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Lost at Locarno? Colonial Germans and the Redefinition of “Imperial” Germany, 1919-1933

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Abstract

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By Sean Andrew Wempe

My project addresses the various ways in which “Colonial Germans” attempted to cope with the loss of the German colonies after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The German colonial advocates who are the focus of this dissertation comprised not only those individuals who had been allowed to remain in the Mandates as new subjects of the Allies but also former colonial officials, settlers, and missionaries who were forcibly repatriated by the Mandatory powers after the First World War. These *Kolonialdeutsche* (Colonial Germans) had invested substantial time and money in German imperialism. My analysis reveals the difficulties this diverse group of men and women encountered in adjusting to their new circumstances, in Weimar Germany or in the new Mandates, as they situated their notions of group identity between colonizers and colonial subjects in a world of colonial empires that were not their own.

My work places particular emphasis on how colonial officials, settlers, and colonial lobbies made use of the League of Nations framework and investigates the involvement of former settlers and colonial officials in such diplomatic flashpoints as the Naturalization Controversy in South African-administered Southwest Africa, the Locarno Conference, and German participation in the Permanent Mandates Commission from 1927-1933. I end my period of analysis in 1933 with an investigation of the involvement of one of Germany’s former colonial governors in the League of Nations’ commission sent to assess the Manchurian Crisis between China and Japan. I spotlight how German men and women from the former African colonies exploited transnational opportunities to recover, renovate and market their understandings of German and European colonial aims in order to reestablish themselves as “experts” and “fellow civilizers” in European and American discourses on nationalism and imperialism. This study revises standard historical portrayals of the League of Nations’ form of international governance, German participation in the League, the role of interest groups in international organizations and diplomacy, and liberal imperialism. In analyzing Colonial German investment and participation in interwar liberal internationalism, the project also challenges the idea of a direct continuity between Germany’s colonial period and the Nazi era.

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Introduction

In April 1884, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck declared that the German Empire would join the European scramble for colonial possessions. After a year of debates in the *Reichstag*, Germany officially began a program of state-directed colonialism and a period of rapid imperial expansion.¹ By 1913, just thirty-two years after unification of the German states under the Prussian Hohenzollern monarchy, Germany possessed the third largest colonial empire in the world, laying claim to small territorial holdings in China, island colonies in the Pacific, and huge swaths of the African continent. Although Germany was technically a latecomer to the table at which Europeans had carved up the globe, the birth and growth of the German colonial empire was the result of more than a century of German overseas scientific exploration, commercial ventures, missionary activities, emigration, scholastic Orientalism and exoticism, and concerted lobbying for the government to formulate a colonial policy by German colonial interest groups.²

The success these groups enjoyed at having attained their goal, however, was short-lived. Within eighteen months of the start of the First World War, all but one of Germany's colonies was captured by foreign powers. By 1918, the only colony Germany

¹ Woodruff D. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 20-51; Mary E. Townsend, *Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 54-123; Mary E. Townsend, *Origins of Modern German Colonialism, 1871-1885* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1974), 169-193.

² Townsend, *Origins of Modern German Colonialism, 1871-1885*; Prosser Gifford and W.M. Roger Louis, eds., *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (London: Yale University Press, 1967); Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Sarah Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, eds., *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Bradley D Naranch, "Inventing the *Auslandsdeutsche*: Emigration, Colonial Fantasy, and German National Identity, 1848-71," in *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, ed. Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 21-40; Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-65.

had partially managed to keep from Allied occupation was German East Africa, thanks to the fierce defense staged by General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and his troops.³ By the time of the armistice on 11 November 1918, the German Empire—both overseas and in Europe itself—was nothing more than a memory.

After four years of war with no end in sight and the loss of nearly two million German soldiers, Germany had had enough.⁴ A revolution, sparked on 29 October by sailors in Kiel who chose to mutiny rather than to perish in a foolhardy “last stand” envisioned by the German admiralty, had prompted calls in Germany for the end of the war, the abdication of the Kaiser, and the establishment of a democratic government.⁵ The Kaiser’s abdication was announced on 9 November by Chancellor Max von Baden, who himself resigned the same day. On 11 November, the same day the armistice was signed, a provisional democratic republican government was established under Friedrich Ebert, head of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).⁶

Yet, as Detlev Peukert argued, “the Weimar Republic did not come into being as the result of an heroic act or of an act which national mythology could represent as heroic [...] Rather it was the product of complex and painful compromise, of defeats and mutual concessions.”⁷ In its fifteen year history, Weimar Germany faced many challenges, particularly in its early years. The new state struggled to legitimize itself domestically and encountered malcontents and critics reacting to, and sometimes prompting, many changes of government amid the shift from monarchy-empire to republic. Pamela Swett

³ Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 221-234.

⁴ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919. Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), xxvi.

⁵ Eric D. Weitz, *Weimar Germany. Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 17-18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-39; MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 162-165, 327, 367.

⁷ Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 6.

and Dirk Schumann have demonstrated the processes by which the polarizing party politics resulted in a sometimes violent or extreme political culture in the form of paramilitary groups, assassinations, and even street brawls between parties.⁸ Although it would attain a brief period of stability from 1925 to 1929, the Weimar Republic experienced at least two bouts of detrimental inflation, fluctuating economic conditions and agricultural and industrial production, and numerous groups placing demands on its welfare system.⁹ Weimar Germans also engaged with global shifts in political culture and communication throughout the “roaring Twenties,” as well as media and cultural production more generally, creating new debates on morals, art, religion, gender roles, demographics, reproduction, and population control.¹⁰

Thus, the birth pains of Germany’s new Weimar Republic, which was not formally established under a constitution with Ebert as its first President until August 1919, went hand in hand with the negotiations to end the First World War and the new

⁸ Pamela Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies: The Culture of Radicalism in Berlin, 1929-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Dirk Schumann, *Political Violence in the Weimar Republic, 1918-1933. Fight for the Streets and Fear of Civil War*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

⁹ Gerald D. Feldman, “The Historian and the German Inflation,” in *Inflation through the Ages: Economic, Social, Psychological and Historical Aspects*, ed. Nathan Schmuckler and E. Marcus, Atlantic Studies on Society in Change (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1983), 386–399; Weitz, *Weimar Germany. Promise and Tragedy*, 129-168; Sun Hong Young, *Welfare, Modernity and the Weimar State, 1919-33* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 239-276; Niall Ferguson, “The German Interwar Economy: Political Choice Versus Economic Determinism,” in *Twentieth-Century Germany. Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Hodder Arnold, 2001), 36–57; Mary Fulbrook, *History of Germany 1918-2000: The Divided Nation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 15-36.

¹⁰ Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968); Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, 86-106; Cornelia Osborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women’s Reproductive Rights and Duties* (London: Macmillan, 1992); Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Elizabeth Harvey, “Culture and Society in Weimar Germany: The Impact of Modernism and Mass Culture,” in *Twentieth-Century Germany. Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (London: Hodder Arnold, 2001), 58–76; Swett, *Neighbors and Enemies*, 79-136; Weitz, *Weimar Germany. Promise and Tragedy*, 251-330; Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control & Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3-77.

global society which emerged in their aftermath.¹¹ The Treaty of Versailles, negotiated between delegates from the victorious Allied Powers between January and June 1919, redrew the map of Europe and imposed what many Germans considered to be harsh terms on the new Republic. In Article 231, the infamous “war guilt” clause, Germany was forced to accept responsibility for initiating the war.¹² Germany was ordered to demobilize large sections of its army, reducing its standing forces to no more than 100,000 troops. The Rhineland, Germany’s shared western border with France and Belgium which was now occupied by forces from those countries, the United States and Britain, was to be completely demilitarized: all German military personnel and their equipment would leave the region, all German fortifications in the area were to be razed, and no new military installations were to be constructed there.¹³ Germany was ordered to pay reparations for damages and occupation costs to the Allied powers, the amount of which—roughly five billion dollars—was not determined until 1921.¹⁴ Last but not least, Germany was forced to cede approximately 25,000 square miles of territory in Europe and turn over sovereignty of its overseas colonies to the League of Nations Mandates System. Estimates vary, but nearly seven million Germans living in Alsace-Lorraine, Moresnet, Eupen-Malmedy, Upper Silesia, Posen, sections of East Prussia, Pomerania, Memel and the city of Danzig found themselves under the sovereignty of France, Belgium, the League of Nations or the newly-self-determined states of Poland and

¹¹ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 462.

¹² Weitz, *Weimar Germany*, 35-37.

¹³ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 166-179.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 180-193.

Czechoslovakia.¹⁵ The result was a protracted debate over the citizenship and nationality of these “minority” Germans: the so-called “orphans of Versailles.”¹⁶

In Africa, China and the Pacific, the thousands of Germans living in the colonies received word that their “colonial homelands” were now reclassified as Mandates of the League of Nations, to be administered by France, Belgium, Japan, Britain, and the British Dominions of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.¹⁷ What immediately followed in each of the reclassified German colonies, with the exception of German Southwest Africa,¹⁸ was the direct expulsion and repatriation of all Germans and a liquidation of “confiscated enemy property.” Colonial Germans became yet another of the many groups of refugees and malcontents within Germany angered by the Treaty of Versailles and placing a cacophony of demands for restitution and accommodation on the Weimar state and the League of Nations.

This study addresses the various ways in which “Colonial Germans” attempted to cope with the loss of the German colonies after Versailles. My work places particular emphasis on how colonial officials, settlers, and colonial lobbies made use of the League of Nations framework and examines the involvement of former settlers and colonial officials in such diplomatic flashpoints as the Naturalization Controversy in South African-administered Southwest Africa, the Locarno Conference, and German participation in the Permanent Mandates Commission from 1927-1933. I conclude in

¹⁵ Ibid., 169-175, 194-203, 216-221, 228, 278, 459, 469, 479-482.

¹⁶ Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles. The Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls. National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Annemarie H. Sammartino, *The Impossible Border. Germany and the East, 1914-1922* (London: Cornell University Press, 2010); Winson Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹⁷ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 98-108.

¹⁸ See Chapter 2 for an explanation of the unique circumstances in South Africa’s Mandate of former German Southwest Africa.

1933 with an investigation of the involvement of one of Germany's former colonial governors in the League of Nations' commission sent to assess the Manchurian Crisis between China and Japan. This project looks into how German men and women from the former African colonies exploited transnational opportunities to recover, renovate and market their understandings of German and European colonial aims in order to reestablish themselves as "experts" and "fellow civilizers" in European and American discourses on nationalism and imperialism. My work revises standard historical portrayals of the League of Nations' form of international governance, German participation in the League, the role of interest groups in international organizations and diplomacy, and liberal imperialism. In analyzing Colonial German investment and participation in interwar liberal internationalism, the project also challenges the idea of a direct continuity between Germany's colonial period and the Nazi era.

The German colonial advocates who are the focus of this dissertation comprised not only those individuals who had been allowed to remain in the Mandates as new subjects of the Allies but also former colonial officials, settlers, and missionaries who were forcibly repatriated by the Mandatory powers after the First World War. Unlike metropolitan Germans who often had little or no exposure to the colonies and for whom colonialism was an experience filtered through consumption and the media, these *Kolonialdeutsche* (Colonial Germans) had invested substantial time, money and emotional capital in German imperialism. They therefore had a strong interest in maintaining a partly imperial basis for their national and European identities and a yet stronger need for renegotiating these identities when Germany became a non-imperial power, a development that forced them to seek new niches and careers for themselves

amid the international imperialism of the League of Nations or within other European colonial empires. My analysis reveals the difficulties this diverse group of men and women encountered in adjusting to their new circumstances, in Weimar Germany or in the new Mandates of the Allies, as they reoriented their notions of group identity between colonizers and colonial subjects in a world of colonial empires that were not their own.

The caesura of 1918/19, though creating the postcolonial environment in which Germany's new variants of imperial and national-identity would emerge, represents an interruption of the running narrative of colonialism, but not a complete break with pre-colonial and colonial identities. For Germans, as for other European nationalities, to be European meant standing at the "pinnacle of civilization." Being civilized in turn implied a need, duty or right to expand that civilization to other parts of the world deemed "uncivilized" and "savage." The final piece of this identity-construction was a sentiment that Empire made a national group truly European among their colonizing peers, since the concept of having "civilizational superiority" or being "respectable" was gained and/or reinforced through displays of dominance over "Others."¹⁹ This conception of Europeanness, as well as notions of race and gender from the colonial period, did not simply disappear with the loss of empire. International encounters with a plethora of understandings of the concepts of Nation, Empire, and European remained crucial in efforts to locate and define "Germanness" in the interwar period.

¹⁹Friedrich Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien? Eine politisch-ökonomische Berachung/ Does Germany Need Colonies?*, ed. E.C.M. Breuning and M. Chamberlain (New York: Mellen Press, 1998); Paul Rohrbach, *Der deutsche Gedanke in der Welt* (Leipzig: Karl Robert Langewiesche, 1912); Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politik, Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität zu Berlin* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897), 123ff; Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*. The concept of "respectability" comes from Woodruff Smith, "Colonialism and the Culture of Respectability," in Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal, eds, *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, 3-20.

Despite a German history of renegotiating colonial selves, Germany is often overlooked in studies of imperial decline and of the impact of that postcolonial experience on European identities. Germany's disappearance from the colonial stage long before the events of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s that challenged British and French imperialism has contributed to its omission from the historiography of decolonization. Although the loss of the colonies far predated the assumed period of decolonization, post-war Germans, just like Frenchmen after Algerian independence or Britons after the loss of India, modified colonial rhetoric and crafted a narrative of colonial loss in order to maintain the dimensions of their imperially-constituted German national and European identities. Germany's experience as one of the first powers in the twentieth century to lose its entire overseas empire, albeit under special circumstances, helped set the tone for how Europeans coped with the end of their colonial rule in Africa and Asia. Colonial Germans, having been so vocal and so public in their own renegotiations of identity without empire, seeded some of the thoughts, arguments and policy decisions that later influenced other "Colonial European" populations as they struggled to come to terms with the contradictions inherent in the "civilizing mission" and as they experienced imperial decline. Colonial Germans efforts to adapt and adjust to the loss of colonies in order to maintain a presence in European imperial endeavors, both within the League of Nations and in broader public discourses, may also have had an effect on metropolitan France and Britain. Both of these states, which engaged in similar discourses as Germany over the nature of "good colonial government" in the international political environment after the Great War, are said to have "invented" decolonization or "abdicated responsibility" for their colonies in the second half of the twentieth century.²⁰ They

²⁰ Veronique Dimier, "On Good Colonial Government: Lessons from the League of Nations," *Global*

refashioned their policies and self-understandings formed in the context of imperialism to secure global influence in new ways as their empires officially crumbled away.

Investigating the German case will enable scholars to chart the trajectory of what Europeans perceived as imperial decline and colonial loss as well as the impacts these experiences had on European societies and cultures over the *longue durée*, beginning earlier in the twentieth century.

In recent years, “postcolonial Germans” have garnered increased attention from scholars. Marcia Klotz and Jared Poley point to works of fiction as a way to indicate the broad influence of “decolonization” and/or postcolonial narratives of German identity. Their research is insightful. Looking for currents of decolonization thought and rhetoric throughout Weimar society is an important first step in probing the particulars of continuity between Germany’s colonial, Weimar and Nazi periods. These works, however, seem too quick to overlook the writings and activities of political figures engaging directly with the loss of empire, particularly former colonial administrators and long-term settlers.²¹ Conversely, Uta Poiger has argued that representations of empire

Society 18, 3 (July 2004): 279–299; Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Michael Adas, “Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology,” *Journal of World History* 15, 1 (2004): 31–64; Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire, 1939-1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Peter Lesse, *Britain Since 1945: Aspects of Identity* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006).

²¹ Jared Poley, *Decolonization in Germany: Weimar Narratives of Colonial Loss and Occupation* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2005); Marcia Klotz, “The Weimar Republic: A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World,” in *Germany’s Colonial Pasts*, ed. Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 135–147; Marcia Klotz, “Global Visions: From the Colonial to the National Socialist World,” *European Studies Journal* 16, Fall (1999): 37–68. See also Brett M. Van Hoesen, “The Rhineland Controversy and Weimar Postcolonialism,” in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, ed. Bradley D Naranch and Geoff Eley (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 302–329.

need to be understood in the context of “decision makers in business and politics.”²² I would suggest that Poiger’s argument holds just as true for representations of empire after the moment of imperialism had passed. Often these individuals had dedicated their entire adult lives to overseas imperialism. Some served for decades in the same colonies, others traveled from *Schutzgebiet* to *Schutzgebiet*, while still others “commuted” over the years between metropolitan and colonial offices. Just like Jared Poley’s fiction writers and pamphleteers, the former colonial administrators tried to renegotiate what it meant to be German during an interruption of imperially-constituted German identity.

The most comprehensive work to date on how Germans came to terms with the loss of empire through memory is Britta Schilling’s *Postcolonial Germany*. Schilling explores the connections between public and private memories of Germany’s colonial past. She charts the changes in Germany’s “collective memory” of its overseas imperial endeavors from the Weimar era, to the Nazi regime, and on into post-Second World War Germany and the later, reunified, Federal Republic of Germany. The focus in her work is the shifting relationship between memory and material culture in these various epochs.²³

Schilling’s work is integral to our understanding of Germany’s colonial past as an ongoing process of memory construction that evolves and changes constantly long after the formal end of Germany’s overseas imperialism.²⁴ Yet, in ambitiously trying to cover nearly a century of transformations in Germany’s “collective memory” of colonialism, Schilling simplifies the Weimar era in order to move on to the later periods. She contends that the Weimar years are the time in which private and public memories of Germany’s

²²Uta Poiger, “Imperialism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Germany,” *History and Memory* 17, 1/2 (Fall 2005): 117–144.

²³ Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany. Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 68-89. For the post Nazi-era, see 90-154.

colonial past were most unified and that the material culture created by Colonial Germans in this period afforded them a “dream state” in which they could indulge in nostalgia for the former colonies “without political repercussions.”²⁵ For Schilling, Colonial Germans in the interwar period are passive actors, not directly engaging in domestic or international politics, but instead “marketing” the colonial experience to Germans as a shared memory and cultural heritage.

I counter that it was in the Weimar era that the memory of Germany’s colonial past is most fragmented and contested, especially among Colonial Germans themselves. Colonial officials largely sought to white-wash German atrocities in the colonial era in the hopes of colonial restitution and doggedly defended Germany’s “colonial record.” Some German missionary societies on the contrary acknowledged the atrocities and distanced themselves from the colonial administration in hopes of retaining the ability to proselytize in the new, Allied-controlled Mandates, bringing themselves into conflict with the German colonial lobbies that were dominated by former colonial officials. Finally, settlers were more concerned with remembering a “better Germany” in Africa. They distinguished their colonial *Heimat* from the European Germany and, rather than “sharing” it with other Germans, coveted their personal contributions to the colonial endeavor that had made their colonial “homeland” superior to a decadent and decaying metropole. Repatriated settlers desired to return to this “truer” Germany in the colonies, not only in dreams or memory, but in reality—even at the expense of their German citizenship and regardless of whether their former African “homes” were restored to German administration. Furthermore, none of these groups of Colonial Germans shied away from political engagement. In domestic politics, Colonial Germans’ cultural

²⁵ Ibid., 13-67, 42.

representations of the colonial past were just part of an ongoing effort to receive some sort of government assistance to alleviate their various post-imperial plights. The *Kolonialball*, the “Africa Book,” and the “Colonial Week” were festivities, publications and public exhibitions full of dioramas of colonial life, parades, musical performances, and lectures from “experts” on the former colonies, and memorial celebrations for fallen German colonial soldiers intended to evoke nostalgia for the colonies among German citizens and politicians. Though not always sharing a common goal of colonial irredentism, these works and events often went hand-in-hand with direct political action by former colonial governors like Theodor Seitz and Heinrich Schnee, who rallied the colonial lobbies for routine demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns to encourage or shame the German government into pursuing colonial restitution.

Colonial German political activity, however, was not limited to the domestic stage. The most frequent omission from recent works on “postcolonial Germans,” concerns Colonial German engagement with internationalism and the League of Nations. To develop a fuller picture of both the Colonial Germans and international relations in the period of the League and the Mandates system, it is important to incorporate Germany’s moment of colonial loss into the larger narrative of how Europeans confronted what they thought was the end of empire. The clearest evidence of Colonial German contributions to the European narrative of fears of imperial decline can be seen in the ways in which Germans participated in transnational discussions of imperialism, ethnicity, and nationalism at the League of Nations. Until the 1990s, most of the scholarship on the League of Nations operated on the “hindsight fallacy” and was preoccupied with the League’s failure to maintain general peace and to prevent the outbreak of the Second

World War. This changed with the fall of the Soviet Union. New questions emerged about how international governance bodies like the United Nations could operate in a world politics environment with a single superpower and how best to handle minorities within the former Soviet Republics. In this context, historians began interrogating something other than the League's teleological trajectory to 1939, and instead investigated the League's intended roles, structures, and functionality.²⁶ This study makes interventions into scholarship on the inner workings of the League of Nations by seriously considering its perceived capacity for international oversight and governance through close examination of the ways in which Colonial Germans adapted to and participated in the political language and structure of the League as part of their efforts to use the international body and its principles to forward their individual and collective goals.

Scholars like Zara Steiner have fleshed out the inner workings of the League and have come to the conclusion that it was never a form of international government, but was intended and used as an extension of diplomacy between the Great Powers. Steiner insists the League "was only a mechanism for conducting multinational diplomacy whose success or failure depended upon the willingness of the states, particularly the most powerful states, to use it."²⁷ Building on these notions, studies like those of Gérard Unger and Jonathan Wright focus on the chief diplomats of the Great powers, investigating the back-room deals and relationships between prominent

²⁶Susan Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations," *American Historical Review* 112, 4 (October 2007): 1091–1117.

²⁷Zara Steiner, *The Lights That Failed: European International History, 1919-1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 299.

plenipotentiaries.²⁸ In this light, the League is seen as nothing more than the occasionally effective plaything of diplomats and powerful states instead of a body that engaged with a global community of peoples and groups. True as this may in part be, the League of Nations was seen by contemporaries as an earnest attempt at international governance and oversight.²⁹ By keeping contemporary views of the League and its role in international mediation in mind, it is possible to understand how not only Great powers, but also minority groups and lobbying interests believed they would have a hearing on the world stage through the mechanism of the League of Nations.

Some of the most recent work has addressed how the League of Nations handled the protection of minorities in newly formed nations and Mandates.³⁰ Despite differences

²⁸ Gérard Unger, *Aristide Briande: Le Ferme Conciliateur* (Paris: Fayard, 2005); Jonathan Wright, "Locarno: a Democratic Peace?," *Review of International Studies* 36 (2010): 391–411; Patrick O. Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I: America, Britain and the Stabilisation of Europe, 1919-1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Patrick O. Cohrs, "The Quest for a New Concert of Europe: British Pursuits of German Rehabilitation and European Stability in the 1920s," in *Locarno Revisited: European Diplomacy, 1920-1929*, ed. Gaynor Johnson (New York: Routledge, 2004), 33–58; Jonathan Wright, *Gustav Stresemann: Weimar's Greatest Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jonathan Wright, "Stresemann: A Mind Map," in *Locarno Revisited*, 146–160; John Keiger, "Poincaré, Briand and Locarno: Continuity in French Diplomacy in the 1920s," in *Locarno Revisited*, 95–108; David Cameron and Anthony Heywood, "German, Russia and Locarno: The German-Soviet Trade Treaty of 12 October 1925," in *Locarno Revisited*, 122–145. These works also consider the public role of the League as well. Historians like Patrick Cohrs, as well as Unger and Wright, point to the League's reliance on public opinion to achieve recognition of the negotiations made by the delegates in private. This constant engagement with the public, however, set a dangerous pattern in which statesmen, when faced with public opposition, modified how their presentations were worded rather than alter their policies or their negotiations.

²⁹ *A League of Nations, Volume I. 1917-1918* (Boston, Oct. 1917-Oct.1918); *A League of Nations, Volume II. 1919* (Boston, Feb.-August, 1919); *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets, Vol. VII, 1924* (Boston, 1924); *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets, Vol. VIII.1925* (Boston, 1925).

³⁰ Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Christian Raitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten: Minority Protection Under the League of Nations--The Case of the German Minority in Poland, 1920-1934* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Martin Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz Contra Konfliktverhütung? Die Minderheitenpolitik des Völkerbundes in den zwanziger Jahren* (Marburg: Herder Institute, 2000); Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*; Michael D. Callahan, *Mandates and Empire: The League of Nations and Africa, 1914-1931* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998); Michael D. Callahan, *A Sacred Trust: The League of Nations and Africa, 1929-1946* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004); Michael D. Callahan, "'Mandated Territories Are Not Colonies': Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s," in *Imperialism on Trial: International Oversight of Colonial Rule in Historical Perspective*, ed. R.M. Douglas, Michael D. Callahan, and Elizabeth Bishop (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 1–20; Michael D. Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa,

of opinion on the effectiveness of the League and its numerous committees in defending minority rights and overseeing governments, continental and colonial, these works share a tendency to center their narratives on the League or Mandate-holding great powers. The more positive assessments of the League highlight the encouragement that minority communities may have received in the period by analyzing partially effective supervisory commissions, but still neglect aspects of the story that could only be told from the perspective of the minorities themselves as these groups navigated the complexities of the League's bureaucracy.³¹

Unlike the current literature, which places more emphasis on the League and Mandate-holding powers, this work operates from the point of view of a self-proclaimed minority group: Colonial Germans. The League's international public presence, though viewed as a weakness by Cohrs and Raitz von Frenzt, added to its legitimacy in the eyes of minority groups who yearned for a larger audience to tell of their plight and from which to seek sympathy and support. Hence the present study investigates how Colonial

1929-1931," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, 2 (1997): 267-293; Susan Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32, 4 (2006): 560-582; Susan Pedersen, "Getting Out of Iraq--in 1932: The League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood," *The American Historical Review* 115, 4 (2010): 975-1000. Fink has argued in her analysis of Jewish minorities in League member states that the League of Nations' Minority Commission was secretive and dismissive of the plight of minority groups (282-320). Christian Raitz von Frenzt, analyzing German minorities in a Poland intent on de-Germanizing its population, agrees that the League was ineffective in its protection of minorities, not due to secrecy, but rather because it was too public in its proceedings. This created political polarizations in sovereign states, resulting in alignments opposed to the League and harsher on minorities. (100-130).

³¹Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz contra Konfliktverhütung?*; Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*; Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*; Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931"; Callahan, "'Mandated Territories Are Not Colonies': Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s"; Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument." Scheuermann is kinder to the League, insisting that the organization and its bureaucrats did the best they could with a weak power basis and should be commended for keeping ethnic tensions from erupting into regional or pan-European conflicts (80-87). Michael Callahan has explored the question of the League's treatment of minorities through the inner workings of the Permanent Mandates Commission. In two of his recent works, he brings to the fore French and British concerns and policies regarding German minorities within their Mandates. He points to Colonial and Foreign Office records to suggest that the League did have a restraining influence on British and French policies towards Germans, indicating that the Permanent Mandates Commission was at least marginally functional in its oversight role.

Germans understood their opportunities for international redress and how they pursued and employed these options. In the first chapters, I focus on the various strategies used by Colonial Germans between 1919 and 1926 to further their cause, their appeals to the League, their petitions to the Mandatory Powers of Britain and South Africa, and their reactions to British, South African and League responses to their pleas. For the years following Locarno, Germany's entry to the League, and the admission of a German to the Permanent Mandates Commission, my focus shifts from how Colonial Germans sought redress to how Germans maintained a foothold in international discourses on imperialism, Mandates and nationalism in events that involved the League like the Manchurian Crisis. By inserting themselves into larger, transnational discussions on the definitions of empire, civilization, 'good colonial governance' and Europeanness, Colonial Germans hoped to create a new niche for themselves in other Europeans' colonial projects. Analyzing this minority group's engagement with transnational events and networks has the added benefit of exploring how a distinct fragment of German national identity not only emerged and interacted with competing notions of German identity domestically, but also managed to interface with and market itself to a dynamic international community.

Colonial German involvement in the League, however, necessitated a shift in the vocabulary, political language, and rhetorical strategies of those Germans who chose to actively participate in the internationalism of the new world order. The Allied Powers justified the seizure of Germany's colonial holdings with accusations that Germany had militarized its colonies and had committed colonial atrocities such as the German campaign against the Herero. As one German commentator recognized, "Germany's

failure in the field of colonial civilization. . . ha[d] become all too apparent to leave thirteen to fourteen million natives again to the fate from which the war had liberated them.”³²

Germany’s history in the colonies had, indeed, been blotted with a considerable amount of blood. There was for instance the highly publicized “Peters Scandal” of 1892-1896 in German East Africa. Carl Peters, the German colonial explorer who had laid the groundwork for the foundation of German East Africa as a colony, was made *Reichskommissar* of the Kilimanjaro region in 1891. In 1892, Peters discovered that one of the local African women he used as a concubine was having a sexual affair with his manservant. Peters had both of them hanged and ordered their villages destroyed. Peters was recalled to Berlin in 1893, but his crimes were not made public until 1896, when August Bebel, chairman of the SPD, read a self-incriminating letter of Peters before a session of the *Reichstag* and demanded a series of investigations that led to Peters being deprived of his commission. Ultimately, Peters evaded criminal prosecution by moving to the United Kingdom to serve as a colonial expert for the British Empire in Rhodesia. Nonetheless, Peters’s wrathful vengeance had resulted not only in the destruction of two African communities, but also led to a series of small rebellions by the Chaga of East Africa that were brutally put down by German forces in the colony.³³ Yet another example of Germany’s colonial violence was the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905-1907, in which several indigenous communities in the East African colony violently resisted head taxes, hut taxes, and a scheme that coerced the indigenous population to grow cotton for

³² Hans Poeschel, *Die Kolonialfrage im Frieden von Versailles: Dokumente zu ihrer Behandlung* (Berlin, 1920), 87 as quoted and translated in Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 186.

³³ Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 93-97, 155-159.

export.³⁴ This African resistance was viciously suppressed by German Colonial Troops, resulting in the deaths of thousands of African subjects in German East Africa.³⁵

While there are several other instances of violent repression of indigenous groups under the rule of the German Empire, the suppression of the Herero and Nama resistance movements in Southwest Africa from 1904-1907 is the most notorious instance of bloodshed in the German colonies. In response to ever more restrictive land policies imposed upon them by the German colonial state, ongoing railway construction through tribal lands, and decades of violent encounters with German settlers and German colonial troops, the indigenous Ovaherero (Herero) and the Nama (Khwoisen, Khoikhoi) communities rose up in open rebellion in 1904. The German general sent to put down the rebellion, Lothar von Trotha, enacted martial law in the colony and, on 2 October 1904, issued his infamous “annihilation order,” stating that every Herero man, woman and child must either leave Southwest Africa or be killed. Though appraisals of the final death toll vary, the war was nonetheless devastating to the Herero and Nama. Between 1904 and 1907, large percentages of both populations were killed in the fighting, in the concentration camps the Germans used for African prisoners of war, and in a desperate flight by several Herero into the Omaheke (Kalahari) Desert in an attempt to escape Trotha’s war machine.³⁶

³⁴ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton. A Global History* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2014), 25-27, 119, 139-166.

³⁵ Thaddeus Sunseri, “The Baumwollfrage: Cotton Colonialism in German East Africa,” *Central European History* 34, 1 (March 2001): 31–51; James Gibson and Jamie Monson, eds., *Maji-Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 1-30.

³⁶ George Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa and Southwest Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 9-12; Philipp Lehmann, “Between Waterberg and Sandveld: An Environmental Perspective on the German-Herero War of 1904,” *German History* 32, 4 (December 2014): 533–559. For more on the history of the Herero-German War, as well as the debates regarding the number of Africans killed (widely ranging from fifty to ninety-eight percent of the total Herero/Nama population) and the genocidal extent of German violence in Southwest

The Allies argued that these acts of colonial violence set the Germans apart. Germans were cast as incomparable in their brutality and “un-European” in their dealings with natives and in the conduct of warfare in the colonial theatre. With the taint of ‘colonial guilt,’ Germans were deemed “exceptionally cruel colonial masters” and “unfit imperialists.” Germany was therefore barred from recovering its colonies by way of becoming a Mandatory Power itself, a status the Allies insisted the Germans would not be allowed to attain in the new League of Nations Mandates System. In short, Germany was publicly ostracized from the work of the “civilizing mission.” This fact presented a challenge to German national and European identities, one to which many Germans felt the need to respond, above all the Colonial Germans themselves.

Given the huge level of not only financial, but also cultural and moral investment that many Europeans had placed in colonialism, it is hardly surprising that Colonial Germans were indignant at being excluded from the “civilizing mission” with the stigma of atrocity. Empire and the “othered” colonized subject had both played roles in European self-identification, including German identity construction, for at least two

Africa, see Horst Drechsler, *“Let Us Die Fighting”: The Struggle of the Herero and Nama Against German Imperialism (1894-1915)* (London: Zed Press, 1980); Brigitte Lau, “Uncertain Certainties: The Herero-German War of 1904,” in *History and Historiography: 4 Essays in Reprint*, ed. Annemarie Heywood and Brigitte Lau (Windhoek: Michael Scott Oral Records Project, 1995), 39–55; Tilman Dederig, “The German-Herero War of 1904: Revisionism of Genocide or Imaginary Historiography?,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, 1 (1993): 80–88; Robert Kössler and Henning Melber, “Völkermord und Gedenken: Der Genozid an den Herero und Nama in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1904-1908,” in *Jahrbuch 2004 zur Geschichte und Wirkung des Holocaust*, ed. Irmtrud Wojak and Susanne Meinl (Frankfurt am Main: Fritz Bauer Institut, 2004); Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Jeremy Sarkin-Hughes, *Colonial Genocide and Reparations Claims in the 21st Century: The Socio-Legal Context of Claims Under International Law by the Herero Against Germany for Genocide in Namibia, 1904-1907* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2009); *ibid.*; Jürgen Zimmerer, “The Birth of the Ostland Out of the Spirit of Colonialism: a Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 39, 2 (2005): 197–219; Jürgen Zimmerer, ed., *Von Windhuk Nach Auschwitz? Beiträge Zum Verhältnis Von Kolonialismus Und Holocaust* (Münster: LIT, 2008); Jürgen Zimmerer, “The First Genocide of the 20th Century: The German War of Destruction in South West Africa (1904-1908) and the Global History of Genocide,” in *Lessons and Legacies: From Generation to Generation*, ed. Doris L. Bergen, vol. 8 (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2008), 34–64.

centuries prior to the Treaty of Versailles. The Enlightenment gave birth to a plethora of ideological frameworks on social and economic development. Edward Said outlined how Anglo-French scholars and explorers regularly engaged in the creation of “imaginary geographies” and false representations of the Middle-East and Asia for centuries in an effort to “orientalize the Oriental” to define boundaries and differences with the “oriental other” not just to understand the peoples they encountered, but to categorize them and claim superiority over them.³⁷ Despite Said’s dismissal of German participation in the creation of “Orientalism” and imperial thinking, Suzanne Marchand points out that Germans made key contributions to the stadial theory of development, particularly in the area of Orientalist religious scholarship.³⁸ Germany, being home to some of the preeminent scholars on Middle-Eastern languages and Sanskrit, as well as the religions of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, contributed simultaneously to theological and racial treatises stemming from imperial experience.³⁹

The enslavement of Africans by Europeans also played its part in the construction of racial hierarchies. Europeans had engaged in the large-scale capture, purchase and transit

³⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), xvii-xxx, 1-72, 149-165, 255-283.

³⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 17, 19; Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, xvii-xxxiv.

³⁹ Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*. For more on German Orientalism, see also Nina Berman, “Orientalism, Imperialism, and Nationalism: Karl May’s Orientzyklus,” in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 51–68; Jennifer Jenkins, “German Orientalism: Introduction,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia and the Middle East* 24, 2 (2004): 97–100; Susan R. Boettcher, “German Orientalism in the Age of Confessional Consolidation: Jacob Andeae’s Thirteen Sermons the Turk, 1568,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia and the Middle East* 24, 2 (2004): 101–115; Todd Curtis Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Douglas T. McGetchin, Peter K.J. Park, and Damodar SarDesai, eds., *Sanskrit and “Orientalism”*: *Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750-1958* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004); Douglas T. McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, and Orientalism: Ancient India’s Rebirth in Modern Germany* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009); Ursula Woköck, *German Orientalism: The Study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800-1945*, *Culture and Civilization in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2009); James R. Hodkinson, *Encounters with Islam in German Literature and Culture* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009); Joanne Miyang Cho, Eric Kurlander, and Douglas T. McGetchin, eds., *Transcultural Encounters Between Germany and India: Kindred Spirits in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

of Africans as slaves since at least the fifteenth century, when Portuguese explorers first arrived in West Africa.⁴⁰ The enslavement of Africans as a labor pool became a key component of overseas expansion for the British, French, Portuguese and Spanish empires from the fifteenth century to the early nineteenth century.⁴¹ Some justified the enslavement of Africans by claiming that African laborers could survive the harsh conditions of the New World better than Europeans and, being far from home, would lack knowledge of local geography, limiting their ability to run away.⁴² Christian rationalizations stemming from misunderstandings of passages in the Book of Genesis created an ethnically-driven argument for slavery known as the “Hamitic Thesis,” which insisted that Africans were the descendants of Ham, the son of Noah supposedly cursed by his father with black skin and perpetual servitude.⁴³ This latter argument would be incorporated into pseudo-scientific Enlightenment racial hierarchies which emphasized racial difference and the supposed moral, cultural and intellectual inferiority of Africans.⁴⁴

The experience of missionaries and religious scholars was an important ingredient in the formation of racial thinking during Empire throughout Europe. Missionaries have, since the work of Comaroff and Comaroff, often been viewed as the “shock troops of

⁴⁰ Martin A. Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-3, 11-16; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History. Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 154-158. Prior to the African slave trade, both the Portuguese and Spanish Empires had engaged in the enslavement of Amerindians (Native Americans). See Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 168-169 and Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3, 5, 12, 93, 105, 108-109, 122.

⁴¹ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 178-179.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 157-158, 168-169, 178-179; Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire*, 3, 5, 12, 93, 105, 108-109.

⁴³ William Mckee Evans, “From the Land of Caanan to the Land of Guinea: The Strange Odessey of the ‘Sons of Ham’,” *American Historical Review* 85 (1980): 15-43; David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-28.

⁴⁴ Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, 224-257.

colonialism.”⁴⁵ While such terminology has been hotly contested at times in postcolonial scholarship, it is hard to deny the role missionaries intentionally or unintentionally played in creating the cultural encounter dialogues that led to the subjugation of other peoples at the hands of Europeans. European missionaries were often the first to give detailed histories, geographic studies, and ethnographic assessments of cultural structures of and relations between indigenous populations in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Pacific and Australia, generating vital information for would-be colonial planners.⁴⁶ The Evangelical concept of “heathenism,” used by missionaries to describe non-Christian religious beliefs and cultural norms, became an integral component of European discourse to legitimate their rule over non-Europeans by pointing to a perceived “lack of morals” and “backwardness” on the part of their colonized subjects.⁴⁷ John Comaroff and Susan Thorne argue that European missionaries, particularly British missionaries, helped to conflate racial discourses with those on class. These scholars contend that the “class baggage” that missionaries carried with them from Europe, chiefly a rhetorical basis for hierarchy, status and position, fed into a racial nomenclature that facilitated not only a view of colonized subjects as the “less fortunate” in need of assistance from a “better class,” but also a justification for the rule of difference.⁴⁸ As time went on, European

⁴⁵ Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁴⁶ Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, xv, 50n. 171, 8, 15-16, 78-80, 289-296 362-370; Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire*, 26, 324n. 38.

⁴⁷ Susan Thorne, “‘The Conversion of Englishmen and the Conversion of the World Inseparable’: Missionary Imperialism and the Language of Class in Early Industrial Britain,” in *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 238–262, 246-249.

⁴⁸ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in *Tensions of Empire*, 1–58, 27-28; John L. Comaroff, “Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Dominations in South Africa,” in *Tensions of Empire*, ed. Frederick

missionaries and religious scholars even aided in the creation of a progressivist “stepping stone” assessment of different cultures, ranking those with more religious structure, monotheism and a written language—easing the process of Biblical translation—as more advanced and closer to civilization, even if they weren’t quite “European.” Carl Becker, a German religious scholar who specialized in Islamic studies at the turn of the twentieth century, even went so far as to suggest conversion of colonial subjects to Islam as a positive step on a path towards their final conversion to Christianity.⁴⁹

The stadial theory of society developed in this multifaceted intellectual atmosphere eventually postulated that each society passed through “a similar history in terms of its internal constitution,” going through numerous steps of organization, based on mode of subsistence, until arriving at the highest stage.⁵⁰ Europe, of course, sat at the pinnacle of this flow-chart of human society. Africa’s primitiveness was set against Europe’s modernity as a Foucaultian “Other.” With putative superiority came equally putative responsibility, and Europeans began to feel a sense of duty toward the “infant savages of Africa,” and saw it as their duty to mold these “primitives” into men of virtue and to shape the land deemed “vacant” of civilization into an economically productive paradise.⁵¹

Although it took on many different forms in Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands and later Germany, Italy, and the United States, this new civilizing mission was merged with mercantilist and later capitalist ideologies to justify colonialism. The emergence of

Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, 163–197; Thorne, “‘The Conversion of Englishmen and the Conversion of the World Inseparable’: Missionary Imperialism and the Language of Class in Early Industrial Britain.”

⁴⁹ Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, 361-366.

⁵⁰ Jacques T. Carlos, “From Savages to Barbarians to Primitives: Africa, Social Typologies and History in Eighteenth Century French Philosophy,” *History and Theory* 36, 2 (1997): 190–215, 193-197, 203.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 214-215; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Liberal Imperialism in Europe* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 1-24.

nationalism and the nation-state also incorporated imperialism as an important component of national identity, in which nation-states were duty-bound to “uplift” their “less-developed” neighbors and colonial holdings economically and culturally while simultaneously using these cultures as anthropological “lenses” to understand Europe’s own past stages of development. The stadial view was even incorporated into ethnographic presentations to the public in museums, where exhibits in German and other European ethnographic institutes drew parallels between non-western cultures and early hominids or tribal groups that were the precursors to European civilization.⁵² Christian missionaries, though they contributed to racial discourses, wholly supported the abolition of slavery and often had a mercurial relationship of support for and from European colonial administrations, along with critique of colonial practices.⁵³ Still, Christian missionaries hoped that imperialism, if properly guided, would provide the infrastructure needed to give ‘natives’ a “European example” to follow in culture, morals, education, and even civil engineering that would in turn influence them to follow Christ. The European movement for the abolition of slaving—pushed heavily by segments of the British population throughout the nineteenth century and formally pronounced as law in 1848—began an international conversation from at least the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) forward over whether and how to engage in a less exploitative form of empire by ending the slave trade and focusing on tutelage of indigenous populations towards

⁵² H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 1-50.

⁵³ Thorne, “‘The Conversion of Englishmen and the Conversion of the World Inseparable’,” 244-246; Comaroff, “Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Dominations in South Africa,” 163-165, 185-187; Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 87, 89, 117, 124-127 ; Birthe Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten: Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel der Kolonien* (Köln: Böhlau, 2003), 116-117, 250-274 .

Enlightenment precepts of humanity and development.⁵⁴ Although state violence and coerced labor in the colonies did not go uncontested in the public sphere of many Western metropolises, in many cases, violent repression and even extermination of supposedly “lazy” indigenous populations were justified by the ends of spreading “civilization” in this liberal imperial paradigm.⁵⁵

The First World War, however, marked a shift in the West’s enunciations of liberal imperialist principles. As Mark Mazower has argued, a new statement of the justification for imperialism needed to be formulated if the standard of civilization via Western domination were to be maintained in the face of movements that had become a greater threat to empire following the First World War. Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, and Pan-Islam, as well as individual nationalist movements in various colonies, challenged the rhetoric of the European stadial theory of development with an adopted and modified

⁵⁴ Technically, France had abolished the slave trade earlier in 1792, but it had been reestablished in 1802 under Napoleonic law (Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*, 19). For more on the treatment of abolition at the Congress of Vienna, see Brian E. Vick, *The Congress of Vienna. Power and Politics After Napoleon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 193-226; For more on British and European efforts to end the slave trade, as well as the international political ramifications of abolition, see Christopher Lloyd, *The Navy and the Slave Trade: The Suppression of the African Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longmans, 1949); David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa*; Paul Kielstra, *The Politics of Slave Trade Suppression in Britain and France, 1814-1848* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000); João Pedro Margues, *The Sounds of Silence: Nineteenth-Century Portugal and the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, trans. Richard Wall (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); Matthew Mason, “Keeping Up Appearances: The International Politics of Slave Trade Abolition in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 66, 4 (2009): 809–832.

⁵⁵ Jens-Uwe Guettel, *German Expansionism, Imperial Liberalism, and the United States, 1776-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1-78, 127-160, 217-232; Giuseppi Finaldi, “Italy, Liberalism, and the Age of Empire,” in *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, ed. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, 47–66; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, Uday Singh Mehta, and Jennifer Pitts, “Liberalism and Empire Reconsidered: A Dialogue,” in *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, 241–266; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism in Germany. Expansionism and Nationalism, 1848-1884* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 1-26, 50-134, ; Nina Berman, *Impossible Missions? German Economic, Military and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Cheryl B. Welch, “Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion: Tocqueville on Algeria,” *Political Theory* 31, 2 (2003): 235–264; Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*; Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, eds., *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

Wilsonian political language of liberty and self-determination for all.⁵⁶ Mazower contends that imperialism was extended in a new, far less overt, manner than a simple extension of nineteenth-century colonialism. To satisfy European and American public opinion, the mission of civilizing the world was retooled as an international program of tutelage, raising colonial subjects towards the eventual, promised formation of their own nation-states.⁵⁷

To many, “internationalism seemed [...] the most likely path to a ‘permanent peace’ and to the fulfillment of the democratic ambitions of [...] anticolonialists who had limited political representation in nation-states and empires.”⁵⁸ New international governmental structures opened up new opportunities for representation, petition and redress for minority and subaltern groups wishing to challenge the status quo. Yet, internationalism was not intended as the destroyer of empires, but as the civilizer of the civilizing mission.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, the Allies’ use of ‘colonial guilt’ as grounds for the seizure of Germany’s colonies and the creation of the League’s Mandates System initiated a discussion of what constituted “humane imperialism” and “good colonial governance”—the new hallmarks of the “civilized nation” engaged in the work of empire—that would bring the hypocrisies of liberal imperialism to the forefront of the international public sphere.⁶⁰

Combating allegations of colonial guilt thus became a necessary first step for Germans to any potential progress in recovery of the overseas empire and their

⁵⁶ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 165-166; Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-18, 25, 31.

⁵⁷ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 166-167.

⁵⁸ Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 3, 11-78.

⁵⁹ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 167.

⁶⁰ Dimier, “On Good Colonial Government: Lessons from the League of Nations.”

imperialy-based notions of “Europeanness.” To do so, Colonial Germans appropriated the new political language of liberal imperial internationalism. Here the notion of “ideas in context” advocated by Quentin Skinner provides a useful framework. Skinner’s theories on textual analysis urge that assessment of how “political language” translates into political action—and vice versa—should be derived from the context of the period and a careful breakdown of what politically engaged authors intended to accomplish in writing a piece amid the give-and-take of political debate. This approach insightfully emphasizes as well how dominant “political languages” of a period both constrain and empower those who engage with them.⁶¹ In efforts to maintain their careers and imperial/national conceptions of the “self,” German colonial officials and settlers argued against the idea of “Colonial Guilt” and reasserted German Europeanness in a world where empire—or at least the “civilizing mission”—was an essential component of this identity. They engaged with the new political vocabulary of empire and civilization made normative by the Allies and the League, using it in conventional ways to legitimate past actions and to reassert German Europeanness as well as manipulating it to claim moral superiority and political advantage in the specific questions of the day.⁶² As Glenda Sluga argues, it is important to remember that the concept of the “international” in the twentieth century developed out of the same questions of modernity, governance and “political idealism” faced in the age of nationalism—debates over citizenship, individual liberties, national identity, democracy and many others.⁶³ Nationalism and internationalism both

⁶¹ Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 29–67.

⁶² James Tully, “The Pen Is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner’s Analysis of Politics,” in *Meaning and Context*, ed. James Tully, 7–28, 13–15; Quentin Skinner, “Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts,” in *Meaning and Context*, ed. James Tully, 68–78; Quentin Skinner, “Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action,” in *Meaning and Context*, ed. James Tully, 97–118.

⁶³ Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, 1–44.

drew heavily on the same Enlightenment concepts relating to the “promise of evolving political, economic, social and cultural progress” that had been key components in imperialism’s stadial theory of development.⁶⁴ Therefore, the new political language of internationalism embodied in the League of Nations shared a heritage and was in constant dialogue with political discourses on empire, colonialism and even national identity—easing the transition for Colonial Germans who sought to engage with the political languages of the post-Versailles world order.

Mazower contends that the League and its political discourse of “imperial internationalism” was largely the brain-child of thinkers within the British Empire.⁶⁵ Others, such as Erez Manela, point to the American President, Woodrow Wilson, as the source for the political language used in the interwar debates over nationalism, imperialism, self-determination, and colonial liberation.⁶⁶ Although well-known figures such as Jan Smuts, Alfred Zimmern, and Woodrow Wilson certainly played key roles in the development of a vocabulary of liberal and imperial internationalism in the 1920s, neither they, nor the leaders and diplomats of the Allied Powers, nor even the bureaucrats at the helm of the League were the sole contributors to the ongoing evolution of imperial internationalist discourse and its forms. As Brian Vick has argued in the case of the Congress of Vienna, the peace settlement which ended the Napoleonic Wars that had engulfed Europe in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries, it is necessary to go beyond the usual canon of societal elites and statesmen when analyzing the diplomacy

⁶⁴ Ibid., 3-11.

⁶⁵ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace. The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 28-103.

⁶⁶ Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 3-63, 137-158, 197-214.

and political wrangling of the League over issues of imperialism and the Mandates System.⁶⁷

Throughout the interwar period, the League became increasingly prominent as the site where international public opinion engaged with diplomacy and political action. It was, for a time in the twentieth century, one of the key venues where what Vick has called “influence politics” was practiced. For this reason, it is important to look not only at the “great men” of the period when analyzing how the political discourses on imperialism, the Mandates System, internationalism, and good colonial governance were continually modified and codified.⁶⁸ Ordinary citizens of numerous states, even the supposedly ostracized Colonial Germans, injected themselves into these discussions through their writings, through the media, through their social and professional networks, and through their cultural and political activities. Individual German settlers and former colonial officials, and especially German colonial interest groups, attempted to sway public opinion in their favor by using important political languages of the time—above all that of liberal internationalism—to reinsert themselves into the European “civilizing mission” in dialogue and, in some cases, in praxis. Whether successful or not, when German colonial lobbies attempted to use the media and political and social networks to achieve colonial restitution, statesmen, diplomats, and governments were forced to respond to and mollify manipulations of domestic and international public opinion concerning German colonialism and colonial restitution. As will be shown, this was most significantly the case at the 1925 Locarno Conference. The 1926 admission of Germany to the League of Nations, the induction of two of Germany’s former colonial officials to

⁶⁷Vick, *The Congress of Vienna*, 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

the Permanent Mandates Commission between 1927 and 1933, and the involvement of Heinrich Schnee, Germany's most vocal colonial irredentist, on the League's Manchurian Commission are all examples of Colonial Germans becoming empowered by appropriating the then dominant political language of imperial internationalism in hopes of ensuring their ongoing contribution to Europe's colonial endeavors.

The participation of Colonial Germans in an international agency meant to oversee the management of their former colonies and their willingness to appropriate the political languages of internationalism and liberal imperialism also raise new questions about continuity between the German colonial state and the Nazi regime. There has been a great deal of scholarship on the perseverance of German imperialist thinking and ambitions into the Nazi era, particularly in recent years. Following the public recognition by a German government official in 2004 of the atrocities that occurred in the early twentieth century in what is now Namibia, scholars such as Isabel Hull and Jürgen Zimmerer drew upon the Herero Genocide of 1904-1907 and the brutal repression of the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905-1907 to tell a story of Germany's unique penchant for military extremism practiced and perfected in its colonial experience. Hull makes blanket statements about the militancy of German nationalism and the population as a whole, arguing that the importance of the military as a symbol of the nation generated a military culture that prized the necessity of winning by any means, resulting in escalating brutality towards those classed as enemies. Using the somewhat tenuous connection to the Armenian Genocide, she argues that this pattern produced the disregard for life and the humanity of "others" displayed during the Holocaust.⁶⁹ Zimmerer takes a slightly more conservative approach and attempts to trace specific policies borrowed by the Nazi

⁶⁹ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*.

regime as well as the careers of individual colonial officials to establish lines of continuity.⁷⁰ Most recently, Shelly Baranowski has claimed that the unusual circumstances of Germany's imperial experience, with continental and overseas ambitions and constant fears of dissolution by rivals from Bismarck forward, explains why the Nazi variant of expansionism emerged there and nowhere else.⁷¹ All of these works draw on the Arendt Thesis, which connects the Holocaust to European imperialism, found in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.⁷² These scholars, however, take the additional step of marking the continuity from colonies to concentration camps as uniquely German, arguing that Germany's colonial brutality was somehow distinctive and separated it from the rest of Europe.⁷³

These scholars are not wrong to contend that aspects of Colonial Germans' views on race and national identity and even personnel from the colonial period may have carried over into the Nazi era, and clearly it is merited to seek connected explanations for moments of extreme violence, such as the Herero Genocide or the Holocaust. There are,

⁷⁰ Zimmerer, "The Birth of the Ostland Out of the Spirit of Colonialism: a Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination"; Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz?*.

⁷¹ Shelly Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 159-386.

⁷³ Elements of this approach can also be found in Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 167-210 and Benjamin Madley, "From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe," *European History Quarterly* 35, 3 (2005): 429-464. For an excellent summary of how the Arendt Thesis has developed, see Robert Gerwath and Stephan Malinowski, "Hannah Arendt's Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz," *Central European History* 42, 2 (2009): 279-300. Predating the Arendt variant, another argument regarding the continuity of German colonial imperialism and its discourses into the Nazi era, contended that imperial ideals provided the basis for Nazi foreign policy and expansionist aims, exemplified by works such as Hans Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969); Klaus Hildebrand, *Vom Reich zum Weltreich, NSDAP und koloniale Frage 1919-1945* (Munich: W. Fink, 1969); Richard Lakowski, "The Second World War," in *German Imperialism in Africa: From the Beginnings Until the Second World War*, ed. H. Stoecker (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1986), 379-418; and Fritz Fischer, *From Kaiserreich to Third Reich: Elements of Continuity in German History, 1871-1945* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986). Baranowski's work seems to draw heavily from this school of thought in addition to the Arendt Thesis.

however, problems with the revived Arendt Thesis, and the approach has therefore not gone uncontested. Schilling has rightly argued that extreme violence and racism were not “unique to the German colonies” and that not all German colonialists “integrated themselves seamlessly” into the Nazi regime.⁷⁴ She contends that, although it may have had an impact on the development of racialist thinking, Germany’s colonial violence does not in itself explain why Germany developed a totalitarian regime in the twentieth century while other imperial powers who engaged in equally abhorrent behavior in their colonies, such as Britain and France, did not.⁷⁵ In *The Devil’s Handwriting*, Steinmetz counters the Arendt Thesis slightly by pointing out that German colonialist definitions of “race” and reaction to these categories were not uniform across the entire German overseas empire. Taking three colonies as case studies—Southwest Africa, Samoa, and Qingdao—, Steinmetz argues that Southwest Africa is an exceptional case, both in German history and in the German colonial experience. As evidence of Southwest Africa being the exception instead of the rule of German colonial governance and warfare, Steinmetz points to debates over miscegenation and race relations in Samoa and Qingdao that did not produce genocidal extremism in the name of preserving German superiority.⁷⁶ For Steinmetz, Germany’s colonial experience is far too diverse and complex to simplify for the sake of satisfying teleology.

In addition to these approaches, the revived Arendt Thesis has been rigorously and persuasively countered by scholars, such as Jens-Uwe Guettel, Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, who argue that the idea of an unbroken ideological continuity between the *Kaiserreich* and the Nazi state unique to Germany without

⁷⁴ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 4-5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁷⁶ Steinmetz, *The Devil’s Handwriting*, 1-68, 135-242.

external influences harkens back to the simplistic *Sonderweg*. While recognizing overlap between Imperial German and Nazi notions of empire and expansion, the above scholars point to key differences between the liberal imperialism of the nineteenth century and National-Socialist conceptions of empire and insist on the importance of charting the contingencies that affected the evolution of liberal imperial thinking.⁷⁷

Building on these arguments, it is important to emphasize that studies steeped in the revised Arendt Thesis which look solely for the connective tissue between Nazi imperialism and German colonialism typically overlook what became of German colonial officials during the intervening Weimar era. Such works pay insufficient attention to the interwar period, often skipping the 1920s or glossing over them quickly en route to 1933, and ignore the role played by the League of Nations in the ‘job security’ of Colonial Germans in the wake of the termination of the German colonial empire. Rather than assuming a direct tessellation of ideas and/or staff from the colonial period to Nazi Germany, the present work seriously considers Colonial Germans’ engagement with internationalism in the years following the Locarno Treaties as their focus shifted from redress of perceived wrongs to participation in larger, transnational discussions on the definitions of empire, civilization, and ‘good colonial governance’ in the hopes of creating new niches for themselves in other Europeans’ colonial projects.

The narrative structure of the dissertation is largely chronological, with the first three chapters covering the 1919-1924 lead-up to Colonial German engagement with

⁷⁷ Guettel, *German Expansionism*; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, “The Pre-History of the Holocaust? The Sonderweg and Historikerstreit Debates and the Abject Colonial Past,” *Central European History* 41, 2 (2008): 477–503; Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, “The Purpose of German Colonialism or the Long Shadow of Bismarck’s Colonial Policy,” in *German Colonialism, Race, the Holocaust and Postwar Germany*, ed. Volker Langbehn and M. Salama (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 193–214. See also Birthe Kundrus, “How Imperial Was the Third Reich?,” in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*, ed. Bradley D Naranch and Geoff Eley (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 330–346.

internationalism at the Locarno Conference in 1925, and the final three chapters addressing the Colonial German efforts to influence the Locarno negotiations in their favor and the results of this encounter up to 1933. The first half of the work is, additionally, divided thematically, with each chapter spotlighting a different Colonial German community: Chapter 1 explores the colonial irredentism of the former officials; Chapter 2 looks at memory and imperial identity among former German settlers; and Chapter 3 examines fragmentation within the colonial lobbies in Germany and their efforts to unify the Colonial German bloc in the interwar period.

The first chapter outlines the creation of the League's Mandates system and its foundational principles, as well as the initial response of Colonial Germans to accusations of "colonial guilt." Focusing on two former governors—Theodor Seitz and Heinrich Schnee—I explore the ways in which Germany's former colonial officials appropriated and manipulated the new political vocabulary of empire and civilization in the League's internationalism to make claims of Germany's moral superiority and its right to possess colonies in the years immediately following the Treaty of Versailles.

Despite the wishes of the former colonial officials, memory of Germany's African colonial experience proved a contested sphere even among Colonial Germans who looked back fondly on Germany's overseas imperial venture. In the second chapter, I analyze the ways in which the colony became the preferred locus of German identity for civilians who had lived in Germany's largest settler colonies, German East Africa and German Southwest Africa. In the first section, I focus on memoirs of repatriated settlers who spent seven years or more in East Africa, both men and women, in order to demonstrate how the colony became a site of memory that served as a foil to what they

viewed as the decaying German nation in Europe. For comparison, the second half of the chapter also examines the experience of the Germans who were allowed to remain in the Southwest African Mandate under South African rule. Here, I tell the story of how Southwest African Germans fought, not for restitution to Germany, but for independent self-government within the structures of the Mandate System. A key component of this struggle was new notions of citizenship that emerged from engagement with the League of Nations, South Africa and the Weimar Republic as a result of an international diplomatic squabble that would become known as the Naturalization Crisis of the 1920s.

As Germany's former colonial officials and repatriated settlers were coming to terms with their new "postcolonial" status, remolding their imperial identities and trying to find ways to adapt to the neo-colonialism of the League, other remnants of Germany's colonial ambitions found themselves in need of repair: the organizations that comprised the German colonial lobby. The third chapter describes the history and Weimar-era reimagining of the three largest and most vocal of the German colonial societies: the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (German Colonial Society, *DKG*), the *Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft* (Women's League of the German Colonial Society) and the *Kolonial Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* (Imperial Working Group on the Colonies, *KoRAG*). Despite all the efforts the *DKG* and other colonialist associations in Germany made to better serve their Colonial German constituencies, these organizations never managed to unite the Colonial German bloc and often alienated groups that should have comprised their core. This chapter narrates the challenges and fragmentation that the German colonial lobbies faced in the wake of the loss of empire, which emanated not from the German government or even from the League and the new Mandatory Powers,

but rather from the cacophony of demands placed upon them by a diverse constituency facing disparate problems both overseas and in Germany.

The fourth chapter probes the public opinion strategies employed by German colonial lobbies to garner sympathy for German colonial restitution on the international stage in the years immediately surrounding the Locarno Conference. The Locarno Conference, held 5-16 October 1925, represented the culmination of nearly two years of diplomatic communication between the foreign offices of Germany, Britain, and France. The conference in the lakeside Swiss resort town,, attended by plenipotentiaries from Germany, Britain, France, Belgium, Poland and Italy, was an attempt to normalize relations between the former Allied powers and Germany's new Weimar Republic and more tightly bind Germany's politics and economy to Western Europe, thereby preventing closer ties between Germany and the Soviet Union. The seven treaties signed at Locarno were intended to ensure mutual security in interwar Europe by alleviating the territorial tensions created by the Treaty of Versailles, but they were certainly not intended to unravel all terms that had been stipulated in the peace that had ended the First World War. Nevertheless, many Germans hoped that the new "peace talks" would result in an overhaul of what they deemed the "Versailles Diktat."⁷⁸ Whether their demands and interests were satisfied or not, minority groups, lobbies and the general publics of numerous countries and colonies made their attitudes and desires known during the proceedings at Locarno and were loud enough to factor into the considerations of the

⁷⁸ Henry Ashbury Turner, *Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 201-236; Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace. International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 43, 56, 69-87; Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*, 237-295; Cohrs, "The Quest for a New Concert of Europe: British Pursuits of German Rehabilitation and European Stability in the 1920s"; Gaynor Johnson, ed., *Locarno Revisited: European Diplomacy, 1920-1929* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-10.

three men given credit for ushering in the “Spirit of Locarno.” Rumors spread by lobbies and press wars between competing interests forced debate on issues at Locarno that had not originally appeared on the agenda.

The matter of Germany’s colonial claims is a perfect example. Colonial German lobbies hoped that the Locarno talks heralded the return of empire and an end to Germany’s banishment from the work of the “civilizing mission” and the humiliating experience of being a “postcolonial state in a still colonial world.”⁷⁹ Public scrutiny from false press reports about the restoration of the German colonies emanating from Germany, France, Britain and its colonies and dominions, and even the United States complicated matters for delegates. The chief plenipotentiaries had intended to focus exclusively on territorial claims in Europe, security pacts among the various states of the continent, the admission of the Weimar Republic to the League of Nations, and Germany’s reintegration into the international economy. In the end, lobbyists’ appeals to the global public for colonial restitution worked against Colonial German interest groups as their voices were drowned out by protest. Colonial Germans, however, still managed a partial victory at Locarno, unexpected and unasked for, and more importantly, the Colonial German lobby learned new and better strategies for playing properly to public opinion and international bureaucracies.

The final two chapters look at “success” stories of Colonial Germans who managed to insert themselves into the new imperial internationalism of the League of Nations following the failure of colonial restitution aims at Locarno. During the tenure of the League’s Mandate System, several former German colonial officials rose to

⁷⁹ Phrase borrowed from title of Klotz, “The Weimar Republic: A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World.”

prominence in the League of Nations as “imperial experts.” The involvement of German colonial officials in League agencies and events suggests that, although no longer part of an imperial power and officially ostracized from the “work of civilization,” Germans remained adaptive contributors to international discourses on empire and to its political practice. In order to determine how individual Germans and lobbying interests were able to make use of the spirit of internationalism to minimize their reputation as “unfit imperialists” and re-establish themselves as “fellow civilizers,” the fifth chapter focuses on the interwar careers and interactions of two colonial officials: Dr. Ludwig Kastl and Dr. Julius Ruppel—former bureaucrats who had served in the African colonies, each of whom became German Members on the Permanent Mandates Commission.

The presence of former German colonial officials as part of the League’s bureaucracy was not confined to the Permanent Mandates Commission, but also came into play in special emergency inquiry committees, most notably in the League’s investigation of the Manchurian Crisis. The five-man commission headed by the second Earl of Lytton of the United Kingdom included Major General Frank Ross McCoy (US), Count Aldrovandi Marescotti (Italy), General Henri Claudel (France), and Dr. Heinrich Schnee.⁸⁰ Hence the sixth chapter spotlights the former East African governor’s role on the Lytton Commission, which became the crowning—and final—event in his efforts to revive his career and renown as an authority on imperialism.

Finally, in the conclusion, I look at the decade-long, rather tempestuous, relationship between Colonial Germans, the colonial lobbies, and the Nazi Party (NSDAP) and take a brief glimpse into German engagement with the postcolonial world

⁸⁰ Ian Nish, “Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis: Dr. Heinrich Schnee and the Lytton Commission,” in *Deutschland-Japan in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, ed. Josef Kreiner and Regina Mathias (Bonn: Bouvier, 1990), 91–104, 91-96.

in the late twentieth century. Although there was a significant amount of mutual flirtation between the Nazi regime and opportunistic Colonial Germans who continued the pursuit of colonial restitution by any means, ultimately they would be disappointed as their organizations were absorbed by Nazi centralization schemes and as the colonial legacy was appropriated to serve the Nazi state's specific propaganda needs. On 13 January 1943, late in the Battle of Stalingrad, Hitler and Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels ordered the cessation of all colonial and colonialist activities in Germany.⁸¹ Even this, however, was not the end of Germany's colonial legacy, as Colonial Germans continued to adapt and insert themselves into new careers and international debates well into the second half of the twentieth century.

⁸¹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 71.

A Question of Respectability:

Colonial German Responses to the Treaty of Versailles and “Colonial Guilt”

Germany's claim to her colonies is, first of all, based on the fact that she has acquired them lawfully and has developed them by means of incessant and fruitful toil and at the cost of many sacrifices. Her ownership of them has been acknowledged by all the Powers. Whenever conflicts have arisen with other Powers over particular sections of territory, they have been settled by means of agreements or arbitration [...] [T]he mandatory states may, according to their own pleasure, drive the Germans from house and home, even if they have been resident there for years or have been born there, and may permanently debar Germans from taking up any activity in the country[...] Germany is ready[...]to administer her colonies according to the principles of the League of Nations—possibly as the mandatory of the latter—if a League of Nations is formed which she can enter at once as a member state, enjoying equal privileges with the other members.

—The German delegation's observations on Article 119 of the Treaty of Versailles, recorded in *History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, 1920.⁸²

⁸²H.W.V. Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, vol. 2, 5 vols. (London: H. Frowde & Howdard & Stoughton, 1920), 295-301.

[...] Shall a great, highly cultured, and efficient nation like the Germans, a nation which, by the testimony of the whole world, has performed such wonders in the domain of science, medicine, hygiene, education, and industry, which has sent forth into the dark places of the earth so many skilled, conscientious, and self-sacrificing physicians, missionaries, and teachers, be excluded from this great cultural work, for which it is so remarkably fitted? [...] If Europe remains sick under the curse of the columnies and brute force embodied in the Treaty of Versailles, Africa will remain sick and undeveloped for the same reason. This interaction is inherent in the operation of an inexorable moral law, which neither nations nor Governments [...] can violate without harming all mankind.

