrow mountain gorge and the Witbooi band had hidden

⁵⁷⁴ Witbooi, "25. Witbooi an Göring," 29. May 1890, *Afrika den Afrikaner!*, 89.

⁵⁷⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1484: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, "Schlimme Nachrichten aus Damaraland," *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24. October 1893, 63.

itself so well that the wagoner's did not notice anything until they saw the guns directed at them."⁵⁷⁶

The paper then explained that leaders initially thought that "100 German soldiers was sufficient to render Witbooi harmless, [but] today there are about 350 men in place and these numbers must be considered too low. The only prospect of a quick end to the war rests on the success of an opportune surprise attack and the capture of Witbooi."⁵⁷⁷ A year later, the *Berliner Neuesten Nachrichten* reported that "Much like Napoleon Bonaparte," Witbooi has proven himself to be "a character that makes history."⁵⁷⁸ By making history, Witbooi changed pre-colonial impressions of Africa *and* Africans in significant ways. As a result, he not only forced Germans to reconsider DSWA's situation within the global empire, but also whether the colony could evolve into a *Heimat* abroad.

This national reconsideration was apparent in a number of ways. The clearest signs that Witbooi influenced colonial policy came with Kaiser Wilhelm's dismissal of Göring's as *Reichskommissar* in May 1889. The Kaiser named Major Curt von Francois, a German army officer who had previously served as a paid mercenary for King Leopold II in the Belgian Congo, as his replacement.⁵⁷⁹ A fanatical racist, Francois was shocked after his appointment to learn that the Witbooi Namaqua and other local populations were better armed than their German counterparts. He also lamented that they still controlled vast swaths of territory and addressed colonial officials in dismissive tones. "The

⁵⁷⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1484: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, "Schlimme Nachrichten aus Damaraland," *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24. October 1893, 63.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, "Hendrik Witbooi," *Berliner Neuesten Nachrichten*, 29. August 1894, 121.

⁵⁷⁹ Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, 56.

Europeans have failed to give the black man the right kind of treatment,” he wrote to Dr. Krauel in the AAKA three months after his arrival.⁵⁸⁰ “They made too many concessions, granting all his wishes without bearing in mind that this is only interpreted as a sign of weakness. Nothing but relentless severity will lead to success.”⁵⁸¹

In spite of Francois’ eagerness to meet Witbooi on the battlefield, he faced a difficult situation. On the one hand, he believed that DSWA’s future prosperity would require African laborers to work for German settlers, making war a potentially hazardous strategy.⁵⁸² On the other hand, Francois recognized that if the power dynamic in DSWA did not soon change, Germany’s presence in the colony might altogether disappear. To complicate matters further, the fragile peace between German colonial forces and the Herero came into question after the unexpected death of paramount chief Kamaherero in October 1890.⁵⁸³ In response to this escalating situation, Francois sent a request for reinforcements. “I consider it a matter of urgent necessity,” he wrote, “to bring the [colonial] force to a strength of 50 men, to equip it with the latest small-bore repeating rifles and to make available a cannon complete with 100 shells and 50 shrapnels [sic].”⁵⁸⁴ Francois was desperate to act and pursued the only course of action that he seemingly understood.

The language of his dispatch reflects that reality clearly. Indeed, he had seemingly decided that violence was inevitable even before he ever sent a letter to Witbooi. Francois

⁵⁸⁰ Francois, “Francois an Krauel,” 29. October 1889, quoted in Dreschler, “*Let Us Die Fighting!*,” 43.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² BAB/RKA 1001/1134e: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutschsüdwestafrika, Curt von Francois, “Bemerkungen zu der Denkschrift der Deutschen Kolonial Gesellschaft: Die Ansiedelung einer Deutschen Gemeinde in Süd-West-Afrika,” 3. March 1891, 54-56.

⁵⁸³ Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (Stuttgart: Paderborn, 2012), 122.

⁵⁸⁴ Francois, “Francois an Bismarck,” 6. August 1889, quoted in Dreschler, “*Let Us Die Fighting!*,” 63, fn159.

eventually defended his use of military force years later. “Only serious, strong-minded and domineering actions against foreign nations, as well as quick diplomacy and battles successes,” he argued, “could excite the support of the German people.”⁵⁸⁵

At the same time, Witbooi began to recognize the growing dangers of German colonialism. Though only a few hundred settlers made up the bulk of Germany’s presence in DSWA in 1890, Francois’ antipathy for Africans and the arrival of military reinforcements from Europe suggested that the Witbooi Namaqua could not prevent German colonization on their own.⁵⁸⁶ Aware that German settlers planned to make the colony their own, Witbooi moved to unite DSWA’s various African communities together in common cause against Germany.⁵⁸⁷ He began this process by trying to reconcile with the Herero. On 30 May 1890, Witbooi asked Captain Maharero Tjamuaha (Kamaherero) to abandon his protection agreements with the colonial government:

I learn from Dr. Göring’s letter that you have given yourself into German protection, and that Dr. Göring has thus gained the power to tell you what to do, and to dispose as he wills over our affairs, particularly in this war of ours with its long history. . . . This dry land is known by two names only, Hereroland and Namaland. Hereroland belongs to the Herero nation, and is an autonomous realm. And Namaland belongs to all the Red nations, and these too are autonomous realms – just as it is said of the White man’s countries, Germany and England, and so on, whatever these countries are called.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁵ Werner Tabel, “Die Literatur der Kolonialzeit Südwestafrikas: Memoiren berühmter Persönlichkeiten, Teil 3: Curt von Francois, in *Afrikanischer Heimatkalender* (Windhoek: Informationsausschuss der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Namibia), 78.

⁵⁸⁶ Olusoga and Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust*, 62.

⁵⁸⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Deutschland und Witbooi,” *Süd-Afrikanische-Zeitung*, 15. September 1894, 132.

⁵⁸⁸ Witbooi, “26. Witbooi an Kamaherero,” 30. May 1890, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 89-90.

Later in the letter, Witbooi acknowledged that he was responsible for the Herero's problems in the region. "This war which has been waged between us for so long [has driven] you to the German Government," he lamented.⁵⁸⁹ "But my dear Captain," he continued, "do you realize what you have done? Perhaps in your heart you saw only me before you, all your life a nuisance and a source of trouble. . . . [I]t seems to me that you [have taken] little account of yourself, of your land and of your people, and your heirs."⁵⁹⁰ Witbooi saved his most dire warning for the conclusion, however. He asserted that Kamaherero would "not be satisfied with Göring's dispensations, for he will not act according to your will, or traditional law, or customs. Then it will be too late, for you have already given him every right, and he will no longer bend to your ways."⁵⁹¹

By May 1890, both sides—colonist and colonized—were influencing the other in significant ways. Protection treaties only seemed to create more instability, and local wars between African communities only strengthened Germany's position in the colony. Especially for German leaders, events seemed to direct strategy as opposed to the other way around. The prospect of African unity in DSWA, for example, forced Francois to abandon temporarily his military plans and seek a diplomatic solution.

In June 1892, Francois agreed to meet with Witbooi at his compound near Hoornkrans to discuss plans for a lasting peace. At the meeting, Francois offered to pay Witbooi an annual stipend of five thousand Marks if he agreed never to conduct a

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 90.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 91.

military operation against a rival population again.⁵⁹² Francois then used the occasion to discuss the prospect of German protection:

I have [also] come to advise you as a friend to do as all the other chiefs of this territory have done already, and to yield to German protection. I think it will be the best thing for you now. Large numbers of Europeans will be arriving by ship soon, and they must be protected. The German Government is obliged to protect all who place themselves under German protection. It cannot protect some and leave others to look out for their own selves.⁵⁹³

After listening to Francois, Witbooi reminded the German leader about the current state of affairs in Southwest Africa:

What is protection? What are we being protected against? From what danger, or difficulty, or suffering can one chief be protected from another . . . ? It is incomprehensible and strange; I cannot see how it is possible. An independent and autonomous chief is chief of his people and land – because every ruler is chief over his people and country, to protect it himself against any danger or disaster which is threatening to harm his people or land. When one chief stands under the protection of another, the subordinate one is no longer independent and is no longer master of himself or of his people or country.⁵⁹⁴

Francois tried to assure Witbooi that he understood his concerns. He even went so far as to acknowledge that he also “could not bear to be bossed,” and that Witbooi would be left to his “own free will as whether to accept or refuse the offer.”⁵⁹⁵ But he reiterated that German protection would mean “security from Boers and other mighty nations who want to enter this country by force, to settle and to do business wherever they please without

⁵⁹² Curt von Francois, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika. Geschichte der Kolonisation bis zum Ausbruch des Krieges mit Witbooi* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1899), 153-154.

⁵⁹³ Francois und Witbooi, “59. Gespräch zwischen von Francois und Witbooi,” 9. June 1892, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 127.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 127-128.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

seeking permission from anyone.”⁵⁹⁶ Francois alluded that both sides would prosper under the proposed agreement and promised that the colonial government “will take care of everything.”⁵⁹⁷ In spite of Francois’ assurances, Witbooi remained firm, expressing that he had “little praise for [Francois’] plan” and that it was “neither just nor good.”⁵⁹⁸ “We are different nations,” he asserted, “and live by different laws and customs, and come from different countries. Each chief lives among his people according to his own laws, and according to the conditions in which he finds himself.”⁵⁹⁹

The meeting at Hoornkrans was a watershed moment in the early history of German colonial rule in Africa. Francois’ encounter with Witbooi led him to double down on his previous convictions, namely that military action was the only reliable solution to the so-called *Eingeborenenfrage* (“native question”). After the meeting, he requested more reinforcements and heavy artillery from Berlin.⁶⁰⁰ Francois also inundated the international press with negative accounts about the Witbooi Namaqua. The *Cape Times*, for example, published a disparaging account about the “Hottentot Power” in April 1892. “According to information derived almost entirely from native sources,” the story began, “the Baralongs were warned by certain of the Namaquas that they would have to pay [rent for their land]. Being strong in numbers, however, it is thought they refused. The Namaquas thereupon closed up the waters along the route, and then attacked the traders, killing a few of them, and taking from them all they had.”⁶⁰¹ Many German

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., 127.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 132.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., 131.

⁶⁰⁰ Francois, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika*, 155-157.

⁶⁰¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “The Hottentot Power. Fighting in the North-West,” *Cape Times*, 18. April 1892.

newspapers followed suit. In May 1892, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* tried to portray Witbooi as a murderous villain. “In once stroke,” the article explained, “the Witboois murdered 37 women and children in Damaraland in October 1891, and then escaped into the mountains with [their] followers.”⁶⁰²

Witbooi, meanwhile, moved to complete his effort at uniting all local communities together against German forces. In November 1892, he came to terms with Samuel Maharero, the new paramount chief of the Herero.⁶⁰³ This agreement was a landmark in the history of Southwest Africa. It not only led to a total realignment of forces, but also reconciled cultural and territorial disputes that had been in place for decades.⁶⁰⁴ This new political configuration, furthermore, put the German colonial administration in a very dangerous position. Indeed, few regarded any other factor as more hazardous to the German colonial project in DSWA.

In spite of the preparation and rhetoric, war came with a suddenness that would have profound ramifications for both sides. On 16 March 1893, two hundred-fourteen German soldiers secretly departed for Windhoek from Walvis Bay. In an attempt to hide his true intentions, Francois wrote Witbooi on 6 April 1893 to propose that the two meet again to discuss their differences.⁶⁰⁵ Less than a week later, Francois marched toward Witbooi’s stronghold under the cover of darkness. Francois’ orders to his soldiers could not have been clearer: “The object of this mission is to destroy the tribe of the

⁶⁰² BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 16. May 1893.

⁶⁰³ Witbooi, “89. Witbooi an Samuel Maharero,” 10. November 1892, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 166-168.

⁶⁰⁴ For a similar argument see Dreschler, “*Let Us Die Fighting!*,” 69.

⁶⁰⁵ Francois, “Francois an AAKA,” 6. April 1893, quoted in Dreschler, “*Let Us Die Fighting!*,” 70.

Witbooi.”⁶⁰⁶ The following morning, Francois surrounded Hoornkrans and unleashed a tremendous barrage against the encampment.⁶⁰⁷ Though Witbooi, together with a majority of his male soldiers, escaped the encirclement, the *Schutztruppe* killed nearly one hundred Namaqua women and children.⁶⁰⁸

News of Hoornkrans filled German and international media outlets. *The London Times* reported that “a German force of 200 men . . . stormed the stronghold of the Witbooi . . . and killed upwards of 70 women, ten men and boys, and some infants.”⁶⁰⁹ The *Frankfurter Zeitung* offered a scathing rebuke of the attack, arguing that “one need not be surprised if such incidents reinforce aversion to a colonial policy that relies upon powder and shot.”⁶¹⁰ The *Vossische Zeitung*, one of the largest liberal papers in Germany, also criticized Francois’ actions.⁶¹¹ It went so far as to accuse Francois of “attracting more circles” to the conflict, citing the arrival of the British warship *Magpie* in Walvis Bay in July 1893.⁶¹² Though some outlets praised the attack, reports of violence on such a mass created a backlash against Francois and his policies.⁶¹³ Many Germans regarded Witbooi as a threat to the future prosperity of DSWA, of course, but military operations of this scale implied that all was not well overseas. Furthermore, because Francois’ assault failed

⁶⁰⁶ Francois, “Francois an AAKA,” 12. April 1893, quoted in Dreschler, “*Let Us Die Fighting!*,” 70.

⁶⁰⁷ Dreschler writes that Francois sent “16,000 rounds of ammunition from 200 rifles within thirty minutes.”

⁶⁰⁸ Franz Joseph von Bülow, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika. Drei Jahre im Lande Hendrik Witboois.*

Schilderungen von Land und Leuten (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1896), 286-288.

⁶⁰⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Damaraland,” *The London Times*, 16. May 1893, 23.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 153-154.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 153.

⁶¹³ O. Seidel’s *Deutschlands erste Kolonie* for example, wrote that “We heave a sigh of relief because it seemed the moment had come to cast off a yoke we had been bearing so long. Our feeling was that the rule of the black and brown riff-raff was coming to an end and that we would at long last be able to settle accounts with them.” See O. Seidel, *Deutschlands erste Kolonie* (Hamburg: 1898).

to incapacitate Witbooi and his male soldiers, the situation remained perilous. In November 1893, the *Vossische Zeitung* called for Francois' dismissal as commander of the *Schutztruppe*.⁶¹⁴ Not long thereafter, Kaiser Wilhelm II appointed Major Theodor Leutwein as the new Governor of DSWA.

The rapid fall of Francois, together with the overwhelmingly negative reaction in the press to the "massacre at Hoornkrans," indicate how events in DSWA shaped collective attitudes in the metropole. Germans certainly longed for peace, but were not willing to accept an accord that came at the cost of hundreds of lives, whether German or African. This argument stands in direct contrast to those scholars who maintain that the roots of the Holocaust extend to the German colonial sphere. Though advocates of the so-called "*von Windhuk nach Auschwitz*" thesis chiefly look to the Herero-Namaqua genocide to bolster their claims, the fact remains that neither the German government nor the public believed that mass killing was a reasonable solution to colonial instability.

Leutwein's approach to the situation in DSWA also reflects this reality. After his appointment as colonial governor, Leutwein sought to find a middle ground between the policies of his predecessors. Later coined the "Leutwein System," he balanced diplomatic outreach and limited military action to establish and then maintain peace. His first action was to reestablish diplomatic ties with Witbooi. Leutwein sent a letter to Witbooi on 9 March 1894 as the first step in the process:

If I understand your letter of [9 February to Francois] correctly, you do not yet ask for peace, but would like the war to run its course. I regret this on behalf of the rest of Namaqualand, as well as yourself, for yours is a war without prospect. . . . Major von Francois was recalled to Germany, and in

⁶¹⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1484: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, "Südwestafrika," *Vossische Zeitung*, 9. November 1893, 101.

his place His Majesty the German Kaiser has sent me with specific orders to carry on the war to your destruction, unless you surrender. . . . In consideration of the gallantry shown by yourself and your men, I hope to be able to work out favorable conditions if you will cooperate in this *final* offer for a chance to put an end to unnecessary bloodshed.⁶¹⁵

After a period of silence, Leutwein sent another letter on 6 May. “At the request of a majority of the captains in Namaland and Hereroland,” he wrote, “His Majesty the German Emperor has taken protective command of both countries. Those who do not abide by German rule *will be left unharmed so long as they keep peace with other captains.*”⁶¹⁶ Leutwein also stressed that “We Germans do not intend to wage war against your people; we wish to work together in peace with you. I therefore hope that your people will accept my permission to return to their homes in large numbers by 25. May.”⁶¹⁷

Witbooi responded the next day. He addressed Leutwein as the “Honorable Imperial German successor to Major von Francois,” a designation that he never once used in his correspondence with Francois.⁶¹⁸ Although he acknowledged that further diplomatic outreach between both sides was a good first step, Witbooi took the occasion to voice his strong opposition to Germany’s “unwarranted assault against his people”:

Francois arrived here to receive an answer [about his offer of protection]. At the same time he attacked me, at a time when I was peacefully asleep. This was at a time when I was at peace with all of the Red Chiefs and the Herero. Since I thought I was at peace, I was not ready for such a sudden attack and suffered greatly. I am truly innocent of anything which could

⁶¹⁵ Leutwein, “110. Leutwein an Witbooi,” 9. February 1894, *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, Brigitte Lau (Windhoek: National Archive of Namibia, 1989), 121-123.

⁶¹⁶ Leutwein, “96b. Leutwein an Witbooi,” 5. May 1894, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 179-180. My emphasis.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁶¹⁸ Witbooi. “97. Witbooi and Leutwein,” 6. May 1894, in *Afrika den Afrikanern!*, 180.

justify this order which the German Kaiser has issued against me through Francois.⁶¹⁹

“The peace we are debating is not a small matter and will require more than a few minutes or a single day to arrange. This should not be taken lightly,” Witbooi concluded.⁶²⁰ Though each leader expressed his respective positions in blunt terms, these exchanges marked the start of a five-month period of diplomatic interchanges between Leutwein and Witbooi. Given such interactions, both men eventually developed a deep personal bond, a fact that Leutwein acknowledged in his memoirs years later.⁶²¹ Indeed, throughout his eleven-year term as Governor of DSWA, Leutwein viewed Witbooi as someone whom Germans could trust to keep peace, despite the apprehensions of more outspoken officials in Berlin.⁶²²

News of their exchanges quickly spread. On 23 May 1894, the *Süd-Afrikanische Zeitung* reported that recent exchanges between “the new Major Leutwein and Witbooi” promised to bring hostilities in DSWA to a close.⁶²³ The piece cited Leutwein’s twofold approach of diplomacy and military pressure, in particular, as its reason for optimism. Witbooi “has probably started to feel the noose draw closer,” the paper concluded.⁶²⁴ Later that summer, Witbooi appealed to Leutwein for a fresh supply of ammunition and horses.⁶²⁵ He reasoned that Leutwein would extend him this courtesy, as it was the only

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 180-181.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 181.

⁶²¹ Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907).

⁶²² This sentiment eventually led Kaiser Wilhelm II to replace Leutwein with General Lothar von Trotha in 1904, following the outbreak of hostilities between Germans, Herero, and Namaqua.

⁶²³ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe.- Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Damaraland,” *Süd-Afrikanische Zeitung*, 23. May 1894, 33.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵

way to ensure a “fair fight.”⁶²⁶ Leutwein refused Witbooi’s request, though did agree to send him provisions, including a “30-sheet packet of writing paper, coffee, and tea.”⁶²⁷

Leutwein had hoped to achieve a permanent peace through diplomatic means. By the end of August 1894, his patience had worn thin. On 20 August, he wrote Witbooi to inform him that the current “unstable peace” was no longer sustainable and that both sides were now at war:

The fact that you do not want to submit to the German Empire is neither a sin nor does it make you guilty. But it is extremely dangerous for the stability of the territories currently under German protection. Therefore, my dear Captain, all further letters in which you do not offer your surrender are in vain. I do hope, however, that you will agree that the war we now face will be fought in a humane way.⁶²⁸

Leutwein surrounded Witbooi’s encampment the following week. Witbooi pleaded for him to withdraw. He reminded Leutwein of the “massacre at Hoornkrans” and warned that any further incidents would reflect poorly on Germany.⁶²⁹ On 4 September, faced with defeat, Witbooi attempted to break out of the encirclement. In the face of new German artillery units, the advances failed, however. Low on supplies and water, Witbooi surrendered the following week.⁶³⁰ In the eyes of many, Germany’s war with Witbooi, at least for the foreseeable future, had finally come to an end.

Before 1884, romantic illusions about the prospect of imperial conquest galvanized many in German society to view Southwest Africa as a land of endless potential. Over time, however, colonial encounters, together with detailed accounts of life

⁶²⁶ Witbooi, “105. Witbooi and Leutwein,” 11. July 1894, in *Afrika den Afrikaner!*, 191.

⁶²⁷ Witbooi, “112. Witbooi an Leutwein,” 7. September 1894, in *Afrika den Afrikaner!*, 200-201.

⁶²⁸ Leutwein, “108a. Leutwein an Witbooi,” 20. August 1894, in *Afrika den Afrikaner!*, 197.

⁶²⁹ Witbooi, “111. Witbooi and Leutwein,” 3. September 1894, in *Afrika den Afrikaner!*, 199-200.

