

# **Germany's Introspective Wars**

Colonial and Domestic Conflict in the German Press' Discourse on Race  
1904-1907

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Andrew Deas

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## ABSTRACT

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Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, Massachusetts

By Andrew Deas

German imperialism has recently drawn the attention of many scholars, making the topic one of increasing relevance in academic inquiry. Working from the assumption of several recent German historians that racial language was laden with alternative meanings and influenced by various non-racial discourses, this study seeks to identify some of the conversations undergirding racial language in the press. Reading closely the coverage of Germany's two most significant colonial wars—the Herero uprising in German South West Africa and the Maji-Maji War in German East Africa—from a broad ideological and geographic sample of popular newspapers, I arrived at two conclusions. First, racial language was evident throughout press coverage of colonial conflict. Second, this language was inextricably linked with alternative conversations concerning politics and society in Germany itself. The colonies and colonial war offered Germans another way to discuss domestic issues. In this way racial language, whether overt or not, was rarely just about race, but it helped Germans discuss their own society and several issues entirely unrelated to race.

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As debate in Europe over the entrance of Turkey into the European fold continues unabated, the argument has often become tainted by the continent's legacy of racism. Outspoken opponents of the effort to expand the European Union have been accused of harboring a "clash of civilizations"<sup>1</sup> mentality, drawing cries of racial insularity—widely regarded as a taboo worldview for most in Europe. These contemporary fears of Turkish membership in the European Union, however, reflect a variety of other concerns—racial, ethnic, and cultural, as well as social concerns. Similarly, demographic data about Europe's "aging" has elicited contradicting responses, from a racist desire to limit immigrants to fears over social and economic decline. Europe continues to suffer from its racial pasts; the elegies lamenting modern racism echo through the halls of European parliaments. Perhaps no country suffers this more than Germany, for which the Holocaust represents the culmination of a century of racism. Many scholars of European and German racism study the phenomenon as a progression toward the atrocious designs of Nazi Germany. Yet this kind of study is too convenient; teleological explanations always are. Keeping in mind the intersectionalities of race, politics, and society, this study seeks to complicate this *Sonderweg* of racism by suggesting that publicly expressed racism in the press was rarely motivated purely by race.

This study began as an attempt to find the impact of colonial conflict on German notions of race. It sought to look at an ideological, political and geographical spread of news media to accomplish this. The scope of this project, however, proved too vast to

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Browne, "Turkey left out in cold as Austria digs in heels over EU entry talks," *The Times* October 3, 2005.

give the topic justice. In any case, the research was not wasted. In looking at the press and the predictable language the press used to refer to the German colonies' native inhabitants, I found that these passages were laden with other concerns including the political, national, and social anxieties that manifest through the racial language of the press. This language surrounded news coming from Germany's colonies, specifically German East Africa and German South West Africa. Closely reading this press coverage from the beginning of each conflict and the most salient event in each one led to the conclusion racial language had greater meaning than the chauvinist veneer suggested. Obviously, these underlying meanings had political and ideological implications. Thus, the newspapers consulted—the *Dresdner Journal*, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Coburger Zeitung*, and the *Berliner Volksblatt: Vorwärts*—constituted a broad spectrum of political persuasion and geographical spread. Reading closely into these months of newspapers offered a significant amount of information, rhetoric and ideology. It also offered insight into the underlying rhetoric of race. This study fills a significant hole in the scholarship on German colonialism in two ways.

German colonialism has only recently become a major focus of contemporary research in German historical scholarship. It was initially viewed as being of minimal significance because it comprised only three unspectacular decades at the turn of the twentieth century. Not only was it not an important aspect of German history, it was similarly insignificant in comparison to the larger, more enduring colonial holdings of Britain and France, and prior to that, Spain and Portugal. Those few scholars that did engage with the subject tended to focus on the political and diplomatic aspects of colonial acquisition. Dawson suggested that the German rivalry in foreign and diplomatic issues with England

was the catalyst to colonialism—it was tied to challenges on other geopolitical fronts. Hans-Ulrich Wehler averred that Bismarckian colonialism was a reaction to internal pressures and reluctance to reforms rather than a focused foreign action (Außenpolitik als Innenpolitik),<sup>2</sup> but others have suggested that colonial policy was hardly central to Bismarck’s foreign stance, let alone his domestic designs. Still, the geopolitical impacts—shifting alliances and colonial maneuvering—of the entrance of Germany into the colonial competition were realized only by a few. The story of Germany’s colonial past has changed considerably in the past hundred years. Of late, although a major figure, Bismarck has taken a back seat to nationalism, capitalism, and pressure groups in Germany’s colonial history. Most scholarship, as a result, has tended to focus on the composition, organization, and other quantifiable aspects of the colonial authorities and the colonists.<sup>3</sup> This, however, was soon to change.

With the cultural turn of the eighties and the “colonial turn” of the nineties, German imperialism caught the attention of many important scholars. Many of their newer scholarship considered the origins and the manifestations of the “colonial imagination.”<sup>4</sup> These cultural analyses of colonial literature, expositions of anthropological science, and intellectual histories tended to tiptoe around the actual experience of colonialism. Rather,

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<sup>2</sup> Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “Bismarck’s Imperialism 1862-1890,” *Past and Present* 48 (1970): 119-155. He also mentions this in the chapter on colonialism in his condensed look at Germany during the Second Reich, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> L. H. Guggan and Peter Duigan, *The Rulers of German Africa, 1884-1914*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977). These authors, in intricate charts and tables, quantify the German colonial experience. They look at the composition of the colonists themselves, examine the military make-up, and relate the economic realities of each of Germany’s African colonies, while devoting only a final chapter to the social changes experienced by the Africans. Even then, however, the economic aspects are central to the focus. Another one is Hausen, Karin. *Deutsche Kolonialherrschaft in Afrika. Wirtschaftsinteressen und Kolonialverwaltung in Kamerun vor 1914*. Zurich: Atlantis-Verlag, 1970. This book seeks to discover the means and methods of German rule in Cameroon.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Holub, for example, discusses Nietzsche’s desire for colonies in order to generate a European civilization in his essay “Nietzsche’s Colonialist Imagination: Nueva Germania, Good Europeanism, and Great Politics.”

they told the story of the periods preceding and following active colonialism and to deal almost exclusively with the colonists themselves, not the German nation at home. Some scholars have written about gender and heroism in the colonial context<sup>5</sup>; others have discussed racial perceptions in the colonies; and some have examined the fantastical Nazi desires to regain their former colonial holdings.<sup>6</sup> The field is rife with cultural analyses of racial and gender construction and the colonial project in the broader scope of a German mentality, but these are rarely connected to the political reality of Germany itself.<sup>7</sup>

Exceptional in this respect is the work of Isabel Hull, who seeks to establish the link between the colonial excesses of Germany and the impacts on Germany itself. In Hull's opinion the colonies became a proving ground for the programmatic militarism which manifested not only in both the eradication of the Herero people in South West Africa but also in the logic behind the Schlieffen Plan and Falkenhayn's plan to bleed the will out of the French during World War I. She argues that the colonies played a major role in the development of German politics and structures; however exaggerated, this has forced scholars to reconsider how colonialism impacted the metropole and how it affected Germany.<sup>8</sup> This study significantly suggested that, rather than being a mono-

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<sup>5</sup> Gesine Krueger writes about the experience of women during the war against the Herero in West Africa in 1904; Sara Lennox writes about gender and race with specific attention to colonial literature's admonition against miscegenation and to the un-feminizing process that takes place in the female colonial experience; Frederieke Eigler discusses similar trends but in an earlier period and using literature written by a woman, Freida von Bülow. Birthe Kundrus has also discussed women's colonial organizations in her chapter from *Kaiserreich Transnational*, entitled "Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus. Die imperialistischen Frauenverbände des Kaiserreichs." Lora Wildenthal has written her book *German Women for Empire 1884-1945* on women's enthusiasm for empire.

<sup>6</sup> Sabine Hake writes about Africans and the colonial impulse in films from the Third Reich; Lisa Gates discusses Leni Reifenstahl's photography of African natives; and Grosse, Camp, and de Faria discuss the influx of Africans (for various reasons) from the colonies and their effect on the politics of the Imperial Imagination, especially notions of foreignness.

<sup>7</sup> Russell A. Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). Berman discusses all of these themes in underlining the enlightenment underpinnings of German imperial culture.

<sup>8</sup> Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2004).

dimensional dynamic, the relationship between Germany and its colonies was dialectical—the colonies impacted Germany in equal measure. Zimmerman has combined this notion of colonial discourse and culture, noting that the language of class and race blended in criticisms of German audiences at ethnographic expositions.<sup>9</sup> These studies, however, are rare, and it is to this history of influential colonies and the two-way colonial relationship that I seek to add to the imperial historiography.

Each of Germany's colonies has its own historiography. The corpus of written history surrounding German East Africa is significant, but by no means complete. Recent scholarship by Philipa Söldenwagner suggests that colonists and Africans in East Africa had less defined notions of central authority. Natives and Europeans were in constant negotiations over power, each winning out in certain situations, because of the uncertain and ambiguous support offered to the colonists by the German government. Colonists had to enter into a discourse of power with the Africans in order to survive.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, it appears that race was secondary to economic sustenance and improvement. Other scholars discuss colonial literature and travel journals, but never only in the context of German East Africa. John Iliffe, before that, told the story of Germany's complicated, discursive rule over East Africa.<sup>11</sup> Far from complete, the scholarship surrounding Germany's hegemony over East Africa could benefit from a study of the colony's impact on the metropole. The colony to the South West, however, has a more nuanced historiography.

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Zimmerman, "Turning Native? Anthropology, German Colonialism, and the Paradoxes of the 'Acclimatization Question' 1885-1914," In *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire*, edited by H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003. Also, Dirk van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt: Deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2005). Van Laak serves as a good overview of German imperialism, but he also seeks to underline the national impulses behind the rise and radicalization of the German imperial project.

<sup>10</sup> Philipa Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation: European Settlement and Settlers in German East Africa 1900-1914* (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> John Iliffe, *Tanganyika Under German Rule* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1973)



While Hull's account attempted to identify the source of dangerous German militarism in West Africa, other scholars have written about the events of the war against the Herero and their implications. Jürgen Zimmerer has contributed to a translated volume of essays on the genocide against the Herero and Nama people during and following the war of 1904. Some of these essays relate the specifics of the war, colonial policy, and the atrocious actions of German administration, and others discuss the "imperial imagination" and the racial policies that came with it.<sup>12</sup> Some have criticized it for suggesting a teleology,<sup>13</sup> a *Sonderweg* to the Holocaust, but it also does not consider German politics or society; native policy, it seems, was the creation only of Trotha and the settlers. Germany simply enabled these actions. Regarding the creation of native administration, George Steinmetz focuses exclusively on West Africa as the African paradigm in his trans-regional approach. His study has revealed the radically different colonial administrative attitudes that arose in Germany's widespread colonies as a result of differing pre-colonial notions of race, concepts that drastically changed with the colonial experience.<sup>14</sup> Yet, he does not discuss the prospect of multiple notions of race existing in Africa itself; Germany acquired many African colonies. Thus, it appears as though the recent historiographies of these colonies and of German conceptions of the "other" and of race have often intertwined.

Race has constituted a major topic of scholarship for a variety of disciplines. As regards the history of racism, and unfortunately its unavoidable destination, George

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<sup>12</sup> Jürgen Zimmerer, ed., *Genocide in German South-West Africa: The Colonial War of 1904-1908 and its Aftermath*, (Monmouth, Wales: Merlin Press, 2008). This edition is translated from the 2003 German edition, and it contains more work on racial discourse, gender during the war, post-colonial relations, and studies of concentration camps.

<sup>13</sup> George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and South West Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 5-6.

<sup>14</sup> Steinmetz's account is an intellectual history that focuses primarily on anthropology and ethnographic science and not popular notions or the press.

Mosse's *Origins of the Final Solution* is significant. He avers, however, that racial ideology had been sufficiently entrenched by the time Germany entered the colonial equation.<sup>15</sup> German notions of race, then, are less defined in the context of coloniality. As mentioned above, race is discussed primarily in cultural examinations of the colonies and the colonists themselves. Comparisons of the white hero to the black warrior and the implications to gender are contained throughout the travel journals and colonial, adventure literature of the period. Most popular were the exhortations of these novels to Germans to refrain from 'going native' by avoiding the temptations of the lustful native women. The reality of race in the colonies was more ambiguous, as some scholars relate, evidenced by the bans on interracial marriage and the stricter limitations placed on citizenship. Yet, these were colonial perceptions of race, and these actions were often taken despite the central government's condemnations and more liberal views. Helmut Walser Smith, however, has noted the fractious impact of the war against the Herero in the German parliament. He has suggested that the conduct of the war concerned Social Democrats and Catholics for different reasons, while the more conservative and military-minded members of the parliament were less concerned about atrocities. What is interesting, however, is that both groups used the same racial rhetoric to convey their concern or disdain for the native Africans.<sup>16</sup> Important in Walser Smith's account is that race was not the object of concern; racial language was simply a device for discussing other issues. Still, less scholarship has dealt with Africans as a self-constituted "other."

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<sup>15</sup> George Mosse, *Towards the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), 56. "The acquisition of colonies in Africa in 1884...came too late to influence the development of racism in Germany." Rather, racism was almost always directed against the Jew.

<sup>16</sup> Helmut Walser Smith, "The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation," in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, edited by Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

The historiography of German race has focused a great deal on the construction of the “other” in Poland and discusses the “Jewish question” in the context of the long nineteenth century. While some of these give reference to racial thought about black Africans, most of it considers the Polish Jewry.<sup>17</sup> A significant trend in current scholarship focuses on the intellectual and scientific manifestations of German ethnography and its role in the creation and communication of race. Steinmetz, as we have seen, has considered the direct impact of these sciences on the colonies themselves. Bunzl and Penny, further, have compiled a volume of essays on the German anthropological tradition, concluding that German ethnography followed a different trajectory than its Anglo and French counterparts. Rather than becoming less radical at the turn of the century, German anthropologists—for so long the least culturally relativist—became more radical, racist, and subservient to state interests as the twentieth century wore on.<sup>18</sup> Other scholars have charted the evolution of racial discourse in the writings of eighteenth and nineteenth century intellectuals in the fields of theology, philosophy and history. These books suggest that racial thought is conceived by working scholars as a construct dictated by intellectuals.<sup>19</sup> Still, the gaps in the historiography are significant. They do not consider how this scholarship

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<sup>17</sup> Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History: Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). This edition tries to trace the origins of the holocaust centuries back, but finds developing anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century. Oddly enough, he gives short shrift to the genocide in West Africa as any indication of future atrocities.