—Heinrich Schnee, last governor of German East Africa⁸³

On April 29, 1919, Dr. Julius Ruppel, a former colonial official who had served in German Cameroon, arrived in Versailles with the rest of the new German Republic's delegation to the peace negotiations. Ruppel's task was to act as Germany's colonial expert. He was to provide advice to the German delegation on matters such as the fair treatment and release of prisoners of war in the colonial theatre, the return of German settlers' and missionaries' property confiscated by the Allies during the conflict, and

⁸³ Heinrich Schnee, *German Colonization Past and Future: The Truth About the German Colonies* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1926), 175-176.

limited territorial concessions from Germany's overseas holdings if required by the victors. He soon discovered that his services were not required. In addition to the truncation of Germany's European borders—which included the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and what would be known as the “Polish Corridor”—and the condition that Germany accept both the “War Guilt” paragraph and the idea of being charged the now infamous reparations payments, Article 119 of the treaty presented to the German delegation stated that Germany would forfeit all of its colonial possessions.⁸⁴ Despite initial resistance by the delegation and the Weimar government in hopes of forcing better terms, on June 28, 1919, Germany's Foreign Minister Hermann Müller of the Social Democratic Party and Ruppel's superior, Colonial Minister Johannes Bell of the Catholic Center Party, signed the Treaty of Versailles on Germany's behalf. Before 1919, Germany had controlled the third largest colonial empire in the world, surpassed only by England and France.⁸⁵ In total, it was an empire that extended over a 900,000 square mile portion of the globe, “four times the area of the [European] Reich”.⁸⁶ With Müller's and Bell's signatures, seemingly in an instant, Germany ceased to exist as a colonial power.

The question remained of what was to be done with the German colonies in the wake of Article 119. Returning the colonies to Germany after a period of occupation was out of the question, as such an action would have gone against the propaganda during the war that had painted Germany as a brutal colonial master. Giving the colonies back would have caused uproar in Europe as well as among the colonized subjects who had

⁸⁴ At the time of the negotiations at Versailles, the amount of the reparations payments was yet to be determined. The amount Germany was expected to pay—132 billion gold marks, roughly 32 billion US dollars—was not announced until 1921.

⁸⁵ Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay, “German Imperialism in Africa: The Distorted Images of Cameroon, Namibia, Tanzania and Togo,” *Journal of Black Studies* 23, 2 (1992): 235–246, 235, 238.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

been exposed to this kind of propaganda during the war. Colonial restitution was therefore immediately dismissed.⁸⁷ France, Britain, and the British Dominions favored direct annexation of the territories by the victorious Allies. Britain was especially concerned about its Dominions and feared that South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia might make a break with the Empire, as the American Thirteen Colonies had done over a century earlier, if they were not rewarded for their service to the Crown in the Great War with territorial acquisitions and given a guarantee that Germany would never be allowed to return as aggressive neighbors of these uniquely autonomous British holdings.⁸⁸

American President Woodrow Wilson, however, stated in his Four Principles speech on February 11, 1918, that he would allow “no annexations,” and insisted that “peoples and provinces must not be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels or pawns in a game,” and “every territorial settlement must be in the interests of the populations concerned and not as part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims among rival states.”⁸⁹

Eventually, a compromise emerged, forwarded by General Jan Smuts of South Africa and Arthur Zimmern and his supporters in the British Labour Party. Using the model of British and American Trusteeship administrations in India and Cuba, it was suggested that German colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, along with the territories that had once been held by the Ottoman Empire in Southwest Asia, should be transferred to the “proposed supernational authority of the League of Nations.” The administration of these territories, it was suggested, should be “under the legislative council of that

⁸⁷ Gail-Maryse Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate* (Capetown: Juta & Co. Ltd., 1976), 31.

⁸⁸ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 30-32.

⁸⁹ Address to Congress by Woodrow Wilson, February 11, 1918, as quoted in “Wilson’s Four Fundamental Principles of Peace which Hertling Approves as a Basis for Discussion,” *New York Times* (New York, February 26, 1918), sec. 1.

authority [...] with its own trained staff, on principles of 1. taking account in each locality of the wishes of the people when these could be ascertained, 2. the protection of the natives against exploitation and oppression and the preservation of their tribal interests, 3. all revenues raised to be expended for the welfare and development of the African state itself and 4. permanent neutralization."⁹⁰ What ultimately emerged was a system whereby administration of individual colonies and territories as Mandates would be directly managed by individual Mandatory Powers—which would include Britain, France, Belgium, Japan, and the British Dominions of South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia—in turn overseen by an international Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations.⁹¹

Drafters of the League Charter, such as General Jan Smuts of South Africa, conceived the Mandate System as a safer means of preserving liberal empire by preventing the unrestricted land grabs and imperial competition that had contributed to the eruption of the First World War.⁹² As Mark Mazower has argued, a new justification for imperialism needed to be formulated if the standard of civilization via Western domination were to be maintained in the face of movements that had become a greater threat to empire following the First World War. Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, and Pan-Islam, as well as individual nationalist movements in various colonies, challenged the rhetoric of the European stadial theory of development with an adopted and modified

⁹⁰ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 35-37; Jan Smuts, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion* (New York: The Nation Press, 1919), 12-24.

⁹¹ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, 28-42; Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 39-43; Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37-38; Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 25, 31; Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 45-65; Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 165-173; Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 43-44.

⁹² Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 34-38, 40-47.

Wilsonian rhetoric of liberty and self-determination for all.⁹³ Mazower contends that imperialism was perpetuated in a new, far less overt, manner than a simple extension of nineteenth-century colonialism. To satisfy European and American public opinion, the mission of civilizing the world was rebuilt as an international project of tutelage, raising colonial subjects towards the promised formation of their own democratic nation-states.⁹⁴ Internationalism was not intended as the destroyer of empires, but as the civilizer of the civilizing mission.⁹⁵ International oversight via a Mandates System would soften imperialism and prevent war and abuse in the future. Influenced by ideas articulated by J.A. Hobson and his calls for “sane imperialism” during the Boer War and by popular thinkers in the British wartime periodical, *Round Table*, the hope was that a new joint imperial project would foster the view of empire:⁹⁶

...as a responsibility exercised on the behalf of civilisation, [and thereby assuring that] the question of who is to govern a dependency [would] never [be] likely to lead to war. For as trustees the rulers have a double function. They have to maintain law, order and justice locally, and to facilitate in every way the development of knowledge and character among a people, so that they may eventually be capable of conducting a civilised government for themselves. They have also to ensure that the rest of the world had equal opportunities with themselves to profit from trade and intercourse with their dependencies. So long as the principle of the open door and that of conducting the

⁹³ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 165-166; Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 3-18, 25, 31.

⁹⁴ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 166-167.

⁹⁵ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 167.

⁹⁶ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 166-167.

government of the dependency in the interest of its inhabitants
are scrupulously observed, empire will lead neither to revolution
nor international war.⁹⁷

Debates between Wilson, Smuts, and Lord Robert Cecil regarding the exact structure and purpose of the Mandates System began in January 1919 and were not concluded until the system was formally approved and signed into existence on 28 June 1919 as part of the League of Nations Covenant within the Treaty of Versailles. Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant outlined the Mandate System and divided the territories to be parceled out among the soon-to-be Mandatory Powers into three classes: A, B, and C-class Mandates. Class A Mandates included territories “liberated” from the Ottoman Empire in the Near East, such as Iraq and Syria. This class of mandates was considered civilizationally advanced enough as to reasonably pursue the construction of independent, hopefully democratic, states in the near future. The B-Class Mandates would consist of the German colonies of East Africa, Cameroon and Togo. These territories, with their large African populations, were considered too underdeveloped to hope for immediate autonomous government and would be placed under European “guidance” for the foreseeable future. The Class B Mandates were also expected to maintain an “open door policy” of trade for all future League Member States. Finally, the remaining German colonies in the Pacific, China, and Southwest Africa would fall into the Class C category. These regions, to be held by the British Dominions and Japan, were deemed hopeless for sustaining independent states except in the very distant future and

⁹⁷ “The Harvest of the War,” *Round Table* VI (September 1915): 1–32, quote on 12-14.

were considered by their Mandatories to have been given as “annexation[s] in all but name.”⁹⁸

The African and Pacific (B and C) Mandates were allocated by the Allied Supreme Council on 7 May 1919 at a meeting of the Council of Four and the Arabic A-Class Mandates were distributed at the League’s San Remo Conference of the Supreme Council on 25 April 1920.⁹⁹ The First Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission was held in Geneva 4-8 October 1921. What immediately followed in each of the reclassified German colonies, with the unique exception of German Southwest Africa,¹⁰⁰ was the direct expulsion of all Germans and a liquidation of “confiscated enemy property.” Ostensibly, the only Germans from the colonies to be repatriated to Germany were those who had served in the colonial administration or the armed forces, or had engaged in espionage or taken up arms against the Allies in the Colonial Theatre. In practice, however, in German East Africa, Togo, Cameroon, and the Pacific holdings, this amounted to the deportation of all German nationals, including settlers, missionaries, and tradesmen.¹⁰¹

Colonial Germans were quick to protest what they viewed as the “unfair” terms of this arrangement. Colonial officials and former settlers alike obviously resented being forcibly removed from their property and employment in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. As historians in the first wave of scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s who addressed both

⁹⁸ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 43; Pedersen, “The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument,”; “The South-West Mandate. Future of the German Population. Position Outlined by General Smuts,” *The Cape Times* (Capetown, September 18, 1920); MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 98-108.

⁹⁹ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 48-49.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 2 of this work for a more substantial explanation of the unique circumstances in South Africa’s Mandate of former German Southwest Africa.

¹⁰¹ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 38, 164-170; Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, 21-27, 77-103, 104-121, 122-144, 145-156; BArch, R8023/529 (48-54,98); BArch, R8023/531 (271-274); BArch, R1001/942 (122); PA AA, R52183.

German colonialism and the end of the colonial empire eagerly argued, the chorus of disapproval by Germany's political elite over the seizure of Germany's colonies seems part and parcel with the general outrage aimed at the terms of the Versailles Treaty and the "War Guilt" clause.¹⁰²

Yet Colonial Germans' resistance to the colonial provisions of the Versailles Treaty did not solely derive from pragmatic and personal considerations. In addition, the matter of Germans' "Colonial Guilt" stung their collective and individual self-image and demanded a response at the level of identity. The Allied Powers justified the seizure of Germany's colonial holdings with accusations that Germany had militarized its colonies and by citing colonial atrocities such as the German campaign against the Herero. They painted a picture whereby Germans stood apart as incomparable in their brutality and "un-European" in their dealings with indigenous peoples and in the conduct of warfare in the colonial theatre. With the taint of 'colonial guilt,' Germans were deemed "exceptionally cruel colonial masters" and "unfit imperialists." Germany was therefore barred from recovering its colonies by way of becoming a Mandatory Power itself, a status the Allies insisted the Germans would not be allowed to attain in the new League of Nations Mandates System. In short, Germany was publicly ostracized from the work of the "civilizing mission."

Combating these allegations of colonial guilt thus became a necessary first step to any potential progress in recovery of the overseas empire, but the implications went beyond the level of political rhetoric. Jens-Uwe Guettel and Ute Frevert have both recently argued that following the First World War, Germany increasingly viewed itself

¹⁰² Wolfe W. Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964). See also: Klaus Hildebrand, *Vom Reich zum Weltreich, NSDAP und koloniale Frage 1919-1945* (Munich: W. Fink, 1969).

as “European” in its activities and identity, thereby pulling away from transnational identity comparisons with the United States that had been grounded in liberalism and imperial liberalism.¹⁰³ Europe became “a notion of its own” and by the 1930s, the Nazis would exploit this shift in German thought about ‘Europeanness’ and advertise themselves as the defenders of Europe against the Soviet Empire and the “American menace.”¹⁰⁴ The 1918 ‘turning point,’ however, though creating the postcolonial environment in which Germany’s new variants of imperial and national-identity would emerge, should not be overemphasized. This remains especially true in the case of colonialism and imperial liberalism as integral components of a European identity that predated the outbreak of the Great War. While comparisons to the American West and the systematic extermination of Native Americans by American settlers were, as Guettel argues, useful for justifying German expansion and eliminationist policies against the Herero and Nama in Southwest Africa, colonialism, and especially imperial liberalism’s foundation myth of the ‘civilizing mission,’ was and would continue to be viewed by Germans as a European project well into the Weimar era.¹⁰⁵ For Germans, like other Europeans, being European meant being at the ‘pinnacle of civilization.’ Being civilized in turn implied a need, duty or right to expand that civilization to other parts of the world considered ‘uncivilized’ and ‘savage.’ The final piece of this identity-construction was a sentiment that Empire made a national group truly European among its colonial peers, since the concept of having ‘civilizational superiority’ or being respectable was gained

¹⁰³ Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 25-27; Ute Frevert, “Europeanizing Germany’s Twentieth Century,” *History and Memory* 17, 1–2 (2005); Christian Bailey, *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow. German Visions of Europe, 1926-1950* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 1-18, 27-48.

¹⁰⁴ Frevert, “Europeanizing Germany’s Twentieth Century.” Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 161-216.

¹⁰⁵ Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 43-160.

and/or reinforced through displays of dominance over “Others.”¹⁰⁶ The Allied Powers’ confiscation of the colonies, however, undermined Germany’s imperial notions of identity as a European power. The loss of the colonies represented an interruption of the running narrative of colonialism and its association with “being European,” but not a complete break with pre-colonial and colonial identity constructions. In contesting the grounds for Germany’s exclusion from Europe’s ‘civilizing mission’ and fervently arguing for colonial restitution in the aftermath of Versailles, German colonial advocates sought to restore Germany’s respectability as a European, civilized nation-state that practiced liberal imperialism.

In addition to reassessing and remarketing their own colonial practices in hopes of being readmitted to the European community of imperial powers, Germans also found themselves once again able to assume an air of ethical superiority by condemning the actions of other European powers still active in the colonial field. Having been deprived of their own colonial holdings, German colonial advocates were now free to point to inculpatory ‘current events’ in the other empires and the new Mandates to undermine the moral credibility of Britain, France, South Africa, Belgium, and, in the later years of the interwar period, Japan. In her seminal book, *Colonial Fantasies*, Susanne Zantop explained that colonial fantasies did not arrive spontaneously in Germany at the end of the nineteenth-century, but were in fact negotiated and played out over a century before the formal founding of the first German overseas colony in 1884.¹⁰⁷ Specifically, during

¹⁰⁶ Elements of this association of Europeaness with imperialism, colonial dominance, and the economic and moral development of areas considered “backward” can be found in Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien ? Eine politisch-ökonomische Berachung / Does Germany Need Colonies ?*; Rohrbach, *Der Deutsche Gedanke in der Welt*; and von Treitschke, *Politik, Vorlesungen gehalten an der Universität zu Berlin*. The concept of “respectability” comes from Woodruff Smith, “Colonialism and the Culture of Respectability,” in *Germany’s Colonial Past*, 3–20.

¹⁰⁷ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*.

the tumultuous 1790s and early 1800s, the French invasions of the German states prompted the “connection between the definition of ‘self’ and ‘other’ on the basis of an essentialist national character on the one hand, and ‘colonial’ competition on the other.”¹⁰⁸ Intellectuals such as Kant and Herder had already engaged with the exotic other vicariously through the colonial empires of Spain, Britain, and France, and had created a hierarchical “Great Chain of Being.” During the French occupations, however, German intellectuals came to associate themselves with “other colonized and oppressed peoples.”¹⁰⁹ In order to negotiate such a feeling of oppression and a desire to be masters themselves, “political weakness translate[d] into moral strength,” as German intellectuals took the moral “high-ground,” criticizing the depravity and violence of the Spanish, British, and French empires. These same intellectuals asserted further that the Germans themselves were the only Europeans innocent of such cruelty and sloth and were therefore best-suited to complete the civilizing mission.¹¹⁰ The similarity in the circumstances between Zantop’s eighteenth-century intellectuals and the crisis in subject constitution during the decolonization forced on the Germans as a result of the Great War shows how Zantop’s analytical framework also proves useful for investigating continuity in German thought on colonialism and civilization across the caesura of the First World War.

There is more to the story of German post-Versailles colonial irredentism than simply bitterness over the loss of the colonies and a desire to see them returned by any means necessary. Here, it is useful to consider Quentin Skinner’s theories on textual analysis, in which the assessment of how political language translates into political action

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 94.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 95.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 94-97,196-201.

is derived from the context of the period and a careful breakdown of what politically engaged authors intend to accomplish in writing a piece.¹¹¹ True, German colonial advocates fully intended to use their works as a means to see the colonies restored to Germany, and they continued to do so well into the 1940s, but this proved an unattainable goal. The intended illocutionary force, however, was not only to persuade other publics or other states to grant colonial restoration or restitution but also to establish claims to Germans' European status and identity. Albeit brief, Germany's colonial experience had fostered an imperially-constituted notion of national identity, much like the cases of Britain and France. Colonial Germans in the Weimar Republic, particularly those with a high level of emotional and intellectual investment in imperial status, were trying to preserve as much as possible of this triangulated identity—this imperially-constituted notion of the self—in the wake of the Treaty of Versailles. In order to maintain imperial/national conceptions of the “self,” these individuals argued against the idea of “Colonial Guilt” and reasserted German Europeanness in a world where empire was an essential component of this identity. They engaged with the new political vocabulary of empire and civilization made normative by the Allies and the League, using it in conventional ways to legitimate past actions and to reassert German Europeanness as well as manipulating it to claim moral superiority.¹¹² Their arguments against “Colonial Guilt” can therefore be broken into three categories: (1) pointing to past praise of Germany's colonial record, (2) reconfiguring the relationships between the terms “violence,” “European,” and “civilization,” and (3) highlighting Allied hypocrisies and

¹¹¹ Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas.”

¹¹²Tully, “The Pen Is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics,” in *Meaning and Context*, ed. James Tully, 7–28, 13–15; Quentin Skinner, “Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts,” in *Meaning and Context*, 68–78; Quentin Skinner, “Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action,” in *Meaning and Context*, 97–118.

claiming to be the only true embodiment of the new ideals of empire. The intention of this threefold line of argument was to preserve imperially-constituted identifiers of the German nation in a post-colonial situation. The end result was a tricky negotiation of Colonial Germans' identity as a group. German colonial irredentists simultaneously claimed the status of victim alongside their former colonized subjects, and yet insisted they were separate from and more advanced than these groups. They demanded recognition of the word "German" as synonymous with the term "European", and yet also claimed moral superiority over the rest of European civilization.

Pointing to a More Positive Past and Refutation of Germany's Poor Colonial Record

The responses to accusations of Germany's 'unique brutality' as a colonial power throughout the 1920s were largely constructed by former German colonial officials. In their writings on Germany as a "postcolonial state," scholars such as Marcia Klotz and Jared Poley recognize the impact of decolonization and 'colonial guilt' on German identity constructions.¹¹³ Both scholars, however, favor an analysis of metropolitan intellectuals or individuals who had had little or no experience in the colonies or colonial administration. They point to works of fiction and linguistic analysis as a way to indicate the broad influence of decolonization and/or post-colonial thought on German identity. Although quite valuable in looking for thought and rhetoric relating to decolonization throughout German society, these works seem too quick to dismiss political figures, particularly former colonial administrators, out of what seems to be an acceptance of the earlier historiographic interpretation that bias and bitterness is all these individuals have

¹¹³Poley, *Decolonization in Germany*, 11-19; Klotz, "Global Visions: From the Colonial to the National Socialist World," 37-68; Klotz, "The Weimar Republic: A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World."

to offer. A sense of loss of purpose and respectability as a result of the colonies being forfeited at the conclusion of the war is evident, however, not only in the fictional works, letters, diaries and pamphlets analyzed by Poley, but also within the published works written by individuals who had devoted their entire careers to colonial service.

Heinrich Schnee, for example, former governor of German East Africa, makes a compelling case study of the renegotiation of identity during German decolonization. Born in 1871, Schnee was thirteen years of age at the foundation of the colonial empire. By the time he was twenty-six, he was employed in the Colonial section of the Foreign Office in Berlin. Not long thereafter, he received his first appointment in the colonies. At the conclusion of the First World War, Heinrich Schnee had spent half of his adult life in the German colonies, with seven years in the Pacific and eight in East Africa.¹¹⁴ Therefore, this was a man who, though born in the metropole and educated there, had spent a considerable portion of his life in the German colonies and/or engaged in the management of the colonies from Germany. After 1919, Schnee emerged as the most public voice of German colonial irredentism.

Theodor Seitz is another perfect example of an individual with a substantial amount of professional and personal investment in German imperialism. Seitz had served as governor of German Cameroon and, later, as the last governor of German Southwest Africa. Following his expulsion from Southwest Africa at the conclusion of the war, Seitz became the president of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (DKG, German Colonial Society) and the *Kolonial Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* (KoRAG, Imperial Colonial Working Association) and retained these positions within two of Germany's largest

¹¹⁴ Deputy Gov. in German New Guinea 1898-1900, Deputy Gov. in German Samoa 1900-1904, Gov. of East Africa 1912-1919.

colonial lobbies for most of the interwar period. If we are to analyze individuals with a strong sense of national identity understood in terms of empire, Schnee, Theodor Seitz, and others like them are prime candidates for study.

Although all German colonial officials were opposed to the notion of Germany's 'Colonial Guilt,' not all former officials were ardent colonial irredentists. One such official was Wilhelm Solf, former governor of Samoa who had served as Schnee's mentor during his early career in the Pacific. Solf, lauded as the ideal liberal imperialist by admirers both in Germany and abroad, opposed German colonial restitution and urged alternate courses for Germany to regain its civilized nation status. Despite such dignified opposition, many former colonial officials joined the chorus of Colonial Germans seeking colonial restitution. Heinrich Schnee and Theodor Seitz were the loudest and most formative of the voices in the political discourse aimed at reconstructing Germany's imperial "respectability." Less prominent and less prolific figures—such as Hermann Schlüpmann, a former *Bauinspektor* in Southwest Africa, or Duke Adolf Friedrich zu Mecklenburg, the last governor of Togo and vice-president of the German Colonial Society—chimed in at *DKG* meetings, in publications, and during government debates in favor of recovering the overseas colonies, but by and large these individuals repeated arguments already made by the most vocal colonial irredentist "giants," Seitz and Schnee.¹¹⁵ There are a number of factors that explain why these two men so wholly dominated the German discussion about colonial restitution and Germany's 'Colonial Guilt.' For starters, Seitz and Schnee were the last governors of Germany's largest and

¹¹⁵ *Für oder gegen Kolonien: Eine Diskussion in 10 Aufsätzen von Freunden und Gegnern des kolonialen Gedankens* (Berlin: Otto Stollberg, 1928); Herzog Adolf Friedrich zu Mecklenburg und Johannes Mildbraed, *Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der zweiten deutschen Zentral-Afrika-Expedition 1910-1911* (Leipzig: Klinckschardt & Biermann, 1922).

most heavily settled colonies. Both men had positions of power within the German colonial lobby after the war, each serving as president of the German Colonial Society and Colonial Imperial Working Association, with Seitz holding the longest term in these offices during the interwar period. Seitz and Schnee both had ties with German publishers, interested in their stories as the last governors and offering them numerous opportunities for writing and editing memoirs and editorial pieces. Schnee even managed to gain sympathetic ears in the United Kingdom, giving him the opportunity for translations of his works to be released in French and English by Allen & Unwin and its subsidiaries. Last, but not least, as a result of the marginal “success” the Germans had enjoyed under the military guidance of Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck in the East Africa campaign, Schnee attained a degree of celebrity at home as a “war hero” alongside the General—despite their differences with one another—in parades and public events aimed at boosting the morale of a defeated nation.¹¹⁶ So it was that these two men were able to presume to speak for German colonial revisionists as a block.

One of the key ways in which former colonial officials like Schnee and Seitz challenged Allied assertions of Germany’s dismal and gruesome colonial policies was to point to more ‘positive’ aspects of Germany’s colonial ‘spirit.’ Former governors injected their memories of and views on Germany’s colonial practices into the public sphere in an effort to erase the mark of ‘colonial guilt.’ What is more, these individuals also pointed to past praise of German colonization from citizens of Allied Powers in an effort to undermine allegations of Germany’s cruelty. They thereby sought to portray the indictments as a recent development fueled by the passions of conflict and of opportunistic territorial acquisition on the part of the Allied governments.

¹¹⁶ Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History*, 187-190.

In a concise essay of 1924 on the history of German colonialism, *Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen*, Seitz argued that Germany's longer history of colonialism should be considered when assessing the German colonial record. Colonialism, Seitz insisted, had formed part of Germany's character dating back to the Middle Ages. From the Crusades to the Hanseatic League, from Hohenstaufen to Hohenzollern, Seitz charted a revisionist history of Germany's colonial spirit that had driven Germans to spread Christianity, civilization, and industry to Southern and Eastern Europe, South and North America, Africa, and Asia. Seitz saw the drive to spread *Kultur* and Christianity through colonization as an inherent part of the German national spirit.¹¹⁷ The former governor further suggested that the successful colonial ventures of the English and the Dutch in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries should really be tallied in Germany's favor, as the world empires of these European states could not have been constructed without the help of "German blood":

If we follow the colonial history of the development of the Americas, we repeatedly come across the fact that the colonial power of the English and the Dutch was, for the most part, built with German blood. To give a few examples: In the mid-eighteenth century, three-fifths of the population of Pennsylvania was German. The first Bible to arrive in the Americas, in Germantown in 1743, was printed in Germany. Also, in the state of New York, a large percentage of the population was German. [...] Similarly, a strong German element can be found in South Africa [...] It was not too long ago that Administrator Hofmeyr,

¹¹⁷ Theodor Seitz, "Heft I: Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen," in *Koloniale Volksschriften* (Berlin: Kolonialverlag Sachers & Kuschel, 1924), 4-12.

who now under the Mandates System oversees Southwest Africa for the South African Union and currently seeks to eliminate all German-language schools from there, often admitted in public gatherings that his family had been farmers from Westphalia who had immigrated to South Africa in the eighteenth century.¹¹⁸

The “new empire” constructed from 1884 onward was, Seitz claimed, built not by a militaristic, expansionist, Prussian government, but instead by ambitious individuals—merchants and missionaries, farmers and friars, millers and miners—who had dreams and an aptitude for the honest hard work needed to spread civilization and morality.¹¹⁹ Seitz blamed the negative images of German colonialism that had been disseminated abroad on Germany’s petty party politics of the 1890s and early 1900s. It was on these internal squabbles over budget and policy, driven by desires for domestic political gain, he argued, that the Allied powers had found what he deemed tenuous evidence of their claims of Germany’s brutality in the colonial sphere.¹²⁰ Seitz insisted that, contrary to claims of mismanagement, German colonies had been thriving and well-managed on the eve of the First World War.¹²¹ In demanding restitution of the colonies that had been “stolen” from Germany, Seitz claimed that he and all Colonial Germans were doing nothing more than fighting for the continued presence of a “two-thousand-year-old culture” of Germans contributing to the development of the world through colonization:

We *Kolonialdeutsche* (Colonial Germans) [...] fight for a two-thousand year-old culture that founded the claims of our people to be active and equal participants in the colonizing

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 12-14.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 15-16.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 17.

¹²¹ Ibid, 20-21.

activities of the world and, as such, we will continue our struggle

[...] ¹²²

Former colonial governor Heinrich Schnee, the most vocal propagandist for the return of Germany's colonies, called for all Germans to struggle against what he coined the *Kolonialschuldliüge* (Colonial Guilt Lie), in an analogy of the "War Guilt Lie."¹²³ Schnee argued that the Allies had not only stolen Germany's colonies as spoils of war, but had also attempted to rob Germany of its respectability through a "complex of lies" about Germany's immorality:

In presentation, these states [The Allies] did not describe the seizure of the German colonies as being influenced by a set of geopolitical considerations, but instead as being driven by moral considerations for the natives in an effort to free them from the alleged tyranny of the Germans and bring them into more favorable conditions. [...] This deception was hidden in a lie, or rather a complex of lies that can be collected under the name of the 'Colonial Guilt Lie.' It was stated that we Germans sought to militarize the colonies, that from the beginning we intended to use these colonies as launch-sites for the invasion of other nations, and, further, that we had forsaken colonial civilization, proving through bad native policy that we were incapable and unworthy of being colonizers.¹²⁴

¹²² Ibid, 23.

¹²³ Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History*, 186-189.

¹²⁴ Heinrich Schnee, "Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldliüge," in *Koloniale Volksschriften* (Berlin: Kolonialverlag Sachers & Kuschel, 1924), 20-21.

Schnee asserted that in response to the ‘Colonial Guilt Lie,’ Germans must not only seek the restoration of the colonies, but also set the record straight about Germany’s colonial past:

[In addition to seeking the return of the colonies,] something else is of the utmost importance: the struggle against the Colonial Guilt Lie. This hateful propaganda has introduced such a jumble of false impressions of our colonial practices into the public opinion of the world that it will now be difficult for the truth to win out. [...] These [bogus perceptions] must be surmounted; then and only then can the path be smoothed for our re-entry to overseas colonization.¹²⁵

Schnee tried to portray the positive aspects of German colonial practices in order to undermine the damning post-Versailles image of German colonialism. The charges against Germany, such as enslaving Africans and militarizing the colonies for war against Europe, he insisted were false. German colonial governance, Schnee argued, had put an end to the slave trade in Africa.¹²⁶ Schnee also enlisted physician Robert Koch’s efforts against sleeping sickness in East Africa, the establishment of hospitals for indigenes, and missions that not only saved the souls of “natives” through conversion, but that also educated Africans and gave them technical and agricultural training as evidence of Germany’s care for the well-being of their colonial subjects.¹²⁷

In an effort to cast Germany’s colonial past in a more favorable light, Schnee reminded his readers of the praise Germany’s colonial methods had received from the

¹²⁵ Ibid, 26-27.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 23; Schnee, *German Colonization*, 129-133.

¹²⁷ Schnee, “Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldflüge,” 24-25.

Allied powers before the war. He claimed that British citizens, when referencing Germany's efforts in East Africa, Samoa, and Southwest Africa prior to the war, viewed the Germans as comrades, even superiors, to themselves in the civilizing mission.¹²⁸ Schnee did not fabricate the admiration espoused by some British citizens for Germany's colonial methods. The praise he referenced, however, was likely neither as frequent nor as continuous up to the outbreak of the Great War as he suggested.

It is apparent from interactions between Bismarck, as well as later German Chancellors, and the British government over matters in the colonies and related naval policy that a sense of rivalry and fear of German involvement in Africa and the Pacific existed.¹²⁹ Still, well-known Britons had praised aspects of German colonial rule before and even during the war,¹³⁰ such as Sir Charles Eliot, Royal Commissioner of East Africa:

I will gladly testify to the cordial spirit of co-operation which the German authorities have always shown in dealing with questions concerning the two Protectorates [of British East Africa and German East Africa]. [...] ¹³¹ As might be expected, the scientific departments, which have been almost entirely neglected in the British possessions, [in the German colonies] have received great attention. Elaborate and costly experiments have been made, with a view of ascertaining what products are likely to prove a

¹²⁸Ibid, 21; Schnee, *German Colonization*, 62-73.

¹²⁹ As evidenced by Foreign Secretary Edward Grey's March 29th speech to Parliament in 1909 warning against the dangers of Germany's imperial and naval expansion.

¹³⁰ As Paul M. Kennedy has noted, the apparent divide between British contemporaries seen here could reflect the differences of opinion over German colonialism within the Foreign Office between Germanophiles and Germanophobes: Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: The Ashfield Press, 1980), 167-222.

¹³¹ Sir Charles Eliot, *The East African Protectorate* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), 185.

success [...] In this respect we [the British] are deplorably backward. [...]¹³²

While no great admirer of Germany's treatment of indigenous populations, the Reverend J.H. Harris, an English missionary, anti-slavery activist, and Liberal Member of Parliament, nonetheless argued that the Germans were better colonial masters than the Belgians or French, especially in regards to commerce and industrial education:

In the Gold Coast, the German Basel Mission leads the way with engaging vigour in the matter of industrial missions. The commercial section of the Mission includes industrial training institutes, and nothing could be more pleasing than the interest and energy with which the natives devote themselves to cabinet work, coach-building, and agricultural pursuits.¹³³

In comparing the position of natives in German Togoland with that of the Congo Natives, it must be borne in mind that the former are generally speaking fairly well off, and receive large benefits from the German occupation, whereas today the greater part of the Congo territory is in worse condition than when Stanley crossed it in 1877, and the natives themselves are completely impoverished.¹³⁴

¹³² Ibid, 257-258. Schnee references Eliot's work in *German Colonization*, 63-64.

¹³³ J.H. Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa* (London: Smith, Elder & Company, 1912), 284.

¹³⁴ J.H. Harris, *Present Conditions in the Congo* (London: Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, 1911), page 13 of the December 16 report contained in the text. Referenced by Schnee in *German Colonization* on pages 106-107.

If France and Belgium together could be persuaded to transfer the whole or the greater part of French and Belgian Congo to Germany, [...] they would individually be immeasurably the gainers, they would secure the peace of the world, and they would thereby add a luster to their names which neither time nor eternity could tarnish. [...] On the whole, both from the commercial and native standpoint, the Congo Basin stands to gain by a transfer to the German Empire.¹³⁵

Even the famed British journalist E.D. Morel, who had helped shed light on the atrocities in the Belgian Congo, defended Germany's role in Africa during World War I.¹³⁶ Morel's respect for German colonialism was even noted in his obituary, cut out of the British periodical *The African World* and saved by Theodor Seitz in his papers held by the German Colonial Society: "Mr. Morel was then [at the time of the Congo Crisis], as his written works testified, a great admirer of Germany's colonial work in Africa, and this admiration he retained during the war."¹³⁷

Schnee, Seitz, and other Colonial Germans marshaled evidence of Allied praise and past successes in "moral colonialism" in an effort to reverse charges of barbarism that had been leveled at Versailles. It was imperative for colonial officials to re-establish not only the legality of Germany's claims to its colonies, but also its moral standing as a civilized, European power. The insistence on claiming similarity to other Europeans in

¹³⁵ Harris, *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, 302-303. Referenced by Schnee in *German Colonization* on page 64.

¹³⁶ E.D. Morel, *The African Problem and the Peace Settlement* (London: Union of Democratic Control, 1917), 27-28. Schnee references Morel's works against British and Belgian colonialism, chiefly E.D. Morel, *Red Rubber: The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade Flourishing on the Congo in the Year of Grace, 1906* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), on pages 106 to 109 of *German Colonization*.

¹³⁷ BArch, R8023/529 (353), Clipping of article entitled "Death of E.D. Morel," *The African World*, November 15, 1924.

the colonial field was necessary if Colonial Germans hoped to reassert what might be called their “right” to empire and participation in the pan-European ‘civilizing mission.’ Respectability as a liberal imperial European power rested on colonial rule based in the economic and, if possible, the moral and civilizational development of colonized regions and peoples.¹³⁸ Although making the case that Germany had practiced ‘good colonial governance’ using examples of past accolades of economic and missionary successes was simple enough, former colonial officials had a much harder time answering specific charges of extreme brutality: namely, reconciling the excessive violence applied by German forces against indigenous revolts in German Southwest Africa, German Cameroon, and German East Africa with the ideals of progressive colonial rule espoused in the European ‘civilizing mission’ into which they claimed to be a participants.

A Record “Stained with Dark Blots”: Normalizing Violence in the Colonial Sphere

In challenging specific charges of Germany’s exceptional brutality embedded in the notion of “Colonial Guilt,” colonial advocates had to reassess violence perpetrated by Europeans against colonial subjects. Here, it is important to consider Gyan Pandey’s discussion of “routine violence”¹³⁹ as a means of exploring what forms and acts of violence are deemed justified and which are considered exceptional. In ‘civilizing’ rhetoric, an understanding of the colonial and the physical violence that is written into it was placed in the context of a “sacred” European civilization protected and advanced by

¹³⁸ Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism in Germany*, 51-59, 206-210; Finaldi, “Italy, Liberalism, and the Age of Empire”; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, “Particular or Universal? Historicizing Liberal Approaches to Empire in Europe,” in *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, 1–24; Fitzpatrick, Mehta, and Pitts, “Liberalism and Empire Reconsidered: A Dialogue”; Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, “Imperialism After the Great Wave: The Dutch Case in the Netherlands East Indies, 1860-1914,” in *Liberal Imperialism in Europe*, 25–46.

¹³⁹ Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 1-15.

these justified acts of violence. It solidified hierarchies and allowed for an 'elite' minority to dominate a subjugated majority. During decolonization, the definition of the "European" component of German identity continued to be rooted in this notion of imperial domination through "normalized" physical violence. When these very acts of allegedly "routine" physical violence were used by the Allies to deem Germany unfit for participation in the "civilizing mission", thus calling into question that nation's European status, Germans needed to reaffirm the "normal" character of even extreme physical violence in the colonial sphere to reclaim their European "self."

The normalization of violence as an inherent component of Europe's 'civilizing mission' in the colonies is seen most clearly in Schnee's post-war work, *German Colonization Past and Future: The Truth about the German Colonies* (1926). In order to recover Germany's "respectability," Schnee took on some of the charges leveled against German colonial practices by the Allies and attempted to write off acts of extreme violence as necessary or typical of any colonial endeavor, even going so far as to compare German acts of violence to those perpetrated by French and British colonial governments in Africa and Asia. Schnee avoided detailed descriptions of any German atrocities, despite the exceptionally brutal treatment of the Herero and Nama of modern-day Namibia in 1904, the Abo and Bakoko of the Cameroons, the Konkomba of Togo, and the 250,000 to 300,000 Masai who were killed in the Maji-Maji rebellion of 1905-1907. He did, however, admit that these events occurred.¹⁴⁰ Schnee argued that these

¹⁴⁰ Blackshire-Belay, "German Imperialism in Africa: The Distorted Images of Cameroon, Namibia, Tanzania and Togo", 242; James Gibson and Jamie Monson, eds., *Maji-Maji: Lifting the Fog of War* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 1-30.

horrific acts were committed “thirty years ago” in a different age and that the offending parties had been chastised by the German government.¹⁴¹

Schnee justified these “episodes of violence” by rhetorically reducing the level of violence committed and shifting blame for the affair onto the colonized subjects themselves. He argued that the condition of the colonies prior to German colonization should be taken into account and compared Germany’s alleged inhumanity to the original conditions of a Hobbesian war of mutual destruction in Africa and the Pacific:¹⁴²

Previous to 1884 the colonies were savage countries where every man’s hand was against his neighbor and “war of all against all” was the rule. The native tribes were continually robbing and murdering one another. In many parts of East Africa the wandering nomads persistently made plundering inroads upon the peaceful agricultural tribes. Coming from the wild interior, these nomads would break through to the coast, destroying in their progress all the foundations and promise of an incipient civilization. On the other hand, the Arab slaving expeditions would invade the interior from the coast, creating fearful havoc. In the other German colonies in Africa, similar conditions prevailed. In German New Guinea cannibalism held sway and native hordes systematically raided one another in order to obtain human flesh. [...] What a different picture the German colonies presented at the outbreak of the war, after only thirty years of colonization! Peace and order reigned everywhere in the

¹⁴¹ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 101,105, 111.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 105, 111-112.

Protectorates. Robbery and murder from tribe to tribe had entirely ceased. The native went peacefully about his work.¹⁴³

To clinch his point, Schnee concluded this passage with the assertion that, “[i]t goes without saying that such an absolute change in the manner of life of barbarous populations could not take place without scenes of bloodshed between the native tribes which had hitherto dominated and their new rulers.”¹⁴⁴ The normalization of violence could not be more clearly stated.

In direct response to Allied criticism of specific instances of Germany’s use of excessive force, Schnee described both Germany’s suppression of the Maji Maji Rebellion in Tanganyika and the near extermination of the Herero in Southwest Africa as “little wars” in the colony that were necessary to maintain order. The “massacre” of German settlers by the Herero and the revolt of the tribes in German East Africa made it necessary for Germany to intervene, and Schnee asserted that such an action against such a threat to colonial order was by no means excessive.¹⁴⁵ In the Herero case, for example, Schnee wrote:

The Herero Revolt began with a massacre of all German settlers who happened to fall into the hands of the rebels. The Herero developed unexpected powers of resistance, so that the dispatch of considerable bodies of troops from Germany became necessary. They were defeated only after long and wearisome fighting, and it is true that a part of them fled into the sandy wastes, where they died of thirst.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 112-113.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 115-117.

The British Blue Book misrepresents the facts to such a degree as to make it appear that the Herero tribes had been persistently and cruelly oppressed by the German colonists and that the crushing of the rebellion had been a mere war of extermination. These charges have been completely refuted by the before-mentioned German White Book, which, nevertheless, does not attempt to conceal the fact that at times military methods were adopted in combating the revolt *which were not sanctioned by the German Government and were formally repudiated*. These measures may be explained, if not excused, by the bitterness occasioned by the massacre of the German settlers. Let it not be forgotten, however, that many a native tribe in the colonies of other nations has been almost completely exterminated.¹⁴⁶

Having already admitted to atrocities committed by the Germans, such as the actions of commanding general Lothar von Trotha in South West Africa, Schnee next needed to establish similarities with European powers if Germany's identity as a civilized nation was to be restored. Schnee attempted to make the case that every imperial power had such atrocities buried in its past:

Let us be honest, however, and admit that such episodes will always occur so long as "man's inhumanity to man" is a factor to be reckoned with. The record of every colonizing country is stained with dark blots, for the most benevolent colonial administration in the world cannot wholly protect all its black

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 117.

subjects against harshness and abuse. All that it can do is to prosecute delinquents with the utmost diligence and to see, as far as possible, that all evil elements are eliminated. That this was done by the German Government, especially in the years preceding the war, can be disputed by no one who is conversant with the actual facts.¹⁴⁷

Schnee did not turn the Allies' accusatory finger back on them and claim that violence committed at the hands of the French or British made them unfit to engage in colonial activity. Instead, he sought to mitigate Germany's violent colonial past through comparison to similar actions by other Europeans, such as English engagements with the Zulu, Afghans, and Iraqis:

Serious fighting was necessary before the Germans could enforce peace. But has this not been the case in every colony with similar population? The English who had serious battles with the Zulu Kaffirs in South Africa are scarcely entitled to blame the Germans for finding it necessary to fight the relations of these very Zulu Kaffirs in East Africa in order to keep order in the country. [...] ¹⁴⁸ There was the bombing of the Waziri tribesmen of an Afghan village of which the *Manchester Guardian* of June 23, 1923, wrote in a leading article headed "A Modern Atrocity." [...] More lately there was the bombing of the Iraq, facetiously described by the British Air Ministry as a

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 111.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 113.

“slight air action” in May, 1924, because a disaffected chief refused to surrender.¹⁴⁹

When writing on how “the French in the Western Sudan conquered the native chiefs by means of sanguinary battles, and are doing the same thing in Morocco to-day”, Schnee asked “can they [the Allies] blame the German administration in the Cameroons for the fighting which was necessary in order to secure peace in that colony?”¹⁵⁰

These examples were not intended as damning criticisms, but merely as an attempt to depict the violence perpetrated against colonized subjects in the service of the European “civilizing mission” as routine and necessary.¹⁵¹ Schnee understood violence as a needed tool to maintain order against violence. By labeling violent acts committed by imperial powers in their colonies routine, Schnee attempted to rob the French and British of their moral high ground and reassert Germany as a moral, civilized colonizer, thereby affirming Germany’s European status. Schnee rationalized forms of violence that occurred at the hands of colonial Germans by normalizing physical harm to colonized subjects as something that is perpetrated by all colonial powers and that a state of anarchic violence is naturally inherent to the colonies:

I have no wish to exonerate or cloak any German who can be rightly accused of indefensible acts [...] Cases in which white men, pioneers of civilization, have degraded themselves by ill-treating the natives, fill the reader with regret and indignation. Such cases have occurred in the colonies of every nation [...] In order to find instances of similar violent outbursts against

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 114.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 115.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 113.

colonial dignitaries to those which were leveled in the German Reichstag against Karl Peters, it is necessary to recall the time of Clive and Warren Hastings in English colonial history. It was only upon the young German beginner in colonization that malice concentrated its attention in the twentieth century. The older colonial nations had all their dark “pasts,” but time had charitably called oblivion upon them.¹⁵²

Constructing commonality with acts committed by those who leveled moral accusations against Germany allowed Schnee to confirm his view that Germany’s actions in the colonial field could be seen as those of a European civilizer. So long as Schnee could portray Germany as acting like a European power, the European component of Germany’s imperially-constituted identity and notions of civilization could be preserved and Germany could not be set apart as a deviant or brutish colonial power.

In Defense of Wilsonian Self-Determination and Good Colonial Governance

After Schnee established that Germany’s colonial use of violence was little different from what any civilized European nation would have done to maintain control of its holdings—that is, proclaiming Germany’s moral equivalence with other European powers—he took the next logical step in responding to charges of Colonial Guilt and the terms of Versailles by reasserting Germany’s moral superiority relative to other Europeans. Prior to the late nineteenth century, this moralizing component of German identity was easy to establish, as the German states lacked a sizeable navy or position to

¹⁵² Schnee, *German Colonization*, 127-128.

engage in the slave trade or form an overseas empire. Since Germans were “innocent” of such bloodshed and depravity, they could effortlessly claim the moral high ground and assert that they would be better colonizers than their peers.¹⁵³ After the First World War, however, Germany had “blood on its hands.” There was no escaping that Germany had engaged in violent acts in the colonies. How, then, was moral superiority relative to other European colonizers to be created anew?

Just as Zantop argues for the case of precolonial Germans, after World War I political weakness translated into moral strength for Colonial Germans. Portraying Germany as an oppressed victim became one piece of the puzzle that enabled Colonial Germans to depict themselves as morally elevated above fellow Europeans. The other component was a shift in the political language of imperialism, which combined what Erez Manela has termed the “Wilsonian Moment”—the belief by many that a wide-scale, international application of the principles of self-determination was possible—with the redefinition of liberal imperialism’s standards of ‘good colonial governance.’¹⁵⁴ Through repeated claims of unfair treatment by their fellow Europeans and the appropriation and manipulation of League and Wilsonian rhetoric, Colonial Germans endeavored to rebrand themselves as ideal imperialists, more truly embodying the standards of the new Mandate System and Wilson’s new world order, rather than as ‘brutal colonial masters.’

Like other German minority groups who became “orphans of Versailles” as a result of the territorial cessions and terms in the peace treaty, Colonial Germans initially focused heavily on Wilson’s Fourteen Points to make the case that they had been the

¹⁵³ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 94-97; 196-201.

¹⁵⁴ Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 3-18.

victims of European hypocrisy.¹⁵⁵ The Treaty of Versailles, they claimed, was not what Wilson had promised when he called for “a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined,” since the German delegation had not been consulted prior to the Allied decision to strip Germany of its colonies.¹⁵⁶ Colonial officials contended further that the entire peace negotiations had been a violation of Wilson’s first point, which called for “open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view,” insisting that the creation of the League and the exclusion of Germany from the new Mandates System had been determined by secret agreements between France, Great Britain, the British Dominions, and the United States.¹⁵⁷ Finally, similarly to German minority groups such as Germans living in now French-controlled Alsace-Lorraine and Germans who found themselves residents of western Poland, former German colonial officials argued that Germany had also been denied the right of self-determination that appeared to have been promised by Wilson’s Fourteen Points.¹⁵⁸ Through the expulsion from their colonies, Germans, they argued, had been deprived of the opportunity to delineate their borders, denied the ability to preserve the national

¹⁵⁵ The phrase “orphans of Versailles” is borrowed from Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*.

¹⁵⁶ Woodrow Wilson, Fourteen Points Address, January 8, 1918, Point 5, as quoted in MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 493; Theodor Seitz, “Vorwort,” *Vierzig Jahre deutsche Kolonialarbeit herausgegeben von der Kolonialen Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* (Berlin: Verlag der Agencia Duems, 1924); Heinrich Schnee, “Der Raub der Kolonien,” *Vierzig Jahre*, 40-42; Seitz, “Heft I: Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen,” 21-23; Schnee, “Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldfrage,” 18-21.

¹⁵⁷ Woodrow Wilson, Fourteen Points Address, January 8, 1918, Point 1, as quoted in MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 493; Schnee, *German Colonization*, 60.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 161-162, 170, 211, 216-221, 228, 325-326, 461, 496; Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*, 9-31.

identity of Germans abroad, and had been robbed of raw materials and markets they viewed as vital to the success of Germany's economy, thereby making the conquered nation dependent upon those which had defeated it.¹⁵⁹

From this starting point, Colonial Germans could transform their claims of 'victimization' into a posture of moral superiority that drew upon contemporary events and manipulated the new political language that had given birth to the League, the Mandates System, and internationalism. Wilson's claim that lasting peace could only be guaranteed by an international body safe-guarding the right for all peoples to delineate and establish their own nation-states resonated across Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and colonized regions around the world. Anti-colonial nationalisms, mostly in their infancies in 1919, found hope in Wilson's pronouncements—hope for the end of imperialism through the principle of self-determination.¹⁶⁰ The German-trained intelligentsia of the Duala people of Cameroon who resided in a territory to be mandated to France asked for the right to pursue a "free state" where the rights and influence of European powers would be annulled and they would be permitted to elect their own chiefs and engage in open commerce. Barring true self-determination, the Duala asked that at the very least if they were to be "entrusted to the protection of one of the Allied powers, [that] the right of choosing such a power be conceded to [the Duala]."¹⁶¹ The delegates of the First Pan-African Congress in 1919 considered the First World War and its peace negotiations as

¹⁵⁹ Heinrich Schnee and Theodor Seitz, "Vorwort," in Arthur Dix, *Was Deutschland an seinen Kolonien verlor* (Berlin: Verlag der Werbestelle "Wieder Kolonien", 1926), 5–8; Heinrich Schnee, *Braucht Deutschland Kolonien?* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1921), 9-10, 16-18, 22-26, 31, 42; Schnee, "Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldfrage," 4-20; Seitz, "Heft I: Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen," 18-22.

¹⁶⁰ Erez Manela, "Dawn of a New Era: The 'Wilsonian Moment' in Colonial Contexts and the Transformation of World Order, 1917-1920," in *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Movements, 1880s-1930s*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmaier (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 121–150.

¹⁶¹ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, 43; Duala to Lloyd George, August 21, 1919, FO 371/3774, TNA.

an opportunity for Africans to break from colonial rule and form their own nation-states.¹⁶² Indian nationalists, such as V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, also hoped that Wilson and the United States would become allies in their fight for autonomous government and sent appeals to Wilson seeking aid in their struggles for self-determination.¹⁶³ Chinese nationalists similarly desired that a “world safe for democracy” include an end to the unequal arrangements forced on China by foreign powers through the Opium Wars with Britain, the suppression of the Boxer Revolt, and the Open Door principle that had been proposed by American and European business interests.¹⁶⁴ Eagerly, colonial subjects hoped they would be afforded a seat at the table as a new world order was formed.

It soon became clear, however, that self-determination was not considered a universal right, but one limited to only a few. The establishment of the Mandates System, while seeking to halt the spread of militant imperialism and re-emphasizing the role of colonizers as tutors cultivating ‘younger’ peoples toward civilization, changed the political language and the procedures of empire but left most overseas colonial holdings under the sway of their former masters. Empire as such, while making a greater show of its liberal roots, remained intact. As anti-colonial movements across Asia, Africa, and the Pacific railed against the limited application of self-determination, Colonial Germans saw an opportunity to designate themselves as the ‘leading victim’ and stand as representative of colonized and oppressed peoples everywhere. Once again, the chief German colonial irredentist, Heinrich Schnee, led the charge, arguing that Germans, like colonized subjects, had been denied the right of self-determination through a system of Mandates

¹⁶² Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 59; Adas, “Contested Hegemony: The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology.”

¹⁶³ Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 77-97.

¹⁶⁴ Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 99-118.

that was little better than annexation. Schnee asserted that the “native populations” of Germany’s colonies, much like the Germans themselves, were deluded into believing they would be granted the right of self-determination:

The Allies had raised a great hue and cry about the right of the peoples to ‘self-determination.’ Lloyd George repeatedly declared in public that the native chiefs and tribes would be consulted before a mandate over a former German colony would be granted to any nation....In reality, the partition took place without the wishes of the natives being seriously considered at all.¹⁶⁵

Schnee, purporting to speak for the colonized subjects as a fellow victim, demanded that their voices be heard alongside the complaints of the Germans who were also being “victimized.”¹⁶⁶

For Germany, Schnee saw self-determination as the right to hold and maintain an empire of its choosing in order to be equal in strength and prestige with France and Britain. For Schnee, empire, ruling over others, and participating in the “civilizing mission” comprised part of the right of self-determination for any respectable European country. For the colonized subjects, on the other hand, Schnee saw self-determination as the right merely to choose which imperial power would govern them, which he understood to amount to a right to choose Germany over the other colonial powers. These two self-serving definitions of self-determination likely represented one last attempt to hold on to the former imperial identity Colonial Germans had fostered prior to the war.

¹⁶⁵ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 58-61.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 129-160.

Schnee could not imagine a European nation without an empire or a colonized subject without a colonial master. What is more, Schnee was unable to imagine the former colonized subjects as having agency apart from an imperial power dominating them. Even without an empire, imperial identity had to be preserved. Schnee tried to mediate this contradiction between his imperialist mindset and Wilson's national self-determination by claiming that German interests and the interests of their former colonial subjects coincided. Schnee insisted that the former colonial subjects of the German Empire wished to remain under her rule so that they might continue to enjoy the "cultural advantages which German rule gave them in the past and can alone give them in the future."¹⁶⁷ He cited protests against the new Mandatory powers in Cameroon and a petition from Samoa to prove his point, further claiming—mendaciously—that natives did not revolt against German colonial administrations during the war.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, he demanded impartial polling of the colonies to allow the natives to "determine" if they wish to remain under German rule. He also insisted that Germany be allowed to self-determine as an imperial power once more to oblige "the wishes of the natives."¹⁶⁹

Pointing to Allied hypocrisy regarding self-determination, and constructing Germany as a fellow 'victim' alongside colonial subjects, became the cruxes by which Schnee could claim German ethical pre-eminence. The limits to self-determination, however, were not the only forms of 'hypocrisy' that German colonial officials latched onto to highlight Allied 'bad behavior' and argue for restitution of Germany's colonial

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 162-172.

¹⁶⁸ Schnee's insistence that the "natives" did not revolt against the Germans during the war is false. He conveniently forgot the earlier revolts in the colonies and threw up a smokescreen by pointing to a later date. It also seems that he is either unaware of, or willfully ignoring the fact that several of the indigenous peoples of Cameroon supported the British during the invasion of that colony.

¹⁶⁹ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 170-171.

empire based upon German moral superiority in colonial matters. Articles 22 and 23 of the League Covenant, as well as the accusations made at Versailles of Colonial Guilt against the Germans, produced a new political vocabulary for what constituted “good colonial governance.”¹⁷⁰ Within these novel “standards,” former German colonial officials found new verbiage for criticism of other empires’ colonial practices. Having been excluded from the imperial internationalism of the League’s Mandates System, these officials, like Zantop’s eighteenth-century German intellectuals, could use the foundational language of the League to call into question the morals and procedures of the Mandatories with impunity.

The matter of militarization of the colonies was one of the supposed double standards favoring the Allied Mandatory powers upon which Colonial Germans focused their efforts. At the peace summit, Germany had been accused of militarizing its colonies and recruiting colonial subjects for the purpose of invading other European nations. These accusations were largely the result of early twentieth-century fears and wartime propaganda that Germany was creating a “large native army” for use in Europe.¹⁷¹ Throughout January and February 1919, the Allied representatives at Versailles debated the issue of whether or not to allow future militarization of Africans by European powers, since it could disrupt the delicate balance of power they were trying to achieve in efforts to prevent another war. In drafting the League charter for the Mandates within the Treaty of Versailles, British, Canadian, and American delegates were initially in favor of a policy whereby Mandatory powers could “raise no native troops other than those required for the maintenance of local order” and called for prohibitions on the construction of

¹⁷⁰World Peace Foundation, *A League of Nations*, II, 487-489; Veronique Dimier, “On Good Colonial Government: Lessons from the League of Nations,” *Global Society* 18, 3 (July 2004): 279–299.

¹⁷¹ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, 29.

fortifications and the military training of Africans for reasons other than “police purposes and the defense of the [Mandatory] territory” in at least the B-Class mandates.¹⁷²

Clemenceau, however, objected strenuously and insisted that “France could not renounce the right of raising volunteers in the countries under its administration, whatever they might be” for defense of the “body of France.”¹⁷³ The issue remained in contention when Article 22 of the League covenant was finally written. Although Article 22 stated that Mandatories would be prevented from “establish[ing] fortifications or military or naval bases and [from requiring] military training of the natives,” its exception for “defense of the territory” remained vague and open to interpretation.¹⁷⁴ While Wilson understood “defense of the territory” to mean only defense of the awarded Mandates themselves, Clemenceau and the French government preferred to interpret the phrase through Lloyd George’s off-handed remark that “so long as M. Clemenceau did not train big nigger [sic] armies for the purposes of aggression” against other Western powers, recruitment and training of African troops would be allowed.¹⁷⁵

Schnee, putting his own self-serving spin on the dispute, pointed to “discussions” on May 5th, 1919, and insisted that the phrase “for other than police purposes and the defense of the territory” was an addition to the proscription against militarization that was intended as a loop hole for the Mandatory powers. This phrase in Article 22 was added and allowed to remain, Schnee claimed, in secret negotiation so that France might recruit former German colonized subjects as part of the occupation of Germany—a “police

¹⁷² Ibid., 29-33.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷⁴ World Peace Foundation, *A League of Nations*, II, 487-489.

¹⁷⁵ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, 33.

action”—should France acquire Mandates.¹⁷⁶ Schnee asserted, obviously with great bias, that France had even greater motivation to ignore President Wilson’s Fourteen points, particularly the passages against secret treaties and those pressing for self-determination, in order to take possession of and militarize Germany’s colonies and their populations against Germany itself in the occupation of the Rhineland. Although not the nation who instigated these machinations, Schnee contended Britain was just as guilty of violating civil conduct as France by being party to negotiations that allowed for the subversion of the “explicit principles of the League of Nations...into their exact opposite,” all in order to oppress Germany.¹⁷⁷

Schnee was not alone in reversing Allied accusations of Germany’s alleged plans to invade Europe with an army of Africans by pointing to the Rhineland Occupation as an example of the Allied militarization of Africans against Germans. Colonial Germans routinely enlisted the already contentious occupation of the Rhineland to kindle even more outrage about Allied policies they regularly depicted as hypocritical. Allied forces, comprised of units from Britain, France, Belgium, and the United States, began an occupation of the German Rhineland based out of Cologne in December 1918. The French forces involved represented the largest contingent of the occupation effort and would remain in place until the end of 1930.¹⁷⁸ In addition to French nationals, the French occupation included tens of thousands of French African colonial troops.¹⁷⁹ In the press

¹⁷⁶ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 96-97. Schnee was obviously biased on this point; there was a change to the article, allowing for military recruitment in the Mandatories, but it is not clear what if any ulterior motives were at work in the negotiations.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 98-100.

¹⁷⁸ Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace. International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 4, 11-13, 70-82, 105-113.

¹⁷⁹ Iris Wigger, “The Interconnections of Discrimination. Gender, Class, Nation and Race and the ‘Black Shame’,” *European Societies. Journal of the European Sociological Association* 11, 4 (2009): 553–582. In addition to occupying several areas along the Rhine, including the coal-rich Saarland, in 1923 the French

and their own publications, Colonial Germans like other German critics belabored the use of African troops in the French occupation army, accepting, even hoping that the casual reader would assume these troops had been recruited in former German colonies when in fact, they hailed from Senegal.¹⁸⁰ Not only were the Allied Powers violating their own standards and engaging in the military training and deployment of colonial subjects, they were breaking a supposed “gentleman’s agreement” of European decorum whereby colonial subjects were not to be given arms and used against “white Europeans.”¹⁸¹ While this unspoken “gentlemen’s agreement” had been violated countless times in Europe’s colonial history, most notably in the First and Second Boer Wars, and despite the use of African troops in the European theatre during the First World War, the use of colonial troops on European soil was still perceived as taboo. Germans, in their propaganda efforts against the occupying forces, told stories of rapes of German women by French-African troops.¹⁸² Angry Germans regarded such encounters—which were presumably more often consensual acts rather than rape— and the mixed-race children born of these unions as violations of European racial and sexual codes and therefore yet another Allied

expanded the occupation into Germany’s industrial Ruhr valley in an effort to force the payment of reparations, sparking what is known as the Ruhr Crisis. See Chapter 4 of this work for more on the international consequences of the Ruhr occupation.

¹⁸⁰ Iris Wigger, “‘Black Shame’ - the Campaign Against ‘Racial Degeneration’ and Female Degradation in Interwar Europe,” *Race and Class* 51, 3 (2010): 33–46.

¹⁸¹ Schnee, “Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldflüge,” 6-7; German distaste for the use of African troops in Europe is not unique. Such views were ubiquitous in the First World War, immediately following it, and even at the outset of European colonialism. See Klotz, “The Weimar Republic: A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World,” 138-139. For period sources that deal with the issue of colonial troops used in the First World War, see Ernst Müller-Meiningen, *Der Weltkrieg und das Völkerrecht: eine Anklage gegen die Kriegführung des Dreiverbandes* (Berlin: Reimer, 1915) and Schnee’s own *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkrieg: wie wir leben und kämpfen* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1919). Schnee himself condones German use of colonial troops so long as their deployment is limited to the colonial sphere, but his tone throughout the work implies that even this is undesirable.

¹⁸² Fatima El-Tayeb, Patricia Mazón, and Reinhild Steingröver, “Dangerous Liaisons. Race, Nation, and German Identity,” in *Not so Plain as Black and White: Afro-German Culture and History, 1890-2000* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 27–60; Eve Rosenhaft and Robbie Aitken, *Black Germany. The Making and Unmaking of a Diaspora Community, 1884-1960*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 161-192, 194-230.

affront to Germany's status as a "European nation."¹⁸³ Schnee, Seitz, and other Colonial Germans argued that this practice was immoral and not only violated the standards of 'good colonial governance' established by the League, but would also undermine Europe's "civilizing mission" by giving colonized subjects an opportunity to see a European group—in this case the Germans—as weak.¹⁸⁴

Jared Poley, in his book on Weimar notions of colonial loss and occupation, finds a similar rhetoric of victimization and fear that the "civilizing mission" was in jeopardy among other, more thoroughly metropolitan thinkers. His sources, such as Paul Rühlman and Arthur von Wrochem, led him to conclude that Germans felt an "inversion" of colonialism as a result of the occupation of the Rhineland by French African troops, with both Africans and Frenchmen as colonial masters of the Germans. The most extreme version of this, Poley writes, was a fear that Africans would one day make use of the training they had received during the suppression of Germans in the Rhineland to conquer and colonize all of Europe.¹⁸⁵

However, Schnee and other German colonial officials were cut from a different cloth than the intellectuals Poley analyzes. Their fears and arguments do not fit nicely into the model of "inverted colonialism." These former officials were neither willing nor capable of conceiving of the African "Other" as their colonial master. Schnee and others

¹⁸³ Susann Lewerenz, "'Loyal Askari' and 'Black Rapist' --Two Images in the German Discourse on National Identity and Their Impact on the Lives of Black People in Germany, 1918-1945," in *German Colonialism, Race, the Holocaust and Postwar Germany*, ed. Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (New York: Routledge, 2011), 173–186; Christian Koller, "Von Wilden aller Rassen niedergemetzelt". *Die Diskussion um die Verwendung von Kolonialtruppen in Europa zwischen Rassismus, Kolonial- und Militärpolitik 1914–1930* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001), 201-204, 207-262, 284-335, 370-379; Wigger, "The Interconnections of Discrimination. Gender, Class, Nation and Race and the 'Black Shame'"; Wigger, "'Black Shame' - the Campaign Against 'Racial Degeneration' and Female Degradation in Interwar Europe." For more on Afro-Germans and the Black Diaspora in Germany, see Peter Martin and Christine Alonzo, eds., *Zwischen Charleston und Stechschritt : Schwarze im Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 2004).

¹⁸⁴ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 99-100, 175-176.

¹⁸⁵ Poley, *Decolonization in Germany*, 177-248.

like him, rather than affording Africans the possibility of imperial agency, viewed African troops merely as tools of oppression used by another European power. German colonial officials were incapable of considering French Africans as colonial masters over the Germans. The goal of colonial irredentists was to preserve German imperially-constituted identity, not to destroy it by dismantling the image of the inferior “Other” through claims that Africans could and might one day rule Europe and, by extension, whites.

Schnee, for example, did not assign the blame for these actions to the “Africans” themselves. Much like the members of the *Frauenliga* (Women’s League) that Poley analyzes,¹⁸⁶ Schnee blamed the French and the British for occurrences of rape and violence in the Rhineland.¹⁸⁷ For Schnee, Africans were nothing but pawns of the French and the British and viewed as minors that could not be held accountable for their actions. For Colonial Germans, the French use of colonial troops in Europe disrupted the “civilizing mission” because the hierarchy of Europeans over all other peoples was belittled, fomenting rebellion against European colonial rulers who “also bleed red”—to borrow a term from studies of the late-twentieth-century period of decolonization. The French were perceived as occupiers violating the new international law through the use of colonial troops, not colonial masters or sovereigns—a seemingly small, but very important distinction.

Former German colonial officials tried to portray themselves as the “defenders” of colonized subjects in the new Mandatories. In much the same way as Germans advertised themselves as the champions of minority rights in Europe by appealing to the

¹⁸⁶ Poley, *Decolonization in Germany*, 151-177.

¹⁸⁷ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 60-61, 100, 162-172.

language and legal structure of the League of Nations, Colonial Germans pointed fingers at instances where the Mandatory Powers were exploiting indigenous populations in the colonial sphere in violation of the League's founding principles in Europe's "new imperialism." Throughout the 1920s, this Colonial German "defense" of the colonized took the form of a criticism of coerced labor in the Mandates.¹⁸⁸ Colonial Germans like Schnee and Seitz accused the Mandatories of violating Article 23 of the League Covenant, or at least its first two clauses, which required that all League member-states: "(a) [...] endeavor to secure fair and humane conditions of labour for men, women, and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend [...]" and "(b) undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control."¹⁸⁹

Schnee and Seitz both pointed to the deplorable conditions of indigenous groups in the new Mandates. Seitz argued that the territorial racial divisions in South Africa, though favorable in his view for preventing miscegenation, hindered economic progress. He contended that, when combined with "English Native Policy," the racial divides prevented the education of "colored peoples" to the level of "skilled workers." Seitz feared this lack of access to occupational education for natives would spread to the Southwest African Mandate if South Africa's policies were not modified.¹⁹⁰ Schnee for his part highlighted numerous instances of excessive taxation by the British and French colonial governments in both of the Cameroons and the East African Mandate, including the infamous "hut tax," which resulted in "Arab and Indian traders [closing] their shops,

¹⁸⁸ Scheuermann, *Minderheitenschutz contra Konfliktverhütung?*

¹⁸⁹ World Peace Foundation, *A League of Nations*, II, 489.

¹⁹⁰ Seitz, *England und Südafrika*, 185-188.

thereby causing serious difficulty in supplying the natives with provisions” and which “called forth unanimous protest both from Europeans and Colored inhabitants.”¹⁹¹

Hut taxes were a form of colonial revenue collection imposed largely in British possessions in Africa, though the Germans themselves had enacted hut taxes of their own in several colonies during their rule as well with similarly deleterious results.¹⁹² Hut taxes, collected per hut or household, required African subjects to pay a proscribed amount of a local colonial currency created by the imperial power, such as the rupee in East Africa. Not only did these taxes force African subjects to neglect indigenous precolonial economic structures and submit themselves to monetary systems based on rather weak currencies artificially set against the European currencies of their imperial rulers; such forms of colonial taxation also created a system of low-wage coerced labor. The only way to get the form of currency needed in order to pay the tax was for African subjects to work for the colonial state or settler plantations and industries which paid African workers in the colonial currency. In most cases, those who failed to pay the tax were fined, detained, and/or forced to work for the state, ensuring that even if an African subject refused to work for European colonists in order to acquire the needed currency, they would still be forced to labor in service of the colonial state.¹⁹³ Schnee, conveniently forgetting Germany’s imposition of a similar hut tax in East Africa during its period of rule, contended that this “exorbitant taxation” imposed by the British gave “the natives [...] less opportunity of earning money” to support themselves and damaged the

¹⁹¹ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 154-155. Schnee draws much of his condemnation of Mandatory rule in this work from his earlier book, *The German Colonies Under the Mandates* (Berlin: Quelle & Meyer, 1922), seemingly transferring large amounts of text directly from the previous publication. Schnee often “repeats himself” in his arguments throughout the 1920s.

¹⁹² Thaddeus Sunseri, “The War of the Hunters: Maji Maji and the Decline of the Ivory Trade,” in *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*, ed. James Gibson and Jamie Monson (Boston: Brill, 2010), 117–148, 135.