⁶³⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe.- Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Theodor Leutwein, Hendrik Witbooi, et al., “Schutz und Freundschafts Vertrag,” 12-14.

in DSWA, exposed those illusions as nothing more than fantasies. Hendrik Witbooi was among the key figures to dispel pre-colonial myths before the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, few inside Germany could argue that the “diplomatically cunning fox” did not direct German colonial policy before the arrival of Governor Leutwein and a large *Schutztruppe* detachment.⁶³¹ This development challenged the very basis of what supposedly justified European colonial expansion in the first place. Colonial encounters not only shaped the lives of Germans abroad, but also those in the metropole, who incorporated stories of these experiences into their impressions of life in DSWA. In doing so, they influenced how German society perceived the colonial project in Africa.

Colonialism in Black and White: Print Media and the Witbooi Namaqua

In spite of attempts by pro-colonial organizations to downplay the dangers of colonial life, citizens in the metropole had a clear understanding of events in DSWA. National and international media outlets reported extensively on Germany’s colonial empire. In doing so, they not only introduced citizens to the realities of imperial domination, but also built a collective image of the Namaqua that clashed with colonial propaganda. By the early 1890s, many people in Germany regarded Witbooi as more than just a “robber.”⁶³²

Germans still overwhelmingly cast him as an enemy, of course. But any collective scorn for him was due to his earned reputation as a dangerous colonial rival. Instead of a “rebellious captain,” for example, the *Cape Times* characterized him as the “Stonewall

⁶³¹ Dr. R.F. Ludloff, *Nach Deutsch-Namaland. (Südwestafrika)* (Coburg: Dietz Hofbuchdruckerei), 91-92.

⁶³² BAB/RKA 1001/1484: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Neue Räubereien des Hendrik Wittboi in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Magdeburgische Zeitung* 26. October 1893, 70.

Jackson” of DSWA.⁶³³ Instead of an unapologetic tyrant, another article described him as the man who “resided in so-called German territory, but in reality [lived] independent of either fear of or respect for the German government.”⁶³⁴ Instead of the uncivilized “savage” of colonial fantasy, he was the “fifty-year old man, the stocky and powerful figure with high cheek bones and little slit eyes” who defied the colonial administration at every turn.⁶³⁵

Race was never entirely absent, of course, as this description of Witbooi in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* clearly demonstrates. But it was *not* the only factor. Racism was a central component of German colonial expansion and remained one until the start of the First World War. Stories about Witbooi never lived up to pre-colonial racist fantasies, however. Colonial encounters demonstrated that he was a major figure in DSWA, regardless of his racial pedigree. Through his actions and words, Witbooi proved that the Namaqua were capable of much more than many Germans dared to consider before 1884.

For the vast majority of German citizens who never left the metropole, print media were their link to the world overseas. Though domestic and international media served a vital role, journalists were limited in what they could print objectively after 1884. Indeed, colonial encounters forced print media to report on life overseas. No longer could travel enthusiasts, merchants, wealthy adventurers, and colonial advocates simply makeup narratives about distant lands in the hope of influencing society unchallenged. By 1884, German colonialism was a reality and provided journalists with an actual

⁶³³ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Fighting in Damaraland,” *Cape Times*, 8. May 1894, 14.

⁶³⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “The Hottentot Power. Fighting in the North-West,” *Cape Times*, 18. April 1892, 12.

⁶³⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Dr. Bernhard Schwarz, “Ein Besuch bei Hendrik Witbooi,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, 28. October 1894, 5.

locality to write about in books, newspapers, pamphlets, and political posters. And write they did. Between 1884 and 1914, all of the major German media outlets filled their pages with information about the colonial empire.⁶³⁶ From plans to develop Southwest Africa into a resource and mineral-rich outpost, to the “proliferation of the German language” throughout the colony, newspapers covered a myriad of subjects.⁶³⁷ To help matters, people thirsted for news of life overseas, as I showed in chapter’s one and three. Newspapers allowed Germans to encounter the colonial world. In the process, they altered their collective impressions of the colonial project based on events as they unfolded overseas.

Three large stories, in particular, drew considerable attention from news outlets during the formative period of German rule in DSWA. First, the fact that German colonial officials needed to sign protection treaties with local African leaders implied that Germany was not the sole power in the region. It also showed, moreover, that Germans could not simply assume that Africans would eventually accept German rule voluntarily. The first protection agreements demonstrate these points in several ways. Article II of Germany’s treaty with the Red Nation, for example, granted a considerable degree of sovereignty to Captain Manasse and his peoples:

His Majesty the German Emperor obligates himself to leave in force those treaties which other nations or their citizens have concluded with the

⁶³⁶ A list of the most prominent include the *Vossische Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung*, *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Berliner Neuesten Nachrichten*, *Deutsche Zeitung*, *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung*, *National Zeitung*, and the *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*. Popular magazines and illustrated pamphlets also played a significant role in bringing news from abroad “home.” The most influential include *Die Gartenlaube*, *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder- und Völkerkunde*, and *Kolonie und Heimat: in Wort und Bild*.

⁶³⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/2103: Auflehnung der Herero, “Afrika,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 10. January 1889, 72. BAB/RKA 1001/1136: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch Südwestafrika, “Sprachverwilderung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3. May 1902, 151.

Capitan of the Red Nation, and at the same time not to interfere in the collection of the income accords with the laws and customs of his land nor in his exercise of jurisdiction over his subjects.⁶³⁸

Though the Red Nation agreed to German protection, they negotiated the right to maintain trade agreements with foreign countries. German administrators also permitted them to have their own laws and to practice their respective customs unheeded in their sphere of influence. Foreign governments may have recognized German rule as the official law of the territory, but realities on the ground suggested otherwise. Local autonomy was more important and gave African communities *de facto* control over the same regions that German colonialists professed to rule. Even in many criminal cases, German colonists had to consult with Captain Manasse before extending a verdict:

All civil and criminal disputes between white people will be tried by those deemed appropriate by His Majesty the German Emperor. The means to determine disputes between German nationals and other white people and natives, as well as how the guilty should be punished, will be defined later *between the German government and the Captain of the Red Nation*.⁶³⁹

Though masters of the colonial state, white authorities could not rule in favor of German settlers out of hand. The Red Nation, given its numerical superiority, won the right to equal protection before the law.

This system of rule is especially noteworthy given the influence of race on Germany's colonial project years later. Colonial authority, at least initially, was not a top-down affair. Though it exuded all of the characteristics of a colonial state in the eyes of the international community, including a hierarchical economic and social system

⁶³⁸ BAL 1001/2103: Auflehnung der Herero, "Schutz- und Freundschaftsvertrag zwischen dem Deutschen Reiche und Manasse zu Hoachanas," 7. April 1886, 12-13.

⁶³⁹ BAL 1001/2103: Auflehnung der Herero, "Schutz- und Freundschaftsvertrag zwischen dem Deutschen Reiche und Manasse zu Hoachanas," 7. April 1886, 12-13. My emphasis.

maintained through violence and structural discrimination, DSWA was hardly ruled by an iron German fist. To the contrary, Germany's first colonists needed to compromise with local African peoples in order to maintain a presence in DSWA.

The Herero also negotiated from a position of authority. In Article III of their 1885 protection agreement, German colonial officials agreed that the Herero could remain a sovereign people:

The Paramount Chief [Maharero] assures all German nationals and protected companions in the entirety of what he controls total protection of person and property The German nationals and protected companions in Maharero's territory are to be respectful of existing customs and practices and will not do anything that would violate German penal laws. [They must] pay all taxes and fees required.⁶⁴⁰

Article IV, meanwhile, granted the Herero leadership even more juridical freedom than the Red Nation. It went so far as to guarantee Maharero "complete jurisdiction over all misdemeanor and felony cases" in their territory.⁶⁴¹ Though the Herero protection agreement allowed German colonial advocates to declare victory, the nature of their "victory" has several far-reaching consequences. First, it did nothing but codify what was already a reality on the ground. The Herero were indeed masters of the colony in all but name. Second, the agreement made this fact public. Once news of the political dynamics in DSWA spread, colonial enthusiasts in Germany lost their ability to frame the narrative. News from abroad portrayed an all-together different state of affairs in DSWA. The fact that Witbooi refused to sign a protection treaty in 1889 was all the more news worthy.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 14-15.

⁶⁴¹ BAL 1001/2103: Auflehnung der Herero, "Schutz- und Freundschaftsvertrag zwischen dem Deutschen Reiche und den Hereros," 23. October 1885, 14-15.

Both on location and in the press, German authorities reacted to—did not shape—events in colonial Africa.

The second major story to capture significant attention in the metropole was the “massacre at Hoornkrans.” Perhaps more than any other incident, Francois’ attack on Hoornkrans forced Germans to reflect on the consequences of colonial rule in bloody terms. For some, violence was a necessary means to an end. In a report to the AAKA, Major Francois justified his actions against Witbooi as militarily crucial. He heaped praise on the “excellent non-commissioned officers and riders for the victory.”⁶⁴² Francois was far from alone. Nearly two months after the attack, the *Kölnische Zeitung* profiled the account of a soldier who fought for Francois at Hoornkrans:

On 8 April, we were suddenly taken mobile; suddenly there was all kinds of life at the station. In the evening we marched from 7 o’clock. After three days’ march we camped in a valley of tangled rocks on 11 [April]. It was here that our captain told us that he had decided to destroy the Hendrik Witbooi tribe. Four hours later, we moved from the rock-like fortress to the residence of the Witbooi bandits.⁶⁴³

After framing the lead up to the assault, the soldier then cast the attack in heroic terms. Francois’ leadership, he recalled, was second to none. “Children,” the soldier remembered him saying, “[they are] 50 meters in front, you have what it takes!”⁶⁴⁴

An article in the *Vossische Zeitung*, meanwhile, contended that “Major Francois [was given] teams to get the desired result; the national government, therefore, has no

⁶⁴² BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Curt von Francois, “Bericht an die AAKA,” 14. August 1893, 145.

⁶⁴³ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Africa,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, 16. April 1893, 84.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

reason to criticize his actions.”⁶⁴⁵ Given the outcome at Hoornkrans, it is perhaps unsurprising that some found cause for celebration. Germany’s emissary in the Cape Colony went so far as to assure Chancellor Caprivi that the English “also think of Hendrik Witbooi as a belligerent” and therefore endorsed German military policy.⁶⁴⁶ Witbooi had, after all, rejected every German demand before April 1893. Indeed, the so-called “Hottentot chief” simply got what he deserved according to the *Cape Times* after the battle.⁶⁴⁷

For a majority of German citizens, however, Francois’ actions challenged the desired image of Germany’s colonial project in DSWA. Only a select few vowed to support the imperial program if it would require a “Colonization by Bullets,” to quote the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*.⁶⁴⁸ Graphic portrayals of the “massacre at Hoornkrans,” in fact, created far more problems than solutions, even though it left Witbooi in a weakened position.⁶⁴⁹ This was due in large measure to survivor testimonies that started to appear in May 1893. Narratives like the one published in the *Cape Times* became common:

Intelligence has been received from Damaraland that on April 12 a German force of 200 men, with Captain Francois in command, stormed the stronghold of Witbooi and killed upwards of 70 women, ten men and boys, and some infants. The object of the expedition was to punish Witbooi for harrying the Herero tribes, who are under German protection. The official report expresses regret for the death of the women, but, it is

⁶⁴⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1484: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Südwestafrika,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 9. November 1893, 101.

⁶⁴⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Bericht an die Caprivi,” 25. May 1893, 78.

⁶⁴⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Damaraland,” *Cape Times*, 15. May, 1893, 23.

⁶⁴⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Colonization by Bullets,” *Diamond Fields*, 23. May 1893, 80.

⁶⁴⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Entstellte Berichte über die Vorgänge in Damaraland,” *Südafrikanischen Zeitung*, 24. May 1893, 81.

urged, a sudden attack and indiscriminate firing were the only means of capturing the stronghold.⁶⁵⁰

The *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung* repeatedly questioned why “some bullets found their way to the women.”⁶⁵¹ An article in the *Frankfurt Zeitung*, meanwhile, actually went so far as to remind readers that Francois’ attack on Hoornkrans was not the first time he targeted women and children:

Witbooi has carried out his raids in Damaraland for years under the eyes of the *Schutztruppe* and as a result the latter has retaliated wherever an opportunity arose. Thus, in October 1891, 37 Witbooi women and children were murdered in Damaraland⁶⁵²

As late as 21 January 1894, the *Hamburger Nachrichten* wrote how “women and children fled to outposts seeking cover, [only to be] met by soldiers [who] shot them down.”⁶⁵³ Stories like this cast a negative image of colonialism in Germany. DSWA was supposed to be a land of endless possibilities, not murder.

The most inflammatory accounts of the assault came from the Witbooi Namaqua themselves. In a letter to John J. Cleverly, the British magistrate in Walvis Bay, Witbooi condemned Kaiser Wilhelm II for sanctioning the attack. He wrote that the German Kaiser “sent his soldiers to Africa to kill innocent women and children.”⁶⁵⁴ “I have

⁶⁵⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Damaraland,” *Cape Times*, 16. May 1893, 23. This story was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and its affiliates in Germany the following day.

⁶⁵¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Ohne Titel, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18. May 1893, 31.

⁶⁵² BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Ohne Titel, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 16. May 1893, 21.

⁶⁵³ BAB/RKA 1001/1485: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Ohne Titel, *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 21. January 1894, 74-75.

⁶⁵⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Hendrik Witbooi, “Bericht vom Hoornkranz,” 20. April 1893, 60. This source was translated by the British Magistrate.

nothing more to do with making war,” Witbooi continued, “and I did not expect anyone would make war against me, especially the Germans. I did not think that so great a power in men and ammunition and mighty a captain of a civilized power would make war with such a smart, disesteemed people as mine.”⁶⁵⁵ Witbooi saved his most critical words for the end, however. “To steal upon me in my sleep – the little children and women and men he has murdered – some of the people [Francois] shot and burnt the dead bodies. I [previously] could not think this [possible] of a white man,” he wrote.⁶⁵⁶

In a separate letter, Petrus Sefta, a self-described “member of Hendrik Witbooi’s people,” told an equally disturbing account of Hoornkrans. In one case, he commented on the brutal death of Witbooi’s eldest son:

A little before sunrise the Germans soldiers opened fire on us and stormed into the place. . . . When we heard the firing, we ran out of our houses; we had no opportunity of making resistance but fled. The men got out, but the women had no chance, they were mixed up with the soldiers. . . . The Captain’s son was only wounded at first and ran down towards the river, but the soldiers followed him and shot him in the head.⁶⁵⁷

Sefta also described how the *Schutztruppe* treated Namaqua women and children after hostilities had ended:

All the women and children who were not killed were taken away [as] prisoners. I saw children killed. One woman was killed, and her child ran to her screaming, a soldier shot the child through the head, blowing it to pieces. I saw this child shot, the soldier aimed at it. In another place, I saw ten women lying dead. Another party of Germans did this, but they were shot from afar.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 60-61.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 60-61.

⁶⁵⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Petrus Sefta, “Statement of Petrus Sefta,” 9. May 1893, 64-65.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 65-66.

Though Sefta's description only confirmed earlier reports of the massacre, it provided a human element to the story. These were not barbarous combatants thirsting for German blood, but women and children whom Francois assaulted without warning.

News of the Namaquas' outreach to Cleverly quickly spread. Not only were their stories harrowing, but they also portrayed an altogether different version of events than Francois. Cleverly wrote to the Under Secretary for Native Affairs two weeks after receiving Witbooi's account of the massacre. In his dispatch, which was later published in both German and English newspapers, he condemned Francois actions. He argued that the assault was not only callous, but also potentially destabilizing to the entire region:

I promised to communicate their wishes to [the] Government, but I warned them in friendly but unmistakeable [sic] terms that they must not hope for British intervention in their quarrel with the Germans. I told them however that their story of the women killing would excite indignation among all civilized people. I most strongly expressed upon them that they must in no wise blame the German people for what had taken place. The guilt, if guilt there were, rested alone with the individual perpetrators of the massacre.⁶⁵⁹

After condemning the actions of the *Schutztruppe*, Cleverly wrote that the "German residents here express horror and indignation [for the attack] and have every reason to believe that these feelings are universal among the European inhabitants of the Protectorate."⁶⁶⁰ Such an "indiscriminate slaughter [against] women and children primarily," cannot occur again, he concluded.⁶⁶¹

Here in DSWA, as in other colonies, then, colonial domination proved a bloody affair. The "massacre at Hoornkrans" exemplified that reality in shocking and bloody

⁶⁵⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1483: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, John J. Cleverly, "Hostilities between Germans and Hottentots," 9. May 1893, 62-63.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 63.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 63-64.

terms. German and international media outlets did not shy away from covering the massacre. In doing so, they challenged Germans to consider their role as a colonial power. Hoornkrans was an unquestioned military success for the *Schutztruppe*. Indeed, for the first time since 1884, Germans forces had an advantage over Witbooi. But how Francois obtained that advantage was unsettling for a significant number of citizens in the metropole.

The third story to attract national attention was the period of stability that followed Witbooi's defeat in September 1894. Though only five pages in its entirety, the "Treaty of Protection and Friendship" was a watershed moment in German colonial history.⁶⁶² Leutwein would later hail the treaty as a sign of Witbooi's "wholehearted devotion to the German cause."⁶⁶³ The *Kölnische Zeitung* also praised the agreement, claiming that the "differences between [settlers'] letters from 1893 and 1894 are clear!"⁶⁶⁴

Peace with Germany also ushered in a new phase of life for the Witbooi Namaqua. Article I of the new peace agreement established that they were no longer masters of southern DSWA:

Captain Witbooi wishes for his people and his successors to come under the protection of His Majesty the German Emperor. Captain Witbooi promises the German Government to support loyally its efforts to keep and ensure the general welfare of Namaland forever.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶² BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Theodor Leutwein and Hendrik Witbooi, "Schutz und Freundschafts Vertrag," 15. September 1894, 12-16.

⁶⁶³ Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 57.

⁶⁶⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, "Africa," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 20. April 1895, 97.

⁶⁶⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Theodor Leutwein and Hendrik Witbooi, "Schutz und Freundschafts Vertrag," 15. September 1894, 12-16.

The treaty also created a special demarcated zone for the Witbooi Namaqua to live and farm.⁶⁶⁶ Though German authorities eventually used “native reservations” as a method for removing all Africans away from valuable land, this represented a new approach in 1894.⁶⁶⁷ Leutwein also forced Witbooi to surrender his juridical sovereignty to the colonial administration. The only circumstances that would not require German authorization in the future were “conflicts between natives exclusively.”⁶⁶⁸ At the behest of Leutwein, German authorities allowed the Namaqua to keep possession of their weapons and ammunition. Leutwein justified this decision because he “believed Captain Witbooi to be a man of his word.”⁶⁶⁹

News of the peace accord spread quickly throughout the colonial world. The *Süd Afrikanische Zeitung* at first questioned whether Witbooi would use “the peace to withdraw into solitude [or] try to recruit new allies to plunge the country into more unrest.”⁶⁷⁰ The *Cape Times*, meanwhile, claimed that the “Hottentot loss is not stated, but is believed to be small. . . . Witbooi is still unconquered.”⁶⁷¹ One month later, the *Cape Times* acknowledged that “Witbooi had submitted,” but maintained that it would “probably be some time before a really reliable version of the actual circumstances can be obtained.”⁶⁷² The *Express*, an English paper, cited that there were now “hopeful prospects”

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ This policy was adopted after the German-Herero-Namaqua war (1904-1907).

⁶⁶⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Theodor Leutwein and Hendrik Witbooi, “Schutz und Freundschafts Vertrag,” 15. September 1894, 12-16.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Deutschland und Witbooi,” *Süd Afrikanische Zeitung*, 15. September 1894, 132.

⁶⁷¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “War in Damaraland,” *Cape Times*, 26. September 1894, 155.

⁶⁷² BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Submission of Witbooi,” *Cape Times* 24. October 1894, 26.

for peace in DSWA, a prospect that had long been the desire of Europeans in the region.⁶⁷³ “A fine church is now being completed. It boasts of a steeple that would not shame a church in the older South African colonies. All we now want is only the war to end so as to carry on peacefully our various occupations,” the paper added.⁶⁷⁴

German media outlets followed suit, both praising and criticizing the lenient terms of the peace agreement. The *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung*, for example, explained that Witbooi was “exceptionally polite during [his] conference with Major Leutwein.”⁶⁷⁵ The article tried to imply that Germans could finally expect a lasting peace in DSWA. The *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung* agreed, celebrating the same meeting one day later.⁶⁷⁶ *Das Volk*, meanwhile, was more direct with its praise:

Despite its maligned and misunderstood image, this country is the pearl of all of Germany’s colonial possessions. Not only gigantic mountains and deep chasms come with this vast empire, but also graceful, fertile valleys that are waiting in large numbers for the diligent cultivator’s hand. Recently, the wild predatory bands of the Witbooi roamed free and devastated these regions; now they are facing imminent destruction.⁶⁷⁷

“Everything breaths still, and the long-awaited peace seems assured for the stricken country,” the article resolved.⁶⁷⁸

The *Kreuzzeitung* commented on the positive news from DSWA. In an article on 4 September 1894, the paper questioned whether the new found peace might elevate the

⁶⁷³ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “German Namaqualand,” *Express*, 14. August 1894, 129.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1487: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Ohne Titel, *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 4. August 1894, 115.