<sup>18</sup> H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, eds., *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> For example, Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore, *The German Invention of Race* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006). This volume contains works by Michael Chauli, “Laocoön and the Hottentots” which discusses aesthetic theory and racial perception in the mid to late eighteenth century specifically through anthropological conundrums surrounding the differences between Europeans and the Hottentots. Also Jonathan M. Hess, “Jewish Emancipation and the Politics of Race” which explores the rise of “the political alliance between race thinking and Christian universalism in its relation to Jews and Judaism.” Overall, this book intends to show that race science was slowly constructed by philosophy, history, and theology, rather than rising on its own.

affected popular notions, nor do they discuss the communication of these scientific notions to the public.

This study thus seeks to accomplish two things. First, it is an attempt to contribute to a new historiography that places the colonies in a dynamic of influence. It suggests that the colonies and the Africans impacted Germany and German understandings of colonial conflict and their native enemies. In the press, Africans were depicted in terms Germans could understand, rather than—or perhaps only tainted with—the scientific language of the elite. It also allowed Germans to discuss aspects of their own domestic concerns in different ways. As such, this paper seeks to understand these different conversations and issues that underpinned racial language. Race and racial language, although they were highly developed by 1904, were at once about racial difference and competition, and they also included several underlying domestic concerns, namely the rising influence of the nation and the debate surrounding the rising working class. In order to understand the conflicts that proved to be so salient and forced journalists and editors to assess their enemies and their nation, the first part charts the course of German colonialism as well as the more particular histories of the two more prominent African colonies. The second part offers a brief overview of the press' role and strength in Germany, and it explains the broadly racial ideologies and language that found expression in all political persuasions of the press. The third part charts the varying discursive elements of this racial language.

## A “Place in the Sun”

For decades prior to the Berlin Conference and the establishment of South West Africa, German missions dotted the uncivilized swaths of the world. This presence, combined with early nationalistic calls for colonial expansion, albeit few and fleeting, comprised the extent of colonial ambitions before the 1870s. These groups were wont to exclaim that Germany was late to empire and had therefore missed out on its “place in the sun.” At that time, however, the rising popularity of geographic and colonial societies and scientific organizations led to increasing numbers of explorers headed to Africa and the Pacific. Supported by small patriotic investors, these adventurers secured tracts of land in Germany’s name. Bismarck, however, was loath to entertain the notion of using the nation’s resources and bureaucracy “for the purpose of ruling distant, little-known, and as yet ill-defined possessions.”<sup>20</sup>

Instead, as it seemed the colonial impetus was gaining steam, Bismarck conceded and planned to conduct colonial policy indirectly through chartered organizations. This would release the German government from diplomatic and financial responsibility. As it turned out, however, these colonial organizations were not equipped to handle the administration and finance of such large colonies. The parsimonious situations the colonies faced contributed to their general impotence in establishing effective government and order. This was partly to do, however, with the leaders of the colonies, who were neither businessmen nor politicians; rather, they were romantics and explorers. Their plenipotentiaries—the bureaucrats that administered the colonies in a fashion—came from the dregs of the governmental bureaucracy. They were “wrong in training and character, and often

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<sup>20</sup> L. H. Guggan and Peter Duigan, *The Rulers of German Africa*, 10.

more wrong in morals.”<sup>21</sup> Wholesale misrule, corruption, and abuse characterized the early years of the colonial experiment, leaving a sour taste in the mouths of many and leading to a decrease in popular support for the endeavor.

Germany, thus, was forced to take over the administration of the colonies, just as money from big businesses began to trickle in ever so slowly. A new colonial administration with a permanent council of economists and experts replaced the colonial societies as the colonial leaders. This coincided with the establishment of business monopolies, which constituted a major concern for social democrats and center parties alike and which accomplished very little while profiting a great deal from it. Significantly, these changes did nothing to affect the administration of the colonies. They continued to be poorly led, corruption abounded, and the abject treatment of the natives continued—despite German pretenses at giving the natives more rights and protections. In any case, the natives despised these new heavily bureaucratized administrations as much as the arbitrary dictators of the 80s.<sup>22</sup>

The mistreatment of the natives throughout the first twenty years of German rule, led to widespread rebellion. In all of Germany’s colonies, from Africa to the Pacific, natives took up arms against their colonial masters. These risings were rarely spectacular, and they were always put down. Those in Germany’s South West African and East Afri-

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<sup>21</sup> William Harbut Dawson, *The German Empire, 1860-1948* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1966), 213.

<sup>22</sup> Graichen and Gründer, *Deutsche Kolonien: Traum und Trauma* (Berlin: Ullstein HC, 2005), summarize the origins of German imperialism by spreading the credit to the colonial societies, diplomacy—primarily between England and Germany—and to big monopolies. L. H. Guggan and Peter Duigan, *The Rulers of German Africa*, claims that domestic politics and colonial societies were far less important than the military nature of Germany and large investors in the introductory chapter. Writing in 1919, Dawson (*The German Empire, 1860-1948*) averred that colonial policy was the coincidence of diplomatic overtures and conflict. It was not a directed programme but a challenge accepted. Horst Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting* (London: Zed Press, 1980), a Marxist historian, thinks that true imperialism only began in the 90s, because that is when big monopolies were formed and capitalism entered the equation. It seems in that newer scholarship gives sufficient voice to numerous interpretations.

can colonies, however, flirted with success. These conflicts and the colonies they rose from certainly shared some common characteristics. But this general account of the path to colonialism and the broad trends in manifestation does not consider the nuances of the German colonial experience. Every colony had its own particular experience, especially in regards to native rebellion. The two most dramatic, spectacular and similarly devastating rebellions in the colonies were rooted in the general colonial background, but each arose under quite specific circumstances.

### **German Southwest Africa**

German presence in South West Africa dated to the middle of the nineteenth century when evangelists from the Rhenish Mission Society arrived to civilize the Herero natives and spread Christianity. This presence amounted to very little until F. A. E. Lüderlitz acquired the initial imperial foothold in South West Africa in 1883 after obtaining territorial concessions from a coastal Hottentot leader. A nationalist and an ardent colonialist, Lüderlitz intended on building a vast colonial empire, but his purse—as was the case with many colonial enthusiasts—was nowhere near large enough to fund such an endeavor. His initial request to Bismarck for protection and recognition was refused, but a year later the chancellor reconsidered, extending protection to the entire region. Lüderlitz, hopeful that the colony would reap massive short-term benefits, did not find the mineral resources he had wanted, thus leading other companies to assume the stewardship of the region. These investors, however, contributed only paltry sums and developed very little and in the meanwhile accumulated millions of hectares of land. For five years the colonial bureaucracy was unable to exert any authority; the military pushed inland in the early 1890s to little effect. In fact, they found themselves constrained by and forced to

conform to the conflictual dynamic of power that existed between the Herero and Nama, the most powerful native groups in the region.<sup>23</sup>

In the early 90s, however, increasing numbers of settlers and an enlarging military presence led to a corresponding rise in European intervention in African affairs. Significantly, the Herero-Nama rivalry temporarily subsided to meet the German threat; in 1892, the two groups conducted an alliance, although perhaps too late to reverse the gains of the German imperial machine. Still, only amounting to some ill-considered attacks on the German margins, the partnership was easily thwarted. Moreover, given the multiplicity of tribes in the region, Governor Leutwein proved particularly adept at playing different tribes off each other in a policy of divide and rule.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the immediate causal factors for the conflict came with the elimination of native rights and the aggressive acquisition of land and cattle from the natives. Leutwein wholeheartedly advocated both measures, looking for reasons to disarm natives and to appropriate their herds of cattle. Further, as the numbers of settlers increased in the years before 1904—from 310 in 1891 to 4,640 at the beginning of 1903<sup>25</sup>—new ways of accommodating these numbers on such little good land were needed.

German policy was broadly manipulative, sparing not even the most powerful tribes. Small uprisings of the less significant tribes intent on keeping their cattle or their guns were quickly put down, but as the Germans came increasingly to target the Herero rebellions sentiment was fostered. The settlers that swarmed into the Herero region generated clever methods of dispossessing the Herero of their cattle. They would buy prod-

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<sup>23</sup> L. H. Guggan and Peter Duigan, *The Rulers of German Africa*, 16-20; See also Graichen and Gründer, *Deutsche Kolonien*, 118-133.

<sup>24</sup> Drechsler, *Let Us Die Fighting*, 4-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.



ucts with credit and offer them to the Herero on similar terms. After repeating this process for some time, the unscrupulous colonizers would demand repayment, knowing well that the Herero neither possessed money nor had a concept of it. The colonists would typically then demand arbitrary numbers of cattle to recompense. In this manner, German settlers became wealthy, while the heads of cattle owned by the Herero decreased to just over 45,000 from hundreds of thousands. The Herero became abjectly impoverished as a result of this and of German land policy, which, despite the best efforts of the missionary societies, was on pace to remove the natives from their land in short order at the time the Herero war began.<sup>26</sup>

The Herero were not only aware that this was an unfair system—that talk of native reservations portended nothing good—but “they neither could nor would live any longer under these conditions.” Increasing predations and the building of the Otavi railway proved to be the last straw. Driven to despair and desperation, their situation deteriorating from one year to the next, there was no better time than January 12, 1904, when Samuel Maherero with his tribe and several others swiftly and decisively took most of Hereroland. They killed nearly a hundred German men and took their livestock back. They were, however, unable to take advantage of their early dominance, and allowed the Germans to regroup. As fresh troops and supplies arrived, the Germans systematically relieved their beleaguered strongholds. During the initial stages of the fighting the Germans suffered considerable losses. In June 1904, von Trotha replaced Leutwein as the military commander. This soon manifested in the operational policy of killing every Herero becoming institutionalized. The German surprise attack in August at the Waterberg resulted in

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 88-119.

heavy Herero losses, the remainder managing to escape into the wastes to the east.<sup>27</sup> Following this victory, von Trotha did not allow the Herero to return; rather he forced them to stay in the desert as part of an extreme policy of eradication. The Herero nation, namely those who survived the ghastly ordeal in the desert, entered concentration camps and labor camps, after Berlin decided that this genocidal policy was inhumane. The Herero conflict, however, sparked a series of native rebellions in the colony, which tied up German troops for several years. The Herero war committed no lasting damage against the colony; in fact, quite the opposite happened. It finally gave Germany the excuse to take all Herero land and cattle and finish the job they had started; it was a convenient war, and one that showed the darkest side of German imperialism.<sup>28</sup> East Africa developed in similar ways, exhibiting similar trends, but its development was nuanced in several ways.

### **German East Africa**

German interest in Africa, as has already been noted, extended further back in time than the initial drives to acquire territory. Throughout the nineteenth century, German missionaries had attempted to evangelize the people of Tanganyika, but these efforts were not tied to the acquisition of land. Rather, the popularity of geographical societies and the scientific organizations following the unification of Germany made the founding of German East Africa possible. Specifically, the fanatic enthusiasm and daring of Carl Peters gave Germany the reason many had been looking for to enter the colonial competition. As the imperial eagle first flew above South West Africa, Peters was traipsing throughout Tanganyika obtaining a number of treaties with local chieftains and native

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 132-146.

<sup>28</sup> See also Graichen and Gründer 136-150. Much of their account details the atrocities of German imperialism and modern memory.

leaders—although they were uncomprehending leaders who had little power or no authority to do so.<sup>29</sup> Bismarck, as was the case with Lüderlitz, was less enthusiastic than Peters; even in Parliament many opposed supporting an East African endeavor. Yet the German government agreed to grant sovereignty over the region to the Deutsch Ostafrika Gesellschaft (DOAG)—at first only 46 bureaucrats scattered across the region, supported by patriotic, albeit small-time, financiers. The first five years offered nothing of note; operations on the coast stalled in the face of stiff native opposition, and efforts to establish footholds inland failed for lack of infrastructure and settlers. The society also failed diplomatically, making no effort to foster a pro-German contingent in the colony and, instead, alienating “the coastal population by its economic exactions, bureaucratic chicanery, and showy display of flags.” Having proved unfit to the task of administering the colony and incurring massive economic losses in the process, the DOAG’s duties fell to an embarrassed German Reichstag.<sup>30</sup> Berlin replaced the DOAG administration with its own preferred leader, Hermann von Wissmann. Wissmann extended German authority through violence and diplomacy, leading an expeditionary force against the coastal insurrections, and making local alliances in an effort to divide and rule.

As German influence became increasingly consolidated, regions other than the coast—the bastion of the colonial bureaucracy—began to develop into areas of enterprise. The northern highlands of the colony especially attracted small numbers of large agriculturalists. To maintain this position and security of these settlers, Germans took po-

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<sup>29</sup> John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1973), 10-11. Also, Arne Perras, *Carl Peters and German Imperialism 1856-1918: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 46-66. Perras details the trip and the atrocities Peters committed, as well as the hardships he and his team endured to secure these treaties.

<sup>30</sup> L. H. Gugnán and Peter Duigan, *The Rulers of German Africa*, 12-17. Also, Perras, 81-129. Perras also suggests that the colonial societies were effective agitators in the political arena, thus adding to the historiography of broader trends of colonialism as well.

sitions in local conflicts, eliminating the threat of many tribes, while maintaining civil relations with others. Yet this diplomacy offered only tenuous control, and many leaders in the south and west of the colony resisted Germans to great effect until the military took its revenge, further weakening the primary rivals. This was only one of a number of native insurrections which German soldiers were forced to put down. Still, despite force of arms, power spread unevenly, manifesting more strongly in the northeast and along the coast. In 1905, little had improved; the government was intent on reducing the colony's military contingent; the colony was in desperate need of funds; and agriculture proved to be generally unproductive and uneconomic. Moreover, no rebellion had broken out in four years, lulling the Germans into complacent disregard of native policy. In this context, the Maji-Maji War caught the German administration unaware.