¹⁹³ John Illife, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 131-133.

agricultural and industrial economies that the German colonial administrations had worked so hard to build up.¹⁹⁴ The French and Belgians, Schnee argued, had a long history of coerced labor and were back to their old ways as “natives under the French Mandate [...were subject to...] the [French] recruiting of laborers for undertakings outside of the territory.”¹⁹⁵ Serfdom, Schnee insisted, persisted in French tropical Africa and British Burma and Assam and in British East Africa and the East African Mandate, as indigenous peoples who refused to work on the railroads were arrested, detained, and fined.¹⁹⁶

The former governors argued that these abuses of authority—taxation, limiting vocational education, and coerced labor—were inhumane and promoted unsanitary conditions, unrest, famine, and disease, such as the sleeping sickness outbreaks in French Cameroon and East Africa.¹⁹⁷ As the Mandatories were “in violation” of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and the League, by Schnee’s account, tolerated this behavior, the erstwhile German colonial officials felt it “their duty” to defend their former colonial subjects and bring these immoral practices to light just as E.D. Morel had once opened Europe’s eyes to the “red rubber” of the Congo. German rule, he insisted, had never been so cruel, and had always brought economic prosperity, which they claimed the indigenous populations of Africa yearned for once again.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 155-156.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 142-143; Seitz, “Heft I: Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen,” 18-20.

¹⁹⁶ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 136, 143; Schnee, “Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldfrage,” 16-23.

¹⁹⁷ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 144-161; Schnee, “Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldfrage,” 16-27; Seitz, “Heft I: Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen,” 20-21; “Die Schlafkrankheitsepidemie in Afrika,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, March 1, 1926.

¹⁹⁸ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 136-143, 162-171; Schnee, *Braucht Deutschland Kolonien?*; Schnee, *The German Colonies Under the Mandates*; Schnee, “Heft II: Afrika für Europa: die koloniale Schuldfrage”; Schnee, Seitz, and Dix, “Vorwort”; Seitz, “Heft I: Zur Geschichte der deutschen kolonialen Bestrebungen.”

German Colonial Irredentism and its Limits

Former German colonial officials—such as Seitz and Schnee—were the loudest, but certainly not the only Colonial German voices in interwar Germany. They argued that the only way to undo the damage inflicted upon Germany’s imperially-constituted identity at Versailles was to restore the lost colonies to Germany, thereby reestablishing its status as a respectable, European nation-state. Colonial irredentists believed that if Germany could regain the colonies, either outright or as Mandates, Germans could once again aid in the work of Western society’s ‘civilizing mission’ as true Europeans. Throughout the 1920s, and in some cases well into the 1930s and 1940s, these officials would pursue a course of colonial irredentism as a means to re-establishing Germany’s ‘Europeaness’ and the rights of Germans to participate in Europe’s colonial activities. They would adapt, appropriating the legal parlance of the League and the Permanent Mandates Commission in their ‘moral’ criticisms of Mandatory powers and in their efforts to regain Germany’s colonies as Mandates within the new structures of international imperialism. Not all Colonial Germans, however, saw colonial restitution to Germany as the likeliest or even most profitable outcome of their use of and participation in the League’s bureaucratic attempts at colonial oversight in the Mandates System. Many, sometimes including other former officials, were focused not on the revival of Germany as a global-power, but instead looked to re-establish the European “character” of Germans as a means of resuscitating their own careers and lifestyles in the colonial sphere by whatever means, whether by international law, treaties, or opportunities provided by the League and the Mandatories. Their stories, and the competition with and pressure from restitutionists that they faced in the years surrounding the Locarno Treaties, will be explored in the later chapters of this work.

Chapter Two

“O Afrika, Meine Seele ist in dir geblieben”:

Heimat and Citizenship for German Settlers in the 1920s.

O Afrika,

Meine Seele ist in dir geblieben,

und der Rest meines Ich's

dürstet

nach dir,

nach deiner Natur und deinen Menschenkindern,

nach deiner fernen Weite

*und nach deinem Frieden.*¹⁹⁹

—From a poem, *Afrika, du Land der großen Kraft!*, of unknown

authorship quoted in

Um Ostafrika: Erinnerungen von Charlotte und Ludwig Deppe, 1925

¹⁹⁹ Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika: Erinnerungen und Erlebnisse von Charlotte und Ludwig Deppe* (Dresden, 1925), last stanza of epigraph “Oh Africa/My soul still remains in you/ And the rest of me/ Thirsts/After you/ After your natural wonders and your human children/ After your far-away vastness/And after your peace.”: This memoir is divided into two parts. The first part is authored by Charlotte and recounts the entirety of their stay in Africa while the second part is authored by Ludwig Deppe and focuses almost exclusively on the experience of the First World War. When citing, I will refer specifically to the author(s) responsible for the quote and/or information, be it Charlotte, Ludwig or both Deppes. Author’s Note: German-language poetry will always be quoted in its original form with my translation in the footnotes. Texts quoted in German are shown here as they appear in the documents without any correction of grammar or spelling errors that appear in the originals. All other texts in German will be quoted in my own translation unless otherwise noted.

On 30 April 1925, the English-language periodical *East Africa* published a letter to the editor from a German East African repatriate. It reads:

Dear Sir,

Regarding your periodical *East Africa*, I should be greatly thankful if you could send me certain information. Several friends and I have applied for permission to enter Kenya. We wish to settle as farmers and planters in the district of Eldoret.

Can one obtain land and is a title obtainable though one is still a German? How high are the prices of land and what are the conditions of payment? How much can one obtain? Is the land already surveyed and can one chose such for oneself for agricultural and stock raising purposes? Are horse sickness and tstsyes prevalent in the Eldoret district?

[...]We are five families with eight children. Is it advisable to travel from London outwards and how much is second class passage to Mombosa?

Is the climate of Eldoret healthy and free from malaria? Can you with good conscience advise us to take with us children of four years of age? How soon can one become naturalized and what conditions have to be fulfilled? We are seeking a new and enduring existence for our children forever.

I was a farmer and a planter in German East Africa and perhaps you can sympathize with the yearning I have to own once more a threshold of my own and shake off the filth of this

place [Germany]. Our children shall not grow up in this
Nation!²⁰⁰

The editor, noting that the paper had not printed the plaintive German's name to spare him from retribution for his lack of patriotism, informed his readers that this letter was a perfect example of the "peculiar mentality of the German." In reply, he had only this to say:

It is significant that Germans invite information on so many matters of practical importance, and it is flattering that they have chosen Kenya as their future home. East Africa, however, has no use for German settlers, even though they be determined that their children not grow up in the land of their own birth. Eldoret can well do without five German families with eight children!²⁰¹

In his rather pithy response, the editor was correct in one thing—Germans who had lived in Africa for any significant amount of time were determined that their children not grow up in Germany. As far as these former settlers were concerned, the Germany of the 1920s was not the land of their birth. The above letter expresses what many German settlers—both those who had been expelled and those who remained in Africa—felt about the Weimar Republic, and even about the German nation-state in its European confines more generally. Africa, not Germany, had become for these individuals the true repository of "Germanness," and they devoted all of their energies toward finding ways of regaining the African *Heimat* they knew and cherished.

²⁰⁰ BArch, R8023/29 (112-113), "Editorial: The Peculiar Mentality of the German," *East Africa*, April 30, 1925.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

Settlers separated their understanding of “Germanness” from Germany in two ways: location and citizenship. In their view, “Germanness” was a “spirit” or an “ethic”—a set of traits that could be cultivated anywhere and that had been refined to their purest state in the harsh environs of Africa, not in the metropole. These *Kolonialdeutsche* viewed themselves not as prodigal sons and daughters or “lost Germans,” as many in the metropole saw *Auslandsdeutsche* (“Germans abroad”). Instead, *Deutsch Afrikaners* (German Africans)—as they now called themselves in their memoirs—believed they were the only true embodiment of a “Germanness” that had disappeared from Germany proper long ago. If “Germanness” was no longer tied to the geographic confines of a now truncated German state, then German citizenship was also dispensable for individuals to consider themselves “German.” As the anonymous letter above indicates, many former settlers, both those who had been repatriated and those who remained in Africa in the new Mandates controlled by Britain and South Africa, sought naturalization in other European empires or petitioned the new international system in hopes of autonomous rule for a German-African state that would answer only to the League of Nations itself. Like Pieter Judson’s ethnic communities in the Habsburg borderlands and Tara Zahra’s “nationally indifferent” Germans in the Bohemian lands, German settlers in and from Africa mercurially adapted their understandings of nationality in pursuit of their own self-interests.²⁰²

In this chapter, I analyze the ways in which the colony became the preferred locus of German identity for civilians who had lived in Germany’s largest settler colonies, German East Africa and German Southwest Africa. In the first section, I focus on

²⁰² Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006). See also Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*.

memoirs of repatriated settlers who spent seven years or more in East Africa in order to demonstrate how the colony became a site of memory that served as a foil to what they viewed as the decaying German nation in Europe. Narratives of individuals from the German settlements of Morogoro, Tanga, Iringa, and Dar-es-Salaam feature in this section, offering a balance of interior and coastal settings. The sample includes male and female settlers, taking into account a number of occupations and varying durations of settlement in the colonies. For comparison, I also examine the experience of the Germans who were allowed to remain in the Southwest African Mandate under South African rule. Here, I tell the story of how Southwest African Germans fought, not for restitution to Germany, but for independent self-government within the strictures of the Mandate System. A key component of this struggle consisted of new notions of citizenship that emerged from engagement with the League of Nations, South Africa and the Weimar Republic as a result of an international diplomatic squabble that would become known as the Naturalization Crisis of the 1920s.

Longing for “Home”: *Heimat* and Memory among German East African Repatriates

Without position, without money, often enough without shelter
for himself and his family, he [the former settler] starved,
hungered and froze. The [European] homeland had nothing to
offer him.

–Carl Friedrich, *Umkewe: Erlebnisse und Erinnerungen aus
Deutsch Ost-Afrika*. 1925²⁰³

²⁰³ Carl Friedrich, *Umkewe :Erlebnisse und Erinnerungen aus Deutsch Ost-Afrika* (Leipzig, 1925), 263.

On 27 February 1885, the German explorer Carl Peters petitioned the Imperial German government to incorporate the portion of eastern Africa we now know largely as Tanzania, plus sections of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi within the German colonial empire. His efforts met with success. Gradually adding more territory in 1889, 1890, 1905 and 1906, German East Africa came to encompass 997, 000 square kilometers, an area twice the size of the Imperial German metropole at the beginning of the First World War.²⁰⁴ Often dubbed the “German India,” the colony exported a range of exotic and luxury goods to the metropole, including cotton, coffee, cocoa, rice, bananas, pineapple, peanuts, sorghum and sesame.²⁰⁵ German East Africa was also home to the second largest settler community within the colonial empire, outranked only by German Southwest Africa, with a population of over four-thousand Germans, of which women comprised a fourth.²⁰⁶ Some of these individuals had spent decades residing on African soil by the time the First World War broke out in Europe. During the war, many East African Germans, both military and civilian residents, found themselves fighting one of the longest guerilla conflicts in history, led by General Lettow-Vorbeck. After being expelled from the colony by its new British and Belgian masters, these Germans from Africa were forced to “return” to a Germany unsure of its own identity and facing destitution. These individuals who had in East Africa, as Wilhelm Rothhaupt put it,

²⁰⁴P. Sprigade and M. Moisel, ed. *Deutscher Kolonial Atlas mit Illustriertem Jahrbuch herausgegeben auf Veranlassung der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft* (Berlin, 1914), 30.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 31-33.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 30.

“found their homeland,”²⁰⁷ remembered Africa as the site of a truer and longed for *Heimat* for the German nation, superior to the Weimar Republic they now inhabited.

In *Postcolonial Germany*, Britta Schilling argues that Colonial German memoirs in the 1920s served as a “textual monument to the past” and that the “need to memorialize and monumentalize German experiences in Africa stemmed from the fear that the actual era of German colonialism was over.”²⁰⁸ Grouping travel accounts, soldiers’ and officials’ works on their wartime experiences, and settler memoirs under the contemporary terms *Afrikabücher* (Africa books) and *Kolonialbücher* (Colonial books), Schilling argues that these interwar works represented a form of “collective memory” intended to “spread the experiences of a select few—German settlers in Africa—throughout more of German society [in order to] foster a common sense of belonging—both in the sense of Germans belonging to Africa and Africa belonging to Germans.”²⁰⁹ Schilling insists that these “Africa books” represented not only the personal memory of their authors, but also Germany’s collective consent on how to remember the colonial period.²¹⁰

Schilling is correct in asserting that published travel accounts of Africa and Colonial German memoirs were, on some levels, intended to raise awareness of the colonial experience in Africa and enlist political support for the plight of repatriated “German Africans.” I would argue, however, at least in the case of German settlers, that individuals involved in the production of German colonial memory were not as interested in granting metropolitan Germans a share in their sense of ownership of German Africa.

²⁰⁷ Wilhelm Rothhaupt, *Habari: Von Schwarzen und Weißen Afrikanern* (Stuttgart, 1925), v-vii.

²⁰⁸ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 15-40.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

Repatriated Colonial German settlers in search of ways to cope with the loss of their African homes did not attempt to merge their unique experiences with those of the metropolitan Germans to form a universal community of national memory, but instead employed their memories of German Africa to distinguish themselves from their European co-nationals. In many instances, settler memoirs from the interwar period served as outlets for criticism of the European notion of German collective identity and relocated the values, structures, and perceived virtues of German ethnicity to a distinct colonial community in a new African *Heimat*.

Heimat, roughly translated as “homeland,” is often understood by scholars as the German nation as imagined through the lens of local experience and memory. The concept has been used for regional analysis in German studies as a way of grappling with the diversity of formerly independent territories that continued to exist in the German imaginary, and in German federal structures, long after 1871. Such local lenses also emerged in the German colonies in far-flung Africa, though settled thirteen years after unification and only housing moderately-sized German populations for thirty years. To grasp the “post-imperial” colonial variant of *Heimat*, certain modifications must be made to Alon Confino’s understanding of the term in the case of Württemberg.²¹¹ Rather than the national identity becoming the repository for a *Heimat* that was understood as historically deep and local, the locality of the colony becomes the site of memory for an idealized national *Heimat*. For Colonial Germans, the nation, as it had been understood when it was an imperial power, no longer existed in Germany and a different, more tenable understanding of imperially-constituted national identity needed to be

²¹¹ Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997).

constructed. Former settlers seeking to come to grips both with the destitution they found in interwar Germany and their longing for homes and property in lost colonial holdings substituted a mere twenty to thirty years of experience for long spans of history. Similarly to the way in which Confino's Württembergers invoked their past to create the notion of *Heimat* as a way to accept the unified "German nation," former German East African settlers co-opted the history of Imperial Germany and its ideals and deposited them under a colonial *Heimat* they created.

Disdain for the Imperial German and Weimar states, gender constructions, the European "civilizing mission" and the "unique" environmental circumstances faced by African Germans combine in the creation of an image of East Africa as a site where "Germanness" could flourish in ways not possible in the metropole. Though this could be considered a typical frontier phenomenon, there is more at stake in the case of former German settlers' memories of their colonial 'homeland.' Their understandings and portrayals of an East African *Heimat* in their memoirs indicate that the *Heimat* concept is not only a way of reconciling centuries of political and cultural difference in the "mirror" of the national that crystallized after unification. Rather, similar in fashion to the *Freikorps*' grandiose plans for a German Baltic State in 1919, *Heimat*, in its post-imperial context, was adapted and employed to distance a locality from the nation. *Heimat* was used to assert the remembered superiority of localized identity conceptions as a viable alternative for regeneration of the national idea.²¹² East Africa, a *Heimat* with

²¹²A similar sense of detachment of a localized identity to create a regenerative alternative to the running national narrative in Germany can be found in the *Freikorps* attempts to establish a Baltic German state in 1919 as described in Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*, 45-70. Unlike Sammartino's "Baltic Germans," however, East African settlers did not forward claims of reviving and protecting "lost" German communities that had been "newly discovered" during the First World War nor did they try to maintain Germanness as something unique or confined to Eurasia.

only a generation of memory to draw upon, became a nostalgic remedy for frustrations and fears surrounding the recent defeat, blurring gender lines, and petty politics.

Metropolitan Mismanagement

The memoirs of repatriated colonial Germans provide multiple examples where the lost colony and not the European state becomes the site of an idealized *Heimat*. Some of the clearest moments occur in the sections of memoirs regarding the management of the colony's infrastructure and defense. Albrecht Prüße, a prominent member of East African society heavily involved in the mining of mica, for example, remembered the imperial German state as horribly inefficient and inept in providing for the welfare and protection of its citizens abroad during the twenty years of his settlement in the colony.²¹³ Writing in the 1920s, it is possible that Prüße's and other settlers' "memories" of a mismanaging metropole were feeding off of the rampant anti-governmental sentiment of the Weimar period. What is striking, however, is that settlers did not view the stereotypical German characteristics of efficiency, military prowess, and industrial development as belonging to Germany's European past, as so many of their contemporaries argued. Instead, former German East Africans awarded these attributes of German identity to a self-reliant German East Africa engaged in the "civilizing mission" where these values came to their greatest fruition.

Infrastructure, both for transportation and communication, is one of the key areas where settlers viewed the metropolitan state with derision and the local colonial

²¹³Albrecht Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre Ansiedler in Deutsch Ost-Afrika* (Stuttgart, 1929). *Der Glimmer* is the German word for "mica." Mica, a group of various silicate minerals, was—and remains—an important component in the production of plastics and electrical starters and insulation. It is relatively rare in Europe, hence the need for the mining of the material in the *Glimmerwerke* of Africa, where the mineral is more abundant.

community as its foil. In 1900 Prüße was, according to his memoir, shocked that after fifteen years in East Africa, the imperial government had not constructed a far-reaching network of telegraph lines between Dar-es-Salaam and the more remote regions of the colony for the major caravan routes:

One thinks about [the condition of the colonies] today: For fifteen years, Germany had a colony that did not possess telegraph connections between even its most important stations along the main caravan routes. Such a state of affairs [reportedly] existed, of all places possible, in a German colony!²¹⁴

This “embarrassment” made it difficult to construct the railroad system in the colony and colonial officials, settlers, and native workers were, as a result, slowed in their efforts to create the transportation network which served as a supply line for settlements in the colonial hinterlands. The extraction of natural resources from the mines and plantations of interior regions, resources that coastal trading cities like Dar-es-Salaam depended upon for their economic prosperity, was also hindered by the lack of sufficient transportation.²¹⁵ The metropolitan government, according to Prüße, had also neglected building roads, even in the burgeoning metropolis of Dar-es-Salaam, making automotive transportation of goods and people difficult even in the most Europeanized sector of the colony.²¹⁶

Difficulties in transportation to and from settlements in the colony are confirmed in accounts by Ludwig and Charlotte Deppe, a doctor and his wife who settled in Tanga

²¹⁴ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 19.

²¹⁵ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 11, 72-93.

²¹⁶ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 114.

in 1913, and Heinrich Langkopp, a self-proclaimed fortune-seeker from Hanover who settled first in South Africa and then relocated to Dar-es-Salaam after his participation in the Second Boer War, finally establishing a homestead in Iringa.²¹⁷ Ludwig Deppe complained that, despite the East African colony being twice as large as the Imperial German state, only two train lines were in service in the vast territory—a single East-West line and one North-South.²¹⁸ To get to their “*neue Heimat*” in Iringa, the Deppes could not rely solely on German transport from Dar-es-Salaam. They were advised instead to make port in British East Africa near Mombasa and take the British Uganda line to a destination where they could make it to Tanga by wagon. Charlotte insisted this hardship was made all the more frustrating due to arrogant Englishmen who insulted Germans during their journey.²¹⁹ Langkopp depicted most of his travel to and from the interior of the colony as done on horseback or by wagon, even when making the long trek of over five hundred kilometers from Iringa to Dar-es-Salaam, where he picked up his mail-order bride in 1911.²²⁰

In sharp contrast to the metropole’s negligence regarding communication and transport in the colony, settlers recalled the entrepreneurial spirit of German settlers as *Deutschtum* incarnate. In response to the inability to transmit information and news within German East Africa, settlers and corporations took it upon themselves to construct telegraph and heliograph lines.²²¹ A printer took the gamble to bring a moveable type

²¹⁷Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*; Heinrich Langkopp, *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas: Was ich erstrebte, erlebte, erlitt* (Dinkelsbühl, 1929).

²¹⁸Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 159.

²¹⁹Charlotte Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 7-10.

²²⁰Heinrich Langkopp, *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas*, 40-50, 52, 57-64.

²²¹Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 13-14.

machine to the colony, thus founding what Prübe remembered as the first newspaper in the colony, the *Deutschostafrikanische Zeitung*:

It was an occurrence of the first order when Dar-es-Salaam received its first, proper newspaper. The “*Deutschostafrikanische Zeitung*,” as the undertaking was named, owed much of its genesis to the efforts of the capable and well-loved Governor v. Liebert.²²²

Despite the financial risks involved in importing the equipment and setting up the paper, his efforts were well-rewarded. Prübe claimed that by 1899, the colony’s first “true newspaper” had achieved a readership of 1200, with 397 European subscribers in Dar-es-Salaam alone.²²³

Heinrich Langkopp asserted that German settlers had made the colony habitable and wealthy through “hard work,” improving its meager infrastructure by establishing plantations, seeing to irrigation in arid regions, constructing cities and building harbors. By the end of the colonial period, settlers claimed that even Morogoro, a settlement further from the coast, had been transformed by German settlers’ hard work from a rural, wild landscape into a place of large homes, clean streets, and a bustling train station. This ingenuity in the face of adversity was what Prübe claimed to be a testament to “German industriousness and enterprise... a sight to behold.”²²⁴ The loss of these fruits of their labor to the Mandatory Powers was often bemoaned in settler memoirs. Langkopp and others lamented that the products of their intense German work-ethic were enjoyed by British, Belgians and South Africans after the Great War—individuals who had not

²²² Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 13-14.

²²³ Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 13-14.

²²⁴ Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 132.

earned such wealth with their sweat and tears and who were overtaxing the land with too many lazy settlers who did not know how to maintain the infrastructure or properly work the land.²²⁵

Settlers also insisted that, despite being faced with a shortage of supplies due to a poor infrastructure, colonial medical care rivaled the best then available in Europe, both for Europeans and the indigenous population:

The health-care facilities of Dar-es-Salaam were, at the time, for European and Colored alike, analogous to the perfection of the great European hospitals and the [medical] instruments were polished accordingly. Private physicians were not yet available, so civilians were handled by the same stalwart doctors who saw to the care of the German Colonial Troops.²²⁶

Prübe's own case of malaria, he exaggeratedly claimed, was the first seen in the colony in forty-three years.²²⁷ Resourceful German doctors, with limited resources or aid from the metropole and faced with the adversities of tropical ailments, were capable of providing phenomenal service. Charlotte Deppe claimed that, despite the dilapidated hospitals outside the capital that were ill-funded by the German government, individuals like her husband saw to the health of the colonial community with long hours and hard work as their only reward.²²⁸

In the East African *Heimat* remembered and imagined by colonial Germans, even medical care was claimed as something that industrious German settlers lacking proper

²²⁵Langkopp, *22 Jahren im Innern Afrikas*, 44-67, 119-122.

²²⁶Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 8.

²²⁷Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 8-9.

²²⁸Charlotte Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 9-10, 51-55.

training could capably manage if needed. Facing shortages of doctors, other colonial Germans would sometimes be enlisted to roll up their sleeves in order to help tame the savage diseases of Africa when aid from the metropole was remote. Wilhelm Rothhaupt described what he considered to be the ‘first rate care’ given not only to Europeans, but also the indigenous peoples, administered by well-meaning colonial Germans like himself. Rothhaupt claimed that, although treated in separate hospitals, Africans received the “benefits” of German medicine despite what Rothhaupt termed their “superstitious” apprehensions. His account of how he himself had clumsily removed a festering tooth from an African in agony would give twenty-first century readers cause to sympathize with nineteenth-century African trepidations about German medical care.²²⁹ For settlers remembering East Africa, however, untrained civilians as ‘deputized doctors’ was simply one more example of colonial-Germanic ingenuity contrasted with the ambivalence of the metropole to the difficult task of the “civilizing mission.”

Defense of settlers in the colony, from both external and internal threats, was yet another area in which the metropolitan state, specifically the *Reichstag*, was remembered as incompetent. Once again, settlers’ contempt for the *Reichstag* should be read in the context of the interwar period, rife with notions of a “stab in the back” and accusations of mismanagement of the military by the Imperial German government’s Supreme Army Command (OHL) towards the end of the war. The focus of settlers is not quite the same as that of their co-nationals, who often concentrated almost exclusively on the success of the German military on the Eastern Front of the First World War and the post-Versailles loss of the territory gained in Eastern Europe by the short-lived Treaty of Brest-

²²⁹ Rothhaupt, *Habari*, 35-41.

Litovsk.²³⁰ Settler memoirs instead emphasized the unique bravery of colonial Germans in multiple military engagements across the last three decades that they viewed as a testament to Germanness against the ineptitude of the metropole. Military prowess and endurance against overwhelming odds and an unrelenting environment were, it would seem, important parts of what it meant to be German—and were traits settlers saw as present only in those who had participated in the colonial theatres of combat. Three major conflicts are often referenced in settler memoirs as moments in which colonial Germans were self-reliant, having insufficient or no aid from Imperial Germany: the Boer War, the Maji-Maji Rebellion, and the First World War. Growing incompetence on the part of the metropole in each of these conflicts was viewed by settlers, in hindsight, as a teleology leading to Germany's humiliating defeat in the First World War and the loss of the empire and their homes.

Regarding the first of these conflicts, Prüße and Langkopp claimed the metropolitan government was too weak in dealing with the “dishonorable” British and their conduct in a vicious war against the Boers of the Orange Free State and South African Republic. Instead of the fears of *verburen* (‘Boerification’ of Germans) expressed by late nineteenth-century German colonialists, a sense of camaraderie with the Boers is prevalent in East African memoirs published in the 1920s.²³¹ Former settlers viewed Imperial Germany's refusal to engage the British more aggressively in the region as a sin of silence that left the British unchecked, allowing them to treat the Boers inhumanely.²³² Prüße claimed that colonial Germans also suffered as a result of the *Reichstag*'s stance of

²³⁰ Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*, 30-44.

²³¹ John Phillip Short, *Magic Lantern Empire. Colonialism and Society in Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 72.

²³² Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 16-18.

neutrality. He remembered that trade and transportation in German East Africa were interrupted by British patrols and blockades during the conflict. Although he did not portray German settlers in the area as participating in this war, he commended them for their fortitude in enduring the obstacles to their livelihood and travel resulting from Imperial Germany's inaction.²³³

Heinrich Langkopp, unlike Prüße, had experienced the Second Boer War firsthand. Living near Johannesburg at the time of the conflict's outbreak, Langkopp volunteered to fight alongside the Boers against the British. Langkopp described the brutality of the British during the war, their scorched earth tactics, the Boer women and children shipped off to the infamous concentration camps and the state of martial law the victorious British imposed on Johannesburg and the rest of South Africa that had once been claimed by the Boers.²³⁴ The British, however, were not the recipients of Langkopp's most searing criticism. The Imperial German state, by refusing to aid the Boers, had not only left the Boers defenseless against the ravages of the British forces, but had also doomed German East Africa. If only the German state had had the same experience and foresight as Germans in Africa and supported the Boers, Langkopp claimed, South Africa would not have been under the dominion of the British during the First World War. He believed that an independent Boer South Africa that had been assisted by Imperial Germany in its war against the British would have allied with German East Africa to defend it against incursions by the Allied Powers.²³⁵

The Maji-Maji Rebellion was the second link in what settlers often saw as the fateful chain of European ineptitude that led to the metropolitan government's failings in

²³³ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 17-18.

²³⁴ Langkopp, *22 Jahren im Innern Afrikas*, 27-39.

²³⁵ Langkopp, *22 Jahren im Innern Afrikas*, 23.

the First World War. Although Prüße admitted in his memoir that German colonial troops were sent to handle the rebellion in 1905, he claimed these soldiers were given no help from the metropole.²³⁶ In their memoirs, settlers claimed to willingly sacrifice much to board and feed German colonial soldiers. Although living off the locals with or without consent was a rather common practice for armies far from the metropole, settlers portrayed themselves as voluntarily offering their homes as barricades during the conflict to ensure that these “boys,” abandoned by the German government, got home safely to their mothers in the Fatherland.²³⁷ Prüße blamed the shortage of ammunition and the tremendous number of deaths, both of Germans in the colony as well as non-combatant Africans, on the *Reichstag*’s “shining colonial policy.”²³⁸ The disturbing pattern of mismanagement, which Prüße claimed to be to “the detriment of our colony and our Fatherland,” was, he insisted, a predictor of things to come in the First World War.²³⁹ Unlike the inefficient and cowardly metropole, Prüße depicted German settlers not only as supporting the troops during the conflict, but also as brave defenders of their homes and neighbors.²⁴⁰

Settlers remembered vividly the experience of the First World War—especially the loss of the war and time spent in British prison camps in Egypt and Dar-es-Salaam. For over a year, Prüße was held in the Maadi-Tura camp in Cairo. Here, Prüße claimed, many died of malaria for want of mosquito nets.²⁴¹ Prüße outlined further the horrors of

²³⁶ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 94, 97-103.

²³⁷ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 95-99, 102-103.

²³⁸ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 99, 101: “illustrious Colonial policy” [the tone is quite sarcastic in context].

²³⁹ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 101.

²⁴⁰ Hans Paasche, *Im Morgenlicht: Kriegs und Jagderlebnisse in Ostafrika* (Neudamm, 1925), 87-116 gives a detailed account of the Maji-Maji Rebellion. Written by a soldier in the conflict and republished in the interwar years, this account focuses almost exclusively on the period surrounding the uprising that occurred in 1907.

²⁴¹ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 258-259.

the constant sand storms and the limited communication the prisoners were granted to have with their families, only being allowed to send letters that said nothing more than “I am doing well.”²⁴² Through all of this, he wondered where the Imperial government was and why there were no petitions to retrieve the troops. He blamed the suffering of the German men and women in the camps on the metropole’s war and was shocked that Germany did so little to ease their plight.²⁴³ Insult was apparently added to injury when East African Germans heard of the Revolution in 1918/19. With the founding of the Weimar Republic, which many settlers—similarly to the new state’s metropolitan dissenters—saw as socialist, settlers were seemingly confirmed in their suspicions that Germanness in Europe had seen its final days. In his memoir, Prüße remembered that when he read of the mutiny of the German navy and the armistice with Britain and France, he was absolutely beside himself: “*Aber Treuebruch und Verrat im großen in Deutschland?*”²⁴⁴ It was not until November 1919 that men like Prüße and Langkopp, who had faced similar conditions in an unnamed camp in Egypt, began the long journey “home” to Germany to rendezvous with family.²⁴⁵ When these men arrived and embraced their families, they were happy to see their loved ones, but distressed that they would never be allowed to return to their lives in their African *Heimat*.²⁴⁶

The Deppes remembered their experiences of the war along similar lines, though the details diverged slightly. Ludwig Deppe’s memoir was exclusively focused on his experience in the war as a doctor enlisted to care for the troops. Faced with the carnage of war every day, Ludwig decried the massive lack of support for the troops from the

²⁴² Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 260.

²⁴³ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 260-261.

²⁴⁴ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 262: “Betrayal and perfidiousness at large in Germany?”

²⁴⁵ Langkopp, *22 Jahren im Innern Afrikas*, 77-79.

²⁴⁶ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 265-270.

metropole, suggesting that the German colonial troops, whites and *askari* combined, were outnumbered by the British by a ratio of one hundred to one, that their weapons were of an inferior grade and caliber compared to the British and that ammunition was a scarce commodity.²⁴⁷

While Ludwig was engaged in his medical duties following the troops, Charlotte Deppe was not sent away to the metropole, as Prüße's wife had been, to avoid the harsher realities of colonial theatre conflict. From 1916 to 1919, she resided in Dar-es-Salaam. There, her experiences can be equated to those outlined by Langkopp in the Second Boer War. In her memoirs, she referenced the constant shelling by the "cruel" British. She complained about the lack of military protection in Dar-es-Salaam due to the small forces in East Africa, which were reassigned for military duties elsewhere during the war. She also claimed to have vivid memories of the military occupation of the city by the British and the detention of German women and children under horrid conditions. Although not nearly as atrocious as the concentration camps of the South African War, Deppe's imagery of women and children interned in camps by a tyrannical British military occupation force would have pulled heavily on the heartstrings of readers who remembered the fate of the Boers.²⁴⁸ Charlotte also recounts that, after reuniting with her husband in Dar-es-Salaam in 1918, they had a year-long stay in Portuguese East Africa under a sort-of-quasi internment. Just prior to their forced journey back to Germany in 1919, the Deppes had a brief layover in British occupied Dar-es-Salaam. Here, they claimed to have observed a tyrannical martial law similar to what is described in Langkopp's memoir in relation to Johannesburg after the South African War. Most

²⁴⁷Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 157-160.

²⁴⁸Charlotte Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 51-99.

importantly, however, they remembered the German metropole as abandoning them to the horrors of war and British cruelty and both implored that the German *Volk* should not forget the courage and bravery exhibited by colonial Germans, the truer representatives of *Deutschtum*.²⁴⁹

Within these narratives of the Great War, East African settlers of German origin expressed more than just detestation for British war-time practices. The colonial Germans claimed they were not only facing the brutality of the enemy, but were abandoned by the metropolitan state. Some settlers accounts, in their anger and resentment of the *Reichstag*, are reminiscent of the “stab in the back” myth espoused by other Germans in the interwar period. Similar to the denial of defeat engendered in that famous complaint, settlers asserted that they had been winning the war in the colony and that Germans in Africa under the leadership of “heroes” like General Lettow-Vorbeck,²⁵⁰ survived extreme adversity with pride and fortitude. These claims, however, also run alongside the expression of a deep-seated belief that those Germans living in and managing the European state had not been and were not receptacles of the same Germanic diligence and industry found in Colonial Germans—a flaw that, in conjunction with the caprice of the Allies, many settlers believed had cost them their homes.

***Die Afrikanische Hausfrau* and .88 calibre Masculinity: Gender in Colonial Memory**

Over the last two and a half decades, scholarship on the colonial period of all European nations has suggested that gender is intertwined with imperial constructions of

²⁴⁹ Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 100-153, 384-386; Langkopp, *22 Jahren im Innern Afrikas*, 27-39.

²⁵⁰ Lettow-Vorbeck’s own memoirs, though not treated here, are also recommended reading for anyone interested in a military man’s sense of the colony as a site of memory. General Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck. *Meine Eringerungen aus Ostafrika*. (Berlin, 1926)

national and racial identity.²⁵¹ Lora Wildenthal has demonstrated that the German woman became incorporated in the nationalist myth as mother, wife and ally against the destruction of German culture caused by colonial miscegenation and distance from metropolitan influence. Despite being erected on a pedestal as a bearer of civilization to the colonial world, German women were not afforded any additional rights or privileges in the colonial sphere. In keeping with the new myth of the German *Hausfrau* (housewife), which emphasized German women's significance for racial and cultural purity efforts, colonial German women were not granted the same level of citizenship rights and sexual autonomy as their male counterparts. German colonial males continued to pursue sexual relationships with native women outside of marriage.²⁵² Still, the image of the ideal German woman as the guardian of German blood and bearer of German culture resonated with some settlers and gained wide acceptance in the metropole. According to Wildenthal, this image born of the colonial experience became so ingrained in the German sense of national identity that it survived the First World War and the

²⁵¹ For just a few key examples, see Nancy Reagin, "German *Brigadoon*? Domesticity and Metropolitan Germans' Perceptions of *Auslandsdeutschen* in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe," in *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 248–266; Krista O'Donnell, "Home, Nation, Empire: Domestic Germanness and Colonial Citizenship," in *The Heimat Abroad*, 40–57; Giulia Barrera, "Patrilinearity, Race, and Identity: The Upbringing of Italo-Eritreans During Italian Colonialism," in *Italian Colonialism*, ed. Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 97–108; Cristina Lombardi-Diop, "Pioneering Female Modernity: Fascist Women in Colonial Africa," in *Italian Colonialism*, 145–154; Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 183–204; El-Tayeb, Mazón, and Steingröver, "Dangerous Liaisons. Race, Nation, and German Identity," in *Not so Plain as Black and White: Afro-German Culture and History, 1890–2010*, 27–60; Hall, *Civilizing Subjects*; Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox, and Zantop, eds., *The Imperialist Imagination*; Clancy-Smith and Gouda, eds., *Domesticating the Empire*; Nancy Rose Hunt, "'Le Bébé en Brousse': European Women, African Birth Spacing, and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo," in *Tensions of Empire*, 287–321; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Difference-Deferral of a Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal," in *Tensions of Empire*, 373–405; Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*; Ann Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, 3 (1992): 514–551.

²⁵² Lora Wildenthal, "Race, Gender and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire," *Tensions of Empire*, 278–281.

Weimar Republic to be hijacked by the SS during Nazi rule.²⁵³ Thus, the German *Hausfrau* and *Kulturmutter* (cultural mother) had been inserted into the imperially-constituted metropolitan construction of national identity as a result of a colonial debate over the inclusion of racial and cultural purity as requirements for ethnic membership.

The German “housewife” is one component of metropolitan definitions of *Deutschtum* that settlers readily embraced in their memories of an idealized colonial *Heimat*, albeit in a nuanced fashion. The role of German women as protectors of racial purity is relegated to somewhat less importance in memories of German East Africa. “Racial purity” is played upon only indirectly in the memoirs, which gloss over miscegenation and do not at any time portray their understanding of German femininity as competing with African, Indian or Arabic models of womanhood for the attentions of German men. Also excluded from these interwar works is any mention of sexual relationships between German women and African males. The absence of miscegenation or children from interracial relationships in the narratives, which only chronicle the sexual and marital relationships between white males and white females and the same relationships between colonized subjects and other colonized subjects separately, indicates the myth of racial purity was important to the remembered colonial *Heimat*. This, however, is not the primary concern or function of German women in the colonial site of memory. Instead, settler memoirs emphasized the *Kulturmutter*’s function as both companion and colleague in the “civilizing mission” in Africa.

²⁵³Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 131-200; Lora Wildenthal, “Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, ed. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Brandt, and Kristin McGuire (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 339–359; Birthe Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten: Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel der Kolonien* (Köln: Böhlau, 2003), 77-96.

There are two instances in his memoir where Prüße wrote at length about the importance of having German women in the colonies. The first, and shorter, of these references the arrival of two new settlers who build a home near his in the Morogoro region in 1907. The relocation of Herr and Frau Schwartz to the region, according to Prüße, marked the coming of the first European woman to Morogoro. Falling into a frontier trope, Prüße described the presence of a German woman in the colony as having a calming effect and positive influence on not only her husband, but on the entire settler community:

Naturally, the arrival of the young married couple was a joy to us all...It was droll to observe how the bachelors, who had previously paid scant attention to their appearance, in the days after her arrival devoted special care to their suits. Through these little things, one observed the positive influence of a German woman.²⁵⁴

The importance of women in the colonies emphasized here, however jocularly, is not the preservation of blood lines, but the maintenance of “civilized” behavior and societal norms that serve to enforce German respectability in even the most adverse conditions.

The second, more protracted example mentioned by Prüße relates to his own wife. In 1908, after thirteen years in German East Africa, Prüße returned to Germany for a six-month vacation. His little vacation to Hamburg must have been quite the trip, because he managed to court and wed a woman named Esa in that time and on 24 January 1909, he and his new bride went on a brief honeymoon to Marseilles before returning to Morogoro. At this point in the memoir, Prüße stated his belief that a man lives better

²⁵⁴ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 112-113.

when he has a German wife, indicating that this was especially true for a German man in Africa.²⁵⁵

More important, however, than the positive influence Esa had on her husband is Prübe's description of the opportunities afforded to his wife in Africa that allowed her German femininity and domesticity to blossom and flourish in Morogoro in ways they could not in Germany. The "unique" challenges to setting up a German household faced by Esa in Morogoro, according to Prübe, made her an ambassador for the ideals of German culture among African natives:

My wife, at first, had quite a lot to do, in order to unpack the household effects she had brought with her and furnish the domicile, which until then had been kept in the style of Herman the Cherusker. The houseboys [African servants] could not help but be amazed by the furniture, the applicability of which they could not divine at first. One of the boys asked me discreetly how much I had paid for her, for the dowry must have certainly been a high sum. According to local custom, a bachelor must buy his wife from his father-in-law, therefore making it difficult for the people to understand that in Germany, we receive a dowry from the father-in-law prior to marriage.²⁵⁶

The situation described, in which an African houseboy stood in awe of the industriousness and efficiency of a German woman to seemingly assemble a household out of thin air, indicates Prübe's acceptance not only of the "myth" of the German woman

²⁵⁵Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 118.

²⁵⁶ Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 119.

as *Kulturmutter* to Germans in the colonies, but also a nuanced vision of the German “housewife” as an integral component of the “civilizing mission.” What is more, Prübe’s description of the scene reinforces a colonial hierarchy in which color trumps gender. To Prübe, the African “boy’s” masculinity is considered worthless and outranked by white femininity. Prübe’s wife, the German *Hausfrau*, is not only re-civilizing him, but bringing civilization and social order to Africa in the process.

The memoirs of Charlotte Deppe, a settler in the region of Tanga from 1913 to the conclusion of the war, mesh well with this representation of East African German femininity as an asset to the “civilizing mission.” Deppe, well-informed of the accusations of “colonial guilt” by the Allies, placed even greater emphasis on German femininity not just as a preserver of civilization, but as a bearer of culture to Africans. She centers her narrative on education and, in a unique way, the German mother. Deppe viewed herself as not only playing an active role in bringing civilization to Africa, but also in maintaining the honor of “Germanness” against accusations in the interwar period that it had adopted a particularly brutal form of colonial native policy. Germans, Deppe claimed, had maintained the *Tangaer Regierungsschule* (Tanga Government School) to instruct Africans in the benefits of European musical culture. These students would then play concerts for the community and would, occasionally, visit military bases and play for Askari and German colonial troops alike. Teaching Africans in Tanzania to play segments from Wagner’s *The Flying Dutchman* hardly seems like a great contribution to African societal development, but Deppe maintained that the British, in closing the

school when they took the colony, were depriving Africans of the benefits of civilization and turning their backs on the “civilizing mission.”²⁵⁷

The desire to educate is also evident in Charlotte Deppe’s extension of the role of German motherhood. For Deppe, motherhood in the colonies, unlike motherhood in the metropole, included the maternal care for and education of not only one’s own progeny, but also African servants and neighbors. Deppe transferred European notions of the bourgeois household in which the woman of the household not only supervised her servants, but also managed the social and educational contacts, to a colonial setting.²⁵⁸ In relating stories about her servants, Juma and Dobi, Deppe explained the unique difficulties faced by a German woman trying to educate Africans in the German values of efficiency and thorough workmanship. She alleged that she took a step beyond the usual employer custody of her servants. Deppe insists that she adopted a maternal interest in “raising” her servants and declared that she was as kind and patient with them as with her own young children.²⁵⁹ The end result was, she believed, a productive and safe society in the colony, unparalleled in Europe:

One should not be afraid of Blacks. I am normally quite easily frightened, but in East Africa I have not been afraid once; here, one lives in more security than among the cultivated Whites.

Where else is it so harmless for one to leave all their belongings in cases and boxes outdoors and amongst the people, far from the

²⁵⁷ Charlotte Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 22-24.

²⁵⁸ For more on German domesticity and how it was exported abroad, see Nancy Reagin, *Sweeping the German Nation: Domesticity and National Identity in Germany, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Reagin, “German *Brigadoon*? Domesticity and Metropolitan Germans’ Perceptions of *Auslandsdeutschen* in Southwest Africa and Eastern Europe,” in *The Heimat Abroad*, 248–266; and O’Donnell, “Home, Nation, Empire: Domestic Germanness and Colonial Citizenship,” in *The Heimat Abroad*, 40–57.

²⁵⁹ Charlotte Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 27-35.

nearest city or lie down quietly and, often with the door
unlocked, sleep peacefully!²⁶⁰

By infantilizing the natives, Deppe portrayed East Africa as a place where German motherhood was not restricted to bearing and aiding one's own children. Instead, the concept of the "German mother" became a vehicle for women to engage directly in the "civilizing mission" of spreading the benefits and values of Germanness in ways other than reproduction in order to create a utopic, German community in Africa.

Deppe did not, however, exclude the important role of reproductive motherhood from her account. Colonial German motherhood was also expanded to embody *Deutschtum* itself in Deppe's tale of colonial days of yore. Deppe, who gave birth to two children in the colonies, recounts the story of her young daughter's reaction to "returning" to Germany:

We found the [European] homeland terribly diseased...In fact, my little daughter, in a sad tone already on the first morning, asked me: "Where is the Sun?" It does not shine in these March days. And our nation was robbed of its place in the sun...And then laying my hand on my daughter's head, I tried to banish the gloom [of Germany] from her presence with the burning wish, that she, as a sunny child of the tropics, could believe in the future of her people, in a future full of tenacious work in the fulfillment of her duties [as mother and culture-bearer], but also

²⁶⁰ Charlotte Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 35.

in a future in which a new, prosperous fortune will blossom for our children.²⁶¹

This passage, full of German imperialist imagery such as the “place in the sun” rhetoric, represents something more than just the parroting of the propagandist language of the period. Deppe was discontented with the metropole and viewed German motherhood, and even *Deutschtum*, as incapable of conveying the values and passions of what it means to be German to a new generation deprived of colonies. For Deppe, only in East Africa, only through her daughter continuing as a *Sonnenkind der Tropen* by experiencing and contributing to the “civilizing mission,” could there be a future for a better, happier Germanness than what then existed in what she saw as the diseased and crumbling metropolitan *Heimat* of the interwar period.²⁶²

Alongside the *Hausfrau*'s role in the ‘civilizing mission’ and the preservation of *Deutschtum*, representations of German masculinity take on heightened importance in settler’s narratives of the colonial *Heimat*. Reminiscent of something out of a Kipling story, the depiction of German men in the colonies could be categorized as “hyper masculine.” German males did not, however, simply mirror what scholars of Orientalism might call a feminization of the exotic “other.”²⁶³ Although there are constant comparisons to effeminate natives or dandy fellow-Europeans, the focal point is that of an idealized memory of the manliness required to survive as a German man in Africa. In East African settler memoirs, German masculinity in Africa was understood through the

²⁶¹Charlotte Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 153.

²⁶²Britta Schilling comes to somewhat different conclusions about Deppe and others like her in “Crossing Boundaries: German Women in Africa, 1919-1933,” in Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., with Katy Heady, *German Colonialism and National Identity* (London, 2010), 140-159.

²⁶³Berman, “Orientalism, Imperialism, and Nationalism: Karl May’s *Orientzyklus*” in *The Imperialist Imagination*, 51-68.

archetypes of the hunter, the settler-farmer, the warrior and the industrious entrepreneur, much as it had been in Germany at various points in history. In Africa, however, these stereotypical traits of manliness were of the utmost necessity and could come to their greatest fruition facing obstacles that could not even be imagined in Europe and as such, became part of the distinct colonial German identity settlers remembered.

Figuring most prominently in Prüße's and Langkopp's narratives of German masculinity is the image of the determined settler-farmer. Africa presented a distinctive set of challenges to an agrarian lifestyle based on manual labor and was viewed by East African settlers as something of an advanced education in "German Work." Both men remembered facing numerous hardships in the trek to and construction of their homesteads.²⁶⁴ Despite the facts that he owned a plantation and rarely lifted a finger on his lands, Prüße presented himself as quite capable of working the land and enjoying the honest labor of the colonial yeoman in a manner reminiscent of several pastoral themes prominent in German literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Langkopp depicted himself as building his home and irrigating his farmstead with nothing but his bare hands, crude tools and livestock that frequently died under the harsh conditions of sub-Saharan Africa.²⁶⁵ These men clearly regarded self-reliance and a strong work ethic as indispensable for the German man of Africa.

Related to the presentation of the German man "working the land" is, of course, the image of a man capable of defending the homestead he has worked so hard to cultivate and develop. In the memoirs, colonial German masculinity is often portrayed in the archetypal forms of the hunter and the warrior. Contrary to Charlotte Deppe's

²⁶⁴ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 45-55.

²⁶⁵ Langkopp, *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas*, 49-65.

account of the security and peace of the colony, male settlers described the life of the settler-farmer as one of constant vigilance in their memoirs. A colonial man needed to be armed to defend his property, his livestock, his workers and his wife from assaults launched by man and nature alike. Unlike in Europe, where diplomacy, law and monetary influence might aid in the defense of one's hard-earned property, in the remembered African *Heimat* both forms of attack on the home were handled in the same way—with rugged courage, tactical prowess and a large gun.²⁶⁶ Hyenas and venomous snakes were a perpetual annoyance for Prübe, frequently killing the mules he used for transport and farming.²⁶⁷ Prübe portrayed himself as heroically and strategically hunting these “pests” and calmly dispensing with such nuisances by putting them on the receiving end of an .88 caliber rifle.²⁶⁸ Africa and its dangers became a site of memory for a strong German masculinity capable of defending and providing for German femininity and domesticity in even the most adverse conditions.

Prübe remembered this “taming” of the African wilderness—making it “safe” for “civilization” with the advanced technology of a “big gun”— as something fostered only by the harsh environmental demands of the “dark continent.” Others, however, reveled in the challenge of the hunt. Ludwig Deppe, Heinrich Langkopp, Wilhelm Rothhaupt and others regarded German East Africa as a *Jagdparadis* (hunting paradise).²⁶⁹ The “taming” of the continent was not the primary concern, but instead, the conquest of powerful beasts became a sort of rite of passage for those wishing to fully develop as a German male

²⁶⁶ Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 60-64.

²⁶⁷ Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 55-63, 104.

²⁶⁸ Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 10-12, 51-63, 104-106, 120-121, 124.

²⁶⁹ For further information on German sport hunting culture and its relationship to colonial rule, see Sunseri. “The War of the Hunters: Maji Maji and the Decline of the Ivory Trade,” in *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*, 117-147.

much as it did for their British counterparts. Quite apart from the stag or fox hunts of European monarchs and aristocrats, which a doctor like Deppe or a merchant like Prüße could never have participated in due to their middle-class social rank, hunting in the African wilderness was remembered rightly as having the very real threat of death as a component.²⁷⁰ The risks were enormous, even with advanced or large-caliber firearms, making the adrenaline-rush from such an experience all the more desirable. The prize game of the safari—the lion, the elephant, the leopard and the hippopotamus—became not only trophies, but totems of manhood and rank that outshined the souvenirs of the less perilous hunts of the aristocracy back in Europe. Ludwig Deppe recounted that even when engaged in war, the desire to hunt, the need to acquire these symbols of masculine virility, was a source of joy—a masculine release that not only the soldiers, but every German male needed.²⁷¹ Only in Africa, not in the department stores or parliaments of Europe, and only against such potent animals could German masculinity reach its full potential for virility and dominance over nature.

In addition to these more rugged components of the African German male outlined in settler accounts, however, German masculinity was also portrayed as bringing “civilization” to Africa in the form of rational emancipation, technological prowess, medical miracles and proper German industry. These German “men of science” were tasked with bringing “rationality” to Africa. Africans, former settlers claimed, had faced harsh treatment at the hands of the Arabs who had enslaved them. German settlers often insisted in their memoirs that they and they alone had eliminated slavery from the colony,

²⁷⁰Rothhaupt, *Unter Palmen und Dornen: Wunderliche Fahrten in Ostafrika* (Hamburg, 1925), 27-128; Langkopp, *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas*, 83-105; Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 186-199; Paasche, *Im Morgenlicht*, 154-278.

²⁷¹Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 186-193.

“freeing” the Africans from bondage.²⁷² This ‘abolitionist myth’ of colonial masculinity, which ignored the persistence of forms of coerced labor in the German colony while simultaneously criticizing the British for their hypocrisy in touting abolition while employing forced labor in their colonies and Mandates, held powerful benefits for German colonial identity. Not only did this have the effect of asserting German moral superiority over both Arabic and other Europeans civilizations in the area, it also allowed German males to portray themselves as opening doors for Africans to develop and civilize. Distinctions were often made between those willing to “learn,” like the *askari*, and those who were irreparably lost, like the rebellious Maasai. Trained as soldiers, the *askari* were portrayed as admiring and adopting the militaristic “big gun” masculinity associated with the “civilized” German colonial identity in these memoirs, while simultaneously being marked as loyal pupils who embraced their servitude within the German colonial *Heimat*.²⁷³

Coupled with “freeing” Africans from slavery was the notion of the German colonial male’s responsibility to “free” Africans of superstition and gift them with enlightened, rational thought. German male settlers are portrayed as the bearers of “civilization” to Africa through the application of technological knowledge. Prüße claimed that things as “simple” as using the Pythagorean Theorem for construction measurements or making bricks and mortar were tasks that even the most intelligent

²⁷² Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 47-48, 99; Rothhaupt, *Unter Palmen und Dornen*, 47-70

²⁷³ Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika*, 36,159-160; Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 64, 94-96, 98-101, 114-117. For work on representations of blackness and the Askari, see Langbehn, “The Visual Representation of Blackness During German Imperialism around 1900,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, 90-100, and Lewerenz, “‘Loyal Askari’ and ‘Black Rapist’—Two Images in the German Discourse on National Identity and Their Impact on the Lives of Black People in Germany, 1918-1945,” in *German Colonialism and National Identity*, 173-183. For information on how the *askari* constructed their own sense of self-understanding in relation to German conceptions of masculinity during German colonialism, see Michelle Moyd, “‘All People were Barbarians to the *askari*’...Askari Identity and Honor in the Maji Maji War, 1905-1907,” in *Maji Maji: Lifting the Fog of War*, 149-179.

African man could not accomplish with skill on his own.²⁷⁴ Only German men, he insisted, could master technology and bring it to Africa. To emphasize the promethean role of knowledge-bearer he assigned to German men in the colonies, Prüße related the German response to the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1910:

An important occurrence for the entire colony was the appearance of the famous Halley's Comet...Knowing the appearance of this natural wonder would make an extraordinary impression on the Natives, the [Colonial] Government, employing wise foresight, advised district exchanges, military stations, missionaries and settlers to, in a timely manner, make the superstitious Natives aware of the Comet's appearance...²⁷⁵

According to Prüße, German missionaries, military officials, and men of reason went to great lengths to prevent "magicians" from using this natural wonder to gain a following of "weak-minded" natives by methodically educating Africans from region to region of the "science" behind the comet's appearance. Rothhaupt and Langkopp also accentuated African superstition as something that, though admirable for the mystification it offered to a bleak reality, needed to be weeded out if modern medicine and law were to bring their gifts to Africa. Only by being forced to overcome their "superstitions" and beliefs in demons and sorcerers causing maladies, these men claimed, could Africans truly benefit from German medical assistance and the rule of law.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 46-52.

²⁷⁵ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 130-131.

²⁷⁶ Rothhaupt, *Habari*, 35-41, 155-171; Rothhaupt, *Unter Palmen und Dornen*, 60, 71-89; Langkopp, *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas*, 50, 109-118; For recent work on the German colonial state and its relationships with African spirituality, specifically notions of sorcery and "cannibalism," see David D. Kim, "Scandals of Translation: Cannibalism and the Limits of Colonial Authority in the Trial of Iringa (1908)," *German Studies Review* 34, 1 (2011), 125-142.

Repeated in all the roles assigned to men in colonial memoirs is the image of a “strong masculinity.” Once again, the interwar context of this writing should be taken into account. Former male settlers, who wanted to remember and present themselves and other German males as strong, strategic men of action, projected an element of “direct action” in their representations of German masculinity. The often senseless and prolific violence on the streets of Germany during the early 1920s, however, created an air of uneasiness and factionalism that contravened desires for order and the self-discipline inherent in the concept of “German work.” Also as members of an older generation, thoroughly immersed in the “civilizing mission” and its conception of “Europeanness,” and aware of British and French accusations of Germans as an exceptionally brutal people at Versailles, these men tried to pair violence with the respectability of reason. Violence within German masculinity could not be self-sufficient as a trait; the aggression needed purpose, either in the form of fulfilling the duties of the “civilizing mission” or as a necessary trait for self-preservation and defense of family and property in a harsh environment. For these settlers, idealized German masculinity resided in a colonial African *Heimat*—a wild frontier where aggression and “civilization” could work in tandem.

Kumbuke!...Remember!

Vom Tanganyika ostwärts war deutsches Land

Deutsch soll es wieder werden!

Kumbuke! (Denkedaran!)

—Albrecht Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre Ansiedler in Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 1929²⁷⁷

Settlers who returned to Germany, in some cases after decades abroad, continued to function on local-colonial understandings of what it meant to be German. They evinced a form of imperial thinking that did not dissipate with the end of colonialism, but actually grew stronger as they formed a new fragment of “Germanness” to negotiate the turmoil of the interwar period. Settler memoirs demonstrate that the *Heimat* concept is not only a way of reconciling centuries of local political and cultural difference in the “mirror” of the national that crystallized after unification, as observed by Confino. It can also be transformed into something that can be adapted and employed to distance a locality from the nation, creating a new geographic association of national identity even in the presence of a “nation-state.” Proponents of the locality can assert the remembered superiority of localized identity conceptions as a viable alternative for national regeneration against defeat, petty politics, blurring or weakening gender identities, consumerism and fears of racial degradation. Furthermore, the case of East African settlers suggests that nostalgic appeals to *Heimat* can be made even when the emphasized locality emerged and disappeared not over the course of centuries, but in the span of a single generation.

²⁷⁷ Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre*, 270. “From Tanganyika eastward was once German soil/ German it should be again!/ *Kumbuke!* ([Swahili for] “Remember!”).

German East African repatriates, unlike former colonial officials, directed their wrath over lost notions of German identity not just at the Allies, but also at what they perceived to be a weak metropole that had not fought hard enough for the colonial empire. Was this outrage, however, simply directed against the imperial state that lost the empire in the war, or was there more at play? Heinrich Langkopp was one of the few to directly voice his discontent in the direction of the Weimar Republic. Langkopp, who had lived in Iringa for a little over a decade, petitioned the Weimar government numerous times to see to the restoration of his property. At the very least, he sought compensation for the loss of income, alleging to have been quite wealthy in Africa, but now destitute in Germany. His claims on the state, he grumbled, were ignored.²⁷⁸

Many colonial Germans lamented the loss of status, property and individual freedoms that came with relocation to the European *Heimat*. These settlers came “home” to a Germany in both economic and social distress after the loss of the war, a Germany that had nothing to offer them in terms of property or prosperity. Economic considerations, however, do not constitute the entire picture of settler dissatisfaction with the Weimar Republic. Concerns over the loss of prosperity merged with anxieties over the geographical boundaries of “Germanness.” The association of German identity with the territorial boundaries of the German state was in crisis, suffering from a series of blows to Germany’s claims of self-determined territorial integrity. Former settlers from East Africa—and Germans as a whole—witnessed the Versailles Treaty’s truncation of Germany’s European borders and the redistribution of the German overseas empire. The

²⁷⁸ Langkopp, *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas*, 3-4, 119-122. An interesting contrast could be made between the monetary and resettlement support given by the Weimar Republic to Germans returning from Africa, which was little if any, and the shifting amount of resources and diplomacy devoted to satisfying the demands of the larger number of Germans from Eastern Europe, particularly Germans from Poland, immigrating to Germany following the First World War. See Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*, 97-120.

Weimar state's inability to avoid the French occupation of the Ruhr and the government's official acceptance of Germany's western and overseas truncations at the Locarno talks of 1925 added to concerns over whether Germanness could still be associated with European territory.

“*Echte Deutsche*” or “Half-Baked Englishmen”? German Southwest African Settlers, the Mandate System, and the Naturalization Crisis

[...] Dr. Fritzsche who followed dealt with the question from a legal point of view, and gave it as his opinion that the Union was only the Guardian of the Territory on behalf of the League of Nations, and that at any time the whole status of the Territory might be changed [...] He therefore advised the German people to continue as “*echte Deutsche*” instead of becoming “half-baked Englishmen.”

—Statement by G.R. Hofmeyr, His Honour the Administrator of Southwest Africa, at the Meeting of the Advisory Council held at Windhoek, 19th February, 1923²⁷⁹

In German East Africa following the Great War, liquidation of German property and the repatriation of German settlers became the norm as British authorities systematically deported “ex-enemy combatants” from the Mandate that would become known as the Tanganyika Territory. German Southwest Africa, however, comprised a unique case. Southwest Africa was awarded to South Africa, a British Dominion, making

²⁷⁹ BArch, R8023/531 (116-117), G.R. Hofmeyr, “Statement by His Honour the Administrator at the Meeting of the Advisory Council”, February 19, 1923.

the Southwest African Mandate one of only a handful of oddities that were not placed under the direct supervision of one of the victorious Allied Powers. More importantly, however, unlike in other former German colonies turned Mandate, particularly those given to British Dominions, 7,855 Germans—nearly two-thirds of the war-time population—were permitted to retain at least some of their property and remain in South Africa’s C-class Mandate.²⁸⁰

Those Southwest African German settlers who were repatriated back to Germany responded in much the same way as their East African counterparts. Memoirs from Southwest African Germans sent back to Weimar Germany, such as Lydia Höpker and Sophie Uhde, narrated the destruction they had witnessed in their colony during the war, decried the lack of support they had received from the German metropole, and lamented their expulsion from the African *Heimat* they had helped to create.²⁸¹

While settlers like Uhde and Höpker could only remember their African homes and property from afar in Germany, many of their neighbors and co-settlers faced a far different set of experiences as they found themselves strangers in their own colonial “homeland” that had been placed under new administration. Jan Smuts, the South African General responsible for conquering the German colony during the War, stated in a speech in Windhoek on 18 September 1920 his belief that “the first requirements for success [in Southwest Africa] were whites and capital,” praised the “good work done by German settlers in the face of great difficulties,” and expressed his hope that the Germans who were allowed to remain would ultimately accept Union citizenship and assist South

²⁸⁰ For these numbers, see Gail-Maryse Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate* (Capetown: Juta & Co. Ltd., 1976), 167.

²⁸¹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 34-40; Sophie von Uhde and Franz von Epp, *Deutsche unterm Kreuz des Südens. Bei den Kolonialsiedlern in Südwest und Ostafrika* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1934); Lydia Höpker, *Als Farmerin in Deutsch-Südwest. Was ich in Afrika erlebte* (Minden: W. Köhler, 1936).

Africa in bringing “civilization” to the Mandate.²⁸² The German Foreign Office and German colonial organizations were delighted, praising South Africa’s “humane treatment” of Germans in the area while hoping that these remaining Germans would serve as a foot-in-the-door for the future restitution of the colony to Germany.

Both Smuts’s ambitions and the pipe-dreams of German colonialists were upset time and again, however, by German settlers in Southwest Africa pursuing their own goal—autonomous rule for German Southwest Africa—through all channels available to them in the new, internationalist system. From the moment South Africa made the unorthodox decision to allow Germans to remain in the Mandate territory, this group of settlers became the focal point of a unique diplomatic struggle. Who had jurisdiction over German communities in the Mandate—the Weimar Republic, the Union of South Africa, the British Empire, or the League of Nations? What citizenship status, and therefore, what rights, did this particular body of “Germans abroad” living in a Mandate have? The search for an answer to these questions turned into an international dispute that flared up in the early 1920s, culminating in the Naturalization Crisis of 1922-1924 when the Union of South Africa attempted to automatically naturalize all Germans in Southwest Africa as British subjects. In the midst of German colonialist organizations pressuring them to fight to retain their German citizenship and debates in the League about the legality of South Africa’s naturalization of individuals within a Mandate, Southwest African Germans constructed their own views on the purpose and value of citizenship as they strove to build not only an independent German identity in Africa, but also a self-governing state.

²⁸²“The South-West Mandate. Future of the German Population. Position Outlined by General Smuts,” *The Cape Times* (Capetown, September 18, 1920) as quoted in its entirety in Robert Love Braum, ed., *Southwest Africa Under Mandate: Documents on the Administration of the Former German Protectorate of Southwest Africa by the Union of South Africa Under Mandate of the League of Nations, 1919-1929* (Salisbury, NC: Documentary Publications, 1976), 16.

Annexation in All But Name: The Diplomatic Dispute over Naturalization

In effect, the relations between the South-West Protectorate and the Union amount to annexation in all but name. Without annexation the Union could under the Peace Treaty, do whatever it could have done in annexed territory [...] The General then discussed the position among the German population. To whom could they look for support? They could not look to the League of Nations, as its only scope was as regards the natives. They could not look to Germany, which had renounced them. The country had been entrusted to the Union, and therefore the Union was the only country to speak and act for them.

—Article in *Cape Times*, 18 September 1920²⁸³

In 1915, South African forces under General Jan Smuts conquered German Southwest Africa and occupied it under a state of martial law until 1921. From that point forward, Smuts envisioned annexing the territory as part of the Union of South Africa. This form of South African manifest destiny to expand the borders of the Union had to be modified, however, as a result of the Mandate System, a compromise between Smuts' expansionist aims and President Wilson's desire to spread democracy and halt imperialist land grabs. German Southwest Africa became a Mandate under the League of Nations and was granted to the Union for 'tutelage towards civilization.' The terms of the C-class Mandate awarded to South Africa, however, were vague, allowing for more direct control

²⁸³ "The South-West Mandate. Future of the German Population. Position Outlined by General Smuts." as found in Robert Love Braum, *Southwest Africa Under Mandate*, 16-17.

of the territory by the Mandatory Power than in A-class Mandates like Iraq or Syria. The presence of a large German population in the area that the Union had allowed to remain and to retain property also presented unique problems to League interference in the Territory. A strict interpretation of the charter of the Permanent Mandates Commission limited their supervisory role to Native Affairs. It was through these loopholes that Smuts later, as Prime Minister of South Africa, and the Union Parliament found a means to pursue annexation in all but name—naturalization of the German populace, but as British subjects rather than citizens of South Africa itself.

Drawing from the Naturalization of Aliens Act of 1910, Smuts and Union government officials put forward a plan to the South African Parliament in late 1921—formally submitted to the League Council in 1923—for the automatic naturalization of all Germans remaining in Southwest Africa, not as Union citizens, but as British subjects.²⁸⁴ The Union was, after all, still a Dominion of the British Empire and the Mandated Territory was therefore indirectly to be considered Crown Lands, at least as far as the Union was concerned if the government's scheme was to be a success. As Prime Minister, Smuts presented automatic naturalization as a solution to the legal “limbo” in which Germans in the territory now found themselves and a means to put an end to Germany's demands for restitution once and for all. Naturalization, he insisted, would afford these individuals the same rights and privileges as citizens of the Union. What he neglected to mention, however, was that by naturalizing the German population as British subjects instead of as South African citizens, the input of the German community as to

²⁸⁴ Naturalization was only to be applied to the 3, 400 male Germans remaining in the colony. Women and children were not, as far as the Union was concerned, eligible for voting or property-holding rights and therefore would only be “naturalized” as citizens indirectly through their husbands, fathers, and male-relatives. Women's status would thus have remained similar to what they had known in Imperial Germany, but would not include the political rights women now enjoyed in the Weimar Republic.

the form of its local governance as well as its representation within the Union Parliament would be limited. Furthermore, this move would give the Union more control over German property in the territory, as the lands of British subjects were considered to be on par with Crown Lands and therefore to be placed under the direct supervision of a Dominion-appointed administrator.²⁸⁵

The German Colonial Society under the leadership of Theodor Seitz, the last governor of German Southwest Africa, was infuriated by the Union's plans for automatic naturalization of German citizens. These *Kolonialdeutsche* who remained in the Mandate were, after all, Germany's only foothold in Africa and the last hope for the eventual restitution of the colony. Germany's fading claims to Southwest Africa would be erased if these Germans became naturalized subjects of the British Crown through the South African Dominion. The *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* lashed out, making the argument to the League and the public sphere that South Africa had violated the terms of its Mandate Charter by pursuing a course that was tantamount to annexation. The colonial organization demanded League intervention and the immediate restitution of the colony to Germany while simultaneously making every effort to dissuade Germans in Southwest Africa from accepting naturalization as British subjects.