⁶⁷⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, Ohne Titel, *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6. August 1894, 117.

⁶⁷⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Ueber die Leitung unseres Kolonialamtes,” *Das Volk*, ohne Datum, 119.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

status of Rector Heinrich Kleinschmidt and his political responsibilities. “He is one of the firmest props of *Deutschtum* and German authority in our reserves [in Namibia] and also has great influence among the natives,” the paper argued.⁶⁷⁹ From missionaries to colonial enthusiasts, Witbooi’s surrender suggested that DSWA was about to enter into a new era. All that was needed now were the “diligent cultivators.”⁶⁸⁰ Perhaps the greatest result of the peace treaty was the shift in public attitude toward the Namaqua. Regardless of whether people thought of Witbooi as a “robber” or the “Stonewall Jackson” of DSWA, stability ushered in a wave of positive reactions throughout the German empire. Peace ruled the day, at least in the columns of German and international newspapers.

Colonial encounters inspired in a new age of journalism with respect to Germany’s overseas empire. The existence of a real colony overseas – one beyond the imagination – forced journalists to cover actual events in DSWA. As a result, even Germans in the metropole could encounter the empire and its peoples. They learned that Africans were worthy adversaries and exhibited qualities that defied the pre-colonial rhetoric. Colonial encounters also compelled Germans to question their status and reputation as an imperial power. Were they going to be a nation that wrought “peace by bullets,” or one that opened up colonial society to the *Heimat* ideal? Colonial encounters had effectively transformed colonial rule into a national issue by the turn of the twentieth century. In spite of their decreased power, Africans, notably the Herero and Witbooi Namaqua, would continue to shape German colonial policy in DSWA.

⁶⁷⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Hendrik Witbooi,” *Kreuz Zeitung*, 4. September 1894, 127.

⁶⁸⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1486: Militärisches Einschreiten der Schutztruppe. – Kämpfe gegen Hendrik Witbooi, “Ueber die Leitung unseres Kolonialamtes,” *Das Volk*, ohne Datum, 119.

Conclusion

On 14 November 1904, during the height of the so-called “*Herero-Aufstand*,” Hendrik Witbooi sent a letter to Governor Leutwein. Like others before it, this message sent shockwaves throughout the colony.

I have for ten years stood in your law, under your law, and behind your law – and not I alone, but all chiefs of Africa. For this reason I fear God the Father. All the souls which have for the last ten years perished from all the nations of Africa and from among all its chiefs, without guilt or cause, without the justification of warfare in times of peace, and under treaties of peace, accuse me.⁶⁸¹

“You accuse me,” Witbooi continued, “of murdering helpless white people, and say that 80 of my men are in your custody, who shall pay for the white people. I beg you, when you read this letter to sit down and quietly reflect [on my words]. Count up the souls who have perished in this country in the ten years since you arrived, and the weeks and days and hours and minutes since they died.”⁶⁸² Witbooi had once again placed himself at the center of German colonial affairs in DSWA. Though he did not live to see the end of his renewed campaign against the German colonial administration, his exchanges with imperial authorities had an impact on German society well into the twentieth century.⁶⁸³

Colonial encounters had a major role in how Germans viewed the colonial empire. The realities of imperial domination forced both citizens and settlers to contend with a world that existed beyond the imagination. Ideas of national belonging that included DSWA became common, replacing those that focused on the European continent

⁶⁸¹ Witbooi, “152. Witbooi an Leutwein,” 14. November 1904, in *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, Lau, 158-159.

⁶⁸² Ibid., 159.

⁶⁸³ Hendrik Witbooi died from a wound he received near Vaalgras in November 1905. The location of his grave is still unknown. Lau, *The Hendrik Witbooi Papers*, xvii.

exclusively. “Our Southwest!” meant exactly that—our colony, our people, our nation.⁶⁸⁴ These sentiments were common throughout Germany, especially during times of colonial rebellion. Hendrik Witbooi, as a result, became a well-known figure in Germany. His actions during the formative years of German colonial rule, perhaps more than any other, forced Southwest Africa onto the national scene. Witbooi’s activities—both diplomatic and military—proved impossible to ignore, forcing Germans to question the kind of colonial power they wanted to be. By the summer of 1904, after the start of the so-called “Herero-Namaqua Rebellion,” German authorities gave their answer in genocidal terms.

⁶⁸⁴ Hubert Janson, “Aus dem Farmerleben in Südwest,” *Kolonie und Heimat* 1, No. 23 (1907/1908): 3. Also see Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 29-30.

Chapter 5:

A Segregated *Heimat*: Colonial Citizenship and the Racial Boundaries of 'Germanness,' 1905-1915

"Meiner Frau, die fast weiß ist"

In September 1909, Carl Becker, a German cattle farmer living in Vaalgras, sent a petition to the Governor of German Southwest Africa (DSWA), Bruno von Schuckmann.⁶⁸⁵ The petition expressed Becker's frustration over a series of new racial laws passed by the German colonial administration earlier that year, specifically Paragraph 17f of the "Regulation of the Reich Chancellor concerning Self-Government in German Southwest Africa."⁶⁸⁶ This new law had revoked his right to participate in all future elections because his wife was a "*Bastardfrau*" (Reheboth Bastard woman) and called into question the legal status of his five children, including two who were living in Germany.⁶⁸⁷

Before September 1909, Becker had probably given little thought to the potentially dangerous and intrusive capabilities of the German colonial administration.

⁶⁸⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Carl Becker, "Eingabe: Annullierung seiner Ehe mit einer Rehobother," 1. September 1909, pgs., 193-194. Vaalgras is located approximately sixty kilometers northeast of Keetmanshoop in present-day Namibia.

⁶⁸⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, *Verordnung des Reichskanzlers, betreff die Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 28. January 1909: pgs. 1-9. Passed on 28 January 1909, the *Verordnung des Reichskanzlers, betreff die Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* established a new legal framework in DSWA, chiefly in response to the German-Herero-Namaqua war (1904-1907). Though the law touched on a variety of issues, including efforts at establishing self-governance in the colony, its efforts to legally and racially distinguish between German and non-German members of the colonial polity is of chief importance here.

⁶⁸⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, 2. Becker, "Eingabe," 1. September 1909, pg. 194. Section 17f read as follows: "Disqualified from voting are the following community members . . . f) if they are married to a native or live in concubinage with such."

Indeed, his status as a cattle farmer had advantages—freedom, adventure, and, as the colonial recruitment posters promised, endless potential to fashion an ideal life in the new overseas *Heimat*.⁶⁸⁸ But that world was now under threat. For Becker's family, the new political regulations disputed their collective identity and national status as colonial Germans. Left with no other alternative, Becker sought help from Governor Schuckmann, who, he hoped, might reinstate his family's German citizenship.

Though he sought Schuckmann's help, Becker made no attempt to conceal his resentment of the new legislation. He strongly rebuked the actions of the German colonial administration, calling its efforts, "an illegitimate act designed to deny him civil rights and marriage."⁶⁸⁹ In order to persuade Schuckmann to support his appeal, Becker portrayed his marriage as a "moral and intellectual relationship" between two equal people deeply in love.⁶⁹⁰ Furthermore, he claimed that the German government should not retroactively subject his marriage to such an exclusionary law because his wife was "nearly white."⁶⁹¹

By making this argument, Becker upheld both the inferred reality of "whiteness" as a central component of *Deutschtum* (Germanness), and simultaneously attacked the restrictive nature of racial thinking and its influence on German constructions of citizenship. He contended that "§ 17 is born of the following idea: Southwest Africa is

⁶⁸⁸ See Medardus Brehl, "Das Drama spielte sich auf der dunklen Bühne des Sandfeldes ab," in *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen*, Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, eds., (Berlin: C.H. Links Verlag, 2004), 86-96.

⁶⁸⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Becker, "Eingabe," 1. September 1909, pg. 194.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

white man's land."⁶⁹² Though Becker was himself a white man, the law had thrust him into a new and hazardous position—that of the “Other.” As such, he made every attempt to underscore his contempt for the state of political and racial affairs in DSWA. Becker did so with a clear degree of caution, however. Indeed, he acknowledged that the government “has all the power” and that its “ultimate source of control is violence.”⁶⁹³ With this statement, Becker was almost assuredly referring to the German-Herero-Namaqua War, a campaign that led to the murder of approximately eighty thousand indigenous Herero and Namaqua peoples between 1904-1907.⁶⁹⁴

Citizenship and Race in the Colonial Empire

Carl Becker personifies how racial policy in Germany's colonial empire affected the lives of German settler-colonists, Europeans, and Africans at the turn of the twentieth century. Moreover, he and his family demonstrate the elusiveness of German identity, an imprecise construct that wove together conceptions of race, culture, and citizenship. Finally, Becker and his wife's experience serves as a clear example of the dangerous, exclusionary potential of states in the modern era. The legal concerns of Carl Becker came at a crossroads in German colonial rule. The Herero-Namaqua genocide, an atrocity that claimed the lives of over sixty percent of the Herero and thirty percent of the Namaqua, had concluded two years earlier, and German settlers were now the unquestioned masters of the colony.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Dr. Wilhelm Külz, *Die Selbstverwaltung für Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Bückeburg: 1909), pg. 52.

⁶⁹⁴ Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* (Berlin: Links Verlag, 2004). Most historians estimate that between sixty-to-eighty percent of the entire pre-war Herero and Namaqua population was murdered between 1904-1907.

Though Germany's victory in DSWA was complete, three years of warfare led many back in Europe to criticize the colonial project. Political leaders and members of the German Colonial Society, in particular, were especially aware of this reality. In no other arena was the tension over the future of DSWA more apparent than in the legal domain. Above all, matters of race and citizenship proved to be especially problematic. As the historical sociologist Rogers Brubaker argues, citizenship is a universally inclusive feature of the modern political landscape, one that every state, no matter its history or geographical location, engages in defining, replicating, and administering.⁶⁹⁵ States attach certain rights, restrictions, and obligations to the official status of citizenship, and, thereby, define all non-citizens as foreigners, permanent residents, or "stateless" peoples.⁶⁹⁶

As a means of substantiating this argument, Brubaker analyzes why France and Germany have had such opposing notions of citizenship, despite their geographical proximity and relative similarities culturally and politically. The difference, he asserts, lies in the origin of citizenship itself. "The French understanding of nationhood has been state-centered and assimilationist, [while] the German understanding has been *Volk*-centered and differentialist," Brubaker writes.⁶⁹⁷ Instead of the state defining citizenship based on "universalist, rationalist, and assimilationist" principles, as in the case of France, German citizenship has historically been more organic, an idea based on "cultural,

⁶⁹⁵ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). Also see Rogers Brubaker, "The French Revolution and the Invention of Citizenship," *French Politics and Society* 7, No. 3 (Summer 1989): 30-49 and "Immigration, Citizenship, and the Nation-State in France and Germany: A Comparative Historical Analysis," *International Sociology* 5, No. 4 (December 1990): 379-407.

⁶⁹⁶ Brubaker, "The French Revolution," 30.

⁶⁹⁷ Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, 1.

linguistic, [and even] racial” dimensions that have produced an “irreducibly unique *Volksgemeinschaft*” not formally tied to the state.⁶⁹⁸ Though he provides some acknowledgement of the place of the French empire and its importance to the French nation-state, Brubaker largely confines his study to the continent of Europe. He concludes that the current legal definition of German citizenship rests in “ethnocultural” conceptions of statehood that extend beyond the political domain.⁶⁹⁹

Though a very useful examination on the historical origins of German statehood, Brubaker’s definition excludes any discussion of the German colonial empire and its role in the process of national development. Similar to Lora Wildenthal in her important chapter “Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire,” I take Brubaker’s claim about German citizenship as a useful point of departure.⁷⁰⁰ Wildenthal’s critique of Brubaker’s thesis is that it is patently Eurocentric. It gives no regard to the German colonial empire and it fails to account for the role of women in the course of national identity formation.⁷⁰¹ Furthermore, she contends that Brubaker is entirely too imprecise with his use of race as an analytical category. Wildenthal points out that neither the 1870 citizenship law nor the amended 1913 version allowed for the “explicit insertion” of race as a category for interpretation.⁷⁰² Indeed, according to both the original and the revised definitions, one was either a *Reichsangehörige(r)* (Reich citizen), *Ausländer(in)* (foreigner), or *Eingeborene(r)* (“native”)—distinctions that certainly show an influence

⁶⁹⁸ Brubaker, “Immigration, Citizenship, and the Nation-State,” 386.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 114, 116, and 1.

⁷⁰⁰ Lora Wildenthal, “Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 264-265.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 265.

⁷⁰² Ibid., 266.

of racial thinking, but categories that fall well short of being defined solely on one's "race."⁷⁰³ Moreover, both laws determined that citizenship "could not be 'mixed'," an important difference that stands in stark contrast to the Nuremberg Laws (1935) passed by the Nazis, for example.⁷⁰⁴

The ambiguity of citizenship and the national status of "mixed-marriage couples" plagued Imperial Germany throughout the colonial era, a self-inflicted political obstacle that has been the focus of a number of recent studies on German colonial policy in DSWA.⁷⁰⁵ "Mixed-marriages" producing children were especially challenging for colonial courts to adjudicate, as the legal national status of the father typically determined citizenship.⁷⁰⁶ In her critique of Brubaker, however, Wildenthal too quickly dismisses the effect of "racial thinking" on the lives of German colonists and citizens in the metropole. After all, legally codified definitions of citizenship were not the only determinants of status, especially in DSWA.

⁷⁰³ The relevant laws on German citizenship in effect between 1884 and 1915 include the *Gesetz vom 4. Mai 1870* ("concerning marriage and the registration of family status of federal citizens abroad"), *Gesetz vom 1. Juni 1870* ("on the acquisition and loss of federal and state citizenship"), *Gesetz vom 6. Februar 1875* ("on the registration of family status and marriage"), and the *Gesetz vom 22. Juli 1913* ("Law for Reich and State Citizenship"). See Otto Riebow, et al., eds., 1893-1910. *Die deutsche Kolonialgesetzgebung: Sammlung der auf die deutschen Schutzgebiete bezüglichen Gesetze, Verordnungen, Erlasse und internationalen Vereinbarungen mit Anmerkungen und Sachregister*. 13 vols., (Berlin: E.S. Mittler, 1893-1910). Also see Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship," 282.

⁷⁰⁴ See "The Nuremberg Laws," in Roderick Stackelberg and Sally A. Winkle, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook: An Anthology of Texts* (London: Routledge, 2002), 186-190.

⁷⁰⁵ See especially Pascal Grosse, *Kolonialismus, Eugenik, und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850-1918* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2000); Krista O'Donnell, "Home, Nation, Empire: Domestic Germanness and Colonial Citizenship," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, eds., Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Gosewinkel, "Wie wird man Deutscher?" 2006; and Sebastian Conrad, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (München: C.H. Beck, 2008).

⁷⁰⁶ For more on the legal nuances of German colonial law see Oskar Hintrager, "9. Mischehenverbot 1905 und Frauenfrage," in *Südwestafrika in der Deutschen Zeit*, Hintrager, (München: Kommission Verlag, 1955), 73-80.

The relative frequency of colonial warfare, capped by the German-Herero-Namaqua War, influenced how colonial Germans came to view non-German populations. Although political disputes over national status were most certainly imperial in their scope, the case-by-case approach adopted by colonial administrators suggests that local affairs often affected colonial regulations more than the whims of “arm-chair” imperialists in Germany, as the case involving Carl Becker clearly illustrates. Following the Herero-Namaqua genocide, this was even more apparent, most notably with the passage of exclusionary marriage and citizenship laws, and the adoption of segregated living districts.

The violent legacy of the German-Herero-Namaqua War has rendered the pre-1904 period as insignificant in scope for a considerable number of scholars, with many regarding the era as nothing more than a historical footnote to “the Kaiser’s Holocaust.”⁷⁰⁷ Such an outlook, however, misses the significant degree to which colonial interactions during the nineteenth century, dating back to the 1830s, in turn affected German conceptions of citizenship. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, African populations, chiefly the Herero and Namaqua, helped to fashion new understandings of the world for many Germans living on the European continent. By 1900, colonial fantasies and physical appearance alone were not enough to dominate German settler and national discourse exclusively.⁷⁰⁸ Colonial encounters had strengthened visions of

⁷⁰⁷ David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser’s Holocaust: Germany’s Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010).

⁷⁰⁸ Though the veil of race was never fully absent from the national discourse on colonialism, settler-indigenous contact did succeed in advancing conversations beyond a strictly racial dialogue. See George Steinmetz, “The Ovaherero: A Radically Simplified Ethnographic Discourse,” in *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*, George Steinmetz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 124-133.

German identity that looked to cultural difference and national belonging, not just as adversarial institutions in competition with one another, but also as forces that together strengthened conceptions of *Deutschtum*. By the conclusion of the Herero-Namaqua genocide, however, armed conflict had forever altered that discourse, to say nothing of the political and social dynamic of DSWA.

This chapter concentrates on the negative effects of this reality. I show how state-condoned acts of mass violence and an increased reliance on “racial thinking” together enabled exclusionary notions of German belonging to dominate collective impressions of *Deutschtum* in the German Empire. Four developments, in particular, characterize how German identity became a racially-exclusive institution after the turn of the twentieth century: the passage of racial legislation, specifically bans on mixed-marriages and the construction of *Eingeborenenwerften* (“native” settlements); the increased effort at encouraging white women in Germany to emigrate overseas; the racial categorization of Boers migrating from the Cape Colony; and the political landscape leading up to the “Hottentot Elections” of 1907 in Germany.

Racial thinking had a long trajectory in DSWA. Rhenish missionaries, as shown in chapter two, acknowledged and utilized the presumed certainty of racial hierarchy as a means to spread Christianity in pre-colonial Southwest Africa. Though a majority of Protestant missionaries practiced an inclusive form of religious belonging, most notably through religious nationalism, race still operated as an important category to distinguish “heathens” apart from the “saved.”⁷⁰⁹ It also acted as a key component in the political relationship between Theodor Leutwein and Hendrik Witbooi. Indeed, Leutwein had a

⁷⁰⁹ Nils Ole Oermann, *Mission, Church and State Relations in South West Africa under German Rule (1884-1915)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999), 32.

clear, racially specific vision for the colony after he became Governor in 1894. He routinely complained that DSWA was on the verge of turning into a “bastard colony” and publically appealed for more white women to emigrate from Europe.⁷¹⁰ Social and racial difference together operated as the guiding principles of Leutwein’s worldview.

But it is important to recognize that race did not act as the *sole* category through which Leutwein and even most other German settlers framed their relationship with Africans. It was certainly a central dynamic in colonial society, but alone was not enough to justify excessive violence, theft, rape, or mass murder. That changed after the start of the so-called *Herero-Aufstand* (Herero Uprising). After hostilities began in 1904, racial epithets saturated German political rhetoric, altering national-colonial policy up to the start of the First World War. Perceived racial difference, as we have seen, allowed the German colonial administration to justify its ban on “inter-racial” marriages. It also raised the status of white women and forced politicians to reconsider their positions in the overseas empire. In the process, the sudden impetus of racial thinking negated the national status of “mixed-race” citizens. After the conclusion of the Herero-Namaqua Genocide, the qualities that characterized an ideal settler also defined the boundaries of *Deutschtum* throughout the German empire.

“Rassentrennung”: Segregating the Southwest African Heimat

On 16 October 1908, Dietrich Reimer, Germany’s consul to the Cape Colony, sent a letter to the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office, AA) in Berlin. His letter criticized an article in the *Norddeutschen Allgemeine Zeitung* (NAZ) that had circulated the

⁷¹⁰ Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 232-233.

previous month.⁷¹¹ Under the title “Koloniales,” the piece advocated a plan that intended to grant all foreign and African subjects living in DSWA full voting rights. Though the proposal did enjoy support among some European populations, Reimer wanted to set the record straight. His letter contended that German colonial policy was no different than any other colonial power in southern Africa. He insinuated, to the contrary, that DSWA was now a model colony and could finally reach its full economic potential. Since the conclusion of the *Herero-Aufstand* the previous year, German leaders were finally able to govern the colony without fear of rebellion. It was for these reasons, Reimer asserted, that he believed that foreigners should not be given the same voting rights as German settler-colonialists:

It has been said that the personal character [*Eigenschaft*] of the community is to be practiced through three classes, namely Germans, other whites, and natives. The treatment of these classes *should* be different. Only Germans are full citizens, while foreigners, in recognition of outstanding achievement or special economic capacity, may only be granted the right of participation (voting rights) by the community.⁷¹²

For Reimer, the current law was not only clear, but also fair. If local authorities made German authority negligible, the potential of the colony would be forever lost. “Why,” he asked rhetorically, “should we give foreigners German privileges, from which we are excluded in English colonies?”⁷¹³

Reimer’s critique was intentionally polemical, but his sentiments were no doubt representative of a majority of German settlers living in DSWA after the conclusion of

⁷¹¹ BAB/RKA 1001/2057: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch Südwestafrika, Consul Reimer, “Bericht von Konsul Reimer an die Auswärtiges Amt,” 16. October 1908, pgs. 175-176. “Koloniales” appeared in the *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung* on 27. September 1908.