This rebellion was a long time coming, and it found its roots in the fragile political and economic systems that the Germans had fostered. Taxes imposed in 1898, the rise and fall of cotton culture in the southern reaches of the colony, and increasing brutality in this European/native dynamic of power formed the preconditions of the uprising. Following the defeat of the powerful Matumbi tribe in the south, the Germans sought to profit from the vacuum of native influence it created by forcing natives to work on cotton plantations. The forced labor was systematized. One member from each family would work on multiple plantations depending on the day of the month. In the words of a native recalling the German treatment, “[a]fter you arrived there you all suffered very greatly. Your back and your buttocks were whipped, and there was no rising once you stooped to dig.”<sup>31</sup> Another native recalled of the European overseer monitoring his fields “Behold

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<sup>31</sup> John Iliffe and G.C.K Gwassa, *Records of the Maji-Maji Rising* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), 6.

death there!”<sup>32</sup> This treatment was not only brutal, but it kept the natives from their own subsistence during key harvesting periods—“This is why some people became furious and angry. The work was astonishingly hard and full of grave suffering, but its wages were the whip on one’s back and buttocks.” These festering feelings, combined with the native ideal that the “Wamatumbi...since the days of old, did not want to be troubled or ruled by any person,” led the people to say with resentment “[t]his has now become an absolute ruler. Destroy him.”<sup>33</sup>

The preconditions meant nothing, however, without the power and influence of popular religion. A prophet in the region gathered a large following around his anti-European message. The Europeans were aware of this popular movement but were unable to halt its spread. By June and July 1905, the ranks of the future insurrectionists had swollen to the tens of thousands; they had also begun advanced preparations and training for an assault on German hegemony. They awaited only the permission of the prophet. Driven by religious fervor, indignation, and fueled by a feeling of invincibility—the rebellion taking its name from Maji, the magical water supposed to protect against spears and bullets—the natives spread out of the south eastern region intent on clearing the region of Arabs, Indians, and Europeans. They attacked cotton plantations, trading settlements, and Arab traders. Throughout August they destroyed everything, gathering momentum and spreading to other regions until late in the month and into early September. At that time successive, devastating reverses signaled an end to massive resistance. Crucial to this string of victories was, first of all, western technology; the machine gun

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>33</sup> Iliffe, *Tanganyika Under German Rule*, 8-10. Gugnán and Duigan, *The Rulers of German Africa*, also offers a good overview of the harshness of German colonial administration as well as the social impact of slavery on pages 194-198.

proved especially destructive to the effervescent waves of native attackers. Recalling the failed assault on the European bastion at Mahenge, a native participant lamented: “Oh so many people died that day! For they had not known what a machine gun was...Far too many people died that day.”<sup>34</sup> Second, internecine conflict among the Africans themselves made it easier for the Europeans to catch their breath and stem the tide. Several native leaders, rather than seeing the anti-colonial religiosity as beneficial, sided with the Germans, tipping the balance in favor of the beleaguered Europeans. By October, German troops were in the ascendant and were forced to fight a guerilla conflict for another two years, until 1907, as the rebellion went underground. Having lost their faith in immunity, the natives resorted to tested methods of warfare. Only with the institution of a revised native policy—one that favored cooperation and reconsidered economic practices—and widespread famine, did the violence subside, leaving perhaps 75,000 dead.<sup>35</sup>

Whites and Germans were acutely aware of both wars, in German East Africa and South West Africa. Drechsler has noted the highly racist and militaristic propaganda campaigns in Germany, while Philippa Söldenwagner has suggested that these conflicts popularized the colonies, leading to the post war immigration of thousands of middle class businessmen and their families. Only defeat in World War I stemmed the rising tide of German colonial growth and aspirations. A primary factor in the increasing salience of colonial affairs and the popularization of “Kolonialpolitik,” along with the highly racial outcomes of both, was the simultaneous rise of the mass press. Newspapers, as we will see, allowed Germans of all classes to leave the provincial past and become more globally aware. Certainly, they relayed news of the conflicts, but perhaps more significantly,

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<sup>34</sup> Illiffe and Gwassa, *Records of the Maji-Maji Rising*, 10-11.

<sup>35</sup> Illiffe, *Tanganyika*, 15-29.

they also contributed to the political and racial ideas resulting from these native wars.

The German press and its coverage and commentary of colonial wars comprise the topic of the second part.

## **The Press**

### **A Rising Power**

The final third of the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of the press from the antagonistic margins to becoming a highly influential “power.” Such innovations as the telegraph and more efficient printing technology made this a European phenomenon. Germans in particular, however, proved to be avid readers of newspapers and magazines. More and more, Germans from all walks of life read about localities and the nation as well as ideas and events from around the world. As a result, modern society truly became a “society of communication.” The newspaper served as a galvanizing force and an outlet for public discussion and commentary on wide ranging topics. One such way in which the press wielded considerable opportunity to connect people was in the political life of the nation. Political parties and groups seized upon its growing influence to help foster an atmosphere of discussion about contemporary society and politics. They became, in fact, such an integral part of the German political discourse that “everyone, including the conservatives, lived with and through the newspaper.” By 1904, the press and politics were intricately linked; political debate, more so than ever before, was conducted both in the halls of parliament and simultaneously in the pages of Germany’s newspapers.<sup>36</sup>

It did not seem in the middle of the century that such a burgeoning press would exist in Germany. This growth followed a period of extreme journalistic censorship during

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<sup>36</sup> Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1918 Band 1*(Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993), 797.

the 1860s and 70s. Yet by the 1890s even the victims of the “Kulturkampf” had procured rights to press freedom. The numbers of newspapers and the circulation of each rose dramatically; from 1850 to 1914 the sheer number of newspapers rose by nearly three times, and the circulation for many of these rose to varying degrees, as well. The more successful papers often issued several editions of the paper a day, a couple in the morning and an evening edition. With this growth came incredible ideological and topical diversity among and in certain newspapers. Some papers devoted the majority of space to arts and literature, others focused on local issues, while some of the larger general newspapers devoted some space to serial novels and tips on gardening.<sup>37</sup>

It was these larger newspapers, the “Generalanzeigers,” which primarily grew in popularity and in which much of the political discourse was conducted. They maintained political neutrality and catered to a hitherto unpoliticized mass of readers; they served as the mouthpiece for the masses of Germans in large cities and towns. Because of independent funding, they maintained greater political distance, while offering the accoutrements of culture and literature. The “Generalanzeigers” were also far cheaper than the more archaic, ideologically and politically stringent presses—*Vorwärts* and the *Kreuzzeitung* among these—often half as much. Yet another broadly appealing aspect also stemmed from the source of funds. Each independent owner of a newspaper came to own many more papers in the city, building each up to corner an aspect of the press market. These included smaller newspapers devoted to sport and gardening as well as the finer arts. This new type of journalism, which “combined apolitical and political elements,” took up a major share of the market. The rise of this politically ‘neutral’ segment of the press corresponded with an evolution in the approach to journalism; “journalists from here on out

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 801.



wanted to say what the public thought.”<sup>38</sup> As such, it offered sufficient space to various interpretations and acknowledged different political ideologies, a far cry from the previous “Richtung” oriented incarnations of the press.

While the “Generalanzeiger” became increasingly important as the century ended, other press organs rose in influence as well. The Catholic press, for so long critics of modernity, began in earnest during the 60s and 70s. The world was full of newspapers, and clerical concerns could easily be addressed through popular methods. It addressed matters spiritual and worldly, increasing its circulation manifold from the “Kulturkampf” until the First World War. Beyond religion, however, the press divided along political issues. The Social Democratic press, which had been close to extinction during the time of strict censorship, enjoyed a resurgence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Berlin newspaper *Vorwärts* was the central organ of the Social Democrats, but, almost mirroring the party, many more radical Socialist papers and more particularly local Socialist newspapers existed. *Vorwärts* sought to give a super regional perspective, forming a tight network of information sharing and correspondence with papers in other cities. Three things, however, mitigated the influence of the Socialist press. First, despite *Vorwärts*’s claim to being the “central organ of the Social Democratic Party,”<sup>39</sup> it represented the interests mainly of those party members in Berlin. Similar papers in other cities stressed more locally nuanced issues or urged more or less radicalism from their party. This was partly a problem of the editors’ political inclinations, but also a result of the increasing number of newspapers and the dilution of the message. The same problem existed, however, within the party itself. Although it was the largest party in Germany, it

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 802.

<sup>39</sup> The newspaper sub-heading triumphantly proclaims this.

was crippled by internal subdivisions. This manifested in the press regionally and nationally, making it harder for a broadly effectual Social Democratic press to exist. Finally, with the rise of the new journalism pioneered by the *Generalanzeiger*s, “in the time before 1914 the style of the agitation press weakened.”<sup>40</sup> That is not to say that the Social Democratic press was impotent; rather, it continued to foster political and social discussion—and did so in much the same way as the press on the other end of the political spectrum.

The conservative press shared many of the problems of its socialist counterpart. The ideological and interpretational divide manifested in hundreds of “conservative” newspapers. In 1914, there were 214 conservative papers, 61 free-conservative papers, 214 national papers, 216 listed as national liberal, 277 considered themselves left liberal, and another 367 were simply liberal. The *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, otherwise known as the *Kreuzzeitung* after the large Prussian cross on the front of every issue, for example was the primary newspaper of the Prussian conservatives, while several other newspapers in this study are regional conservative or national. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, another paper central to this survey, was a left-liberal organ. The *Coburger Zeitung* and the *Dresdener Journal* both represented various parts of this end of the political-ideological spectrum. The conservative press that was not tied to the government served as a highly influential right, opposition voice, and held significant sway over government moderates, diplomats, and heads of society.<sup>41</sup>

As such, the vast regional and ideological variance and the large numbers of journalists that interpreted the “Wolffische” Telegrams contributed to a cacophony of politi-

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 805-807.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 807.

cal discourse. That, however, does not detract from the incredible influence the press had on such varying topics as foreign and domestic politics. “Pressepolitik” was indeed a phenomenon that could not be ignored by the government. Everyone and every party in politics, even Bismarck, used the press to their own intents and purposes<sup>42</sup>. In this study, the multifaceted character of the press—the dissonance of views and approaches—is important to understanding the language of race and its own multi-tiered levels of meaning. Also important in this regard, however, is to understand that the press was, in fact, broadly racial. In response to the wars in Africa and in other aspects of colonial discourse, the press, regardless of its political inclinations, expressed popular notions of race.

### **The Racism of the Press: Ethnography**

With the initial outbreak of violence in South West Africa and a year later in East Africa, the press—except in some instances in 1905—quickly relayed the frantic Morse code warning of native rebellion to an avid public. Perhaps not surprisingly, press response and the specifics of the news varied dramatically. Depending on the political leanings of specific newspapers, the focus of coverage ran along a political and ideological spectrum. The focus of one newspaper, for example, inclined towards debating the origins of the conflict, while another advocated a specific course of action, or yet another tended to more readily detail the atrocities of the natives or the tactics of the war. These differences were broadly noticeable throughout the coverage of both wars. Beyond trends of emphasis, however, certain predominant themes transcended ideological and political boundaries where others did not. Most prominent among these themes were the highly racialized aspects of the coverage. Influenced by Social Darwinist rhetoric, the press was

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 809.

broadly racial; newspapers utilized racist language in their analyses of the origins of conflicts and in discussions of Germany's native subjects. Some did so by employing ethnographic and anthropological science to introduce the natives to their readers. Most revealed their racial explications in attempting to foist the onus of guilt on to either the natives or colonists. Finally, race played a major factor in the ideal, German response to the outbreak as well as the foreseeable future of the colony.

Following the events of 12-13 January 1904, a combination of the violence, the dire straits facing Germany, and the surprising nature of it all, forced the press into action. They published death tolls, troop numbers and location, detailed the geography and infrastructure of the colony, and generally explained the difficult task at hand. Crucial to the press' analysis, however, was to introduce Germans to their colonial enemies. In some papers, for example, within the first week of the outbreak in South West Africa, maps and 'expert' descriptions of Germany's native subjects splashed across the front pages. These descriptions and maps tended to stress the same aspects of the natives, their pre-war disposition, geographic spread, etc. These articles may have been written simply because depicting the "population" is "especially interesting"<sup>43</sup> and sells papers; there is something inherently entertaining about learning about different cultures. More importantly, however, these offer insight into the priorities and dispositions of various organs of the press.

George Steinmetz has observed that pre-colonial ethnographic discourse significantly impacted the type of colonial hegemony that German governors and bureaucrats enforced. While his study assesses a broad swath of history prior to the enacting of co-

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<sup>43</sup> "Die Völkerstämme in Deutsch-Südwestafrika," *Vorwärts*, Jan 28, 1904, Erste Beilage. It mentions studying the "dortige Bevölkerung" as "besonderes Interesse."

lonial acquisition, he argues that the period of active colonizing was important to both ethnographic endeavor and to colonial governance. It created a relationship in which “causal traffic moved in both directions.” Whereas, ethnography had held considerable sway over policymaking prior to and at the onset of coloniality, “scientific and ethnographic discourse about a particular indigenous group tended to correspond closely to the basic thrust of native policy in a given period.” The roles reversed, and new ethnography responded to various colonial situations.<sup>44</sup> For so long, German anthropology had avoided the progressive historical tendencies and progressive hierarchies clung to by French and English scientists. Instead, they broadly viewed “human diversity through a specifically German lens; and what they saw was the result of particular histories rather than stages on the progressive march of reason.” In the tradition of Herder, every culture was significant as a *Volksgeist*. Yet, by 1895, this science was changing and for various reasons.<sup>45</sup> Instead of valuing the diversity of their empire, Rochus Schmidt consistently compared Hottentot culture to that of white Europeans. He correlated intelligence with certain aspects of facial structures. His ethnography, while acknowledging the musical and linguistic talents of the Hottentot tribe, stressed that “the Hottentot is always ready for a schnapps, and he would ride all night, sell his wife, and murder for a bottle of Fu-

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<sup>44</sup> Steinmetz, *The Devils Handwriting*, 145-146.

<sup>45</sup> Penny and Bunzl, 19-23. The edited volume *Worldly Provincialism* by Penny and Bunzl attempts to explain this shift at the turn of the twentieth century. Whether the reason is the increasing links between biological eugenics and anthropological science or the democratization of *Völkerschauen* into forms of imperial, popular entertainment, anthropology and ethnography changed dramatically into a chauvinist, nationalist science. Also, Benoit Massin, “From Virchow to Fischer: Physical Anthropology and “Modern Race Theories” in Wilhelmine Germany,” in *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic*, edited by George W. Stocking, Jr., 79-154, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 94-106. Massin notes this change over time, although he is quick to assert that even liberal anthropologists regarded Germany’s colonial subjects as inferior, despite their efforts to ‘ennoble’ them. By 1895, however, newer, racist science had prevailed. Also, Mosse has noted that much of this ‘science’ was ascientific, that many anthropologists “lost their grounding in empiricism. Eventually, patriotism displaced “reliable facts,” and for them, the Germans became the superior race” (87).

sel.”<sup>46</sup> Hierarchical anthropology also reared its ugly head, when he suggested that the Basters—similar to the Boers but more ‘native’—were superior to the “Negers,” but disdainfully added that they were disgusting beggars.<sup>47</sup> This ethnographic discourse was also to be found in the press—however amateur—presenting a spectrum of ethnographic styles.

In the case of the Herero uprising *Vorwärts*, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* published such ethnographic articles. The article in *Vorwärts*, accompanied by a map, related more so than any other newspaper the geographic placement and the diversity of the tribes. With intricate detail, it showed the vast expanse of the colony and the sheer numbers of its native inhabitants. It explained how the tribes were interrelated and how some of them were simply agglomerations of the others; many were of “mixed blood.” The map did show the political boundary of the colony, but the tribes existed on both sides of the fluid line. Perhaps significantly, the extent of Germany’s colony did not determine the extent of the movement and existence of these tribes.<sup>48</sup> It seemed to utilize the outmoded ethnographic tradition that valued cultural variety and diversity of history. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*’s ethnographic study was slightly more chauvinist. It was far less concerned with the natives than what their numbers and weapons could say about them. It noted with fascination that, in the many years of living with European weapons, they seemed to be none the better marksmen. Rather, they were much better with their bows and arrows. The article gave little more than numbers, organization and

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<sup>46</sup> Rochus Schmidt, *Deutschlands Kolonien, ihre Gestaltung, Entwicklung und Hilfsquellen*, von Rochus Schmidt (Berlin: Schall & Grund, 1895), 228: “Für einen Schnapps ist der Hottentotte zu jeder Zeit dienstbar, für eine Flasche Fusel reitet er die ganze Nacht Kurier, verkauft sein Weib und begeht einen Mord.”