The Weimar Republic further objected to the naturalization of Germans by another power without any means for the individual to opt out and/or retain their German citizenship. The German government claimed that Germany had left the colony, but had

²⁸⁵ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 164-171; N.J. De Wet et al., "Interim and Final reports of the Commission appointed to enquire into the question of the Future form of Government in the South-West Africa Protectorate" (Cape Times Limited, Government Printers, 1921) as reprinted in facsimile within Braum, *Southwest Africa Under Mandate*, 26-39. It should be noted that even at this early stage, there were some in South Africa, particularly Brigadier-General J.J. Byron, a member of the Commission, who objected to automatic naturalization and argued that there should at least be some mechanism for opting-out of naturalization as a British subject for Germans who did not wish to join the Union.

not renounced these individuals, who remained German citizens despite their geographic location. The government and colonial organizations also expressed concerns that Germans in Southwest Africa would be deprived of rights to German-language education and newspapers, as well as local governance, if automatic naturalization succeeded. The fledgling German democracy, however, needed to tread softly on the issue. The government wanted to ensure that Germany's claims to the colony remained intact and that its citizens were well-treated, but it also wanted to avoid yet another infusion of thousands of Germans from abroad into the diminished economy and borders of the Weimar Republic.²⁸⁶ What is more, faced with inflation, volatile veteran groups and challenges to government legitimacy, it could not yet afford to resume control of an overseas territory. Therefore, the German Foreign Office pursued a course of diplomatic engagement with the League, South Africa, and Great Britain in the hopes of reaching some sort of compromise.²⁸⁷

The issue of the rights of Germans in B- and C-class Mandates as a whole was brought before the League Council in the Spring of 1923. Although delegates from the Mandate-holding Dominions of New Zealand and Australia attended, the true focus of the April session of the Council was the naturalization of Germans in Southwest Africa. The League Council was, at first, unsure how to react. Germans remaining had not been provided for under the Treaty of Versailles and the Mandate Charter, both of which assumed that deportation of ex-enemy citizens would be the norm. The immediate

²⁸⁶ Similar to the situation faced by the Weimar Republic regarding ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, outlined in Chapters 4, 5, and 7 of Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*, 96-137, 156-170. The inflationary German economy could not handle receiving more unemployed Germans seeking benefits from the German state, hence the government pleaded with *Auslandsdeutsche* to retain their citizenship, but remain where they were to preserve German claims in Poland, Latvia, Czechoslovakia and, in this case, Southwest Africa.

²⁸⁷ Braum, *Southwest Africa Under Mandate*, 117-122, 179-187.

concern of the League was that South Africa would also attempt to naturalize the indigenous African population, thereby violating the spirit of the Mandate—to provide “tutelage towards self-rule”—and too closely resembling formal annexation. In general statements, the Council declared that “the status of the native inhabitants is distinct from that of the nationals of the Mandatory Powers and cannot be identified therewith by any process of general application, [and] the native inhabitants are not invested with the nationality of the Mandatory Powers by reason of the protection extended to them [by the League and the Permanent Mandates Commission].”²⁸⁸ Sir Edgar Walton, South Africa’s representative, argued that, although native affairs might apply in the cases of Australia and New Zealand, Southwest Africa’s position was a unique one. The Germans in the Mandate were a “civilized people.” The Union had the necessary machinery and the League the requisite authority to supervise native affairs, but there was no process in place to address the governance of fellow European groups residing permanently in the Mandates. It was therefore in the best interest of the Union, the League, and the Germans in the area if these individuals were naturalized as British citizens and afforded a degree of participation in the government of the Mandate.²⁸⁹

Some delegates, such as Mineichiro Adachi of Japan, were unconvinced by South Africa’s argument, insisting that the proposal to naturalize a group of people en bloc without their behest violated the spirit of the League Covenant. The Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission, Marquis Theodoli, also opposed the initial proposal, declaring that the Union’s presentation looked like little more than a means to disguise annexation of the territory, something the League and the PMC could not condone.

²⁸⁸ “Status of S.W.A. Germans,” *The Cape Times* (Capetown, May 23, 1923), reprinted facsimile within Braum, *Southwest Africa Under Mandate*, 76.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

Ultimately, however, the Permanent Mandates Commission and the League Council admitted that the status of Europeans in Mandated territories was distinct from that of the indigenous peoples and gave way to South Africa's demands with only two modifications of the Naturalization Act. First, it must be made clear that Germans who wished to do so could, within a six-month period, apply to be exempted from naturalization and second, the League declared that at no time could this be used as a precedent for naturalizing the indigenous population of the region.²⁹⁰

The League's decision, however, did not exhaust the need for compromises. The Weimar Republic, not yet a member of the League, demanded to be involved in any discussions relating to its citizens abroad. In October of 1923, the British government arranged for a meeting in London between German and South African delegates. In what became known as the London Agreement of 1923, Prime Minister Smuts, Legationsrat de Haas of the German Foreign Office and Dr. Julius Ruppel, who had served as Germany's colonial expert for the Treaty of Versailles, worked out the following assurances and concessions to the German government: 1. Germans in SWA would be treated as having the same rights and duties as citizens of the South African Union; 2. German language publications would not be prevented and German translations of laws of the Union were to be made available; 3. German schools would be allowed in Swakopmund and Windhoek for a trial period of two years with some financial support, but were to be subject to Union inspection; 4. German Churches and Missions were allowed to continue their work; 5. Germans from Europe would be allowed to immigrate to the Union and the Mandate so long as they were of good type and character; and 6. Germans in the Mandate

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 77.

were exempted from military service for the next thirty years and were never to be forced to serve against Germany.²⁹¹

After nearly three years of diplomatic wrangling, the final text of the Naturalization Law of the Union of South Africa for South-West Africa of 1924 read as follows:

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Naturalization of Aliens Act, 1910, as so applied to the Territory, every adult European who, being a subject of any of the late enemy powers, was on the first day of January, 1924, or at any time thereafter before the commencement of this Act, domiciled in the Territory shall, at the expiry of six months after the commencement of this Act, be deemed to have become a British subject naturalized under the said Act of 1910, unless within that six months he signs a declaration that he is not desirous of becoming so naturalized.²⁹²

All that remained to be seen was how the German settlers in Southwest Africa would respond to the prospect of automatic naturalization.

²⁹¹ BArch, R8023/531 (103-106), Jan Smuts, Walther de Haas, and Julius Ruppel, "Memorandum: Germans in the Mandated Territory of South-West Africa" (His Majesty's Stationery Office, October 23, 1923) ; BArch, R8023/531 (58-61), Julius Ruppel, "Die Londoner Verständigung über die Deutschen in Südwestafrika," *Kolonial-Warte: Korrespondenz für Deutsche Kolonial-Propaganda im In und Auslande*, January 19, 1924.

²⁹² BArch, R8023/531 (2), Copy of the Naturalization Act sent in a letter from L. Elster of the Auswärtiges Amt to Theodor Seitz, October 4, 1924.

A Derelict Nationality? Southwest African Germans Consider their Citizenship

Options

While all classes and races in South Africa are at present in trouble, the German community have in some ways the least enviable lot. [...] For one thing, they are a derelict nationality. [...] They have lost their own country without being admitted as citizens of any other.

—Dowdney Drew, *Cape Argus*, 14 September 1922²⁹³

The initial response of Southwest African Germans to naturalization was, despite Union propaganda, overwhelmingly negative. As early as 1921, protests and demonstrations by Germans unnerved the Administrator of the Mandated Territory. By 1922, Southwest African Germans—through legalists and colonial activists in the Weimar Republic—presented cases to the Council of the League of Nations and the Permanent Mandates Commission arguing that Germans in Mandated Territories should be considered to have the same status as indigenous inhabitants in regards to land distribution and League protection. At the very least, they insisted that Germans in Southwest Africa be afforded the same international protections granted to minority groups in the new, Wilsonian nation-states that appeared in Europe after Versailles.²⁹⁴

Germans in the new Southwest African Mandate were not alone in their murky citizenship status and their standing as part of a “derelict nationality.” Statelessness was a common problem after the First World War. At least ten million refugees and other

²⁹³ Dowdney Drew, “Our Mandated Territory,” *Cape Argus*, September 14, 1922 as printed in facsimile within Braum, *Southwest Africa Under Mandate*, 54.

²⁹⁴ *Permanent Mandates Commission. Minutes of the Second Session Held in Geneva, August 1-11th 1922*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1922), 65-69, 85-88, 91-94, 101; PA AA, R96522, Julius Ruppel to Auswärtiges Amt, November 27, 1922; PA AA, R96522, Julius Ruppel to Auswärtiges Amt, November 30, 1922.

groups became “minorities” in the newly self-determined nations across Europe created by the Treaty of Versailles.²⁹⁵ As James Sheehan has argued, the issue of “territorial sovereignty was not merely a matter of drawing lines on the map; it required the consolidation of power.”²⁹⁶ The period from the French Revolution to the First World War had seen the rise of the concepts of the citizen and the nation state.²⁹⁷ This process, according to John Torpey, resulted in the state’s monopoly over not only the designation of its territorial boundaries and the qualifications individuals needed to traverse its borders, but also the definition of who was considered “foreign,” and who was considered a “national.”²⁹⁸ Although Wilson’s principle of self-determination had seemingly solved the problem of sovereignty by allowing for nation-states to define themselves by ethnicity, thus completing a process that had begun with the French Revolution, in reality, the breakup of multiethnic empires into various nation states created new problems for the definition of sovereignty in the form of millions of stateless refugees and minorities.²⁹⁹ As Miriam Rürup has argued, the “stateless person emerged as a sort of inevitable byproduct of [...] European national movements that defined the state as a nationally homogenous entity.”³⁰⁰ The presence of minority ethnic groups, who fell just outside of the arbitrary boundaries of their supposed nation-state, and refugees, forced by revolution or political persecution, to traverse territorial boundaries as nomads without a recognizable citizenship challenged the notion of nationality-based

²⁹⁵ Miriam Rürup, “Lives in Limbo: Statelessness After Two World Wars,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 49 (Fall 2011): 113–134, 118–119, 122.

²⁹⁶ James Sheehan, “The Problem of Sovereignty in European History,” *American Historical Review* 111, 1 (2006): 1–15, 9.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1–11; Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 1–8, 27–123; John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport. Surveillance, Citizenship and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–4, 32–121.

²⁹⁸ Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport*, 1–21.

²⁹⁹ Rürup, “Lives in Limbo,” 114–115; Sheehan, “The Problem of Sovereignty in European History,” 9–12.

³⁰⁰ Rürup, “Lives in Limbo,” 113.

sovereignty.³⁰¹ The new states rushed to defend their “ethnic nationals” abroad and assimilate or expel groups within their territory deemed “foreign,” yet these governments faced a Sisyphean task. Although the new nation-states had achieved independence and defined boundaries, in practice “no government was strong enough either to assimilate its national minorities or to enforce the rights they had been promised” if their nationals found themselves outside of the theoretical territorial limits of their ethnicity.³⁰² For their part, interwar minority groups, such as Germans in Poland, Eastern Europe and the Czech lands, adhered less to the easily defined boundaries of national citizenship and territory and identified more strongly with malleable definitions of ethnicity.³⁰³

The League and national governments tried to deal with the issue in various ways throughout the interwar period.³⁰⁴ The Trianon Treaty of 1920, which had defined the boundaries of the new nation states in the wake of the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, afforded non-Hungarians an opportunity to create their own nation-states rather than assimilating into the state of Hungary.³⁰⁵ Plebiscites took place all across Europe as communities “voted” as to which nation-state they would belong.³⁰⁶ In an effort to prevent persecution of minority groups who were unable or unwilling to leave their homes in favor of an ethnic nation-state, the League facilitated several Minorities Protection Treaties between 1920 and 1924 in which it would serve as the guarantor of

³⁰¹ Sheehan, “The Problem of Sovereignty in European History,” 10-11.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 11-13.

³⁰³ See Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*; Sammartino, *The Impossible Border*.

³⁰⁴ Rürup, “Lives in Limbo,” 122-124.

³⁰⁵ Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 80, 96-97, 288, 608.

³⁰⁶ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 12, 217-221, 240, 254-255.

basic rights for all inhabitants of various nation-states regardless of their nationality, religion, language or race.³⁰⁷

Set within this context, it makes perfect sense that Germans in the Southwest African Mandate sought protected status as a minority group and later asserted claims for greater autonomy. Just before the official ruling by the League on the Union's naturalization scheme, new demands emerged for the right of self-determination for an independent German Southwest Africa. At a meeting of the Union's Advisory Council on the topic of naturalization held at Windhoek on 19 February 1923, a group of 350 Germans presented the following resolution expressing the views of the German communities of Windhoek, the former capital and largest city of the erstwhile German colony:

RESOLUTIONS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE PUBLIC
MEETING OF THE GERMAN POPULATION OF THE
TOWN OF WINDHOEK AND THE FARMS IN THE
DISTRICT OF WINDHOEK HELD ON THE 12TH OF
FEBRUARY, 1923: [...]

3. Concerns the Commando Proclamation of 8th January 1923
[...] The German Population will not refuse its assistance in the
event of any risings by the Natives of this country taking place,
BUT it will give such assistance voluntarily. It is prepared to
discuss with the Administration the question of a suitable
organization for that Purpose.

³⁰⁷ Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 85-86, 123, 259, 359, 361-365, 607, 628; MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 486-487, 493; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 126, 139, 142; Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*, 20-21.

4. Concerns the “Franchise” and “Citizenship”

This Meeting refuses to agree to a Law, by virtue of which a foreign Nationality is forced upon the German Population in the manner proposed by the resolution passed by the A.C. This Meeting takes up the standpoint that the creation of a SWA Citizenship would be the suitable means and it is not convinced at all that the creation thereof should be impossible.

5. Concerns “Self-Administration”

This Meeting Declares that the German Population conjointly with the subjects of other Nationalities residing in this country, must have the right to decide on the affairs of the country and its administration. This Meeting asserts that it is unnecessary to accept the British Nationality for that purpose [...] ³⁰⁸

As the resolution makes clear, Southwest African Germans were not concerned with restitution to Germany. Their experience of early defeat in the war and six years of occupation under martial law had led many, like German East African settlers, to believe they had been abandoned by the German government. What they sought instead was a Southwest African citizenship independent of the Union of South Africa and autonomy in the day-to-day governance of their communities and the management of resources in the Mandated Territory. Naturalization was, they believed at this stage, an obstacle to this goal and they were not convinced by South African arguments that insisted that self-rule necessitated naturalization as British subjects within the Union.

³⁰⁸ BArch, R8023/531 (116-117), Quoted in its entirety in Hofmeyr, “Statement by His Honour the Administrator at the Meeting of the Advisory Council.”

Running alongside demands for an independent Southwest Africa administered by Germans was another, bolder proposal to solve the issue of what to do with the Germans who remained in the territory. During the same Advisory Meeting in 1923, one member of the German delegation at the proceedings—Dr. Fritzsche—challenged the legality of the South African government’s authority in the territory. True sovereignty over the Mandate, he argued, belonged not to the Union or the Weimar Republic, but to the League of Nations itself. “His contention was that a Mandate Parliament and a Mandate Citizenship should be created. It was a new thing, but the Mandate itself was a new thing, and if a Mandate could be created, so also could a Mandate Parliament and Citizenship be created.”³⁰⁹ This proposition, which met with cheers from the audience according the Union Administrator in his report, suggests a willingness to step outside the bounds of the traditional nation-state model and make use of internationalism and its governance structures. There was a hope that a Mandate citizenship under the League could provide all the benefits of restitution to the German state or naturalization within the Union while at the same time granting more independence and greater autonomy for the local German population than either of these alternate solutions.

Fritzsche’s suggestion could have succeeded. There was, after all, precedent for the League engaging in more intensive internationalism to redefine citizenship for special circumstances. One example of these attempted international solutions was the so-called Nansen Passport, an internationally-recognized Certificate of Identity issued by the League to White Russian refugees that granted them League protection and the ability to gain admittance to other countries when the Soviet Union stripped them of their

³⁰⁹ Ibid, BArch, R8023/531 (116).

nationality and citizenship in 1921.³¹⁰ The Nansen Passport was later partially extended to other refugees, chiefly Greeks and Armenians in the Balkans, on a temporary basis, affording them the travel benefits of national and imperial citizenship they had been denied when the maps of the defunct Habsburg and Ottoman Empires were redrawn in the name of “self-determination” and the Mandate System.³¹¹ Fritzsche’s proposal was, in effect, a more comprehensive and permanent extension of this emergency patch measure for dealing with individuals who had lost their national or imperial citizenship: the creation of a bona-fide international citizenry in the Mandated Territories governed directly by the League. Although Fritzsche’s plan for a Mandate citizenship ultimately reached the ears of a few members of the League Council, it was not pursued. Had the League taken a stronger stance and placed governance and protection of not only Germans, but also other minorities and even indigenous groups in the Mandated Territories, under the direct control of the Permanent Mandates Commission, it might have set a stronger precedent for international governance and permanently settled the question of sovereignty in the Mandates. At the time, however, there were fears that if the League pursued “Mandate citizenship,” the Mandatory Powers, particularly the British Dominions, would challenge the decision or abandon the League, thereby calling into question the organization’s legitimacy and crippling international governance in its infancy. The argument did, however, lead to further discussions over the issue of sovereignty in the Mandates and set precedents referred to by Japanese scholars of

³¹⁰ Rürup, “Lives in Limbo,” 122-124; Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport*, 127-130.

³¹¹ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 156-159.

international law regarding the sovereignty of the South Seas Mandate following the Manchurian Crisis and Japan's withdrawal from the League.³¹²

Despite the initial outcry, most Southwest African Germans were less concerned with autonomy for the German community as a whole and remained more focused on the maintenance of their individual rights to property and continued income from their land. The majority of the German population carefully weighed all options—including naturalization under South Africa's model—in regards to their own self-interests. Some settlers, like R. Schneider, a farmer in the Okonsogomingo region of Southwest Africa, even wrote to the German Foreign Office asking for advice on whether to pursue naturalization as a British subject:

[...] I would be most grateful if you could provide me with information as to what opinion German experts have in regards to the political status of the Mandates and, above all, what stance they take in respect to citizenship law and other aspects of public administration [in the Mandates].

I have been in correspondence with General Smuts on the matter and I feel confident that there will be little to no negative impact for the majority of the population should they seek naturalization as British subjects. [...]

I assume that you can direct me to the most up-to-date German view on the subject. [...] I would be grateful for any

³¹² Haruo Tohmatsu, "Japan's Retention of the South Seas Mandate, 1922-1947," in *Imperialism on Trial*, 61–84.

information you can provide so that I may form my official and personal opinion on the subject.³¹³

Schneider was not alone in believing citizenship within the Union was a possible means to secure his future in the region. In the face of criticism from neighbors, a large block of Germans in the former colony, led by the editor of a Southwest African German-language paper, the *Luederitzbuchter Zeitung*, M. Otzen, had frequently expressed its desire to cooperate with the Union government regarding naturalization to ensure that the German community in Southwest Africa would be allowed to remain and, eventually, participate in the governance of the territory through the South African Parliament.³¹⁴

Much to the horror of the German Colonial Society, naturalization quickly appealed to Southwest African Germans as the only, and indeed the most attractive, way to allay their fears of deportation and preserve their property rights in the new, international world order of the Mandate System. Theodor Seitz, former governor of German Southwest Africa and the President of the *DKG* following his repatriation to Germany, feared Germany was losing its hold on the *Kolonialdeutsche* in the Mandate. If restitution was to be possible in the future, he believed Germany needed to have a strong claim to the area in the form of a thriving German community. He therefore made concerted efforts to push both German Colonial organizations and the Weimar Government to issue statements and even write personal appeals to individual Germans in

³¹³ BArch, R8023/531 (230-231), R.H.A.S. Schneider to Auswärtiges Amt, November 14, 1921.

³¹⁴ BArch, R1001/1937 (65-68), Hofmeyr, "Statement by His Honour the Administrator at the Meeting of the Advisory Council."; Konsulrat Renner to Auswärtiges Amt, "Pressesachen Deutsch Südwest Afrika, Mai 1924", May 1924; BArch, R1001/1937 (74-76)Konsulrat Renner to Auswärtiges Amt, "Presseachen Deutsch Südwest Afrika, August 1924", August 1924; BArch, R1001/1937 (97-99), Konsulrat Renner to Auswärtiges Amt, "Pressesachen Deutsch Südwest Afrika, Dezember 1924", December 1924; BArch, R1001/1937 (111-113), Konsulrat Renner to Auswärtiges Amt, "Pressesachen Deutsch Südwest Afrika, Januar 1925", January 1925.

the former colony to persuade them to retain their German citizenship.³¹⁵ Seitz himself, having been forwarded Schneider's letter by the Foreign Office, wrote to the farmer to make the case for fighting naturalization by a British Dominion:

Dear Mr. Schneider! [...]

The question of whether or not a German should accept British citizenship has a political and an economic side. In regards to the political, one must recall that Southwest Africa is not a British territory, but a Mandate, therefore a resident should not find it necessary to naturalize as a British citizen. My understanding is that an electoral victory for General Smuts [in the Parliament] regarding the Annexation of the Mandate in the upcoming years is by no means guaranteed, because on the one hand the Hertzog Party, which has expressed opposition to a violent annexation, has gained another 45 men in the Parliament, while on the other hand several of the Boers in the Smuts Party want nothing to do with [his plans for annexing the Mandate]. Add to this the attitude of the Americas, which would never allow the conversion of the Mandate into annexed territory. England, and with him South Africa, must now more than ever bow to American wishes. [...]

So long as the Annexation is not successful, it makes no political sense for Germans to acquire British citizenship. [...] ³¹⁶

³¹⁵ BArch, R8023/532 (150), Theodor Seitz to Gustav Stresemann, April 10, 1923; BArch, R8023/531(146), Theodor Seitz to Gustav Stresemann, April 19, 1923; BArch, R8023/531 (130-133), Theodor Seitz to Generalkonsulrat von Schubert, April 29, 1923; BArch, R8023/531 (134-135), Generalkonsulrat von Schubert to Theodor Seitz, April 30, 1923; BArch, R8023/531(106), "Seid einig!," *Swakopmundre Zeitung* (Swakopmund, March 3, 1925).

³¹⁶ BArch, R8023/531 (216-220), Theodor Seitz to R.H.A.S. Schneider, May 27, 1921.

Ultimately, however, these efforts were for naught. By the time the Naturalization Act went into full effect in March 1925, only 240 of the 3,400 German males eligible for automatic naturalization filed the necessary declarations to retain their status as German citizens.³¹⁷ For Southwest African Germans, pursuit of their self-interests lay not in maintaining sentimental ties to a distant Germany struggling with political and economic turmoil, but in adapting to their circumstances in the Mandate so that they might one day participate in the new organs of governance now administering the former colony they called home.

Not a Perfect Union—Southwest African Germans, the German Party and Continued Demands for Self-Rule

Forfeiting their German citizenship in favor of status as naturalized residents of the Union of South Africa, however, did not mean that Southwest African Germans were sacrificing their Germanness or their desire for self-rule. Almost immediately after the enactment of the naturalization laws, Southwest African Germans made it clear that Union involvement in the Mandate was not going to be a simple process of assimilation and annexation as Smuts had hoped. German communities across the Mandate politicized on a greater scale after naturalization. Any disagreements among Germans in the region over whether to become British subjects in the Dominion seemingly faded once naturalization became a reality. A common goal emerged in their place—the desire to preserve the prosperity and sense of German ethnic community enjoyed in Southwest Africa before the war. Through the press and the newly formed German Party, Southwest

³¹⁷ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 171.

African Germans pushed their way into South Africa's public sphere and made more vehement demands on the Union government and the League for land-rights, German language schools, and ever higher levels of autonomy.

Despite naturalization as British subjects, Southwest African Germans sought to retain their cultural identity as Germans. Much like Germans in western Poland, who mostly kept to themselves, Germans in Southwest Africa showed little interest in integrating into Boer and English communities in South Africa and the Southwest Mandate. German communities continued to print their own German-language newspapers, hold church services in German, and aside from economic transactions, Germans in the Mandate made every effort to keep cultural exchanges with the Union to a minimum.

With the election of General J.B.M. Hertzog as Prime Minister of the Union in 1924, a South African thought to be more sympathetic to the Germans' plight than his predecessor, German demands from Windhoek for the maintenance of "Germanness" in the Southwest to be respected by the Union resurfaced. In November 1924, a lobby group headed by Dr. Fritz Brenner was formed in Windhoek to register the German community's demands with the new Prime Minister. Their leading demands were for German to be made the third official language of the Union, alongside English and Afrikaans, and for legislation to establish permanent German-language schools within the Mandate for the duration of what they referred to as South Africa's ongoing "occupation" of Southwest Africa.³¹⁸ Their understanding of the Naturalization Act, Brenner and his constituents argued, was that Germans would be placed on an equal footing with the

³¹⁸ BArch, R8023/532 (140-143), Auswärtiges Amt to Theodor Seitz, "Report on the Petitionskommission in Windhoek", November 15, 1924.

other “white races” of the Union, with the same legal privileges as both the English and the Boers and the same respect of cultural differences that had been afforded the Boers upon the Union’s formation. The Union talked of the Germans as “co-citizens,” yet barred them from electing German mayors for their towns or having separate military units headed by ethnic Germans within the Union Army, and refused to respect linguistic differences by conducting forced enrollment of German children into English-language schools or depriving German communities of the funds promised for German-language schools.

Hertzog’s response disappointed the German community. The Prime Minister insisted that Germans had the same rights as all Union citizens and might one day have their own mayors, but preservation of German culture in the Mandate was out of the question. Introducing German as a third official language and maintaining German-language schools beyond the temporary grace periods his predecessor had outlined were both, he insisted, simply too expensive. He paid lip-service to German contributions to the development of the African continent, but added that Germans must simply learn Afrikaans and English if they wished to become equal partners in the further development of the Union to which they now belonged.³¹⁹

The German response was immediate, and included an appeal to the Permanent Mandates Commission. Just as Germans in Poland and the Bohemian lands pushed the League and the new nation-states to provide German-language instruction in the territories in which they were now minorities, the German community in Southwest Africa routinely dragged the Union government before the League’s oversight body over

³¹⁹ BArch, R8023/532 (144-148), Auswärtiges Amt to Theodor Seitz, “Transcript of a speech by General Hertzog at Windhoek on 6 November 1924”, November 9, 1924.

the issue of German-language schools over the next seven years.³²⁰ In addition to their petitions for German-language education to preserve a sense of German ethnicity in their small communities, several Southwest African Germans privately raised funds to create German *Vorschulen* and *Realschulen* like, those founded in Swakopmund in 1925, without the permission or financial assistance of the Union's Mandate administration.³²¹ The arguments set before the commission ranged from complaints about violations of promises made by the Union during the Naturalization Crisis to arguments about South Africa ignoring international law regarding governance of the Mandates. The latter of these arguments gained more traction after the admission of the Weimar Republic to the League of Nations following the Locarno Conference. According to League policy, all member states were to have equal access to the Mandated Territories. This included government services provided by the Mandatory Powers in their respective Mandates. If a Mandatory Power distributed funds for services to its citizens, it could not deny these services to non-residents who came from League member states.³²² In spite of South African arguments that the Germans in the Mandate were no longer citizens of the Weimar Republic, but of the Union, and therefore extension of services to citizens of member states did not apply, the PMC ruled in favor of the German communities in the Mandate on multiple occasions, repeatedly admonishing South Africa for not providing funds for state education to be conducted in German.³²³ Although monetary support from the Union was intermittent and Germans occasionally needed to file complaints with the

³²⁰ Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*, 76, 79, 101-102, 106-111, 143, 178, 190, 196; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 14, 16, 21-32, 54-62, 112-116.

³²¹ BArch, R8023/532 (136), *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Swakopmund, November 8, 1924), Nr. 134.

³²² Callahan, "'Mandated Territories Are Not Colonies': Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s," in *Imperialism on Trial*, 1-20, 4.

³²³ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Vingt-Deuxième Session, Tenue à Genève du 3 Novembre au 6 Décembre 1932*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1932), 19-36.

League to force South Africa to provide funds, the German community had won. German culture would be preserved through primary and secondary language education, preventing assimilation of younger generations of Germans into the Union through state schooling.

Apart from confrontations in the realm of culture and education, Southwest African Germans had several other conflicts with the Union government concerning its economic regulations. German quarrels with South Africa in the Southwest Mandate centered on restrictions on the ability of Germans to purchase and cultivate land. A series of disagreements with the Union on agricultural policies and land rights fermented into German discontent with South African rule. The most practical German complaints about Union governance—considering Southwest Africa’s arid environment—related to water management. In December 1925, the Union government passed the Lower Orange River Act of 1926, altering the border between South Africa and its Mandate along the Orange River and setting restrictions on the water rights of inhabitants of the Mandate:

[...] and whereas the inhabitants of the said Mandated Territory are not entitled to use of the water of said river [...]

1. The area of land which is covered or surrounded by the waters of the Orange River when that river is in normal flood and which lies between the 20th degree of east longitude and the Atlantic Ocean shall be incapable of alienation and subject to the provisions of section two, no ownership in or servitude or other real right over any portion of such area shall be capable of acquisition by any person [...]

[...] 4. The Governor General may take regulations not inconsistent w/this Act for the purpose of prohibiting, restricting or regulating the use of any land or water in the area defined in section one for grazing or watering of livestock, wood-cutting, navigation [...] and may prescribe penalties for the contravention of such regulations not exceeding a fine of fifty pounds or imprisonment with hard labour for a period of six months or both such fine and imprisonment.³²⁴

Southwest African Germans along the Orange River protested the regulations and voiced fears that South Africa was pursuing a course of flagrant annexation. German farmers insisted that the new restrictions on water access represented not only a violation of their rights, but also a violation of the terms of the Mandate. The German Consul to South Africa, Alfred Haug, sent reports to the German Foreign Office and the *DKG*, advising that the petitions he received from German settlers in the region be forwarded to the League and the Union government.³²⁵

The purchase and retention of land was also a point of contention among German settlers. Beginning in 1920, the Union repealed Imperial German laws regulating land ownership and use in the former colony and instituted a new system based on the Union Settlement Act of 1912, with amendments made in 1917 and 1920 to specifically address the Southwest Mandate. Under Section 16 of the Act, the new system required that all available land be first surveyed and valued by the Union government. Land suitable for

³²⁴ BArch, R8023/532 (34-41), Contents of Bill sent in facsimile in a letter from Pretoria by Generalkonsul Alfred Haug to Theodor Seitz, "Lower Orange River Act of 1926", December 31, 1925.

³²⁵ Ibid.

agriculture would be advertised in local newspapers. Those who wished to purchase these plots, regardless of citizenship, would submit applications to the South African government. In order to be considered for even a lease of the land, applicants had to 1.) be at least 18 years of age, 2.) possess qualifications sufficient for making use of the land applied for, 3.) intend to occupy the land themselves and not lease it to others, 4.) “be of good character,” and 5.) declare that the land would only be used to benefit themselves and members of their family and not corporations or foreign states.³²⁶ A five-year lease with a provision for annual government inspection of the property would then be issued. At the end of the five-year term, if and only if the applicant had improved the property by twenty-five percent of its original valuation, the lessee could then pay the balance of debt on the property to begin the process of applying for ownership. Only after a total of ten years of occupying the property for at least eight months of every year and meeting the criteria of Union inspections could the lessee obtain a Freehold Title.³²⁷ Since the German government had not issued titles in its land distribution system, Germans already in possession of land were strongly encouraged, but not required, to apply for titles through the Mandate Administrator at Windhoek if they wished to sell the land in the future. If their applications for title were successful, these Germans would be granted a title similar to that of the lessee and would then need to meet government inspection standards for five-years to convert it into a Freehold Title.³²⁸ Regardless of citizenship or the granting of a Freehold Title, the Union government retained all mineral rights on a property and

³²⁶ PA AA, R96524, A. Rowan, “Land Tenure in the Mandated Territory of South West Africa” (Union of South Africa, March 19, 1925), 21, sent as an attachment within Eric Drummond to League of Nations Member States and the League Council, “The Mandated Territory of South-West Africa (Annex to Document C.367 (a) .M. 117 (a). 1925. VI)”, August 1925.

³²⁷ Ibid, 21, 23.

³²⁸ Ibid, 28-29.

reserved the right to re-designate the property for public works, such as reserves for “Natives,” railways, conservation of natural resources, or seizure in the service of public health.³²⁹

This system was not altogether different from previous German laws regulating the colony, yet Southwest African Germans viewed the new regulations as unfair. They complained that the Union’s use of the “good character” clause was abused to deny former German combatants land, despite having naturalized as British subjects. German communities criticized the Union for regularly advertising newly available property only in English-language papers. Finally, German-owned corporations, such as the *Kakao und Minengesellschaft* that had been one of the largest land-holders under German rule, filed formal petitions with the Permanent Mandates Commission insisting that the League curb South Africa’s monopolistic behavior that prevented German-owned business enterprises from holding or purchasing land. The company claimed South Africa’s laws in the Southwest stood in clear violation of the League Charter, which stipulated that Mandates were to be free-trade regions open to all nationalities who had membership within the League.³³⁰

Confrontations over schools, water, and land rights reinvigorated Southwest African Germans demands for autonomy. The result was the growth of a new political party with a platform of self-rule—the German Party. Between 1924 and 1926, the newly formed German Party agitated for more self-government in the Mandate. Chief among

³²⁹ Ibid, 28.

³³⁰ PA AA, R96524, Gottfried Aschmann to Auswärtiges Amt, September 11, 1925; BArch, R8023/532 (140-143), German Consulate in Windhoek to Theodor Seitz, “Bericht des Petitionskommission”, November 15, 1924; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Quatorzième Session, Tenue à Genève du 26 Octobre au 13 Novembre 1928*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1928), 111-115, 255-260; PA AA, R96537 (4-6), German Consulate in Geneva to Auswärtiges Amt, November 21, 1929; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Seizième Session, Tenue à Genève du 6 au 26 Novembre 1929*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1929), 176-177.

their demands was the establishment of a representative legislature for Southwest Africa. English and Boer settlers in the Mandate who had steadily been migrating into the area expressed concerns over the growing support this movement was managing to acquire. Coupled with the London Agreement of 1923 and news that Germans from Europe might be allowed to migrate to the Mandate, these new arrivals from the Union feared a German ‘take-over’ of the territory:

Dr. Fogarty, Anglican Bishop of Dmaraland, expresses the opinion that South-West Africa—now mandated territory of the Union—will virtually be restored to the Germans if certain political proposals are adopted. According to the Bishop, there are two extreme parties in the South-West. The German Party are asking for entire self-government, with an elected Legislative Council. On the other hand, the extreme South African Party are seeking incorporation within the Union, with members in the Union Parliament. “If General Hertzog, the Prime Minister, accedes to the request of the Germans,” says the Bishop, “and we have a legislative body composed of elected members, you can safely say that every member of the House will be a German. In that event it is easy to imagine the strings being pulled in Berlin, and the result would be equivalent to handing South-West Africa back to the German people. Roughly, there are 7000 men over 21 in South-West Africa, and the great majority are Germans. Moreover, as soon as the Union immigration laws are

applied to the mandated territory, we shall have a big influx of Germans.”³³¹

Despite these worries, Prime Minister Hertzog came to the conclusion that the best way to convince German agitators that “their ultimate destination [was] to be [incorporated] with the Union” was to allow for limited participation of white inhabitants of the Mandate in the governance of that territory.³³² To this end, the Prime Minister and several members of the Union Parliament put forward a bill in June 1925 to draft a constitution for Southwest Africa. The bill, which passed the following month, resulted in the creation of an eighteen-man legislative body for the Mandate that consisted of twelve members elected by enfranchised residents of the territory and six members nominated by the Union Parliament. While ultimate control of resources, Native Affairs, public services, railways and harbors, immigration, currency and the judicial system would remain with the Union, the white residents of the Mandate would, after a three-year waiting period, be allowed to oversee the police, the Burgher Force, education and land settlement in the Territory.³³³

Germans in Southwest Africa were furious over what they saw as the limitations imposed by the new constitution.³³⁴ Still, the German Party seized the opportunity to gain a foothold for Germans in the governance of the Mandate. In preparation for the Southwest African legislative elections, scheduled to take place in May 1926, the German

³³¹ BArch, R8023/532 (109), “German Scheming in the South-West,” *South Africa* (Capetown, November 28, 1924), Nr.1875, 358.

³³² BArch, R8023/532 (89-93), Konsulrat Haug to Theodor Seitz, April 20, 1925; Braum, *Southwest Africa Under Mandate*, 165-168.

³³³ *Ibid*, 160-163.

³³⁴ *Ibid*, 169-171; BArch, R8023/532 (26), “Politics in South-West Africa”, February 4, 1926.

Party launched an aggressive campaign on a platform promising to force the Union Government to modify the constitution with proposed amendments including:

1. Strict adherence to the Mandate charter to accelerate the development and expansion of home rule [for Southwest Africa];
2. Equal treatment of all three segments of the [white] population regarding the usage of language, schools, employment opportunities, enfranchisement and immigration;
3. Facilitation of the settlement and agricultural development of the land; [...]
6. Regulation of the 'Native question' to suit the unique conditions of the Southwest;
7. Social welfare and legislation to address the weakened economy;
8. Granting of sole proprietorship of resources, such as the diamond industry, and transit (Rail & Post) to the Southwest Mandate; [...]³³⁵

The platform seems to have resonated well in the community and Germans in the Mandate made good use of their vote. When the results of the election came in on 25 May 1926, Germans claimed six of the twelve elected seats on the new legislative body.³³⁶ A few days later, a German would also claim one of the two seats that were still in dispute at the time of the presentation of the official results.³³⁷ Although South Africans would be selected for the six appointed seats and win another five of the elective

³³⁵ BArch, R1001/1937 (261), Auswärtiges Amt Regierungsrat Franz to Auswärtiges Amt, "Die Presse Südwestafrikas im März 1926", March 1926.

³³⁶ BArch, R1001/1937 (268-275), Auswärtiges Amt, "Die Presse Suedwestafrikas im Monat Mai 1926", July 8, 1926.

³³⁷ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 171.

seats, Germans represented over one-third of the new legislature, making for a very vocal minority. The German victory showed the Union government that Southwest African Germans fully intended to participate in the governance of the Mandate to the utmost of their ability. They could not be ignored.

Despite the fact that the new body lacked any real legislative power and that true autonomy would prove little more than a pipe dream, in many ways Southwest African Germans won. From their new position, German demands for linguistic and educational considerations were taken more seriously. By 1932, German was made a *de facto*, albeit unofficial, working language of government in Southwest Africa and all documents concerning the Territory were available in translation. In 1958, German became the third administrative language of the Southwest African Legislative Assembly and by 1984, German would become the third official language of Namibia for a period of six years until independence. German-language classes and schools, such as the *Deutsche Höhere Privatschule*, persisted through widespread anti-German sentiment in South Africa during the Second World War and Smuts' 1945 efforts to deport all Germans based on fears of connections to Nazi Germany. They still exist today, with government subsidies no less. Beginning in the 1950s, German-language schools were allowed to offer the *Abitur* as an option for their students seeking to enter university.³³⁸ Newspapers in German, like the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, remain in circulation and there are still radio and television programs available in German. Pockets of Windhoek and Swakopmund retain a German "feel" in their architecture and layout. Though naturalized, throughout the twentieth-century, Southwest African Germans remained a distinct community and identified themselves

³³⁸ For more on the status of Germans in the Mandate during and after the Second World War, see Daniel J. Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Policies and National Identity in Namibia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 160-193.

first and foremost, not as South Africans nor as overseas denizens of Germany, but as *Deutsch Afrikaners* (German Africans).

A Colonial *Heimat* without an Empire

Throughout the duration of the Weimar Republic, German settlers from the larger colonies of German East Africa and German Southwest Africa pursued all avenues left open to them to preserve their imperially-constituted definitions of Germanness. Their time in Africa and the loss of the colonies as a result of the First World War provoked shifts in German settler communities' understandings of what "Germanness" was. The literature on ethnic German minorities in Poland and the Czech lands has carefully spelled out that "Germanness" lost its national territorial connection for these minority communities and became more of an insular, localized cultural identity.³³⁹ The same proved true for Germans in the Southwest African Mandate. They systematically distanced themselves from the Weimar Republic and the European boundaries of what it meant to be German, even going so far as to reject the concept of the nation-state itself. Colonial Germans repatriated from East Africa, rather than hoping for a new, powerful German state in Europe, spiritually abandoned Germany and re-inscribed the values and characteristics they associated with "Germanness" onto their lost African *Heimat*. Southwest African Germans took the next step, mentally splitting the nation from the state so that they might retain their German identity while pursuing other citizenship options in an effort to preserve their way of life in the African colony they knew as home.

³³⁹ Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*, 1-32, 54-89, 121-162, 238-241; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 1-12, 253-273.

As I will show in later chapters, new opportunities for German settlers to return to and participate in the further European colonization of Africa would become available in the years before and after the Locarno Treaties. The British and South Africans would make land eligible for purchase by Germans and would invite several to assist in the agricultural development and racial stratification of various colonies and Mandates in eastern Africa, the Cameroons and Namibia. Germany's entrance into the League of Nations would grant German citizens equal access in terms of travel to and residency within their former colonies turned Mandates. German colonialists hoped that the shifting diplomatic environment would allow them to use Colonial Germans who remained in or returned to Africa as bargaining chips in advocating for colonial restitution, just as their nationalist counterparts hoped that Germans in Alsace-Lorraine, Poland and Czechoslovakia would assist in their efforts to recover Germany's lost European territories.³⁴⁰ Yet, despite all their efforts, I demonstrate in the next chapter that the German Colonial Society and other colonialist organizations in Germany never managed to rally former settlers to their cause of reinstating the German nation-state to its imperial status. Similarly to "nationally indifferent" Germans in Poland and the Bohemian lands who lacked the territorial restitution aims of German Nationalists, German settlers in Africa, it seemed, did not share colonialist visions of grandeur.³⁴¹ The only restitution in which these Colonial Germans were interested was their personal restoration to the African continent.

³⁴⁰ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 143, 169-175, 194-203, 216-221, 228, 278, 325-326, 459-461, 469, 479, 481-482; Marks, *The Illusion of Peace*, 5, 12-13, 57, 77, 91-93, 102-104, 121-123, 146-150, 155-157; Henry Ashbury Turner, *Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 93, 190-196, 211-229.

³⁴¹ Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*; Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*; Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*.

Chapter Three**Grasping for a “Great New Future”:****The German Colonial Lobbies in Search of a United Platform**

1. Because we are a growing people that must operate in the future...more than ever before on our own ground and soil if we want to live independently.
2. Because we require territories for raw materials.
3. Because we must build up and expand our global trade, our global business again.
4. Because we must open up a broader arena of activity for our culture and our collective tasks.
5. Because we believe in the maintenance of our people, that it is heading for a great new future, if its world mission amongst the nations is correctly grasped.

—List of reasons for colonial restitution, published by the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*, 20 March 1919.³⁴²

³⁴² “Wir müssen unsere Kolonien zurückhalten,” *DKG* 36 (3), 20 March 1919 as quoted and translated by Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism in Germany*, 51-52.

As Germany's former colonial officials and repatriated settlers were coming to terms with their new "postcolonial" status, remolding their imperial identities and trying to find ways to adapt to the neo-colonialism of the League, other remnants of Germany's colonial ambitions also found themselves in need of repair: the organizations that comprised the German Colonial lobby. Without an empire, Colonial German and colonialist alike found themselves at a loss regarding what purpose and goals these organizations should pursue. The two largest surviving lobbies, the German Colonial Society (*DKG*) and its loose-affiliate, the Women's League (*Frauenbund*), faced new demands from their members as settlers, missionaries, and former officials petitioned the organizations for financial and legal assistance in hopes of restoring their colonial livelihoods and careers. Although their ranks would steadily increase after the reopening of the Tanganyika Territory to German immigration in 1925, in the early years of the Weimar Republic, both organizations saw drops in their numbers, as individuals found themselves unable or unwilling to pay membership and subscription dues as a result of inflation and other economic hardships.³⁴³ Members broke from the larger lobbies, establishing or resurrecting smaller, more localized colonial societies. Former settlers and missionaries pursued their own goals that diverged from those of the restitutionist colonial officials who, upon returning home, had come to dominate the leadership of the *DKG*. If the colonial lobbies were to survive and have any chance of speaking with a united voice, new strategies for evoking sympathy for the post-Versailles variant of the colonial cause needed to be established.

³⁴³ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 42; Christian Rogowski, "The 'Colonial Idea' in Weimar Cinema," in *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, ed. Volker Langbehn (London: Routledge, 2010), 220–238, 222. Schilling argues that the colonial lobbies saw a steady increase in their numbers throughout the 1920s, but neglects the precipitous drop in their membership numbers from 1919–1923, which Rogowski notes.

What follows is an analysis of the adaptation and reimagining of the three largest and most vocal of the German colonial societies in the Weimar period: the German Colonial Society, the Women's League and the *Kolonial Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* (Imperial Working Group on the Colonies, *KoRAG*). Each of these organizations made an effort at retooling itself to serve the needs of Colonial Germans in the Weimar era. Yet, despite all their efforts the *DKG* and other colonialist organizations in Germany never managed to unite the German Colonial bloc. Former officials, missionaries, and German settlers in and from Africa opportunistically adapted their understandings of nationality in pursuit of their own self-interests.³⁴⁴ The most difficult challenges that the German Colonial lobbies faced in the wake of the loss of the empire did not come from the German government or even from the League and the new Mandatory Powers, but rather from the cacophony of demands placed upon them by a diverse constituency.

Foundations of the Big Three: Origins of the Principal German Colonial Lobbies

While the *KoRAG* was a product of Germany's post-Versailles circumstances, the other two colonial lobbies that comprised Germany's 'Big Three'—the German Colonial Society and the Women's League—dated back to Germany's precolonial and colonial periods, each with rich histories.

The origin of the most influential interwar German colonial lobby, the German Colonial Society, lies in Germany's pre-colonial period. Agitation from small groups

³⁴⁴ This is very similar to individuals living on the borderlands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who opportunistically shifted between national and ethnic identities, as outlined in Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

within Germany for overseas colonies as part of platforms for wider concerns of nationalism, missionary zeal, navalism, commerce, population management and scientific inquiry was present in the German public sphere for most of the latter half of the nineteenth century.³⁴⁵ It was not until the early 1880s, however, that lobbies specifically dedicated to colonial expansion for Germany coalesced and began incorporating these other interests as cogs in their agendas. Two large, all-encompassing colonial interest groups—the *Deutscher Kolonialverein* (German Colonial Association) and the *Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation* (Society for German Colonization)—emerged in 1882 and 1884 respectively. The German Colonial Association was founded in 1882 by the naturalist Baron Heinrich von Maltzan, the traveler Ernst von der Brüggem, and Ernst Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, a politician. These men joined industrialists, some exploratory societies, and many boards of trade into this larger, overarching interest group to present a united front to the German government in their demands for the formation of a colonial policy.³⁴⁶ Soon after its foundation, however, the infamous explorer Carl Peters, not content with the policies of the Colonial Association, established his own competing group in 1884. The Society for German Colonization absorbed the remaining smaller interest groups who had not fallen in with the German Colonial Association as well as some who had become disenchanted with the Colonial Union and were seeking a new, more effective voice for their efforts.³⁴⁷

While the German Colonial Association sought a cultural and educational mission to support colonial endeavors already in place by German citizens, Peters' organization

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 25-132; Townsend, *Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918*; Townsend, *Origins of Modern German Colonialism, 1871-1885*; Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History*, 15-35.

³⁴⁶ Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History*, 21-35; Townsend, *Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918*, 88.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 82-83.

demanded immediate annexation by the German government of current German 'claims' as well as new colonies in areas yet to be settled.³⁴⁸ Despite the fact that these two groups squabbled with one another over the nature of German colonial policy, at the outbreak of the Lüderitz affair in Southwest Africa both groups aligned themselves with nationalist politicians over the condescension Britain had shown Bismarck and Imperial Germany. Though interest groups and the two societies had laid the foundation for German colonialism, it was the Lüderitz incident that, as Carl Peters put it, saved the movement from becoming only an elite club of idealists.³⁴⁹ The Lüderitz affair had been the latest in a series of diplomatic difficulties with England over German interests abroad, including the matter of reparations for Germans who had been deprived of property by the British in Fiji in 1883, the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1884 that excluded Germans from trade in the Congo River basin, and a host of other monopolistic actions by English merchants.³⁵⁰ Businessmen, nationalists, and Boards of Trade, with the assistance of the two large colonial societies, expressed their anger and frustration. Bismarck, aware of these groups' response to the most recent British challenge to German interests and at last convinced the opportune moment had come where a colonial policy would be beneficial to his diplomatic ambitions, issued a proclamation that the German Empire would defend Lüderitz in South West Africa, and on April 24, 1884, the German colonial empire was born.³⁵¹

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 84.

³⁴⁹ Peters, Carl. "Über die deutsche Kolonialpolitik," *Kolonial-Politische Korrespondenz*. 1. Jg. Berlin, 16. May 1885.

³⁵⁰ Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History*, 25-27; Townsend, *Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire 1884-1918*, 86-89.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 88.

Far from dying out after achieving their goal of a German colonial policy, these two societies united into the German Colonial Society in 1887 and continued to press for expansion of the colonial empire. At its founding in 1887, the *DKG* had nearly 15,000 members, steadily growing to upwards of 42,000 by 1914.³⁵² Following the loss of the overseas possessions in 1919, the organization needed once again to revive its older platform of pushing for a German colonial policy as it lobbied for colonial restitution well into the twentieth-century.³⁵³ The leadership of the *DKG* in the Weimar era was chiefly comprised of former colonial officials, all of whom had contacts with or were members of the National Liberal Party or the German Conservative Party (*DKP*, *Deutschkonservative Partei*), prior to the dissolution of both these parties in 1918, and became members of the left-liberal German Democratic Party (*DDP*), the national-liberal German People's Party (*DVP*) and the national-conservative German National People's Party (*DNVP*) in the post-Versailles political environment.³⁵⁴

In close association with the German Colonial Society was the *Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft* (Women's League of the German Colonial Society). Founded in 1907 under the name *Deutschkolonialer Frauenbund* (German Colonial Women's League), this procolonial women's movement was established by women from colonial and military officials' families or those who had familial or other ties with the *DKG*.³⁵⁵ In its infancy, the Women's League boasted a membership of a little over 4,000, but by 1914, it had garnered around 17,800 dues-paying members in 134 local chapters

³⁵² Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, 351; Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change After Bismarck* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 366.

³⁵³ Townsend, *Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire 1884-1918*, 83.

³⁵⁴ L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa, 1884-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 249-256.

³⁵⁵ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 132-133, 138-139.

across Germany.³⁵⁶ Contrary to its name, the Women's League also had a sizeable number of male members. Men, seeking cheaper annual dues than those demanded of them in the *DKG*, accounted for nearly 17 percent of membership in the Women's League by 1910.³⁵⁷

The majority of Women's League's members, like those of the *DKG*, were metropolitan colonialists. Many of them never saw the colonies firsthand. In fact, the first chairwoman of the Women's League to visit a colony was Hedwig von Bredow (chair 1920-1932), visited the former colony of Southwest Africa in 1927-1928 at the age of 75. Nicknamed *Mutter der Afrikaner* (Mother of the Germans in Africa), von Bredow made another set of journeys to Tanganyika, South Africa and Southwest Africa, beginning in 1931 and ending with her death in Tsumeb, Southwest Africa (now Namibia) in August 1932.³⁵⁸ On her voyages, she toured schools that the Women's League had established, visited German communities in the Mandates, and immersed herself in the colonial experience.³⁵⁹

Although the name would suggest otherwise and despite the tacit legal oversight by and presence of *DKG* representatives at the meetings of the Women's League from 1908 forward, the Women's League was technically independent of the *DKG*, and sometimes came into conflict with the male colonialist organization over differences in approach to the colonial question and accusations of "membership poaching."³⁶⁰ For the most part, however, the working relationship between the Women's League and the *DKG*

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 148, 156.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 149-150.

³⁵⁸ Wildenthal, "Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty," in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 339-359, 349.

³⁵⁹ Hedwig von Bredow, *Rund um Afrika. Briefe von Hedwig von Bredow, 1931-1932* (Berlin: Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft, 1932).

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 132-133, 144-145, 150-151.

was more congenial than the interactions between the colonial lobby and the more feminist-driven societies that were the contemporaries of the *Frauenbund*.³⁶¹ The chief role of this society during the colonial period was to promote the settlement in the colonies of German women of all classes for the preservation and cultivation of the “German family spirit.” To accomplish this, the Women’s League established work-training programs, education seminars on domestic economics and German culture for the future colonial spouse and mother, and financial assistance for travel.³⁶²

The goal of sending women to the colonies received support from male colonialists both within and outside the *DKG*. The result was an agreement in 1908 between the then German Colonial Women’s League and the German Colonial Society that gave the former the right to use the latter’s name—prompting the shift to the *Frauenbund der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft*. Additionally, this afforded the *Frauenbund* administration over the *DKG*’s women’s settlement operation that had begun in 1898 as well as funding to sponsor the ship passages for women bound for the colonies.³⁶³ As Lora Wildenthal has argued, this agreement was largely driven by concerns over miscegenation, particularly in the African colonies. Colonialists believed that it was the lack of “pure German women” that had prompted male settlers to seek out indigenous companionship in the colonies.³⁶⁴ The Social Darwinist premise of a “race war” of breeding emerged based on the notion that only the German woman could preserve Germanness in the colonies: “The German soldier has conquered the land with the sword, the German farmer and trader seek to develop its economic potential, but *the*

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 142-144.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 144-145.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 132-133, 142-172.

*German woman alone is called upon and able to keep it German.*³⁶⁵ Racial reproduction came to be the dominant argument for the presence of women in the colonies among both male and female colonialists in Germany and the centerpiece of German women's colonial activism.³⁶⁶ With the preservation of Germanness in the colonies as its principal role, the *Frauenbund* focused its efforts on cultural and economic contributions to the colonial movement rather than practicing the overt political lobbying of its male-administered counterpart, and it continued to do so well into the 1940s.³⁶⁷

The third major German colonial lobby, the *Koloniale Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* (*KoRAG*), is the only one of the three to have been founded in Germany's post-imperial period. Following the loss of the empire, a multitude of colonialist organizations had sprung up in Germany, founded by repatriated colonial officials and settlers and colonialists who were either disenchanted with the *DKG* or could no longer afford to pay their membership fees during hyperinflation in Weimar Germany. In an effort to merge the many colonial groups on the political stage, Georg Ludwig Rudolf von Maercker, the head of the *Deutscher Kolonialkriegerbund* (Federation of German Colonial Veterans), founded the *KoRAG* as a new umbrella organization in 1922. The goal of this new society was to form a bridge between the still quite large *DKG* as well as competing splinter groups, local groups, and missionary and commercial lobbies with the goal of coordinating and streamlining colonial activism in the Weimar Republic.³⁶⁸ Its membership, much like that of the *DKG*, chiefly consisted of merchants, bankers, government and military officials, and ex-colonial bureaucrats, all of whom also

³⁶⁵ *Frauenbund* flier, 1908, as translated by Wildenthal in *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 144.

³⁶⁶ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 133.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

³⁶⁸ Rogowski, "The 'Colonial Idea' in Weimar Cinema," 222.

maintained membership in one or more of the smaller German colonial lobbies. Although it had its own periodicals, its own publishing house, and separate meetings, the leadership of the *KoRAG* overlapped significantly with that of the *DKG*. The *DKG*, particularly during Seitz's tenure as president of both the Colonial Society and the Imperial Working Group, monopolized the platform of the larger but younger colonialist organization with a focus on colonial restitution, to the detriment of the concerns of the smaller colonialist lobbies that comprised the *KoRAG*.

The colonial movement in Germany remained active into the Nazi era as well, but lost its autonomy as part of the Nazi Party's policy of *Gleichschaltung* ("coordination"). As Claudia Koonz argues, Nazi "coordination" was part of a larger effort to control everyday life in Germany, maintaining continuity with the past by preserving aspects of organizations and governmental structures while simultaneously transforming these entities with an infusion of Nazi administration and ideology so that the " 'same stream [flowed] through the [German] ethnic body politic.'"³⁶⁹ In 1936, the German Colonial Society, the Imperial Working Group on the Colonies, and the Women's League, along with several other colonialist organizations, were absorbed into the Nazi Party's *Reichskolonialbund* (Reich Colonial League).³⁷⁰ Some colonial lobbyists, such as the last chairwoman of the Women's League, Agnes von Boemcken, were convinced Nazis and had joined the party in early 1933.³⁷¹ Heinrich Schnee, then president of the *DKG*, also joined the NSDAP in 1933 shortly after his return from service on the League's

³⁶⁹ Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 72-76, quote on 73. For more on *Gleichschaltung* ("coordination"/"Nazification") of clubs, societies and organizations, see Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power, 1933-1939* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 14 and Richard Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), 380-390.

³⁷⁰ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 43; Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 180-200.

³⁷¹ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 182.

Manchurian Commission.³⁷² Like several of the leaders of other German colonial lobbies who joined the Nazi Party in 1936, Schnee sought membership in the Nazi Party in an opportunistic fashion, hoping for a stronger colonial policy from the new regime if he and other Colonial Germans met it halfway. Although Schnee and other leaders of the colonial lobbies had tried to cultivate a relationship with the Nazis before their seizure of power, even flirting with closer ties as early as 1928, in the end, they would be disappointed.³⁷³ The German colonial lobbies were renamed, made answerable to the Nazi Party, and repurposed and, when necessary, censored to suit the needs of the propaganda and policies of the Nazi regime.³⁷⁴

With the loss of the colonial possessions, the German colonial lobbies necessarily underwent a crisis of organizational purpose and goals. The *DKG*, which had focused its efforts in the colonial era on the maintenance and expansion of the German Empire overseas, now was forced to retool itself towards the goals of colonial restitution, preservation of the memory of Germany's colonial pasts, and pressuring the Weimar government for a new colonial policy. The *Frauenbund*, which had long focused its efforts on the education of women for colonial life and the settlement of German women to preserve German culture and racial purity abroad, now found itself occupied with the arduous task of navigating around new legal restrictions and finding funds needed in order to begin the resettlement of Colonial German repatriates of all ages and genders in

³⁷² Ibid., 182-183. For more on Schnee's role in the Manchurian Commission, see Chapter 6 of my work. Generally, the Nazi party looked down on Germans who joined in 1933 as opportunists, referring to those who joined in March 1933 as "Märzgefallene" and in May 1933 as "Maiveilchen." For more on this, see Juliane Wetzel, "Die NSDAP zwischen Öffnung und Mitgliedersperre," in *Wie wurde man Parteigenosse? Die NSDAP und ihre Mitglieder*, ed. Wolfgang Benz (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2009), 74-80. In Schnee's case, opportunism was an accurate assessment of his move to the party from the *DNVP*. It is unclear if the Nazis took this stance towards all Colonial Germans who joined the Nazi Party.

³⁷³ Ibid., 180-183.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 180-200; Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich. A New History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 219-238.

Africa and the Pacific. *KoRAG*, born after the loss of the empire, became the weak adhesive struggling to hold the various facets of Germany's colonial interests together, while missionary societies, splinter groups, and individuals sought their own distinct and often mutually exclusive objectives in restoring their particular views of what it meant to be a Colonial German.

The Colonial Officials' Club: The DKG and KoRAG under Theodor Seitz

The German Colonial Society had two related aims in the Weimar Period—the preservation of Germany's colonial legacy and the complete restitution of Germany's lost colonies. In an effort to control the narrative of Germany's colonial past, the *DKG*, with assistance from *KoRAG*, arranged for public demonstrations and publications throughout the 1920s to remind Germans and the world of Germany's colonial heritage. In a turnaround from their indifferent stance towards broader membership in the early days of Germany's imperial expansion, in the interwar period, German colonial organizations, such as the Colonial Society, forcefully pursued more economically and socially diverse constituencies.³⁷⁵ In 1926 alone, the *DKG* hosted 850 colonial events that ranged in size from intimate private gatherings where the elite could rub elbows with colonial heroes like General Lettow-Vorbeck to the giant community displays of the *Kolonialwoche* (Colonial Week).³⁷⁶ Following the model of colonial era exhibitions, "Colonial Week" festivities included dioramas of colonial life, parades, musical performances, and lectures from "experts" on the former colonies, speeches from the leaders of the various colonial lobbies, and memorial celebrations for German soldiers who had fallen in colonial wars

³⁷⁵ Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 1-35. Short argues the colonial lobbies had been ambivalent about expanding their constituencies in the early days of the German overseas empire.

³⁷⁶ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 44.

or the colonial theatre of the First World War.³⁷⁷ In line with the colonial irredentist views of its leadership, the *DKG* routinely published pieces on Germany's colonial past in its Berlin-based organ, *Der Kolonialdeutsche (The Colonial German)*.³⁷⁸ These articles and editorials often included damning criticisms of the Mandatory Powers, demands for colonial restitution, and updates on ongoing German missionary and settlement activity around the globe. The *KoRAG* and the *DKG*, through their own publishing firms and those sympathetic to German dreams of overseas imperialism, also helped print and distribute repatriated settlers' and colonial soldiers' memoirs and political works by former colonial officials and colonial irredentists, such as Heinrich Schnee.

Schilling's thesis regarding the desire of Colonial Germans to create a "collective memory" of colonialism for all Germans rings true in the case of the colonial lobbies.³⁷⁹ Unlike repatriated settlers, who used memories of colonial life to distinguish themselves from other Germans through the creation of an African *Heimat*, the leaders of the *DKG*, *KoRAG*, and the *Frauenbund* strove to make all Germans recognize the benefits of colonialism and remember Germany's colonial heritage and contributions. For the German Colonial Society and *KoRAG*, the goal of these activities, initially focused solely on Germany's domestic political sphere, was to keep pressure on the new Weimar government to pursue a colonial policy by spreading enthusiasm for colonialism among Germans outside the ranks of the colonial societies. The coordination of these actions necessitated the formation and maintenance of a complex network of communication

³⁷⁷ Advertisement and Schedule of Events for "Kolonial Woche Berlin 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 28 March 1925, 63; David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 25-64, 148-212; Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History*, 186-192; Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 80-108.

³⁷⁸ For more on German colonial irredentism, see Chapter 1 above.

³⁷⁹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 9-16.

between the leaders of the various colonial societies, contacts in the German Foreign Office, bureaucrats in German consulates and embassies around the world, former German colonial officials, and editors at various newspapers and publishing houses. The spider at the center of this web of informants and contacts was Theodor Seitz, former governor of German Southwest Africa and president of both the *DKG* and *KoRAG* until 1930.

If Schnee—as the most persistent propagandist calling for German colonial restitution—was the vocal chords of the German Colonial Society, Seitz was the colonial lobby’s nervous system, sensing, collecting, and responding to every scrap of information that might possibly aid or threaten German colonial irredentism. Seitz repeatedly harried the Weimar Foreign Office, Chancellery, and Presidency with demands that they keep the *DKG* informed of all international affairs relating to the former colonies and urged the government to adopt a stronger position on the restitution of Germany’s colonial empire. One of the earliest records of Seitz requesting information on behalf of the *DKG* comes from a press report he received. The cover letter, from a lower-ranking official in the German Foreign Office, is a response to Seitz’s earlier request for information and intelligence gathered by the Foreign office regarding Southwest Africa. The official, Elester, became one of Seitz’s chief correspondents in the German Foreign Office, supplying the former governor with a steady stream of information and new contacts over the course of the next decade.³⁸⁰ Between 1923 and 1933—three years after Seitz gave up his leadership positions in the *DKG* and *KoRAG*—thousands of pages of material flowed between the German Foreign Office and Seitz, including summaries of German Foreign

³⁸⁰ BArch, R8023/537, Auswärtiges Amt Regierungsrat Elester to Theodor Seitz, May 1924. A copy of Seitz’s original request sent to the Foreign Office, unfortunately, has not been preserved.

Office meetings on colonial policy, minutes of sessions of the *Reichstag* where the League of Nations, the Mandates and Germany's colonial history were discussed, personal letters to and from bureaucrats and Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann and his successor Julius Curtius, and press reports and newspaper clippings from both domestic and foreign papers concerning the former African colonies, various international conferences, and the Mandatory Powers.³⁸¹ Seitz also maintained personal correspondence with German consular officials and ambassadors in Great Britain, the United States, France, and the Mandates of British Cameroon, French Cameroon, South African administered Southwest Africa, Tanganyika, and Samoa.³⁸² As President of the *DKG* and *KoRAG*, Seitz insisted as well on receiving minutes of the meetings of all the smaller colonial societies that had ties to either the *DKG* and *KoRAG*, such as the Women's League and the Federation of German Colonial Veterans. He also kept a watchful eye on the publications and activities of the various German missionary societies.³⁸³

In addition to its network of connections and correspondence in the German Foreign Office, the colonial lobby had associates and sympathizers in the Reichstag that Seitz called upon or threatened for support. German colonialists were fairly well-represented in Germany's parliamentary body. There were German colonialist members in almost all the political parties active during the Weimar period. Still, Colonial Germans and colonial lobbies were not equally influential across all parties, and were even opposed by the German Social Democratic Party (*SPD*) and the German Communist

³⁸¹ BArch, R1001/937; BArch, R8023/529; BArch, R8023/531; BArch, R8023/532; BArch, R8023/537; BArch, R8023/541; BArch, R8023/542; BArch, R8023/543; BArch, R8023/548; BArch, R8023/1106.

³⁸² BArch, R8023/529; BArch, R8023/531; BArch, R8023/532; BArch, R8023/537; BArch, R8023/548; BArch, R8023/555; BArch, R8023/558.

³⁸³ BArch, R8023/157; BArch, R8023/158; BArch, R8023/181; BArch, R8023/484.

Party (*KPD*). Several parties provided the colonial lobby with at least lip-service support for their claims and demands for restitution.³⁸⁴ The German People's Party (*DVP*) was perhaps most committed to colonial restitution. This national-liberal party represented the interests of industrialists and Germany's upper middle-class, many of whom had had investments—however small—in Germany's colonial endeavors. The most telling indicator of this party's support for colonial irredentism was the fact that Heinrich Schnee served a *DVP* representative in the Reichstag from 1924-1932.³⁸⁵ The national-conservative German National People's Party (*DNVP*) was generally less enthused about colonialism, having fewer ties to the colonies, but it considered the seizure of the colonies an affront to Germany's prestige and therefore embraced restitution as a "national" cause.³⁸⁶ Although the liberal German Democratic Party (*DDP*) was often divided on the issue of colonialism, with some of its members staunchly opposed to imperial ventures as either immoral or impractical, it also represented business interests—particularly bankers—who had previously held stakes in overseas expansion. Though it was not overly public in its support, the *DDP* recognized that a sizeable number of its members labeled themselves "colonialists." The party was thus at least mindful and considerate of the demands of the colonial lobby. Hjalmar Schacht, an economist who viewed colonial restitution as key to Germany's economic rebirth, was a member of this party until 1926, and Bernhard Dernburg, a banker who had served as Germany's Colonial Secretary, was one of its Reichstag deputies.³⁸⁷ The Nazi Party (*NSDAP*) had a mercurial relationship with the colonial lobby that will be addressed in more depth in the conclusion of this

³⁸⁴ Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, 11.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

dissertation. Of all the political parties, Seitz maintained closer ties with the *DVP*, the *DNVP*, and the *DDP* throughout his tenure as *DKG* president.

Not all parties were as supportive of colonial restitution, but Seitz nonetheless made efforts to stay in touch with all but the Communists. The German Center Party was largely ambivalent on the matter of colonialism, but being a Catholic party, there was at least tacit support for restitution if it aided missionary endeavors.³⁸⁸ On principle, many members of the *SPD* opposed imperialism, and the party generally made these views part of its platform during the Weimar era. Yet there had been a wing of the German Social Democratic Party that had supported German colonialism, under the belief that Germans could better see to the welfare of the indigenous populations and eventually tutor them towards a socialist state. Additionally, the Trade Union Movement within the *SPD* considered colonies an economic necessity for Germany's development.³⁸⁹ The German colonial movement had hopes that *SPD* opposition to restitution would eventually dissolve and tried to maintain ties with the party to that end.³⁹⁰ On the whole, however, the Social Democratic Party was more focused on Germany's other foreign policy concerns—such as relations with the Soviet Union—and the domestic demands of its constituency. The German Communist Party (*KPD*) took the strongest stance against colonialism, even going so far as to protest Germany's eventual selection of a member to the League's Permanent Mandates Commission in 1927 as a perpetuation of Europe's oppression of colonial subjects, that is the global proletariat.³⁹¹

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13; Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft und Interfraktionelle Koloniale Vereinigung des Reichstags, *Deutschland in den Kolonien* (Berlin: Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, 1926), 30-32, 94-95.

³⁹¹ Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, 14.