⁷¹² BAB/RKA 1001/2057: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch Südwestafrika, Reimer, “Bericht an die Auswärtiges Amt,” 16. October 1908, pg. 176. Emphasis is mine.

⁷¹³ BAB/RKA 1001/2057, Reimar, “Bericht an die Auswärtiges Amt,” pgs. 176-177.

the German-Herero-Namaqua War. Indeed, war had soured the attitude of German settlers who now looked at many of the colony's non-white populations as probable enemies. Reimer's letter also underscored the new postwar reality, namely that Germans were now the undisputed masters of DSWA. Coupled with a longing for stability, the German colonial administration moved to strengthen its position further by forever relegating the Herero and Namaqua to a status of economic and political servitude. Paul Rohrbach, Germany's *Ansiedlungskommissar* (Commissary for Settlement) for DSWA, put this agenda bluntly. "Our task is to divest [the Herero and Namaqua] . . . of their specific *völkisch* and national characteristics and gradually to meld them with the other natives into a single colored work force," he wrote.⁷¹⁴

The first step toward this goal came with the institution of marriage laws based on race. The second was the establishment of segregated "native" reservations organized throughout the colony. In October 1905, Hans von Tecklenburg, vice governor of DSWA, issued a ban on marriages between Germans and persons of "mixed-race." Tecklenburg, who had been appointed by General Lothar von Trotha to this post a year earlier, justified the new regulation as a preventative security measure:

[M]ixed-blood children produced by a native woman [and her German husband] become German citizens and are thereby subject to the laws valid for Germans. The male mix-bloods will be liable for military service, capable of holding public offices, and will assume the right to vote sometime in the future, as well as other rights tied to citizenship. These consequences are of a high degree of seriousness in German Southwest Africa especially. Not only is the preservation of purity of the German race and of German civilization here very substantially impaired because

⁷¹⁴ Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft, Südwest-Afrika*, Vol. 1 (Berlin: 1907), 21. Also cited in Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, 210.

of them, but also the white man's position of power is altogether endangered.⁷¹⁵

Though similar laws would emerge in other German colonies, such as German East Africa (1906) and Samoa (1912), regulations in DSWA were especially severe. The reasons are threefold.

First, suppression of the *Herero-Aufstand* required over fifteen thousand soldiers from Germany.⁷¹⁶ After 1907, a majority remained in the colony to enforce the newly won peace. The presence of more men in a region where white women were already scarce created new problems for the colonial administration, however.⁷¹⁷ Aside from encouraging women to emigrate to DSWA, colonial officials hoped that eliminating German citizenship as a prospect for "mixed-race" children would discourage men from having children with women from the local populations. The threat of "race-mixing" proved especially dire for German officials. These new measures aimed, in the words of Tecklenburg, to preserve "the white man's position of power."⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁵ For specific mention of this justification see Hintrager, *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit*, 76; Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship," 267; and Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 143. Others have cited Tecklenburg for comparisons between German marriage bans and segregation laws in the United States. See Jonathan Hyslop, "White Working-Class Women and the Invention of Apartheid: 'Purified' Afrikaner Nationalist Agitation for Legislation against 'Mixed' Marriages, 1934-9," *Journal of African History* 36, No. 1 (1995): 65.

⁷¹⁶ Jürgen Zimmerer, "Krieg, KZ und Völkermord in Südwestafrika: Der erste deutsche Genozid," in *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen*, Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, eds. Berlin: CH Links Verlag, 2004), 45-63.

⁷¹⁷ As of 1 January 1903, there were only 712 white women in the entire colony. See "Deutscher Kolonialkalender," in *Das Schulwesen in D.S.W.A.*, Moritz, ed. (Berlin, 1914), 74.

⁷¹⁸ Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship," 268.

Second, a majority of settlers were in favor of new restrictions on miscegenation.⁷¹⁹ More than simply seeking revenge against Africans, German settlers viewed the postwar period as an opportunity to question what white colonial society would actually look like for the first time. Everything was up for reconsideration, including the sexual and familial practices of their fellow colonists. Germans living in the metropole, too, were supportive of anti-miscegenation laws.⁷²⁰ Nationalist organizations like the *Alldeutscher Verband* (Pan-German League), for example, had feared that the purity of *Deutschtum* was in peril overseas long before the outbreak of hostilities in 1904. These fears, of course, were principally centered on the threat posed by “race-mixing.” The 1905 marriage decree simply provided the *Alldeutscher Verband* a new topic to include when its members discussed their anxieties about race and citizenship, as well as the colonial project as a whole.

Third, local colonial courts generally supported the ban.⁷²¹ This was especially important given that anti-miscegenation laws directly challenged German law, which clearly stipulated that children of women married to German men automatically inherited the father’s citizenship.⁷²² For nationalists like vice governor Tecklenburg, this legal stipulation was a Pandora’s box. A direct path to German citizenship threatened to weaken not only German rule in DSWA, but also the biological composition of

⁷¹⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/5423: Eherecht, Mischehen und Mischlinge, “Tecklenburg an die Reichskolonialabteilung,” 23. October 1905, 68-72. Also see Hintrager, *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit*, 76, and Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 143-144.

⁷²⁰ Naranch, “Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*,” 23-34.

⁷²¹ Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 143.

⁷²² For a rich overview of German citizenship laws and their evolution from the Frankfurt Parliament to the Bundesrepublik see Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen: Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 303-309. Also see Frank Becker, ed., *Rassenmischehen-Mischlinge-Rassentrennung: Zur Politik der Rasse in deutschen Kolonialreich* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004).

Deutschtum throughout the entire German empire. The new law, therefore, formally changed the legal status of all mixed-race children from German to “native.”⁷²³ In 1907, colonial authorities expanded this clause to include retroactively mixed-race persons born before the institution of the ban.

Though the legality of the marriage law would remain tenuous up to the start of the First World War, Tecklenburg ultimately succeeded by taking advantage of what historian Jens-Uwe Guettel has termed “a legal gray zone.”⁷²⁴ Instead of basing the anti-miscegenation law in existing legal precedent, Tecklenburg argued that the German constitution had not yet explicitly addressed marriages “across racial lines.” Any and all decisions involving the prohibition of mixed-race relationships, as well as restrictions against mixed-race children therefore were legal in the eyes of the colonial state. Interestingly, however, the most controversial legacy of this debate was the limitation placed on the patriarchal rights of German men.⁷²⁵ The curbing of men’s legal and cultural prerogatives was an unforeseen consequence, one that led to several prolonged court battles in German courts—Carl Becker’s among them.

Nevertheless, advocates of *Rassentrennung* (race separation) forged ahead with additional political measures. On 17 July 1905, Tecklenburg wrote the *Auswärtiges Amt* – *Kolonial Abteilung* (Foreign Office – Colonial Division, AAKA) that “half measures will only exacerbate the current situation without breaking the resistance and make future

⁷²³ Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen*, 306-307.

⁷²⁴ Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 143.

⁷²⁵ Especially see Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

rebellions possible. It is [therefore] necessary to give the Governor broad powers.”⁷²⁶

Tecklenburg reasoned that the governor must be allowed to exercise executive authority during moments of crisis, as well as to remind “natives that they live in the land of the white man and under German law.”⁷²⁷ Five months after making this statement, a majority of these “broad powers” were law of the land. Along with placing bans on mixed-race marriages and limiting the political rights of their offspring, the Governor now had the authority to seize property from Africans who participated in the *Herero-Aufstand*, issue *Paßmarke* (identity passports), and establish segregated living districts and “native” reservations.⁷²⁸

Each measure was rooted in a larger policy goal. The confiscation of indigenous people’s property, for example, had a greater purpose than simply humiliating African belligerents. If Herero and Namaqua lacked the ability to live and work independently from the state, they would need to rely upon German authorities for their economic livelihoods. Such was Tecklenburg’s idea when he stated that “natives should go through a period of suffering” after the war, but not one that would threaten their economic potential in the colony.⁷²⁹ By the end of 1905, however, many were already familiar with the kind of suffering to which Tecklenburg had alluded. In spite of surviving Trotha’s *Vernichtungsbefehl* (“annihilation order”) the previous year, all surrendering Herero and

⁷²⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1220: Einziehung von Vermögen von Eingeborenen in DSWA, Tecklenburg, “Erlass Nr. 710 an die AA – Kolonial Abteilung,” 17. July 1905, pg. 36.

⁷²⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1220, Tecklenburg, “Erlass Nr. 710, pg. 28, 36.

⁷²⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1220: Einziehung von Vermögen von Eingeborenen in DSWA, “*Einziehung von Vermögen Eingeborener im südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiet*,” 26. December 1908, pg. 72. See especially Paragraphs 1, 3, subsections 4 and 5, 7, and 10.

⁷²⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/2118: Aufstand der Herero 1904-1907, Bd. 8, Tecklenburg, “Bericht an die Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 3. July 1905, pg. 154.

Namaqua were promptly sent by German officials to concentration camps.⁷³⁰ Forced labor was a consequence of surrender. Hendrik Fraser, a Reheboth Bastar from Keetmanshoop, testified after the conclusion of the First World War to the size and scope of German labor camps:

When I got to [the camp near] Swakopmund, I saw very many Herero prisoners of war who had been captured in the rebellion which was still going on in the country. There must have been about 600 men, women and children prisoners. . . . The women were made to do hard labour just like the men. The women had to load and unload carts and trolleys, and also to draw Scotch-cart loads of goods to Nonidas (9 10 kilos. away) where there was a depot. The women were put in spans of eight to each Scotch-cart and were made to pull like draught animals. Those who did not work well were brutally flogged with sjamboks.⁷³¹

With such brutal treatment came high death counts. Missionary Heinrich Vedder reported that as many as, “thirty people died everyday in the worst period.”⁷³²

The “suffering plus proletarianization” program, to use George Steinmetz’s phrase, had an additional purpose; it would create a strong workforce for a growing capitalist economy.⁷³³ More specifically, the Herero and Namaqua peoples were to serve as the backbone of a tightly regulated system of labor exploitation.⁷³⁴ DSWA was, after

⁷³⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/2089: Differenzen zwischen Generalleutent von Trotha und Gouverneur Leutwein bezbg. der Aufstände in DSWA, General Lothar von Trotha, “Kommando der Schutztruppe, J. Nr. 3737,” 2. October 1904, pg. 7. For more on the ramifications of the “Destruction order” see Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) and Zimmerer, *Von Windhoek nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011).

⁷³¹ Hendrik Fraser, “Testimony,” in *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*, Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 174-175.

⁷³² Vedder, *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (Cape Town: Frank Cass, 1966), 138.

⁷³³ Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 205.

⁷³⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1220, Tecklenburg, “Erlass Nr. 710”, pgs. 33-36.

all, “established as a society based on work,” as Rohrbach wrote in February 1905.⁷³⁵ Rohrbach went so far as to cite the origins of the German-Herero-Namaqua War in the unregulated market structure that dominated the pre-war years. “Trade with its encroachments had itself contributed to the bitterness of the Hereros . . . and accelerated the masses into joining their leaders,” he argued in May 1904.⁷³⁶ Tecklenburg agreed with Rohrbach’s version of events, stating in October 1904 that “our prestige among the natives, the prestige of the white man is irretrievably gone.”⁷³⁷

With this in mind, the colonial administration moved to force local Africans to sign *Dienstverträgen* (service contracts) with white settlers.⁷³⁸ Workers would be paid a modest wage and provided with basic living conditions in exchange for long hours of labor spent on farms, in shops, and, after 1908, in diamond mines.⁷³⁹ For members of the colonial administration, there was a sense of optimism that this plan would work. White farmers needed laborers and indigenous peoples needed employment. In March 1908, Governor von Schuckmann went so far as to celebrate the success of this economic strategy in his opening address to the Government Council:

⁷³⁵ BAB/RKA 1002: “Schutzgebiet Deutsch-Südwestafrika.” Rohrbach, Paul (Dr.) – Ansiedlungskommissar, Paul Rohrbach, “Bericht an die Siedlungsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” 10. February 1905, pg. 11. Rohrbach expanded further upon this argument the next year in the *Jahrbuch über die deutschen Kolonien* I with an article entitled, “Südwestafrika nach dem Krieg.”

⁷³⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1139: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Rohrbach, “Bericht an die AAKA,” 2. May 1904, pgs. 22-23.

⁷³⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1139, Tecklenburg, “Wirtschaftspolitische Bericht über die gegenwärtige Lage und die nächste Entwicklung,” 15. October 1904, pg.4.

⁷³⁸ “Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika, betr. Maßregeln zur Kontrolle der Eingeborenen,” 18. August 1907,” in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 18 (1907): 1181-1182. See also Weitz, “Creating the Color Line,” 13 and Cynthia Cohen, “‘The Natives Must First Become Good Workmen’: Formal Educational Provision in German South West and East Africa Compared,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, No.1 (March 1993): 115-134.

⁷³⁹ Ibid. See especially Paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 15.

The period after the insurrection is short, the natives, to whom we have extended the hand of peace, need to calm down and get used to order. . . . As far as possible, settlers are penetrating; everywhere creative hands are stirring; look at the cities. Settlements and farms emerge, the resources of the country are explored and development is going forward. It remains the duty of the government to promote this development and forge a way forward.⁷⁴⁰

German authorities regarded economic growth and expansion as the only significant measures of progress. As an additional step, the colonial administration labeled non-white persons without employment as *Landstreicher* (vagabonds), which was a punishable offense.⁷⁴¹ Bernhard Dernburg, Germany's first Secretary of State for the Colonies, expressed in 1908 that Africans would be "educated to work" and their labor utilized "for the benefit of the economy of the colonizing nation."⁷⁴² The *Kölnische Zeitung* was even more forward, declaring that "blacks are now the 'work animals' of whites," thanks to the new regulations.⁷⁴³

"Education for work" was, however, nothing more than an officially sanctioned program of indentured servitude. As a result, employers often treated Africans brutally. Moreover, the Africans were given little choice in where they could work and live. "Those who were left after the rebellion were put into compounds and made to work for their food only. They were sent to farms, and also to the railways and elsewhere. Many

⁷⁴⁰ Governor von Schuckmann, "Eine Programmrede des Gouverneurs," 15. May 1908, in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 10 (1908): 467-468.

⁷⁴¹ "Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika, betr. Maßregeln zur Kontrolle der Eingeborenen," 18. August 1907," in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 18 (1907): 1181. Generally, see Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*.

⁷⁴² "Die Erziehung der Eingeborenen zur Arbeit in Deutsch-Ostafrika," *Jahrbuch über die deutschen Kolonien* I (1908): 117-124. Also see Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*, 85-91 and Edward Snyder, "Work not Alms: The Bethel Mission to East Africa and German Protestant debates of Eugenics, 1880-1933" (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Minnesota, 2013).

⁷⁴³ BAB/RKA 1001/1220, "Deutsche Schutzgebiete. Die Einziehung von Eingeborenen-Land," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 11. January 1906, pg. 113.

were hanged and flogged nearly to death,” testified Hosea Mungunda, a Herero Headman, in 1918.⁷⁴⁴

Along with signing service contracts, German officials also forced Africans to carry identity passports and wear identity badges at all times. Worn around the neck and inscribed with personalized numbers, identity badges allowed white settlers to separate non-white populations from certain aspects of society.⁷⁴⁵ Some employers even went so far as to tattoo their laborers with specific insignia so as to identify those who left work without proper authorization.⁷⁴⁶ The “racialization of identity” extended to the legal sphere as well. Any white citizen had the authority to arrest or detain a “native” suspected of illegal activities, and colonial courts typically imposed harsh sentences for minor infractions. The German colonial administration gave business and farm owners the freedom to survey their own property and to manage their own affairs as they saw fit.⁷⁴⁷

Racial division also came in the form of programs that physically separated Africans from Germans. The “Regulation of the Governor of German Southwest Africa concerning Passport Requirements of the Natives,” for example, mandated that Africans could not live in “white districts.”⁷⁴⁸ It also segregated churches, schools, hospitals, trains,

⁷⁴⁴ Hosea Mungunda, “Testimony,” in *Words Cannot Be Found*, Silvester and Gewalt, eds., 177-178. The title “Headman” performed as another name for “leader” or “chief.”

⁷⁴⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1139: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, “Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika, betr. Die Paßpflicht der Eingeborenen,” 18. August 1908, in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 18 (1907): 1882-1884. See especially Paragraph 11: “Eingeborenen Reisepaß, Deutsch-Südwestafrika.” The first official document to mention internal passports and identity badges is a report sent by Tecklenburg to the AAKA on 15 October 1904. pgs. 6-7.

⁷⁴⁶ Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 211.

⁷⁴⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1142: Ansiedlung insbesondere deutscher Bauern in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Kapitän Draeger, “Allgemeine Gesichtspunkte für die geplante Gründung einer Deutschen Besiedlung Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” c.a. 1907, pgs. 182-187.

⁷⁴⁸ “Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika, betr. Maßregeln zur Kontrolle der Eingeborenen,” 18. August 1907,” in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 18 (1907): 1181-1182.

post offices, and legal jurisdictions, all done with the intention of establishing a society dominated by Germans and worked by Africans.⁷⁴⁹ These policies only added to existing legislation that forbade Africans from owning firearms, selling large quantities of alcohol, or hunting beyond the borders of their district without written permission from local authorities.⁷⁵⁰

In order to justify these measures, German colonial officials often looked beyond the borders of DSWA for support, usually toward the Cape Colony, Australia, and the United States. Indeed, Tecklenburg often referred to segregationist legislation in other colonial empires. In a letter to the AAKA, for example, he explained that miscegenation was the root cause of the “degradation of the European race in the former Spanish colonies in Central and South America.”⁷⁵¹ In contrast, he continued, “the United States and England’s African colonies [have instituted] a strict separation between Caucasians and colored Africans [and] in the United States, marriages between whites and blacks are prohibited.”⁷⁵² A few years later, Wilhelm Solf, the last German governor of DSWA, asked rhetorically in a speech before a group of parliamentarians, “what is the ‘Negro question’ in the United States if not a miscegenation question?”⁷⁵³ As these

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 1182. Also see Hintrager, *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit*, 81-94.

⁷⁵⁰ “Verfügung des Kolonialamts betr. die Verwertung fiskalischen Farmlandes in Südwestafrika,” 28. May 1907, in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 18 (1907): 604-605; “Verordnung des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Südwestafrika, betr. Bildung von Wildreservaten in dem südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiet,” 22. March 1907, in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 18 (1907): 428-429.

⁷⁵¹ BAB/RKA 1001/5423: Mischehen und Mischlinge in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Tecklenburg, “Bericht an die AAKA,” pgs. 68-69. Also see Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 141-142.

⁷⁵² Ibid. Tecklenburg’s assertion about anti-miscegenation laws in the United States was not fully accurate. There existed no federal legislation prohibiting “mixed-race” relationships from materializing, only state regulations.

⁷⁵³ BAB/RKA 1001/5420: Mischehen und Mischlinge in den USA, den englischen, französischen, niederländischen und spanischen Kolonien, Wilhelm Solf, “Rede,” 2. May 1912, pg. 73.

pronouncements all show, the talk of anti-miscegenation regulations was a global phenomenon that carried with it global ramifications.

Finally, German authorities constructed “native reservations” divided along ethnic lines throughout the colony.⁷⁵⁴ The German-Herero-Namaqua War served as the main catalyst for their creation. Before 1904, some German leaders had considered reservations as a very real possibility. Governor Theodor Leutwein, for instance, viewed them as a central component of any permanent peace between Germans and Africans.⁷⁵⁵ Various governmental institutions also weighed the potential ramifications of reservations in DSWA. Like Tecklenburg, many associated with these institutions looked beyond German shores toward the United States for guidance. On 7 April 1898, the *Reichsjustizamt* (Reich Ministry of Justice) submitted a report to Kaiser Wilhelm II. “It has become desirable to protect German control in Southwest Africa against natives using means that extend beyond current legislation,” the report began.⁷⁵⁶ “For this purpose, it appears beneficial, after the example of other countries, in particular the United States of America, to create special and protective native reserves in Southwest Africa.”⁷⁵⁷ The study went on to stipulate that similar “benefits” could follow in DSWA if colonial authorities created native reservations.

⁷⁵⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1220, *Einziehung von Vermögen Einbeorener im südwestafrikanischen Schutzgebiet*,” 26. December 1908, pgs. 72-74.

⁷⁵⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1218: Kronland und Eingeborenenreservate in Südwestafrika,” Sitzung, “Zur Verhandlung steht die Frage der Schaffung von Eingeborenen Reservaten im Hererolande,” 14. November 1902, pgs.183-185. Several reservations were established in the immediate years after the German-Namaqua war of 1890-1894. Leutwein deemed these sufficient, as they would serve as “isolated pockets” within the German umbrella of control. These, however, bare little resemblance to reservations created after 1904.

⁷⁵⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1218: Kronland und Eingeborenenreservate in Südwestafrika, “Bericht an die Kaiser Wilhlem II,” 7. April 1898, pg. 91.

⁷⁵⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1218: Kronland und Eingeborenenreservate in Südwestafrika, “Bericht an die Kaiser Wilhlem II,” 7. April 1898, pg. 91.