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 233.

<sup>48</sup> “Die Voelkerstämme in Deutsch Suedwest-Afrika,” *Vorwärts*, January 28, 1904, Erste Beilage. “mischblütige Stämme.”

weapons. They were both quick to point out that Germany's enemies were more diverse than one might think, and they sought to relate that each tribe was important for German bureaucrats to consider.<sup>49</sup> Yet, while one paper overtly suggested this, the other was tainted with cultural relativism. Other newspapers, however, did not even consider the native variety in their own colonies.

The *Neue Preussische Zeitung* also released its own ethnographic assessment of their native antagonists written by Dr. J. Wiese. Wiese was far less distant in his appraisal of the natives, speaking of a time “when our natives are finally defeated...” suggested his bias from the outset. After a vivid description of the average Herero, their hair, height, and occupation, he mentioned that they are “liars” and are quickly resort to “begging.” It described their clothes and dwellings, but it characterized them as being like any other “Kaffirhut.” It disdainfully described the polygamy, paganism, birthing practices, and funerary ceremonies in comparison to those of westerners. The purpose of this article was not to “reveal” the natives as such. Instead, it was intended to depict the vices, the irrationality, and the sub-humanity of their enemies.<sup>50</sup> Although the descriptions of native practices amounted to an in-depth ethnography of the Herero people, the cultural relativism and the interspersed condescension placed this assessment among the newer, chauvinistic anthropological sciences. Conflicts in East Africa and in New Guinea offered more opportunity for Germans to describe their natives.

German East Africa, however, presents a more difficult case in analyzing these articles as a way to look at racial language. Because of the availability of certain sources,

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<sup>49</sup> “Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, January 19, 1904, Evening Edition.

<sup>50</sup> “Die Hereros ihre Zitten und Gebräuche,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 16, 1904. This article notes their propensity to “luegen,” their habit of becoming “Betteln,” and generalizes African dwellings as “Kaffirhütten.”

the nature of the conflict in East Africa as opposed to that in the South West, and, it seems, the priorities of certain newspapers, only one such example of anthropological ethnography exists for the Maji-Maji War. The only significant example of this type of article came from the August 24<sup>th</sup> edition of *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Even this article, however, used as its “expert analysis” a military officer with twenty years of service. This article did not maintain an anthropologically distant disposition; rather, it was obviously biased against the rebellious natives. Its descriptions of the natives as “effete,” as drunks, and as easily swayed by magic and sorcery often became confused with the causes for the conflict, suggesting that the essence of the natives caused the conflict. He did not mention their appearance, but he did stress the multitude of tribes in the region as well as the rivalries extant among them.<sup>51</sup> One wonders whether this description would extend to Germany’s native allies, since, as Steinmetz has noted, Germany did have its favored natives.

Significantly, at the end of August 1904, a violent murder of missionaries in Germany’s New Guinea colony provided another opportunity for an ethnographic look at Germany’s native subjects. In this instance, the newspaper takes a more appraising stance than some articles a year earlier, although it was evident that the writer—a churchman—favored one tribe over the other. The Baining were described as intelligent, deft with their weaponry, and stationary, living in grass huts. The “Kuestenbewohnern,” the murderous group, which is given no other name than their location—the author treats contemptuously, labeling them cannibals. The former group had previously maintained favorable ties with the Germans and the missionaries, but the barbarian nomads, for that is all that the author knows about them, have taken the Baining as slaves leading the author to say

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<sup>51</sup> “Kolonialpolitisches,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, September 14, 1904. For East Africa, the one account does not focus as much on numbers as irrationality and belief in magic.



that “the lot of the Baining is immensely bitter.” Moreover, as a result of the Pater’s outspoken criticisms of the Baining enslavement, the “Kuestenbewohnern” evidently murdered him and his brothers and sisters of the cloth.<sup>52</sup> The author pities the non-threatening tribe in this local power dynamic, elevating them to a type of “noble savage” in comparison to the ultimate transgressors, the cannibalistic “Kuestenbewohnern.” These, to the contrary, constitute a terrifying and unknown quantity that pose a threat to Germany’s influence as well as the ongoing civilizing process. Colonial conflict even on such a small scale offers the opportunity for papers to give accounts of Germany’s colonial subjects.

It seems that some did not always resort to ethnography to discover their enemies. Four newspapers did so—however biased; it did not matter so much to others. While some papers sought to understand their subjects, the more nationalist press was content at labeling them the masses or listing their exact numbers, typically in terms of the number of rifles a group possessed. The *Dresdner Journal*, for example, seemed less concerned with the sheer numbers of the natives. Rather, it counted the number of weapons the natives and the whites possessed in comparison, in this case content that the natives in one hot spot had “50 rifles, almost equal to that of the growing numbers of whites.” Other papers refer to “the Herero hordes” or “a black cloud,” content to sensationalize or propagandize or out of a genuine ignorance of the numbers of native warriors.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps out of confidence or lack of information<sup>54</sup>, the story dehumanizes the natives and makes them dangerously large entities facing the explicit numbers of whites and Germans. Often,

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. It mentioned that “das Los der Baining-Sklaven” is “ungemein hart.”

<sup>53</sup> “Aus anderen Blättern,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 21, 1904. “50 Gewehren stimmt fast genau mit der Zahl der erwachsenen Weissen;” Also “Vom Aufstand der Hereros,” *NPZ*, February 1, 1904. “den Horden der Herero;” as well as “Der Aufstand der Hereros,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 20, 1904: this equates the Herero fleeing through the gap in the German lines as “einer schwarzen Wolke.”

<sup>54</sup> “Der Herero-Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Coburger Zeitung*, January 29, 1904. This article stressed that there were untold thousands of enemies. It noted that nobody really knew how many “Kaffirs” and “feindliches Volk” the Germans were truly facing.

however, the conversation about understanding the natives and the threat they posed, evolved either into commentary on the origins or the resolution of the conflict.

### **The Search for Answers**

Racial slurs and overtly racist language appeared throughout the coverage of both of Germany's colonial wars. This occurred most, however, in discussions of the origins of conflict. Depending on the ideological persuasion of the newspaper, the origins or the outcome of the wars dominate discussion. Of course, every paper gives its own interpretation of each war's origins, but *Vorwärts* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* offer a more structural, overarching account. Speaking for the downtrodden natives, the Social Democratic press criticized the general European view that the "coloreds were some kind of two legged animal." It cites this treatment, the numerous outrageous executions of natives, and the failure of the mission to civilize as reasons that "the rebellion is more like a revolt against the imperial whip." Despite the fact that this group elevates and calls for better treatment of the natives, it is racially informed. It advocates compensating the natives for their destroyed "hovels," and it laments their poverty: "the poor hungry black devils." It was not that the natives should be equal, but that the whites had failed the natives, that the whites brought along with their whips "schnapps and syphilis, the dregs of (European) culture."<sup>55</sup> The natives were still lesser, despite the fact that they were worthy of better than "barbaric" treatment, nonetheless.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> "Unser Neuer Kolonialkrieg," *Vorwärts*, Jan 16, 1904. "Man betrachtet den Farbigen als eine Art zwei-beinige Tieres;" "Es wäre also nicht ausgeschlossen, dass der Aufstand eine Art Revolte gegen die Nilpferdpeitsche darstellte;" "den armen Teufeln von hungernden Schwarzen;" "Schnapps und Syphilis, das find auch hier die Kulturgüter, die man den Eingeborenen neben der Nilpferdpeitsche gebracht hat!"

<sup>56</sup> "Ein Kolonialer Scharfmacher," *Vorwärts*, February 3, 1904. It mentions the "barbarische Handlung" of the natives by the settlers, and warns that this will drastically lead to a situation like the British were facing in South Africa.

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* offered a more systematic and less vitriolic version of the war's origins. It claimed that the "politics of half-measures" and "frailty" sowed and must reap these "bloody fruits." The article hoped lessons had been learned, condemning the German administration for poor foresight. Ultimately, "absurd livestock farming" and severe indebtedness led to "progressive impoverishment." These unfair settler practices drove the natives to poverty and to rebellion.<sup>57</sup> A day later, while suggesting alternatives to massive reinforcement, the paper enumerates the war's causes as if they were understood: the shrinking of native personal land holdings and the worsening of their economic position for various reasons.<sup>58</sup> German policy instigated the violence, but only in as much as it pushed the natives off the precipice into abject poverty. The "Kaffern" (even in defending the natives it used derogatory language), through their own inferiority, brought much of this upon themselves. Despite this, the paper was quick to dispel any notions that German presence was good for the Africans. It did not need "Kolonialpolitik" packaged naïvely as a "culture mission and as providing the natives with the gift of German civilization, a gift that often turns out to be hard and gruesome."<sup>59</sup> A year later, the paper was less condemning of Germans. It offered no more than the perspective of the military officer, who denied claims about unfair labor practices, suggesting instead that the "effete weakness" and "drinking and smoking binges" as well as too much idle time made the

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<sup>57</sup> "Zum Aufstand der Herero in Deutsch-Südwestafrika," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, January 19, 1904: "Die Politik der Halbheit und Schwäche;" "blutige Früchte;" "unsinniger Viehwirtschaft;" "fortschreitender Verarmung."

<sup>58</sup> "Der Aufstand der Herero," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, January 20, 1904. The majority of this article, however, as with most articles looks at the dire military situation. This was often more important than introspective musings on the reasons the natives came to rebel.

<sup>59</sup> "Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, January 20, 1904, Abend Beilage. It mentions that "man braucht die Kolonialpolitik nicht als eine Kulturmission und als die Berglückung der Eingeborenen mit deutscher Besittung anzusehen und kann sie als ein Geschäft und oft genug als ein hartes und grausames Geschäft betrachten."

natives “thirsty for war.”<sup>60</sup> Surely, this interpretation did not match the ideological views of the paper’s readers. But it is significant that neither did it list alternative reasons, nor did the editor mitigate the message, as happened so often. Native shortcomings, drink, and idleness led to an irrational war against missionaries—their most important benefactors, it noted ironically. As such, the paper took a cynical stance on German colonial policy, criticizing it for its role in one of the wars, but it was also acutely aware of the baseness of black Africans.

Other newspapers expounded on these more racial causes for Germany’s native the wars. The *Coburger Zeitung*, claimed that the aberrant Herero war was primarily a result of native “perfidiousness,” “antagonism,” and “hostility” and as early as the 26<sup>th</sup> of January advocated “extermination” in order to rid the Herero of this characterological shortcoming. This paper also cites the native’s “criminal” and “murderous” actions as inherent to the conflict. The whites were victims of terrorizing masses of African natives, intent on destroying white civilization.<sup>61</sup> A year later, a similar story came out of East Africa, where the colonial government had treated the natives far too leniently. Instead of being thankful for fair treatment, the “black race” had increased in vanity and mischief until it sought to ascend to the level of white Europeans through gruesome and bestial acts. The *Dresdner Journal* mentions in its first report of hostilities that “the reasons for the recent uprising [were] yet unknown.” It was quick to note that they look very much like the South African “Kaffern”—dark brown with a smattering of lighter shades mixed

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<sup>60</sup> “Die Unruhen in Deutsch-Ostafrika,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 24, 1905. The author mentioned that the conflict’s causes were not a result of rubber policy or mistreatment of the natives, if anything the opposite was the case. Rather, “es lag nur an der mangelnden Energie der Eingeborenen und ihrer Schwäche;” “Ein zweiter Punkt...Da wird viel Bier gebraut und getrunken, und der wochenlang daurnde Rausch macht schlieslich auch den sansmutigsten Neger kriegslustig.”

<sup>61</sup> “Kolonialpolitisches,” *Coburger Zeitung*, January 26, 1904. Racial and descriptive vocabulary includes “hinterhältig,” “widerstreitend,” “vernichtung,” “rauberliche,” “mörderliche.”

in: a palette of iniquity.<sup>62</sup> A week later, long after other papers published their musings on the conflict's origins, the *Dresdner Journal* maintained its stalwart skepticism, claiming that the rationale for rebellion remained uncertain.<sup>63</sup> Even Farmer Rolf noted the outrageous, irrational nature of the uprising. His Northern natives were peaceful!<sup>64</sup> The onus of the conflict, contrary to the version propagated in the Social Democratic and Leftist presses, lay entirely on the natives, their "perfidy" and irrationality caused these confrontations.

The *Neue Preussische Zeitung* continued this line of accusation. Content to leave speculation on origins to others, the paper responded to the official missionary stance that the natives—not the whites—were the victims. After denigrating the mission to civilize, saying that attendance at school and church had been declining for some time before the war, the paper attacked the notion that the settlers instigated this "mire of sin and disgrace." It claimed that even before the Germans and their civilizing presence arrived, the natives "were not angels."<sup>65</sup> Certainly Europeans did not instigate this conflict. Strangely, only in December did the paper posit its own theory as to the causal factors of the conflict. It was not the then widely held belief that chauvinistic native and land policies

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<sup>62</sup> "Kolonialpolitisches," *Dresdner Journal*, January 14, 1904. "Kaffer" is best translated as "kaffir" or "wog," both pejorative terms for black Africans, particularly in South Africa. "Die Gründe die die Herero neuerdings zu einer Bewegung veranlassen sind noch unbekannt. Die Herero stehen körperlich den südafrikanischen Kaffern sehr nahe. Ihre Körperfarbe ist ein schwarzes Braun, doch sieht man auch gelbbraune Herero."

<sup>63</sup> "Der Aufstand der Hereros," *Dresdner Journal*, January 21, 1904. "Die Ursache des Hereros-Aufstandes bleibt also noch unbekannt."

<sup>64</sup> "Der Aufstand der Hereros," *Dresdner Journal*, January 25, 1904. This report commented about the rebellion that "wie ueberraschend der Aufstand der Hereros den Ansiedlern gekommen ist, ergibt auch ein Schreiben des Farmers Rolfs..." who says: "Im Süden sind leider sehr ernste Unruhen ausgebrochen...Unsre Lage hier im Norden ist be idem völlig friedlichen Charakter unsrer Eingeborenen (Hereros) völlig gesichert."