Seitz used his vast information network to keep abreast of developments in the former colonies and imperial circles around the world, as well as to police the presentation of Germany's colonial legacy. He enlisted this material, often manipulatively, as evidence in argumentative letters to Germany's elected officials and Foreign Office functionaries, encouraging them to intervene in League Mandates System affairs such as the debates over the Naturalization of Germans in South African-administered Southwest Africa (1922-1924, covered in the previous chapter) and over Lord Amery's plan to federate British colonies in East Africa with the Tanganyika Mandate (1927-1933).³⁹² Seitz also pounced on any criticism of Germany's colonial record that he spotted in domestic and foreign press reports, defending Germany's colonial policies in acerbic editorials and venomous letters to detractors, especially if the denigrations of Germany's colonial past emerged from German missionaries or ex-German Colonial officials—like Wilhelm Solf, the former governor of Samoa and an ardent opponent of colonial restitution. The Colonial Society President shared most of this information with fellow former colonial governors and bureaucrats—especially Heinrich Schnee—and tried to synchronize responses to condemnations of Germany's role in the European “civilizing mission.”

As President of the *KoRAG*, Seitz arranged for talks for, presentations by, and regular meetings between leaders and prominent members of the *DKG*, the *Frauenbund*, and the smaller colonial societies in an effort to unify their aims.³⁹³ From 1923-1925, upon hearing rumors of a potential revision to Versailles at what would become the Locarno Conference, Seitz attempted to launch a large-scale press and publicity

³⁹² BArch, R8023/531; BArch, R8023/532; BArch, R8023/548; BArch, R8023/555; BArch, R8023/558.

³⁹³ BArch, R8023/1106; BArch, R8023/537; BArch, R8023/541; BArch, R8023/542; BArch, R8023/543; BArch, R8023/544; BArch, R8023/548.

campaign to influence domestic and international opinion in favor of colonial restitution.³⁹⁴ Colonial German lobbies hoped that the Locarno talks heralded the return of empire and an end to Germany's banishment from the work of the "civilizing mission" and the humiliating experience of being a "postcolonial state in a still colonial world."³⁹⁵ Yet, if the goal of at least partial colonial restitution were to be realized, Seitz recognized that the *DKG* and *KoRAG* would have to make enough noise in the press and flood the German Foreign Office's mailbox to ensure that Colonial German interests were not forgotten at the negotiation tables.³⁹⁶

These efforts resulted in failure at the Locarno Conference of 1925, but despite this setback, Seitz continued to use his position within the colonial lobby to push domestic and international politics toward the goal of a new colonial empire for

³⁹⁴ BArch, R8023/541; BArch, R8023/542 (5-9), 21 July 1926, Letter from Seitz to Oberbürgermeister Lohnmeyer; BArch, R8023/542 (52-53), 5 May 1926, Letter from Seitz to Schnee; Published letter from Seitz to President Hindenburg originally written on 11 May 1925, *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 29 May 1925. Hindenburg's answer, which was also published in *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, came two months later and, though calling upon Germans to remember the sacrifices of German soldiers in the colonies and the fact that "Germany cannot remain without colonies," made no promises to pressure Stresemann to seek colonial restitution as a goal. Hindenburg's reply to Seitz's public letter, *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 July 1925; „Berliner Kolonialwoche," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 28 March 1925, 58; Advertisement and Schedule of Events for "Kolonial Woche Berlin 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 28 March 1925; "Kolonialwoche Berlin 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 April 1925; "Kolonial-Tagungen München 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 29 May 1925; „Die Kolonialtagungen in München, 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 June 1925 .

³⁹⁴ "Erklärungen über Mandatsmächte," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 June 1925; "Die Kolonialdebatte im Reichstag," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 June 1925; "Das Fiasco des Mandatssystem," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 July 1925; "Deutschland und der Völkerbund," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 September 1925; "Die Verhandlungen Locarno und die deutschen Kolonien," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 October 1925; "Die Mandatsfrage," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 October 1925; "Ausbreitung der Schlafkrankheit im ehemaligen Deutsch-Ostafrika," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 October 1925; "Zwischen Locarno und Genf," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 January 1926; "Koloniale Aussichten bei einem Eintritt Deutschlands in den Völkerbund," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 February 1926; Theodor Seitz, "Verlangt Italien Kolonialmandate?," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 February 1926; "Wie der Völkerbund irreführt wird," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 March 1926; "Die deutschen Kolonialeisenbahnen unter Mandatserschaft," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 16 April 1926; William H. Dawson, „Die Rückgabe der Kolonien—ein Gebot der Ehre Englands," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 June 1926; „Völkerbund und Kolonien," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 19 July 1926.

³⁹⁵ Phrase borrowed from title of Klotz, "The Weimar Republic: A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World."

³⁹⁶ For more on the German colonial lobbies' efforts to influence the Locarno Treaties in their favor, see Chapter 4.

Germany. Through his connections in the German Foreign Office, threats of protest against the Weimar government, and missives to Germany's conservative political parties menacing them with loss of support from the colonial lobby, Seitz was able to influence the selection of Germany's members on the Permanent Mandates Commission in 1927 and 1930.³⁹⁷

In later years, Seitz attempted to bypass Weimar's bureaucracy to engage with the League's international governance directly, and was able to direct some coordinated assaults on the Mandates System through petitions to the PMC.³⁹⁸ By and large, however, Seitz was unable to amalgamate the diverse set of demands made by different communities of Colonial Germans and German colonialists behind an all-encompassing platform pursuing colonial restitution. Nor was he able to convince any of Weimar's interwar administrations that pursuit of a colonial policy was the right course of action for a recovering Germany. Although the *DKG* and *KoRAG* did seek to expand their constituencies, these organizations failed because they continued to rely on the same

³⁹⁷ BArch, R8023/537, 9 December 1927; Theodor Seitz to Auswärtiges Amt and Gustav Stresemann, 9 December 1927; BArch, R8023/543, 11 January 1928, Deutscher Kolonialverein to Seitz, 11 January 1928; BArch, R8023/543, Ludwig Kastl to Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft and Seitz, 14 April 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (416), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 9 January 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Theodor Seitz to Reichsaussenminister Curtius, 21 February 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Seitz to Wilhelm Solf, 28 February 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Solf to Baron von Zastrow, 21 March 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Zastrow to Seitz, 24 March 1930; Seitz to Zastrow, 25 March 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Theodor Seitz to Auswärtiges Amt, 22 January 1930; Seitz to Baron von Zastrow, 25 March 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Seitz to Julius Ruppel, 17 May 1930. Chapter 5 focuses on the interwar careers of two colonial officials, Dr. Ludwig Kastl and Dr. Julius Ruppel—former bureaucrats who had served in the African colonies, each of whom became a German member on the Permanent Mandates Commission—and their interactions with the German Foreign Office, the German colonial lobbies, and fellow Mandates Commissioners. See also, Sean Andrew Wempe, “From Unfit Imperialists to Fellow Civilizers: German Colonial Officials as Imperial Experts in the League of Nations, 1919-1933,” *German History*, Forthcoming (2016).

³⁹⁸ BArch, R8023/542 (73), 16 January 1926, Letter from H. Ziemann to Seitz; BArch, R8023/542 (71-72), 18 January 1926, Letter from Seitz to H. Ziemann; BArch, R8023/542 (63-64), 26 January 1926, H. Ziemann sends a copy to Seitz of a letter from Dr. Olsen to H. Ziemann; BArch, R8023/542 (62), 29 January 1926, Letter from Seitz to H. Ziemann; BArch, R8023/537; BArch, R8023/543; BArch, R8023/544; PA AA, R96546 (124-127, 179-182).

antiquated strategies of *Honoratiorenpolitik*, just like their late imperial predecessors.³⁹⁹ While claiming to represent the German public, the German Colonial Society and its leadership did not successfully engage in mass politics and mass culture. They failed to embrace new technologies like the radio and film and were incapable of making arguments for colonial restitution that would appeal to non-aristocratic and non-bourgeois Germans. Leaders like Seitz continually referred to the importance of popular support of colonialism and touted the will of the German people for overseas imperialism as an imaginary club to be wielded menacingly against government officials when they did not step in line with colonial irredentist views. Yet, these interest group leaders did not regularly converse with individuals—Colonial Germans or otherwise—below their own social station. Seitz in particular preferred to interact directly with political movers-and-shakers, only deigning to correspond with former settlers and other members of lower classes when he felt he needed to “educate” them on what they should be doing to further colonial restitution or in order to chastise them for what he deemed their mistakes and false information.

Ultimately, Seitz’s abrasive personality, combined with the domination of the *DKG*’s and *KoRAG*’s leadership positions by former colonial officials of one mind with Seitz on the matter of restitution, alienated the largest German colonial lobby. Pragmatic politicians and Germany’s repatriated settlers and missionaries, all of whom were working towards more practical and limited solutions to Germany’s “colonial question,” often disagreed with the large colonial lobbies’ positions and practices. At its height in 1914, the German Colonial Society had boasted a membership of just over 42,000.⁴⁰⁰ By

³⁹⁹ Short, *Magic Lantern Empire*, 22-37.

⁴⁰⁰ Eley, *Reshaping the German Right*, 366.

1923, it had nearly dwindled out of existence.⁴⁰¹ Although the loss of members would be remedied with gradual annual increases following the reopening of Tanganyika to German immigration and the stabilization of the German economy in 1925 which somewhat eased the burden of annual dues, the damage to the lobby's cohesion was irreparable. Neglecting fundraising efforts and membership drives in favor of monotone direct political action on the part of himself and his former colonial colleagues in pursuit of restitution, Seitz found himself faced with a population of Colonial Germans that did not view the German Colonial Society as representative of its interests and concerns.

German Women for Resettlement or a New Empire? The Frauenbund, 1919-1929

Lora Wildenthal suggests that the typically accepted female role of working outside of formal politics gave the German women's colonial movement a slight advantage over the male-dominated groups in adjusting to the new circumstances of Germany's loss of Great Power and imperial status.⁴⁰² In practice, unlike its male counterpart, the *Frauenbund* carried on in much the same way as it always had prior to the loss of the colonies. Under the leadership of Hedwig von Bredow, the Women's League organized educational events in the form of lectures and talks, such as the annual "Colonial Festival," to promote awareness of the harsh environment of the former colonies and instruct the public on the skills needed to successfully tame the wilderness and bring the "blessings" of German civilization to Africa.⁴⁰³ Remnants of the Women's League's colonial era 'finishing' schools for soon-to-be colonial wives and female

⁴⁰¹ Rogowski, "The 'Colonial Idea' in Weimar Cinema," 222.

⁴⁰² Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 6,172-201; Wildenthal, "Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty," in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*,343-353.

⁴⁰³ BArch, R8023/157; BArch, R8023/158.

domestic servants persisted in Germany and the former colonies—particularly in Southwest Africa and later, East Africa—throughout the Weimar Period. Infrastructure and organization from these schools was also used to maintain existing and establish new German-language schools for German children in the Mandates.⁴⁰⁴

In order to finance these lectures and schools, the *Frauenbund* continued to seek new members from whom to draw annual dues and sought to expand the number of subscriptions to its periodical, *Kolonie und Heimat (Colony and Home)*.⁴⁰⁵ Unlike the *DKG*, the Women's League was remarkably adept at making gains in membership and subscriptions. Like the Colonial Society, the Women's League had noticed a precipitous drop in its membership during and immediately after the war. By 1925, its numbers had dropped to just 6,500.⁴⁰⁶ Five years later, however, the Women's League rebounded beyond its prewar levels and reached a membership of 20, 560.⁴⁰⁷ By 1934, it boasted 26,600 members among over three hundred local chapters, forty of which were in Africa.⁴⁰⁸ The periodical, *Colony and Home*, had three hundred and fifty-seven subscribers in sixty-one cities in two countries and one Mandate by 1927.⁴⁰⁹

In addition to these strategies, the *Frauenbund* hosted lavish fundraising events, like the *Kolonialball (Colonial Ball)* held at the Berlin Zoological Gardens, in order to raise money and support for the organizations activities.⁴¹⁰ From 1920 to 1936, the Berlin

⁴⁰⁴ Wildenthal, "Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty," in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 348-351; BArch, R8023/158 (21), Essay by Seitz commending the *Frauenbund* for the opening of a German-language school for women in Southwest Africa.

⁴⁰⁵ Translation of the periodical's title comes from Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*.

⁴⁰⁶ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 183.

⁴⁰⁷ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 42.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁰⁹ BArch, R8023/157 (102-192), 1927 List of Subscribers to *Kolonie und Heimat*. Subscribers lived in Germany, Poland, and the Mandate of Southwest Africa.

⁴¹⁰ BArch, R8023/158 (6), 1 November 1929, Letter from Frau Rechenburg to Seitz, Invitation to the *Kolonialball* to be hosted by the *Frauenbund* branch in Gross-Berlin on 11. January 1930; BArch,

chapter of the Women's League hosted the annual "Colonial Ball" at the beginning of each year.⁴¹¹ Hailed by some as a traditional social event of the Berlin Winter season, the attendance of the colonial balls was comprised of representatives of Germany's political, colonial, military and merchant elite. In 1928, 3, 500 guests attended.⁴¹² Some of the most prominent ball-goers were former governors, shipping magnates from Hamburg and Bremen, generals like Lettow-Vorbeck, and even President Hindenburg's wife.⁴¹³ The events guided guests through romanticized facsimiles of the former colonies in Africa and the Pacific. Potential donors and politicians were surrounded by exotic animals collected from the former colonies, introduced to dishes and entertainment supposedly unique to regions of Africa and Polynesia, and shown ethnographic exhibits documenting 'life' in Germany's former overseas possessions. The *Frauenbund* sought to remind Weimar's elite of the scientific and cultural achievements of Germany during its brief colonial period. With alcohol, food, and dancing, they hoped to loosen this same group's purse strings just enough to provide the *Frauenbund* with the funds needed to operate the schools, the periodicals, and the talks that kept Germany's colonial culture alive. Although the *Kolonialball* offered an opportunity for more prominent Colonial Germans to satisfy their "thirst" for the good old days of overseas imperialism, it was more than just a "dream state" in which Germany's colonial elite "could act out their yearning for reinstatement of the former colonies without political repercussions."⁴¹⁴ This method of raising colonial awareness in Germany had very real financial and political consequences

R8023/158 (99), 15 October 1927, Letter from Frau von Rechenburg on behalf of *Frauenbund* inviting Seitz to the *Kolonialball* in January 1928. BArch, R8023/157 (64), 17 January 1923, A letter from the Ostafrikaner Verband e.V. sent to the *Frauenbund*.

⁴¹¹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 44.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42, 41-61.

for the German colonial lobby. The lavish “Colonial Ball,” although important raising funds for the Women’s League’s educational efforts run, alienated repatriated settlers, many of whom found themselves part of a struggling lower middle-class in Weimar. Decadent events like these facilitated the estrangement of former settlers seeking a return to their homes in Africa or the Pacific from the larger colonial lobbies, leading to fractures within the Colonial German bloc.

The *Frauenbund* hosted educational talks and benefit events and published educational materials and periodicals on colonial life and Germanness sent to German homes abroad, but these were not the only efforts on which the organization expended its energies. The Women’s League also pursued one other key Colonial German ambition in the Weimar period: resettlement. The goal of enabling the return of Colonial German repatriates to the colonies, however, was not a task the Women’s League had chosen for itself; rather, this herculean chore was forced upon the *Frauenbund* by the *DKG*, Theodor Seitz, and numerous German settlers repatriated from the former colonies. The Women’s League had always managed and financed the settlement of German women in the colonies to satisfy colonialist hopes of preserving German racial and cultural purity abroad.⁴¹⁵

In the Weimar era, however, this older purpose of the organization received a drastic overhaul. , Seitz and the *DKG* unofficially placed the *Frauenbund* in charge of managing travel support for German women seeking to find a home for themselves in Africa or the Pacific. In addition, the Women’s League was tasked with overseeing the distribution of funds intended for the resettlement of all German colonial repatriates as

⁴¹⁵ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 132-133, 142-172.

well as welfare for Colonial Germans starting their lives anew in the Weimar Republic.⁴¹⁶ There was precedent for the Women's League engaging in welfare assistance for stranded Colonial Germans. In the summer of 1914, the Women's League had provided loans and financial assistance to settlers from the African colonies who had been visiting family and were unable to travel home because of the war.⁴¹⁷ Moreover, from the Napoleonic period onward, German women increasingly took on the role of social workers. As Jean Quæterart has argued, "women in voluntary philanthropic service under dynastic state patronage [...] acquired a civic identity through the public roles and activities that were named 'patriotic.'"⁴¹⁸ In a trend that continued well into the Weimar Republic, albeit in adapted forms, aristocratic and bourgeois women often took the lead in philanthropic endeavors, founding and running organizations that afforded women opportunities to work outside the home by engaging in the welfare and charitable activities that were deemed an extension of the woman's role in the household.⁴¹⁹ Therefore, it is likely that Seitz reassigned the welfare tasks related to repatriated settlers to the Women's League not only as a convenient way to free himself of the burden so that the male-dominated Colonial Society could instead pursue direct political action for colonial restitution, but also as a result of the cultural view of social work and charities as women's work.

In part, Seitz facilitated this transfer of welfare functions through some astute shuffling of correspondence. Between 1921 and 1927, the German Colonial Society and the Women's League received numerous letters from former settlers and missionaries

⁴¹⁶ BArch, R8023/181.

⁴¹⁷ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 189.

⁴¹⁸ Jean Quæterart, *Staging Philanthropy: Patriotic Women and the National Imagination in Dynastic Germany, 1813-1916* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 6.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 293-304; Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class. Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (London: Oxford University Press, 1991), 192-218, 229-234; Sun Hong Young, *Welfare, Modernity and the Weimar State, 1919-33* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), 141-180.

asking for financial or legal assistance in returning to the colonies, the majority of whom were seeking a return to Southwest Africa or East Africa.⁴²⁰ The male and female settlers posed such questions as how best to return to Africa, what amount of money would be needed to start over, how much financial support they could expect from the Women's League or the German government, what paperwork would be required by the new Mandatory Powers, and whether the former colonies were still open to German immigration.⁴²¹ Seitz referred all inquirers to the Women's League, informing them that the *DKG* regularly provided the Women's League with funds for these purposes but that the *DKG* was not in charge of resettlement.⁴²²

Organizing funds for welfare and resettlement of repatriates, often when monetary support for such endeavors was non-existent, was a fiscally and politically arduous chore for the Women's League. The funds to which Seitz referred—which totaled a mere 12,000 Marks in 1921—was the Women's League's annual budget for day-to-day maintenance of the organization.⁴²³ None of it was earmarked for resettlement. More often than not, the Women's League was put in the difficult position of informing Colonial German repatriates that funds for resettlement or financial aid were not available. With the average cost of transport, legal paperwork, and establishing a homestead for a German emigrating from Hamburg to Windhoek costing anywhere from 800 to 20,000 Marks and thousands of repatriated Colonial Germans seeking assistance, petitioners were informed that neither *Frauenbund* nor the Weimar government's

⁴²⁰ BArch, R8023/181.

⁴²¹ BArch, R8023/181 (40-41), 4 January 1921, Letter from Paul Wache—a former office assistant from the German colonial office in Togo now living in Berlin-Schöneberg—to the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*.

⁴²² BArch, R8023/181 (25-28, 40-41), Series of Seitz's responses to and letters from repatriates from German Southwest Africa, January 1921.

⁴²³ BArch, R8023/157 (92), 15 October 1921, Letter from Theodor Seitz to Else Frobenius.

Reichsministerium für Wiederaufbau (Kolonialamt) had the ability to cover resettlement expenses.⁴²⁴

Despite its inability to offer funding, the *Frauenbund* did endeavor to assist Colonial German repatriates seeking emigration back to imperial livelihoods in other ways. The Women's League provided these individuals with estimates on the cost of travel and settlement in the new Mandates and other European colonies. The Women's League also provided petitioners with as much advice as the organization could provide on the visa application process for entry into the Mandates, including costs, where to submit the applications for entry passes, and what questions to expect on the application.⁴²⁵ The continuation of the *Frauenbund*'s domestic service academies, which trained young German women for work in the colonial sphere, as well as scholarships to these schools allowed several German women to seek employment in British, Belgian and German homes in Africa as nannies and maids, often in European colonies that had never been part of Germany's overseas empire.⁴²⁶ The Women's League also encouraged missionaries and nurses to seek assistance from other organizations, such as the Red Cross, when pursuing a station in Africa.⁴²⁷ As will be shown later in this chapter, however, the continuation of strategies based on social, educational, and fundraising functions which the Women's League repurposed during the Weimar Period for informal colonialism and resettlement in non-German territories in Africa also exposed its leadership to criticism from and conflict with the *DKG* and other recently-formed,

⁴²⁴ BArch, R8023/181 (9), 16 January 1922, Letter from Frau Maria-Magdalena Oppermann to the *DKG*, forwarded to the *Frauenbund*; BArch, R8023/181 (8), 17 January 1922, Letter from *Frauenbund* and *DKG* to Frau Oppermann.

⁴²⁵ BArch, R8023/181 (10-44).

⁴²⁶ Wildenthal, "Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty," in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 350-351.

⁴²⁷ BArch, R8023/181 (8), 17 January 1922, Letter from *Frauenbund* and *DKG* to Frau Oppermann; BArch, R8023/181 (10), 17 December 1921, Letter from *Frauenbund* to Sister Lisa Raabe of Jever.

localized, male-led German colonial interest groups which were in pursuit of a new, formal German colonial policy.

Conflicting “Imperial” Visions: Settlers, Missionaries and the Colonial Lobbies

Despite attempts by Seitz and the *DKG/KoRAG* to amalgamate the various populations of Colonial Germans and German colonialists into a single interest bloc, repatriated settlers, missionary societies, and even the larger German Colonial lobbies themselves often found that their visions for how best to preserve Germany’s colonial legacy and their imperial livelihoods were at odds with one another. Settlers, tempted by opportunities offered by a slight easing of immigration regulations in the Mandates and the colonies of other European powers after 1924 and 1925, lost interest in the goal of colonial restitution pursued by the *DKG*. Smaller interests groups with narrower aims questioned the distribution and application of funds and resources by the larger colonial organizations, thus creating disunity in the German Colonial lobby. Missionary societies, though seemingly beholden to the *DKG* through donations and advertisement, were more focused on conversions and did not always buy into the *DKG*’s vision of Germany’s role in the civilizing mission nor did they always agree with a positive interpretation of Germany’s colonial record. All these groups shared an interest in overseas imperialism, but they had distinct objectives that were not always mutually compatible.

The disaffection of certain groups of Colonial Germans toward the colonial lobbies is representative of a larger issue in the political system of the Weimar Republic. Thomas Mergel argues that the instability of the Weimar Republic’s political structure was largely the result of unrealistically high expectations to which German citizens held

their politicians and leaders.⁴²⁸ The Weimar Republic was a fragmented cacophony of disparate publics, with the population divided along various social milieus and “life worlds” that did not blend harmoniously.⁴²⁹ Diverse demands were placed on the government by citizens with problems ranging from displacement to welfare needs to concerns over shifts in the moral fabric of German society.⁴³⁰ All of these groups expected the politicians and political parties not only to represent their interests, but to share their “real life” experiences and to intimately understand their problems and were ultimately disappointed when their particular interests were not favored by a political party, an umbrella interest group, or the state.⁴³¹ Demands for an experientially common identity between citizens and representatives resulted in the fragmentation of political parties and lobbies into smaller, particularist splinter groups that were supposedly more representative of certain groups within Weimar society, but were ultimately as ineffective in garnering advantageous arrangements to satisfy their constituencies, leading to an overall disenchantment with party politics.⁴³²

A similar process of disaffection was at work in the German colonial lobbies as new circumstances and openings for settlers to return to their African *Heimat* presented themselves in the 1920s. Prospects for repatriated German settlers wishing to return to the colonies were improving by the mid-1920s. The London Agreement of 1923, originally intended to resolve the dispute over the naturalization of Germans in the South African-

⁴²⁸ Thomas Mergel, *Parlamentarische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik. Politische Kommunikation, symbolische Politik und Öffentlichkeit im Reichstag* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2002); Thomas Mergel, “High Expectations—Deep Disappointment. Structures of the Public Perception of Politics in the Weimar Republic,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 192–210.

⁴²⁹ Mergel, “High Expectations—Deep Disappointment,” 192–194, 196–199, 201–202.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 196–199, Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 6–18, 79–103, 147–190.

⁴³¹ Mergel, “High Expectations—Deep Disappointment,” 196–199, 201–204, 206–207.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 201–207; Peukert, *The Weimar Republic*, 222–246.

administered Mandate of Southwest Africa, allowed for German churches and missions to continue their work, exempted Germans in the Mandate from military service for the next thirty years, and stipulated entrance policies in Southwest Africa such that Germans from Europe would be allowed to immigrate to the South African Union and the Southwest African Mandate so long as they were “of good type and character.”⁴³³

Following the British Tanganyikan Immigration Policy of January 1925 and the lapse of the Ex-Enemy Restrictions Ordinance in June 1925, two thousand Germans reentered the British-administered Mandate of Tanganyika in East Africa, mostly as coffee planters.⁴³⁴

By 1925, Germans were also allowed to repurchase confiscated plantations in former German Cameroon.⁴³⁵ By the 1930s, Germans accounted for half of the white European population in Tanganyika, and 60 percent of the white European population in British Cameroon, and controlled nearly 300,000 acres of cocoa plantations in the Cameroons.⁴³⁶

British joint-stock ventures and real-estate brokers routinely advertised in *The Colonial German*. These advertisements, printed in English in the German-language periodical, offered acres of plantation land for sale or sought individuals with experience growing

⁴³³ BArch, R8023/531 (103-106), Jan Smuts, Walther de Haas, and Julius Ruppel, “Memorandum: Germans in the Mandated Territory of South-West Africa” (His Majesty’s Stationery Office, October 23, 1923) ; BArch, R8023/531 (58-61), Julius Ruppel, “Die Londoner Verständigung über die Deutschen in Südwestafrika,” *Kolonial-Warte: Korrespondenz für Deutsche Kolonial-Propaganda im In- und Auslande*, January 19, 1924. See Chapter 2 of this work for more detail on the circumstances of South Africa’s naturalization policy and the dispute surrounding it.

⁴³⁴ Wildenthal, “Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 350; Michael J. Macoun, *Wrong Place, Right Time: Policing the End of Empire* (London: Radcliffe Press, 1996), 115-117.

⁴³⁵ Wildenthal, “Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, footnote 62 on page 357.

⁴³⁶ Callahan, “‘Mandated Territories Are Not Colonies’: Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s,” in *Imperialism on Trial*, 1–20, 3; TNA, CO 691/107, Sir Donald Cameron, Governor of Tanganyika, to Colonial Office, 15 March 1930; *Report by his Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of the Cameroons under British Mandate for the Year 1926* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1927), 97; *Report by his Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of the Cameroons under British Mandate for the Year 1936* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1937), 48-50.

coffee, sorghum and other colonial crops for resettlement and employment on plantations in the Tanganyikan Mandate, as well as other British colonies in East Africa.⁴³⁷

Former settlers living in Weimar Germany still faced the burden of finding a way to fund their return to Africa. Though the laws and restrictions eased somewhat over the course of the 1920s, some of those seeking entrance visas into European-administered colonies and Mandates still encountered legal obstacles to their immigration in addition to the financial difficulties. Applications for entry permits to East Africa included references to attest to a German immigrant's character, asked for evidence of financial stability, and included questions regarding an applicant's previous military service. Any German who could not prove they had sufficient funds not to be a burden on the colonial or Mandatory administration was blocked from returning to British-administered territories. Individuals who had served in the German colonial military were also more likely to have their applications rejected.⁴³⁸ Still, the growing number of possibilities for a new start in colonies and Mandates held by other European powers diminished the interest repatriated German settlers showed in the cause of colonial restitution. Many had disliked restrictions imposed upon them or mismanagement of colonial affairs by the Imperial German government in the past and had little or no nostalgia for German metropolitan rule of the former colonies outside of a resurrection of their colonial careers and property.⁴³⁹ With other options to pursue imperial livelihoods once again, many were

⁴³⁷ *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, advertisements in nearly every issue from 1925 to 1928.

⁴³⁸ BArch, R8023/548 (175-181), series of letters between the German Consulate in Mombasa and the British District Office in Mahenge concerning Wilhelm Schimmelschmidt's application for re-entry and obtaining a lease of land, as well as his illegal squatting activities, 27 February 1928-8 January 1929; BArch, R8023/548 (241-252), A series of letters between H. Speiser, the German Consul in Mombasa, to Sir Percy Scott, British Chief Secretary in Dar es Salaam concerning the rights and procedures for Germans applying for entry and bidding for land in Mufindi, Mobosi, and Lupembe, 8 December 1927-1 February 1928.

⁴³⁹ See Chapter 2 of this work.

willing to abandon Germany and, in some cases, their German citizenship in favor of new opportunities under other European administrations.

New prospects for repatriated settlers led to new conflicts between the various colonial organizations within Germany. Repatriated Colonial Germans felt that the focus of the colonial lobbies on colonial restitution was misguided and that a lobby truly representative of their “life world” would spend more time and resources on exploiting these opportunities for resettlement. Competition between the societies during drives to recruit members and raise funds, as well as private and public disagreements over how best to pursue the goals of the colonial constituency, had been a factor in the German Colonial lobby since Germany’s pre-colonial period. The organizations which later merged to form the *DKG*, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, had been adversaries. The Women’s League had a long-standing rivalry with the German Women’s Association for Nursing in the Colonies, later known as the Women’s Red Cross Association, dating back to 1888. The two organizations disagreed over the role of women in the colonies and over how best to advance female colonial careers, with nursing and motherhood as the competing visions.⁴⁴⁰ Similar conflicts over the “Woman Question” in the colonies had been common fare between the various German Women’s colonial organizations and the male-dominated *DKG* throughout the colonial period.⁴⁴¹ These sorts of antagonisms persisted into the Weimar era, but were now heightened by a sense of urgency driven by the desire to ameliorate the undesirable circumstances created by the loss of empire—chief among them, the loss of property and employment experienced by former officials and settlers.

⁴⁴⁰ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 168-171.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6, 50-52, 72, 90, 143-151, 156, 162-166, 181-183.

Facing the economic difficulties of returning to Weimar during its inflationary periods, settlers wanted quick solutions to their financial woes. Smaller settler-run organizations sprang up after the war, such as the *Ostafrikaner Verband* (Association of East Africans). These splinter settler lobbies had little patience for the larger colonial organizations and their long term goals of maintaining public memory of Germany's colonial legacy, colonial restitution, and fundraising to pay for the continuance of their monthly periodicals and their day to day administration. Settler-run groups evinced a great deal of hostility towards the use of funds by the large Colonial lobbies for anything other than the immediate resettlement of Germans in or near the former colonies, especially once avenues were again available through the easing of restrictions against German immigration by other European imperial powers. The leadership of the Association of East Africans wrote to both the German Colonial Society and the Women's League in 1923 complaining of the decadence and excess of these organizations in the face of a paucity of resources and money among repatriated settlers:

The majority of the Colonial Germans find themselves in poverty, their property having been seized through the [Versailles] peace treaty, and many are still waiting for reparations for their losses [from the government], the amount of which still has yet to be determined by the representatives of the people. In such times as these, our representatives engaging in pleasures given the spurious denomination of a "Colonial Ball" runs the risk of creating the appearance that our representatives

lack sympathy for the hardships which the majority of us find ourselves in.⁴⁴²

Former settlers who had been uprooted from their lives in Africa and had fallen on hard times in the new Weimar Republic often felt as if the large German Colonial lobbies like the *DKG* did not represent their needs or concerns. The expenditures on elaborate fundraising activities and mass public education events like the “Colonial Week,” intended to raise awareness of Germany’s “colonial question” in the interwar period, often did as much, if not more, to isolate Colonial Germans—particularly repatriated settlers—from the core of the German colonial lobby as these events did to garner support and funding for the cause of colonial restitution.

Missionaries without Borders: Missionary Societies and the *DKG*

Like the smaller settler organizations, Germany’s missionary societies also frequently found themselves at odds with the *DKG* and the German Colonial administration, during the colonial period as well as the 1920s. Unlike the settlers, however, the debate was less over the future of German colonialism and was more concerned with Germany’s colonial legacy. Missionaries have, since the work of Comaroff and Comaroff, often been viewed as the “shock troops of colonialism.”⁴⁴³

While this thesis has been hotly contested in postcolonial scholarship, it is hard to deny the role missionaries intentionally or unintentionally played in creating the cultural encounter dialogues that led to the subjugation of other peoples at the hands of

⁴⁴² BArch, R8023/157 (64), 17 January 1923,

⁴⁴³ Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*; Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*.

Europeans. Despite wide acceptance of this narrative of the missionary in the colonial realm, however, it is necessary to point out that the relationship of German missionaries to the colonial state, its policies, and the German Colonial lobbies was often a mercurial one. German missions, acting as a sort of interest group, both supported and opposed colonial policy. Acting on sincere religious belief, these individuals were, at times, willing to play the metropole against the colonial administration in the service of faith, hence their contribution to broader debates over the definition and boundaries of “Germanness.” The same proved true in their struggles to continue their work against the hostile national politics and jingoistic German Colonial lobby rhetoric regarding Germany’s colonial legacy in the post-war era.

The history of missionary involvement in colonial policy predates Germany’s adoption of any colonial directive. German missionaries comprised a distinct branch of German emigrants with important connections back in Germany. The hope of these missionaries was that providing ‘natives’ with a “German example,” would influence them to follow Christ.⁴⁴⁴ Prior to 1870, “at least eight strong societies for [missionary] work abroad had been founded.”⁴⁴⁵ Through these organizations, numerous Germans voluntarily set out to convert the world to Christianity. The strongest of these societies were the Barmen Rhine Mission, the Bremen Mission, and the Basel Mission based in Switzerland. Missionary settlements popped up across the globe, and, in addition to their religious duties, provided aid to German traders and travelers. Back in Germany, the headquarters of missionary societies published a great mass of pamphlets and reports to arouse expansionist interests, not only for German Christians to spread the faith, but for

⁴⁴⁴Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History*, 23-24 ; Townsend, *Origins of Modern German Colonialism, 1871-1885*, 34.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

the German nation itself to expand in order to facilitate the Christian duty of spreading the Word.

In 1864, the Bremen Mission took matters into its own hands and, without government assistance, sent a man by the name of Carl Hugo Hahn to establish the first ‘missionary colony’ in Africa along the coast of Otymbique, roughly located in a portion of the coastline of modern-day Namibia and South Africa. This was only the first of many ‘missionary colonies’ to develop as other societies established ‘colonies’ in Nabuqualand, Windhoek, Grootfontein and South West Africa. These first footholds of German colonialism constructed by missionaries soon sought protection from the German governments. Dr. Friedrich Fabri, Inspector of the Rhine Mission, implored the Prussian government to provide military assistance to German citizens conducting mission work in the lands of the Herero.⁴⁴⁶ Though this request was denied, Fabri persisted and later wrote a book in 1879 in which he declared that Imperial Germany needed to gain colonies not only to remain in decent standing among the world powers, but also in order to fulfill its cultural responsibility to expand on the world stage:

A people that has been led to a high level of power can maintain its historical position only as long as it understands and proves itself to be the bearer of a cultural mission... If the New Germany wants to protect its newly won position of power for a long time, it must heed its *Kultur*-mission and, above all, delay no longer in the task of renewing the call for colonies!⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁴⁴⁷ From Fabri’s *Does Germany need Colonies* as quoted in Louis L. Snyder (ed.), *The Imperialism Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 116-117.

The tenacity of this director of a missionary society in Africa earned him the moniker ‘the Father of the German Colonial Movement.’⁴⁴⁸ This seems to convey that missionary societies received credit from their contemporaries for being effective at raising public interest in colonies overseas and putting pressure on the German government for their acquisition and protection. It also suggests that missionaries were understood as a vital and powerful component of Germany’s *Kultur* mission and therefore a defining part of “Germanness.”

Support of imperial protection for missionaries abroad and the establishment of colonial governments to assist in the spread of Christianity, however, did not translate into blind support for the colonial state on the part of German missions. The miscegenation debate of the early twentieth-century is a perfect example of missionaries attempting to use their influence in an effort to curb the actions of the colonial state and mould its morality. Acting upon their own volition in the early years of the twentieth century, without prompting from the metropolitan government, three German colonies—Southwest Africa (1905), Tanganyika (1906), and Samoa (1912)—outlawed mixed marriages and, in some cases, denied citizenship to the children of such unions. Sparking a huge debate in the metropole and colony alike over the legality and morality of these moves, racial hierarchies conceived of by armchair colonialists were finally called into question, forcing an evaluation of the role of blood in the politics of inclusion. Race, however, was a complex subject and the experience of including ethnic “others” in the definition of German national identity varied, not only between colony and metropole. The result was a lengthy debate on the *Reichstag* floor in 1912 which resulted in a

⁴⁴⁸Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, 116-117.

compromise whereby the validity of mixed-marriages concluded in church services before 1893 and those concluded by the state before 1905 was grandfathered in.⁴⁴⁹

The *Reichstag* was not the only arena in which the anti-miscegenation laws came under fire. As both Kundrus and Wildenthal point out, anti-miscegenation laws were seen by missionaries, both in the colonies and the metropole, as a possible pitfall for German morality. Fearing, knowledgably, that German male settlers would continue sexual relations with native women regardless of the ban on marriage, missionary organizations sought to reassert morality as a mainstay of German identity.⁴⁵⁰ Further suggestions by some members of the *DKG* and Pan-German League that white prostitutes be provided to lessen the temptation to engage in sexual relations with the natives fanned the flames of missionary protest even higher.⁴⁵¹ In multiple petitions to colonial and metropolitan officials, missionary leaders sought to end this “racial madness.”⁴⁵² Marriage was a pillar of morality and German men should, according to both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, assume responsibility for their actions and make “honest” women out of the natives with whom they had sexual relations.⁴⁵³ Furthermore, both Catholic and Protestant associations asserted the Christianity of the native converts, the German settlers who married them, and their children and refused to deny them sacraments at the behest of a few “deranged” colonial officials and colonialist organizations.⁴⁵⁴ As Germans, and as Christians, missionaries felt it was their duty not only to preserve their

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 264. The actual legislation did not pass until May 1912.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 250-274; Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 87, 126-127.

⁴⁵¹ Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, 247.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 250-274.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 255.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 250-254; Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 87, 99, 117, 124.

own integrity, but to lift up and save the souls of the indigenous peoples with whom they interacted, regardless of the goals of the colonial administration and the colonial lobby.

The relationship between missionaries and the large colonial organizations in the 1920s, following the pattern of the relationship to the former colonial administration and the lobbies in the earlier period, was sometimes amicable, sometimes adversarial. The missionary societies enjoyed indirect support from the *DKG*, the Women's League, and *KoRAG* in the form of free publicity. The periodicals of these societies included articles in every monthly issue on the history and present state of German missionary activity in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, praised the missionary societies for their devotion to spreading German Christian culture, and encouraged readers to donate to missionary causes. Missionary societies, in turn, set aside advertising space for periodicals such as *The Colonial German* in their own periodicals and individual members accepted invitations to speak at German colonial lobby educational events.⁴⁵⁵ Missionary societies even borrowed Colonial German strategies of public events to raise awareness, such as the annual *Missionswoche* in Bielefeld hosted by the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society.⁴⁵⁶

Yet, despite occasional common interests in regards to the colonial education of the German public and some mutual support in the interwar period, the German missionary societies faced different challenges from the *DKG* and had different visions of Germany's colonial legacy and future, as well as of the morality of imperialism. The First

⁴⁵⁵ *Monatsblätter der Oblaten der unbefleckten Jungfrau Maria, Zeitschrift des Marianischen Missionsvereins*, January 1925-December 1925; *Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft, Barmer Missionsblatt*, 1925-1926; *Illustrierte Monatschrift über das Missionswerk des Kapuziner Ordens*, 1925-1926; *Jahrbuch des Reichsverbandes für die katholischen Auslanddeutschen*, 1926-1932.

⁴⁵⁶ BArch, R8023/484 (104), 9 February 1927, Letter from Seitz to the Leadership of the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society.

World War marked a major interruption to German missionary activity around the globe. Those working in Germany's colonies found themselves quickly overrun and interned by Allied occupiers, while many working in French and British colonies found themselves under constant surveillance or imprisoned as suspected spies for the duration of the conflict. As they proselytized to Africans and Asians in Germany's former colonies throughout the 1920s and 1930s, German missionaries needed to be able to move across national, colonial and Mandatory borders without being hindered by the continuation of antagonistic national politics and suspicions left over from the war.⁴⁵⁷ Like settlers, missionaries began in the 1920s to see an easing of the wartime restrictions placed upon them. Still, German missionaries seeking re-admittance to the former colonies ran up against probing visa applications intended to determine the exact relationship of these Germans to Germany's colonial armed forces and espionage networks during the war.⁴⁵⁸ German missionaries also needed to distance their image from that of the "exceptionally cruel" colonial masters that had been constructed by the Allies with the conception of Germany's "colonial guilt." Rather than deny Germany's bloody colonial record, most German missionaries tried to set themselves above the debate, with some evading the topic to focus on a dialogue of continuing Europe's work for God while others detached themselves from the cries for German colonial restitution by forcefully and publicly denouncing Germany's pre-war colonial policies and administration.

⁴⁵⁷ Hartmut Lehmann, "Missionaries Without Empire: German Protestant Missionary Efforts in the Interwar Period (1919-1939)," in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 34–53.

⁴⁵⁸ Frankesche Stiftungen zu Halle, II. 32. 534, 27 September 1927, application for an entrance visa to Tanganyika for Charlotte Friede Magdalena Rother; Frankesche Stiftungen zu Halle, II. 32.532, application for an entrance visa to Tanganyika for Katharina Elisabeth Reuter.

One instance of a religious condemnation of Germany's colonial past is the case of Mission Inspector Hannig and his indirect confrontation with Theodor Seitz in February of 1927. At the Bielefeld *Missionswoche* in January 1927, Hannig gave a speech to the assembled audience in which he criticized the German Colonial administration's and the Colonial army's slaughter of the Herero and Nama in Southwest Africa from 1904-1907. He counseled for the pursuit of only missionary and educational endeavors. Hannig argued against efforts for colonial restitution, or, for that matter, colonial rule by any European power.⁴⁵⁹ Seitz, as President of the *DKG* and a former governor of Southwest Africa, launched back with a biting attack on Hannig. In letters to the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society, Seitz demanded an apology from Hannig and the leadership of the organization for the insults lobbed at the former colonial administration. He insisted on the spotlessness of Germany's colonial record, reminding the missionary society that the administration and the army had allegedly done nothing more than quell a violent revolt instigated by the Herero.⁴⁶⁰ Seitz threatened that if the Mission Society did not denounce Hannig and force him to retract his comments, the *DKG* would dissuade donations to the organization and further warned that the Bielefeld branch of the *DKG* would be staging protests against Hannig and the Barmen-Rhine Mission Society until such a retraction was issued.⁴⁶¹ In the press, Seitz attacked Hannig's expertise and character in at least two newspaper articles, one of which appeared in the regional *Westfälische Zeitung*. In that piece, Seitz insisted that Hannig had no practical experience

⁴⁵⁹ BArch, R8023/484 (104), 9 February 1927, Letter from Seitz to the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society.

⁴⁶⁰ BArch, R8023/484 (92-107), 9 February-26 February 1927, series of letters from Seitz to the Leadership of the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society.

⁴⁶¹ BArch, R8023/484 (104-107), 9 February 1927, Letter from Seitz to the Leadership of the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society; BArch, R8023/484 (103), 9 February 1927, Letter from Seitz to Schreiber of the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society.

with Germany's former colonies and had never visited Southwest Africa. Not stopping there, he called Hannig a traitor for belittling the civilizing work of all Germans who had labored in the former colonies.⁴⁶²

Hannig and the Barmen-Rhine Society never gave in to Seitz's demands for an apology or a retraction, though Hannig continued to bluster about the incident in letters and telegrams well into April 1927.⁴⁶³ Colonial restitution was not the aim of the missionary society, and they cared little whether the former German colonial administration—with which they had engaged in regular conflict during the colonial period regarding its restrictions and policies—was viewed in a positive light. Missionaries were far more willing to step outside of national politics and wartime animosities in the 1920s to participate in what Daniel Gorman has called “ecumenical internationalism”: cooperation among Christian missionaries from across Europe on the model of the League of Nations through organizations like the League of Churches.⁴⁶⁴ German missionaries were much more concerned with cooperating with the new international system and the major European imperial powers in order to reintegrate themselves into the work of shaping the morality of colonized subjects and their rulers. Whether the administrators of the colonies were English, German, French or Belgian mattered little to them so long as they were allowed to enter the Mandates and colonies to continue Germany's contribution to Europe's Christian missionary legacy in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

⁴⁶² BArch, R8023/484 (59B), 21 January 1927, clipping from unknown newspaper of a printed response to Hannig's statements by Seitz and the *DKG*; BArch, R8023/484 (65), clipping of an article from the *Westfälische Zeitung*, nr. 29, 4 Feb 1927.

⁴⁶³ BArch, R8023/484 (63-64, 72-81), Series of letters and telegrams sent by Seitz to the Barmen-Rhine Missionary Society between February 1927 and April 1927.

⁴⁶⁴ Daniel Gorman, “Ecumenical Internationalism: Willoughby Dickinson, the League of Nations and the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship Through the Churches,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, 1 (2010): 51–73.

The Colonial Lobbies' Shift from Domestic to International Politics

The German Colonial Society and other colonialist organizations in Weimar Germany never managed to restructure and remarket themselves in such a way as to unite the German Colonial bloc into a coherent whole behind the cause of colonial restitution. Smaller settler organizations and missionary societies had different aims than the large colonial societies like the *DKG* and *KoRAG* that were dominated by former officials wedded to colonial irredentism. Strategies intended to raise awareness of Germany's colonial losses and bring more financial and political support for the pursuit of a renewed formal or informal overseas imperialism, such as the *DKG*'s "Colonial Week" or the *Frauenbund*'s "Colonial Balls," backfired. In attempting to broaden their base in the Weimar political arena, they neglected a substantial part of their core. While the restitutionist aims of the *DKG* and the annual events intended to glorify Germany's colonial legacy appealed to colonialist ambitions among Germany's elite and the former officials of the German Colonial service, Germans who had adapted to and become dependent upon a livelihood in Africa or the Pacific, such as repatriated settlers and missionaries, felt neglected. They criticized the larger lobbies or condemned the former colonial administration and sought their own pathways back to Africa and the Pacific through other imperial powers and the League of Nations. Unable to draw a substantial number of metropolitan Germans to their cause and hemorrhaging support from Colonial Germans who had returned to Germany, it was impossible to make a concerted push on the Weimar government backed by a solid voting bloc to demand the crafting of a new pro-colonial policy.

Despite such failures on the domestic political front, the larger colonial societies—chiefly the *DKG* and *KoRAG* with occasional support from the Women’s League—continued to make attempts at broadening their political base within Germany throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Seitz and the *DKG* made one more large-scale push to garner domestic support for colonial restitution in the months leading up to the Locarno Conference in hopes that the Weimar government, through Stresemann, would add this demand to the list of hoped for revisions to the post-Versailles status quo. That effort too, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, failed. After that disappointment, however, the *DKG*, *KoRAG*, and the Women’s League added another sphere of activity to their ongoing pursuits in Germany’s domestic political arena in the latter half of the 1920s. Though they were clearly not representative of the cacophony of demands made by Colonial Germans, these organizations recognized after Locarno that they were the loudest voices pursuing German colonial interests on the world stage. The lessons learned from that experience, prompted Seitz and the colonial lobbies to chase colonial restoration through a new, emerging set of tools associated with the internationalism of the League of Nations, which became available to Germany and Germans following the Weimar Republic’s admission to the League in 1926.

Chapter Four

“Ravening Wolves” and Hopes of a Return to the Imperial Fold?

The Press, Colonial Germans and the Spirit of Locarno

Are you surprised that what the Germans would call the “general-Stimmung” of the conference good? Even those ravening wolves, the reporters, have apparently succumbed to the atmosphere of general contentment [...] And sitting at my place at the table I have particularly noticed the way in which the eyes of both Luther and Stresemann are riveted upon Mr. Chamberlain the moment he begins to speak [...] For the first time since the war the French and the Germans meet as man to man; one might almost say as friend to friend. There is complete equality; there is no longer a division into groups; all that is past and gone.

—Miles Lampson to Sir William Tyrell, 9 October 1925⁴⁶⁵

An Englishman with a monocle, a Frenchman with a bushy mustache, and a German in a tight suit sat down at a table in Switzerland to rehash the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. It sounds like the lead-up to a bad joke, but this is how the Locarno Treaties of 1925—intended to preserve the peace of Europe—have been viewed by generations of historians. When looking back on the negotiations at Locarno, there is a temptation to

⁴⁶⁵ TNA, FO 840/1 (171-174), 9 October 1925, Miles W. Langston to Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir William Tyrell.

take the iconic photo of Stresemann, Chamberlain and Briand at face value: these treaties were the result of three men parleying at a table in a villa on the shore of Lake Maggiore with the Swiss Alps as a backdrop to the negotiations of great powers. Scholars such as Zara Steiner insist that peace talks like Locarno emerged from the framework of the League of Nations, which “was only a mechanism for conducting multinational diplomacy whose success or failure depended upon the willingness of the states, particularly the most powerful states, to use it.”⁴⁶⁶ Building on these notions, studies like those of Gérard Unger and Jonathan Wright focus on the chief diplomats of the Great Powers, investigating the back-room deals and relationships between prominent plenipotentiaries in the interwar period. These works consider the public role of the League as well. Historians like Patrick Cohrs, alongside Unger and Wright, point to the League’s reliance on public opinion to achieve recognition of the negotiations made by the delegates behind closed doors. These scholars thus consider the role of public opinion, but only as an ineffectual distraction. They argue that the constant engagement with the public set a dangerous pattern in which statesmen, when faced with public opposition, modified how their presentations were worded rather than altering their policies or their negotiations, making treaties like those at Locarno unrepresentative of the public will and therefore ineffective in bringing about change or preserving peace in the long term.⁴⁶⁷

Yet there were more “representatives” making their voices heard than the iconographic photographs suggest. Apart from government delegates and other attachés at the conference, public opinion took its place at the bargaining table, causing

⁴⁶⁶ Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*, 299.

⁴⁶⁷ Unger, *Aristide Briand: Le ferme conciliateur*; Wright, *Gustav Stresemann*; Wright, “Locarno: a Democratic Peace?,” 391–411.

disruptions and forcing compromises. Minority groups, lobbies and the general publics of numerous countries and colonies made their attitudes known during the proceedings and were taken into consideration by the three men given credit for ushering in the “Spirit of Locarno” even if the desires of these groups were not satisfied in the final treaties. Rumors spread by lobbies and press wars between competing interests forced debate on issues at Locarno that were not originally on the agenda. The matter of Germany’s colonial claims wonderfully illustrates how the global public sphere forced the discussion of off-program topics at Locarno. Public scrutiny from false press reports about the restoration of the German colonies emanating from Germany, France, Britain and its colonies and dominions, and even the United States complicated matters for delegates. The chief plenipotentiaries had intended to focus only on territorial claims and security pacts within Europe, the admission of the Weimar Republic to the League of Nations, and Germany’s reintegration into the international economy. In the end, lobbyists’ appeals to the global public for colonial restitution worked against Colonial German interest groups as their voices were drowned out by protest. Colonial Germans, however, still managed a partial victory at Locarno, unexpected and unasked for, and more importantly, the Colonial German lobby learned new and better strategies for playing to public opinion and international bureaucracies.

An Opportunity to End the *Kolonialschuldfrage*? Colonial Germans Hopes for Locarno

Colonial German lobbies hoped that the Locarno talks heralded the return of empire and an end to Germany’s banishment from the “civilizing mission” and the

humiliating experience of being Europe's first "postcolonial state" in the twentieth century.⁴⁶⁸ These hopes were not entirely unfounded, considering developments such as the London Treaty in 1924 and the British Tanganyikan Immigration Policy of January 1925—enacted just eight months prior to the Locarno Treaties—which respectively allowed for concessions on German property and citizenship in the Mandates and the return of some German settlers to East Africa. Such policies indicated there were individuals on the Allied side—particularly among British officials—who were sympathetic towards Colonial Germans and willing to make concessions regarding a return of Germans to the imperial stage.

Yet if the goal of at least partial colonial restitution were to be realized, Seitz recognized that the *DKG* and *KoRAG* would have to make enough noise in the press and flood the German Foreign Office with letters, telegraphs and petitions to ensure that Colonial German interests were not forgotten at the negotiation tables. In 1925, Seitz besieged Chancellor Luther, Foreign Minister Stresemann and other officials from the German Foreign Office, and President Hindenburg with letters, urging them to consider the "colonial question" as integral to Germany's recovery of Great Power status before finalizing the Locarno Treaties.⁴⁶⁹ When one of his letters to then newly-elected President Hindenburg went without a reply for two weeks, Seitz promptly published the unanswered epistle on the front page of the May edition of *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, the *DKG*'s own periodical. In the published version, Seitz congratulated the famed World

⁴⁶⁸ Phrase borrowed from the title of Klotz, "The Weimar Republic: A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World."

⁴⁶⁹ BArch, R8023/541 (25), 31 October 1925, Letter from Schubert at the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Auslands-und Kolonialtechnik (AKOTECH) to Seitz; BArch, R8023/541(30), 13 November 1925, Letter from Seitz to Chancellor Luther; BArch, R8023/541 (33), 13 November 1925, Letter from Seitz to Stresemann; BArch, R8023/541 (34), 13 November 1925, Letter from Seitz to President Hindenburg.

War I general on his victory in the elections and publically called upon the *Reichspräsident* to lend his support to what Seitz referred to as the Colonial German “victims” who “were in need” of the return of the colonies, of their imperial careers and property, and of their national pride.⁴⁷⁰

In addition to Seitz’s private and public letters to government figures, the *KoRAG* and the *DKG* arranged for public demonstrations and publications to remind Germans and the world of Germany’s colonial heritage and claims in the lead-up to possible revisions to the postwar status quo. *Kolonialwoche* (Colonial Week) and *Kolonialtagungen* (Colonial Meetings) celebrations had been hosted by various branches of the *DKG* and *KoRAG* since 1920. *Kolonialwoche* 1925 ran from 30 March-8 April 1925 in cities across Germany. Berlin’s *Kolonialwoche*, however, was by far the most elaborate.⁴⁷¹ Though it was billed as “an exhibition of colonial wares and ethnographic artifacts, colonial books and stamps,” Berlin’s *Kolonialwoche* was much more than just a massive flea market of exotic goods.⁴⁷² Festivities, held chiefly at the *Märchensaal* and *Festsaal* of Berlin’s Red City Hall, as well as the grounds outside, included ten days of shopping, exhibits, parades, music performances, lectures from “experts” on the former colonies, speeches from the leaders of the various colonial lobbies, and memorial celebrations for German soldiers who had fallen in colonial wars or the colonial theatre of

⁴⁷⁰ Published letter from Seitz to President Hindenburg originally written on 11 May 1925, *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 29 May 1925. Hindenburg’s answer, which was also published in *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, came two months later and, though calling upon Germans to remember the sacrifices of German soldiers in the colonies and the fact that “Germany cannot remain without colonies,” made no promises to pressure Stresemann to seek colonial restitution as a goal. Hindenburg’s reply to Seitz’s public letter, *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 July 1925.

⁴⁷¹ „Berliner Kolonialwoche,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 28 March 1925, 58.

⁴⁷² Advertisement and Schedule of Events for “Kolonial Woche Berlin 1925,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 28 March 1925, 63.

the First World War.⁴⁷³ There were also educational sessions on the history of German colonialism, intended to raise public awareness of Germany's colonial past, its "colonial heroes," and its "achievements in overseas colonialism."⁴⁷⁴ The German colonial lobbies hoped that, through these opulent displays, the everyday German citizen would become more interested in colonial affairs and put pressure on the German government to pursue a course of colonial restitution in any upcoming renegotiations of the postwar settlement.

Der Kolonialdeutsche published a number of pieces aimed at rallying public support for German colonial restitution in the build-up to Locarno. There was extensive coverage of *Kolonialwoche* in March and April. Colonial Week had the tacit support of the government, and Seitz, as leader of *KoRAG* and the *DKG*, gathered short statements for *Der Kolonialdeutsche* from Foreign Minister Stresemann, Chancellor Luther, and Economics Minister Albert Neuhaus, in which all three paid lip-service to the importance of the colonies to German foreign policy and the German economy and lauded the colonial lobbies' memorialization of Germany's colonial past.⁴⁷⁵ While they bemoaned the loss of the colonies, however, these high-ranking officials all remained careful in their wording and avoided direct promises of pursuing colonial restitution in any revision of the Treaty of Versailles in the near future.⁴⁷⁶ Aside from pieces on Colonial Week and other colonial celebrations, *Der Kolonialdeutsche* also ran a number of pointed articles between May and October 1925.⁴⁷⁷ These works criticized the mismanagement of the Mandates System, called for the German government to be awarded a Mandate from the

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 64.

⁴⁷⁵ "Geleitworte der Reichsregierung zur Kolonial-Woche 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 28 March 1925.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ „Kolonialwoche Berlin 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 April 1925; „Kolonial-Tagungen München 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 29 May 1925; „Die Kolonialtagungen in München, 1925," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 June 1925 .

League, and critiqued the British and Belgians for their inability to control outbreaks of sleeping sickness in the East African Mandates. They also summarized debates over the *Kolonialfrage* in the Reichstag, discussed the pros and cons for Colonial Germans that would follow Germany's entrance into the League of Nations, and editorialized the negotiations at Locarno.⁴⁷⁸ The periodical, which sold for 50 pfennig an issue at newsstands and to subscribers, shared the aims of the Colonial Week festivities—to raise awareness about Germany's colonial claims and achievements among Germany's literate public and to convince readers of the flaws of imperial projects from which German “expertise” was excluded.

Der Kolonialdeutsche did not, however, present the only attempt to sway public discourse with the printed word. Heinrich Schnee had recently completed the process of compiling, editing and translating his various essays on Germany's colonial record, the “colonial guilt lie,” and the Mandates System into a book in English: *German Colonization Past and Future: the Truth about the German Colonies*.⁴⁷⁹ By July 1925, the manuscript had already been accepted for publication by the London-based publishing firm, Allen & Unwin, and was awaiting a foreword from the English historian and German sympathizer, W.H. Dawson, before going to the printers.⁴⁸⁰ Schnee, who also had plans to translate the work into French, hoped that the book would come out in time to influence public opinion in Germany's favor before any international negotiations took place. The book, however, was not released until Spring 1926. Although it was too

⁴⁷⁸ „Erklärungen über Mandatsmächte,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 June 1925; „Die Kolonialdebatte im Reichstag,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 June 1925; „Das Fiasco des Mandatssystem,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 30 July 1925; „Deutschland und der Völkerbund,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 September 1925; „Die Verhandlungen Locarno und die deutschen Kolonien,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 October 1925; „Die Mandatsfrage,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 October 1925; „Ausbreitung der Schlafkrankheit im ehemaligen Deutsch-Ostafrika,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 October 1925.

⁴⁷⁹ GStAPK, VI NL Heinrich Schnee, Nr. 49 (252), 9 July 1925, Letter from Schnee to Julius Ruppel.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

late to affect the events of Locarno, it still factored heavily into the German colonial lobbies' plans for recruiting sympathy for their cause abroad well into the League Crisis of 1926.⁴⁸¹

The German press, capitalizing on Colonial German agitation, eagerly did its part to keep the Locarno Conference and the Mandate question in the public eye. News outlets in Germany had been publishing articles on a possible Mandate for Germany since late 1924, when rumors were circulating that a new round of talks might be convened to revise the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Articles in the more conservative-leaning *Hamburger Nachrichten*, the liberal *Berliner Tageblatt*, and the then DVP-affiliated *Kölnische Zeitung*, emphasized what they termed the “*Mandatsschwindel*” (“Mandates Swindle”) that had occurred at Versailles. Pieces in these papers argued that the former colonies were being mismanaged by their current Mandatories, and insisted that any revision of the postwar settlement at an upcoming conference should award Mandatory Power status to Germany.⁴⁸² Both during the negotiations and the ratification process for the Locarno Treaties, German papers gave regular reports of the proceedings. The press supplied the German public with a steady stream of out-of-context quotes from the minutes of the meetings in Locarno in October of 1925 and the various parliamentary

⁴⁸¹The German Foreign Office pursued a similar strategy in regards to the infamous charge of Germany's ‘War Guilt.’ See Herman J. Wittgens, “Senator Owen, the *Schuldreferat* and the Debate over War Guilt in the 1920s,” in *Forging the Collective Memory. Government and International Historians Through Two World Wars*, ed. Keith Wilson (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996), 128–150; Ellen L. Evans and Joseph O. Baylen, “History as Propaganda. The German Foreign Ministry and the ‘Englightenment’ of American Historians on the War Guilt Question, 1930-1933,” in *Forging the Collective Memory*, ed. Keith Wilson, 151–177.

⁴⁸² PA AA, R96523, Clipping of “Der Genfer Mandatsschwindel,” *Hamburger Nachricht*, Nr. 502, 25 October 1924; PA AA, R96523, Clipping of Willi Ruppel, “Deutschlands Kolonien zur Tagung der Mandatskommission,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, Nr. 529, 6 November 1924; PA AA, R96523, Clipping of “Das Mandat über Deutsch Südwestafrika. Eine Aussprache im Ausschusse des Völkerbundes,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 478, 1 July 1925; PA AA, R96523, Clipping of “Das Mandatsystem des Völkerbundes. Die Geheimnistuerei im Mandatsausschuß. Der wahre Zweck der Nackprüfung der Mandatsstätigkeit,” *Kölnische Zeitung*, Nr. 481, 2 July 1925.

debates across Europe called to approve the treaties and ratify them, transcripts of speeches made by the chief delegates at the conference, and punditry regarding what Germany was or was not gaining in the negotiations as concessions for its entry into the League of Nations. The German public was reminded of what it had lost at Versailles and, depending on the paper, was encouraged to feel a renewed sense of animosity towards the Allies who had taken so much in 1919 or was fed a false hope that Germany would be restored to its former Great Power standing in the world with predictions of restitution of Alsace-Lorraine, the Polish Corridor, and the colonies, or of a release from the onerous burdens of reparations payments through the benevolence and diplomacy of the key delegates at Locarno.⁴⁸³

Rumors in the German press of the Locarno talks' resulting in a possible return of Germany's colonies, let alone any revision of the Treaty of Versailles, sparked an immediate response from reporters, columnists and editorialists in the Allied powers and the British Dominions. The ink in newspapers, pamphlets, and periodicals from France, Britain, the Dominions and even the United States flamed red with debate and outrage on the topic of German colonial restitution. While the rumors varied from paper to paper as to whether it was Stresemann, Luther, or Chamberlain who had proposed that Germany would receive a Mandate as "payment" for entry into the League, the response by columnists, editors, and editorialists all played on the fear and anger their respective audiences would feel at Germany's return to imperialism.

⁴⁸³ BArch, R8023/541 (1-22), Large number of clippings from various newspapers of German coverage of Locarno; TNA FO 840/1 (66-68), Press report sent to A. Chamberlain summarizing various German newspaper articles and general German complaints and expectations regarding Locarno in the press; PA AA, R96630, Series of clippings of articles from *Wolff's Telegraphische Büro (W.T.B.)* prepared for the German Foreign Office, October-December 1925; PA AA, R96628, Copy of article "Die Locarno Verträge in Kraft, *W.T.B.*, Nr. 1550, 14 September 1926; PA AA, R96628, Copy of article "Empfang der englischen Presse durch Dr. Stresemann," *W.T.B.*, Nr. 1552, 14 September 1926.

Some articles, like those in the British newspaper *The Morning Post*, launched damning critiques of Germany's colonial record. These pieces sought to remind the delegates at Locarno and the populations they represented of Germany's "colonial guilt":

The report that Germany has been promised a Colonial Mandate as a quid pro quo for entering the League of Nations will fill former victims of Prussian *Weltmacht* with mild alarm. Germany was deprived of her colonies not only as a check to Prussian military ambition, but also because of the brutality with which they were administered. I recall some photographs taken by a young Frenchman in German East Africa about ten years before the war. One showed a large tree with about a score of natives hanging to the boughs. The other showed a company of German soldiers each with the head of a native spitted on his fixed bayonet.⁴⁸⁴

French reports expressed fear that the British were willing to bargain away the Togo or Cameroon Mandates to Germany and insisted that, whatever the price, the French government should block Stresemann's unreasonable demands to prevent the loss of any piece of the "body of France overseas" to the Germans.⁴⁸⁵ The press of the British Dominions and Mandates displayed similar reticence towards the idea of a German Mandate. Articles and editorials in periodicals such as *East Africa* out of Mombasa and

⁴⁸⁴ BArch, R8023/529, Copy of "Weltmacht Again?" *The Morning Post*, 15 October 1925, sent by the German Foreign Office to Theodor Seitz, 7 November 1925.

⁴⁸⁵ BArch, R8023/529 (153), Series of press notices, summaries, and clippings of articles in the French press concerning Mandates and colonial restitution, sent by Elester to Seitz, 16 June 1925; BArch, R8023/529 (243-46). Copy of a report to the French Budget General de L'Exercice 1925 drafted by M. Leon Archimbaud, sent by German Foreign Office to Seitz, August 1925.

The African World published in Cape Town gave voice to anxieties concerning the possible expulsion of British residents if one of the African Mandates were returned to Germany. These periodicals gave voice to the resistance of British settlers and colonial officials to any suggestion that ex-enemy property be restored to German individuals and companies and to their fears regarding the threat to British settlers if Germany regained a military foothold in Africa. They also expressed antagonism towards the menacing prospect of an influx of German settlers to the Mandates, as these would purportedly steal land and jobs away from British colonists.⁴⁸⁶

Some few weeks ago we wrote at length on the question of the return of Germans to Tanganyika, stating at the time that our mail bag was eloquent testimony to the dissatisfaction felt in the Mandatory at the prospect of unrestricted admission of ex-enemy citizens. [...] In reply to our inquiries we are now officially informed by the Colonial Office that ‘the operation of the Ex-Enemy Restriction Ordinance of 1922 of the Tanganyika Territory will not be further extended [...]’ In other words, [...] Tanganyika [...] will be threatened with an invasion of Germans bent on regaining economically what they have lost politically.⁴⁸⁷

A few American papers took a different tack that was even more hostile towards the League and the powers represented at Locarno. Although several Americans were

⁴⁸⁶ BArch, R8023/529 (93), clipping of an article in *The African World*, 25 July 1925 concerning White-settlement in Tanganyika sent from Elester to Seitz, August 1925; BArch, R8023/529 (98), copy of the article “Ex-Enemy Property,” *The African World*, 27 June 1925; BArch, R8023/529 (241), clipping of article in *East Africa*, Nr. 37, 722, 4 June 1925, which chronicles complaints against German resettlement in East Africa, sent from German Foreign Office to Seitz, June 1925.

⁴⁸⁷ BArch, R8023/529, a clipping of an article in *East Africa*, 30 April 1925, sent by the German Foreign Office to Seitz, June 1925.

sympathetic to Germany's plight in the interwar period and were open to revisions of the Treaty of Versailles, there was a great deal of animosity towards European imperialism as a whole. Germany's rumored return to the imperial stage would have represented an unacceptable expansion of the imperial system:

Dr. Stresemann, the German foreign minister says that when Germany enters the League of Nations it will want full equality and rights with the other members in possession of colonies. He said it was a principle recognized in the League that fully civilized nations have the right to control the less progressive peoples, and Germany, being fully civilized, would ask for some of them.⁴⁸⁸

The anonymous author of the above editorial from the *Chicago Tribune* went on to criticize not only German colonial restitution, but the entire notion of the stadial theory of development that imperial powers had used to justify their domination of the peoples of the world. The editorialist insisted that the "doctrine [of "civilizational development"] is now challenged by the 'less progressive' in India, Egypt, China, Morocco and elsewhere" and should have been abandoned at the end of the First World War. The editorial continued with an unflattering synopsis of the history of colonialism from Columbus forward, representing imperialism not as a benevolent force for civilizational progress, but as a brutal form of repression. The article concluded that the League, for all its

⁴⁸⁸BArch, R8023/529, copy of an editorial from the *Chicago Tribune*, 17 August 1925, sent to Seitz, September 1925.

vaunted virtues, continued to endorse the “civilizational development doctrine” and was unlikely to improve the conditions of the colonized with its Mandates System.⁴⁸⁹

Keeping the Ravening Wolves at Bay:

Stresemann, Chamberlain, and Briand at Locarno

In spite of the rumors of Germany’s colonial restitution at Locarno and the outcry in the international press, colonial concerns were not intended to be a priority on the docket for the participants at Locarno. Aristide Briand and later Prime Minister Poincaré of France were chiefly concerned with countering the negative attitudes towards the French government that had grown in response to the French occupation of the Ruhr. They also sought guarantees of security and territorial integrity for their allies in Eastern Europe, especially for the new state of Poland.⁴⁹⁰ British Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain, with the backing of Prime Minister MacDonald in 1924 and then Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin in 1925, was, for his part, more interested in preserving the peace of Europe through an attempted *rapprochement* between France and Germany regarding the boundary lines in Western Europe and in binding Germany to the Western powers through admission to the League of Nations. Chamberlain was especially troubled by the relationship Weimar Germany had been fostering with the Soviet Union and by vocal assertions by prominent Germans, such as General Hans von Seeckt, that Germany should cut ties with the West and form a military alliance with the Soviet Union to redraw the post-Versailles map of Eastern Europe.⁴⁹¹ Gustav Stresemann and Chancellor

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*; Wright, “Locarno: a Democratic Peace?,” 392-397; Keiger, “Poincaré, Briand and Locarno: Continuity in French Diplomacy in the 1920s.”