Interestingly, however, a majority of German farmers, large estate owners, and private companies were against the construction of reservations before 1904.⁷⁵⁸ They feared that large tracts of land would turn to waste under African control, and that the full economic potential of the colony would remain an elusive dream. Mostly, though, they feared a loss in their investments. “The welfare of the country is rooted first in the prosperity of farmers and second in the development of mining,” or so they had been led to believe by colonial officials.⁷⁵⁹ Reservations threatened to get in the way of progress. The German-Herero-Namaqua War irrevocably altered that mindset. Now, instead of actively lobbying against the creation of reservations, farmers and private business owners joined the cause. Apart from security concerns, the main reason for this change was economic gain. Whereas the prewar economy strove to move indigenous peoples to the periphery, the postwar strategy aimed to incorporate them into a capitalist labor system. Decentralized reservations would now serve the needs of the colonizer economically, politically, and, of course, racially.⁷⁶⁰

In 1908, Rohrbach wrote in the *Jahrbuch über die deutschen Kolonien* about Germany’s prospects in DSWA following the German-Herero-Namaqua War. For him, the future looked bright:

The economic question as a whole and the question of native labor in particular are to be decided in the only possible and natural way for the

⁷⁵⁸ Large estate owners were especially hostile to the establishment of native reservations. Already fearful of the growing political influence of poor white farmers in local districts, estate owners fought against all proposals that threatened their dominance in DSWA.

⁷⁵⁹ Governor von Schuckmann, “Eine Programmrede des Gouverneurs,” 15. May 1908, in *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 10 (1908): 468. “Das Wohl des Landes wurzelt in erster Linie in dem Gedeihen des Farmers, in zweiter Linie in der Entwicklung des Bergbaus.”

⁷⁶⁰ Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 209. Lora Wildenthal argues that native reservations were also built as a means to “protect” indigenous peoples from white settlers. She stresses, however, that this was primarily an economic decision that would further tie natives to the land and German colonial leadership.

whole of South Africa: wherever there is a down-home and permanent white settlement, it can develop the entire land and be kept free, and the natives kept on living and bread wages from the government. . . . [T]he next generation must continue this program, as it also will provide a moral uplift for the negro by improving and deepening his character intellectually, and not only morally.⁷⁶¹

Racial difference and forced labor were twin corner stones that would support Rohrbach's vision for a new German *Heimat* in southern Africa. As Rohrbach understood, however, his dream could only be made into a reality if white settlers became the undisputed masters of the colony. The Herero-Namaqua genocide went a long way toward that goal.⁷⁶² So did the presence of German soldiers, as well as the imposition of anti-miscegenation legislation. Indeed, by the start of the First World War, "racial thinking" had successfully permeated all facets of colonial life. With the "*Eingeborenenfrage*" ("native question") resolved, colonial officials could shift their focus in new directions, most notably toward the so-called *Frauenfrage*.

"Our Culture-Bearer": Emigration and German Southwest Africa's "Frauenfrage"

"Southwest, sweet land of sun and stars, you land of endless blue horizon, open spaces, and wild field deer, you land of the Kudus and range animals; I'll build on your sunbaked earth happily, stone by stone in the native soil."⁷⁶³ For those who embarked on the long journey to DSWA, enthusiasm was never an issue for concern, as these overtly

⁷⁶¹ Rohrbach, "Südwestafrika nach dem Kriege," *Jahrbuch über die deutschen Kolonien I* (Essen: G.D. Baedeker, 1908), 166.

⁷⁶² Some historians, especially Jürgen Zimmerer, have argued that the genocide of Herero and Namaqua was a deliberately planned strategy with roots that stretched back to the mid-nineteenth century. Though the manner in which the campaign was fought, most especially in the first year, suggests that settlers and soldiers alike fought passionately, no direct evidence points to its execution as anything more than the military strategy of the colonial *Schutztruppe*. This is not to say that its implementation was any less brutal or systematic, however.

⁷⁶³ Settler Lyric, circa 1910, in *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit*, Hintrager, 86-87.

romantic verses from a well-known settler-colonist song exemplify. Adventure and freedom offered settlers much, if only in their minds. Unfortunately for the German colonial administration, building a strong cultural and economic foundation overseas required more than enthusiasm, however.

White women, in particular, were essential to Germany's colonial project in DSWA. After the passage of anti-miscegenation legislation in 1905, the emigration of white women from Germany became an even more pressing issue for supporters of German colonial expansion. As Baroness Adda von Liliencron, chairwoman of the *Deutschkolonialen Frauenbundes* (German Colonial Women's League, DFB), wrote in 1908, "The German soldier conquers the land with the sword, the German farmer and businessman searches for its economic utilization, but the German woman is alone called to and capable of keeping it German."⁷⁶⁴

Colonial advocates had ample reason for concern. In 1900, there were only 403 white women living in the colony, which comprised a mere twelve percent of the total white European population.⁷⁶⁵ Six years later, the number had risen slightly to 717, but the overall percentage of white women dropped to eleven percent.⁷⁶⁶ By 1913, when the final colonial census before the First World War was tabulated, there were 3,058 white women living in DSWA. In spite of this seemingly large increase, white women still

⁷⁶⁴ Baroness Adda von Liliencron, "Die Frauenfrage in den Kolonien," *Kolonie und Heimat* (1908/1909). Quoted in Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 46.

⁷⁶⁵ Karen Boge Smidt, "'Germania führt die deutsche Frau nach Südwest': Auswanderung, Leben, und soziale Konflikte deutscher Frauen in der ehemalige Kolonie Deutsch-Südwestafrika, 1884-1920. Eine sozial- und frauengeschichtliche Studie (Ph.D. Dissertation: Otto-von-Euericke-Universität Magdeburg, 1995), 430-431.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

remained a significant minority in the colony, representing only twenty percent of the European population.⁷⁶⁷

Organizations like the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (German Colonial Society, DKG) allied with the DFB and *Frauenbund* to facilitate the emigration of more white women to DSWA.⁷⁶⁸ Given the goals of both groups, colonial advocates hoped that this would increase public awareness about the prospects of living abroad.⁷⁶⁹ The *Frauenbund* had an enthusiastic base that could be counted on to promote the benefits of living in DSWA. Moreover, it was a popular organization. By 1914, its membership had grown to 18,680 people.⁷⁷⁰ In addition, the *Frauenbund* published the popular periodical, *Kolonie und Heimat*, which proved a useful outlet for the DKG. Authorities could advocate policies that they deemed necessary, but in a manner that was not overtly propagandistic. Led by passionate supporters of colonial expansion and settlement, the *Frauenbund* promoted stories that appealed to middle-class and unmarried women, as well as young girls.⁷⁷¹ The organization also endeavored to assist financially those who could not alone

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid. Also see Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 58-59.

⁷⁶⁸ In addition to providing support, the *Kolonialgesellschaft* also agreed to subsidize the travel expenses for all women that the *Frauenbund* convinced to emigrate to DSWA. See Richard Pierard, "The Transportation of White Women to German Southwest Africa, 1898-1914," *Race Class* 12 (1971): 318.

⁷⁶⁹ The stated goals of the *Frauenbund* were: to win the support of women from all classes for colonial expansion; to encourage women to travel to the colonies; to educate white children in the colonies; to assist women when they arrive overseas; and to strengthen the economic and spiritual ties between women living in the colonies and Europe. Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Kolonial-Handels-Adressbuch* (Berlin: 1914), 32.

⁷⁷⁰ *Kolonie und Heimat* (July 1914): 8. See also Pierard, "The Transportation of White Women," 319.

⁷⁷¹ Nancy R. Reagin, "German *Brigadoon*? Domesticity and Metropolitan Germans' Perceptions of *Auslandsdeutschen* in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe," in *The Heimat Abroad*, O'Donnell et al., eds., 250.

afford the cost of emigration. By the summer of 1914, the *Frauenbund* alone had subsidized the travel of 953 women to DSWA.⁷⁷²

In spite of the efforts to bolster emigration, German authorities never fully resolved the problem. The dearth of white women in the colony, colloquially referred to as the “*Frauenfrage*” (“women’s question”), threatened the entirety of Germany’s imperial project in Africa. In 1898, Governor Leutwein expressed concern that the issue would turn DSWA into a “bastard colony” if they did not act quickly.⁷⁷³ He also believed that the offspring of mixed-race marriages inherited the “bad traits” of African women and that German men would never prosper as farmers, merchants, or businessmen without a family.⁷⁷⁴ Rohrbach, too, regarded the *Frauenfrage* as the most pressing issue of the time. For him, white women were more than just status symbols or sexual objects.⁷⁷⁵ They were indispensable partners of emigrating men who would help Germany realize its colonial dream. He went so far as to claim that the shortage of German women had a detrimental effect on male settlers. The prospect of keeping “a filthy house with the lazy, ignorant, indolent . . . colored wenches” would ruin German men, according to Rohrbach.⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁷² *Berichte über die Sitzungen des Ausschusses der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft*, 22. May 1914, pg. 4.

⁷⁷³ Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 232-233.

⁷⁷⁴ Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, 234.

⁷⁷⁵ Paul Rohrbach, *Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika ein Ansiedlungs-Gebiet?*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Buchverlag der “Hilfe,” 1910).

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 29. Also see Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft, kulturpolitische Grundsätze für die Rassen und Missionsfragen* (Berlin: Buchverlag der “Hilfe,” 1909).

Dr. Wilhelm Külz, among the most vocal champions for self-administration in DSWA, harbored similar sentiments as Rohrbach on the issue of racial purity.⁷⁷⁷ While traveling in Germany on a lecture tour, he coined the slogan, “No black woman, no yellow one! Only the German woman is to be our culture-bearer.”⁷⁷⁸ He thought that this would encourage more women in the metropole to consider their prospects overseas. In a similar manner, Baroness Liliencron went so far as to argue that “the hard-won territory was in danger of going completely to the Boers and Kaffirs . . . because a growing race of mixed-bloods threatened . . . to nip Germandom in the bud.”⁷⁷⁹ As these statements suggest, race and cultural purity were at the heart of the *Frauenfrage*. Along with fueling the fears of administrators and colonial societies, the *Frauenfrage* gave women a forum in which to voice their opinions on the scope of Germany’s colonial project. It also challenged traditional gender expectations, and forced both men and women to reconceptualize their views on what would constitute a masculine and feminine identity in the new *Heimat*.⁷⁸⁰ In her pamphlet “*Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika: Ein Beitrag*

⁷⁷⁷ Oberbürgermeister Dr. Wilhelm Külz was one of the principal architects of self-government in DSWA. Born in Saxony in 1875, Külz became a chief advocate for German expansion overseas. In 1907, he was appointed the Reichskommissar for Self-Government in German Southwest Africa, and occupied that post until 1912, when he became the mayor of Zittau. Later, following the First World War, Külz served briefly as major of Dresden, and went on to be a founding member of the *Deutschen Demokratischen Partei* (DDP). The “Assessment on the Results of the Examination of a Draft for Self-Government in German Southwest Africa” was the first action taken to justify restrictive forms of community membership in DSWA.

⁷⁷⁸ Külz, in *Kolonialzeitschrift* 13, No. 25 (21 June 1912): 392. Also see Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*, 103.

⁷⁷⁹ Adda von Liliencron, *Krieg und Frieden: Erinnerungen aus dem Leben einer Offiziersfrau* (Berlin: R. Risenschmidt, 1912), 299. Also see Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*, 139.

⁷⁸⁰ For a detailed assessment of gender construction in German settler colonies, see Daniel Joseph Walther, “Gender Construction and Settler Colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894-1914,” *The Historian* 66, No. 1 (2004): 1-19.

zur Frauenfrage in unseren Kolonien,” for example, Clara Brockmann described imperial conquest as an important national interest for women.

I bid my sisters in the homeland [*Heimat*] farewell and put to them a request to the heart: help with the work to make our colonies purposeful and agreeable. Support in the homeland our cultural tasks on Africa’s soil to build and establish a new Germany.⁷⁸¹

Brockmann believed that women were the most important German figures overseas, and eventually settled in DSWA after the German-Herero-Namaqua War. Similar to Dr. Külz, she railed against interracial marriage, asserting that only a German wife could preserve and maintain the German race, language, culture, and prestige. “Without the participation of the housewife, prevention of intermarriage, which signifies the spiritual and economic ruin of the settler, [and] the achievement of a profitable farm, cannot reach successful development,” she wrote in 1910.⁷⁸² Indeed, for advocates like Brockmann, German women were the only ones capable of crafting an “orderly family life” out of the “disheveled bachelor economy” that reigned in the Southwest African *Heimat*.⁷⁸³

As Clara Brockmann signifies, women were often vocal enthusiasts of German colonial expansion. Along with speeches, many showed their support by writing about their own experiences abroad. Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, who went on to become one of the most well-known female colonialists in Germany, echoed Brockmann’s

⁷⁸¹ Clara Brockmann, *Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika: Ein Beitrag zur Frauenfrage in unseren Kolonien* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn Königliche Hofbuchhandlung, 1910), iv.

⁷⁸² Brockmann, *Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika*, 2. Also see Lora Wildenthal, “‘She Is the Victor’: Bourgeois Women, Nationalist Identities, and the Ideal of the Independent Woman Farmer in German Southwest Africa,” in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*, Geoff Eley, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 371-395. Also see Lora Wildenthal, “‘She Is the Victor’: Bourgeois Women, Nationalist Identities, and the Ideal of the Independent Woman Farmer in German Southwest Africa,” in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*, Geoff Eley, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 371-395.

⁷⁸³ Brockmann, *Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika*, 4-5.

message. In October 1913, she wrote about the importance of family life in the *Südwestbote: Windhuker Nachrichten*. She argued that the *Frauenfrage* “in the colonies, especially in Southwest Africa, has in addition to a national side overwhelmingly an ethical and cultural one . . . which the woman has to fulfill here.”⁷⁸⁴ Eckenbrecher had made a name for herself six years earlier when she published her autobiography, *Was Afrika mir gab und nahm: Erlebnisse einer deutschen Ansiedlerfrau in Südwestafrika*.⁷⁸⁵ The memoir, which is divided into three sections, details her journey to DSWA, her life as a farmer’s wife living in a remote village, and her experience during the German-Herero-Namaqua War.⁷⁸⁶

Eckenbrecher’s autobiography found a ready audience in Germany, as it appeared only one year after the publication of Gustav Frenssen’s best-selling novel, *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest*.⁷⁸⁷ Frenssen’s novel offered a fictionalized account of a volunteer from Hamburg who joined the *Schutztruppe* to battle Herero in the 1904. The book won

⁷⁸⁴ Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, “Die deutsche Frau und die Kolonien,” *Südwestbote: Windhuker Nachrichten*, 15. October 1913. Also see Daniel Joseph Walther, “Gender Construction and Settler Colonialism in German Southwest Africa, 1894-1914,” *The Historian* 66, Volume 1 (2004): 1-18.

⁷⁸⁵ For a detailed assessment on the literary significance of *Was Afrika mir gab und nahm*, see Katharina Gerstenberger, “The Autobiography of a White Woman: Margarethe von Eckenbrecher’s Colonial Memoir,” in *Truth to Tell: German Women’s Autobiographies and Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 64-99. For memoirs and travel literature written by women who had traveled to Germany’s Africa colonies see Clara Brockmann (footnote 112); Else Sonnenberg, *Wie es am Waterberg zugeht: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Hereroaufstandes* (Berlin: 1905); Ada Cramer, *Weise oder Schwartz: Lehr- und Leidensjahre eines Farmers in Südwest im Lichte des Rassenhasses* (Berlin: 1913); Maria Karow, *Wo sonst der Fuss des Kriegers trat: Farmerleben in Südwest nach dem Kriege* (Berlin: 1909); and Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, Helene von Falkenhausen, Stabsarzt Dr. Kuhn, and Oberleutnant Stuhlmann, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika. Kriegs- und Friedensbilder* (Leipzig: 1907).

⁷⁸⁶ Eckenbrecher expressed in the Forward her desire that the memoir, “not be viewed as a piece of propaganda,” but simply as a work, “explaining how ‘outside’ Germans [Deutschen ‘draußen’] lived before, during, and after the [Herero] war.”

⁷⁸⁷ For an analysis of Frenssen’s *Peters Moors Fahrt nach Südwest* see John Noyes, “National Identity, Nomadism, and Narration in Gustav Frenssen’s ‘Peter Moor’s Journey to Southwest Africa,’” in *The Imperialist Imagination*, Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox, and Zantop, eds., 87-105.

wide praise in Germany, detailing acts of heroism and instilling a sense of adventure in readers. Eckenbrecher's book added a human element to Frenssen's portrayal of life in the colony. For example, in the final section of *Fahrt nach Südwest*, Peter Moor describes what he encountered after entering a small town that had recently been attacked by "marauding Herero":

As we rode by the first house that wasn't roofless, and hadn't burned out window-holes, we admired it very much, and when we noticed that proper furniture, a table and chairs, were standing on the open veranda, we stared in astonishment and turned in our saddles to look until we had passed. With wide eyes we gazed into the garden, which in former years the colonist had laid out with great care . . . and there in the shade of the veranda stood a German woman, and she held a little child on her arm.⁷⁸⁸

After reading *Was Afrika mir gab und nahm*, it was probably difficult for many not to imagine Eckenbrecher standing in the shade of that veranda.

At the inauguration of the Windhoek Chapter of the Women's League, Frau Neugebohrn, a staunch supporter of colonial settlement, maintained that the German woman, "brings very firm views about order and decency and . . . tries to transfer this to the new circumstances. [In short], she transplants her entire way of life wherever she goes."⁷⁸⁹ "Therefore," she continued, "the woman achieves an important cultural work because she observes and bestows great care on all these small things and through this achieves a great deal."⁷⁹⁰ Another argued that "the German woman stands out as the strongest and greatest hope for the spiritual Germanization [*Deutschwerden*] and

⁷⁸⁸ Gustav Frenssen, *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest* (Berlin: 1906), 127.

⁷⁸⁹ Frau Neugebohrn, "Wie können die Frauen Südwestafrikas die Bestrebungen des kolonialen Frauenbundes unterstützen?," *Kolonie und Heimat* 3 (1909/1910): 8. Also see Walther, "Gender Construction and Settler Colonialism," 13.

⁷⁹⁰ Neugebohrn, "Wie können die Frauen Südwestafrikas," 8.

enduring preservation of the lands that we have purchased dearly with life and property.”⁷⁹¹ “At her hot, busy and dangerous outpost,” the author continues, “she stands as a factor, more important than all the gold and gunpowder, in the preservation of the race and nation.”⁷⁹² The implication that only German women possessed the biological means to bear German children and bestow upon them German heritage made for a powerful message, one that resonated with citizens in both Berlin and Windhoek.⁷⁹³

It is important to note that these writings never ignored or trivialized the negative affect of miscegenation on German culture.⁷⁹⁴ Authors strove to convey and fulfill an exclusionary process for making a new Germany in southern Africa. That these patently racist works began to appear after 1904 was hardly coincidental. The German-Herero-Namaqua War had forever stigmatized “the native” in the eyes of white settlers. Once the

⁷⁹¹ Leonore Niessen-Deiters, “Rassenreinheit!”, *Kolonie und Heimat* 36 (1911-1912): 8. Also see Roger Chickering, “‘Casting Their Gaze More Broadly’: Women’s Patriotic Activism in Imperial Germany,” *Past and Present* 118 (February 1988): 180.

⁷⁹² Niessen-Deiters, “Rassenreinheit!”, 8.

⁷⁹³ Martha Mamozai, *Schwarze Frau, weiße Herrin: Frauenleben in den deutschen Kolonien* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989), 152-154.

⁷⁹⁴ A selection of contemporary popular German literature and autobiographical accounts of the German-Herero-Namaqua war include Maximilian Bayer, *Mit dem Hauptquartier in Südwestafrika* (Berlin: 1909); Marianne Eckenbrecher, *Was Afrika mir gab und nahm: Erlebnisse einer deutschen Ansiedlerfrau in Südwestafrika* (Berlin: 1907); Burkard Hartmann Axel von Erffa, *Reise- und Kriegsbilder in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Halle-Saale: 1905); Helene von Falkenhausen, *Ansiedlerschicksale: Elf Jahre in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1893-1904* (Berlin: 1905); Gustav Frenssen, *Peter Moors Fahrt nach Südwest: Ein Feldzugsbericht* (Berlin: 1906); Jean Gümpell, *Ins Land der Hereros: Erlebnisse eines jungen Deutschen: Erzählungen für die reifere Jugend* (Berlin: 1904); Henny Koch, *Die Vollrads in Südwest: Erzählung für junge Mädchen* (Stuttgart: 1910); Friede Henriete Kraze, *Heim Neuland: Ein Roman von der Wasserkante und aus Deutsch-Südwest* (Stuttgart: 1909); Adda von Liliencron, *Reiterbriefe aus Südwest: Briefe und Gedichte aus dem Feldzuge in Südwest-Afrika in den Jahren 1904-1906* (Leipzig: 1907); Otto Metterhausen, *Im Kampf ums Neuland in Südwest: Eine Erzählung aus dem Hereroaufstande* (Stuttgart: 1908); Erich von Salzmänn, *Im Kampf gegen die Herero* (Berlin: 1905); and Kurd Schwabe, *Der Krieg in Südwestafrika 1904-1906* (Berlin: 1906). For a scholarly analysis of these works see Medardus Brehl, “‘Das Drama spielte sich auf der dunklen Bühne des Sandfeldes ab’: Die Vernichtung der Herero und Nama in der deutschen (Populär-) Literature,” in *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, Zimmerer and Zeller, eds., 86-96.

war was over, advocates of colonial emigration simply adopted the race-war thesis that originated with General Trotha and applied it to postwar life in the colony.