<sup>65</sup> "Der Aufstand in Deutsche-Südwestafrika und die dortigen Missionen," *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 23, 1904. It responded to allegations that the settlers began this "Sumpf von Sünde und Schande." And it placed the blame on the natives, who "die Eingeborenen schon vor ihrer Bekanntschaft mit den deutschen Ansiedlern keine Engel waren."

caused the rebellion; “that cannot be the reason.” Rather, the Herero captain claimed to have been visited in a dream and divinely inspired to throw off the imperial yoke. Still, it was “hard to give a clear picture of the uprising.”<sup>66</sup> Even in the face of popular conceptions of the conflict, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* continued to grasp at straws, citing once again, the sub-standard intellect and reasoning of the Herero as the ultimate reason for the conflict. This was more so the case a year later, at the outbreak of the Maji-Maji War. In the middle of detailing the war’s tactics and strategy, it blamed African, tribal magic and superstition for stoking the fires of rebellion.<sup>67</sup> The *Dresdner Journal* averred that the natives were too used to freedom, driving them into the ranks of the Herero and irrationally distancing themselves from the social order that the Germans offered.<sup>68</sup> Even the *Frankfurter Zeitung* printed an editorial which claimed that “the Hottentots decide simply to destroy or not; plunder, escape, and action are their favorite existence...nomads all have this character...European ways are lost on them.”<sup>69</sup> Written by an Englishman, it attests at the very least to a global view of colonial conflict. These arguments, however, did not seem to occupy the editors for very long. Perhaps their half-hearted, contrarian

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<sup>66</sup> “Aufstand in Südwestafrika,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, December 8, 1904. It notes that what others say “nicht die Rede sein kann,” and that “Es ist schwer, über den Aufstand schon jetzt ein klares Bild zu geben.”

<sup>67</sup> “Aufstand in Ostafrika,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, September 1, 1905. In the region where “Der Einfluss der deutschen Behoerden ist dort gering,” “die Makumbileute durch Hezereien eines Zauberes aufgewiegelt seien, wie dies auch amtlich gemeldet wurde, eine Nachricht, die hier in der Presse mehrfach bespoettelt wurde. Kenner der dortigen Zustaende versichern aber, dass die Neger ausserordentlich dem Aberglauben zugetan sind, und der Brief aus Kilwa besagt, dass die dortigen, im Dienst von Weissen stehenden Schwarzen ueberzeugt seien, diser Zauberer sei halb Mensch, halb Schlange. Dieser nun habe den Makumbileuten untersagt, ferner fuer die Weissen zu arbeiten.”

<sup>68</sup> “Der Aufstand der Hereros,” *Dresdner Journal*, January 20, 1904. “Es lag also nicht der mindeste Grund vor, in die Loyalität und die Friedfertigkeit der Hereros im allgemeinen Zweifel zu fetzen. Immerhin bleiben die Hereros die Gegner der Staatlichen und gesellschaftlichen Ordnung, die wir ihnen doch schliesslich aufzmingen müssen.”

<sup>69</sup> “Deutscher und Engländer in Südafrika,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 20, 1905. “Denn den Hottentotten macht es seinen Unterschied, ob sie ‘geschlagen’ sind oder nicht; fuer sie ist Pluendern, Ausweichen und dann wieder Vorgehen die liebste Existenz. Dieses nomadische Volk had immer denselben Charakter gehabt.” “Bei diesem Volk ist mit den europaeischen Methoden gar nichts auszurichten.”

suggestions reflected their ambivalence, while they stood firm on their recommendations for war conduct and German reprisals.

More racist even than blaming the stupid Africans for rising up against the Europeans, were their notions of post-war native relations and their visions of the future. To be sure, the half of the press more apt to blame the colonists than the natives had their own visions; they were just less clear. Overall, however, the future of Africa was highly racialized. Even *Vorwärts* dehumanized the Herero as it celebrated their exercise in violent agency. It almost reveled in the lusty, powerful mauling of the European settlers albeit with the instruments of Western dominance. It hardly evoked a human form, rather that of some dangerous, exotic beast.<sup>70</sup> While the newspaper as we have noted wanted better treatment for the natives, it was not inclined to suggest that they were beyond the help of white civilization. It criticized the mistreatment of “Negers,” but above all it put the missionaries to task for their silence and portioned blame to Oberst Leutwein as well.<sup>71</sup> In other words, the civilizing, christianizing mission failed its supposed beneficiaries. The civilizing mission was a positive force, in theory, but its silence made it complicit in the inegalitarian system of imperial dominance. In a similar way, the *NPZ* hoped that the civilizing mission had not suffered irreparably from the uprising. In the rightist ranks, the missionaries still had a purpose, to sow the seeds of civilization so that some “fruits” may be enjoyed.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> “Über die Ursachen des Herero-Aufstandes,” *Vorwärts*, January 28, 1904. After talking about the inequality of capitalist imperialism, the article notes ironically that “Nun, die Eingeborenen wird man einstweilen kraftig mit Pulver und Blei traktieren!”

<sup>71</sup> “Ein neuer Arenberg,” *Vorwärts*, August 19, 1904. “Allerdings haben auch wir mehrfach konstatieren muessen, dass dies Menschlichkeits- und Verantwortungsgefuehl bei weiten nicht so ausgepraegt war, wie man das von Repraesentanten des Christentums und der Civilsation haette erwarten muessen. Die Missionare haben viel zu lange geschwiegen und sind dann viel zu frueh wieder verstummt!”

<sup>72</sup> In its article on the missions from January 23, 1904 the *NZP* noted: “Hoffen wir, dass nicht die Fruechte einer Arbeit verloren sind, welche mit so viel idealer Ausopferung seit vielen Jahren geleistet wurde!”

The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, as previously noted, was less optimistic about the prospects of the civilizing mission, but it also had opinions on the future of the colonies and Germany's natives. Concerned about the bottom line, it advocated a less hands on stance. As the war was still ongoing, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* suggested first that friendly natives might be recruited to do Germany's dirty work against the Herero, considering the expense and the difficulty of operationalizing a protracted colonial war.<sup>73</sup> That same day, it lamented that only the social democrats had objected to budgetary increases to help fund the colonies, despite the extreme reservations of many politicians.<sup>74</sup> Although it had suggested that the war was ultimately the Germans' fault, the newspaper recognized what is in the best interest of the German people. It pleaded with Trotha to recognize his enemy and not to stir up the tribes that "were quiet during the Herero rebellion."<sup>75</sup> Alienating all of them would surely be a mistake. Yet, this plea came from self-interest. This is best exemplified in the call for a new governor: "If the previous governor [Leutwein] had been there...he would have made greater use of the natives through his personal influence."<sup>76</sup> Perhaps it pined for the days of Leutwein's policy of "divide and rule" over Trotha's singular and destructive vision. Natives served a purpose, and treating them poorly was counter-intuitive to that purpose. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* truly understood the value of a worker, if it was loath to see blacks as humans. It was only rational to suggest that "we should finally see that without the natives as workers the colony is totally worthless."<sup>77</sup> A

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<sup>73</sup> "Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, January 20, 1904, Zweite Beilage.

<sup>74</sup> "Deutscher Reichstag. Der Nachtragsetat für Südwestafrika—sozialdemokratische Interpellation über russische Polizeienten," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, January 20, 1904, Dritte Beilage.

<sup>75</sup> "Herr v. Trotha," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 19, 1905, Zweite Beilage.

<sup>76</sup> "Der Gouvernenwechsel in Südwestafrika," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 21, 1905. "Wäre Leutwein dort geblieben...und sein persönlicher Einfluss auf die Eingeborenen wäre gerade dort von goreserem Nutzen gewesen."

<sup>77</sup> "Die Unruhen in Deutsch-Ostafrika," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 19, 1905. "Wir sollten uns endlich verstehen...denn ohne die Eingeborenen als Arbeiter ist die Kolonie doch voellig wertlos..."



responsible German administration and rational use of colonial resources—including a better native policy—was all the *Frankfurter Zeitung* could hope for.

Perhaps a more eerie vision of the future came from the pages of the *Coburger Zeitung*, which advocated “checking” the Herero with an “iron fist.” To reverse the prior “benevolent” German policy toward the natives would only turn them into Germany’s favored children.<sup>78</sup> A day later, it proudly reprinted a *Kolnisher Zeitung* piece that celebrated the death of the Herero tribe as a means to an end: the establishment of a cultural haven of the “first order” by whites. It called for the atonement of Herero guilt through laboring for the erection of this onrushing culture. Further, it called for the placement of chieftains of “other tribes” into systems of observation, and it relished the prospect of extending the war to the Witbooi and other tribes in the south of the colony.<sup>79</sup> During the conflict in East Africa, the *Coburger Zeitung* suggested making the blacks utterly subservient to the whites, averring that blacks should under no circumstances be educated. Educating the natives, in combination with their “evil instincts” “would not result in men, rather beasts and traveling animals that did not murder alone.”<sup>80</sup> Whites, by their own kindness, have compromised their own safety. Exerting greater power, by this paper’s logic, would restore that security. The *Berliner Neuesten Nachrichten* called for a mass immigration not only of Germans but of whites from all around the world. It lamented the “failure of the hitherto mild” native policy and called for “extensive reductions of native rights in retribution for their transgressions against the farmers.” Overall, it desired “the

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<sup>78</sup> “Zum Aufstand der Hereros,” *Coburger Zeitung*, January 26, 1904.

<sup>79</sup> “Aus dem Schutzgebieten,” *Coburger Zeitung*, August 15, 1904. the article also uses the language of “putzen” or “to clean up.” Helmut Walser Smith has discussed the development of eliminationist racism and its language in *The Continuities of German History*, 167-210.

<sup>80</sup> “Unser Afrika,” *Coburger Zeitung*, August 25, 1905. It talks about the native’s “bosen Instinkte,” and it advocated depriving the natives of education, otherwise “dann find es keine Menschen mehr, sondern Bestien, reisende Tiere, die nicht allein morden.”

elevation of Europeans over coloreds in every regard.”<sup>81</sup> This was a highly racial conception of the future. One way of establishing this dynamic of power was discussed in numerous papers: forced labor.

This theme, however, was not new to the overall discussion of colonial politics. The future of the colonies was often conceptualized in utilitarian terms. The conflict only exacerbated the suppositions of certain papers. As the news of violence in South West Africa broke, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* was already calling for the importation of Chinese laborers to replicate the ongoing English experiment to the south. Because the “hitherto spent kaffirs” no longer functioned well—“whether because of numbers or because of endurance” or because they were “indolent by nature and only worked” when on the cusp of abject poverty—alternative sources of labor needed to be found. Whites would not suffice, because they would be quick to demand rights and might for a “proletariat.” The obvious solution, “with regards to the industrious character of the Chinese,” was hiring “oriental lorries.”<sup>82</sup> A progress report on the English experiment with “coolies,” mentions that an outbreak of Beriberi sickness clouded some of the optimism surrounding the project. Yet, “in every other aspect of their health the coolies [we]re extraordinarily good,” and the benefits extended to white and black worker alike. Far from a competition with the “yellow workers,” white workers seemed to have taken to the Chi-

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<sup>81</sup> “Kein Lamm Durfen Sie Behalten,” *Berliner Neuesten Nachrichten* cited in “Aus anderen Blätter,” *Vorwärts*, Feb 2, 1904. The BNN was a very conservative newspaper. In this article a military man with experience in the colonies advocated the “hebung der Stellung des Europaers dem Farbigen gegenüber in jeder Beziehung;” he wrote that the about the native policy as being “verfehlt bisherige milde (!),” and he called for “weitgehende Einschränkung der Rechte der aufrehrerischen Eingeborenenstaemme zu Gunsten der schwer geschädigten und bisher im Verhaeltnes zu den Eingeborenen oft recht stiefmütterlich behandelten (!) weissen Farmer.” The exclamation points were included in the *Vorwärts* version, presumably because the paper did not agree with the statements or thought they were outrageous.

<sup>82</sup> “Der chinesische Arbeit in Südafrika,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 15, 1904: “Es fehlt an Arbeitern zur Ausbeutung der Minen. Der bisher verwendete Kaffer genuegt nicht mehr—weder an Zahl, noch in Bezug auf Ausdauer. Indolent von Natur, arbeitet er nur, wenn er von der Not dazu getrieben wird;” “Die Bedenken waren sowohl materieller wie moralischer Art. Im Hinblick auf den industriellen Character der Chinesen.”

nese. Incidentally the rejuvenation of the “Neger” ranks was surmised to be a result of their origin of procurement. Central Africans were far healthier than those in the South.<sup>83</sup> The conflict in East Africa may have blocked some inroads to spreading German culture, but the *Dresdner Journal* hoped that technological advance would help to “naturally elevate the baser culture.” The natives would be assigned “primary work” leading to this elevation and “spread in every direction.” It also “hope[d] that much would come out of cotton culture,” particularly making the most of the “natives abilities.”<sup>84</sup> Conflict did not change these previous notions of the potential of the natives, but it amplified the calls and the vehemence driving them. Conflict shook the Germans and the white settlers out of their complacency, enraging some and driving others to despairing notions of a monolithic struggle between white civilization and black chaos.

Strands of this racial competition have been discussed already; the article from the *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten* stressed the supremacy of the white race in comparison to the black masses. The *Kolnisher Zeitung* and the *Coburger Zeitung* both called for the establishment of a white cultural order in which blacks would be ultimately subservient. Even *Vorwärts* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* alluded to some large conflict with their criticisms of colonial policy and the mission to civilize. It is easy to read the panic and over-reaction in many of these articles. Often, however, these themes came to the fore in the logic of colonial politics. The *Dresdner Journal*, for example, called for the lessons of South West Africa—“a strong hand does not fail”—to be learned, in order become a

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<sup>83</sup> “Afrika,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 20, 1904. “In jeder anderen Beziehung sei der Gesundheitszustand der Kulis ausserordentlich gut;” “Von seiten der Schwarzen fand keinerlei feindfelige Rundgebung gegen die gelben Arbeiter statt, und die weissen Minenarbeiterr scheinen die Chinesen sogar mit grosser Genugtuung zu empfangen.”