⁴⁹¹ Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*; Cohrs, “The Quest for a New Concert of Europe: British Pursuits of German Rehabilitation and European Stability in the 1920s,” in *Locarno Revisited*, 33–

Luther hoped the negotiations at Locarno would result in a partial revision of the Treaty of Versailles which they could take home to soothe the growing anti-Weimar sentiment of ultra-nationalists in Germany. They particularly looked for progress regarding the withdrawal of French troops from Cologne and adjustments to Germany's eastern borders. Stresemann, similarly to Chamberlain, sought closer ties between Germany, the League of Nations and the Western powers in order to maintain the revitalization of Germany's economy through trade agreements, but he was hesitant to cut all ties with the Soviet Union. Stresemann had reservations about Germany joining the League and adopting Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant, which required all Member states to participate in trade embargos and to provide military support for one another. Fearing an eventual conflict between the West and the Soviet Union, Stresemann worried that this condition for League entry would not only damage Germany's trade relations with the Soviet Union, but would make the Weimar Republic a theatre of battle in any military confrontation between the USSR and League member states in Western Europe.⁴⁹² With this set of diplomatic conundrums and conflicts to address, debating the issue of colonial restitution for Germany was not going to be central to the negotiations.

Briand had no strong personal convictions about the colonies and was amenable to compromise, but he was the representative of a government that was determined to uphold and enforce the Treaty of Versailles. Briand was routinely accused by the French right, both during and after the Locarno Conference, of caving-in too easily to Stresemann's demands for revision of the post-war settlement. Unlike his government,

58; David Cameron and Anthony Heywood, "German, Russia and Locarno: The German-Soviet Trade Treaty of 12 October 1925," in *Locarno Revisited*, 122–145.

⁴⁹² Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*, 263–268; Wright, "Stresemann: A Mind Map," in *Locarno Revisited*, 146–160; Turner, *Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic*, 189–220.

however, Briand accepted that international public opinion, at least in part of the press in the United States and Great Britain, was skewed in favor of Germany. Although public opinion still seemed opposed to the return of Germany as an imperial power for a variety of reasons, American and British papers leaned more towards the sentiment that the postwar settlement, specifically the imposition of reparations payments and the occupation of the Rhineland, had been too harsh on Germany. The French government needed the continued assurance of defensive military support from the British government if a future conflict should arise. British public opinion and even Chamberlain himself were increasingly sympathetic regarding Germany's post-Versailles position concerning reparations and League membership. Briand recognized that Chamberlain's aim was the rehabilitation of Germany, not its continued isolation. If France wanted to avoid alienating its chief ally through diplomatic intractability, concessions would need to be made to Stresemann and the Weimar government. Briand's objective became one of limiting the revision of Versailles to manageable levels. The French plenipotentiary focused his efforts on binding Germany to a pan-European economic, political, and diplomatic community to make war against France impractical for Germany. To achieve these two ends, while facing much hostility in French domestic politics, Briand reconciled himself to satisfying Stresemann's larger demands—evacuation of French troops from Cologne, Chamberlain and Stresemann's compromise over Germany's duty to adhere to League sanctions of the USSR, and League membership for Germany.⁴⁹³ In order to retain a semblance of French resistance to revision of the Versailles settlement and maintain his position of authority in France's foreign affairs long enough to attempt his plans for a European union capable of both admitting and limiting a potentially

⁴⁹³ Marks, *The Illusion of Peace*, 73-82.

aggressive Germany, however, he could not compromise on French territorial gains made in the Treaty of Versailles and the League Mandates Charters.⁴⁹⁴ If Stresemann wanted Cologne, in other words, he would have to abandon Germany's Western European territorial claims and the former colonies.

Chamberlain was outraged at press reports that Germany might seek a Mandate as payment for League entry. The British plenipotentiary was already aggravated at both Luther and Stresemann for engaging in what he viewed as backroom diplomacy where they demanded the evacuation of Cologne as "payment" for German recognition of any European security pact.⁴⁹⁵ Chamberlain sympathized with Germany's concerns about Article 16, the Soviet Union, and League membership. He was willing to compromise on this aspect of Germany's admission to the League.⁴⁹⁶ Although he was willing to grant Germany a Mandate, Chamberlain could not afford to appear favorably inclined towards German colonial restitution. He was facing a great deal of pressure from the Dominion governments on the subject of the proceedings at Locarno. The Dominion governments—particularly Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the ever problematic South African administration—had reservations about the drafting of a security pact for Europe. Canada and South Africa led the charge, demanding that they receive representation at the negotiation table. The Dominion governments railed against Chamberlain's notion that a security pact in Europe between European states, with guarantees for mutual military support, would have to be honored by the British empire's "autonomous

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 73-82.

⁴⁹⁵ Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*, 264-268.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 263-264.

communities.”⁴⁹⁷ The South African and Australian administrations also feared that any security pact with Germany would weaken their governmental authority over German nationals in their respective Mandates.⁴⁹⁸ The Dominions threatened to refuse recognition of any security pact drafted at Locarno.⁴⁹⁹ Faced with dissension within the Empire and having on hand press reports that showed that the idea of German colonial restitution was wildly unpopular in the Dominions and might further antagonize their parliaments, there was no way that Chamberlain could dangle a Mandate for Germany as a bargaining chip at Locarno.⁵⁰⁰

Stresemann found the timing of Seitz’s and the *DKG*’s press campaign for colonial restitution irritating in the environment surrounding the Locarno Conference. He successfully convinced a furious Chamberlain that the rumors in the German press that he would demand a Mandate as payment for Germany’s entrance into the League were unfounded. Stresemann further insisted that the misrepresentation in German papers of statements made by British, French, and German delegates on the goals and proceedings of the conference were neither his doing nor representative of the German government’s

⁴⁹⁷ Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 21-51; TNA CO/537/1097 (25), “Letter to the German Government; A Simple Invitation,” *Times*, 12 September 1925; TNA CO/537/1097 (26), Clippings of various articles from *The Morning Post* and *The Telegraph*, 12 September 1925; TNA CO/537/1097 (24), Copy of “The Empire and the Pact: Dominions and Empire,” *The Morning Post*, 23 October 1925; TNA CO/537/1097, Copy of an editorial in *Times*, 23 October 1925.

⁴⁹⁸ TNA CO/537/1097 (24), Copy of “The Empire and the Pact: Dominions and India in case of War,” *The Morning Post*, 23 October 1925; TNA CO/537/1097 (21), Copy of “Smuts on Locarno,” *Times*, 12 November 1925; TNA CO/537/1097 (20), Clipping of an article from *Times*, 18 November 1925.

⁴⁹⁹ Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, 46-49; TNA CO/537/1097 (14-19), Telegram from Acton and Capetown to A. Chamberlain regarding lack of Dominion Participation in Locarno talks, 18 November 1925; TNA CO/537/1097 (8), Letter from Colonial Secretary/Dominion Secretary L.S. Amery to A. Chamberlain, 9 November 1925.

⁵⁰⁰ TNA CO/537/1097 (21), Copy of “Smuts on Locarno,” *Times*, 12 November 1925; TNA CO/537/1097 (20), Clipping of an article from *Times*, 18 November 1925; TNA CO/537/1097 (44-45, 47-53), Draft of Telegram and Actual Telegram sent by Amery to all Dominion governments, 18 November 1925.

views.⁵⁰¹ Yet these reassurances were something of a half-truth on Stresemann's part. The German Foreign Minister knew that the idea of seeking restitution had been discussed as early as August 1925 by his staff in the Foreign Office, outlined in a telegram from Germany's embassy in London. The telegram argued that given the sympathetic attitude of the British government, the Foreign Minister should consider lobbying for Germany to be admitted as a Mandatory Power as compensation for League membership. In this missive to the German Foreign Office, Albert Dufour-Feronce, councilor at the German embassy in London, suggested that either a former colony or a swath of territory in Eastern Europe could be re-designated as a League Mandate to be held by the Weimar Republic.⁵⁰²

Stresemann admittedly did hold out hope for the eventual return of the German colonies.⁵⁰³ The Foreign Minister, however, envisioned these negotiations as taking place later after a favorable rapport had been established between the governments of Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Stresemann had initiated dialogue with the French and British governments throughout 1924 and early 1925 to arrange for negotiations on a security pact for Europe.⁵⁰⁴ The diplomatic path to Locarno had been beset by myriad foreign relations hurdles created by the Weimar Republic's domestic politics. The untimely death of President Ebert in 1925 resulted in the nomination of numerous candidates for the Weimar Presidency that would have been disastrous for Franco-German relations. The French government was already predisposed to suspect Germany of once again becoming an aggressive power and the election of an openly

⁵⁰¹ TNA FO 840/1 (282-284), Letter from Stresemann to A. Chamberlain, 9 October 1925.

⁵⁰² PA AA, R966626, Telegram from Dufour-Feronce to German Foreign Office, 17 August, 1925, 9AM.

⁵⁰³ Turner, *Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic*, 210.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 182-187.

hostile candidate might have wrecked any security pact between France and Germany. Stresemann did what he could to advise the various parties seeking a unity candidate to avoid anyone who might jeopardize the delicate status of his queries to London and Paris for a new round of peace talks.

The German Foreign Minister managed to avoid the diplomatic snags of dealing with both the infamously aggressive General von Seeckt and the Minister of the Army, Otto Gessler, as neither attained candidacy. Yet, despite these victories for Stresemann, he faced a greater challenge in the end: the election of Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg—the progenitor of the “stab in the back” myth and one of Germany’s loudest critics of the League, Versailles, and the Allied Powers.⁵⁰⁵ Stresemann deftly handled this foreign relations disaster and somehow managed to hold French and British interest in going ahead with the planned peace conference in 1925. Still, Stresemann had only narrowly averted the collapse of his entire project.⁵⁰⁶ The lobbying and press coverage of Seitz and the *DKG*, particularly Seitz’s public appeal to President Hindenburg to pressure Stresemann to seek colonial restitution, represented yet another threat to all of Stresemann’s hard work.⁵⁰⁷ The colonial lobby was forcing a discussion that Stresemann was not prepared to conduct at the conference and the Foreign Minister was not in a position to resolve the matter in Germany’s favor thanks to the panicked response to the idea of German colonial restitution in the newspapers of the former Allied Powers.

The Locarno pact and the numerous agreements that comprised it were initialed on 16 October 1925 and signed by all parties on 1 December of the same year. The pact

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 191-200; Anna von der Goltz, *Hindenburg: Power, Myth, and the Rise of the Nazis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 14-42, 65-103.

⁵⁰⁶ Turner, *Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic*, 201-211.

⁵⁰⁷ Published letter from Seitz to President Hindenburg originally written on 11 May 1925, *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 29 May 1925.

initiated a mutual security guarantee whereby the Rhineland states—Germany, France, and Belgium—renounced their rights to redraw the borders by military force. These nations further agreed to accept League arbitration if disputes arose along this boundary. No such guarantees were made regarding the Eastern borders between Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia, leaving Germany free to “renegotiate” this frontier, preferably by peaceful means through League diplomacy. France made token promises of military aid to both of its Eastern European allies in the event of a German attack on Polish or Czech soil. The treaties established that the Weimar Republic was set for admission to the League in March 1926. Stresemann achieved a compromise with Chamberlain and Briand whereby the German government, in view of its disarmament, would not be bound by the clause in Article 16 of the League Covenant stipulating that member states support all military sanctions issued by the League. Chamberlain had secured an agreement from Briand, satisfactory to Stresemann and Luther, that French forces in Cologne and the Ruhr were to be removed by 1 December 1926. Though the evacuation of the Ruhr was not completed until 1930, Briand fought continuously with his government to make good on the promise at Locarno to end the ridiculously expensive occupation.⁵⁰⁸ The delegates, however, agreed to table the matter of a potential German Mandate in Africa or the Pacific for later discussion. The best that Chamberlain and Briand could offer at present was the assurance that once Germany joined the League, it would be considered for a possible seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission.⁵⁰⁹ It was a concession for future talks that the diplomatic pragmatist Stresemann was happy

⁵⁰⁸ Wright, “Locarno: a Democratic Peace?”, 397-400; Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 396-398; Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*, 263-272.

⁵⁰⁹ TNA FO 840/1 (179-201), British Secretary’s notes of Fourth Meeting between the British, Belgian, French, German and Italian Delegates, 8 October 1925.

enough to take—Seitz and the *DKG*, however, were not yet ready to give up on further concessions from the Western European governments.

A Second Chance for Victory in the “Locarno System”:

Colonial Germans and the League Council Crisis of 1926

The construction of the “Locarno System” was not finished with the signatures on the treaties in late 1925.⁵¹⁰ Aside from the ratification process for each state involved, which took months, there were several matters that needed further resolution. Germany’s entrance into the League was one. The procedure and requirements for Germany’s admission to the international body had not been hammered out in detail at the Locarno Conference, leaving room for critics and opportunists to entertain the possibility of filling this pedantic void with their own demands. The prospect of joining the League was unpopular with nationalists in the Weimar Republic, who felt that more concessions should be made or that Germany should abandon interaction with the West entirely.⁵¹¹ In addition to Germany’s domestic antagonists, several League member states objected to the possibility of granting Germany a permanent seat on the League Council. Much to Stresemann’s dismay, when he arrived in Geneva in March 1926 to participate in the ceremonies for Germany’s League debut, he found that Germany’s admission would be delayed due to a diplomatic deadlock that had developed within the League Assembly.⁵¹² Several other countries, including Poland and Czechoslovakia, demanded to be given their own Permanent seats on the League Council. The resulting months-long League

⁵¹⁰ Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*, 259-571.

⁵¹¹ Turner, *Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic*, 210-232.

⁵¹² Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*, 348-351; Marks, *The Illusion of Peace*, 83-87; Turner, *Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic*, 220-221.

Council Crisis of 1926 afforded Colonial Germans one last chance to skew the new “Locarno System” in their favor.

The cause of the Crisis of 1926 was not really the admission of Germany to the League Assembly, nor its demands for a Permanent seat on the Council, though such a demand in its 1924 application for League membership had met with resistance.⁵¹³ The majority of League states, with perhaps the notable exception of Poland, had come to recognize Germany’s right of inclusion in both bodies. The delay of Germany’s admission was, instead, the result of long-standing controversies and claims among League member states. Which states would receive Permanent seats on the Council had been a matter of contention since 1921. Spain, Brazil, China and Poland had all made previous requests, using a host of justifications, for Permanent seats on the League Council and had been denied.⁵¹⁴ The promise made to Stresemann of Germany’s gaining a Permanent seat on the Council, thereby expanding its numbers, merely served as an opportunity to reopen these debates about other alterations to the Council’s composition. Representatives of Brazil, Poland, Spain, Persia (Iran), and China all expressed their disdain of the Western European dominated Council. Each proffered individual ultimatums to resist expansion of the Council unless their countries were also awarded Permanent seats.⁵¹⁵ While the Great Powers of Britain and France assumed their governments would resolve the issue, the more vocal, smaller European states of Sweden, Denmark, and Belgium offered their own resistance, insisting that, while they would allow for an expansion of the Permanent seats of the Council to include themselves and Germany, their governments would not allow the admission of non-European states to the

⁵¹³ Marks, *The Illusion of Peace*, 84.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.

Council for fear that they would dilute European influence over the League and therefore jeopardize its ability to preserve European peace and ideals.⁵¹⁶ In line with the Eurocentric, liberal imperial thinking that had led to the construction of the League's Mandates system, European member states did not want to grant administrative powers or strong voices in the League's system of international governance to former colonies and Eastern European states that Western and Central Europeans believed "unready" for the work of civilization.

Amidst the cacophony in the League Assembly, German entry had to be postponed. The delay aggravated German domestic politics over the League. In at least one way, however, the Crisis redounded to Stresemann's benefit. The debate over the composition of the League Council seemed to convince German nationalists that Permanent seats on the Council were much desired and potentially more valuable than they had previously thought, causing a slight reduction of domestic criticisms that Stresemann had gained nothing of value at Locarno.⁵¹⁷ Yet the debate also roused those who had opposed League entry and those who had not achieved their goals at Locarno to further action and agitation—not coordinated with the official line from the Foreign Office—as they operated under the belief that new controversy over Germany's League admission provided another opportunity to continue the wrangling from Locarno and renew their demands. Stresemann himself sought additional concessions, pushing for a quicker withdrawal of French troops from the Rhineland. Yet, the domestic indignation over the Great Powers' perceived backpedaling on their promise of a Permanent Council seat meant Stresemann had to contend with Russophile German interests, who demanded

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., 85-86.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 87.

closer ties with the USSR, and an outraged President Hindenburg, who supposedly favored withdrawal from League entry if Germany was not awarded a Permanent seat.⁵¹⁸

It was in this environment that Colonial German lobbyists renewed their demands for Mandatory power status. Less than a month after the Locarno Pact was initialed, Colonial Germans were again in the press, reiterating their claims and calling for a new round of negotiations:

The process of international readjustment, of which the adoption of the Dawes Plan and the Locarno Pact are two outstanding features, appears now to be advancing towards a third and perhaps equally important milestone—colonial reorganization by reapportionment of colonial mandates, by the League of Nations and the return of one or more of her former colonies to Germany[...] Dr. Heinrich Schnee, former governor of German East Africa [...] regard[s] Germany's re-emergence as a colonial power as the price the Allies must pay for Germany's acceptance of the Dawe's Plan, her entrance into the League of Nations and the sacrifices she is supposed to have made at Locarno in recognizing the status quo in the West and pledging herself never to seek readjustment of the frontiers in the East by force [...]

According to some dispatches, Chancellor Luther will use the prospect of the return of some of Germany's colonies as his big card in the impending parliamentary battle with the Nationalists for the ratification of the Locarno Treaties.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 87.

⁵¹⁹ BArch, R8023/541 (1), 15 November 1925, clipping of article by Joseph Shaplen, "Germany Seeking Colonial Power as price of League pledges—Locarno Pact raises Hopes within Berlin—Luther to Use

Seitz was particularly vocal in renewing calls for talks with the Allies on the recovery of Germany's colonies. He remained adamant that Locarno had been a failure for the Colonial Germans. In Seitz's view, discussion of the Polish Corridor had monopolized the Locarno talks and had stymied any progress that could have been made towards colonial restitution. Seitz still had hope, however, that the new "Locarno System" could work to the German Colonial lobby's advantage. He argued on the one hand that the German government should take advantage of the debates over ratification of the Pact and Germany's Permanent Council seat to draw out Germany's League entry in hopes of gaining further concessions, and on the other that the German Colonial lobbies should do everything in their power to keep the *Kolonialfrage* from fading in both the German and English press.⁵²⁰

In addition to overseeing the publication of numerous articles on the topic of colonial restitution in the DKG's organ, *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, Seitz wrote to Schnee in May 1926, encouraging him to be even more productive in publishing works on German colonialism and the Mandate System than he already had been up to this point, particularly works aimed at foreign audiences.⁵²¹ Seitz congratulated him on the recent publication of the English translation of his work on the German Colonies, *German Colonization Past and Future: The Truth about the German Colonies*. Seitz was

Prospect of Return of Overseas Possessions as Big Factor in Struggle with Parliament," *The New York Herald*.

⁵²⁰ BArch, R8023/542 (5-9), 21 July 1926, Letter from Seitz to Oberbürgermeister Lohnmeyer.

⁵²¹ „Zwischen Locarno und Genf," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 January 1926; "Koloniale Aussichten bei einem Eintritt Deutschlands in den Völkerbund," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 February 1926; Theodor Seitz, "Verlangt Italien Kolonialmandate?," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 February 1926; „Wie der Völkerbund irreführt wird," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 March 1926; "Die deutschen Kolonialeisenbahnen unter Mandatsherrschaft," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 16 April 1926; William H. Dawson, "Die Rückgabe der Kolonien—ein Gebot der Ehre Englands," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 June 1926; "Völkerbund und Kolonien," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 19 July 1926.

particularly impressed by the sympathetic introduction to the English edition by the English historian William H. Dawson. Seitz insisted that the need not only for an English audience, but for a truly international audience of sympathizers for Germany's claims was even more important as Germany prepared for League entry.⁵²² Seitz also encouraged the German Foreign Office to support Albert Hahl, the former governor of German New Guinea, in his efforts to translate into English an essay he wrote in May 1926, in which he reiterated the Allies violation of Wilson's Fourteen Points in the seizure of the German colonies and the economic necessity for Germany to recover her colonies as Mandates. The essay was translated for an English audience and subsequently sent to C.R. Buxton in the British House of Commons for presentation before Parliament.⁵²³ Buxton was a frequent advisor to the Labour Party on colonial affairs and the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa. From 1917 on, he was also a member of the Society of Friends. More colloquially known as Quakers, the Society of Friends had been pacifists during the war and believed afterwards that Germany had been treated unfairly in the Treaty of Versailles.⁵²⁴ Buxton was therefore more likely to sympathize with the position of Seitz and the German Colonial lobby than most in Parliament, making him an easy choice for presenting Hahl's essay.

Seitz was not content, however, to leave the important matter of colonial restitution to press coverage and essays in Parliament alone. Using contacts made through the German Foreign Office, who themselves had contacts in the League's bureaucracy,

⁵²² BArch, R8023/542 (52-53), 5 May 1926, Letter from Seitz to Schnee.

⁵²³ BArch, R8023/542 (28-35), 31 May 1926, A series of letters between Ministerrat Hauptmann and Governor Hahl, along with Hahl's essay, composed in April and May 1926, sent as a bundle to Seitz by Elester.

⁵²⁴ Panikos Panayi, "The British Empire Union in the First World War," in *The Politics of Marginality: Race, the Radical Right and Minorities*, ed. Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (New York: Frank Cass, 1990), 113–130, 120–122.

Seitz sought to collect intelligence on the general temperament of the League Assembly, and more specifically the attitudes of the current members of the Permanent Mandates Commission, towards German Mandates. Already aware of the promise to consider Germany for a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission, Seitz was clearly beginning to develop a plan of action to use that seat and the League as a whole as a platform for German colonial restitution claims. In particular, he sought information on who the most powerful personalities in the League Assembly, League Council, and PMC were, on who was sympathetic to the Colonial German cause, and on how he or the *DKG* could contact these individuals.⁵²⁵ He was especially curious as to what Marquis Theodoli, the Italian member on the PMC and its Chairman, thought about Germany's claim to Mandatory Power status.⁵²⁶

Domestically, Seitz focused on the economic angle. Writing to the *Reichswirtschaftsrat*, Seitz attempted to convince the German government that “[w]ith the entry of Germany in the League of Nations, the Colonial question [had] entered a new stage.”⁵²⁷ He insisted that the German government should take advantage of its upcoming membership in the League to express colonial demands. Seitz argued that should the promises of a seat on the Permanent Council and a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission materialize, German representatives in these posts must press for a new

⁵²⁵ BArch, R8023/542 (73), 16 January 1926, Letter from H. Ziemann to Seitz; BArch, R8023/542 (71-72), 18 January 1926, Letter from Seitz to H. Ziemann; BArch, R8023/542(63-64), 26 January 1926, H. Ziemann sends a copy to Seitz of a letter from Dr. Olsen to H. Ziemann; BArch, R8023/542 (62), 29 January 1926, Letter from Seitz to H. Ziemann.

⁵²⁶ BArch, R8023/542 (71-72), 18 January 1926, Letter from Seitz to H. Ziemann; BArch, R8023/542 (62), 29 January 1926, Letter from Seitz to H. Ziemann.

⁵²⁷ BArch, R8023/542 (57-59), 3 February 1926, Letter from Seitz to the *Reichswirtschaftsrat*.

colonial settlement as a matter imperative to German economic recovery, and that this topic should also be broached at the upcoming 1926 World Economic Conference.⁵²⁸

In a way, Seitz got what he wished for in regards to keeping the colonial debate alive in the press. Amidst the struggles by all the diplomats to convince their governments to ratify the Locarno treaties and the continuing debates over the exact nature of Germany's entry into the League of Nations, rumors filled newspapers with what might have been promised to the Weimar Government behind closed doors at Locarno concerning colonial restitution:

Just what definite promises, if any, the Allies have actually made on the question of giving Germany some colonial mandates is not known, but it was generally accepted in Berlin on the eve of Luther and Stresemann's departure for Locarno that the German statesman had been given to understand by both the Quai d'Orsay and Downing Street that if Germany behaved herself and did not go back on Stresemann's pact offer of Feb. 9 of this year, she may expect some material concession in her plea for the return of some of her former colonial possessions. [...]

Objects being sought. It is upon German East Africa, Togoland, and Kamerun that the eyes of Germany are directed in her efforts to become once again a great colonial power. Being fully aware that the Union of SA is hardly likely to acquiesce in the return of GSWA to Germany, the German government is concentrating its attention on the proposal whereby England, France and Belgium would agree to return the Mandates they hold for German East

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

Africa, Togoland, and Kamerun to the League of Nations, which, in turn, would transfer these mandates to Germany [...] *France-Belgian Attitude*: It is possible however that the British Government may be willing to have this colony [East Africa] returned to Germany, if German gives adequate guarantees for its proper administration. Reports from reliable diplomatic sources in recent months confirm also the possibility of the French and Belgian governments agreeing to let Germany assume the mandates for Togoland and the Kameruns, or parts of them, in exchange for Germany's promise to help keep the peace in Europe and as a means of helping Germany meet her reparations obligations.⁵²⁹

False reports that the Germans had managed to gain a colony as a concession sparked a flurry of disputes over the future of the Mandate System as a whole. In addition to yet another round of anti-German sentiment from the press in France and the British Dominions, there were also proposals for a restructuring of the Mandates System. Two of the most interesting suggestions, if at odds with one another, put forward plans to strengthen the level of international supervision of colonial affairs, either through economic or social reform.

The economic plan for greater international control over colonial endeavors came, not surprisingly, from Germany. During a visit to the United States, Hjalmar Schacht, a member of the *DDP* and president of the *Reichsbank*, ambitiously claimed that his

⁵²⁹ BArch, R8023/541 (2-10), 15 November 1925, clipping of article by Joseph Shaplen, "Germany Seeking Colonial Power as price of League pledges—Locarno Pact raises Hopes within Berlin—Luther to Use Prospect of Return of Overseas Possessions as Big Factor in Struggle with Parliament," *The New York Herald*.

proposal would “take the colonies out of politics [...] and do for them exactly what the Dawes Plan did for the Reparations problem.”⁵³⁰ Schacht’s plan, which gained some traction in the United States and would remain in the press well into 1929, promoted the idea of shifting control of the Mandates System from the international governmental body of the League to a private, corporate enterprise.⁵³¹ Schacht called for the formation of an international chartered company, modeled after the old East India Company, through which joint development of Germany’s former colonies by Germany, the Allies and the United States could occur.⁵³² If the plan succeeded in this trial run, it could, he recommended, be extended for the beneficial mutual exploitation of lands throughout Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the unstable Soviet Union by the world’s civilized Western Powers.⁵³³

Although Schacht’s plan was well-received in the Allied Press and among some Colonial German activists, including Seitz, hostility towards his international charter company proposal still arose, both domestically and abroad. Germany’s radical nationalists, such as Wilhelm Föllmer, and dedicated colonial irredentists like Heinrich Schnee, called Schacht’s plan a “colonial stab in the back” that needlessly diverted attention away from the true mission of full colonial restitution for Germany.⁵³⁴

⁵³⁰ BArch, R8023/541 (10), 15 November 1925, clipping of article by Joseph Shaplen, “Germany Seeking Colonial Power as price of League pledges—Locarno Pact raises Hopes within Berlin—Luther to Use Prospect of Return of Overseas Possessions as Big Factor in Struggle with Parliament,” *The New York Herald*.

⁵³¹ *Afrique Francaise*, vol. 30, April 1920, 164; *Afrique Francaise*, vol. 36, August 1926, 402; BArch, R8023/543 (451-452), 13 May 1929, Letter from Seitz to Ludwig Kastl.

⁵³² Hjalmar Schacht, “Neue Kolonialpolitik,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 April 1926; Wildenthal, “Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 339–359, 344..

⁵³³ Wildenthal, “Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 344.

⁵³⁴ Wildenthal, “Gender and Colonial Politics After the Versailles Treaty,” in *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects*, 345.

Schacht also faced international opposition to his plan in the form of an alternative proposal that emerged in July 1926 from the International Women's League, which suggested a radical reform of the League's structure to fulfill more truly its purported founding principles. The International Women's League, founded in the Hague in 1915 as an anti-war movement, held a series of meetings in Dublin in mid-July 1926 to discuss Germany's former colonies as part of the program of its biennial assembly. Women from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Holland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the USA, and the Irish Free State were in attendance and the minutes of the meetings were published daily in the *Irish Times*. The International Women's League unanimously opposed Schacht's plan on the grounds that it represented an extension of economic imperialism. The German delegation to the 1926 meeting, comprised of thirteen members and headed by Magda Hoppstock-Huth, forwarded the view that the causes of the First World War could be found in colonialism and, that more dangerously, the war had served to aggravate tensions between Europeans and "coloured peoples" that had begun under European colonial oppression, thus threatening another global war, this time between "whites and coloured peoples."⁵³⁵ The Women's League thus proposed that all European powers relinquish their colonies and Mandates in order to "make possible mutual relations with coloured people on the ground of the recognition of human equality and respect for the culture of so-called savages."⁵³⁶ The IWL's Committee on Colonial and Economic Imperialism published the following

⁵³⁵ BArch, R8023/542 (19-22), 7 August 1926, Report from German Consul in Dublin to German Foreign Office. List of German Delegation members: Anita Augsburg, Elise Dosenheimer, Lida Gustana Heymann, Olga Knischewsky, Magda Hoppstock-Huth, Illa Uth, Fria Perlen, Hedwig Konietzny, Martha Steinitz, Constanze Hallgarten, Frau Hethley, Margerit Wachsmann.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, R8023/542 (19).

radically anti-colonial plan to abolish traditional European imperialism and strengthen the League through a revision to the Mandates System that would increase international oversight “so as to protect the natives from oppression, [the League’s] declared objects sincerely applied, and that the standard set up in the League Covenant for Mandatory States should be extended to all Colonies”:

A.) All Territories should be administered in the interests of the native inhabitants. Therefore –**(a)** the Revenue derived from the native population should be expended in their own interests, so that the mandates be not camouflage for the exploitation of the natives, **(b)** Enough good class land should be preserved for the present and future needs of the native population. **(c)** All commerce in alcohol and drugs with the native peoples should be forbidden **(d)** Forced labour of the native population should be forbidden **(e)** the hygienic conditions and needs of the natives should be carefully attended to **(f)** Military conscription of natives should be forbidden **(g)** regulation of prostitution should be forbidden **(h)** that liberal provision should be made for the education of natives on the lines of their own culture **(k)** that full liberty shall be given the native Press. [...]

Abolition of Economic Imperialism:

(1) That preferential tariffs, Custom barriers and all measures tending to impede the free exchange of goods and free intercourse between countries should be abolished. The temporary establishment of a European Custom Union would be

the first step towards the attainment of Free Trade in all countries and continents.

(2) That there should be established through the League of Nations international control of the distribution of essential raw materials and food, according to the needs of the peoples, and not for the profit of the entrepreneurs. To this end an international economic council should be established, consisting of (a) members representing the interests of the consumers, (b) members representing producers, finance, industry, government, trade unions, etc.

(3) That there should be established through the League of Nations an international economic Council, in order to promote the development of the productive powers of each country in the common interest of all and in order to avoid the economic rivalry and subjugation of any country.

(4) That the League of Nations should consent to guarantee loans for the development of production in such countries as suffer from lack of capital.⁵³⁷

Debates such as these over the structure of the Mandates System and European imperialism would continue long past the end of the League Council Crisis of 1926. Up to the conclusion of the Crisis, however, the additional press coverage and arguments over Germany's former colonial possessions and the possible expansion or reform of the Mandates System did not result in any substantial change to the System. In late summer

⁵³⁷ Ibid., R8023/542 (20-22).

1926, the League's Special Committee on the Composition of the Council formulated the compromise solution to the diplomatic crisis. It stipulated that: 1.) Germany would gain its promised Permanent seat on the League Council, but no other country would be added as a Permanent member; 2.) the number of Non-Permanent seats on the League Council, however, was increased from six to nine; 3.) six of these temporary seats would be held for fixed three-year terms while the three remaining seats would be eligible for re-election to the Council at the end of their terms, creating a new class of Semi-Permanent seats intended for Poland, Brazil and Spain. The solution was not popular, and Brazil actually left the League rather than accept the Semi-Permanent seat it was offered, but Poland and Spain, now content with their own Semi-Permanent seats, accepted Germany's Permanent seat on the League Council. On 10 September 1926, Germany's delegation was officially admitted to the League Assembly in Geneva.⁵³⁸ Germany would not, however, become a Mandatory Power. Yet, the results of the Locarno Pact, its ratification, and the League Council Crisis of 1926 did not represent a complete loss for Colonial Germans either. In addition to its admission to the League Assembly and its Permanent seat on the Council, Germany received its promised seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission in Autumn 1926. The process of selecting a German to serve on the PMC was set in motion with the goal of the German member joining by mid-1927. Though Seitz and the German colonial lobby would continue to press for colonial restitution, he and the *DKG* hailed the admission of a German member to the PMC as a

⁵³⁸ Marks, *The Illusion of Peace*, 85-86.

partial victory achieved by Colonial Germans and looked forward to PMC membership as a new platform from which to advance Germany's colonial claims.⁵³⁹

Locarno: Failure, Success, or Learning Experience for the German Colonial Lobby?

Apart from the official conference delegates, public opinion had its share of influence on the negotiations at Locarno, causing disruptions and forcing compromises. Whether their demands and interests were satisfied or not, minority groups, lobbies and the general publics of numerous countries and colonies made their attitudes and desires known during the proceedings and they were loud enough to factor into the considerations of the three men given credit for ushering in the "Spirit of Locarno." The possibility—and eventual reality—of Germany's entry into the League as a key component of the Locarno talks emboldened Colonial Germans to attempt to influence the German government to go a step further in the international negotiations, demanding Mandatory Power status for Germany. The contemporary view of the League of Nations and the Mandates Commission as legitimate attempts at international governance and control of imperialism, and therefore theoretically open to petitioners of all nations seeking redress on the international stage, also encouraged the German colonial lobbies' to view the organization as a possible means of challenging and revising the post-Versailles status quo.

The strategy of employing the press and international opinion did not always garner the desired results. In fact, as in the case of Locarno, they often backfired when public opinion from the former Allied Powers and their affiliates was antagonized by

⁵³⁹ "Deutschland im Völkerbund: das Ende der Kolonialschuldflüge," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 16 September 1926; „Deutschland in der Mandatskommission: Kastl in der Mandatskommission gewählt," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 16 September 1926.

Colonial German demands and retaliated with anger, threats, and renewed criticisms of Germany's colonial record. On occasion, public discussion of expanding the Mandates System or restoring the colonies to Germany roused something even more dangerous to those colonialists seeking Mandates and colonies for Germany: anti-colonial sentiments from segments of the European and American communities seeking to revise drastically or to terminate even the League's liberal, internationalist imperialism. Still, the tactics acquired during the debate surrounding Locarno, combined with recognition that German colonial demands should be pitched to a wider audience, would result in more aggressive appeals to the press to voice Colonial German concerns in the future. Moving forward from Locarno, Colonial Germans and their lobbying organizations, such as the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*, continued to adapt and appropriate internationalist 'democratic' rhetoric in a persistent effort to work through the organs of the League's bureaucracy to attain their goals. Though they had failed to garner a single Mandate for Germany, let alone complete colonial restitution, through their efforts surrounding the Locarno Treaties the German colonial lobbyists had attained a partial, somewhat haphazard victory—a seat for Germany on the Permanent Mandates Commission and with it, renewed hopes of using internationalism as a stage on which to present their grievances.

The German colonial lobbies under the leadership of individuals like Seitz and Schnee became a variable that could not be ignored by Weimar foreign policy. The German Foreign Office, under the leadership of Stresemann and later Curtius, was clearly running the show when it came to Germany's foreign policy within the League and colonial restitution was not a key component of its plans for a greater Germany. Yet, *KoRAG*, the *DKG*, and the *Frauenbund* still harried the Weimar government in the

German press and in direct appeals to officials regarding the government's colonial policy—or lack thereof. Far from snubbing this special interest group, I argue in the next chapter that the German government placated the colonial lobbyists with regular installments of copies of Foreign Office reports on the Mandates and the League, consideration of the lobbies' positions on recommendations for PMC appointments, and a steady stream of vague platitudes about the possibility of the government pursuing Mandatory Power status for Germany at a later date.

Why would the German Foreign Office feel the need to address the concerns—however superficially—of what could be deemed a group on the fringe of Germany's foreign interests? The answer lies in the colonial lobbies' adaptation to internationalism. Schnee and other German colonial irredentists were loud and visible not only at home but on the international stage, both in the press and their publications. Just as in the case of the Locarno Conference, this public presence of German colonialist demands continued to be recognized and refuted by the Allied press, creating diplomatic hiccups for German and Allied statesmen alike in their efforts to reach international compromises on issues even tangentially related to the Mandates System. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, Seitz routinely harassed Germany's PMC members with his demands. The lobbying organizations themselves petitioned the PMC throughout the 1920s and early 1930s on everything from individual business interests to the Naturalization of Southwest African Germans by the Union of South Africa (1922-1924) to plans for 'Closer Union' in East Africa. The colonial lobbies became so visible through their protests in international politics and international agencies that the German Foreign Office had to mollify them at home. Furthermore, the German Foreign Office was forced to

appropriate, modify, and smooth over the ripples created by vocal Colonial Germans and foreign responses to them during large international disputes in order to pursue its policy goals in the League. Even if they did not always get their way or share the same vision regarding what could be achieved through appeals to the emerging international bureaucracy, Colonial Germans and the colonial lobbies acclimatized to internationalism and found ways to use the Mandates Commission and League organs as a public platform. In this way, the German colonial lobbies remained adaptive contributors, for better or worse, to the new variant of the colonial world order known as the Mandates System.

Chapter Five

**From “Unfit Imperialists” to “Fellow Civilizers”:
German Colonial Officials on the Permanent Mandates Commission**

“To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League [...]”

—Article 22, *The Treaty of Versailles*⁵⁴⁰

By 1926, it became apparent that campaigns by Colonial Germans and the Weimar government demanding the return of the former colonies had failed. The international

⁵⁴⁰ A variant of this chapter will be published Wempe, “From Unfit Imperialists to Fellow Civilizers: German Colonial Officials as Imperial Experts in the League of Nations, 1919-1933.” *German History*, Forthcoming (2016).

negotiations at Locarno in October 1925—intended to ensure stability in interwar Europe by alleviating tensions created by the Treaty of Versailles—signaled the finality of the loss of empire. Colonial Germans had pinned their hopes on these negotiations, anticipating the return of empire and an end to the humiliating existence as a postcolonial state surrounded by ongoing imperial powers. There was a general assumption that entrance into the League might expunge Germany’s ‘colonial guilt.’⁵⁴¹ Despite reports that Stresemann had insisted on Germany gaining a Mandate as payment for its entry into the League as negotiated during Locarno, German delegates had not pursued this line as vigorously as issues regarding Germany’s European borders and reparations payments.⁵⁴² The League did not grant Germany the status of a Mandatory Power. Despite the fact that the overseas possessions remained out of reach, the treaties had brought tangible results and heralded the return of Germany to the international stage: Germany was admitted to the League of Nations, the Weimar government recognized its Western borders, and Stresemann gained the concession that Germany’s contentious Eastern borders would remain open to contractual revisions in the future.⁵⁴³ Most importantly for the present argument, however, Germany was granted a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC)—the League’s supervisory committee tasked with receiving reports on and making judgments concerning the governance of the Mandates.

⁵⁴¹ “Deutschland im Völkerbund: das Ende der Kolonialschuldflüge,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 16 September 1926.

⁵⁴² “Die Verhandlungen in Locarno und die deutschen Kolonien,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 31 October 1925; BArch, R8023/529 (56), Joseph Shaplen, “Germany Seeking Colonial Power as Price of League Pledges. Locarno Pact Raises Hopes Within Berlin--Luther to Use Prospect of Return of Overseas Possessions as Big Factor in Struggle with Parliament,” *New York Herald* (New York, 15 November 1925); “Weltmacht Again?,” *The Morning Post*, 15 October 1925.

⁵⁴³ Patrick O. Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I: America, Britain and the Stabilisation of Europe, 1919-1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 348-352.

Until the 1990s, most of the scholarship on the League of Nations operated on the “hindsight fallacy” and remained preoccupied with the League’s failure to maintain general peace and to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, new questions emerged about how international governance bodies like the United Nations could operate in a world politics environment with a single superpower and how best to handle minorities within the former Soviet Republics. In this context, historians interrogated the League’s intended roles, its structures, and its functionality.⁵⁴⁴ One organ of the League receiving renewed scholarly interest has been the Permanent Mandates Commission, responsible for overseeing the Mandatory Powers’ administrations of the Mandates. The works of Michael Callahan, Antony Anghie, and Susan Pedersen differ in their interpretations of the Commission’s effectiveness and of its means and motives for maintaining, restraining, and reforming imperialism within the framework of interwar internationalism. All, however, share a focus on the Mandatory Powers, either as the primary actors in the construction and maintenance of the Mandates System or as the primary recipients of the PMC’s legitimization or condemnation of their colonial rule.⁵⁴⁵

This chapter, instead, changes the gaze to look away from the Mandatories and focus on the involvement of individuals and lobbying interests in the Mandates System from a power that had initially been cast out of the new imperial internationalism of the 1920s: Germany. With the taint of ‘colonial guilt’ still hanging over them in the public sphere, Germans were deemed “exceptionally cruel colonial masters” and “unfit

⁵⁴⁴Pedersen, “Back to the League of Nations,”1091-1117.

⁵⁴⁵ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*; Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*; Callahan, “‘Mandated Territories Are Not Colonies’: Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s,” in *Imperialism on Trial*, 1–20; Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Pedersen, “The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument,”560–582.

imperialists.” They were therefore barred from Mandatory Power status. Yet, during the tenure of the League’s Mandate System, several former German colonial officials rose to prominence in the League of Nations as “imperial experts.” The involvement of German colonial officials in League agencies and events suggests that, although no longer part of an imperial power and officially ostracized from the “work of civilization,” these individuals and the German colonial lobbies remained adaptive—if not always successful—contributors to international discourses on empire and overseas possessions. The present work seriously considers Colonial Germans’ engagement with internationalism in the years following the Locarno Treaties as they inserted themselves into larger, transnational discussions on the definitions of empire, civilization, and ‘good colonial governance’ in the hopes of using the Permanent Mandates Commission as a platform for challenging the post-First World War status quo.

In order to determine how individual Colonial Germans were able to make use of the spirit of internationalism to minimize their association with the appellation of “unfit imperialists” and thereby re-establishing themselves as “fellow civilizers,” this chapter concentrates on the interwar careers of two colonial officials: Dr. Ludwig Kastl and Dr. Julius Ruppel—bureaucrats who had worked in Germany’s former African colonies. Each of these men served for a time as the German member on the Permanent Mandates Commission: Kastl from September 1927 until his resignation in May 1930 and Ruppel from July 1930 until Germany’s withdrawal from the League in October 1933. I investigate the process of how, and the extent to which, these Colonial bureaucrats were reintegrated into the ‘civilizing mission’ via the League’s international Mandates project. In the second section of the chapter, I evaluate the level and type of Kastl’s and Ruppel’s

involvement in the workings and decisions of the Permanent Mandates Commission. Next, I assess the degree of influence the German Colonial lobby had over both Kastl and Ruppel during their tenure as Germany's member on the Commission. Finally, I look at the complementary strategies employed by the *DKG*, the *KoRAG*, the German Foreign Office, and the two German members on the Permanent Mandates Commission to hinder British plans for a "Closer Union" in East Africa. By tracing the PMC careers and interactions of two German bureaucrats with ties to both the German Colonial lobby and the German Foreign Office, this chapter not only demonstrates the complexities and tensions of Germany's foreign policy in regards to mandated territories, but also provides a different perspective on the Mandates System and on how the ideology and structure of this new imperial program were put to use in ways outside the stated objectives of its founders.

Reluctant Rehabilitators: Admitting Germany to the PMC

The admission of a German member to the Permanent Mandates Commission did not come about without controversy. Although often regarded in hindsight as an ineffective body which did little to curb the excesses of imperialism, contemporaries—especially imperial thinkers—were wary of the PMC and its potential for exposing colonial powers to international shame. The members of the PMC had made it clear in its early years of existence that they took the Commission's role far more seriously than imagined or intended by the Mandate System's founders.

Drafters of the League Charter, such as General Jan Smuts of South Africa, conceived the Mandate System as a safer means of preserving liberal empire by

preventing the unrestricted land grabs and imperial competition that had contributed to the eruption of the First World War.⁵⁴⁶ As Mark Mazower has argued, a new justification for imperialism needed to be formulated if the standard of civilization via Western domination were to be maintained in the face of movements that had become a greater threat to empire following the First World War. Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism, and Pan-Islam, as well as individual nationalist movements in various colonies, challenged the rhetoric of the European stadial theory of development with an adopted and modified Wilsonian vocabulary of liberty and self-determination for all.⁵⁴⁷

In the view of the system's founders, the PMC was to be little more than an organization for conflict resolution between the great imperial powers.⁵⁴⁸ Once established, however, the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission viewed the Mandate System as the preservation of a European-wide 'civilizing mission,' and the Commission's role as that of the defender and standardizing agent of this mission through the regulation of the policies of the Mandatory Powers. As Susan Pedersen has argued, the Members of the Commission, who were appointed without fixed terms, came to be impossible for the Mandatories to control.⁵⁴⁹ In spite of the fact that four of the commissioners were nationals of chief Mandatory Powers, the members of the PMC had their own visions of a new imperial internationalism and sought to run the Commission as they saw fit, without interference from the national governments of Britain, France, Belgium, Japan, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.⁵⁵⁰ In the 1920s, for example,

⁵⁴⁶ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 34-38, 40-47.

⁵⁴⁷ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 165-166; Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 3-18, 25, 31.

⁵⁴⁸ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 34-38, 40-47.

⁵⁴⁹ Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," 569-570.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 561-562, 568-572; Daniel Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 11-18, 53-134.

the Permanent Mandates Commission made statements criticizing health and sanitation conditions in the French and Belgian Mandates; questioned the legality of the automatic naturalization of Germans as British subjects in South Africa; condemned efforts by Britain, France, and the British Dominions to annex C-Class Mandates; and began inquiries into who had the actual authority over Mandate Territories: the Mandatory Powers, the Allied Powers, or the League of Nations via the Commission itself.⁵⁵¹

Although it lacked the power of enacting formal economic or military sanctions against offenders, the Commission's limited authority still made the Mandatories wary of transgressing their Mandate charters too openly. The PMC had the ability to hear petitions from indigenous populations, League member states, and business interests, and had the additional right to demand increasingly more detailed yearly reports from the Mandatory Powers concerning their possessions, which it could then subject to public censure. The PMC's selective publication of Mandate reports and the Commissioners response to them brought with it the potential for ridicule in the public sphere that made the Mandatories feel as if they were living in a glass house with every aspect of their rule subject to public opinion.⁵⁵²

The introduction of the concept of 'colonial guilt' by the Allied Powers certainly had an impact on more than just the German Empire that it had helped dissolve. 'Colonial

⁵⁵¹ Braum, ed., *Southwest Africa Under Mandate*, 64-77, 110-130, 145-160; *Commission Permanente des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Sixième Session, Tenue à Genève du 26 Juin au 10 Juillet 1925*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1925), 45-46, 58-85, 99-100; PA AA, R96523, J.B.M Hertzog to Eric Drummond, "Nouvelles Observations du Gouvernement Sud-Africain sur le Rapport de la Commission Permanente des Mandats Relatif aux Travaux de sa Quatrième Session", May 27, 1925; *Commission Permanente des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Quatorzième Session, Tenue à Genève du 26 Octobre au 13 Novembre 1928*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1928), 120-140, 265-268; *Commission Permanente des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Quinzième Session, Tenue à Genève Du 1 Au 19 Juillet 1929*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1929), 103-110, 167-170, 200-204.

⁵⁵² Callahan, *Mandates and Empire* and Callahan, *A Sacred Trust* and Callahan, "'Mandated Territories Are Not Colonies': Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s," in *Imperialism on Trial*, 1-20; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 165-173; Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, 3, 13, 37-38, 132-133.

guilt' brought with it accusations of hypocrisy as well as a new debate on the concept of "good colonial governance."⁵⁵³ Having accused one imperial power of brutalities in such a public arena and having created an international oversight commission in the PMC, the Allies, especially Britain and France, were now subject to even greater scrutiny in all of their colonial policies. In publishing the discussions and minutes of its sessions, as well as a small selection of reports on and text of the petitions submitted from claimants contesting aspects of Mandatory rule, the Mandates Commission forced the imperial powers into a public discussion to determine new norms for how best to govern colonial, and Mandatory, subjects. In essence, the Mandatories could only acquire legitimation in the public sphere for their continued rule in both the mandates and the colonies if they accepted the standards set by the PMC, and faced public denunciation if they did not.⁵⁵⁴ The admission of a German to the Permanent Mandates Commission, it was feared, would subject the Mandatory Powers to even more vitriolic condemnations from the League's Commission by giving the dead empire an official setting in which to point an accusing finger from the grave at those powers which now ruled Germany's former overseas possessions.

The French government was perhaps the most concerned about the entrance of Germany to the League and the Permanent Mandates Commission. French newspapers and officials continued to lobby against this development right up until the PMC recognized the appointment of the first German member in 1927. One of the French concerns involved the increased scrutiny from a nation that was clearly hostile to France's acquisition of not only former German colonies as Mandates, but also of Alsace-

⁵⁵³ Dimier, "On Good Colonial Government," 279-299.

⁵⁵⁴ Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," 571.

Lorraine. Germans, French opponents claimed, could not be trusted to be dispassionate in the matter of Mandates, given their repeated criticism of the Mandate System and France. Attempts were made by members of the French and British press to further discredit Germany's right to a seat on the Commission by once again raising the cry of "colonial guilt," reminding the world that Germany was unfit for the European "civilizing mission."⁵⁵⁵ The driving force of these efforts appear to have been French anxiety over the potential loss of their Mandate Territories in Africa, which as far as the French were concerned—though the PMC and the League did not agree—were now considered part of the French nation. This fear was largely fueled by rumors that the Germans had insisted on a Mandate as the price of their membership in the League and that the British were willing to pay that price with a French colony:⁵⁵⁶

[France] grows restless in the face of interested allegations—especially German allegations—which seek to deny the virtues of [French] colonization in certain territories which were received as Mandates and avariciously demand the return of Togo and Cameroon to Germany. Such demands demonstrably appear, in effect, to attempt to bring about [German colonial restitution] and push towards the complete disintegration of our colonial patrimony!⁵⁵⁷

As a result of strong British support for German admission to the League and the Mandates Commission, the French government was unable to stop either. Together with

⁵⁵⁵ BArch, R8023/529 (56), "Weltmacht Again?," *The Morning Post*, 15 October 1925. See quote in Chapter 4 above.

⁵⁵⁶ BArch, R8023-529 (7), *La Dépêche Colonies et Maritime* (Paris, 15 November 1925); BArch, R8023/529 (58), *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, 17 August 1925). BArch, R8023/529 (33), Auswärtiges Amt Regierungsrat Wertheimer to Theodor Seitz, Telegram, 16 November 1925.

⁵⁵⁷ BArch, R8023/529 (2-3), French National Committee, *Journée Industrielle* (Paris, 4 December 1925).

the British government and pragmatists in the German Foreign Office like Gustav Stresemann, however, they did succeed in making certain that no *Schutztruppe* generals, like Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, or vocal former governors of the German colonies, like Heinrich Schnee or Theodor Seitz, would be considered as possible candidates, as these individuals would presumably be the most antagonistic towards the Mandatory Powers.

The Judged Become the Judges: Selecting Colonial Germans as PMC Members

Two German Colonial officials successively filled Germany's seat on the PMC: Dr Ludwig Kastl, who served on the commission from September 1927 to May 1930, and Dr. Julius Ruppel, who took the post after Kastl's resignation and held it until Germany's withdrawal from the League in October 1933. Both men possessed credentials that worked in favor of their selection. Kastl's and Ruppel's years of service in the German Colonies mostly fell outside the incriminating period of the Herero Genocide, the chief example of German 'colonial guilt' as understood by the Allied Powers and the League. Neither man had served in the *Kolonialschutztruppe* or as a governor of any colony. Kastl had worked in the Colonial Department of the German Foreign Office since 1906, with the majority of that time spent in German Southwest Africa in various positions; he was promoted to Chief of the Finance Division of the colony in 1915 by Governor Theodor Seitz. From 1915 to 1920, Kastl had also served as the leader of the German Civil Administration under the wartime occupation of German Southwest Africa by South Africa and had made lasting connections with English and South African officials.⁵⁵⁸ Ruppel for his part entered the colonial service in 1908 and worked in German Cameroon until 1912, giving him the additional benefit of geographical distance from the events that transpired in

⁵⁵⁸BArch, R8023/537 (4-7), Theodor Seitz to Gustav Stresemann and Auswärtiges Amt, 9 December 1927.

Southwest Africa between 1904 and 1907. In 1912, he was promoted to the position of *Regierungsrat* at the *Reichskolonialamt* in Berlin where he served until the end of the First World War.⁵⁵⁹

Kastl and Ruppel also had experience with international relations. Kastl had served in the Reich Finance Ministry after the war and, as a result, had taken part in the discussions and agreements regarding Germany's reparations payments that would later form the Young Plan.⁵⁶⁰ In April and May 1919, Ruppel had figured as the "colonial expert" in the German delegation to Versailles in hopes of negotiating better terms, and in 1924 he led the German delegation to Paris for discussions with the Reparations Commission as a preliminary to the Dawes Plan of August 1924 and the later Locarno Conference.⁵⁶¹ These experiences, combined with their more politically-benign service records in the former colonies, were important factors in the final approval of both men by the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission.⁵⁶²

Ludwig Kastl and Julius Ruppel were not given their seats on the PMC based on these credentials alone, however. Although it was the League Council and the Permanent Mandates Commission which approved the appointment of Kastl and later Ruppel to the PMC, the German government—as a full League member state—was allowed to perform the early rounds of selection, proposing qualified candidates to the League. The Weimar

⁵⁵⁹ BArch, R8023/543 (372), Written Record of a Telephone call between Ruppel and Elester to discuss Ruppel's credentials sent to the Auswärtiges Amt, 26 May 1930.

⁵⁶⁰ BArch, R8023/543 (452), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 16 April 1929.

⁵⁶¹ BArch, R8023/543 (372), Written Record of a Telephone call between Ruppel and Elester to discuss Ruppel's credentials sent to the Auswärtiges Amt, 26 May 1930. Ruppel's role as colonial advisor in 1919 was, in the end, superfluous. By the time the German delegation arrived at Versailles, the terms for peace, including the forfeiture of Germany's colonial holdings, had already been determined by the Allied Powers.

⁵⁶² PA AA, R96530, Ernst Scholz to Auswärtiges Amt, 5 August 1927; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Rapport Sur Les Travaux de La Onzième Session de La Commission, 20 Juin-6 Juillet 1927*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1927); *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Douzième Session, Tenue à Genève Du 24 Octobre Au 11 Novembre 1927*, VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1927); *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Seizième Session, Tenue à Genève du 6 au 26 Novembre 1929*, VI:.

government predictably assigned this task to the German Foreign Office, which in turn researched potential nominees. Perhaps the most significant factor in the choices of Kastl and Ruppel as the German representative on the PMC, however, was the persistent influence of the *DKG* in Germany's bureaucracy, especially the continued correspondence between its President—Theodor Seitz—and the German Foreign Office.

Seitz was the Governor of German Cameroon from 1907 to 1910 and later of German Southwest Africa from 1910 until his removal from office by invading South African and Allied forces in 1915. Seitz, therefore, knew both Kastl and Ruppel and had been their superior—Ruppel in Cameroon and Kastl in Southwest Africa. After his forced repatriation to Germany by the Allies, in 1920 Seitz assumed the role of President of the German Colonial Society, the largest and most important of the colonial lobbies in Germany, and took up a key leadership role in the *KoRAG*, the umbrella organization responsible for coordinating all of Germany's colonial interest groups and associations. From this position, he repeatedly pestered the Foreign Office, the Chancellery, and the Presidency of the Weimar Republic with demands that they keep the *DKG* informed of all international affairs relating to the former colonies and urged the government to pursue a stronger position in insisting on the restitution of Germany's colonial empire.

The German Foreign Office, far from snubbing Seitz and the *DKG*, complied with requests to keep the organization informed with detailed press reports and duplicates of letters and documents from the various German embassies and consulates in the former colonies and Mandatory Powers.⁵⁶³ Despite the Weimar government's hesitancy to pursue

⁵⁶³ There is a massive body of material sent from the *Auswärtiges Amt* to Seitz between 1924 and 1933, chiefly concerning the former African colonies, various international conferences, and the Mandatory Powers. It currently resides at the Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde (BArch) in the following files: R1001/937;

colonial restitution or seek Mandatory Power status, the Foreign Office does seem to have paid heed to the former governor's unrequested advice on which individuals were best suited to sit as the German member of the PMC. When word spread that Germany would soon have membership on the Permanent Mandates Commission, Seitz insisted in his communications with the Foreign Office that a former governor like himself or Heinrich Schnee would be the most qualified to sit on the Commission and would be the best representative of Germany's colonial interests. Only a governor, he claimed, could compete with the likes of Britain's PMC representative, Lord Lugard, himself a former governor of some renown, in order to take advantage of opportunities for colonial redress through activities on the PMC. He therefore tried to dissuade the Foreign Office from choosing Ludwig Kastl, bureaucrat. Nonetheless, he praised Kastl's record and his useful connections with English officials and ultimately threw his weight and the influence of the *DKG* behind Kastl, his former subordinate, when it became apparent France, Britain and the British Dominions would not tolerate the appointment of a former governor to the post.⁵⁶⁴

Seitz's hand weighed heavier in the selection process for Germany's second PMC member following Kastl's resignation in 1930.⁵⁶⁵ Having heard rumors that Wilhelm Solf, the former governor of German Samoa, was to be selected as Kastl's replacement, Seitz wrote a series of rancorous letters to the German Foreign Office. Solf, as was well-

R8023/529; R8023/531; R8023/532; R8023/537; R8023/541; R8023/542; R8023/543; R8023/548 and R8023/1106.

⁵⁶⁴ BArch, R8023/537, Theodor Seitz to Auswärtiges Amt and Gustav Stresemann, 9 December 1927; BArch, R8023/543, Deutscher Kolonialverein to Seitz, 11 January 1928; BArch, R8023/543, Ludwig Kastl to Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft and Seitz, 14 April 1928.

⁵⁶⁵ BArch, R8023/543 (416), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 9 January 1930.

known, was an avowed opponent of German colonial restitution.⁵⁶⁶ Seitz declared Solf an unacceptable candidate on these grounds and warned that the German Foreign Office would face discontent from the *DKG*, *KoRAG*, and all other colonially-minded factions in Germany:

The board of the *DKG* has asked me to inform you, honorable Foreign Minister, that the *DKG*—in light of his stance on the Colonial Question—does not view Mr. Solf as a suitable representative of German colonial interests on the Mandates Commission and therefore requests that his candidacy for the post be rescinded. Should his candidacy become a reality, the *DKG* is determined that you will not escape strong public agitation from colonialist circles against [Solf's appointment].⁵⁶⁷

The former governor wrote a follow-up letter providing a short list of “approved” nominees, with Julius Ruppel’s name at the top.⁵⁶⁸ The Foreign Office maintained correspondence with Seitz throughout the internal selection process and ultimately passed the name of Seitz’s first choice, Ruppel, to the League Council and Permanent Mandates Commission where he was promptly approved and awarded the post.

⁵⁶⁶ Peter J. Hempenstall and Paula Tanaka Mochida, *The Lost Man: Wilhelm Solf in German History* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005).

⁵⁶⁷ BArch, R8023/543, Theodor Seitz to Reichsaussenminister Curtius, 21 February 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Seitz to Wilhelm Solf, 28 February 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Solf to Baron von Zastrow, 21 March 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Zastrow to Seitz, 24 March 1930; Seitz to Zastrow, 25 March 1930.

⁵⁶⁸ BArch, R8023/543, Theodor Seitz to Auswärtiges Amt, 22 January 1930; Seitz to Baron von Zastrow, 25 March 1930; BArch, R8023/543, Seitz to Julius Ruppel, 17 May 1930.

A Brave New World: Kastl and Ruppel on the Mandates Commission

Far from being token German members on the Commission, Ludwig Kastl and Julius Ruppel were each treated as equals and colleagues by their fellow members on the PMC. Nothing was done to curtail their involvement in the major decisions of the Commission during their tenures and both men were tasked with researching and compiling reports to the League that were given the same credibility as those presented by other members. Much to the irritation of France, South Africa, and other Mandatories, the chief cases where Kastl and Ruppel were called upon by the Commission to provide their expertise were those involving the Mandates that had been Germany's former colonies. Yet, their roles on the PMC were not limited to damning criticisms of the treatment of indigenous peoples or property rights for Germans in Southwest Africa and Cameroon, but also included careful assessments of international law regarding liberation of A-Class Mandates, such as Iraq, and equal commercial access to Mandated Territories.

Seitz had expected that his former subordinates, out of a sense of loyalty and appreciation for his support of their appointments, would serve as mouthpieces for Colonial Germans, advocating for the return of the German colonies. Both Kastl and Ruppel maintained some ties to *KoRAG* and the *DKG*, but much to Seitz's disappointment and ire, neither individual fought heavily for German colonial restitution. Kastl and Ruppel began new careers—once again serving as international bureaucrats for the Weimar Republic—as members of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

In the last decade, there has been a greater desire among historians to understand how interwar internationalism affected the careers and mentalities of those who participated in multinational bureaucracies such as the League of Nations. Andrew

Webster has written on the attempts made in the 1920s to create a new bureaucrat within the context of the League of Nations: the post-national civil servant. He argues, however, that these efforts were not entirely successful, as there were disagreements between state-actors (and indeed individual bureaucrats on the League's various commissions and committees) that had conflicting visions of how an ecumenical approach to international affairs should be formed. Webster focuses on the French and British governments and their representative international bureaucrats, who sought to use their leadership as a mechanism for shaping international affairs in the image of French and British national ideals and politics.⁵⁶⁹ Susan Pedersen has made a similar argument in the case of the ex-British Governor of Nigeria, Lord Lugard, in regards to his service on the Mandates Commission.⁵⁷⁰ Patricia Clavin and Jens-William Wessel, on the other hand, in their article on the League's Economic and Financial Organization (EFO), point to genuine efforts by League officials, however unsuccessful, to prioritize League interests over those of their individual nation-states, a process that was complicated by the involvement in League affairs of powerful non-member states like the United States.⁵⁷¹ Daniel Gorman's approach, alternatively, does not deny the persistence of national-interests within the context of the League, but argues instead that they were transformed in some way by the encounter with internationalism in the 1920s. Gorman's thesis appears the best fit for assessing German involvement in the Permanent Mandates Commission.

Despite Seitz's hopes, Kastl and Ruppel could no longer easily be categorized as Colonial

⁵⁶⁹ Andrew Webster, "The Transnational Dream: Politicians, Diplomats and Soldiers in the League of Nations Pursuit of International Disarmament, 1920-1938.," *Contemporary European History* 14, 4 (2005): 493-518.

⁵⁷⁰ Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," 569-570.

⁵⁷¹ Patricia Clavin and Jens-Wilhelm Wessels, "Transnationalism and the League of Nations: Understanding the Work of Its Economic and Financial Organization," *Contemporary European History* 14, 4 (2005): 465-492.

Germans. They had become participants in an internationalist organization. As Gorman has argued in the case of the British, this international connection caused these men to modify their thoughts on what constituted national best interests and to look beyond the experiences and boundaries of Germany's lost colonial empire in search of new ways to participate in, speak on, and define imperialism.⁵⁷² Through repeated exposure to multinational negotiations and the official procedures of the League throughout their interwar careers, Kastl and Ruppel ceased to be colonial bureaucrats and instead remade themselves as international bureaucrats.

Kastl's chief responsibility during his tenure on the PMC was the assessment of Health and Sanitation for indigenous populations in the Mandates. He had no medical training, but he did have some rudimentary knowledge of civil engineering and his years of experience with 'native affairs' in Southwest Africa were cited when his PMC colleagues deferred to his expert opinion.⁵⁷³ From this position, Kastl proved a vocal critic of conditions and treatment of indigenous groups in Southwest Africa, Belgium's mandate in Rwanda-Burundi, and Samoa. Kastl was harsh in his assessment of South Africa's treatment of the Rehobothers throughout the 1920s, insisting that medical care and sanitation fell far below acceptable standards. He argued time and again for measures against the South Africans, who he insisted had been covering up the horrors they inflicted against the indigenous populations in the Mandate ever since the atrocious Bondelswarts Massacre in 1922. The bloodshed was an imbalanced response to a resistance movement by a group of Khoikhoi against a series of unfair taxes and arrests was met by the Mandatory with shootings and aircraft bombings that resulted in the

⁵⁷² Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, 1-18.

⁵⁷³ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Douzième Session, 1927*, 55-56.

deaths of one hundred indigenes and the injury and arrest of hundreds more. Kastl also argued that the Rehobothers, a group of mixed-race descendants of emigrants from the Cape Colony viewed by many Europeans as having a degree of civilization comparable to Western forms of governance and culture, deserved to have their petitions to the League heard and should be afforded greater protection against European and South African land-grabbing.⁵⁷⁴ Similarly in the case of Samoa, Kastl—who favored indigenous Samoan petitions for self-governance and independence which were repeatedly ignored by the League—decried the state of health care and waste removal in the Mandate.⁵⁷⁵ Regarding Rwanda-Burundi, Kastl argued that the Belgians were not only depriving local Africans of good health and sanitary conditions, but were also employing exceptionally brutal police-state methods and summary prosecutions in clear violation of standards of justice for ‘natives’ established by the Mandates Commission and the League.⁵⁷⁶

While it is tempting to assume bias on Kastl’s part in his reports on Mandates that had once been part of the German Colonial Empire and in his focus on these territories, it is worth noting that Kastl did not choose his own assignments nor did he work alone on these tasks. Kastl’s colleagues did not accuse him of prejudices and actually praised him for his thorough research and expert testimony.⁵⁷⁷ Kastl’s opinion and expertise, always carefully worded and tactfully avoiding any direct comparisons between Mandatory and German rule, were given in a spirit of cooperation with the other PMC members, whom he often asked for assistance in crafting his final reports. Kastl also eschewed any attempt

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid, 54-59, 129.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid, 196; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Treizième Session, Tenue à Genève Du 12 Au 29 June 1928*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1928), 126-138, 220; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 170.

⁵⁷⁶ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Douzième Session, 1927*, 139-152; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Quatorzième Session, 1928*, 120-140; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Seizième Session, 1929*, 56-83.