Though colonialism enhanced the voice of several female settlers, men still largely treated women as subservient members of colonial society. Indeed, female colonialists, like “their sisters” in the metropole, enjoyed no political rights and were in most cases publically relegated to the domestic sphere. To this end, organizations like the DFB and *Frauenbund* regularly instructed women on how to perform domestic chores overseas. After all, the chief goal of the *Frauenbund* was “to preserve and strengthen the spiritual and intellectual bonds between the women in the motherland and the women struggling for their culture in the colonies.”⁷⁹⁵ For the *Frauenbund*, the German household, to use historian Roger Chickering’s phrase, was to be “physically transplanted” to colonial soil so that women could continue their roles as, “priestesses of the domestic hearth.”⁷⁹⁶ In spite of these specific aims, however, the *Frauenbund* attracted a wide variety of women. This included people who had lived abroad and were interested in colonial policy; women who wanted to escape the social limitations in Germany; progressive women who advocated women’s suffrage, as well as conservative middle-class women who opposed political equality; and women who saw a patriotic duty in counteracting race-mixing.⁷⁹⁷

As such, many of the women affiliated with colonial leagues had opposing ideas on what constituted a proper settler life.⁷⁹⁸ Even though male settlers generally envisioned

⁷⁹⁵ Brockmann, *Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika*, 29.

⁷⁹⁶ Chickering, “‘Casting Their Gaze More Broadly’,” 178; *Kolonie und Heimat*, No. 1 (1909/1910): 8.

⁷⁹⁷ Wildenthal, “‘She Is the Victor’,” 384.

⁷⁹⁸ Social class played an especially important role in determining how women viewed the colonial sphere. The *Frauenbund*, which was primarily associated with bourgeois society, supported policies that were

a passive role for women, their status as “culture-bearers” made that difficult to establish. The elevation of race as *the* central component of citizenship, together with the realities ushered in by the new colonial context, raised the status of women throughout the German colonial empire. Public and private spheres were no longer separate domains. Though “pacified,” DSWA still remained an untamed place, one that required men and women to cultivate *and* make homes together. Clara Brockmann, for instance, advocated that women should come prepared to farm, and to welcome the realities of rural life.⁷⁹⁹ “One should not fear the danger of becoming countrified [*Verbauern*],” she wrote, “for the woman farmer protects everyone’s good upbringing and education.”⁸⁰⁰ Her appeal evoked an image of the ideal colonial German—a woman motivated by the same sense of adventure that inspired men to emigrate overseas and that still embraced her responsibilities as “priestess of the domestic hearth”:

All over the house and yard, they must arrange and distribute work, often with a vigorous hand . . . I can think of a current farmer’s wife, who was said to ride and oversee the work of her servants like a man into the field. Such women we need for the Southwest.⁸⁰¹

based on “traditionalist” understandings of Germandom, whereas working-class women were typically more entrepreneurial and independent. See Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*, 2001; Karen Smidt, “‘Germania führt die deutsche Frau nach Südwest’: Auswanderung, Leben und soziale Konflikte deutscher Frauen in der ehemaligen Kolonie Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1884-1920. Eine sozial- und frauengeschichtliche Studie” (Ph.D. Dissertation: Universität Magdeburg, 1995); Krista O’Donnell, “The Colonial Women Question: Gender, National Identity, and Empire in the German Colonial Society Female Emigration Program, 1896-1914” (Ph.D. Dissertation: Binghamton University, 1996); and Krista O’Donnell, “Home, Nation, Empire: Domestic Germanness and Colonial Citizenship,” in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness*, Krista O’Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagan, eds., (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 40-57.

⁷⁹⁹ Brockmann, *Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika*, 7-11.

⁸⁰⁰ Brockmann, *Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika*, 7. “Man darf nicht fürchten, daß für die Farmersfrau die Gefahr des Verbauerns nahe liegt; davor schützt sie jede gute Erziehung und Schulbildung.”

⁸⁰¹ Brockmann, *Die deutsche Frau in Südwestafrika*, 8.

Others claimed that the “danger of becoming countrified” could be overcome. In her memoir, *Wo sonst der Fuss des Kriegers trat: Farmerleben in Südwest nach dem Kriege*, Maria Karow emphasized the importance of cleanliness to maintaining familial order. Unlike the homes of “natives,” which she likened to “molehills” that lacked “proper doors or ventilation,” Karow argued that a well-kept house was a reminder of the European *Heimat*.⁸⁰² After visiting the homes of several white settlers, she wrote that “their wives greeted me and showed me their households with pride, in which everything was so clean that it gleamed. If the African servants had not been there, I would have thought myself in Germany.”⁸⁰³ Helene von Falkenhausen, a *Farmersfrau* who lost her husband in the first year of the German-Herero-Namaqua War, made a similar argument in 1907. She characterized African women as inferior housekeepers, and chastised mixed-race households under the same pretext. “What a tragic life is led [by male settlers] who have married native-born women! These women are generally too lazy to pay sufficient attention to the household and too stupid to learn how to do so,” she wrote in 1907.⁸⁰⁴

The presence of more white women promised to rescue German settlers from marrying Africans and thereby ensure the continuance of Germandom in DSWA. Colonial life, in addition, granted more opportunities for women to craft their own image of the southern African *Heimat*. In DSWA, women could articulate their own conception of national belonging, whether as *Farmersfrauen*, *Hausfrauen*, or small business owners,

⁸⁰² Karow, *Wo sonst der Fuss des Kriegers trat*, 154, 33. Also see Nancy Reagin, “The Imagined *Hausfrau*: National Identity, Domesticity, and Colonialism in Imperial Germany,” *Journal of Modern History* 73, No. 1 (March 2001): 81.

⁸⁰³ Karow, *Wo sonst der Fuss des Kriegers trat*, 128. Reagin, “The Imagined *Hausfrau*,” 83.

⁸⁰⁴ Margarethe von Eckenbrecher, Helene von Falkenhausen, Stabsarzt Dr. Kuhn, and Oberleutnant Sthumann, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Kriegs- und Friedensbilder* (Leipzig: 1907), 27. Also see Reagin, “The Imagined *Hausfrau*,” 82.

and overcome the gendered social constraints that inherently tied women's identities to male organizations and political institutions in Germany.⁸⁰⁵ Indeed, the physical separation of the colony from the metropole distanced women from many of the gendered expectations that existed in Europe. The increased emphasis on race had allowed white women to become necessary partners in colonization.⁸⁰⁶ In short, DSWA, to quote historian Daniel Joseph Walther, empowered some women to "go beyond notions of domesticity and womanhood—both because they could, and because the colony demanded it of them."⁸⁰⁷

Near the conclusion of *Fahrt nach Südwest*, Peter Moor states that "it is remarkable how indifferent man is to human life, if that life is of a different race."⁸⁰⁸ Though the novel celebrated German colonial expansion, even Frenssen acknowledged that racial thinking had a dangerous potential for the world. Irrespective of his veiled warning, however, German settlers and colonial administrators looked to race as a means for making *Deutschtum* an exclusionary concept in Africa. They rejected colonial miscegenation, pledged to safeguard the racial divide between white Europeans and Africans, and called for greater racial awareness among the German general public. In the process, Germans of "mixed-race" had their political status negated and eventually erased by the colonial administration. As a result, the standing of German women rose substantially. The German woman, as "culture-bearer," was to focus her attention on keeping both men and children German, while also forging a place in a new *Heimat*.

⁸⁰⁵ For a discussion on women business owners see Wildenthal, "She Is the Victor," 382-384.

⁸⁰⁶ Martha Mamozai, *Schwarze Frau, weiße Herrin: Frauenleben in den deutschen Kolonien* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), 156-157.

⁸⁰⁷ Walther, "Gender Construction and Settler Colonialism," 18.

⁸⁰⁸ Frenssen, *Peter Moor Fahrt nach Südwest*, 195. "Es ist merkwürdig, wie gleichgültig uns Mensch und Menschenleben ist, wenn es von anderer Rasse ist."

“Harmony and Plague:” Boer Migration and Race in German Southwest Africa

On 22 March 1905, the *Alldeutscher Verband* submitted a report to the *Reichskolonialamt* (RKA) entitled “*Die Burenfrage in Südafrika betreffend.*” The study sought to verify rumors that Boers in the British Cape Colony looked favorably upon the German leadership in DSWA.⁸⁰⁹ With the German-Herero-Namaqua War entering its second year, the RKA was in search of good news in southern Africa. To that end, the report’s findings could hardly have been more encouraging for officials in Berlin:

There are already over 2000 Boers living amongst Germans [in DSWA]. In my opinion the rebellion waged by the Hereros and Witbois in the German Southwest can be a great blessing if we take advantage of the situation. The farmers see their political power destroyed, and their nationality threatened to the highest degree; [Boers] take out for German SW-Africa under mild conditions, and they will be the greatest blessing for our colony. In German SW-Africa, I see the possibility of grafting German culture onto the Boer tribe, as the English do in other parts of South Africa. In no other part of the world does *Deutschtum* have a better chance to spread than in South Africa.⁸¹⁰

The idea of “culturally cultivating” Boers into Germans was new to the colonial sphere. It also represented a fundamental shift in German colonial policy.

Before 1900, the German colonial administration passed economic and social policies designed to help large-scale farmers and merchants. The administration hoped that large farms would “stretch out side by side to the horizon” and generate enough capital for the colony to manage its affairs independently from Berlin. For commissioners like Rohrbach, the only way to make this dream a reality was to encourage upper middle-

⁸⁰⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1153: Förderung der Einwanderung von Buren in das deutsche Schutzgebiet Südwestafrika, RKA-AAKA, “Die Burenfrage in Südafrika betreffend,” 22. March 1905, pgs., 54-65. For purposes of clarity I use “Boer” and “Afrikaner” interchangeably.

⁸¹⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1153: “Die Burenfrage in Südafrika betreffend,” 22. March 1905, pgs., 60.

class and wealthy farmers to emigrate overseas to DSWA.⁸¹¹ Self-reliance and economic gain were, after all, central components of his vision for the colony.⁸¹² Governor Leutwein, a strong proponent of social hierarchy, shared similar views. He unquestionably thought in terms of upper and lower classes, going so far as to distinguish between “propertied”, “lower-middle”, and “unpropertied” peoples.⁸¹³ As a result, Leutwein did not regard Boers in favorable terms. He regularly dismissed them as old-fashioned peasant-farmers unsuited to the needs of the colony.⁸¹⁴ In September 1902, for example, Leutwein wrote that Boers were “nothing more than a plague” that threatened to disrupt the prosperity of German farmers in the region.⁸¹⁵

The start of the German-Herero-Namaqua War, however, led many German officials to shift their perspective on what constituted an ideal settler. Indeed, by the early twentieth century, some German colonists, especially those living near the Cape border, looked upon the influx of Boers as a positive development in DSWA.⁸¹⁶ Even *The Cape Times* went so far as to acknowledge that Germany was gaining “a good type of settlers” as a result of the Boer migration during the period.⁸¹⁷ Given their many commonalities, including a similar language, culture, and religion, Germans and Boers seemed like natural allies. This sentiment was apparent in different ways. Kaiser Wilhelm II, for instance, publically praised Boers living on both sides of the Orange River. In January

⁸¹¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1170-1183: Ansiedlungverhältnisse in Deutsch Südwestafrika, 1903-1927.

⁸¹² Rohrbach, “Südwestafrika nach dem Kriege,” 157.

⁸¹³ Bley, *South-West Africa*, 122.

⁸¹⁴ Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, 414-415.

⁸¹⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Theodor Leutwein, “German and Boer: An Opinion from German Africa,” *Cape Times* (15. September 1902), 43.

⁸¹⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Förderung der Einwanderung von Buren in das deutsche Schutzgebiet Südwestafrika, Theodor Leutwein, “Germans in S.W. Africa: Germans and Boer Settlers,” *Cape Times* (18. March 1903), 172.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 172.

1896, in what became known as the “Krüger telegram,” he congratulated Paul Krüger, President of the Transvaal Republic, for his victory over British forces in the Jameson Raid.⁸¹⁸ The German Kaiser was direct with his felicitations. “I express my sincere congratulations that you and your people, without appealing for help from friendly powers, have succeeded against the armed bands which invaded your country as disturbers of peace and in maintaining the independence of the country against external attacks,” he wrote.⁸¹⁹

The “Krüger telegram” caused tremendous indignation in Great Britain.⁸²⁰ It also signaled that Germany would support efforts that promised to weaken British authority in southern Africa. Though a controversial position, many people around the world praised Kaiser Wilhelm II’s support of Boer resistance in South Africa. W.H. Burns of Saint Paul, Minnesota, for example, wrote Wilhelm II asking him to convince “Grandma” to remove all British forces from the African continent.⁸²¹ “Grandma’s Request,” he claimed, would “place [Queen Victoria] at the head of all the men and women that lived on this Earth” by making peace the central component of British foreign policy.⁸²² Others argued that Wilhelm II did not go far enough. One such person, calling himself a “German Roman Catholic born in New York,” for instance, wrote to Count von Bülow in May 1900. In his

⁸¹⁸ Auswärtiges-Amt (hereafter PAAA)/Kundgebungen in Deutschland zu Gunsten der Buren/14796: Kaiser Wilhelm II, “Telegram an den Präsidenten Krüger,” 3. January 1896, in “Der Vertriebene,” *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* (4. December 1900).

⁸¹⁹ PAAA/Kundgebungen in Deutschland zu Gunsten der Buren/14796: Kaiser Wilhelm II, “Telegram.” In spite of his sympathies, Kaiser Wilhelm II was wary of provoking the British. After the Anglo-Boer war started in 1899, Kaiser Wilhelm II did not offer Krüger asylum in Berlin after he fled South Africa.

⁸²⁰ Volker Ullrich, *Die Nervöse Grossmacht: Aufstieg und Untergang des deutschen Kaiserreichs, 1871-1918* (Berlin: Fischer Verlag, 1997), 187-188. Also see H. Rosenbach, *Das Deutsche Reich, Großbritannien und der Transvaal (1896-1902)* (Göttingen, 1993).

⁸²¹ PAAA/Frage einer Intervention der Mächte/14788: W.H. Burns, ““Grandma’s Request’,” 15. April 1900, 9-10. “Grandma” was in reference to Queen Victoria, the German Kaiser’s grandmother.

⁸²² PAAA/Frage einer Intervention der Mächte/14788: Burns, “Grandma’s Request,” 10.

letter, he encouraged Bülow to “overthrow the Emperor William of Germany and let the people of Germany take a hand of intervention in favor of the Boers in south Africa [sic] as the Emperor of Germany is of part English blood and that is the reason he sticks to the English.”⁸²³

Still other groups justified collaboration with the Boers by appealing to the similar racial characteristics shared by German and Boers. The *Alldeutsche Blätter*, for example, featured a story on a settler-farmer named Conrad Rust, who owned a large farm named Monte Christo near the Cape border. In the article, Rust celebrated what he saw as a mutually beneficial relationship between the two peoples. “I know of one Boer woman [Burin] who shares the greatest sympathies for Germans in the colony. [She proudly and routinely states] ‘My children have to learn German, as they have learned English in the Cape Colony, and my sons should be soldiers! Where we were English subjects, here we want to be citizens of Germany’,” he reported.⁸²⁴ “With the right tools and necessary conditions,” Rust concluded that it would “only be a matter of decades to make Boers in German Southwest Africa *real Germans*.”⁸²⁵

In addition to sharing similar cultural and racial attributes, German colonists and Boers shared a general antipathy for the British.⁸²⁶ After the start of the Anglo-Boer war in 1899, this attitude became even more pronounced. “German trade and German industry are England’s most powerful enemies in the world and threaten in the not too

⁸²³ PAAA/Frage einer Intervention der Mächte/14788: “German born Roman Catholic,” “Letter to Count von Bülow,” 10. May 1900, 14-15.

⁸²⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Conrad Rust, “Der Bur und das Deutschtum in Deutschsüdwestafrika,” *Alldeutsche Blätter* No. 23 (6. June 1903): 2-3.

⁸²⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Conrad Rust, “Der Bur und das Deutschtum in Deutschsüdwestafrika,” 2. Emphasis mine.

⁸²⁶ PAAA/Kundgebungen in Deutschland zu Gunsten der Buren/14796: Fritz Bronsart von Schellendorff, “Deutschlands Interessen und der Burenkrieg,” January 1900, pgs. 77-78.

distant future to jeopardize England's purse seriously," expressed Fritz Bronsart von Schellendorff, a prominent German military officer, in January 1900.⁸²⁷ "The German people's strong sympathy for the freedom of the Boers" is the greatest worry of the British, he argued.⁸²⁸ In a letter to Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow, "*Ein Patriot*" commended the German government's "indirect support" of Boers in the Anglo-Boer war.⁸²⁹ "It is indescribable the sympathy the people have for the Boers. And what rancor [*Groll*], yes hate against England!," asserted the author.⁸³⁰ Four short years later, similar accounts about Germans could be found in Afrikaner newspapers and reports from the Transvaal.⁸³¹ Some even volunteered to assist the German *Schutztruppe* in its campaign against Herero and Namaqua fighters during the German-Herero-Namaqua War.⁸³²

All of the major colonial newspapers acknowledged the "sympathetic relationship" between Germans and Boers.⁸³³ *Der Tag* declared that "Boer settlers were welcome in DSWA" in an article from September 1902.⁸³⁴ The *Kölnische Volkszeitung* expressed that

⁸²⁷ PAAA/Kundgebungen in Deutschland zu Gunsten der Buren/14796: Schellendorff, "Deutschlands Interessen," 77.

⁸²⁸ PAAA/Kundgebungen in Deutschland zu Gunsten der Buren/14796: Schellendorff, "Deutschlands Interessen," 77. Fritz Bronsart von Schellendorff went on to become the chief of the Ottoman General Staff in 1914. Historian Vahakn Dadrian depicts him as "the actual initiator of the scheme of the Armenian deportations." See Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 256.

⁸²⁹ PAAA/Kundgebungen in Deutschland zu Gunsten der Buren/14796: "Ein Patriot," "Briefe an die Reichskanzler," 3. December 1900.

⁸³⁰ PAAA/Kundgebungen in Deutschland zu Gunsten der Buren/14796: "Ein Patriot," Briefe and die Reichskanzler," 3. December 1900.

⁸³¹ Cape Town Archival Repository (hereafter CAP)/GH 35-140: Local Correspondence RE Rising of Natives in German Southwest Africa.

⁸³² CAP/GH 35-140: Local Correspondence RE Rising of Natives in German Southwest Africa, Inspector Edensor, "Telegram: Dutchmen in German Southwest Africa," 16. September 1905.

⁸³³ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: "Zu der Boerenansiedelung in Deutsch-Westafrika," *Der Tag* (6. September 1902), 31.

⁸³⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Zu der Boerenansiedelung in Deutsch-Westafrika," *Der Tag* (6. September 1902), 31.

“Although German Southwest Africa possesses less than favorable farming conditions [in Gibeon], the freedom thirsty Boers have fought for the ground in their present republic, only not to win. The German administration readily provides Boer settlers with material aid, but still leaves them with peculiarities, especially their language.”⁸³⁵ In the *African Review*, a Cape rebel farmer went so far as to proclaim that DSWA “has undoubtedly a good future, and is in many ways most suitable for a white farming settlement.”⁸³⁶

Even *The Cape Times* portrayed the “great trek movements” as tales of adventure.⁸³⁷ One article told the story of Isaac Bosman, a so-called trek leader, and his daring travels to DSWA. “Mr. Isaac Bosman . . . possesses a personality of the most interesting character—connected, as it is, with the thrilling adventures of the bold and hardy pioneer who has roamed over every territory south of the Zambesi He is certain to [have] great results in the development of southern Africa and the planting of a white population on the land in the interior,” the article celebrated.⁸³⁸

Similar accounts could be found in German publications as well.⁸³⁹ In April 1900, the *Alldeutscher Verband* explained that “over 15,000 Boers were presently trekking into our African colony,” their presence would not threaten the “*volkliche Grundlage*”

⁸³⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1151: Förderung der Einwanderung von Buren in das deutsche Schutzgebiet Südwestafrika/“Die Buren und Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Kölnische Volkszeitung* (19. October 1901), 51.

⁸³⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1151: “A Great Boer Trek to German West Africa,” *African Review* (21. September 1901), 45.

⁸³⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1148: Förderung der Einwanderung von Buren in das deutsche Schutzgebiet Südwestafrika/“The Trek Movement,” *The Cape Times* (22. February 1894), 95.

⁸³⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1148: “The Trek Movement: Sketch of the Leader’s Career, Some Thrilling Adventures,” *The Cape Times* (22. February 1894), 95.

⁸³⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1148: “Boeren für die deutschen Schutzgebiete,” *Süd Afrikanische Zeitung* (3. June 1893), 36.