<sup>84</sup> “Kolonialpolitisches,” *Dresdner Journal*, October 8, 1904. “Das Natürliche ist nur die Hebung der Bodenkultur;” “man die fremden Bevölkerungen selber die Hauptarbeit tun lässt und sie nur in jeder Richtung stuetzt;” “gemäs dem Vermögen der Bevölkerung.”

great colonial power. The competition to divide the remaining portions “of the black areas of the world” through “different means and methods,” however, did not pit Germany against its colonial rivals. Rather, cooperation between Germany and, primarily, England was “in the best interests of the white population of Africa;” the battles in South West Africa were microcosmic, and by writing about Germany’s fight “England was writing about the state of all whites...and the victory of German weapons against the native population of Africa will be exceedingly beneficial in the eyes of the white race.”<sup>85</sup> Although the same article pondered the material value of the colonies, Africa was viewed as exceedingly important as a racial battlefield. It was to be a victory of the white race, in cooperation, against the entire population of Africa. A *Frankfurter Zeitung* editorial also recommends general European cooperation. The author, an English colonial advocate in South Africa, also wanted a reciprocal colonial relationship between England and Germany. His ultimate fear was the Hottentot uprising spreading into South Africa from the north, but he expressed it as a fear of the “growth of the coloreds against the whites.”<sup>86</sup>

As we have seen, the variety of interpretations on the war, their opponents, and what it all meant corresponded to the numbers of newspapers, editors, and journalists that discussed them. Even within newspapers, there was often considerable variation. This contributed to a discourse on race and colonial policy that turned out to be multi-faceted and diverse. Yet, these discussions, while superficially diverse, bled into and were in-

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<sup>85</sup> “Afrika,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 26, 1904: “nach verschiedene Methode und mit verschiedenen Mitteln;” “des Schwarzen Erdteils;” “eine starke Hand nicht fehlen darf;” “Auch der deutsche Aussenhandel würde von einer solchen Abmachung, die al seine wirksame Foerderung der witeren Kolonisierung Afrikas anzusehen waere, wesentliche Vorteile erwarten duerfen, muss doch jede Massnahme, die dem Interesse der weissen Bevölkerung in Afrika dient, willkommen deheissen werden, ebenso wie kürzlich ein engliches Blatt mit Recht hervorgehoben hat, dass der Kampf, den Deutschland gegenwärtig in Südwestafrika führt, die Sache aller Weissen ist und dass der nicht zu bezweifelnde Sieg der deutschen Waffen dem Ansehen der weissen Rasse bei der einheimischen Bevölkerung Afrikas in hohem Masse zu statten kommen muss.”

<sup>86</sup> “Deutscher und Engländer in Südafrika,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 20, 1905. “Das Wachsen der Abneidigung der Farbigung gegen die Weissen.”

formed by much larger debates. Rather than simply discussing their African holdings and the populations therein, these newspapers viewed, interpreted, and wrote through a domestic political/social lens. Commentary on colonial conflict rarely stopped just at that; rather it was also a way to discuss other concerns. There were multiple layers of meaning in the discourse coming out of the colonial wars, and although these were as diverse as the primary discussion, certain themes manifested. The next part will identify some of these debates.

### **Beyond Racial Language**

As the Herero surge holed German settlers in their scattered strongholds, politicians in Berlin met to discuss sending additional troops and material. Even in such dire straits, when conservatives and radicals alike voted yes to massive additions to the colonial budget, August Bebel and his Social Democrats comprised the only opposition to the proceedings. Although their reservations extended only so far as to abstain from the vote, Bebel made his party's stance on the current colonial regime and the situation in South West Africa sufficiently clear. A day later, Bebel was derided in the nationalist press; the *Corburger Zeitung*, for example, criticized his "kowtowing" to the upstart Africans and calling him "hereroish."<sup>87</sup> Surely, the journalists and editors of the newspaper were not accusing the vocal politician of having no culture or civilization, nor did they consider him of a lesser race. Rather, through the use of colonially and racially charged words and ideas, the *Coburger Zeitung* attacked Bebel's stance, his party, his credibility, and above all his patriotism. Without such language, the newspaper could easily have

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<sup>87</sup> "Der 'hereroische' Bebel," *Coburger Zeitung*, January 17, 1904. It mentions that "Der 'hereroische' Bebel" will "kautau" to the native insurgents.

written a more scathing indictment, but the trends mentioned above offered another way for the multifarious discussion in the press to observe other aspects of German reality. Specifically, these racial notions provided ammunition for salvos fired in the realm of politics, especially as Germany became increasingly nation-centered, and they offered an alternative forum to comment on German society.

### **The Politics of Conflict and Race**

German politics during the period of most intense colonial conflict, 1904 to 1907, is best characterized as a showdown over the role, importance, and meaning of the nation. The wars in German East Africa and South West Africa proved especially significant in the politics of the nation. If the 1880s and 1890s witnessed the rise of the Social Democratic party to being the largest and at least the second most powerful political faction in the Reichstag, it came at the cost of polarizing politics into nationalists and non-nationalists. Three different times in the 90s, the government was dissolved and elections brought in increasingly nation-oriented politicians. That is not to say that both the transnational socialists and the skeptical center/Catholic party waned in numbers and influence. Rather, they accomplished two things. First, as noted by Sheehan, they forced the Left Liberal party into the conservative ranks. Having suffered a decades-long crisis of ideology and identity, the Left Liberals were forced to make a decision regarding their stance on the shape the nation should take and the influence it would have. Second, the subsequent move to the political right—with the national parties and the various conservative parties—allowed the ascendant conservative bloc to force their hand on such national issues as militarism, the navy, and colonialism. The division of politics into three

primary spheres of influence and varying numbers of “radicals” parties—Poles, Guelphs, etc.—provided the background for yet another watershed dissolution of parliament in 1906, elections to be the next year. 1907, thus, proved an important date to the future of the national program.<sup>88</sup>

Significant to the timing of this reshuffling of the Reichstag was the surge in native violence and the questions these raised regarding other important, national issues. Response to the violence and to the increasing of colonial and military budgets—the ultimate indicator of national motivations—were simply the culmination of years of political debate over the same issues whipped up into a frothy, patriotic head. On one side of the long standing argument over the military, navy matters, and imperial aspirations were the conservatives, recently joined by the National and soon the Left Liberals, as sympathetic with these nationalist policies. “Prussian” conservatives, primarily concerned about military strength and the maintenance of the monarchy, and “German” conservatives, who cared more about business and industrial concerns, both supported the national project. They supported all military bills and patriotically supported all naval and colonial enterprises. The National Liberals even more enthusiastically supported the Empire’s national program. The party of the middle classes, they counted among their numbers some

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<sup>88</sup> James J. Sheehan has written the premier monograph on German liberalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, giving an entire chapter to the political/ideological crises it faced in the Wilhelmine era, James Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 239-257. Gordon Craig, *Germany: 1866-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 251-271 details the difficulties the Reichstag faced structurally, mentioning that this time period was one of shifting blocs of influence and impotence in the face of economic and military interests. George Crothers has written about the 1907 elections—otherwise known as the Hottentot elections—as a watershed event in the gathering momentum of the national movement in *The German Elections of 1907* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1968), 11-18 and 239-249.; Alastair P. Thompson, *Left Liberals, the State, and Popular Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7-23. He puts into greater perspective the fractious nature of politics both within and among parties. His account attempts to deconstruct the Left Liberals, noting the incredible influence of local interests and the ideological variance between rural and urban, regional and national fragments of the party.

of the leading industrialists and the most distinguished professors, who had long ago allowed their nationalism to eclipse their liberalism. And despite their descent from the heights of Bismarck's chancellorship, they comprised an able and significant bloc of nationalists.<sup>89</sup>

On the other side of the national fence were the center party—the Catholic party—and the Social Democrats, the two most significant political groups at odds especially with the liberal/conservative stance on colonialism. The Centrists were not contrary to the national project per se. From 1897 they had often voted for military, naval, and colonial endeavors, but they nearly always fought to mitigate or dilute these bills' impacts, severely denting national aspirations. In regards to colonial policy, the Center party—in reality a confessional, Catholic party—supported imperial expansion as long as the intent was to civilize and spread Christianity to the natives. As such it frequently attacked German native policy, business practices, and the bureaucratic walls erected against the missionaries. Although they voted at the outbreak of the war in South West Africa to send additional troops and material, their criticisms of colonial policy and exaggerated liberal perceptions of their relation to the church and the Pope caused Bülow to consider them “enemies within the gates.”<sup>90</sup> Despite their recent complicity with regards to colonialism, the view persisted that they were anti-national. Lumped together with the center party with Bülow's ignominious tag were the Social Democrats, whose opinions of national projects were far less flexible. Social Democrats had remained vehemently anti-national; it was fundamental to their party platform. They opposed military bills, naval bills, and

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<sup>89</sup> Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia 1600-1947* (London: Penguin, 2007), 603-606. Clark's assessment of the colonial project is surrounded by the Prussian military establishment's dangerous programme to extend military powers through bureaucratic means. His is a look at the nationalization of Germany and Prussia through militarization.

<sup>90</sup> Craig, *Germany*, 280.



imperial acquisition. Dogmatically, they opposed capitalism, and since imperialism was capitalist, they opposed it as well. They attacked the logic of imperialism on other fronts, however, claiming that it was hardly conducive to capitalist economic growth and that it weakened rather than strengthened the German geopolitical position. They also, although it was the weakest in their arsenal of arguments, fought against imperialism on humanitarian grounds. The contrarian voices within the party advocating more ideological flexibility were far too few to make a difference. Unraveling rapidly for other internal reasons,<sup>91</sup> the Social Democrats were too weak to stand alone, despite their numerical strength. These numbers would prove futile under Bülow's sustained attack.

Prior to the dissolution of the Reichstag in 1906, the national project had encountered some resistance, primarily the center party and the Social Democrats, but a 1905 Socialist/center opposition to cavalry increases as well as vitriolic anti-Catholic sentiment among his advisors forced Bülow to act. In order to succeed in his stated policy to unite the nation through foreign policy, he “decided to break with the Center party and to create a new coalition by means of an electoral campaign based on nationalism, anti-socialism, and appeals to the latent anti-Catholicism that existed in certain parts of the country.”<sup>92</sup> He ran the subsequent campaign with the aid of colonial, Pan-German, and Naval Leagues, viciously attacking the Center Party and Social Democrats. He manipulated the patriotism of the average voter, urging him to punish these “enemies” for ignoring the national interest—or the interests of nationalist foreign policy. The resulting elections gave the Bülow bloc a slim majority, even without the Center party. More than the

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<sup>91</sup> Primarily their failure to control and motivate the trade unions, a crippling reality; still, the Social Democrats remained a staunch opponent, who none wanted to bargain with: “the price of collaboration with the working class was social and political change that [the conservatives and center party] thought they could not afford.” Craig, *Germany*, 269.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 280, 279-284.

tenuous majority Bülow's conservative grouping achieved, the Centrists and the Social Democrats learned a harsh lesson about the rising nationalism in Germany. Taking their cue from the election, they tempered their staunch opposition to "national interests," the center party drifting towards the right in that regard, and the Social Democrats deciding to choose their battles more carefully. Thus, the colonies were deeply significant to the rightward shift in German politics as World War I approached. Conflicts in Germany's South West and East African colonies were the proverbial straws that shattered all resistance to political nationalism.<sup>93</sup>

Bülow's efforts, his adept use of propaganda and his mobilization of the masses, were certainly central to the political pendulum swinging once again to the right. The press, however, also served as a vehicle for discussion in these matters. They did so overtly, of course, but conflict with natives also offered journalists and editors another lens through which to view the political drama in Berlin. Specifically, the racial language inherent to discussing the causes of the war and its eventual ideal outcome simultaneously stressed the importance, or the evils, of militarism and nationalism. Similarly, it offered a way to attack political opponents of colonialism and the national project—namely, the Social Democrats and the Center Party. Finally, it reflected the Left Liberal shift to the right.

As I have already sought to express, attempts to explain the wars in East and South West Africa as well as ideal conduct and outcomes of each were central to the coverage of native conflict. These were at once broadly racist, and they were also a commen-

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<sup>93</sup> See also Crothers, *The German Elections of 1907*, 11-61. This comprises the topic of Crothers whole book; he gives space to the background, the election, the figures, and the aftermath of the election.

tary on the national project gaining momentum in Germany.<sup>94</sup> As the majority of the newspapers used in this study give good indication to the conservative aspect of this debate, it is fair to say that the Center party and Social Democratic voices go underrepresented. As such, much of the content of these papers promoted some aspect of Bülow's national program, if not all of it. It has been noted that these have coincided in history with extreme domestic persecution of minorities—Jews, Poles, and gypsies—and that the Kaiserreich witnessed some of the most drastic instances of this national mentality.<sup>95</sup> This was done overtly, particularly in regards to militaristic nationalism, in the conservative press. The *Coburger Zeitung*, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* and the *Dresdner Journal* all elevated the military in the colonies to a heroic level, recounting their bravery and sacrifice while stoking the patriotic fires at home. Each newspaper printed the Kaiser's message to his departing troops; each mentioned the newly created military award designated to commemorate the soldier that "died for King and Empire" and "honor their memory."<sup>96</sup> Similarly, they tugged on the empathetic, patriotic heartstrings of the German nation by mentioning the "hardships" their military faced in South West Africa. Alternatively, they suggested that it was the duty of both the people and the government to support the military and "be thankful for the men who risk their lives and health for honor of

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<sup>94</sup> A good indicator of this was the *Neue Preussische Zeitung's* article "Anruf zur Mitarbeit behufs Ermittlung noch heute gebräuchlicher deutscher Namensformen für Orte in fremden Sprachgebieten," January 14, 1904. Even before news of the conflicts had reached German telegraph machines, the *NZP* was advocating a global/nationalist project to spread German language and influence to their parts of the world. It was similarly a call to undertake this project on Germany's terms, not on those of perhaps the more powerful colonizing powers.

<sup>95</sup> Panikos Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Turks, and Others* (Edinburgh: Longman, 2000), 68-72.

<sup>96</sup> "Der Aufstand der Hereros," *Dresdner Journal*, August 29, 1904. The inscription on the medal read: "Starb für Kaiser und Reich. Ehre seinem Andenken." It was only for those that died. It does not mention whether there is a medal for those that survived.

the fatherland.”<sup>97</sup> The military was thus depicted as an overwhelmed, but honorable, corps of men fatalistically condemned. Juxtaposed to the honorable, patriotic man in the military, the natives wreaked incredible havoc with their “murderous hands,” “perfidious” and “antagonistic” nature, and their savagery in numbers. The danger at hand dehumanized the natives, as we have already seen, but it also cast the military in a favorable light, the true representatives and saviors of Germans and German culture.

In searching for the causes and solutions to the conflicts at hand, by dehumanizing the natives and describing their appearance and actions in frightening, racially charged ways, the conservative press also promoted national and military interests. Naturally, the conservative response to the conflict’s outbreak was to call for more troops to bring stability and punish the natives. The explanation for the apostasy of the “hitherto German-friendly”<sup>98</sup> natives often turned to the irrationality of the natives, but this was often tied to claims that a greater military presence might have prevented the conflict.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> “Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 18, 1905. “das deutsche Volk mit dieser Teilnahmslosigkeit eine grosse Ungerechtigkeit gegen seine Söhne, die in dem fernen Lande mit einem schonungslosen Gegner kämpfen”. These men, Germany’s sons, must endure hardships of climate and poor food to face a possible “gauenhaftes Ende unter den Moerderhaenden der Aufstaendischen.” Ultimately, this is about SWA and supplying the troops there adequately. “Das deutsche Volk hat die Pflicht, den Männern dankbar zu sein, die ihr Leben und ihre Gesundheit für die Ehre des Vaterlands in die Schanzen schlagen, und wir hoffen dass wenn erst diese Empfindung wieder allgemein zum Durchbruch werden, die so manchen unserer Soldaten jetzt beseelen, wenn er bei der Rueckkehr in die Heimat auch teilnahmslosen Mangel an Verständnis fuer die Leistungen vor dem Feinde stötzt, nicht nur im Volk, sondern auch bei Persönlichkeiten, die besser unerrichtet sein muesten.” As for the government, all three stressed the adequate supplying of the troops, while slagging off the segments of the government that opposed such actions. A good example is the article “Deutsche Reichstag,” *Dresdner Journal*, January 20, 1904. It mentions that stopping the natives is directly linked to Germany’s “nationale Ehre.”