⁵⁷⁷ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Douzième Session, 1927*, 156-157, 163.

to broach the topic of colonial restitution for Germany when critiquing Mandatory Powers and their policies. Furthermore, particularly in the cases of Southwest Africa and Rwanda-Burundi, Kastl's assessments often mirrored the opinion of the majority of the Commission.⁵⁷⁸ Although the Commission was incapable of taking strong actions against offenders, PMC members were normally united in their aggressive stance towards the South African and Belgian representatives sent to present the Annual Reports on the Mandates to the Commission, berating them with questions about and criticisms of the conditions for indigenous populations under their supervision. During the interwar years, no Mandatory received a glowing review for Health and Sanitation in their holdings and all were threatened and urged to improve living conditions in order to advance the work of the civilizing mission.

Outside of his chief tasks in Health and Sanitation, Kastl also took a keen interest in safeguarding open door trade for all League member states in all the Mandates. In addition to his criticism of South Africa's handling of 'Native Affairs,' Kastl argued for German-owned corporations, such as the *Kakao und Minengesellschaft* that had been one of the largest land-holders under German rule, to be granted equal access to the Mandate. The *Kakao und Minengesellschaft* had filed formal petitions with the Permanent Mandates Commission insisting that the League do something to curb South Africa's protectionist behavior that prevented German-owned business enterprises from holding or purchasing land. The company claimed South Africa's laws in Southwest Africa stood in clear violation of the League Charter, which stipulated that Mandates were to be free-

⁵⁷⁸ Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," 568-572, 577-579.

trade regions open to all nationalities with membership in the League.⁵⁷⁹ Kastl agreed with the company's assessment and pushed the Commission to have a formal discussion on the German company's right to equal access to the Mandate.

Kastl's economic interests were not limited, however, to petitions from German companies in former German colonies. In cooperation with an Italian League bureaucrat, Vito Catastini, and the Spanish member on the PMC, Leopoldo Palacios, Kastl repeatedly made motions to have the Commission investigate the agreements and books of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Palacios, Kastl and Catastini were concerned with what they saw as the monopolistic behavior of the British in the Middle Eastern Mandates that blocked the rights of France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany to trade in the region, particularly in regards to the area's rich stores of oil, in clear violation of League guarantee's of equal economic access to the Mandates for all League member states.⁵⁸⁰ Though Kastl's investigations did not get very far before his resignation, the suspicions he and Catastini placed on record resulted in greater skepticism on the part of the entire Commission of Britain's motives for the termination of the Iraq Mandate during Ruppel's tenure on the PMC.

Ruppel, in some ways, followed Kastl's example on the commission. He was initially assigned to report on Health and Sanitation in the Mandates and shared almost all

⁵⁷⁹ PA AA, R96524, Gottfried Aschmann to Auswärtiges Amt, 11 September 1925; BArch, R8023/532 (140-143), German Consulate in Windhoek to Theodor Seitz, "Bericht des Petitionskommission", 15 November 1924; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Quatorzième Session, 1928*, 111-115, 255-260; PA AA, R96537 (4-6), German Consulate in Geneva to Auswärtiges Amt, 21 November 1929; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Seizième Session, 1929*, 176-177.

⁵⁸⁰ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Douzième Session, 1927*, 156-157; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de la Quatorzième Session, 1928*, 247-249; PA AA, R96535, Ludwig Kastl to Vito Catastini, 8 December 1928.

of Kastl's opinions on Southwest Africa and Rwanda.⁵⁸¹ In addition, he advocated for more thorough assessments of France's Mandate in Cameroon—which comes as little surprise given his colonial experience there—and took a more active role in the investigation of conditions in the Palestinian and Syrian Mandates than his predecessor.⁵⁸²

Compared to Kastl, however, Ruppel proved a far more aggressive member of the Mandates Commission. Kastl had limited most of his commentary to his formal reports and took an active, but smaller role in the general discussions of the Commission on Annual Reports from the Mandatory Powers. Ruppel, by contrast, was vocal during interviews with representatives of the Mandatories delivering the reports. Prior to each session he attended, Ruppel appears to have done thorough research on the Mandate and its conditions, with the help of consular reports from the German Foreign Office, and tomes on international law and the League charter available to him at Geneva, which enabled him to beleaguer representatives presenting on any Mandate with probing questions.⁵⁸³ Often, Ruppel can be seen leading the charge during Commission inquiries. Other commissioners, such as Martial Merlin of France and William E. Rappard of Switzerland, followed suit, demanding more information from representatives of South Africa, Belgium, and Britain with questions branching from Ruppel's earlier

⁵⁸¹ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Dix-Neufième Session, Tenue à Genève Du 4 Au 19 Novembre 1930*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1930), 124-140, 166-169; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-et-Onième Session, Tenue à Genève Du 26 Octobre Au 13 Novembre 1931*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1931), 14-25; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Deuxième Session, Tenue à Genève Du 3 to 6 Decembre 1933*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1933), 19-36; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Troisième Session, Tenue à Genève Du 19 Juin Au 1 Juli 1933*, vol. VI, A. Mandates (Geneva: League of Nations, 1933), 81-96.

⁵⁸² *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-et-Onième Session, 1931*, 200-203; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Deuxième Session, 1933*, 333-340.

⁵⁸³ See PA AA, R96543 for bundles of Auswärtiges Amt reports and correspondence to and from Ruppel.

interrogations.⁵⁸⁴ He gained something of a reputation as the ‘one to convince’ on the Commission by the Mandatory Powers. For example, in the lead-up to discussions on Iraqi Mandate termination and the ‘Closer Union’ in British East Africa, members of the British Foreign and Colonial Offices frenziedly exchanged letters and reports back and forth, editing documents for presentation and trying to prepare representatives in an effort to fend off the criticisms of “the German.” They thereby hoped to prevent Ruppel’s probing questions that could turn the entire Commission against either project.⁵⁸⁵

Such preparation by the British representative proved to be necessary. Ruppel was heavily involved in the Mandates Commission and League Council debates in 1930 and 1931 over the British resignation of the Iraq Mandate, which ultimately gained League approval in 1932.⁵⁸⁶ In principle, Ruppel favored the liberation of the A-Class Mandate. The granting of independence to one Mandated Territory, after all, might pave the way for the granting of self-government to the former German colonies now under Mandatory control. Yet, Ruppel formed a coalition with the French and Swiss members on the PMC—Martial Merlin and William E. Rappard—to criticize and condemn Britain’s efforts to liberate Iraq. The reason was, on the surface, simple: oil.

Ruppel and his allies questioned the British motives behind the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 which laid the groundwork for the creation of an autonomous Kingdom of Iraq under the Hashemite ruler, Faisal. While the British insisted on the stability of Iraq

⁵⁸⁴ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Dix-Neufième Session, 1930*, 124-140, 166-169; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-et-Onième Session, 1931*, 20-24, 33-39, 56-78, 200-203; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Deuxième Session, 1933*, 19-36, 120-124, 131-159, 333-340, 345; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Troisième Session, 1933*, 37, 41, 44-75, 81-96, 124-127.

⁵⁸⁵ TNA, CO 730/163/9, Telegram from the High Commissioner for Iraq to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 February 1931; TNA, CO 822/28/5.

⁵⁸⁶ Pedersen, “Getting Out of Iraq--in 1932,” 975–1000; Steiner, 108-125; Tohmatsu, “Japan’s Retention of the South Seas Mandate, 1922-1947,” in *Imperialism on Trial*, 61–84, 63; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 171.

and its readiness for self-rule, Ruppel pointed to the years of rebellion in the Mandate and the still tenuous ownership of the oil-rich Mosul territory as reasons why the League should consider tabling the issue of Iraqi independence. Merlin, whom Susan Pedersen has quite rightly described as serving “unabashedly as his government’s mouthpiece” on the PMC, was chiefly concerned with French economic interests in the region.⁵⁸⁷ The French government held a share in Iraq’s oil as a result of a series of compromises with the British government in the 1920s. British restrictions on drilling for oil in Iraq—in order to regulate supply and maintain sale prices—were frustrating French desires to increase their share of the profits from Iraq’s oil.⁵⁸⁸ An independent Iraq, unbound by Mandate economic policies and likely to sign a treaty with Britain giving it a more favorable trade status, would hinder French plans to drill for oil even more, hence Merlin’s motivation for joining Ruppel, Rappard, and Orts in their protest against the termination of the Iraqi Mandate. Rappard for his part, along with Belgium’s Pierre Orts, expressed concern over the protection of minorities. The violence and obvious prejudice of the proposed Faisal government, which favored Shi’a and Sunni interests, indicated that the territory was nowhere near ready for liberation. Pursuing such a policy, Rappard and Orts insisted, abandoned minorities like the Kurds, Jews, Christians, Turks, Yazidis, Assyrians and Bahai to religious fanatics, hence international oversight was still needed in the region to prevent bloodshed.⁵⁸⁹ Ruppel went on to point out to the Commission and the League Council that, as a Mandate, trade with Iraq for its oil was, in theory if not in practice, open to all League member-states. No such guarantees for an “open door” approach to the oil question could be made for an independent Iraq. Given the

⁵⁸⁷ Pedersen, “Getting Out of Iraq—in 1932,” 982.

⁵⁸⁸ Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 100-130; Pedersen, “Getting Out of Iraq—in 1932,” 981-982.

⁵⁸⁹ Pedersen, “Getting Out of Iraq—in 1932,” 983, 992-996.

preferential diplomatic and economic status awarded to Great Britain and the British-controlled Iraq Petroleum Company (Turkish Petroleum Company prior to 1929) in the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, Ruppel explained, the result of Iraqi liberation would be Britain's sole control over Iraq's oil reserves.

Drawing on Kastl's earlier reports on the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Ruppel, Merlin, and Rappard pointed to what they saw as a pattern of monopolistic behavior and expressed concerns that Great Britain's motives for pursuing the liberation of the Mandate were actually imperialistic, using "liberation" as a means of achieving indirect rule, and were therefore in clear violation of the founding principles of the Mandate System and the League's international laws regarding trade with Mandated Territories.⁵⁹⁰ This behavior prompted these members to initiate discussions regarding what independence and sovereignty truly meant. The opposition to Iraqi liberation, these commissioners insisted, was founded not just on market concerns or fears of a possible failure of the balance of power tenuously held in the League, as they had already argued, but also on the issue of how to define self-determination.⁵⁹¹ As Kastl had contended in a letter to Catastini, the desired independence of any Mandate "cannot consist in the Mandatory relationship being discarded in favor of one with a single power, with which

⁵⁹⁰ TNA, CO 730/152/7 (2, 18-20, 23-30), "Permanent Mandates Commission, 19th Session, Provisional Minutes of the 12th Meeting", 11 November 1930; TNA, CO 730/152/7 (3-7), "Permanent Mandates Commission, 19th Session, Provisional Minutes of the 13th Meeting", 11 November 1930; TNA, CO 730/163/9, 19th Session of the PMC Iraq 62nd Consideration, January 1931; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Dix-Neufième Session, 1930*, 169-173; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-et-Onième Session, 1931*, 56-78.

⁵⁹¹ Pedersen, "Getting Out of Iraq--in 1932," 986-990. As Pedersen points out, the latter concern was voiced by Portugal's representative, Count de Penha Garcia, who argued that emancipation should not disturb the general peace, insisting that any new state should honor all commitments—including economic ones—previously made by the Mandatory as a signatory of the League covenants.

the former Mandate would enter into a new and [internationally] uncontrollable relationship of dependence.”⁵⁹²

Although Ruppel supported the idea of an independent Iraq, he, and the Commission at large, were reticent to terminate Iraq’s Mandate without significant concessions to put constraints on Britain and thereby prevent domination of the new state by the former Mandatory. It would set a detrimental precedent, not only for the former German colonies and their efforts to achieve autonomy, but for the entire notion of self-determination and the proposed “sacred trust” of the League Mandates System that decreed that the Mandates would be tutored towards civilization and self-rule. In the end, the Commission, faced with the dilemma of denying independence to an A-Class Mandate and the repercussions that would have for the legitimacy of the mission of the Mandates System, allowed Britain to terminate the Iraqi Mandate in October 1932, provided that certain concessions were made. Iraq was required to join the League; the new state was expected to honor existing contracts and promised to safeguard the rights of foreign nationals in its borders; the Kingdom of Iraq was required to make a declaration before the League Council that it intended to uphold the League’s minority protection laws; and, finally, Iraq was obliged to grant all League member states most-favored-nation status in trade negotiations for a period of time after its liberation.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹²PA AA, R96535, Kastl to Catastini, 8 December 1928. The translation in this chapter is my own. Pedersen has her own translation of this letter which differs slightly from the one here in “Getting Out of Iraq--in 1932,”988.

⁵⁹³ Pedersen, “Getting Out of Iraq--in 1932,”989-990, 997; TNA, CO 730/152/7 (2,18-20,23-30), “Permanent Mandates Commission, 19th Session, Provisional Minutes of the 12th Meeting”, 11 November 1930 ;TNA, CO 730/152/7 (3-7), “Permanent Mandates Commission, 19th Session, Provisional Minutes of the 13th Meeting”, 11 November 1930; TNA, CO 730/163/9, 19th Session of the PMC Iraq 62nd Consideration, January 1931; TNA, CO 730/163/9, “General conditions required for the Termination of the Mandate”; TNA, CO 730/163/9, “Admission of Iraq to the League of Nations”; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Dix-Neufième Session, 1930*, 169-173; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-et-Onième Session, 1931*, 56-78.

Colonial Lobby Mouthpieces? Kastl's and Ruppel's Relations with KoRAG & DKG

Kastl's interactions with *KoRAG*, the *DKG*, and above all with Seitz, became increasingly strained during his tenure on the PMC. Prior to his appointment as the Mandates Commission member in 1927, Kastl exchanged friendly letters with Seitz on a regular basis.⁵⁹⁴ Initially, Kastl seems to have welcomed any opportunity to discuss his work on the Commission with the President of the *DKG* and the membership at large. Throughout 1927 and 1928, he maintained regular correspondence and had several personal meetings with Seitz, keeping his former superior informed of the inner-workings of the Mandates Commission meetings and relationships for the first two years of his stint at the post.⁵⁹⁵ Kastl also agreed to attend a number of meetings of *KoRAG* and the *DKG* to give lectures about the work of the Commission and answer any questions the membership had about the international organization Germany had recently joined, continuing the country's involvement in the global 'civilizing mission.'⁵⁹⁶

By 1929, however, the relationship between Germany's Mandates Commission member and the colonial lobbies and their leadership began to decay. Kastl, progressively

⁵⁹⁴ These exchanges can be found in BArch, R8023/531 and BArch, R8023/1106.

⁵⁹⁵ BArch, R8023/537 (2), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 23 December 1927; BArch, R8023/543 (568), Regierungsrat Brückner to Theodor Seitz, 22 March 1928; PA AA, R96530, Ten pages of minutes of two meetings between Heinrich Schnee, Ludwig Kastl, Theodor Seitz, and Regierungsrat Brückner in his office on 28 March 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (493), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 12 July 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (492), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 19 June 1928.

⁵⁹⁶ BArch, R8023/543 (571), Theodor Seitz to Deutschen Kolonialverein, 10 January 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (570), Deutscher Kolonialverein to Theodor Seitz, 11 January 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (564), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 22 March 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (541), Ludwig Kastl to Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft and Theodor Seitz, 14 April 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (528) Deutsche Gesellschaft 1914 to Theodor Seitz and Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, April 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (556), Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft to Theodor Seitz and Kolonial Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft, 23 April 1928; Various letters of invitation to and confirmations of attendance at Kastl's talk on 2 May 1928 written in April 1928, R8023/543 (507-527) found at the Bundesarchiv Lichterfelde currently; BArch, R8023/543 (502-503), "Seating Arrangement for Kastl's Dinner Talk to German Colonial Advocacy Groups on May 2", April 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (498), "Teilnehmer-Liste zur Kolonial-Politischen Aussprache am 2. Mai 1928", April 1928.

more frustrated by Seitz's demands that he take a harder line regarding colonial restitution in Geneva, became curter in his replies to Seitz's letters.⁵⁹⁷ Kastl repeatedly tried to explain to the *DKG* president that he, as a Mandates commissioner, could not propose tangential topics for discussion during PMC sessions for examining the Annual Reports from the Mandatories and petitions concerning the Mandates. The work of the Commission was to regulate the Mandatories, he exclaimed, and was not the appropriate setting for seeking colonial restitution, hence such attempts were not likely to meet with success. He went on to tell Seitz that the meetings for the finalization of the Young Plan, at which Kastl was then—in addition to his Mandates Commission role—acting as a plenipotentiary, might be a better place to broach the *Kolonialfrage*, but even there, Kastl concluded that colonial restitution was not diplomatically feasible:

Regarding the fact that the colonial question is closely tied to the question of reparations, all members of the German delegation [sent to negotiate the Young Plan] are of one mind and together will here allude to the need for Germany to find alternatives to its [former] colonial dependencies and point out that, in this way, Germany's ability to acquire its own source of raw materials would be strengthened, thereby finding a solution to the reparations problems.[...] Whether such a solution will materialize even here, however, is, frankly, doubtful. I no longer have very much hope.⁵⁹⁸

Seitz, unaware of Kastl's intent to resign in order to focus more on his position as president of the *Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie*, sent yet another letter in 1930

⁵⁹⁷BArch , R8023/543 (451-452), Theodor Seitz to Ludwig Kastl, 13 May 1929.

⁵⁹⁸BArch , R8023/543 (452), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 16 April 1929.

advising Kastl to broach the topic of restitution in a session of the Permanent Mandates Commission.⁵⁹⁹ Kastl informed Seitz that he would no longer be holding the post as the German member on the PMC, indicated yet again that restitution would not be possible through the Permanent Mandates Commission, and told Seitz to no longer contact him regarding colonial matters.⁶⁰⁰ Following his resignation, Kastl exchanged no more letters with Seitz and engaged in only a limited correspondence with Seitz's successor as *DKG* President, Heinrich Schnee, who formally took over the position in 1930.⁶⁰¹

Ruppel's relations with the *Kolonial Reichsarbeitsgemeinschaft* and the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*, unlike those of his predecessor, were practically non-existent. During his tenure as Mandates commissioner, he did not give any lectures at *KoRAG* or *DKG* functions or fundraisers. For the same period, few letters exist between Ruppel and Seitz and only two between Ruppel and Schnee. While non-confrontational with the *Kolonialgesellschaft* and grateful for its role in his selection as Germany's member on the PMC, Ruppel was brief in his replies to the queries of Seitz and Schnee and rarely provided them with any "insider information" regarding the Commission's work.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ BArch, R8023/543 (417), Theodor Seitz to Ludwig Kastl, 6 January 1930.

⁶⁰⁰ BArch, R8023/543 (416), Ludwig Kastl to Theodor Seitz, 9 January 1930.

⁶⁰¹ These letters, dating from 1930-32, which can be found in GStAPK, HA VI NL Heinrich Schnee, Nr. 49 at the Staatsarchiv in Dahlem concern a range of topics, from the 'Closer Union' issue in East Africa in the 1920s and early 1930s, to Schnee reaching out to Kastl for help in finding employment for a half-Samoan son of a fellow colonial official, to Kastl congratulating Schnee on his appointment to the Lytton Commission to investigate Manchuria. They are friendly exchanges that indicate no desire on Schnee's part for Kastl to use his influence on the Mandates Commission (which might have remained after his resignation) towards achieving colonial restitution. Seitz stayed on as an *Ehrenpräsident* (Honorary President) of the *DKG* until 1936.

⁶⁰² BArch, R8023/543 (373), Theodor Seitz to Julius Ruppel, 17 May 1930; BArch, R8023/543 (370), Julius Ruppel to Theodor Seitz, 27 May 1930; BArch, R8023/543 (349), Julius Ruppel to Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, 18 December 1931; BArch, R8023/543 (347), Julius Ruppel to Theodor Seitz, 18 January 1933; BArch, R8023/543 (310), Julius Ruppel to Heinrich Schnee, 7 September 1933; GStAPK, VI. NL. Heinrich Schnee Nr. 49 (256), Heinrich Schnee to Julius Ruppel, 19 January 1931; GStAPK, VI. NL. Heinrich Schnee Nr. 49 (257), Julius Ruppel to Heinrich Schnee, 7 February 1931.

There is, however, a plethora of correspondence between Ruppel and the *Auswärtiges Amt*. Ruppel saw his role as Germany's member on the Mandates Commission as an extension of the German Foreign Office rather than as a representative of Germany's colonial lobby on the international stage. Unlike Kastl, Ruppel routinely sent formal reports on the Commission's sessions to the German Foreign Office, frequently requested information on Weimar Germany's ever-changing foreign policy, and sought advice on what relationships to pursue in the Permanent Mandates Commission.⁶⁰³ Ruppel came to regard the colonial lobby as small-minded. In the midst of debates over international trade, the global management and availability of new resources, and the shifts in European politics and diplomacy that came in the 1930s, Ruppel's concern for Germany's *Kolonialfrage* faded as he began to use his position on the PMC to look out for Germany's international interests beyond the boundaries of the former colonial empire.

A United Front? German Opposition to a 'Closer Union' in East Africa

Despite tensions and differences of opinion between Germany's Mandates Commission members and their self-proclaimed benefactor in the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*, there was one issue in the interwar period where the interests of Germany's colonial lobby, the German Foreign Office, Germany's PMC members, and even the Mandates Commission aligned. All were opposed to British Colonial Secretary Leo Amery's 'Closer Union' plan for East Africa.

⁶⁰³ See R96543 at the PA AA in Berlin for bundles of *Auswärtiges Amt* reports and correspondence to and from Ruppel.

Between 1924 and 1929, Colonial Secretary Amery, as well as Conservative supporters in the British Parliament and Kenya, routinely pressed for the federation of the British colonies of Kenya and Uganda with the Tanganyika Mandated Territory. The hope was for a more efficient and cost-effective administration of the colonies and the Mandate by unifying the government and services provided in the region. Amery and his supporters also envisioned that 'Closer Union' would ultimately result in the formation of a new British East African Dominion in the style of the Union of South Africa that would be ruled by white settlers.⁶⁰⁴ Amery insisted that such a federation was not excluded by the terms of Britain's mandate for the former German colony and that the principles of the mandate regarding the protection of the indigenous populations and the international standards for the development of these populations as outlined in Article 22 of the League covenant would be extended to the entire territory once a political union was established.⁶⁰⁵

Ultimately, Amery's efforts to establish a 'Closer Union' in East Africa ended in defeat. Michael Callahan argues that the 'Closer Union' was brought down by a combination of international pressure against the British Colonial Office as well as the domestic controversy within Britain over Amery's plan. Amery's vision for East Africa was contested by the Labour Party Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions (ACIQ), Sir Frederick Lugard, the former governor of Nigeria and British member on the PMC,

⁶⁰⁴ Michael D. Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, 2 (1997): 267-293, 268-272.

⁶⁰⁵ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 269, 282-283; V. Harlow and E.M. Chilver, eds., *History of East Africa*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 591-592; John Illife, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 302, 321, 406-410; T.O. Lloyd, *The British Empire 1558-1983* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 306-307; Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," 572-573. For the relationship between the Closer Union scheme and efforts on the part of Indians in East Africa to attain citizenship rights, see Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, 109-148.

by Ramsay MacDonald's second Labour Government, and by Amery's Labour appointed-successor, the Colonial Secretary and seminal Fabian socialist Sidney Webb (Lord Passfield).⁶⁰⁶ The Labour Party ACIQ feared that Amery's policies would result in an extension of the Kenya's settler policies into a mandated territory, giving white settlers legislative authority over Africans and undermining Mandatory principles.⁶⁰⁷ Lugard, the progenitor of the doctrine of 'Indirect Rule,' contended that administrative separation was the only way to end racial tensions in the region and that any union would violate the mandate.⁶⁰⁸ Between 1929 and 1931, Passfield and J.H. Oldham, drafted a new version of 'Closer Union' rather than simply repudiating Amery's scheme. With support from the Labour Government and Sir Donald Cameron—Governor of Tanganyika and dogged opponent of Amery's vision for a 'Great White State in East Africa'—the new version so altered Amery's original plan that, instead of paving the way for a new Dominion, it now looked as though Mandate principles from Tanganyika would extend into Uganda and Kenya as well, challenging settlers' dominance in the administration of the colony with the threat of oversight on the model of the League PMC.⁶⁰⁹ These internal divisions came to a head in a Parliamentary joint committee between December 1930 and October 1931.⁶¹⁰ The official report the joint committee submitted in October 1931 took an ambiguous stance towards the legality of 'Closer Union,' but stated that economic hardship, opposition from colonial officials, and resistance from Africans and Asians (mostly Indians in East Africa), made the federation of East Africa a logistical and fiscal

⁶⁰⁶ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 269-273.

⁶⁰⁷ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 269.

⁶⁰⁸ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 269.

⁶⁰⁹ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 271-273.

⁶¹⁰ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 277-285.

impossibility.⁶¹¹ Callahan argues that this report, combined with the committee's law officers' having never registered a formal opinion on the legality of 'Closer Union,' allowed the Conservative and successive Labour Governments to "cover-up" an embarrassing domestic failure and avoid the possibility of international litigation.⁶¹²

Callahan carefully outlines the domestic and internal legal complications that led to the downfall of 'Closer Union.' He also recognizes the contribution Germans made to League and British politics on the issue, placing particular emphasis on the role of the German Foreign Office.⁶¹³ Callahan, however, oversimplifies German efforts to halt 'Closer Union,' particularly in regards to the interactions between the German members of the PMC and the German Foreign Office as well as to the German colonial lobby's attempts to insert themselves into the international discourse on the law and the Mandates concurrent with the debates on 'Closer Union.' Kastl, Ruppel, the Foreign Office administrations of Stresemann and Curtius, and the leadership of the German colonial interest groups all had different motivations for opposing the British federation of East Africa and different strategic visions for how best to put a stop to Amery's proposed union of colony and mandate. Despite the dissimilarity of their methods, the German members on the PMC, the German Foreign Office, and the Colonial German interest groups voicing their opposition simultaneously and publicly between 1927 and 1933 gave the semblance of a coordinated and—thanks in large part to the additional controversies on the subject in Britain's domestic politics and among other League member states—successful effort to block any administrative consolidation of Tanganyika with the British colonies in East Africa.

⁶¹¹ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 285.

⁶¹² Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 285-286.

⁶¹³ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 270-275.

The response to British efforts at ‘Closer Union’ from the German colonial lobbies was swift and forceful. Seitz and Schnee, the leading figures in the *DKG* and *KoRAG*, met with and exchanged letters with Kastl and later Ruppel to discuss the rumors they had heard regarding British plans for a federation in East Africa.⁶¹⁴ Armed with the knowledge provided by Kastl on the particulars of the British plan to unify administrative, postal, and transit services and the general sentiment of the PMC regarding the action’s legality, both Schnee and Seitz launched public attacks against the plan as a means to pursue the eventual restoration of Germany’s colonies.

The persistent propagandist Schnee took to the press repeatedly between 1926 and 1930, condemning Amery’s plan as a clear violation of Article 22 of the League covenant, which clearly stated that “the degree of authority, control or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.”⁶¹⁵ Seitz, in cooperation with branch presidents of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* and other sympathetic clubs, organized a series of public protests across Germany between 1926 and 1930 demanding that the German government resist efforts at ‘Closer Union’ and take a stronger position

⁶¹⁴ BArch, R8023/543 (568), Regierungsrat Brückner to Theodor Seitz, 22 March 1928; PA AA, R96530, Regierungsrat Brückner to Heinrich Schnee and Theodor Seitz, 22 March 1928; PA AA, R96530, Ten pages of minutes of two meetings between Heinrich Schnee, Ludwig Kastl, Theodor Seitz, and Regierungsrat Brückner in his office on 28 March 1928; BArch, R8023/543 (373), Theodor Seitz to Julius Ruppel, 17 May 1930; BArch, R8023/543 (370), Julius Ruppel to Theodor Seitz, 27 May 1930; GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee Nr. 49 (169), Heinrich Schnee to Ludwig Kastl, 12 August 1930; BArch, R8023/543 (349), Julius Ruppel to Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, 18 December 1931; BArch, R8023/543 (347), Julius Ruppel to Theodor Seitz, 18 January 1933; BArch, R8023/543 (310), Julius Ruppel to Heinrich Schnee, 7 September 1933; GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee Nr. 49 (256), Heinrich Schnee to Julius Ruppel, 19 January 1931; GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee Nr. 49 (257), Julius Ruppel to Heinrich Schnee, 7 February 1931; BArch, R8023/543 (347), Julius Ruppel to Theodor Seitz, 18 January 1933; BArch, R8023/543 (310), Julius Ruppel to Heinrich Schnee, 7 September 1933.

⁶¹⁵ Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, 28 June 1919; Callahan, “The Failure of ‘Closer Union’ in British East Africa, 1929-1931,” 270, 273; Heinrich Schnee, “Kolonialimperialismus wieder Völkerbund,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 October 1926; “Englische Verleumdungen und Verdrehungen, eine Unterredung mit Gouverneur Dr. Schnee,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 16 June 1926; Heinrich Schnee, “Baldwin über die Kolonialemandate,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 19 July 1926.

in insisting that the Mandate be returned to German control.⁶¹⁶ These men and other members of the colonial lobbies argued that German rights to East Africa, both of Germany as a League member state and of Germans who had recently been allowed by the British to return as settlers to East Africa, were being undermined by a course of action that would put the region under an administration analogous to that of a Crown Colony, where British citizens and companies would have favored status. Britain, in promoting the East African federation, was pursuing a course of annexation and had therefore violated League policies of equal access and the terms of its Mandate.

Therefore, the colonial lobbies contended, the sovereignty of the Mandate should be returned to the League, which had the right to strip Britain of its hold in the Tanganyika Territory, and the League should award the East African Mandate to Germany.⁶¹⁷ Schnee and Hedwig von Bredow, President of the *Frauenbund* of the *DKG*, took the additional step of meeting with Dr. Julius Curtius, Stresemann's successor, in an effort to sway him

⁶¹⁶ "Protest gegen die englische Annexionspolitik: Eingabe der KoRAG an der Reichskanzler," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 August 1926; BArch, R8023/548 (116-118), Public Statement by Seitz against "Closer Union," June 1929; For material on protests and public statements against "Closer Union" by various German colonial organizations and organizations sympathetic to the colonial cause in Germany (Ansbach, Apolda, Bad Wildungen, Bernburg, Dessau, Dusseldorf, Emden, Erfurt, Falkenstein, Frankfurt an der Oder, Gotha, Göttingen, Gütersloh, Halle, Hamborn, Hannover-Münden, Harburg, Heidelberg, Hildesheim, Karlsruhe, Kassel, Kiel, Köln, Kreuzburg, Meinigen, Merseburg, Mittelschleisen, Münster, Naumburg, Neumünster, Warthe, Neuwied, Nienburg/Weser, Nürnberg, Oppeln, Potsdam, Salzwedel, Spandau, Weimar), Poland (Stettin), and Austria (Vienna) see BArch, R8023/555 (62-184).

⁶¹⁷ "Die Rückgabe der Kolonien," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 June 1926; "Die englischen Kolonialkreise und die deutschen Kolonien," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 November 1926; "Kann England Deutsch Ostafrika nicht entbehren?," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 December 1926; "Neue Gebiete für Europasiedlung in Ostafrika," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 January 1927; "Um das Schicksal Deutsch Ostafrika," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 April 1927; "Englische kolonialmandatscheuchelei," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 14 April 1927; "Das Gespenst der deutschen Majorität in Ostafrika," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 June 1927; "Deutsch Ostafrika Siedlungsland," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 September 1927; "Deutschen Wiederaufbau in Ostafrika," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 January 1928; "Ostafrika Debatten in Berlin, London, und Genf. Protest des Dr. Stresemann gegen die englischen Annexionsabsichten," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 February 1928; "Mandats oder Annexionskommission?," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 March 1928; "Protestkundgebungen im Zeichen der Einheitsfront," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 15 March 1928; "King George of Mandatoria," *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, 1 April 1928; For more on Germans resettling in East Africa, see Callahan, "Mandated Territories Are Not Colonies": Britain, France, and Africa in the 1930s." According to Callahan, by 1930, Germans accounted for half of the European population of Tanganyika(3) as a result of a series of treaties made between Germany and Great Britain and the British need for expertise in plantation farming in the region.

to their stance of seizing the opportunity created by the British ‘Closer Union’ controversy to advance the cause of colonial restitution.⁶¹⁸

The *DKG* and *KoRAG* did not limit their protests against the ‘Closer Union’ and demands for restitution to the German public sphere. Maintaining contact with Kastl and Ruppel during the controversy, the colonial lobbies took their advice and submitted formal petitions to the Permanent Mandates Commission. While petitions from inhabitants of the Mandated Territories had to pass first through the administrative offices of the respective Mandatory Powers before reaching the Mandates Commission, no such restriction existed for petitions from citizens, companies, advocacy groups, and governments of League member states.⁶¹⁹ Taking full advantage of Germany’s League membership and drawing on Mandates Commission catchphrases of equal access to the Mandates and the assurance of liberty for mandated territories through international sovereignty, the *Frauenbund* of the *DKG* submitted a formal petition on the “Tanganyika Question” in October 1930 in an effort to protect German culture and German rights of use within the region:

The millions of German women, affiliated with the associations mentioned in the appendix [of this petition], hereby submit formal protest against the plan of Great Britain to federate our former protectorate of German East Africa, now known as the Mandate of Tanganyika, with the two East African

⁶¹⁸ BArch, R8023/555(38), “Dr. Curtius zur Kolonialfrage,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (Berlin, 23 December 1930), Nr. 597; BArch, R8023/555 (33), “Gouverneur Schnee bei Curtius,” *Kölnische Zeitung* (Köln, 23 December 1930) Nr. 693.

⁶¹⁹ Pedersen, “The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument,” 570; Gorman, *The Emergence of International Society in the 1920s*, 37, 138-139; Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*, 74.

Colonies, Uganda and Kenya, under the authority of British High Commissioner.

A political fusion of the type proposed by the White Papers published by the British government would cause the loss of what remains of a Germanic East Africa within the Mandate and should be considered a violation of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

We German women implore the League of Nations to assure equal access to the Mandates and to safeguard, in particular, the status of German East Africa (Tanganyika) as a free territory under mandate and block any attempt to incorporate it within the British Empire.⁶²⁰

To keep up the pressure in the international public sphere, *KoRAG* submitted a petition against the federation of East Africa to the PMC in January 1933. The petitioners argued that the union of even postal services in the mandate was “incompatible with the letter and spirit of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which was the sole guiding principle for the administration of the mandated territory of Tanganyika,” and that “any unilateral modification of the Mandates System would violate Germany’s rights [as a League member state].”⁶²¹ Both of these petitions were mulled over by the PMC and published in the Commission’s official minutes, thus giving the colonial lobbies a voice in the formal proceedings. What’s more, the publication of the petitions also afforded

⁶²⁰ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Dix-Neufième Session, 1930*, 63. The Commission’s brief discussion of this petition can be found in the same document on page 64.

⁶²¹ *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Troisième Session, 1933*, 180. The Commission’s discussions of this petition, which took place in June and July 1933, can be found in the same volume on pages 124-127 and 180-182.

KoRAG and the *DKG* an opportunity to be seen and heard by a wider international audience as a force against Britain's plans to challenge international sovereignty. The colonial lobbies could not have paid for better publicity.

In the debates on 'Closer Union,' Gustav Stresemann, his successor Julius Curtius, and the German Foreign Office saw another opportunity to open up discussions for revision of the Treaty of Versailles. Stresemann had no interest in pursuing the radical goal of colonial restitution sought by the colonial lobbies. With Germany now a member of the League and with Anglo-German relations improving, the German Foreign Office was unwilling to disrupt its plans with such aggressive demands. Nonetheless, Stresemann made it clear in 1927 and 1928 that Germany would oppose any attempt at federation in East Africa. By insisting that the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and the League charter be followed to the letter, the German Foreign Office hoped to take advantage of an opportunity to shame the British and remind the Allies that the strict guidelines of the Treaty and the League Covenant were not just restrictive for the Germans, but for others' expansionist aims as well. The hope was that a press war over such issues would enable the Germans to build on the revisionist current of Locarno and seek more modifications to the Peace of Versailles.⁶²² Germany had to appear moderate lest its objections be written off as colonial irredentism.

To this end, Curtius—who became Foreign Minister following Stresemann's death in October 1929—made gestures in his public statements in December 1930 to placate the colonial lobby, saying that Mandates for Germany might be discussed in the future if it seemed feasible, but for the most part echoed the position of his predecessor and pointed to the hypocrisy of the British for not adhering to the terms of the Treaty and

⁶²² Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 270-276.

the Covenant and indicated that the government was indeed seeking every possible means to block the federation of East Africa.⁶²³

Regarding the East African Question, the Foreign Minister alluded to his previous statements that he and his office had brought the matter before the *Reichstag* and that the government would do everything in its power to seek to prevent a violation of the Mandates System.⁶²⁴

German Foreign Office functionaries maintained contact with Ruppel on the issue of ‘Closer Union,’ arranging meetings with the PMC member and requesting reports in order to coordinate their arguments before the Mandates Commission and the public.⁶²⁵

While content to ride on the tide of press generated by the German colonial lobbies and their protests, the German Foreign Office made it clear that the topics of restitution or Germany’s “rights” in East Africa were not to be broached in the debates before the League, advocating instead for arguments founded on legal grounds that could be used against the British before the Permanent Court of International Justice.⁶²⁶

Ludwig Kastl and Julius Ruppel agreed with the colonial lobbies that the federation in East Africa was unlawful. The German members of the PMC, however, did

⁶²³ BArch, R8023/555(42), “Curtius verspricht energischen Kampf gegen Englands Ostafrikapläne: Volle Aufrechterhaltung der deutschen Mandats ansprüche,” *Börsen Zeitung* (Berlin, 20 December 1930), Nr. 593; BArch, R8023/555(26), “Englische Pläne mit Ostafrika-Curitus über die Kolonialfrage,” *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten* (Düsseldorf, 20 December 1930), Nr. 645; BArch, R8023/555(41), “Dr. Curtius zur Ostafrikanischen Frage: eine farblose Erklärung,” *Reichsbote* (Berlin, 21 December 1930), Nr. 305.

⁶²⁴ BArch, R8023/555(43), “Curtius macht Versprechungen,” *Der Tag* (Berlin, 20 December 1930), Nr. 303.

⁶²⁵ PA AA, R96543, Report from Ambassador Konstantin von Neurath in London to Auswärtiges Amt, 13 November 1930; PA AA, R96543, Telegramm from Julius Ruppel in Geneva to Auswärtiges Amt, 17 November 1930; PA AA, R96543, Julius Ruppel to Ministerialdirektor Dieckhoff, giving a report on the PMC and requesting a meeting, 1 December 1930; PA AA, R96543, Report by Ministerialdirektor Dieckhoff to Auswärtiges Amt, 6 January 1931; PA AA, R96543, Report on Ruppel and the 19th session of the PMC from Frohwein to Auswärtiges Amt, 7 January 1931; PA AA, R96543, Report by Dufour on “Tanganyikafrage,” 13 March 1931.

⁶²⁶ Callahan, “The Failure of ‘Closer Union’ in British East Africa, 1929-1931,” 278-284.

not believe the opportunity could be used to return Tanganyika to Germany. They provided advice for Schnee, Seitz, and the *DKG*, but pursued a different course of action more in line with that of the German Foreign Office. Kastl and Ruppel focused on blocking Britain's efforts through a careful application of legal expertise and avoiding the entire issue of stripping Britain of its Mandate and restoring Tanganyika to German rule. Both Kastl and Ruppel had their finger on the pulse of the PMC. They knew that Amery's 'Closer Union' was already unpopular with all of the members on the Commission. Ruppel was also aware that Lord Lugard—the British member on the PMC—had received notice from Sir Eric Drummond, the League Secretary-General, advising him to recuse himself from debates on East Africa. Catastini, an Italian League bureaucrat, had expressed his concern that Lugard's participation in Britain's joint committee on the subject and his status as a member on the Mandates Commission might give the appearance of a conflict of interest. Though he would later reverse his thinking on the matter and told Lugard he saw no such conflict, Drummond initially feared accusations of partiality if the Commission's decision went in Britain's favor.⁶²⁷ Refusing to step down temporarily from either post, Lugard faced a dilemma of needing to appear unbiased.⁶²⁸ On the one hand, he viewed Amery's 'Closer Union' proposal as illegal and wanted to see it defeated both domestically and in the PMC to avoid international legal entanglements for Britain at the Permanent Court of International Justice.⁶²⁹ On the other,

⁶²⁷ TNA, CO 822/28/5, Telegram from Catastini to Sir Eric Drummond from Geneva, 30 October 1930; TNA, CO 822/28/5, Sir Eric Drummond to Lord Lugard, 31 October 1930; TNA, CO 822/28/5, Sir Eric Drummond to Alexander Cadogan, 31 October 1930; TNA, CO 822/28/5, Sir Eric Drummond to Lord Lugard, 3 November 1930; TNA, CO 822/28/5, Sir Eric Drummond to Alexander Cadogan, 3 November 1930; TNA, CO 822/28/5, Sir Eric Drummond to Alexander Cadogan, 4 November 1930; TNA, CO 822/28/5, Alexander Cadogan to Charles Howard Smith, 8 November 1930.

⁶²⁸ TNA, CO 822/28/5, Lord Lugard to Sir Eric Drummond, 1 November 1930; Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 275-276; Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, 170-177.

⁶²⁹ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 275-276.

he supported Labour's alternate version of the plan that would extend mandate policies into Kenya and Uganda, giving him the appearance to foreign observers of supporting 'Closer Union' in any form.⁶³⁰ Ultimately, Lugard offered to continue on the PMC, but to recuse himself from all PMC meetings regarding Tanganyika in November 1930.⁶³¹ Ruppel and the remaining PMC, members, however, refused to sit if Lugard was not present, so Lugard never needed to recuse himself.⁶³² Instead, the former governor continued to serve on the PMC and did not actively interfere with the 'earnest consideration' of protests from Germany and other PMC members. The general consensus among the PMC members during the debates, just as in the case of Smuts's efforts to annex Southwest Africa as part of South Africa earlier in the 1920's, was that any attempt at 'Closer Union' violated the provisions of Britain's mandate for the Territory. Therefore, Kastl and Ruppel needed only to cooperate with the non-British members of the Commission and work together to find and present specific legal grounds for blocking the federation of Tanganyika with Britain's East African colonies that could be used during interrogations of British representatives to the PMC and during general discussion.

During the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Sessions of the PMC in July and November 1929, Kastl had taken the argument a step further, saying that Article 10 of the Tanganyika Mandate, the very article the British representatives cited as grounds for federation, actually prohibited the incorporation of the territory into a single administrative territory with Britain's colonies in the region. Article 10 of the mandate stated that:

⁶³⁰ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 277-282.

⁶³¹ Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 276.

⁶³² Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 276-277.

The Mandatory shall be authorized to constitute the territory into a customs, fiscal, and administrative union or federation with the adjacent territories under his own sovereignty or control; provided always that the measures adopted to that end do not infringe the provisions of this mandate.⁶³³

Kastl argued, with support from other members, that while the first clause of the article seemed to allow for a union of colonies and mandates by a Mandatory Power, the second clause forbade it.⁶³⁴ The merger of the territory with Britain's colonies presented a challenge to the Mandate's independence, and therefore could not proceed without violating the League's international sovereignty over the territory. Ruppel held to this position when pressed by Sir Gerald L.M. Clauson, a British Foreign Office official in Geneva, for what his stance would be regarding 'Closer Union.' Ruppel stated that he:

had the greatest possible doubts whether the scheme was in fact compatible with the mandate, that he was quite sure that even if it formally was, the effect would be simply to create a single large Colony in which the mandatory character of Tanganyika would cease for practical purposes to exist, and that in any case the scheme, if put through, would arouse the greatest possible suspicion and resentment in Germany and probably also in other European countries.⁶³⁵

⁶³³ "British Mandate for East Africa," *The American Journal of International Law* 17, 3 Supplement: Official Documents (July 1923): 153-157, 157.

⁶³⁴ *Commission Permanente des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Quinzième Session, 1929*, 167-170, 200-204; Minutes of the 16th Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission, 1929, 104, 200-202; Callahan, "The Failure of 'Closer Union' in British East Africa, 1929-1931," 272, 274-276; Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, 166.

⁶³⁵ TNA, CO 822/28/5, Memorandum on the 19th session of the PMC, Sir Gerald L. M. Clauson to Mr. Green, 8 November 1930.

While serving on the Commission, both Kastl and Ruppel continually opposed British efforts at uniting East Africa. Ruppel continued the fight a full two years after the Commission's formal decision. In December 1932 and June, July, and September 1933, the German PMC member and Heinrich Schnee, now head of the *DKG*, complained to the PMC that the British were trying to revive the scheme in a piece-meal fashion, citing rumors that the British Colonial Office intended to create a union of postal services in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika.⁶³⁶ Repeated criticisms launched against any and all forms of 'Closer Union' in East Africa from the German camp solidified the Mandates Commission's doubts over the legality of merging Tanganyika into a federation with Britain's East African colonies. The threat of facing charges of violating international law was a large part of the constellation of pressures, both domestic and foreign, that prompted the British Colonial Office to abandon the plan.

Reacceptance of Germans as “Fellow Civilizers”?

The Allied Powers' declaration of Germany's 'colonial guilt,' which had sparked debates over the nature of “good colonial governance,” did not do as much in practice as usually thought to bar Germans from participating in the imperial projects of their erstwhile colonial competitors. Although difficult for Germany as a nation, individual colonial officials actually had only modest difficulty in overcoming the brand of “unfit imperialists” and being readmitted by their “fellow civilizers” to the new imperial internationalist project in League of Nations sub-organizations like the Permanent

⁶³⁶ BArch, R8023/543 (307), Heinrich Schnee to Julius Ruppel, 22 September 1933; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Deuxième Session, 1933*, 16-17, 120-124, 135-143, 149-151, 156-158; *Commission Permanent des Mandats. Procès-Verbaux de La Vingt-Troisième Session, 1933*, 37, 41, 48-55, 58, 61, 69-73, 124-127.

Mandates Commission. A privileged few, as we have seen in the examples of Ludwig Kastl and Julius Ruppel, even managed to adapt their previous experiences and connections to make use of interwar attempts at international imperial oversight as a means of professional self-preservation, successfully morphing from colonial bureaucrats into international bureaucrats over the course of the 1920s and early 1930s.

The success of these individuals was in large part due to the ideological origins and bureaucratic structure of the League of Nations Mandates System itself. The League of Nations is often viewed as nothing more than the occasionally effective plaything of diplomats and powerful states instead of as a body that engaged with a global community of peoples and groups.⁶³⁷ Yet, the various structures of the League of Nations, such as the Permanent Mandates Commission, were viewed by contemporaries as a genuine attempt at international governance.⁶³⁸ The organization found itself constantly subject to pressure from the public sphere, not just from diplomats and states, but from lobbying interests, minority groups, and individuals to uphold its perceived roles in international mediation and oversight.

The Mandate System's ideological basis as a means to preserve imperial stadial theories of development while preventing 'military imperialism' and conflict through discussion ultimately necessitated the admission of Germany into the League of Nations, the League Council, and the Permanent Mandates Commission. Ostracizing Germany from the League had already prompted discontent against the League of Nations and its plethora of international governance structures from Germans and their sympathizers, and

⁶³⁷ Steiner, *The Lights that Failed*; Unger, *Aristide Briand*; Wright, *Gustav Stresemann*; *A League of Nations, Volume I. 1917-1918* (Boston, Oct. 1917-Oct.1918); Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace After World War I*; *A League of Nations, Volume II. 1919* (Boston, Feb.-Aug.,1919).

⁶³⁸ *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets, Vol. VII, 1924* (Boston, 1924); *World Peace Foundation Pamphlets, Vol. VIII.1925* (Boston, 1925).

had incited questions regarding the autonomy of the international organization. Sensitive to such accusations, the League Secretariat and the Great Powers that supported it—chief among them the British government—believed, in true *Realpolitik* fashion, that the best way to silence this critique and preserve the peace was to admit Germany to the League's governing bodies, including its imperial organ, the PMC. Colonial restitution was impossible, as it would have struck at the very heart of the founding justifications for holding the former German and Ottoman colonies that constituted the Mandate System and would certainly have weakened the League's credibility among the Mandatories—particularly the British Dominions. It was thought, however, that granting Germany a seat on the Permanent Mandates Commission would be enough to cement Germany's bond to the international organization by giving it a chance to participate in some small way in Europe's ongoing attempts to bring 'civilization' to Africa and Asia and prevent Germany from once again pursuing a policy of 'military imperialism.'

Yet, even recognizing the need for Germany's re-admittance to the international community, efforts could have been made that would have blocked the appointment of all former German colonial officials—regardless of rank—from reprising their roles as molders and shapers of the European 'civilizing mission' as members on the League's commissions. The League Council, however, lacked the bureaucratic manpower necessary to nominate international members of its Commissions and Councils on its own. The various bodies that comprised the League of Nations relied heavily on national governments of member states for the proposal of individuals as members for committees and commissions and, with few exceptions, readily accepted the appointed persons. With a full membership in the League of Nations, as well as seats on the League Council and

the PMC, Weimar Germany had the opportunity, though subject to League Council approval, to proffer its own short list of names to the Council of who the German government saw as fit to serve as its members on the Permanent Mandates Commission and other League emergency committees. The Weimar government predictably assigned such tasks to the German Foreign Office, which, for matters relating to the Mandate System, looked no further than the body of officials from the defunct *Kolonialamt*—individuals whom the German Foreign Office considered as experts on all things colonial.

The contemporary view of the League of Nations and the Mandates Commission as legitimate attempts at international governance and control of imperialism, and therefore theoretically open to all petitioners of all nations seeking redress on the international stage, is also what led to the German colonial lobbies' views of the organization as a possible means of challenging and revising the post-Versailles status quo. Colonial Germans' criticism of the League of Nations and the Mandates System should not be interpreted as an aversion to participation in global governance and oversight agencies as such. In fact, much of the Colonial German critique resulted from the exclusion of Germans from the League and its Commissions, not their mere existence. Although some Colonial Germans, including Heinrich Schnee, would ultimately come to spurn liberal international politics and look to the ultra-national platform of the Nazis in hopes of forwarding their expansionist aims, from at least 1925 to 1932, the German colonial lobby and individual colonial bureaucrats—much like their British and South African counterparts—looked to the League as the defender of

imperialism and the sustainer of the European 'civilizing mission' to which Colonial Germans had dedicated their careers and ideologies.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁹ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 28-103. Mazower talks extensively about British and South African investment in empire and the 'imperial internationalism' of the League and its successor the UN, especially in his first and second chapters on Jan Smuts and Alfred Zimmern respectively.

“The Faithful Hounds of Imperialism”?

Heinrich Schnee on the League’s Manchurian Commission

To Dr. Schnee,

A WARNING TO THE LEAGUE ENQUIRY COMMISSION

We Chinese people have long been aggressed by the international imperialism without, and oppressed by the feudalistic militarists and compradoric bourgeoisie within [...]

Now the League Enquiry Commission arrived at Hankow yesterday. They were welcomed by these faithful hounds, the Chinese local authority, with colored decorations, beautifully woven slogans and delicious banquets, while the laborious class were driven away who would at least starve for two days. But the fact that the commission closeted with the Inukai Cabinet for a week in Japan and that after its arrival at Shanghai, the Japanese troops have been still proceeding to bombard the Chinese territory and massacre the Chinese laborious class, proves that they are not the so-called “peace messengers,” They are only the spies of the international bandit organization—the League of Nations. They are the pioneers for the partition of China. They are the enemy of the proletariat of Chinese people. They are the enemy of the world’s oppressed peoples.

From this, we—the oppressed peoples of the world—should, with our own might and strength unite ourselves in the

same warline to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes
 respectively, to push down the imperialism. Then we can free
 and relieve ourselves from their bondage.

Down with the League Enquiry Commission—the faithful
hounds of imperialism!⁶⁴⁰

—Threatening note sent to Schnee by the Young Proletariat

Union of China, Hupeh Branch, April 5, 1932

On September 18, 1931, Lt. Kawamoto Suemori of the Japanese Kwantung Army set off explosives along Japan’s South Manchuria railway near the Chinese town of Mukden (present-day Shenyang). Soldiers at the Chinese barracks in the region were blamed for the “attack” against the Japanese Imperial Army’s supply line. Skirmishes between Japanese and Chinese troops in Manchuria erupted, the then-named city of Mukden was seized by Japan’s Imperial Army, and the stage was set for Japan’s full scale invasion of Manchuria. Soon after the so-called Mukden incident, the Japanese military council attempted to remonstrate with the officers involved in the attacks. The censure of the acts failed and the attacks continued. The Imperial Chief of Staff in Tokyo sent ambiguous messages to his officers in Manchuria, seemingly calling off attacks but secretly urging them on. The highest-ranking Japanese commander in Korea sent troops to Manchuria independently of any orders from his government. In late September and early October, Chiang Kai-shek, the Chairman of the National Military Council of China,

⁶⁴⁰ GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee, Nr. 75, Young Proletariat Union of China, Hupeh Branch, to Heinrich Schnee, April 5, 1932. The text is quoted exactly as found in the original. Underlined sections here represent underlining in the original in red pencil that was noted in this fashion by Schnee for later discussion with his fellow commissioners.

recalled Chinese troops from the region to prevent further losses against Japanese forces. In response to the Japanese incursions into Manchuria, the Chinese and American governments called on the League of Nations for mediation of the conflict. Thus, the Manchurian Crisis was set into motion.⁶⁴¹

The region had been in turmoil for at least a decade and tensions had been running high between the Japanese and Chinese governments since the end of the First World War. Japan's presence around Manchuria had increased since its victory in the Russo-Japanese War, when the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905) granted Japan the Kwantung Leased Territory and the rights to the Southern Manchuria Railway branch of the Far East Railway network. Japan and China had engaged in border disputes over the region, as the Japanese government repeatedly claimed that previous treaties between China and Russia defined the boundaries of the Kwantung Territory as larger, including sections of Chinese territory outside of what Japan controlled as a result of its peace treaty with the Russian government. China's situation had also become more precarious. At the time of the Mukden Incident, China was in the middle of what would be known as the Ten Year's Civil War and Central Plains War. Although the government in Nanjing was recognized by most world powers as the sole legitimate government of all China, the reality was that China was split into several factions of competing warlords, communist

⁶⁴¹ Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 391-396. For more on the Manchurian Incident, see Thomas W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914-1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 165-185; Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society, 1931-1933* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 15-29. Wilson, though keeping to the standard narrative of the events at Mukden, argues that Japanese society was not as bellicose as generally assumed. Throughout the rest of her work, she also argues that the Manchurian Incident was not especially significant as a factor shaping national identity and consciousness in the decade that followed.

insurgents, and a fledgling and corrupt Republic.⁶⁴² The Japanese government played on these internal divisions in order to justify its aggression in Manchuria as support for a ‘nationalist uprising’ for self-determination and announced Japanese plans to restore the former Chinese emperor, Puyi of the Qing dynasty, as the leader of a new state to be called Manchukuo.⁶⁴³

In addition to the regional tensions, the Japanese and Chinese governments had been in competition with one another over their level of prestige within the League of Nations. Japan—along with Great Britain, France, Italy and the recent addition of Germany—held a seat as a Permanent Member of the League Council. Japan also administered the South Seas Mandate for the League as the only non-European Mandatory power and had a representative on the Permanent Mandates Commission. China’s standing in the League was not nearly as vaunted as Japan’s.⁶⁴⁴ The importance and upward mobility of China within the League had long been a matter of debate in the League Assembly. It was not formally considered a “colony” or a “mandate” by the League, but all European member states and the United States government wished to maintain an exploitative flow of goods in and out of China’s “Open Door.” China was a League member-state, but for the first decade of the League’s existence, China had been deemed by League Secretariat Sir Eric Drummond as too unstable to be granted one of the four Non-Permanent seats on the League Council. In 1931, China’s status within the League changed. Despite Japanese opposition, China was granted a seat as Non-

⁶⁴²Ian Nish, *Japan’s Struggle with Internationalism. Japan, China and the League of Nations, 1931-3* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), 4-22.

⁶⁴³ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 391-396.

⁶⁴⁴ For more on Japan’s Mandatory Power status and the debates over sovereignty that arose in the South Seas Mandate following the Manchurian Crisis, see Tohmatsu, “Japan’s Retention of the South Seas Mandate, 1922-1947,” in *Imperialism on Trial*, 61–84.

Permanent Member of the League Council for a trial term of one year just one week prior to the incident near Mukden and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.⁶⁴⁵

Conflict between two member-states of the League Council necessitated League intervention. In November, 1931, the League of Nations called for a Commission of Enquiry to determine the causes of the conflict, hoping to diffuse the tensions between Japan and China, which ran counter to many world powers' and League member states' interests in the Far East. The presence of former German colonial officials as part of the League's bureaucracy was not confined to the Permanent Mandates Commission, but also came into play in special emergency inquiry committees, most notably in the League's investigation of the Manchurian Crisis. The five-man commission headed by the second Earl of Lytton of the United Kingdom included Major General Frank Ross McCoy (US), Count Aldrovandi Marescotti (Italy), General Henri Claudel (France), and Dr. Heinrich Schnee.⁶⁴⁶ It was in this venue that Heinrich Schnee—the last governor of German East Africa and the most outspoken detractor of the Allies, the League and the new Mandates System—somewhat ironically was able to benefit from growing internationalism. His role on the Lytton Commission became the crowning—and final—event in his efforts to revive his career and renown as an authority on imperialism. Despite the loss at Locarno of any hope of a return of Germany's former overseas possessions, the involvement of a prominent Colonial German in the Manchurian discussions suggests that, although no longer citizens of an imperial power, Germans made continued contributions to the international discourse on empire and nation, as well as to international decision-making on these matters.

⁶⁴⁵ Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 4-22.

⁶⁴⁶ Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis: Dr. Heinrich Schnee and the Lytton Commission," in *Deutschland-Japan in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, 91-104, 91-96.

An Odd Choice: The Selection of Heinrich Schnee for the Commission of Enquiry

On November 18, 1931, two days into the first League Council session convened in Paris to discuss the crisis in Manchuria, Sir Eric Drummond suggested that the League form a Commission of Enquiry to find an international diplomatic solution to the conflict.⁶⁴⁷ An intense three weeks of debate ensued between Council Members and the states involved to determine what the purpose and constitution of such an investigatory body would be. The Japanese government had initially opposed Chinese pleas for League mediation, preferring direct negotiation with China to resolve border disputes and treaty rights in Manchuria without interference from the League. At the League Council meeting, however, the Japanese delegation embraced the construction of a Commission of Enquiry so long as certain conditions were met: Japan and China were to have representatives on the committee; the commission should be made up of persons from Britain, France and the United States; the League had to agree to step aside if direct negotiations between Chinese and Japanese governments were initiated; and finally, the commission should not only look into Manchuria, but scrutinize the Nanjing government of China, which the Japanese government insisted needed international attention and assessment.⁶⁴⁸ China, which had originally asked for League intervention, now objected. The Chinese government in Nanjing feared that an international investigatory mission would postpone the desired withdrawal of Japanese forces from Manchuria and was

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 91-96.; Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 44-62; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 391-396.

⁶⁴⁸ Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 4-22, 50-51.

concerned that any examination of the governance of China as a whole would delay the solution of the immediate crisis in Manchuria.⁶⁴⁹

By December 10, 1931, the two conflicting parties had reached a compromise whereby the League would function as a conciliator, not a mediator. A five-member commission would be appointed to “study on the spot and to report to the Council any circumstances... affecting international relations.”⁶⁵⁰ Japan and China were guaranteed the right to appoint one assessor each to accompany the League’s five-man commission into Manchuria. The League further agreed to step aside if the two conflicting governments began direct negotiations and the Commission would, supposedly, not inspect military installations or interfere with military matters of either party.⁶⁵¹ After much debate, the League Council finally determined that the five-man commission would comprise representatives appointed from Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and the non-member United States.⁶⁵² The Japanese government chose Yoshida Isaburō—the ambassador to Turkey and former ambassador to the United States, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland—as its representative.⁶⁵³ The Chinese government in Nanjing selected Wellington Koo, an American-educated diplomat and resident of Manchuria.⁶⁵⁴ Ten days later on December 20, 1931, the list of names of the Commission members was released to the League Assembly and the press. The five-man commission was to be headed by the second Earl of Lytton of the United Kingdom and would include Walter Hines (US; who stepped aside and was replaced five days later by Major General Frank McCoy), Count

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 51-52.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 52.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., 50-54.

⁶⁵² Ibid., 53.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 58-60.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 59.

Aldrovandi Marescotti (Italy), General Henri Claudel (France), and, finally, Heinrich Schnee of Germany.⁶⁵⁵

The German government took the longest time in appointing its representative and getting approval from the League and the Japanese and Chinese governments for its selection. Schnee was, in several respects, the least logical choice for a League Commission of Enquiry. Schnee's antagonism towards the former Allied Powers and the League's Mandate System was well-known. In his book *German Colonization Past and Future* and in various articles and books he published thereafter, Schnee tried to refute Germany's 'colonial guilt' by outlining his view of German administration in the colonies, highlighting the praise Germany had received from other imperial nations when it entered the colonial arena, and the alleged sentiments of the indigenous peoples toward the Germans as opposed to the nations who held these colonies subsequently as mandates and protectorates.⁶⁵⁶ Schnee's chief argument against the Allies, the League and the Mandate System centered on Wilson's Fourteen Points. Citing Point Five,⁶⁵⁷ Schnee claimed that both Germany and its colonies were denied the right of self-determination. Schnee asserted that the "native populations" of Germany's colonies, much like the Germans themselves, were forced into the Mandate system—a system of boundaries drawn in an "arbitrary fashion without any regard for the natural boundaries of the tribes."⁶⁵⁸ The former governor insisted that the public had been deceived by what he called the "Colonial Guilt Lie" which the Allies had "circulated" to justify stripping

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 53; Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis," 91-96; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 391-396.

⁶⁵⁶ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 62-73.

⁶⁵⁷ "A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined."-Woodrow Wilson, 8 January 1918.

⁶⁵⁸ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 60-61.

Germany of its colonies.⁶⁵⁹ For Schnee, these “hypocrisies” were damnable forms of betrayal against a fellow European civilization. By denying Germany the right to hold its former colonies as Mandates and barring Germany from the ‘civilizing mission’ with the label of “unfit imperialists,” Schnee believed that the Allies—and later the League, which he argued had been deceived by the “Colonial Guilt Lie” yet again at Locarno—had sentenced Germany, its former colonies, and the entire European imperial project to ruin.⁶⁶⁰ Furthermore, Schnee argued that not only had the League narrow-mindedly twice denied Germany the ability to participate as a Mandatory Power, but the international body was also failing to uphold the principles of the Mandates System it had created:

[The League] has, since [its foundation] , also failed in certain instances to preserve the integrity of the Mandates System; especially regarding English designs on German East Africa (the planned unification of that Mandate with neighboring English colonies under one General Governor [...]) and in the case of

⁶⁵⁹ Heinrich Schnee, “Die deutsche Außenpolitik im Kampf um die Befreiung von Versailles,” in *Zehn Jahre Versailles*, ed. Hans Draeger and Heinrich Schnee, vol. 1 (Berlin: Brückenverlag, 1929), 159-184; *Für oder gegen Kolonien: Eine Diskussion in 10 Aufsätzen von Freunden und Gegnern des kolonialen Gedankens* (Berlin: Otto Stollberg, 1928); Heinrich Schnee, *Nationalismus und Imperialismus* (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1928); Heinrich Schnee, *Die koloniale Schuldfrage*, 2nd ed. (München: Buchverlag der Süddeutschen Monatshefte, 1927); Heinrich Schnee, Theodor Seitz, and Arthur Dix, “Vorwort,” in *Was Deutschland an seinen Kolonien verlor* (Berlin: Verlag der Werbestelle “Wieder Kolonien”, 1926), 5–8; Heinrich Schnee, *Die englische Presse zu Deutschlands kolonialen Forderungen* (Berlin: Kolonialkriegerdank, 1926); Heinrich Schnee, “Kolonialimperialismus wider Völkerbund,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, October 1, 1926; Heinrich Schnee, “Baldwin über die Kolonialmandate,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, August 15, 1926; Heinrich Schnee, “Heft II: Afrika Für Europa: Die koloniale Schuldfrage,” in *Koloniale Volksschriften* (Berlin: Kolonialverlag Sachers & Kuschel, 1924); Heinrich Schnee, *The German Colonies under the Mandates* (Berlin: Quelle & Meyer, 1922); Heinrich Schnee, *Braucht Deutschland Kolonien?* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1921); “Dr. Schnee im Reichstag über Kolonialbeamte und Tropenzulage,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, March 1, 1927; “Englische Verleumdungen und Verdrehungen: eine Unterredung mit Gouverneur Dr. Schnee,” *Der Kolonialdeutsche*, June 16, 1926.

⁶⁶⁰ Schnee, *German Colonization*, 172-176.

South Africa's successful efforts towards the assimilation and annexation of South West Africa.⁶⁶¹

In addition to his hostile stance towards the Mandatory powers, Schnee had little knowledge of and no practical experience with Japanese or Chinese politics and culture. Although he had been to the Pacific and even served as Deputy Governor of German New Guinea for two years and as Deputy Governor of German Samoa for four, the bulk of his colonial expertise had been acquired during his tenure as a colonial official and later as a Governor in German East Africa. This alone, however, would not have excluded Schnee from League approval. None of the diplomats sent as part of the League's Commission had extensive experience with China or Japan. Lytton had been born in India and had been Viceroy in Calcutta for five years before becoming India's representative at the League of Nations in 1927. Claudel had commanded troops in Africa and had only visited Indochina. McCoy's experience with Japan was perhaps the most extensive of them all, but was limited to his one year stay in Tokyo as administrator of America's earthquake aid to Japan in 1923. Aldrovandi had never left Europe.⁶⁶² Clearly the League's definition of the term "expert" was a loose one when it came to selecting officials for the Commission of Enquiry. Still, given the obvious deficiencies of the other members of the Commission, one would think that the League would have preferred that at least one of the diplomats be well-versed in East Asian culture and politics. Former Governor Wilhelm Solf—Schnee's onetime superior in German Samoa as well as

⁶⁶¹ Schnee, "Die deutsche Außenpolitik im Kampf um die Befreiung von Versailles," 177. Schnee, writing *in medias res* of the debates over Britain's plans for a "Closer Union" in East Africa, did not yet know that the League's Permanent Mandates Commission would actually block these repeated efforts, largely due to protestations from German lobbies and statesmen as well as other League delegates, until the Second World War. See previous chapter for more details.

⁶⁶²Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 57-58.

Schnee's occasional mentor and intermittent rival—would have seemed the more appropriate choice. Solf was recognized world-wide for his supposedly more humanitarian efforts at colonialism as Governor of German Samoa, he was adamantly opposed to Germany seeking to regain her lost colonies, and he had served as Germany's ambassador to Japan for nearly eight years.

And yet, Heinrich Schnee was chosen to serve the League as an “expert” observer in what was perhaps the most important international event in the League's brief history: the Manchurian Crisis. The factors that most likely contributed to Schnee's appointment to the Commission were timing, name-recognition, and Germany's member state status in the League Council—which gave it a tremendous deal of latitude in the selection of delegates for League business. Although the German government had originally intended to let the Americans and British handle the League's Commission of Enquiry into the Manchurian Crisis, Italy's request in late November 1931 to be represented combined with recognition of Germany's commercial interests in China prompted Germany to put forward a request for membership in the investigative body.⁶⁶³ As a now interested member state of the League, the German Foreign Office supplied three names as possible candidates to serve as Germany's representative on the Commission: General von Seeckt, Solf, and Schnee.⁶⁶⁴ The Secretary General of the League, Sir Eric Drummond, in an effort to set a standard by which criteria of expertise would displace those of nationality, had planted the idea in the League Council that members of the Commission should come from a range of professional backgrounds: a soldier, a merchant, an engineer and a

⁶⁶³ *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918-1945*, vol. 18, B: 1925-1933 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), Docs. 166, 200, 232, 234; *Ibid.*, vol. 19, B: 1925-1933 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), Docs. 46, 54, 84, 94.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 19, B: 1925-1933, Doc. 94.

lawyer, all preferably with colonial experience.⁶⁶⁵ As General Claudel of France had already been selected, thus fulfilling the soldier's role, General von Seeckt was eliminated from consideration. In addition, Seeckt's repeated calls for revision of Germany's post-Versailles borders through military force with the aid of the Soviet Union very likely played a part in the removal of his name from the League Commission's list of possible candidates.⁶⁶⁶

There were concerns from both the Japanese and Chinese governments to consider as well. The Japanese delegation to the League was apprehensive that Weimar Germany would adopt an antagonistic stance toward Japan. Although relations between Weimar and Nanjing had been tentative at best during the reigns of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, the German government had been establishing commercial connections with the Chinese state in the late 1920s through the efforts of Max Bauer—an ex-officer of the German army and employee of Junkers Aircraft and Örlikon arms manufacture.⁶⁶⁷ In 1929, the German government had also sent advisors to China: experts in agrarian resettlement, municipal administration, mineral resource management, industrial engineering, and radio communications. In the same year, the German Foreign Office had even offered its services as a mediator between the Chinese Republic and the Soviet Union in a border dispute.⁶⁶⁸ Furthermore, the Japanese government knew that several Germans were angered by Japan's receipt of German colonies in the Pacific as the South

⁶⁶⁵ Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis", 93-94.