(“ethnic base”) of the region.⁸⁴⁰ The *Frankfurter Zeitung* cited that “German authorities [were] sympathetic toward the movement and agree that Boers are good.”⁸⁴¹ “Motivated by a hatred for the English,” it continued, “most [were] sorry not to have emigrated to German territory earlier, as it was economically better.”⁸⁴² The *Hamburger Nachrichten* cited a speech delivered by Otto von Bismarck in 1893, where he commented on the place of Boers in DSWA.⁸⁴³ “Prince Bismarck in his time [was] against bringing any relief of immigration and development of areas [of settlement]. The Boers are a *Volksstamm* with reliable knowledge on local conditions, and are an order-loving people.”⁸⁴⁴ Therefore, concluded the piece, “the immigration of Dutch Boers on a large scale is a much lower risk than . . . English entrepreneurs.”⁸⁴⁵

For many others, however, “trekking Boers” were nothing more than a dangerous nuisance. Governor Leutwein was perhaps the most outspoken opponent of Boer settlement in DSWA. He typically based his hostility in cultural stereotypes and generalities. In his autobiography *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, Leutwein cited their lack of education, “tribal weakness,” and racial inferiority as his primary motives against Boer emigration to German territory.

The Boer, generally considered, turns out to be equal to the Low German farmer with all the advantages and disadvantages. He is honest, hospitable, an excellent family man, conservative against excess, and therefore tough

⁸⁴⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1149: “Die Bureneinwanderung nach Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Alldeutscher Verband* (23. April 1900), 107.

⁸⁴¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1149: “Die Einwanderung von Kap-Buren in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Frankfurter Zeitung* (12. August 1900), 143.

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, 143.

⁸⁴³ BAB/RKA 1001/1149: “Fürst Bismarck über die Buren-Einwanderung,” *Hamburger Nachrichten* (25. September 1900), 155.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

on old principles. By living in the intra-Africa grasslands for a long time, [however,] the Boer has evolved to such an extent that it has finally become detrimental to him. The Boer is independent of the pleasures of Europe, his personal needs are therefore lower, while he understands how to utilize better the resources of Africa. However, [the German] will in turn pass the Boer because he is too indolent to advance.⁸⁴⁶

By “going kaffir” (*verkaffern*), Boers had forfeited any claims to cultural superiority over local African populations.⁸⁴⁷ Leutwein also contended that the German colonial administration “had been against the immigration of Boers from the very beginning” and that arguments to the contrary were a gross mischaracterization of colonial policy.⁸⁴⁸ Though he understood why some settlers “had enthusiasm for the brave resistance of the small Boer tribe against mighty England,” Leutwein stressed that “the Boers are to be treated just like all other nations. There are useful and useless Boers, and German colonial policy must reflect that reality.”⁸⁴⁹

Leutwein was not alone in making a distinction between “useful and useless” Boers. Dr. Hendrick Müller, attached to the German embassy in The Hague, for example, explained in December 1900 that “The Imperial German Government assumes a kindly bearing toward the settlement of Afrikaners in German Southwest Africa territory. In this respect, however, it only has those in view who by their former avocations guarantee that through them a useful increase to the population can be expected Those who are called trek-Boers are looked upon as not belonging to these.”⁸⁵⁰ Interpretations of socio-

⁸⁴⁶ Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, 414.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid., 414-415. Also see Bley, *South-West Africa*, 111.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., 413.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁰ CAP/GH 23-66: Settlement of Boers in German Southwest Africa, “Boer Emigration to German South-West Africa,” *Ons Land*, 17. March 1903, 108-109.

economic status typically determined the difference between “good Boers” and “trek-Boers.”

If one did not have the means to succeed as a settler-farmer, the colonial administration feared that they would become a burden to the colony. German leaders also extended this sentiment to poor emigrants from Germany. Instead of “Christian patience and well-considered educative methods, these lower class settlers” treat the Africans with “abruptness and brutality,” Leutwein wrote in 1896.⁸⁵¹ Rohrbach also shared this view, arguing in 1903 that a poor farmer “will not have the means to marry a white women, and will only produce mixed children [*Bastardkinder*]” for the colony.⁸⁵² Ideal settlers, along with individual wealth, would come with a European education and provide the same to their children. German colonial officials considered education as the best protection against “sinking to a more primitive level of civilization,” which they both considered Cape Boers.⁸⁵³ They believed that it would enable Germans to emphasize “their separateness from tribal civilization.”⁸⁵⁴

Others voiced their protests in strictly racial terms. The *Reichsbote*, for example, argued that “the immigration [of Boers] is taking away cheap land from Germans. Today the wiser statesman will conduct policy more by political considerations rather than compassion or impulses of blood kinship [*blutsverwandtschaftliche*]. Whether the immigrant Boers are sold on the idea that they will be given German citizenship for

⁸⁵¹ Leutwein, “Berichte and die Bezirkskommendant,” in *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, Leutwein, 408-410.

⁸⁵² Rohrbach, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur*, 412.

⁸⁵³ F. Jaeger and L. Waibel, “Beiträge zu Landeskultur von Südwestafrika,” *Mitteilungen aus deutschen Schutzgebieten* 14, Vol. I and II (1920-1921): 6. Also see Bley, *South-West Africa*, 111.

⁸⁵⁴ Jaeger and Waibel, “Beiträge zu Landeskultur,” 6.

military service is indifferent to us.”⁸⁵⁵ “Hopefully,” the article concluded, “the tide will wash this settlement from the German Rhine and the English Thames.”⁸⁵⁶ Another article hinted that Boers would stop emigrating to DSWA if they “heard the reproach: ‘you are still less than a *kaffir*’” more often.⁸⁵⁷ Still others cited demographic numbers in order to protest adding more “non-German, non-white” elements in DSWA.⁸⁵⁸ “The colony counted as of 1 January 1901: 3601 Whites, of which 2222 are citizens of Germany, 826 Afrikaners, [and] 443 English. On 1 January 1902: Whites 4635, of which 2595 German citizens, 1455 Afrikaners, [and] 452 English. These figures indicate only the nationality; the government itself noted that many Boers, who are “English subjects,” are counted as “British,” wrote the *Deutsche Zeitung* in 1902.⁸⁵⁹ Such an inclusive characterization of citizenship represented a dangerous precedent for the colony to establish, according to the paper.

Captain Ludwig von Estorff, an officer in the *Schutztruppe*, echoed these same sentiments. In a letter to the AA, Estorff wrote that he expected “Boer immigration to continue, but neither schools nor forced conscription [are] adequate for the weak German population to handle.”⁸⁶⁰ He warned that “*Deutschtum* is in direct danger of succumbing [to] the self-confident, well-established Boers [if] stronger German immigration does not

⁸⁵⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1151: “Gegen die Buren-Einwanderung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Der Reichsbote* (29. December 1901), 74.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid. The German Rhine and English Themes were in reference to the Orange River on the border between DSWA and the Cape Colony.

⁸⁵⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/1151: “Niederlande. Der Burentreck nach Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Frankfurter Zeitung* (14. June 1902), 144. “Sie fürchten den Schimpf: ‘Du bist ja noch weniger, wie ein Kaffer!’”

⁸⁵⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: “Deutsch-nationale Politik in Südwestafrika,” *Deutsche Zeitung* (11. September 1902), 32.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁰ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Captain Ludwig von Estorff, “Betrifft beabsichtigte Buren-Einwanderung,” 14. November 1902, 75.

soon take place.”⁸⁶¹ To confront this “direct danger,” officials passed land ordinances to combat their influence in specific locales. Governor Schuckmann, for example, forbade Boers from purchasing farms next to one another. He argued that “multiple farms side by side . . . can easily form into associations” and weaken German authority.⁸⁶² “Those farms [will now] be reserved for German applicants. I would love to see German settlers there with German women,” he wrote in 1908.⁸⁶³

With respect to Boer immigration, proponents and opponents did agree on one thing. Boers were a separate race and, therefore, different as such. Those who had designs of “grafting German culture” onto Boers meant exactly that and nothing more. Their appealing ethnic characteristics were meant only to augment Germans’ standing in southern Africa. Not every white settler was considered an asset simply for being white, after all. What the colonial administration wanted were settlers like Friedrich Deckert, an agriculturalist from Wolferstadt in western Bavaria.⁸⁶⁴ In his colonial *Eingabe* to the AAKA, Deckert represented the ideal in every way.

I am an agriculturist by profession and would like to settle in a German colony (as a farmer) with my family: 3 boys and my wife. After selling my business I have 25000 Marks at my free disposal. Would you advise me by 1 August. Where do I go and how best could I comport myself as a settler in the colonies?⁸⁶⁵

A white farmer with financial flexibility, a family, and ambition met the standard of class-conscious officials and racial exclusivists alike. So, too, was Carl Hanke, who

⁸⁶¹ BAB/RKA 1001/1152: Estorff, “Betrifft,” 75.

⁸⁶² BAB/RKA 1001/1153: Schuckmann, “Auf das Schreiben vom 26. Februar 1908,” 9. März 1908, 114.

⁸⁶³ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/1154: Geeignete Ansiedler für Deutsche Südwestafrika/Friedrich Deckert, “Brief an die AAKA,” 25. April 1903, 11-12.

⁸⁶⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/1154: Deckert, “Brief an die AAKA,” 11-12.

emphasized that after “living in the Transvaal for 8 years and mastering English, Dutch, and *Käffern*,” he was ready for settler life in a German colony.⁸⁶⁶ “The Government can use energetic young people in German Southwest Africa after the suppression of the uprising,” he closed.⁸⁶⁷ In the words of Governor Leutwein, however, what was not wanted were more poor and economically “useless trek-Boers.”

Opponents of Boer settlement saw race as an indisputable rationale for their anti-immigrant positions. Some looked no further than “the Boer States” themselves to support their views on racial segregation. Secretary Dernburg, for example, remarked that he found ““in the Boer States that the white man could not dispense with coloured labour, while the blacks would not progress without the whites.”⁸⁶⁸ He continued that in “the ‘Boer countries’ and the purely British Colonies, where the blacks, though legally equal with the whites, [are] actually oppressed and despised.”⁸⁶⁹ In other words, racial hierarchy was utilized in other societies—therefore, so, too, should it be in DSWA. By 1913, settlers were exuberant about DSWA’s future. The security of the colony was greater than ever before, and emigration numbers were rising steadily. In all but one district (Hasuur), which was located on the border of the Cape Colony, Germans outnumbered the immigrant Boer population.⁸⁷⁰ Farmers like Joachim Cranz were boasting about

⁸⁶⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/1154: Carl Hanke, “Brief an die AAKA,” 5. January 1905, 33-34.

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁸⁶⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1461: Informationsreise des Staatssekretärs Bernhard Dernburg nach Deutsch Südwestafrika und nach Britisch-Südafrika Informationsreise Dernburgs/Bernhard Dernburg, “The Boer States. German Duke’s Abberations,” *The Natal Mercury*, 15. June 1908, 97.

⁸⁶⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/1461: Dernburg, “The Boer States,” *The Natal Mercury*, 97.

⁸⁷⁰ Herbert Nöckler, *Sprachmischung in Südwestafrika* (München: Max Hueber, 1963), 133. See also Walther, *Creating Germans*, 116.

“herds of cattle reaching 100 heads” and that only in DSWA did their “pioneering spirit” have an outlet in which to take root and grow.⁸⁷¹

In the year before the First World War, there were over 1331 large farms stretching throughout the colony—of them, only a few were owned by Afrikaners.⁸⁷² For German supporters of the colonial dream, this was a good and necessary thing. As with the elevation of status for white women, race made the presence of German settlers an essential component for the growth, spread, and preservation of Germandom in the region. Given their race, Boers both helped and hindered this process. In the end, German settlers tolerated Boer immigration only because they remained a minority ethnic group. “We must never lose sight that they are gradually to be subordinated to our culture,” wrote deputy governor Tecklenburg in 1902.⁸⁷³ At the turn of the twentieth century, the German colonial administration made every attempt to make Tecklenburg’s vision a reality.

Politics, Rhetoric, and “Wild People” in Wilhelmine Germany

Graf Ludwig zu Reventlow, a conservative member of the Reichstag, rarely missed an opportunity to voice his support for Germany’s colonial mission in Africa. On 17 March 1904, such an occasion arose. With the German-Herero-Namaqua War entering its second month, the German colonial project was on full display. Given the severity of the issue, Reventlow advocated strategies, mostly military, that would bring the conflict to a swift conclusion. As he spoke, few in attendance were left guessing as to the kind of campaign that he desired to wage overseas. Reventlow avowed that he was “not of the opinion that the time [had] even come close, where we have to think particularly keenly

⁸⁷¹ Westphal, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 284.

⁸⁷² Ibid., 283-284.

⁸⁷³ Weitz, “Creating the Color Line,” 17.

about protecting the Hereros against injustice.”⁸⁷⁴ “Of course,” he continued, “we are for humanity with respect to human beings of all kinds. But in contradiction to some of the orators preceding me, I would conclude by abjuring the interested authorities: Do not apply too much humanity to bloodthirsty beasts in human form.”⁸⁷⁵

At the same Reichstag session, August Bebel, a leading member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and ardent opponent of German colonial expansion, also spoke about the war in DSWA. He asserted that the conflict was “an act of desperation among the Herero [and that] any other people in rebellion against a superior enemy . . . would be heroic and portrayed as patriotic under the circumstances.”⁸⁷⁶ This position seemingly aligned well with other speeches he had made about the war. Indeed, only two months prior, Bebel called for civility and asked military officials to pursue a strategy “with the greatest possible humanity.”⁸⁷⁷ By the conclusion of his address on 17 March, his tone had changed markedly, however. Though Bebel continued to express his displeasure about the unfortunate fate of the Herero, he did so with a colonialist’s vernacular. “Let me repeat: I have not held a speech in favor of the Hereros [as such]; they are a wild people, very low in culture. . . . My words do not gloss over the barbarous and cruel activities that they commit against murdered [soldiers] and farmers.”⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁴ *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des deutschen Reichstages* (hereafter *SBVdR*), 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1900.

⁸⁷⁵ *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1900.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1890.

⁸⁷⁷ *SBVdR* 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 14th Sitzung, 19. January 1904, 368.

⁸⁷⁸ *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1891. Bebel was alluding to reports that Herero were mutilating the bodies of dead German soldiers and farmers. See especially Helmut Walser Smith, “The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation: Notes on Debates in the German Reichstag Concerning Southwest Africa, 1904-14,” in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy*, Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 107–108

Though Reventlow and Bebel championed two widely different viewpoints about the fate of the Herero, their statements shared a common core. Indeed, they reflect the degree to which racial thinking had influenced discourses on German colonialism at the turn of the twentieth century. Reventlow used the image of the primitive as proof of his inhumanity, while Bebel ascribed humanity to the primitive in spite of his racial inferiority. These arguments, unquestionably, represent different sides of the same coin, together revealing the reach and scope of race thinking during the period. They also illustrate how parties across the political spectrum understood race to be a fixed category. That Bebel or Reventlow endeavored to be more politically magnanimous than another is tangential to the larger issue at stake. Both men deemed races as primordially distinct and that the politics of a modern state needed to reflect that reality. The nature of racial thinking and its political effects are suggestive of two important phenomena concerning the influence of events in DSWA on national politics in Germany.

First, political officials were conscious of events occurring beyond the European continent. Many in German society viewed the overseas empire as a vital component of the German nation. Racial difference, as we have seen, played a key role in shaping conceptions of nationalism throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Perceptions of cultural and racial difference were based, even rooted, in a global context. That sentiments of exclusivity arose during the “national age” is hardly coincidental. In Germany, difference and exceptionality were established in both a continental and global context. On the continent, the German nation represented a “third way” beyond western

civilization and barbarism in the East.⁸⁷⁹ In the colonial sphere, it stood as a bastion of culture in an otherwise economically backward and disorganized region.

To that end, then, Germany's overseas empire became an arena where difference evolved into systematic state violence. The insertion of race as a category of belonging advanced exclusionary notions of nationality to the extreme, directly affecting the nature and scope of colonial politics throughout the German Empire. Reventlow and Bebel were only among the most outspoken in their views on Africans in DSWA. Many others shared their sentiments. Karl Schrader, a left-liberal representative from Berlin, for example, reasoned in the same Reichstag session as Reventlow and Bebel that "in the midst of a revolt, one is not inclined to mild treatment of wild people, and, often enough, it is hardly appropriate."⁸⁸⁰ National dignity and prestige were also at stake. "Because we have established a German protectorate in the area, we owe SWA every protection," remarked Martin Spahn, a member of the *Zentrum Partei* from Prussia.⁸⁸¹

Even Eugen Richter, a prominent leader of the left liberals, announced that "the current moment . . . is inappropriate" to question military conduct.⁸⁸² These attitudes were, in part, products of the rancorous atmosphere spawned by warfare in the colonial realm. That the conflict was being waged against a "wild people" only added to the vitriol. What is significant about these arguments is the degree to which officials articulated their messages in a racial discourse. The Herero were not a "heroic minority" bravely resisting a "superior power," but a "marauding horde" that threatened to halt the spread of

⁸⁷⁹ Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation*, 69-70. Also see Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁸⁸⁰ *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1897.

⁸⁸¹ *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 14th Sitzung, 19. January 1904, 365. Also see Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 106.

⁸⁸² *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1896-1897.

civilization abroad.⁸⁸³ Colonialists regarded civilization as a monolithic condition, one that indigenous African peoples could not wholly grasp. They measured cultural and racial differences on a universal scale, with the consequences on full display in the deserts of DSWA.

The second important aspect of the evolution of racial thinking in Germany concerns the timing of its onset. After hostilities commenced in DSWA, political rhetoric became saturated with racial epithets and undertones. The *Eingeborenenfrage* replaced the *Frauenfrage*. *Rassentrennung* replaced *Kulturbildung*. Sub-humanity replaced inferiority. Reactions to the *Herero-Aufstand* had pushed these beliefs to the forefront of all other discourses on German colonialism. From Rohrbach, who believed that the Herero “lacked the ability to be educated to moral independence,” to Ernst Müller-Meiningen, a left liberal who aspired “to build reservations for the natives in the interests of the native groups whom culture does not easily penetrate,” racial thinking influenced politics in an exclusionary and pronounced way.⁸⁸⁴

General von Trotha, commander of the German *Schutztruppe* in DSWA, provided on 2 October 1904 the most consequential example of how race thinking could manifest itself. In what has become known as the *Vernichtungsbefehl*, Trotha sanctioned murder on the basis that Herero combatants were “no longer German subjects.”⁸⁸⁵

The Herero have killed, stolen, cut off the ears and other body parts of wounded soldiers, and are now too cowardly to want to fight any

⁸⁸³ *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1891 (Bebel); *ibid.*, 1897 (Reventlow).

⁸⁸⁴ Rohrbach, *Die Kolonie*, quoted in Smith, “The Talk of Genocide,” 114; *SBVdR*, 1912, Vol. 284, 128th Sitzung, 7. March 1907, 4365.

⁸⁸⁵ BAB/RKA 1001/2089: Differenzen zwischen Generalleutnant von Trotha und Gouverneur Leutwein bezbg. der Aufstände in DSWA, General Lothar von Trotha, “Kommando der Schutztruppe, J. Nr. 3737,” 2. October 1904, pg. 7.

longer. . . . The Herero nation must now leave the country. If it refuses, I shall compel it to do so with the cannon. Any Herero found inside the German frontier, with or without a gun or cattle, will be executed. I shall spare neither women nor children. I shall give the order to drive them away and fire on them. Such are my words to the Herero people.⁸⁸⁶

Though the *Vernichtungsbefehl* did nothing more than sanction practices that were already customary in the war, the language used by Trotha exposes how racism affected both legal practice and military conduct in DSWA.⁸⁸⁷ He permitted German soldiers to shoot Herero indiscriminately because they had forfeited their right to be treated humanely. Further, the *Vernichtungsbefehl* gave Trotha, as acting military governor, authority to pursue a military strategy that would enable whites to dominate all political and social affairs in the colony after the war.⁸⁸⁸ Whether by fleeing to British territory, or by dying, the Herero would no longer have a dominant presence in DSWA.

News of the war's conduct traveled fast to Germany.⁸⁸⁹ Though officials in the Reichstag were aware of Trotha's policies by the end of November 1904, most were either powerless or unwilling to counter his initiatives. This is not to say that they openly embraced mass slaughter as a legitimate military tactic, however. Certainly not. Nor did

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁷ For more on the *Vernichtungskrieg* in DSWA see Hull, *Absolute Destruction* (especially 44-69).

⁸⁸⁸ After his appointment as military commander and subsequent arrival in DSWA, Trotha immediately declared a state of emergency so as to override civilian authority, most notably Governor Leutwein. This led to a long and protracted struggle between both men, which culminated in the formal resignation of Leutwein in November 1904. Their primary difference of opinion concerned military strategy and tactics. Trotha, an unapologetic racist and advocate of "race war," found little benefit in negotiating with Herero, and later Namaqua, combatants. Peace of the graveyard suited his ideology more than "mindless chatter." Trotha also had the support of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the General Staff. Leutwein, in contrast, believed that negotiations with Herero leaders were the only means of crafting a permanent peace in the colony. Moreover, it would preserve the Herero as a valuable workforce after the conflict had concluded.