<sup>98</sup> “Aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 14, 1904. This was the first report on the conflict and noted with some incredulity that the Herero had been “bisher deutschfreundlich.”

<sup>99</sup> “Vom Aufstand der Hereros,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 20, 1904. “Nach den bestehenden Vortschriften muessen die Kapitulationen auf die Dauer von 3.5 Jahren abgeschlossen werden. Die Zurückführung der Truppe auf den normalen Mannschaftstand kann also auch nach Benndigung des Aufstandes nur nach Massgabe des Ablaufes der Kapitulationen in der Weise erfolgen...” Also, “Aus anderen Blättern,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 21, 1904 which talks about the need to learn the military lessons of the conflict.

Yet, the conservative press was more concerned with the future of the colony, indicative of their focus on the process of national strengthening in the metropole. The Social Democrats and proponents of the Center Party, however, entered the equation by opposing militarism and colonialism.

Of course, the Social Democratic press attacked the military build up in the colonies overtly as uneconomical and inhumane. But it also attacked Bulow's national program through descriptions of the natives and their conduct in the war. As the initial stages of the war witnessed the crippling of German military hegemony in the colony, *Vorwärts* both animalized the natives and celebrated the military reverses and the symbolically violent demise of the national program, when it wrote that the natives were "powerfully" "mauling" the settlers with the German's own weapons. The military was counter-productive to the process of civilizing and establishing control, since it was an instrument of this colonial "system of exploitation."<sup>100</sup> Only its destruction would bring order. This same danger was inherent to Germany. The German military was the greatest threat to the nation, not the various 'others' external and internal to the nation—which the conservatives cared much more about. The Social Democratic press dwelled primarily on the economic and humanitarian impacts of the colonies on Germany and the natives. These implications were revolutionary; the military was seen equally as oppressors of the workers and the lower classes as well as the masses of Africans under the colonial flag, The Center party, unfortunately, has not factored into this debate, but their criticisms were best vocalized through the missionaries themselves, whose criticisms of colonialism were

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<sup>100</sup> "Ueber die Ursachen des Herero-Aufstandes," *Vorwärts*, Jan 28, 1904. "Nun, die Eingeborenen wird man einstweilen kraftig mit Pulver und Blei traktieren!" This was all a response to what even the *Frankfurter Zeitung* called the colonial "Ausbeutungssystem." The Social Democratic press agreed whole-heartedly with the Left Liberal views on the colonial system, if not the future of the colony or the course of action.

primarily humanitarian and offered nothing to the ongoing debate over the national question. The conservative press was more focused in their notions of the shape post-conflict Africa would take.

The *Coburger Zeitung* presented a spectacularly structured vision of the future, hoping to wipe out their antagonistic enemies in order to establish a settlement of high civilization and culture. The labor for the erection of this civilization would be provided by the subjugated classes of native workers, the Herero at first and hopefully the Basters and Witbooi in short order. The establishment of German civilization through a structured military policy of “Vernichtung,” a “hard fist” and through the spreading of the “thunderous words of Martin Luther”<sup>101</sup> mirrors the domestic national project as well as the political intricacies in Berlin. Militarism, the hard fist, was viewed as crucial to unite and uplift the colonies, but it was also viewed as a uniting factor in the construction of a strong German nation. Racial language advocated the rise of militarism and by extension the national program. Beside the reification of the military through the telling of heroic tales<sup>102</sup>, labeling them martyrs<sup>103</sup>, and printing the Kaiser’s adieu to the departing troops<sup>104</sup>, it was also seen as crucial to the stabilization of the colonies and the establishment of a strong nation.

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<sup>101</sup> These examples come from articles in the *Coburger Zeitung* from January 26 and 29, both entitled “Zum Aufstand der Hereros” and those from August 15 and 24, 1904, the former entitled “Kolonialpolitisches” and the latter entitled “Aufstand in Südwestafrika.”

<sup>102</sup> “Zum Aufstand der Hereros,” *Coburger Zeitung*, January 18, 1904. This article talks about a soldier that held off attacks with a revolver and a machine gun until he ultimately fell in battle.

<sup>103</sup> See for example “Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 18, 1905.

<sup>104</sup> Wilhelm’s farewell to his troops on the eve of battle: “Ich erwarte dass ihr durch Tapferkeit Mannszucht und Pflichttreue dem Ruf der deutschen Armee Ehre machen werdet, dann wird’s euch nicht schwer fallen, den frechen Aufständischen die verdiente Strafe zuteil werden zu lassen. Gott sei mit euch! Wilhelm.” Every newspaper printed this message, but *Vorwärts* was the only one to follow that by enumerating the absurdities of sending additional troops.

The *Dresdner Journal* also called for stability through racial explanations of the Herero. Because of their fickle loyalty and irrationality—the primary traits of the Herero—they became “the opponents of state and social order,” something that Germany would have to correct. Sending greater numbers of troops, swiftly and thoroughly defeating the natives, and completely disarming them, would serve the best interests of the military and the colony. Similarly, the solution to the problem of division, military strengthening, became the solution to opposition to state and social order. The conflict in South West Africa became another battleground for commentary on the ongoing national project. Problems of state and social order were best solved by the military. At the same time, the Center and Social Democratic parties were targeted for their opposition. Through criticizing the fractious nature of native chieftains and the resulting turn from the benefits of German civilization constituted a simultaneous challenge to the perceived anti-national forces in Berlin. Opposition was as base an undertaking in Germany as it was for the natives, and the interests of German civilization suffered as a result.<sup>105</sup> Attacks on these parties ran through much of the commentary on the natives and their take on native policy.

Conservative assaults on the Center and Social Democratic resistance to increasing the colonial budget and allotting for a greater military presence were overtly expressed. They continued to stress the need for military strength, for victory and stability’s sake. They derided the segment of “the German people that (by refusing to support the military increases in 1905) were doing an extreme disservice against their sons, who were

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<sup>105</sup> “Zum Aufstand der Hereros,” *Dresdner Journal*, January 20, 1904.

dying in foreign lands.”<sup>106</sup> But the frequent criticisms of the left and center parties by the conservative parties were also evident in their musings on the conduct of the war and the shape the colonies would take afterwards. The utopian notion of the future found in the *Coburger Zeitung*, for example, was to be guided by the spirit and teachings of the Protestant hero of Germany, amounting to an attack on the Catholic party. Another attack on the center came from the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* who patronizingly “hoped that the fruits of the labor” of the civilizing mission were not lost, while simultaneously listing the limits of its success and possibilities.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, the *Coburger Zeitung* denigrated the Socialist leader as engaging in an act of “yellow” deference and also by equating him to an inferior, albeit dangerous, enemy of the nation. Native rights also proved to be fertile territory for mudslinging as well. The *Neue Preussische Zeitung* criticized the colonial reforms that liberalized native policy following the outrage of the Herero genocide. Specifically, it went after leftist attempts to grant native rights. There was not need to understand the native, nor was there any reason to give the natives rights, when it could deter Germany from benefiting from a newly discovered source of coal, for example. The racially utilitarian nature of natives in extracting resources was paramount to any silly leftist scheme that worked counter to the military and economic interests of Germany.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> “Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 18, 1905. It criticized the lack of support they perceived in Germany for the soldiers in Africa, saying “das deutsche Volk mit dieser Teilnahmslosigkeit eine grosse Ungerechtigkeit gegen seine Söhne, die in dem fernen Land mit einem schungslosen Gegner kämpfen...”

<sup>107</sup> “Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika und die dortigen Missionen.,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 23, 1904. It mentioned the journalist’s ‘sincere’ hopes that “Hoffen wir, dass nicht die Früchte einer Arbeit verloren sind, welche mit so viel idealer Ausopferung seit vielen Jahren geleistet wurde!” It was quick to note, however, that “die Eingeborenen schon vor ihrer Bekanntschaft mit den deutschen Ansiedlern keine Engel waren.”

<sup>108</sup> “Reformfragen des deutschen Kolonialrechts.,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, July 9, 1907. “Letztere, die zum grossen Teil noch gänzlich unbekannt sind, aufzudenken und zu fixieren, ist ein um so dringenderes



Other papers and ideologies became involved in the attacks as well. The Social Democratic newspaper was wont to go after their Center Party rivals as well, attacking the civilizing mission's silence in the face of such heinous abuses. Their primary criticisms were reserved for the conservatives, however. Their vituperative railings against settler conduct and against the bureaucratic failings of Berlin, colonial administrators and, later, the military often emerged from descriptions of the barbaric treatment of natives. Although humanitarian concerns were significant to the argument, these attacks were intended to be political galvanizations pointing out the hypocrisy of the government and the wastage of the colonies. It is, however, significant that race and native policy provided significant ammunition to arguments over taxation, for example, that had very little to do with the natives themselves. Even identity seeking parties entered the political fray over colonial excesses and failures, appropriating the language of race along the way.

The Left Liberals also recognized and exposed the futility of the civilizing mission from the outset of the conflict in South West Africa; to them, the natives were beyond improvement. Yet, this evolving party, which found a voice through the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, also came to criticize their compatriots on the right of center. The paper only did so for one year, but at the outbreak of the conflict, it criticized the manifestation of German colonialism. It pointed out the shortcomings of the missions despite the civilizing rhetoric in Berlin and the colonies, and it criticized the way in which the settlers had behaved in instigating the natives to rebellion. A year later, however, perhaps an in-

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Bedürfnis geworden, also grundsätzlich ueber die Eingeborenen nach ihren eigenen Normen Recht gesprochen werden soll. Jede derartige Justiz fesselt natürlich in erster Linie die genaue Kenntnis jener Normen voraus. Obwohl sich Kohlen durch seine Forschungen auf diesem Gebiet schon grosse Verdienste erworben hat, ist doch ein planmässiges Erforschchen des Eingeborenenrechts von Staats wegen unerlässlich.”

indicator of the party's rightward shift into Bulow's national bloc, the paper only released a military man's interpretation of the events in East Africa. Far more critical of the natives and supportive of harsher military solutions, it appeared that the paper's notion of the power, role, and importance of the state and order had changed. Allowing the military to speak through it represents a dramatic shift in the *Frankfurter Zeitung's* approach to the conflicts in South West Africa and East Africa. It suggested that the paper's skepticism had given way to more stringent support of the conservative, national stance. It also suggested that it had fewer reservations about considering the natives to be tools for a greater national purpose.<sup>109</sup>

These notions of race, of the power of the state in building a visionary colonial future, the military's role in that conversation, and the internal and external enemies that plan faced bespoke another important discourse underlying these conversations. This one, however, dealt with a European wide epidemic of democratization, the fear of the masses, and the fear of the degeneration of society. The native enemy and German attempts to understand him were tainted in the press by commentary on the condition of European society.

### **Native Conflict and the Masses of Europe**

It would be easy to place the social questions that these discourses address in a simply German context. As we will see, however, the discussion of natives tends to in-

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<sup>109</sup> Contrasting the articles on August 17, 1905 and August 24, 1905 on German East Africa and the ones covering the outbreak of conflict in South West Africa are very revealing. The paper continues to call for responsible governing of the colonies, but that responsibility comes from the military now. The military had better candidates to lead than von Trotha, who was derided in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* several times, most overtly on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of August: "Die Truppentransporte nach Südwestafrika" and "Der Gouvernerwechsel in Südwestafrika."

volve the language of “whites” against “blacks.” This monolithic showdown between the races crossed borders, forcing German and English colonial commentators alike to contemplate greater cooperation among the European powers, no matter how unpalatable that many have seemed. Thus, it is better to understand this discourse in terms of a European caste of imperialists and nationalists faced with the menace of the increasingly influential lower classes of society. This conversation was debated along ideological lines within Germany, but it was also a European concern. As German newspapers reported the news from Africa, it was charged with what Nipperdey calls the “question of society.”<sup>110</sup> Specifically, these papers expressed this fear through the amalgamation and exaggeration of African native tribes. They commented on the base living standards, values, and morals of the European masses through their descriptions of the native belligerents and their enumerated atrocities. Finally, they also stressed the importance of class demarcation. At times the Herero and the Matumbi native took the shape of the downtrodden European worker, for better or for worse.

The language of competition between races manifested in the press as a reaction to the troubles in Germany’s colonies and to opposition to the national program at home. It drove some conservative presses to aver that the division of the “black world” “through different means and methods” was almost complete. The resulting battle between races was best solved with a “strong hand” and cooperation between the colonial powers. “The values of all whites will be served by the victory of German arms over the native inhabitants of Africa.”<sup>111</sup> Cooperation with the English was also discussed by the Left Liberal

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<sup>110</sup> Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*.

<sup>111</sup> “Afrika,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 26, 1904. “Auch der deutsche Aussenhandel wuerde von einer solchen Abmachung, die al seine wirksame Förderung der witeren Kolonisierung Afrikas anzusehen wäre, wesentliche Vorteile erwarten dürfen, muss doch jede Massnahme, die dem Interesse der wiessen Bevölke-

*Frankfurter Zeitung*, which noted the alarming rise of the natives in relation to the whites and suggested that the solution could be found in American treatment of their own blacks.<sup>112</sup> Colonizing powers peered over each other's shoulders, despite their foreign rivalries. The *Kreuzzeitung* also suggested sharing information with England and France to avoid such uprisings. In theory these ideas were probably justified, but considering the acrimony between nations over colonial borders and regional influence—arguments over Morocco almost started a war, for example—it was impossible in practice. Yet, they spoke to other issues as well. Just as conservative newspapers hoped that the process of colonization could be eased by western, white cooperation, this white versus black mentality was predicated on the fear of the masses and the baseness of their culture; this was a European problem.

Daniel Pick has studied the problem of the masses and society, although through the lens of nineteenth century scientific and anthropological discourse. He has mentioned that “evolutionary anthropology functioned not only to differentiate the colonized overseas from the imperial race, but also to scrutinize portions of the population at home: the ‘other was outside and inside.’”<sup>113</sup> With the rise of the masses, fears of social degeneration—from the storing up of pathologies in the lower classes to fears that the sun may die—haunted both the left and right of Europe's political hierarchies. To them, “society was an organism threatened by death.”<sup>114</sup> Certainly, this was tied to widespread Social

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rung in Afrika dient, willkommen deheissen werden, ebenso wie kürzlich ein englisches Blatt mit Recht hervorgehoben hat, dass der Kampf, den Deutschland gegenwärtig in Südwestafrika führt, die Sache aller Weissen ist und dass der nicht zu bezweifelnde Sieg der deutschen Waffen dem Ansehen der weissen Rasse bei der einheimischen Bevölkerung Afrikas in hohem Masse zu statten kommen muss.”