⁶⁶⁶ Seeckt eventually wound up in China in late 1933, as an "adviser" to Chiang Kai-shek at the head of the Nazis' military mission to China.

⁶⁶⁷ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 397-402; William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 17-75; Gabriele Ratenhof, "Das Deutsche Reich, Japan und die internationale Krise um die Mandschurei 1931-1933," in *Deutschland-Japan in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1990), 105-127; John P. Fox, "Japan als Machtfaktor in Deutschlands Europa und Fernost Politik von Versailles bis Locarno," in *Deutschland-Japan in der Zwischenkriegszeit*, 61-90.

⁶⁶⁸ Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis," 95-103; Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 4-22, 44-62.

Seas Mandate. Though they could not stop Germany's inclusion on the Commission of Enquiry, Japan's delegation could at least push for the appointment of Solf to the post and oppose the selection of the irredentist Schnee as a member of the Manchurian Commission:

Schnee is a *Kokuminto daigishi* (*Deutsche Volkspartei*) close to the right wing... Apart from this he lectures in two or three universities about Colonial policy. According to what people say, he is rather bureaucratic (*kanryōteki*) and not particularly conciliatory (*dakyōteki*). It is doubtful if he will be as favorable to Japan as Dr. Solf on this issue. ⁶⁶⁹

The Chinese government in Nanjing for its part welcomed the idea of a German delegate on the Commission. Chinese officials, however, were reticent to accept Solf, fearing—what the Japanese hoped—that he would be more sympathetic toward Japan given his years as ambassador there. ⁶⁷⁰ Perhaps fortunately for the Chinese, Solf was seventy years old by the time the crisis in Manchuria began and expressed little interest in coming out of his hard-earned retirement to travel to East Asia.

With Seeckt eliminated by the League and Solf taken out of the running, Schnee's name remained the only one on the short list for appointment, Japanese objections or no. Schnee, however, had more stacked in his favor for selection than a simple process of elimination. Although he had never practiced law, he did hold a degree as Doctor of Laws, making him the closest to Drummond's request for a lawyer that could be found among the names proffered by Britain, the United States, France, Italy and Germany.

⁶⁶⁹ NBG-MJ, i.3, no.788 as translated and quoted in Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis," 96.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 93-97.

Schnee was also, by all accounts, an adept linguist as a result of his colonial experience. Most importantly, he was proficient in English, the language of the two nations that were taking the lead on the commission (Great Britain and the United States) because his wife, Ada, hailed from the British colony of New Zealand. He lacked experience in East Asia, but Schnee had begun his overseas career under Wilhelm Solf's tutelage in Samoa in 1905 and had gone on to receive a Governorship in East Africa with a firm endorsement from Solf, himself an early favorite for the position on the Commission. Despite the fact that Schnee's interwar writings were caustic towards the League, the Mandate System and notions of Germany's 'colonial guilt,' Schnee was so prolific, with numerous books published in three languages, that, regardless of the content, he had established himself as a leading authority on not only Germany's past colonial endeavors, but on the Mandate System and imperialism as a whole.⁶⁷¹

Schnee did not, however, have to rely solely on his large publication record to claim a status in the international policy community; his interpersonal networks and lobbying presence extended farther afield. After the First World War, Schnee had also managed to maintain his friendships and regular correspondence with academics and publishers in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States on matters of diplomacy and empire, further cementing his position as an international authority on these subjects.⁶⁷² He was routinely invited to speak at international anti-slavery rallies in the United Kingdom and gave numerous talks in Germany on colonial history and practices. Added to these

⁶⁷¹ *German Colonization Past and Future: The Truth About the German Colonies*, for example, was published in German, French and English.

⁶⁷² Perhaps the best evidence of this can be found in the file GStAPK, HA VI. NI. Heinrich Schnee, Nr. 30 (31-74), the collection of Schnee's correspondence with his publisher, Allen & Unwin. His publisher often served as an intermediary between Schnee and foreign universities and academics, distributed complimentary copies of his book to university libraries around the globe—with a heavy concentration on distribution to universities in the United States—and established contacts between the former governor and academics interested in exchanging letters with him about his work or wishing to invite him to speak.

“credentials” was a large pool of British and American acquaintances and thinkers, such as William H. Dawson, who were sympathetic listeners to Germany’s demands for colonial restitution and saw Schnee as the voice of moderation against the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles. In short, Heinrich Schnee had become such a public figure that it had become hard for contemporaries to think of colonial, Mandate and overseas policies without recalling his name. His appointment to the Lytton Commission was therefore little more than the final chapter in Schnee’s restoration as a “colonial expert” by the international community.

A Delicate Balance: Heinrich Schnee and the Proceedings of the Lytton Commission

The Lytton Commission submitted its report to the League for consideration in late September 1932. The report was largely ineffective. By the time it was received, Japan had officially recognized the puppet government in Manchukuo in defiance of the League of Nations. The public condemnation that followed prompted Japanese abandonment of the League.⁶⁷³ In hindsight, this event heralded the decline of internationalism generally and the League in particular. The interaction between the five men on this commission, however, is worthy of consideration beyond its obvious demonstration of the League’s inability to enforce its decisions. In producing the report

⁶⁷³ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 391-402; Westel W. Willoughby, *The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1935), 21, 380-504, 581-656; Sara R. Smith, *The Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1932. A Tragedy in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), vii-ix, 225-262; Justus D. Doenecke, ed., *The Diplomacy of Frustration: The Manchurian Crisis of 1931-1933 as Revealed in the Papers of Stanley K. Hornbeck* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), xi-xiv; “The Manchurian Question: Japan’s Case in the Sino-Japanese Dispute as Presented Before the League of Nations. Observations of the Japanese Government on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry, Memorandum of the Japanese Delegation, and Addresses Delivered by Yosuke Matsuoka, Chief Delegate, Before the Council and the Special Session of the Assembly Convened in Virtue of Article XV of the Covenant at the Request of the Chinese Government, Held at Geneva November December 1932” (Geneva: Japanese Delegation to the League of Nations, 1933); “The Verdict of the League: China and Japan in Manchuria. The Official Documents with Notes and Introduction by Manley O. Hudson” (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1933).

and in dealing with Japan, the Lytton Commission members were placed in a position that necessitated dialogue over an acceptable, uniform understanding of imperialism and of what constituted proper forms of expansion. They also had to construct a consensual definition of nationhood and self-determination as they assessed the situation in China and the validity of the Manchukuo state. Prior to Japan's dramatic exit from the organization, contemporaries—especially Germans—viewed the League's actions in the matter as the epitome of internationalist cooperation with former rival imperial powers setting aside past animosities to work together on an individual level in order to address a violation of international law without resorting to armed conflict.

Although the Japanese government had feared Schnee would be openly hostile towards Japan's position in Manchuria, Schnee actually constituted part of the centrist position between the two extreme poles of the Commission's membership. Lord Lytton was firmly prejudiced against Japan from the beginning and viewed the Commission's role as one of mediation that needed to result in the withdrawal of Japanese forces and possible sanctions against the government in Tokyo.⁶⁷⁴ General Claudel, seeing opportunities for trade between France and Japan and viewing the Chinese Republic in Nanjing as a hopeless attempt at governance, was instead inclined to be lenient towards the Japanese. Count Aldrovandi, General McCoy, and Schnee all found themselves in the "middle ground," seeking to preserve the framework of unbiased assessment that the League had imparted to the Commission. Aldrovandi, as the most adept linguist, held the group together, calming tensions through translation. McCoy, as the American, was a seeming outsider to the internal politics of the League. He was much more interested in the regional geopolitics in Manchuria as they pertained to the Soviet Union and its

⁶⁷⁴ Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 121-136.

potential expansion of “the Revolution” to China and the rest of East Asia. The confrontation between Japan and China, in his mind, should be mediated in whatever fashion in order to reduce the possibility of the spread of Soviet influence and preserve American interests in the region.⁶⁷⁵

Schnee was, admittedly, biased against Japan and had even expressed views prior to arriving in Manchuria that a possible penalty for Japanese militarism could be the forfeiture of the South Seas Mandate back to the League, which should, he self-servingly thought, grant the Mandate to Germany. Still, during the proceedings, Schnee diplomatically did not voice these views and instead put his little-used law degree to work. Though he secretly agreed with Lytton and was relatively perturbed by “a certain pro-Japanese member” on the Commission, he approached the assessment of the situation with legal diligence and balance.⁶⁷⁶ There may have been ulterior motives for a German advocating a more evenhanded treatment of Japan. In a letter dated June 6, 1932 to Schnee from the German Foreign Office intercepted by British operatives, Schnee was advised by the Weimar government to bear in mind that there was talk of the “possibility of a German-Japanese economic cooperation” in the exploitation of Manchuria’s resources.⁶⁷⁷ While this missive heralds the shape of things to come regarding Japanese-German relations, it is unclear if this letter ever reached Schnee, as it is not found in the archival files of his personal papers. It is even less certain if it played any role in his activities on the Lytton Commission, as he continued to favor Japanese withdrawal from the region during his time on the Commission of Enquiry. Regardless of the variables at

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 107-121, 173-187; Nish, “Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis,” 96-103.

⁶⁷⁶ Nish, “Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis,” 96-103.

⁶⁷⁷ TNA, GFM 33/4759, L.517882-884, Letter to Schnee, June 6, 1932; *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918-1945*, vol. 20, B: 1925-1933 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), Docs. 46, 135, 190; Ibid., vol. 21, Docs. 62, 140, 215.

work that prompted Schnee to adopt a more moderate, legally-minded position, it is known that Schnee took the stance that if Japan were to be punished for its invasion of Manchuria, reaching that decision in a formal report to the League Assembly would have to come only after a “fair trial.” In the interviews in which he took co-leadership, and in the questions he directed towards those interrogated by the Commission, Schnee contended that all angles be explored and that as many voices be heard as possible so as to prevent Japan from challenging the decision of the Commission in the League Council.⁶⁷⁸

Schnee’s attempt at impartiality between the Japanese and Chinese parties, however, does not signify that he was a disinterested observer when it came to German populations and economic concerns in the region. Indeed, the redefined imperialism in liberal guise of the League and the Commission emerged clearly here. In addition to questioning military and bureaucratic staff from both sides of the crisis, the commissioners interviewed several European, Korean, Russian and American “interests” in Manchuria, ranging from merchants to missionaries, to gain a more “complete picture” of the events that led up to the incident at Mukden. Schnee, McCoy and Claudel were all keen to use these interviews as opportunities to assess the extent to which the conflict had damaged their home nations’ interests in East Asia. As League delegates, they could not and did not openly admit to these ulterior motives. Schnee was particularly eager to find out more on the condition of a rumored population of Volga Germans in Manchuria. These individuals had supposedly fled Russia during the Revolution, fearing persecution from the Bolsheviks. Schnee repeatedly interrupted the flow of the formal proceedings in interrogations of Russian, Korean, and Manchurian officials as he inquired about the

⁶⁷⁸ GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee, Nr.74-76.

economic well-being of these Manchurian Germans, the nature of their relationship with local authorities, and the matter of whether or not these *Auslandsdeutsche* needed financial assistance from the Weimar government or protection as minorities from the League of Nations.⁶⁷⁹

When not engaged in Commission business, Schnee would take time to respond to letters from local German businessmen or heads of the German Manchurian Chamber of Commerce, or to have tea or meals with them. With these men, he discussed the state of German mercantile concerns amidst the chaos of the conflict between China and Japan.⁶⁸⁰ Major-General McCoy, already prejudiced against Germans as a result of his service in the Great War and the subsequent occupation of Germany by Allied Forces, became so frustrated with Schnee's focus on "national concerns" that he filed a formal complaint with the League and the German government regarding Schnee's behavior.⁶⁸¹ It came to nothing, however, as all the delegates had engaged in a similar level of 'touching base' with their respective nations' financial interests in the region and McCoy himself was guilty of shifting discussion in formal interviews away from the timeline of the crisis to focus on fleeing White Russians in Manchuria or the threat of military intervention from the Soviet Union. McCoy also pressed to learn whether there was a potential for a second Russo-Japanese war in the region, and how Soviet interference or armed conflict with Japan might affect Open Door policies and American trade in China.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁹ GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee, Nr.76, A Conversation with Representatives of Various White Russian Organizations of Harbin, British Consulate, May 17, 1932, (3-7, 13).

⁶⁸⁰ TNA, GFM 33/4759, L517787-L517791; GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee, Nr. 74-75; Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis," 99-100.

⁶⁸¹ Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis," 100.

⁶⁸² GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee, Nr.76, A Conversation with Representatives of Various White Russian Organizations of Harbin, British Consulate, May 17, 1932 (6-15).

Despite minor internal squabbles such as these, the commissioners exemplified the spirit of international cooperation in their investigation of the key issues involved in the Manchurian Crisis. One of the chief questions the Commission members needed to answer in order to determine the level of Japan's militaristic aggression was whether the Manchukuo State represented a true case of national self-determination. The Commission conducted a series of interviews of Chinese and Japanese military officials on this matter, but the most significant factor that helped the League's representatives determine the legitimacy of the Manchukuo government was the interrogation of Takuzo Komai, the Secretary General of the Cabinet of the new state of Manchukuo. While all commissioners were present at the meeting on May 6, 1932, Lytton, McCoy and Schnee took the lead in the discussion and were the only members to ask questions of Komai. In a note sent to the American government on January 7, 1932, the Japanese government had repeated its assertion that the crisis in Manchuria had helped to establish a unified, independent government in the region that had been desired by locals seeking liberation.⁶⁸³ The Lytton Commission was tasked with determining the validity of these claims.

The test was, theoretically, simple: to determine whether the idea of an independent state had indeed originated from Manchurian locals or if it had been conceived in Tokyo as an expedient for invasion. The reality of getting the information to answer this all-important question was far more complicated. Lord Lytton, who began the questioning of Komai, endeavored to coax an admission out of the ethnically Japanese official that the state was little more than a puppet regime by pointing to the

⁶⁸³ GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee, Nr. 76, A Conversation between Mr. Komai, Secretary General of the Cabinet of Manchukuo government, Cahngchun, May 6, 1932 (7).

Japanese press. Lytton had received multiple press reports on Japanese newspapers and pointed out to Komai that discussion of an independent Manchukuo had begun in Tokyo newspapers as early as December 1931. Komai brushed this evidence aside, insisting that Ambassador Yoshizawa of Japan had visited Manchuria around that time and must have taken the notion of a free Manchukuo with him after he had seen “the movement on foot among the Chinese people to set up a new government.”⁶⁸⁴ Upon further probing from Lytton, who was unsatisfied with the incongruities in the timeline Komai was establishing, Komai insisted that the desire for a liberated Manchuria dated back to 1916, when a movement to restore the Qing Dynasty was born. That movement, he stated, grew into a failed 1924 rebellion against the warlord of Manchuria, Zhang Zuolin, and had been waiting for an “opportune moment” to make an independent Manchuria a reality. That moment had finally arrived, Komai said, thanks to the Japanese army. Komai added that the fledgling Manchukuo state, comprised of many racial groups, “did not want the Japanese army to withdraw and leave them to be slaughtered by the forces coming from the south.”⁶⁸⁵ Major-General McCoy tried a different tack. Posing the same questions he had in interviews with Japanese and Chinese military officials, McCoy sought a more detailed timeline of the immediate confrontations between the two armies and clarification as to how heavily the Japanese armed forces had been involved in the overthrow of local government. Komai’s answers evaded the questions, giving a similar potted timeline of Chinese initiation of the conflict followed by Japanese occupation and assistance that the Japanese Imperial Army officers had given in previous interviews.⁶⁸⁶ Schnee, picking up where Lytton and McCoy had left off, asked open-ended questions

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., (7).

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., (8-9).

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., (10-12).

about the structure and composition of the new government. The last two queries of the interview ultimately forced Komai to reveal just how much influence Japan had over the new regime:

Schnee: “Perhaps you can tell us how the Chief Executive was elected?”

Komai: “I may explain in this way [...] The Chief Executive is not now in his position as a man elected by popular vote but as a man invited by leaders of different groups.”

Schnee: “Who fixed the number of advisers and their positions?”

Komai: “It is all decided in cabinet meetings. They need not be exclusively Japanese. Any other nationals who can read Chinese may be appointed as officials of the government if they are qualified for the position and show their desire and sincerity in the service. It is our desire to found this government with the cooperation of able leaders of different countries.”⁶⁸⁷

From the numerous exclamation points, “L’s” and “M’s” in Schnee’s notes on his copy of the transcript interview, it seems the commissioners were not satisfied with Komai’s answers regarding the legitimacy of the Manchukuo state. This was reflected in the final draft of the Lytton Report sent to the League and published on 10 October 1932—roughly a year after the Mukden Incident. The one hundred and thirty-nine page document was largely impartial, presenting only the facts as the commissioners understood them regarding the timeline of the conflict. The commissioners ultimately agreed that the Kwantung Army was only partially to blame for the outbreak of hostilities

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, (12).

and they suggested that new Sino-Japanese treaties should be drawn up to guarantee that Japanese economic rights in the region would be respected in the future. The five men, however, unanimously took a hard-line against the notion that Manchukuo was the product of a genuine independence movement.⁶⁸⁸ They remained unconvinced by Komai's Japanese-influenced narrative of a nationalist revolt for self-determination that had asked for Japanese assistance. The commissioners concluded that the new government had been imposed by Japanese officials and "[could] not be considered to have been called into existence by a genuine and spontaneous independence movement," seeing how there was "no general Chinese support of the Manchukuo government which [was] regarded by local Chinese as an instrument of the Japanese."⁶⁸⁹ The grounds for denying legitimacy of the state as a true nationalist creation were agreed upon by the commissioners simply as follows: Manchukuo was an undemocratic regime that had foreign nationals in key positions of authority. The Commission decreed that if the Japanese continued to interfere in the governance of the region, Manchukuo could and should be considered as little more than a colonial product of an imperialistic land-grab, the likes of which the League was founded to prevent. The five members were not so bold as to counsel non-recognition of the new state, but instead urged the Japanese to pull out their troops and officials and allow the new Manchurian state to be governed by local Chinese authorities.⁶⁹⁰

The report was passed on to a committee of nineteen delegates from League member states. While the committee was in session deliberating over the Lytton Report

⁶⁸⁸ Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 740-741; Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 173-187.

⁶⁸⁹ League of Nations, *Appeal by the Chinese Government: Report of the Commission of Enquiry*, (Geneva, 1932), 97, 11.

⁶⁹⁰ Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 741.

to determine its recommendations for how the League Assembly should proceed, the Japanese government responded to the allegations in the Commission of Enquiry's final draft. In a lengthy document submitted for consideration in November 1932 and in a series of speeches by the Japanese delegate on 6 December, the Japanese government opposed the League's consideration of the Lytton Report and warned that if the League threatened Japan with sanctions or refused to recognize the Manchukuo state, Japan would leave the League of Nations.⁶⁹¹

Frustrated with Japan's belligerent tone, several delegates on the committee of nineteen wished to punish the delinquent member state but Sir Eric Drummond and several other representatives opted for a conciliatory tone.⁶⁹² Attempts were made throughout December 1932 and January 1933 to bring about a Sino-Japanese compromise.⁶⁹³ The damage, however, was done. Western newspapers soon filled with anti-Japanese sentiment and criticism of the League for not taking a harsher line with the aggressor.⁶⁹⁴ In February 1933, the Japanese Kwantung Army advanced farther into Manchuria, subjugated Jehol (modern Rehe), and pushed Chinese forces—both from Nanjing and those under the command of Zhang Xueliang, the warlord who had controlled Manchuria prior to the crisis—back to the Great Wall.⁶⁹⁵ The Chinese government and its representative on the Lytton Commission, Wellington Koo, made

⁶⁹¹ TNA, FO/262/1802, 15-18; "The Manchurian Question: Japan's Case in the Sino-Japanese Dispute as Presented Before the League of Nations. Observations of the Japanese Government on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry, Memorandum of the Japanese Delegation, and Addresses Delivered by Yosuke Matsuoka, Chief Delegate, Before the Council and the Special Session of the Assembly Convened in Virtue of Article XV of the Covenant at the Request of the Chinese Government, Held at Geneva November December 1932" (Geneva, 1933); Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 741; Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 201-212.

⁶⁹² TNA, FO/262/1802, 143-155; TNA, DO 35/141/2, 6010/366.

⁶⁹³ Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 201-218; Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 742.

⁶⁹⁴ TNA, FO/262/1802, 139-141; TNA, DO 35/141/2, 6010/362.

⁶⁹⁵ TNA, DO 35/141/2, 6010/482.

appeals to the League to formally intervene with military support. Their pleas were ignored. The government in Nanjing became embittered towards the League. On February 22, 1933, the Japanese government formally decided to endorse the previous decision to leave the League if the Assembly would not concede to Japanese revisions to the draft resolution of non-recognition for Manchukuo.⁶⁹⁶

All attempts at mediation had been exhausted and the committee of nineteen submitted its final recommendations to the League Assembly. Incorporating a substantial portion of the original Lytton Report and language from speeches given by Commission of Enquiry delegates on the League Assembly floor, the committee urged the Assembly to insist on the withdrawal of all Japanese troops from Manchuria and called for Japan to cede sovereignty over Manchuria to the Chinese government in Nanjing. The League Assembly voted to support the recommendations of the committee on February 23, 1933 and adopted a policy of non-recognition for the Manchukuo government.⁶⁹⁷ The next day, following an impassioned speech on the League's error in the matter, Japan's delegate left the League Assembly hall, never to return to Geneva. Japan had withdrawn from the League, taking with it the South Seas Mandate.⁶⁹⁸ The League stood by its principles, but was impotent to enforce its decision.

Putting Down the Faithful Hound: The Triumph and Decline of Heinrich Schnee

In spite of the League's inability to compel Japan to cooperate in Manchuria, the Lytton Commission could be viewed as a partial success. Non-recognition of the puppet

⁶⁹⁶ Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 201-218; Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 742-743.

⁶⁹⁷ TNA, DO 35/141/2, 6010/449.

⁶⁹⁸ Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism*, 210-236; Steiner, *The Lights That Failed*, 743-744; Tohmatsu, "Japan's Retention of the South Seas Mandate, 1922-1947."

state in Manchuria was nearly unanimous among the members and remained so for a few years. Even Nazi Germany, which left the League in October 1933, maintained non-recognition of Manchuria until 1936, when it formed an alliance with Imperial Japan. More important for this project, however, is the fact that the Lytton Commission represented just how far Germany had been reintegrated into the international community. Less than five years after its admission to the League, Germany had become part of the League Council and had fashioned itself into a key player in one of the greatest diplomatic decisions the League ever had to face. The involvement of a prominent Colonial German in the one of the most important tests of the League's authority suggests that, although no longer part of an imperial power, Germans were still participants in the international discourse on imperialism. The fact that the German involved was Heinrich Schnee, Germany's staunchest colonial irredentist, represented the growing dominance of internationalism as a political force prior to the Manchurian Crisis despite its myriad weaknesses. Known for his hostility towards the British and French governments and their status as Mandatory Powers, Schnee was, nevertheless, able to engage with imperial rivals, set aside past animosities, and work together on an individual level to address a violation of international law. Even though Schnee and Claudel disagreed on certain issues during the construction of the Lytton Report, the two decided to be travel companions on the long journey back to Europe and spent the entire trip swapping stories of their experiences in Africa in days-gone-by.⁶⁹⁹ Lord Lytton and Schnee maintained a cordial correspondence for several years after their service on the Commission, consoling each other over lost family members and even proffering

⁶⁹⁹ Nish, "Germany, Japan and the Manchurian Crisis," 102; Heinrich Schnee, *Völker und Mächte im fernen Osten. Eindrücke von der Reise mit der Mandschurei-Kommission* (Berlin: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, 1933), 167-188.

invitations to meet again to reminisce about old times.⁷⁰⁰ The old antagonisms seemed to be fading away in favor of a spirit of internationalism that, however, could not be maintained through the tumultuous politics to come in the 1930s.

For Schnee personally, the Manchurian Crisis represented the pinnacle of the restoration of his imperial career. Although the Commission of Enquiry was quickly viewed as the League's greatest failure,⁷⁰¹ this did not diminish Schnee's desire to capitalize on his involvement with it. Rather, the inability of the League to force Japan to withdraw its forces enhanced Schnee's desire to use the Manchurian Crisis as an example of why his "imperial expertise" and views on the Mandate System still had value. It was a golden opportunity he exploited to the fullest. He milked the publicity as much as possible by publishing yet another tome, this time on his experiences on the Lytton Commission. In his book *Völker und Mächte im Fernen Osten*—the first draft of which he composed on the return trip from Manchuria—Schnee once again argued that the League should place its energies of internationalist cooperation in the service of German colonial restitution. Schnee insisted that if only the League had penalized Japan for its militarism in Manchuria by returning the South Seas Mandate to Germany, perhaps the organization could have proved its mettle, and both the integrity of China and the strength of internationalism might have been preserved. As a non-member of the League following its withdrawal, Schnee argued that it was a violation of the League covenant and the Mandate charter for Japan to be allowed to continue administering the South Seas Mandate in the League's name. In his mind, seizure of the South Seas islands that

⁷⁰⁰ GStAPK, VI. Nl. Heinrich Schnee, Nr. 44 (80-82).

⁷⁰¹ TNA, DO 35/141/2, 6010/362, 6010/488.

comprised the Mandate and the initiation of negotiations to return them to Germany, a League member, seemed prudent.⁷⁰²

Unluckily for the former governor, however, the Manchurian Crisis was also the death-knell for the League and the beginning of the end for the heretofore ongoing influence of Schnee and Colonial Germans like him in Germany's colonial policies and international relations. Schnee's memoir of his time in Manchuria was released the same year that the Nazis seized power and the year that Adolf Hitler pulled Germany out of the League of Nations, making such internationalist collaboration and negotiation through the League regarding the South Seas Mandate or any other Mandate impossible. Heinrich Schnee himself joined the NSDAP in 1933 hoping to influence the new regime in favor of the overseas colonial lobby, only to be repeatedly ignored and see Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels enact bans on the discussion of any site other than Eastern Europe as suitable for future German colonization.⁷⁰³ Nazi Germany formed an alliance with Japan four years after the Manchurian Crisis. The League of Nations, though nominally existing until the creation of its successor the United Nations, became defunct with the outbreak of the Second World War. Less than three years after his revival as an international expert on imperialism and overseas colonialism, Heinrich Schnee's sway in both the colonial policy of Germany and internationalist discussions of imperialism came to an end.

⁷⁰²Schnee, *Völker und Mächte im fernen Osten*, 344-350.

⁷⁰³GStAPK, VI, HA, N1/24 (69); BArch, R8023/152 (282, 289); BArch, NS 18/162 (16-17, 31-36, 59); BArch, NS 18/624 (6); BArch, NS 18/154 (56-58); BArch, NS 18/ 944 (13); BArch, NS 18/ 227 (2, 9-10); Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, 105, 120-121.

Conclusion

We do not deny the value which overseas colonies can have for settlement and for the supply of our national economy with raw materials [...] But we must guard against the attention of the German people being diverted by colonial endeavors—perhaps intentionally—from more important things [...] Possible colonial acquisitions must never be bought by giving up such vital necessities of the German people.

—Adolf Hitler, Statement made before the *Reichstag* elections of 1930⁷⁰⁴

Let us make up our minds that we shall never win back the lost territory by solemn invocation of the Lord, or by pious hopes based on the League of Nations, but only by force of arms[...]for suppressed countries are not won back to the bosom of the common Reich by flaming protests, but by the stroke of a mighty sword[...]To forge this sword is the task of the domestic policy of a nation; to see that this work is done in security and to look for companions in arms is the task of its foreign policy'

—Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 1933⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁴ As quoted in Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, 19-20.

The question of the distribution of colonial territory, regardless of where, will never be a question of war for us.

—Adolf Hitler in an interview with the *Daily Mail*, 18 October 1933⁷⁰⁶

In 1938, nearly two decades after the loss of Germany's overseas colonies at the Treaty of Versailles, German colonial irredentists had another opportunity to recover one or more colonies as a Mandate through diplomacy. The opportunity came in the midst of the Sudeten Crisis of 1938. In February, Hitler issued a warning to European states housing the “ten million” Germans who found themselves under non-German administration after the territorial changes of the Versailles Treaty that the Nazi government would not “idly watch their persecution.”⁷⁰⁷ One of the states targeted in his remark was Czechoslovakia. The Sudetenland, a substantial swath of Czechoslovakia's territory that bordered Germany and Austria, was home to a sizeable German minority. Making arguments based on the principle of self-determination and taking advantage of collaboration with a movement for autonomy by Germans in Czechoslovakia that had been ongoing since 1918 (led in 1938 by Konrad Henlein and the Sudeten German Party), Adolf Hitler demanded the immediate cession of the Sudetenland to Germany. A conference was scheduled to be held in Munich on 29 September so that representatives

⁷⁰⁵ As quoted in Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 174.

⁷⁰⁶ As quoted in Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 70.

⁷⁰⁷ Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 53-54.

from Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and France could negotiate a settlement between the two states and hopefully prevent war.⁷⁰⁸ Unfortunately for the Czechs as well as for Colonial Germans hoping Munich would prove an opportunity to pursue colonial restitution by using the threat of eastward German militarism as a bargaining chip, in that moment the Nazi regime was far more focused on expansion on the European continent itself than on any ideas of regaining Germany's overseas empire.

At Munich, once again a British Chamberlain, this time Austen's half-brother Neville, considered the possibility of ameliorating a tense diplomatic situation in Europe by offering Germany an overseas Mandate. Whereas Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain had ultimately dismissed this course of action thirteen years prior at Locarno, the now Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain went forward with the plan and proffered an African Mandate—either Tanganyika or one of the Cameroonian Mandates held by Britain and France—to Adolf Hitler as an alternative to German annexation of huge portions of Czechoslovakia.⁷⁰⁹ To the surprise and dismay of Colonial Germans, Hitler refused and insisted on German territorial gains in Czechoslovakia.⁷¹⁰ The following month, German forces occupied the Sudetenland and by March 1939, Nazi Germany had seized what is now the Czech Republic to create a puppet regime known as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia while the remainder of Czechoslovakia formed the Republic of Slovakia and declared itself an Axis client-state.⁷¹¹ Chamberlain's offer and Hitler's refusal at Munich in 1938 are indicative both of the decade-long tumultuous and often one-sided relationship between Colonial Germans and the Nazi state and of the

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., 53-54; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 169-170.

⁷⁰⁹ Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, 103-123; Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 180-192.

⁷¹⁰ Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, 119-123.

⁷¹¹ Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 54-58; Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 169-175.

continuity of liberal imperial and internationalist attitudes towards colonialism among many European thinkers and governments well into the twentieth century.

A Bad Romance: Colonial Germans and the Nazis

There were many German colonial advocates who joined the NSDAP in the 1930s and a few Nazi officials were themselves interested in overseas colonial endeavors—including Hermann Göring, a leading member of the Nazi party and the son of the first commissioner of German Southwest Africa.⁷¹² Despite these facts, the relationship between Colonial Germans and the Nazi state was neither ready-made nor a clear-cut case of common interest. Many Colonial Germans—whether they opposed the Nazis, joined as opportunists, or were ‘true believers’ in the Nazi ideology—had difficulty adapting their imperial worldviews to suit the political language of continental expansion espoused by the Nazis.

In large part this was due to the often-times ambivalent and mercurial attitudes and policies toward colonialism and German colonial advocacy adopted by Hitler and the Nazi regime. In some ways, it is conceivable that the Nazis would have been ardent colonial enthusiasts and it is somewhat surprising that they were not more sympathetic to the German colonial movement. As Gerhard Weinberg has made clear, Hitler and the Nazis did have plans for total conquest of the “world artichoke from the inside, leaf by leaf” in a series of wars “fought in isolation, one at a time, against enemies of

⁷¹² Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, 53-54.

[Germany's] choice and with victory in each facilitating victory in the next."⁷¹³ The Nazi war machine would not have ended with the subjugation of Europe, but would have continued until global domination had been achieved.⁷¹⁴ Throughout the Nazi era, the regime engaged in colonial planning focused mainly on what to do with the colonial holdings of the European imperial powers Germany defeated and/or intended to overpower.⁷¹⁵ Plans for resurrecting the scheme of a German central African colonial empire were still being drafted until autumn 1942.⁷¹⁶ The Nazis even courted German communities abroad, including those Germans who lived in the Mandates—particularly in Southwest Africa, with the hopes of using these *Auslandsdeutsche* as “fifth columns” during the war.⁷¹⁷ Nazi military officials also toyed with the idea of instigating insurrections by minority groups and colonial subjects to distract and weaken the United States, the Soviet Union, France, and Great Britain.⁷¹⁸

Yet, during the Nazi period, the primary focus was always on the reclamation of German and Habsburg territory in Europe, German domination of Western Europe, and an imagined, extensive German empire in Eastern Europe and Northern and Central Asia that would be built on the ashes of the Soviet Union. For Hitler, the *Lebensraum* and resources that were needed to solidify the supremacy of the German *Volk* and position it for later global domination were to be found in eastward expansion, not in Africa or the

⁷¹³ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22.

⁷¹⁴ For more on Hitler's global ambitions, see Norman J.W. Goda, *Tomorrow the World: Hitler, Northwest Africa and the Path Toward America* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998). See also Kundrus, “How Imperial Was the Third Reich?”

⁷¹⁵ Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, 137-184.

⁷¹⁶ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 71.

⁷¹⁷ Cockram, *Southwest African Mandate*, 180-192; Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 166-179.

⁷¹⁸ Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 324-345, 493, 641; Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 98-100, 109, 465, 576-595.

Pacific.⁷¹⁹ Whereas the German colonial movement placed primacy on colonial restitution and the creation of a new colonial policy for Germany, overseas possessions were more of an afterthought for the Nazis.

In addition to differences with the Nazis on the prioritization of overseas colonization for Germany, the German colonial lobbyists faced ever-increasing government control of their clubs and organizations in line with the Nazi policy of “coordination.”⁷²⁰ In 1936, the German Colonial Society, the Imperial Working Group on the Colonies, and the Women’s League, along with several other colonialist organizations, were absorbed into the Nazi Party’s *Reichskolonialbund* (Reich Colonial League).⁷²¹ The German colonial lobbies were renamed, made answerable to the Nazi Party, repurposed and, when necessary, censored to suit the needs of and support the propaganda and policies of the Nazi regime in a fashion similar to how the Nazis took over the administration of other German interest groups, lobbies, charities, and welfare institutions in the 1930s.⁷²² Some colonial lobbyists were convinced Nazis and had joined early on.⁷²³ Most, however, did not join until 1933. Heinrich Schnee, for example, joined the NSDAP in 1933 shortly after his return from service on the League’s Manchurian Commission.⁷²⁴ Schnee sought membership in the Nazi Party in an opportunistic fashion, hoping for a stronger colonial policy from the new regime if he and other Colonial Germans met it halfway. Although Schnee and other leaders of the

⁷¹⁹ Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 4th ed. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012), 227-231; Winfried Speitkamp, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2014), 171-173; Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 69-72; Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 189-196.

⁷²⁰ For more on “coordination” (*Gleichschaltung*), see Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience*, 72-76 and Evans, *The Third Reich in Power, 1933-1939*, 14.

⁷²¹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 43; Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 180-200.

⁷²² Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*, 180-200; Burleigh, *The Third Reich. A New History*, 219-238.

⁷²³ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 182.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, 182-183. For more on Schnee’s role in the Manchurian Commission, see Chapter 6.

colonial lobbies had tried to cultivate a relationship with the Nazis before their seizure of power, even flirting with closer ties as early as 1928, in the end, they would be disappointed.⁷²⁵ All hopes of colonialists regaining the overseas empire through a working relationship with the Nazis died when Hitler ordered the immediate termination of all colonialist activities on 13 January 1943.⁷²⁶

The Nazi state did not shun Germany's colonial past in the construction of their propaganda and doctrines. The Nazis appropriated Germany's colonial heritage, but on their own terms and with their own ideological twists, often in conflict with the worldviews of Colonial Germans who had lived the colonial experience. Britta Schilling has effectively demonstrated how the Nazis modified Germany's colonial legacy to suit their own agenda, particularly in the realm of public education. In her analysis of schoolbooks and educational policy regarding colonial history in Weimar Germany and the later Nazi state, Schilling outlined distinct editorial and pedagogical shifts in the presentation of material on German colonialism.⁷²⁷ Whereas the Weimar era textbooks had edited out instances of colonial violence, such as the punitive campaigns against the Herero in 1904-1907 and the brutal suppression of the Maji-Maji rebellion from 1905-1907, the Nazis embraced German colonial violence. In Nazi era textbooks, the taboo topic was transformed into heroic narratives of German colonial troops engaged in "humane" wars who should be honored for their military service to the Fatherland.⁷²⁸ While Weimar-era lessons vociferously denied Germany's "colonial guilt" and focused on teaching students that Germans had been virtuous colonialists by liberal imperial

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 180-183.

⁷²⁶ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 71; Hildebrand, *Vom Reich zum Weltreich*, 36.

⁷²⁷ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 72-89.

⁷²⁸ Ibid., 81, 84-85.

standards and had the right to demand the restoration of the colonies, Nazi pedagogy on the history of the colonies instead focused on great man narratives to teach the “Nordic” “racial” qualities of leadership and militarism. Figures like Carl Peters, ostracized from the Weimar narratives of German colonialism which sought to whitewash the colonial legacy, were transformed into heroes by the Nazis to emphasize their sacrifice to Germany’s advancement.⁷²⁹ Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, a hero in the Weimar era as well for holding out to the last days of the war in his guerrilla campaign in East Africa, was heralded in the Nazi period not only for his military prowess, but also for espousing the qualities of intelligence, organization, and inspiring his men to follow orders without question.⁷³⁰ The Nazis engaged in similar shifts in presentation in other propagandist media as well, most famously in Herbert Selpin’s 1941 film *Carl Peters*, in which the violent *Reichskommissar* was portrayed instead as a martyred proto-Hitlerian who pursued a course of righteous territorial conquest that was disdained by the Jewish parliamentarians in Germany who pilloried Peters into exile.⁷³¹

Colonial Germans continued to adapt to their new circumstances and new political languages that emerged in subsequent administrations, but the shift from the interwar discourse of imperial internationalism to the language and worldview of the Nazi state proved more difficult than the previous transition from imperialism to internationalism. Several German colonialist thinkers and actors had invested substantially into Wilsonian and internationalist discourses on empire and nationhood during the Weimar era, vilified as *Systemzeit* by the Nazis. Colonial German arguments

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 83-87.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., 86-89.

⁷³¹ Herbert Selpin, dir., *Carl Peters* (Bavaria Filmkunst, 1941).

for colonial restitution or equal rights to and treatment in Mandated territories founded on principles of fair trade, good colonial governance and the civilizing mission or appeals to the international sovereignty and oversight of the League of Nations had garnered some sympathy and partial acceptance in the international politics of the interwar period. Those same arguments became a liability in Hitler's totalitarian state, where ultranationalism and the *Führerprinzip* were the prevailing discourses on sovereignty and expansion was justified by the need for resources and space for extension of an Aryan race instead of a European-wide duty to uplift supposedly backward societies culturally, technologically, and commercially.

Those colonial officials who did attempt to adapt to the language of the Nazis and opportunistically cater to the new regime, such as Schnee, were unable to shed completely their nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mindsets on the purpose and utility of overseas imperialism and found they had become fossilized relics of a lost age of German imperialism, put on display when useful for propaganda purposes but left on the outside looking in when expansionist policies were crafted.⁷³² Heinrich Schnee's association with the Nazis, however one-sided, backfired on him later as well when Schnee once more tried to adapt to a new world order. After the war, Schnee failed to convince his accusers that he was not an ardent Nazi during his denazification trial and was barred from continuing his career in government or as a writer and expert on colonialism.⁷³³ Some, like Kastl, had tried to keep their heads low and continue on in the Third Reich, but still found themselves at odds with the Nazis. Because he was suspected

⁷³² Guettel, *German Expansionism*, 187-189.

⁷³³ Eric Kurlander, *Living with Hitler: Liberal Democrats in the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 167. Schnee died in an automobile accident in 1949.

of having Jewish ancestry, Kastl was removed from his position as President of the *Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie* in April 1933.⁷³⁴ Despite the end of this phase of his career, Kastl managed to weather the regime, serving as a jurist on the Berlin circuit court, engaging in occasional anti-Nazi corporate sabotage and espionage, and adapting again to a new government and political discourse.⁷³⁵ After the war, Kastl testified against the Nazis at Nuremberg as an expert witness during the IG Farben Trial in 1948. He reprised his role as a diplomat as part of the German delegation for the 1952-1953 multi-national talks that resulted in London Agreement on German External Debts.⁷³⁶ Others abandoned adaptation all together. Wilhelm Solf, a political moderate, became an outspoken opponent of the Nazis. After his death in 1936, Solf's wife, Johanna, and their adopted Samoan daughter, Lagi, continued to engage in anti-Nazi activities until they were arrested by the Gestapo and interred in Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1944.⁷³⁷

German settlers also had a less than perfectly amicable relationship with the Nazi state. Former settlers and their memoirs shared some common ground with Nazi ideology, particularly in placing emphasis on Teutonic virtues of diligence and hard-work and the argument that these traits could be transplanted to new areas as Germans expanded across the globe. Sophie Uhde, a repatriated settler from Southwest Africa, even dedicated her memoir to the *Führer* and gave Adolf Hitler a signed copy.⁷³⁸ As mentioned earlier, the Nazis were also keen on courting German settlers who remained

⁷³⁴ Daniela Kahn, *Die Steuerung der Wirtschaft durch Recht im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland: das Beispiel der Reichsgruppe Industrie* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006), 150, 511.

⁷³⁵ Ibid., 511; S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past: 1945-1955* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 224.

⁷³⁶ Kahn, *Die Steuerung der Wirtschaft durch Recht im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*, 150, 511.

⁷³⁷ Hempenstall and Mochida, *The Lost Man: Wilhelm Solf in German History*, 1, 206-208, 220-239.

⁷³⁸ Sophie von Uhde and Franz von Epp, *Deutsche unterm Kreuz des Südens. Bei den Kolonialsiedlern in Südwest und Ostafrika* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1934). The signed copy, along with several other pieces from Hitler's personal library, can be found at the Library of Congress.

abroad as potential “fifth column” agents to be used against the Allied powers. A chapter of the NSDAP was even founded in Southwest Africa in 1932.⁷³⁹

German settlers’ presentations of the colonial *Heimat* as distinct from and superior to the European homeland, however, conflicted with Nazi ideology, which ranked the localized identity and loyalty of the *Heimat* as less important than a racially-based, uniform and geographically all-encompassing community of the *Volk*.⁷⁴⁰ There was also a fair amount of animosity against the Nazi party among those Germans in the former colonies being courted as “fifth columns.” In Southwest Africa, for example, Germans abroad found themselves divided—largely along generational lines—over the Nazi platform of expansionism, centralized control, and aggression as a means for colonial restitution. Younger Southwest African Germans and new arrivals to the Mandate wanted fast-paced progress and an immediate return of the colony to German rule and were more likely to accept the Nazi program. Older Southwest African Germans and long-term residents, though in many cases sympathetic to the racial thinking of the NSDAP, preferred a slower, more pragmatic pace for change and were concerned that Nazi bellicosity would jeopardize all their work towards self-rule and a workable governing relationship with South African Afrikaners.⁷⁴¹ The result was ongoing tension between Nazi Foreign Office and propaganda agents, their affiliates in the German community in the Mandate, and outspoken Southwest African Germans opposed to the

⁷³⁹ Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 166.

⁷⁴⁰ For more on Nazi views on *Heimat*, see Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1990), 198-217.

⁷⁴¹ Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad*, 167-170.

NSDAP. These political hostilities often became personalized, with smear campaigns directed at individuals from both sides.⁷⁴²

The Persistence of Empire:

Internationalism, Imperial Thinking, and Twentieth Century Europe

Chamberlain's offer of a Mandate to Hitler at Munich in 1938 also demonstrates the persistence of the types of imperial thinking that had contributed to the foundation of the League of Nations and its Mandate System. First, European statesmen continued to view colonial expansion as an alternative to war and territorial conflicts in Europe. Munich 1938 was not the first time a colony had been proffered in the stead of border changes in Europe nor was it the last. European diplomats had routinely bartered colonies to restore or preserve stability and political boundaries on the continent. The French, for example, had unsuccessfully offered Bismarck a colony in hopes that the Germans would accept an overseas territory in place of Alsace-Lorraine at the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.⁷⁴³ Following the First World War, which was seen by many as a war of imperial aggression, the prevailing view of the League of Nations' founding statesmen was that responsible colonial expansion was the way to maintain European peace. Harkening back to Bismarck's Berlin Conference of 1884 in practice if not in spirit, the idea was that if the Great Powers negotiated their colonial expansions in an equitable carving up of the globe, wars over imperial land-grabbing would come to an end.

⁷⁴² Ibid., 171-178.

⁷⁴³ Helmut Washausen, *Hamburg und die Kolonialpolitik des Deutschen Reiches: 1880-1890* (Hamburg: H. Christians, 1968), 21.

As was demonstrated in Chapter Two, Five, and Six, however, the international oversight of the Permanent Mandates Commission created a new wrinkle to the feasibility of “colony swapping” by creating a question of sovereignty which annexationists, like Smuts, detested. Unlike in previous centuries when a colony ceded to a victor was considered to be under the total control of its new imperial master, the territorial gain of a colony under League Mandate status came with strings attached in the form of international expectations and legal restrictions on the administrator’s authority. Perhaps the question of sovereignty and the expectation of international oversight is why Hitler—obsessed with the *Führerprinzip* and the idea of creating a totalitarian state under his personal authority—rejected the Mandate option at the Munich Conference and again in 1939 when the French and British once more offered Hitler a Mandate to avoid a potential German invasion of Poland.⁷⁴⁴

Second, the proffering of a Mandate to Hitler at Munich confirms that the concept of self-determination continued to be viewed as the unique privilege of European societies. No representatives from the indigenous populations of the Mandates suggested as alternatives to the cession of the Sudetenland had been consulted, let alone were present at the Munich Conference in 1938. Just as in the case of the Treaty of Versailles and the creation of the Mandates System, colonial subjects were not allowed a voice in determining their own fate as their homelands were traded between European powers as diplomatic and economic bargaining chips. Primacy continued to be given to the independence of European populations in Czechoslovakia and Poland over that of populations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The notion of self-rule for these territories was not even considered. Although a few Mandates—such as Iraq—would be given the

⁷⁴⁴ Schmoke, *Dream of Empire*, 127-128.

chance at independence during the interwar period, albeit under questionable circumstances, many remained under European administration for the majority of the twentieth century.

Even after the Second World War, Western thinkers and statesmen continued to believe that colonial holdings were not yet ready for self-governance. Rather than disbanding the Mandates System when the League of Nations was dismantled, it was given new birth in the League's successor, the United Nations. In 1945, Chapters XII and XIII of the United Nations Charter placed the former Mandates and several European colonies under the UN Trusteeship Council so that their "tutelage" towards democracy could continue under European administration.⁷⁴⁵ Borrowing heavily from the language of the League of Nations Charter's outline for the Mandates System, the drafters of the United Nations Charter once again assigned the role of oversight to an international governing body intended to ensure that these "trust territories" were managed in the supposed interests of their inhabitants and that international peace and stability were preserved.⁷⁴⁶ The Trusteeship Council, as Gordon W. Morrell has argued, was intended to critique and reform imperialism like its predecessor the Mandates Commission.⁷⁴⁷ Yet, its ideological foundations in liberal imperialism and imperial internationalism also meant that the Trusteeship Council facilitated the preservation of the imperial world order well into the final years of the twentieth century. It took three decades of diplomatic wrangling and colonial wars for independence before most of the populations under the

⁷⁴⁵ Gordon W. Morrell, "A Higher Stage of Imperialism? The Big Three, the UN Trusteeship Council and the Early Cold War," in *Imperialism on Trial: International Oversight of Colonial Rule in Historical Perspective*, ed. R.M. Douglas, Michael D. Callahan, and Elizabeth Bishop, 111–138.

⁷⁴⁶ Text of the UN Charter found in appendix in R.M. Douglas, Michael D. Callahan, and Elizabeth Bishop, eds., *Imperialism on Trial*, 169-173.

⁷⁴⁷ Morrell, "A Higher Stage of Imperialism?" 111-131.

control of European empires gained political autonomy. The UN did not release its last trust territory, Palau, until 1994.⁷⁴⁸

New or Recycled International Political Languages?

Even with the end of the Trusteeship Council, however, imperial internationalism persists in other ways. Aside from holdovers of imperial thought in diplomacy and statesmanship as seen at Munich, the imperial internationalism of the League of Nations had an additional legacy: the related political languages of international modernization and globalization such as “developmentalism,” “human rights” and “humanitarianism.” These languages were intended by those who participated in their creation as a means to discuss and find solutions for global societal and economic issues in both erstwhile or declining imperial metropolises and their former colonies, problems that were the result of empire, racial tensions, and war. As Lora Wildenthal has argued regarding the international political language of “human rights,” these political languages could be viewed as part of a larger “project of reform.”⁷⁴⁹

Project of reform or no, these political discourses cannot deny their imperial roots. As I have demonstrated in Chapters One, Five and Six, the imperial internationalism of the League and its ongoing debates over what constituted “good colonial governance,” humane treatment of indigenous populations, and which areas of administration fell under international sovereignty instead of imperial or national state control also comprised part of a “project of reform.” The discussions held in Geneva—both in the League Council and the PMC—and in the global public sphere of the interwar period to which the former

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 130-131; Mazower, *Governing the World*, 252-254.

⁷⁴⁹ Lora Wildenthal, *The Language of Human Rights in West Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 4-16.

Allies and Colonial Germans alike contributed were not meant to destroy imperialism, but to modify and perfect the European “civilizing mission” and reconcile competing visions of its goals, methods, and participants.

Far from abandoning the “civilizing mission” in the wake of the Second World War’s destruction, European and American statesmen and intellectuals once again retooled it. European imperialism faced renewed condemnation for its violent methods from anti-colonial movements and general public opinion. Ghana’s declaration of independence in March 1957 and the Algerian War of 1954-1962 prompted a cascade of colonial revolutions against European rule throughout much of Africa.⁷⁵⁰ The stronger anti-colonial language espoused by these liberation movements not only contributed to wars of liberation, but added fuel to student protests in the former metropole against imperialism and other forms of oppression throughout the 1960s.⁷⁵¹ The emergence of two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—vying for global spheres of influence launched the Cold War and an ideological conflict, the timing of which coincided with increasingly fervent demands from the colonized peoples of the world for self-determination and independence. As more and more colonies broke away from their imperial masters in the latter half of the twentieth century, European, American and Soviet thinkers and politicians needed to devise new ways to court newly independent states and justify continued economic, social, and political involvement—and even interference—in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific in order to maintain their influence in the

⁷⁵⁰Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 90-91; Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 1-16.

⁷⁵¹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 133-154; Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front. Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 1-77, 170-200; Timothy Scott Brown, *West German and the Global Sixties. The Anti-authoritarian Revolt, 1962-1978* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 23-24, 39, 111-119, 281, 341, 367. See also Belinda Davis, ed., *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

erstwhile colonial world. Meanwhile, the governments of the newly independent colonies were faced with reconfiguring their international relationships and economic partnerships. During the Cold War, more often than not this came to mean choosing an affiliation with either the United States and Western Europe or the Soviet Union and its allies.⁷⁵²

International political languages such as “development policy,” “humanitarianism,” and “human rights” were not simply crass, calculated schemes to preserve imperial rule. They were also intended to address economic and social problems—both real and perceived—faced by minority groups in the former metropolises and the inhabitants of the newly independent colonies. Genuine compassion and a desire to right the wrongs of imperialism and/or inequity can be found among many of the workers and thinkers participating in several of these international movements to assist communities in need across the globe. In part, this is why discourses such as “humanitarianism” and “human rights” survived past the Cold War.⁷⁵³ Yet, languages of aid and reform continue to be founded upon preconceived notions from the imperial period about minorities and the peoples of Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Similarly to the debates over “good colonial governance” in the League’s PMC, once again the former colonial world was measured against the meter-stick of stadial civilizational

⁷⁵² Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 91; Robert D. Grey, “The Soviet Presence in Africa: An Analysis of Goals,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 22, 3 (1986): 511–527; Joseph L. Noguee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1992); Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid. The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992); Elizabeth Schmidt, “Cold War in Guinea: The Rassemblement Democratique Africain and the Struggle Over Communism, 1950-1958,” *Journal of African History* 48, 1 (2007): 95–121; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Alessandro Iandolo, “The Rise and Fall of the ‘Soviet Model of Development’ in West Africa, 1957-1964,” *Cold War History* 12, 4 (2012): 683–704. See also Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 84-119.

⁷⁵³ Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, 1-43, 176-230.

development. Africa, Eastern Europe, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East were once more portrayed as places of ongoing violence and poverty.

The bloodshed, hunger, illness, and unemployment were not entirely blamed on the imperial powers, which had, as Frederick Cooper puts it, “abdicated responsibility” for these areas.⁷⁵⁴ Instead, many of the reasons adopted by international political languages of reform to explain war, genocide, disease and scarcity in these regions consisted of assumptions and trite polemics about the inability of these peoples to establish “stable” democratic or socialist governments, the economic backwardness of these regions, and/or supposedly ancient racial or religious hatreds that, in many cases, had actually been fostered by European colonial powers. The solutions proposed by Non-Governmental Organizations, Western governments, pundits, and, in some cases, even academics have been nearly identical to the solutions advocated by imperial thinkers and reformers: uplift these societies by supplying them with Western technology, Western education, and Western government.⁷⁵⁵ The “civilizing mission” was rebranded into the “modernizing mission” aimed at culturally, technologically, and financially binding the

⁷⁵⁴ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society*, 1-20, 455-472.

⁷⁵⁵ Criticism of these imperial roots of humanitarianism, modernity, and developmental schemes can be found in Postcolonial and Subaltern scholarship, such as Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity. Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993). For specific criticisms of NGO's, see Terje Tvedt, *Angels of Mercy or Development Diplomats? NGOs and Foreign Aid* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998); Steven Robins, “Talking in Tongues: Consultants, Anthropology, and Indigenous People,” in *Expert Knowledge: First World Peoples, Consultancy and Anthropology*, ed. Barry Morris and Rohan Bastin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 89–101; Lamia Karim, “Democratizing Bangladesh: State, NGOs, and Militant Islam,” *Cultural Dynamics* 16, 2–3 (October 2004): 291–318; Lamia Karim, “Demystifying Micro-credit: Grameen Bank, NGOs, and Neoliberalism in Bangladesh,” *Cultural Dynamics* 21, 1 (Spring 2008): 5–29; Lamia Karim, *Microfinance and its Discontents. Women in Debt in Bangladesh* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 1-34, 133-162; Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (New York: Verso, 2006), 70-79, 154, 184; Hans Holmén, *Snakes in Paradise: NGOs and the Aid Industry in Africa* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2010).

former colonies to the global community as defined by the West through assimilation via humanitarian aid and financial regulation.

Meanwhile, during the Cold War, a similar set of arguments developed on the Soviet side of international discourse surrounding the new postcolonial states. Socialist and Communist thinkers sought to create a sense of international solidarity across a global working class, which included colonized subjects, against imperialism and capitalism.⁷⁵⁶ Despite support from the Soviet Union and its allies for colonial revolts and independence movements, however, there was still a progressivist discourse about how best to foster “social revolution” in the postcolonial world. Just as Western thinkers outlined a “program” of modernization built upon Western technological, cultural, and political values, socialist and Communist theorists postulated that the “Third World” could only complete the process of “social revolution” if certain economic and political preconditions were met and the fledgling states were “tutored” in an act of socialist solidarity towards Marxist ideals and statecraft of a sort that were themselves based upon Western scientific ideals and technology.⁷⁵⁷

Ongoing Participation: Germans and International Political Languages

Germans remained adaptive and active contributors to and critics of the ideological evolution of imperial internationalism throughout the twentieth century. The Cold War facilitated the ongoing participation of Colonial Germans and metropolitan

⁷⁵⁶Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 94; Grey, “The Soviet Presence in Africa”; Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid*; Schmidt, “Cold War in Guinea”; Iandolo, “The Rise and Fall of the ‘Soviet Model of Development’ in West Africa, 1957-1964.”

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid. 94; G.M. Winrow, *The Foreign Policy of the GDR in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 40-63; Ernst Hillebrand, *Das Afrika-Engagement der DDR* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1987), 55.

Germans in Europe's former colonies. Following the Second World War, the memory of Germany's colonial history was overshadowed by the atrocities and war crimes of Germany's more recent Nazi past.⁷⁵⁸ Although it might seem logical that the Allied Powers would have again attempted to ostracize Germany from global politics and European and American involvement in the then gradually decolonizing world as their predecessors had tried to do in 1919, the opposite proved true. The Allied Powers had divided Germany into occupation zones prior to the falling out that sparked the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. In 1949, the United States, Britain and France agreed to merge their occupation zones to found the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, known as West Germany). That same year, the Soviet Union in turn encouraged its occupation zone to create the German Democratic Republic (GDR, *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, known as East Germany). Germany quickly became the frontline of the Cold War in Europe and a global symbol of the ideological conflict between the world's superpowers. Both superpowers actively supported the nascent German states they recognized as the FRG and GDR in building new international relationships, including economic, diplomatic, and social ties with colonial nations—particularly those in Africa—seeking and achieving liberation from formal imperial rule.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁸Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 90-91.

⁷⁵⁹ William Glenn Gray, *Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 87-115; Hubertus Büschel, "In Afrika helfen: akteure westdeutscher 'Entwicklungshilfe' und ostdeutscher 'Solidarität,' 1955-1975," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 48 (January 2008): 333-365; Hubertus Büschel, *Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe. Deutsche Entwicklungsarbeit in Afrika, 1960-1975* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2014); Brigitte Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era: The Two Germanies and sub-Saharan Africa, 1960-1985* (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 1995).

The Foreign Office of West Germany centered its new *Afrikapolitik* on foreign aid. In conjunction with the European Economic Community and the United States, the FRG pursued a “watering can principle” of distributing aid indiscriminately across several African nations in an effort to preserve “global security on Western terms” by using financial assistance to halt the spread of communism and Soviet influence in postcolonial states.⁷⁶⁰ The Foreign Office also recycled and retooled colonial organizations. The old colonial lobbies were transformed into a Foreign Office initiative as the German Africa Society (*Deutsche Afrika-Gesellschaft, DAG*). Founded in 1956, the purpose of the *DAG* was to publicize German-African relations and make Germans aware of African issues and news, much like its predecessors the German Colonial Society and *KoRAG* but without the end goal of demanding a colonial policy.⁷⁶¹ The leadership and membership of the *DAG*, just like the colonial lobbies of the imperial and interwar periods, was largely comprised of the industrial and financial elite.

In the *DAG* and the general government of the Federal Republic, there was also a fair amount of continuity of staff and supporters from the old colonial lobbies. Two prominent examples include Hjalmar Schacht and Konrad Adenauer. Hjalmar Schacht, a colonial revisionist, had been head of the *Reichsbank* during the Weimar Era and had been the Economics Minister of the Nazi state and a defendant at Nuremberg in 1945. He remained a prominent figure in West Germany’s involvement in the postcolonial world. Schacht was involved with the *DAG*, and served as a consultant to governments of

⁷⁶⁰ Gray, *Germany’s Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969*, 102-107; Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era*, 46-66, 94-122, 155-181; Büschel, *Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe. Deutsche Entwicklungsarbeit in Afrika, 1960-1975*, 11-40, 51-67, 79-84, 116-178; Büschel, “In Afrika helfen: akteure westdeutscher ‘Entwicklungshilfe’ und ostdeutscher ‘Solidarität,’ 1955-1975.”

⁷⁶¹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 92-93.

developing countries on economic development.⁷⁶² Konrad Adenauer, West Germany's Conservative Chancellor from 1949 until 1963, had been a member of the German Colonial Society.⁷⁶³

Africa and the postcolonial world also played a prominent role in the foreign policy of the East German government.⁷⁶⁴ This was propelled not only by the GDR's strong ties with the Soviet Union, which viewed postcolonial states as an opportunity to expand its sphere of influence, but also from a longer history of German socialist and communist thinking that called for solidarity with colonized subjects as a global community of proletarians united against imperialism. In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, the German Communist Party (*KPD*), borrowed heavily from arguments made by former Colonial Officials such as Heinrich Schnee, but made a different use of Germany's portrayal as a victim. German Communists argued that Germany had become a new type of colony subjected to economic and social exploitation by Great Britain and France. Like the colonial officials, their aim was to court colonies of the Western powers with an anti-imperial rhetoric that emphasized Germany's common plight with African and Asian groups that had been denied self-determination and autonomy. Unlike former colonial officials, whose objective was to ensure Germany's continued importance in imperial ventures as a broker between Mandates and their holders, the *KPD* blended these

⁷⁶² Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 92; Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur: Deutsche Planungen für die Erschließung Afrikas, 1880-1960* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 362-367.

⁷⁶³ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945*, 183.

⁷⁶⁴ Brigitte Schulz, "The German Democratic Republic and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Limits of East South Economic Relations," in *The Soviet Bloc and the Third World. The Political Economy of East-South Relations*, ed. William W. Hansen (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 213-230; Ulrich van der Heyden, *GDR International Development Policy Involvement. Doctrine and Strategies Between Illusions and Reality, 1960-1990. The Example of (South) Africa* (Berlin: LIT-Verlag, 2013), 1-87.

complaints about Germany's predicament with Leninism in an effort to situate Germany as a leading power in a global anti-imperial revolution of the proletariat.⁷⁶⁵

The ruling party of the German Democratic Republic, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED*) resurrected part of the *KPD*'s argument and insisted that East Germany could serve as a leader and supporter to postcolonial states in the coming anti-imperialist global social revolution.⁷⁶⁶ The GDR founded the German-African Society of the German Democratic Republic (*Deutsch-Afrikanische Gesellschaft der DDR*) in 1961 as a mirror of the West German *DAG*. The organization, run by East German academics and experts on African studies, was housed at the Karl-Marx-Universität in Leipzig as an educational foundation. Those who took part in its five year study program specialized in "African Culture, economics, language, history and politics" as well as a "solid and wide-ranging education in Marxism-Leninism."⁷⁶⁷ The GDR outlined its official position on aiding postcolonial states in the 1974 version of its constitution, stating that the "GDR supports those states and peoples who are struggling against imperialism and its colonial regimes, and for national freedom and independence in their struggle for social progress."⁷⁶⁸ Building off of Soviet ideology that the developing world needed to progress through certain economic preconditions to realize social revolution, East German politicians and academics portrayed the German Democratic Republic as a model of "actual existing socialism" which had a duty to help

⁷⁶⁵Conan Fischer, *The German Communists and the Rise of Nazism* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 27, 32-38, 53, 71.

⁷⁶⁶Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era*, 12-45.

⁷⁶⁷Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 95.

⁷⁶⁸Ibid., 94; Hillebrand, *Das Afrika-Engagement der DDR*, 54-56.

postcolonial states “advance” past colonial, subsistence-level economies and create Marxist societies.⁷⁶⁹

Even after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Germans continued to engage with international discourses on imperialism and development and participate in social and political interventions in Europe’s former colonies. The unified Federal Republic of Germany contributed troops and military support to several United Nations peacekeeping and aid missions in Africa and the Balkans throughout the 1990s and early twenty-first century. This included the United Nations operation in Somalia in the early 1990s. Bodo Kirchoff, a German author, went to Somalia to write an account of German participation in the UN’s mission there.⁷⁷⁰ His published travel diary, the tellingly titled *Herrenmenschlichkeit (Humanity of the Masters*, 1994), recounts his experiences. In it, he critiques the humanitarian intervention as futile and argues that Germans, through involvement in Somalia, “oppressed” the Somalis with their “obsession with life.”⁷⁷¹ Nina Berman has noted that Kirchoff’s criticism of the imperial nature of the humanitarian mission in Somalia ignores the fact that the Somalis asked for help and that Kirchoff’s argument is itself ironically rooted in colonial stereotypes of bell-jar imperialists.⁷⁷² Berman contends that Kirchoff casts Somalis into the mold of ‘noble savages’ living in a violent society that has a

⁷⁶⁹ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, 94; Schulz, “The German Democratic Republic and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Limits of East South Economic Relations”; Schulz, *Development Policy in the Cold War Era*, 12-45, 67-93, 123-154; van der Heyden, *GDR International Development Policy Involvement*, 45-53, 65-98, 148-187.

⁷⁷⁰ Nina Berman, *Impossible Missions? German Economic, Military and Humanitarian Efforts in Africa* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 139-145.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, 145-173.

comfortable camaraderie with death that should remain untouched by Western influence.⁷⁷³

German engagement with the postcolonial world in the late twentieth-century was, however, not limited to participation in international task forces, political relations, or academic debates. Everyday individuals also fostered an ongoing liaison between Germany and Europe's former colonies. Germans, like other Europeans, routinely visit Africa, Asia, and the Pacific as tourists. As with travelers from other European metropolises, tourism creates an ongoing rapport between Germany and the former colonial world as well as fostering continued fantasies of the exotic in travel writings and film.⁷⁷⁴ In addition to sightseeing, Berman has outlined how several Germans who are repeat vacationers to Kenya transform into aid workers, engaging in humanitarian missions. Some participate in medical assistance programs, while others organize nutritional and financial assistance efforts, and still others endow scholarships and found educational centers for Africans.⁷⁷⁵

Far from disengaging from Europe's former colonies after the loss of their own empire nearly a century ago, Germans remain adaptive participants in social and economic interventions across the globe. The case of Colonial German involvement in the League of Nations, the Mandates System, international discourses on imperialism and nationalism, and memorializations of colonialism and thus forms a small part of two much larger stories. First, there is the history of how Europeans adjusted to and continue to address the loss of empire. Colonial Germans were, in many ways, the first Europeans

⁷⁷³ Ibid., 161-173.

⁷⁷⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 224-243.

⁷⁷⁵ Berman, *Impossible Missions?*, 175-212.

in the twentieth century to face this dilemma and, for good or ill, they found new ways to maintain their involvement in the European civilizing mission. Their dogged persistence and malleability should be noted and scholars should make use of this test case of the “postcolonial European” to see what their experiences can tell us about the ongoing process of other Europeans adapting their imperial thought and careers into something new—be it constructive or destructive—the further in time we digress from the end of formal empire. Second, Colonial German participation in the League and its Mandates Commission suggests that scholars should stop thinking about imperial histories and continuities in terms of a single metropole or national actor and instead consider how those case studies relate to the larger-scale history of European imperialism as a transnational whole. European imperialism was, from its inception, a multinational political language, cultural framework and system of rule. The same is true of the “projects of reform” that were and are its intellectual heirs. These programs were and, in some cases, continue to be part of discussions had by a global community, whether they were efforts to preserve the geopolitics of colonial rule while curbing its excesses as was the case with the League’s imperial internationalism, or attempts to right the wrongs and inequities of imperialism, such as humanitarian missions and human rights advocacy. The continuity of imperial thought is neither restricted to one nation in a vacuum as it progresses through history nor is it a direct tessellation of ideas from the preceding period into the next. The political languages of imperialism continue to evolve and are constantly adapted to suit new circumstances. Remnants of imperialism are reformed as building blocks in international political languages. These discussions and “projects of reform” are being held in an increasingly global public sphere. Therefore, it is impossible

to completely isolate or ostracize groups that are at one time or another deemed “undesirable” or “belligerent” from contributing—for better or worse—to the ongoing modification of these discourses.

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