⁸⁸⁹ The first official report did not appear until 12 January 1905. BAB/RKA 1001/2121: Denkschrift über Eingeborenen Politik und Herero- Aufstand in Deutsch Südwest Afrika, *Denkschrift über den Verlauf des Aufstandes in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, No. 559, 16. January 1905, 21-25.

the general public.⁸⁹⁰ Aware of this fact, the military general staff flatly denied reports of soldiers murdering women and children, even if some officials did view them as legitimate targets.⁸⁹¹ If officers did acknowledge the shooting of women, there were quick to remind distrustful politicians that “native women have not only participated in the fighting, [but] have also been the main originators of the cruel and horrible martyrdom that our wounded have often been subjected to.”⁸⁹²

Georg Ledebour, a member of the SPD from Hannover, warned the *Schutztruppe* against “sinking down to the moral level of the Hottentots,” concluding that he regarded acts of murder as “bestial and uncivilized.”⁸⁹³ In addition to Ledebour and other members of the SPD, Commissary Rohrbach, Colonial Secretary Dernburg, Governor Leutwein, and Chancellor von Bülow all also expressed their unease about Trotha’s actions against the Herero.⁸⁹⁴ They articulated their concerns in economic prose. How, after all, could Germans establish an affluent colony if there were no laborers and “human material” to exploit?⁸⁹⁵

Due in large measure to these complaints, Kaiser Wilhelm II rescinded Trotha’s *Vernichtungsbefehl* on 8 December 1904.⁸⁹⁶ Though this did not bring an immediate end to hostilities, it did indicate that politicians would not embrace violence for violence’s sake. It also suggested that the political tides could turn against colonial supporters if the

⁸⁹⁰ John Phillip Short, *Magic Lantern Empire: Colonialism and Society in Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012). See especially 57-79 and 132-147.

⁸⁹¹ *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1888-1891.

⁸⁹² BAB/RKA 1001/2089: Alfred von Schlieffen, “Bericht an die Bülow,” 16. December 1904, 107. Also see Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 66.

⁸⁹³ *SBVdR*, 1903-1904, Vol. 1, 60th Sitzung, 17. March 1904, 1903-1904.

⁸⁹⁴ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 63-69.

⁸⁹⁵ *SBVdR*, 1910-1911, Vol. 262, 99th Sitzung, 12. December 1910, 3595.

⁸⁹⁶ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, 63. Trotha would, however, issue a similar order against the Namaqua on 22 April 1905.

conflict extended much beyond 1905.⁸⁹⁷ Racial thinking was influential, but certainly not the only force steering German politics at the turn of the century. Therefore, time and care were of the utmost importance. Unfortunately for advocates of *Weltpolitik*, the war in DSWA did not end in 1905, nor did it end in 1906. To make matters worse, the Maji Maji Rebellion had broken out in German East Africa, and Kaiser Wilhelm II's trip to Tangier had caused the First Moroccan Crisis.⁸⁹⁸

These foreign policy calamities prompted the SPD and Center Party to reject Chancellor Bülow's request for an additional 29 million marks in supplemental funding for the war in December 1906.⁸⁹⁹ In response, Bülow dissolved the Reichstag on 13 December 1906 and called for new elections to be held the following month. The so-called "Hottentot Elections" of January 1907 would become nothing less than a referendum on Germany's colonial project in DSWA. Moreover, they proved to be a watershed moment in German politics, for they marked, as historian Jonathan Short argues, "the transition of colonialism from an emblem of class division to a potential force for national integration."⁹⁰⁰

⁸⁹⁷ On the climate surrounding the withdrawal of the *Vernichtungsbefehl*, see Erik Grimmer-Solem, "The Professors' Africa: Economists, the Elections of 1907, and the Legitimation of German Imperialism," *German History* 25, No. 3 (2007): 313-347.

⁸⁹⁸ Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 134-135. Also see Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in Wilhelmian Germany, 1897-1914," *Central European History* 24, No. 4 (1991): 381-401.

⁸⁹⁹ By December 1906, nearly 600 million marks had been spent on the war in DSWA. See Mary Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire 1884-1918* (New York: H. Fertig, 1966); Beverly Heckart, *From Bassermann to Bebel: The Grand Bloc's Quest for Reform in the Kaiserreich, 1900-1914* (New Haven, 1974); Winfried Becker, "Kulturkampf als Vorwand: Die Kolonialwahlen von 1907 und das Problem der Parlamentarisierung des Reiches," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 106 (1986): 59-84; and Katharine A. Lerman, *The Chancellor As Courtier: Bernhard von Bülow and the Governance of Germany, 1900-1909* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁹⁰⁰ Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 137.

These elections were not about suffrage, tax reform, or social mobility. Nor were they about the “East Elbian elite” and the growing power of the SPD. Instead, they were about national honor, loyalty to those serving on the field in the distant southwest African empire, and racism.⁹⁰¹ For the nationalist Right this proved to be especially true.⁹⁰² In an effort to galvanize public support behind the forces of colonialism, Bülow’s government, the nationalist Right, and the Colonial Office attacked Center and SPD politicians for their betrayal of German soldiers and cowardice in the face of “Herero and Namaqua savages.” The “Bülow Bloc,” as this political group came to be known, thus attempted to orchestrate an electoral campaign that associated colonialism with patriotic devotion to the national cause and characterized the opposition as cowardly deviants.⁹⁰³

Race, unquestionably, was at the center of the Bülow Bloc’s propaganda campaign. Its supporters distributed thousands of racist leaflets depicting horrors from the war in DSWA.⁹⁰⁴ Others railed against the “*Hottentotten* Bloc” of the Center and SPD, referring to them as the “black-red League for the Defense of Kaffirland against Germans.”⁹⁰⁵ In Nuremberg, the *Frankischer Kurier* complained about a “leaflet from the Social Democrats” that endeavored to “entirely cover up the fundamental issue of this election.”

⁹⁰¹ Frank Oliver Sobich, “*Schwarze Bestien, rote Gefahr*”: *Rassismus und Antisozialismus im deutschen Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006).

⁹⁰² For the importance of mass politics and populism in Wilhelmine society see Geoff Eley, “Reshaping the Right: Radical Nationalism and the German Navy League, 1898-1908,” *The Historical Journal* 21, No. 2 (1978): 327-354 and Eley, “Conservative and radical nationalists in Germany: the production of fascist potentials, 1912-1928,” in *Fascists and Conservatives: The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth-Century Europe*, Martin Blinkhorn, ed. (London: Unwin, 1990), 50-70.

⁹⁰³ Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 134-135. Also see Jonathan Sperber, *The Kaiser’s Voters: Electors and Elections in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 203-264.

⁹⁰⁴ *Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung*, 26. January 1907. See Richard Pierard, “The German Colonial Society,” in *Germans in the Tropics*, Knoll and Gann (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 31.

⁹⁰⁵ “Die Koloniale Lügenfabrik,” quoted in Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 138.

It deals quite thoroughly with the colonial scandals objected to by all parties, and with the costs of German colonial policy, but entirely conceals that the Center and Social Democracy refuse the means necessary to maintain the military readiness of the German troops standing against *the savage and cruel enemy*.⁹⁰⁶

In a speech delivered on 8 January in Berlin, Secretary Dernburg argued that when properly understood, colonization would speak for itself: “the exploitation of the soil, its natural resources, the flora and fauna, and above all the people, for the economy of the colonizing nation.”⁹⁰⁷ He justified German overseas expansion on the basis that it was more humane than other international examples, namely the United States.

How has man previously engaged in colonialism? It has been through merchants, [and] through adventure companies that sold natives what they wanted most, schnapps, the “firewater,” and firearms. They served as the foundation for the destruction of large masses. It is no doubt that some native tribes degenerate just like some animals in civilization, and become depended on the state. Fortunately we are not too heavily loaded with these elements in our German colonies. But the history of the United States, which engaged in the largest colonial undertaking that the world has ever seen, almost completed destroyed the native population [using these methods].⁹⁰⁸

If “policies of destruction” are representative of a civilized colonialism, Dernburg concluded, then so must also be the “agents of conversation, which include the missionary as well as the doctor, the railroad, which serves as the engine, as well as the advanced theoretical and applied sciences in all areas.”⁹⁰⁹ These were the agents that best described German colonial conquest in Dernburg’s mind. He conveniently left out

⁹⁰⁶ *Fränkischer Kurier*, 7. January 1907, quoted in *Magic Lantern Empire*, Short, 138. Emphasis is mine.

⁹⁰⁷ Dernburg, *Zielpunkte des deutschen Kolonialwesens: Zwei Vorträge gehalten von Bernhard Dernburg* (Berlin: Mittler, 1907), 5. “Heißt die Nutzbarmachung des Bodens, seiner Schätze, der Flora, der Fauna und vor allem der Menschen zugunsten der Wirtschaft der kolonisierenden Nation.”

⁹⁰⁸ Dernburg, *Zielpunkte*, 9.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Trotha's "peace of the graveyard" approach from his speech. Dernburg cast the agents of peace and anti-colonialism as both unpatriotic and socially inept, and accused them of aligning with an inferior enemy that threatened "the entire colonial project [and] the true benefits" therein.⁹¹⁰

The elections produced a decisive outcome. Though the SPD received nearly a quarter of a million more votes than it had in 1903, it lost nearly half of its seats in the Reichstag.⁹¹¹ The SPD, Center, and Bülow Bloc parties all experienced this as a sign of the power and influence of colonialism. The elections marked the "apotheosis of race" in Wilhelmine Germany.⁹¹² A national consensus built around race had successfully diffused the power of oppositional groups that had traditionally appealed to voters by focusing on issues of class and social mobility. Racial thinking had moved away from being the sole refuge of xenophobic zealots and extremist rabble-rousers. It now served as an underlying basis which all political parties had to consider. Inextricably linked to this reality was the future of DSWA. National prestige and colonial racism proved too much for anti-colonial supporters to overcome in 1907. The forces of progress, humanity as an abstraction, and racial struggle had become established in the colonial and political lexicons. This was possible because "the beast" had replaced the "native" individual in DSWA—not only in the minds of colonial advocates, but also in the politics of the German metropole.

⁹¹⁰ Dernburg, *Zielpunkte*, 20.

⁹¹¹ Sperber, *The Kaiser's Voters*, 248-249.

⁹¹² Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 147. Also see Sobich, *Schwarze Bestien, rote Gefahr*, 26.

Conclusion

By 1914, German settler-colonists exemplified a national character that celebrated exploration, scientific discovery, and overseas conquest. As exponents of culture in a land devoid of modern achievement, *Auslandsdeutschen* (Germans abroad) stood as agents of Germandom in southern Africa, promising to spread culture throughout the region. Hubert Janson, a German settler-farmer living in DSWA, perhaps captured the essence of these sentiments in a featured story published by *Kolonie und Heimat*. Throughout his testimonial, Janson praised the challenges of colonial life, claiming that “one must be everything, gardener, livestock breeder, farmer, glassblower, yes even photographer. Only tailoring and cobbling I have yet to try.”⁹¹³ He concluded that “the man who does not shun work and who has a little bit of the devil in his body, he is the right man for our Southwest!”⁹¹⁴ The prospect of an unhindered life proved attractive to those seeking an escape from the vicissitudes of modern life in Germany.

And yet, in spite of Janson’s praise, freedom did have its limits. As the legal dispute between Carl Becker and the German colonial administration demonstrates, the state still intended to draft and enforce policies that it deemed vital to the successful governance of DSWA. Race thinking served as a catalyst for many of these initiatives. Gone were the days of inclusivity and *Kulturbildung*. Colonial and national societies now looked at the German nation through a racially and culturally exclusive lens.

⁹¹³ Hubert Janson, “Aus dem Farmerleben in Südwest,” *Kolonie und Heimat* 1, No. 23 (1907/1908): 3. Also see Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 29-30.

⁹¹⁴ Janson, “Aus dem Farmerleben in Südwest,” 3.

The German-Herero-Namaqua War had moved racial thinking to a preeminent position in German colonial discourse. Just as it justified Deputy Governor Tecklenburg to both ban and nullify inter-racial marriages, it raised the status of white women abroad and forced politicians to reconsider their positions on the colonial empire. In the process, Germans of “mixed-race” had their status negated politically. What colonial citizens had previously considered either bourgeois or working-class was now simply “German.” This was true for many Germans living in the metropole as well. Germans used their perceptions of the African *Heimat* as a mirror to replicate what they saw as the essence of national character.⁹¹⁵ By 1914, a majority of citizens defined that character in racial terms.

⁹¹⁵ Nancy Reagin has made a similar argument about the role of gender. See Reagin, “German *Brigadoon?*”, 248-266.

Conclusion:

The Global ‘*Heimat* Ideal’ in an Age of Racial Exclusion

As Germans struggled to define themselves as citizens of a newly unified state after 1871, they did so with a profound awareness of the world beyond the European continent. Global networks, established through trade agreements, missionary contact, European foreign conquest, and print media, exposed Germans to a global periphery that steadily became more tangible throughout the nineteenth century. After Germany formally entered the “African scramble” in 1884, the overseas world became an even more important factor in German national life. Whether in the colonies themselves, or in fairs, museums, zoological displays, and “exotic” spectacles in Berlin, Munich, and Leipzig, citizens engaged with the German empire on a daily basis. “Our country is the central country of the most powerfully civilized continent,” Richard Lehmann remarked at the *Deutscher Geographentag* in 1895.⁹¹⁶ Though the “developments of the [colonies] are still small,” he continued, “much can come from them . . . in the course of time.”⁹¹⁷ For Lehmann and other supporters of overseas conquest, the empire was of the utmost importance. Germany’s economic and national potential was intertwined with an ever more visible global periphery, most especially in colonial Africa.

DSWA emerged as the most crucial imperial territory for citizens in the metropole due to its size and status as Germany’s only settler-colony. Though supporters of German colonialism differed in their motives, they all believed that the intrinsic value of empire

⁹¹⁶ Richard Lehmann, “Der Bildungswert der Erdkunde,” in “Classroom Colonialism: Race, Pedagogy, and Patriotism in Imperial Germany,” Jeff Bowersox, *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, Bradley Naranch and Geoff Eley, eds., (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 176.

⁹¹⁷ Ibid.

to the nation over the long term outweighed the potential troubles in the near term. In this spirit, citizens from across Germany participated in the process of colonial conquest. Rhenish missionaries aimed to bring salvation to “heathen” communities with the Bible and Christian morality; merchants aspired to establish trade monopolies across southern Africa’s seeming limitless landscapes; and hopeful settler-colonists cultivated fantasies centered on open spaces and endless horizons to satisfy their wanderlust and sense for adventure.

The allure of settlement overseas captivated men, women, and families from all socio-economic backgrounds and regions in Germany. H. Lane, a resident of Hamburg, expressed his desire to immigrate to DSWA after he learned that the German government provided financial assistance to make the long journey. “My family consisting of five people has the desire to emigrate to German [South] West Africa,” he wrote to the *Auswärtiges Amt – Kolonial Abteilung* (AAKA) in February 1912.⁹¹⁸ He listed himself as “thirty-nine years old, healthy big, and strong,” followed by his “thirty-four-year-old healthy wife, fifteen-year-old strong son, eleven-year-old daughter and young three-year-old baby.”⁹¹⁹ Though neither he, nor any member of his family had ever traveled to Africa, Lane emphasized that they all “were familiar with the land and society in colonial German [South] West Africa.”⁹²⁰ They simply wanted to participate in the construction of a global *Heimat* that stretched from Berlin to Windhoek and back.

Along with the promise of commercial expansion and overseas settlement, colonial encounters introduced Germans to the various indigenous communities that lived

⁹¹⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/1181: Ansiedlungsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. – Anfragen., H. Lane, “Eingabe an die Auswärtiges-Amt – Kolonial Abteilung,” 7 February 1912, 165.

⁹¹⁹ Ibid.

⁹²⁰ Ibid.

in their new African empire. These colonial interactions revealed that pre-colonial discourses on Africa's indigenous communities were woefully inaccurate. Africans were neither submissive to Europeans, nor uncontrollably violent. The Ovaherero and Witbooi Namaqua, among many others, were well versed in European languages, practiced Christianity, and possessed advanced weaponry. These encounters demonstrated, above all, that DSWA's so-called "empty spaces" were not empty at all and forced Germans to question their rationales for support of the colonial project. After the Reichstag designated DSWA as a settler colony in 1893, German imperialists increasingly relied upon nationalist arguments to justify their presence overseas. By the turn of the twentieth century, mental pictures of colony and metropole became interchangeable for adherents of the global "*Heimat* ideal."

German and African peoples in DSWA were as integral to Germany's national development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as the merchants, soldiers, and settlers who first ventured abroad in 1884. Whether in everyday social practices or the ways in which men and women spoke about the world, the colonial project had a significant influence on the lives of German citizens in the metropole. The inclusion of race as a category of German national belonging represents the most consequential legacy of Germany's colonial project in Africa. Though exclusionary views of German citizenship were neither an inevitable outcome, nor a natural outgrowth of colonial expansion, the means through which settler-colonialists justified imperial domination after the Herero-Namaqua genocide rested on racial apartheid. After 1908, German colonists formalized racial separation into every social and political dynamic in DSWA. By the start of the First World War, "racial difference" affected the entire social

landscape in Germany's only settler-colony. Carl Becker's confrontation with the German colonial administration in 1909 was emblematic of this shift in German colonial politics. Indeed, the culmination of his family's legal dispute with the colonial state reflected the influence of race on German national belonging in the twentieth century.

Governor Schuckmann responded to Becker in October 1909, nearly a month after receiving his petition. Schuckmann agreed that Becker's situation warranted special attention and pledged to support his case against the new marriage law. He reasoned that Becker's national status did not warrant infringement by the state since the German colonial administration had considered an alternate draft of §17f the previous year.⁹²¹ Schuckmann proposed that those who were "married to a bastard wife in a civil ceremony or in a church before 1890" should retain their standing as citizens of Germany.⁹²² Schuckmann forwarded the case to his authorities in Berlin in October 1909. He expressed in his letter that "Becker's case and several others prove the great disappointment and bitterness caused by the Berlin-made amendment of § 17f."⁹²³ "The bastard country," he continued, "is in a great uproar about the fact that women from the best families are married civilly and ecclesiastically to men that are deprived of voting."⁹²⁴ Schuckmann closed by emphasizing the great "difficulty and terrible inconvenience" that had been caused by the new regulation.⁹²⁵

⁹²¹ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Governor Bruno von Schuckmann, "Antwort: Auf die Eingabe vom 1. September 1909," 11. October 1909, 192.

⁹²² Ibid.

⁹²³ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Bruno von Schuckmann, "Anwendung des § 17 der Selbstverwaltungsverordnung," 20. October 1909, 191.

⁹²⁴ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Schuckmann, "Anwendung des § 17 der Selbstverwaltungsverordnung," 20. October 1909, 191.

⁹²⁵ Ibid.

After a month of deliberation, officials in Berlin rejected Schuckmann's appeal on the basis that "the reasons for which the voting exclusions in § 17 were enacted still exist today."⁹²⁶ The colonial administration did concede one point, however. In cases where "a mixed marriage permits a special assessment based on the moral standing and determined worthiness of the house father," the governor could determine the voting eligibility of the party in question at a later date.⁹²⁷ These exemptions still required an official declaration of support from the governor of DSWA and approval from Berlin. This condition took literally a pronouncement delivered by a colonial official earlier that year who said "only in the motherland lay the roots of [colonial Germans'] energy, politically and economically."⁹²⁸ If so, then, the German colonial administration gave no regard to the author's primary argument, which emphasized that "in the motherland the conviction must become even more pronounced, that the economic and political life of German-South Africa must be developed unrestricted, freely, and generously."⁹²⁹ After 1908, this condition only applied to white Germans in DSWA.

The "heathens," "Hottentots," and "*Auslandsdeutsche*" in DSWA affected collective discourses on German colonial rule considerably during the imperial era. Indeed, these groups made the realities of colonial domination *real* for citizens who before 1884 only encountered the global "periphery" in story books and their imaginations. Notions of national belonging that included DSWA were common by the

⁹²⁶ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Reichskolonialamt, "Auf den Bericht vom 20. October 1909, No. 2071," 11 December 1909, 198.

⁹²⁷ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Reichskolonialamt, "Auf den Bericht vom 20. October 1909, No. 2071," 11 December 1909, 198.

⁹²⁸ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Einrichtung einer Kommunal- und Selbstverwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Dr. Wilhelm Külz, *Die Selbstverwaltung für Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Bückeburg: 1909), 52.

⁹²⁹ BAB/RKA 1001/2058: Dr. Wilhelm Külz, *Die Selbstverwaltung für Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Bückeburg: 1909), 52.

turn of the twentieth century. “Our Southwest,” to quote the German settler-colonialist Hubert Janson, meant exactly that—our colony, our people, our nation.⁹³⁰ For supporters of German colonialism in Africa, colony and metropole were equal parts in the same national project.

The African and German communities in this study also demonstrate that Germany’s colonial project was not an inherently genocidal program until the start German-Herero-Namaqua war in 1904. While the consequences of colonial “race thinking” extended violently into Germany’s twentieth century, the disastrous policies pursued by the Nazis were far from an inevitable outcome. The evolution of German colonial policy demonstrated how citizens in the metropole changed their perceptions of the imperial project in seismic ways, from viewing it as nothing more than a private economic boondoggle for Germany’s social elite in 1884 to justifying it as the bastion of *Deutschtum* overseas in 1914. In this sense, DSWA’s “heathens,” “Hottentots,” and advocates of the global “*Heimat* ideal” illustrate the rich complexity of Germany’s colonial legacy and its centrality to nineteenth and twentieth century German history.

⁹³⁰ Hubert Janson, “Aus dem Farmerleben in Südwest,” *Kolonie und Heimat* 1, No. 23 (1907/1908): 3, quoted in Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 29-30.

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