<sup>112</sup> “Deutscher und Engländer in Südafrika,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, August 21, 1905. It fears the “Das Wachsen der Abneidigung der Farbigen gegen die Weissen ist nicht zu verkennen und wird von amerikanishchen Negern geshuert.”

<sup>113</sup> Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 39.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

Darwinist ideology as well as the increasingly scientific nature explications of society, a broad European trend. Pick's account, although one would expect the supremely racist Germans to enter at some point, considers only England, France, and Italy. To consider the west as some monolithic construct as Said does in his similar suggestion that "the Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor),"<sup>115</sup> however, is too easy. Pick disentangles national narratives from the general European one, but the important trend remained, that "the appeal to superiority over other races...was projected over perceptions of social division at home."<sup>116</sup> In Germany, as we consider the national lens of these projected perceptions, colonial conflict allowed German commentators in the press to relate their fear of the wanton masses.

The native uprisings in Africa took the Germans by surprise in both instances. The dire prospects facing future of each colony manifested in exaggerations of native numbers and confusion over whom exactly they were fighting, leading to an over-generalized African enemy. This was certainly evident in the *Coburger Zeitung's* hope that other tribes might be caught up in the fray and taught a lesson. This mentality impacted decision-making in South West Africa, where von Trotha eliminated one tribe and treated others with similar contempt. These native enemies were called the "antagonistic" and "hostile" "masses" by one newspaper.<sup>117</sup> Another amplified the fear by saying that their enemies looked like every other South African "Kaffer."<sup>118</sup> Another article detailed the atrocities of the "hordes of Africans," which were said to go through the countryside

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<sup>115</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books), 207.

<sup>116</sup> Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, 41.

<sup>117</sup> "Der Herero Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika," *Coburger Zeitung*, January 29, 1904. This article fears the "unknown thousands" and the masses of this "feindliches Volk."

<sup>118</sup> "Kolonialpolitisches," *Dresdner Journal*, January 14, 1904.

murdering and plundering.<sup>119</sup> The fear of the African masses heightened with each report that some tribe had joined with Herero, thereby making Germany's task seem that much harder.<sup>120</sup> This fear also reflected a fear of the working class masses and their growing power. On the left, the Social Democratic press was less concerned about the size of the African masses. In any case, they were quick to distinguish between the native tribes, noting the diversity of Germany's colonies. Rather, it was the state of these diverse masses that drew the attention of the left—and the right.

The press was broadly aware of the “culture gutter”<sup>121</sup> that the colonies constituted. The conservative press obviously credited that with the natural inferiority of the natives. The conflicts in Africa were the result of native inadequacy and inferiority, thus their propensity to drink and debauchery. It has already been mentioned that the NPZ commented on the “effete” character of both the working and native classes, drawing the comparison between the natives and the white proletariat.<sup>122</sup> A day later, it derided the natives for quickly resorting to begging and lying. The natives were also cast as criminals numerous times, as “plunderers,” “robbers,” and “murderers.” These could be confused in any other context for the poor, degenerate masses of Europe, masses that mirrored the growing populations of European cities in Pick's analyses of nineteenth century intellectual writings.<sup>123</sup> Some hoped to solve these native iniquities in some way or another. The *Dresdner Journal* offered a solution to “the raising of Africa's base cultures”: putting the

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<sup>119</sup> “Vom Aufstand der Hereros,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, February 1, 1904.

<sup>120</sup> See for example “Der Aufstand der Hereros,” *Dresdner Journal*, February 1, 1904. It mentioned that “die Bergdamaras oder, wie andere Gerüchte sagen, die Bergkaffern mit den Hereros verbündet haben.” It also stressed to the reader how dangerous this was; it stretched out the troops, and it meant that they would have to fight in the mountains.

<sup>121</sup> “Unser Neuer Kolonialkrieg,” *Vorwärts*, January 19, 1904. “Schnapps und Syphilis, das find auch hier die Kulturgueter, die man den Eingeborenen neben der Nilpferdpeitsche gebracht hat!” Strangely, it does not say anything about rape.

<sup>122</sup> “Der chinesische Arbeit in Südafrika,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 15, 1904.

<sup>123</sup> Pick, *Degeneration*, see for example 182-184.

natives to work on railroads and cotton plantations.<sup>124</sup> The *Coburger Zeitung* suggested something similar, although less for the purposes of civilizing the natives than for maintaining security. For the conservatives, this baseness was as inherent to the natives as it was to German and European workers.<sup>125</sup> To these newspapers, the shortcomings of native character and culture were central to the irrational beginnings of the rebellions.

While many hoped the civilizing capabilities of colonialism and that these systems of labor and subjugation would, at the very least, maintain security, the fear of degeneration at home lead domestic commentators to similar notions of imprisoning the mentally ill and the creation of prisoner colonies. Even the Social Democrats were acutely aware of the social carcinogens of “schnapps and syphilis.” Yet, while they acknowledged the rottenness of native society, they stressed that it was no fault of the natives.

Native character, thus, was informed by took the shape of worker culture in the conservative press. Who was responsible for that, however, comprised the subject of socialist debate. Conservatives, as we have seen, maintained that the natives’ problems were their own; they were inherent to their existence. Such was the plight of inferior cultures, and such was the reality of Europe’s degenerate masses. Somehow their uncouth criminality was passed down in some Lamarckian evolutionary process. To the contrary, in their multi-barreled assaults on imperialism, the Social Democrats supported the natives, and blamed their cultural plight on the colonial system itself. *Vorwärts* was quick to dispel such notions of natural iniquity when it reproduced a missionary’s letter deriding the European settlers as the harbingers of alcohol and bawdiness. Venereal disease was

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<sup>124</sup> “Kolonialpolitisches,” *Dresdner Journal* October 8, 1904. It notes the natives "bösen Instinkte" and it claims that with education "dann find es keine Menschen mehr, sondern Bestien, reisende Tiere, die nicht allein morden." This is the only paper that advocates not educating the natives.

<sup>125</sup> For example “Zum Aufstand der Hereros,” *Coburger Zeitung* August 25, 1905.

spreading in both the native and in the settler ranks at equal rates. Rather than begin good stewards of their colonies, the settlers had brought only the “culture gutters” from Germany.<sup>126</sup> The political organ of the masses, the Social Democrats placed the blame for social deficiencies on capitalist structures. Thus their domestic fight for socially beneficial legislation went hand-in-hand with their fight against expensive imperialism. Beyond social degeneration, racial language and native policy were tied to economics.

The political debates in Germany also considered industrial, economic interests in their equating workers to natives. Specifically it manifested as a political debate over workers and their rights. Tied to conservative, nationalistic goals for rising power was a concern for the concurrent rise in both the numbers and influence of workers. The class conscious “Prussian” conservatives feared that the tight delineations of class would blur, and viewed Social Democratic and popular moves for more rights and better treatment as a dangerous affront to the power of the monarchy. Chancellor Hohenlohe, upon his rise to that office, found it “incomprehensible that the lower classes should be demanding more share in the governance of the state.” Even Wilhelm II frequently derided millions of his subjects “as being untrustworthy, disloyal, and capable of helping Germany’s enemies,” leading to the alienation of many in the working class. Conservatives more concerned about business and industry saw class also perceived these as more than disruptive. Most subscribed to the philosophy that “any type of working-class organization was a threat to the existing social and political system;” some even came to advocate military intervention as the best response to the rise of socialism.<sup>127</sup> These notions, however, were borne out of fear, leading conservatives to forego accommodation of the working class and “ex-

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<sup>126</sup> *Vorwärts*, January 19, 1904. “Kulturgüter.”

<sup>127</sup> Craig, 270, 262.



aggerated the possibilities of conflict.” This socio-political problem was evident in press coverage of native rebellion. Proponents of class divide and industry voiced their concerns about the labor and class problem through their notions of Africa’s future. Meanwhile, the Social Democrats not so subtly challenged the domestic exploitation of workers, by attacking native labor policy.

The *Coburger Zeitung*’s lofty vision of a racially striated society rising out of the ashes of war was at once a commentary on the natives, on the future of the colonies and the nation, but it also shed light on the conservative stance regarding domestic labor problems. It called for the leaders of the natives to be placed in isolation or in systems of observation, sounding eerily reminiscent of Wilhelm’s screeching calls for socialist leaders to be imprisoned for sedition. It also had clear notions on how society should be organized to create a strong state, and that necessitated the swift “checking” of the working class movement to attain power. Similarly, it required the military and the government to abandon “benevolent” policies and turn to harder methods to mold the workers into “Germany’s favorite children.” Paternalistic society, in which both the native and the worker complacently accept their position, was the conservative ideal.<sup>128</sup> Rights and power for the workers did not factor into this strengthening of the state. The *Neue Preussische Zeitung* was also wont to expound on the absurdity of giving rights to the natives. Simply, it was not in the material interest of the German nation; it was wasteful.<sup>129</sup> As such, the shape society took was integral to the national question. Commentary on the natives also gave indication to other conservative notions of class and the worker.

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<sup>128</sup> These come from previously cited articles from the January 26 and January 29 editions of the *Coburger Zeitung*.

<sup>129</sup> “Reformfragen des deutschen Kolonialrechts,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, July 9, 1907.

The conservative press that called for systems of subjugated labor also revealed their perceptions of German workers and class structure. Mirroring calls in Germany for a malleable, weaker working class, the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* advocated importing Chinese laborers into the colonies. It outwardly stressed that white laborers were too unreliable, saying that they were dangerous and would inevitably form a “proletariat.” The connections to troubles in Germany itself are obvious; the paper was wary of extending labor problems in the metropole to the colonies. Descriptions of the African laborers, however, were laden with commentary on Germany’s laborers. It criticized the lazy, “spent” Africans, who only worked to avoid abject poverty, thereby attacking the labor organizations that crippled industrial efficiency through frequent strikes. The solution, it averred, was to import “Oriental porters” which was both practical and moral, “considering the industrial character of the Chinese.”<sup>130</sup> The *Dresdner Journal*’s report on the English project to import Chinese laborers expressed similar comparisons between white laborers and those of other races. It spoke of one class of laborers and the benefits inherent to that class through such an influx of new labor. Whites were not superior in the construction of the German civilization in the colonies. They worked side by side with blacks and Asians, suggesting that notions of race were bound up intricately in notions of class. Workers in Germany served the same purpose as the natives did in the colonies. That is not to say that conservatives were colorblind. If anything, they were equally repulsed by

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<sup>130</sup> “Die chinesische Arbeit in Südafrika,” *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, January 15, 1904. It called these potential workers “orientalischen Laster;” It also justified the theory by saying that “Die Bedenken waren sowohl materieller wie moralischer Art. Im Hinblick auf den Industriellen Character der Chinesen.”

both, while recognizing their mutual utilitarian value.<sup>131</sup> Yet, Social Democrats were also willing to compare the natives to the working class struggle in Germany.<sup>132</sup>

In a telling article at the outbreak of the conflict in South West Africa, *Vorwärts* made a direct connection between the revolting natives and the socialist stance on the labor situation in Germany. It frequently referred to the tax burden placed on the average German worker in its opposition to the conflict, thus placing the interests of their working class constituents foremost in their policymaking decisions. But in using similar rhetoric for both the fight to end the unfair system of capitalist dominance in Germany as well as the one erected against the natives in the colonies, socialists elevated the worker as it advocated the native. When *Vorwärts* criticized the bureaucratic consideration of the natives as “a type of two-legged animal,” it attacked the conservative perception of the worker as a tool to be exploited. As such, it also celebrated the native “uprising as a kind of revolt against the hippopotamus whip.” It reveled in the savage destruction of German systems of domination. It was seen as the extension and true realization of the socialist revolution. Social democratic press coverage, contrary to their conservative counterparts, related to the natives, despite their racial perceptions of them.<sup>133</sup>

Maintaining class structure, then, was seen as crucial to the establishment of a strong nation. In advocating a labor proving ground and in criticizing the natives’ character, the conservative press advocated the strict establishment of similar structures in Ger-

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<sup>131</sup> “Afrika,” *Dresdner Journal*, August 20, 1904.

<sup>132</sup> Alfred Kelly has noted the widespread use of Social Darwinism by Socialists in order to humanize and democratize Germany. Popular Social Darwinism “sought to crush superstition, to inform, to liberate, and, indirectly, to democratize... Thus Darwinism in the 1860s and 1870s was a weapon against such bastions of the conservative establishment as the churches and public education and later it became a popular prop for Marxist socialism.” Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 7-8.

<sup>133</sup> “Unser Neuer Kolonialkrieg,” *Vorwärts*, January 19, 1904. “Man betrachtet den Farbigen als eine Art zweibeinigen Tieres, um das man sich nicht kümmert, ausser wenn man etwas von ihm haben will.” “Es wäre also nicht ausgeschlossen, dass der Aufstand eine Art Revolte gegen die Nilpferdpeitsche darstellte!”

many, and it commented on the state of the worker in Germany. On the other end of the spectrum, Social Democrats applauded the violent tearing down of those classes through native revolutions. The socialist revolution, so hard to enact for various reasons in Germany, found adherence in the least likely of places.

## **Conclusion**

With the outbreak of war in the colonies, the press rushed to relay the news to their diverse readership. In attempting to explain why Germany was fighting these wars, against whom they were fighting, as well as how Germans were faring in these conflicts, newspapers of every ideological and political persuasion used racialized language. As I have sought to explain, the press varied in their opinions of the natives: some newspapers were ambivalent towards them; some reified their revolutionary actions; and others condemned them as enemies of order and society. Yet, through the anthropological accounts and the dehumanizing efforts of the general press, other conversations became relevant. Political debates found new opportunities for expression, and the scientific fears of degeneration and the cancerous elements of society were verbalized in popular forums.

Significantly, some other trends manifested in the press' coverage of the conflict. Evidenced from the coverage each conflict received—New Guinea covered nearly as often in the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* as the conflict in German East Africa—we can assume that the colonies were not a monolithic construct in popular German mentality. Not only was South West Africa doted on more generously by Berlin, with the other colonies pushed to the margins of funding, but it was also popularly assumed to be the “sunniest,” or at least the most important, of Germany's scattered “places in the sun.” Perhaps this

was because this conflict was less salient during the sample time chosen—the brutal murder of Christian missionaries—since there were very few protracted battles. Yet the coverage of South West Africa remained consistent; the intricacies of government and the scandals therein found expression in the press, as frenzied East Africans silently wreaked havoc on several hundred German settlers and missionaries.

The differences in coverage, which this study set out to chart, offered no substantial conclusions. Press coverage of the conflicts in both German South West Africa and German East Africa showed distinct similarities. They dehumanized their African enemies in similar ways, and they spoke to the same domestic fears. As such, the comparative assessment of the German colonies, native conflicts, and racial language led to a general conclusion. Racial language was less concerned about racial difference than it was with discussing troubles in Germany. In this way, colonial conflict was inextricably linked to the domestic and cultural upheaval in the march to Germany's watershed election of 1907 and beyond.

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