

AN EPISODE OF COLONIAL HISTORY: THE GERMAN PRESS IN TANZANIA

1901 - 1914

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Introduction*

Among the many problems that beset the independent countries in Africa there are some which most Europeans hardly know about, but which are real enough for the Africans themselves. One of these is their sense of inferiority, the "sad deficiencies in our evaluation of ourselves" which are a clear sign that "psychologically Africa has been most severely brutalised by the impact of colonialism".¹⁾ If the Africans want a future, they must know about and appreciate their own past. African historians must, therefore, like all other historians, glorify their past. "A truly African historian has a duty to recover for his race lots of self-pride ...".²⁾ Thus the direct corollary of this problem is the urge to write a new history of the continent in which Africans are actors on their own account, opposing colonialisation in different ways, actively, passively or adaptively, by armed resistance, by diplomacy and intrigue, and by learning to use the colonialists' powerful techniques for their own ends.³⁾

In Tanzania much research is being done with the help of available knowledge in the form of memories, traditions and other orally preserved material, but of course much of the work relies on written sources kept in archives and libraries. Thus, John Iliffe's book on "Tanzania under German rule 1905-1912"⁴⁾ is to a large extent an analysis of German politics based on records of administrative bodies, of the Reichstag and of associations in Germany and in her "Schutzgebiet", but the new perspective of the author does lead to a rather different picture from the one found in the "standard work" on the history of East Africa by Harlow and Chilver.⁵⁾

* Since this is a story from before World War I, I shall follow contemporary use, i.e. when referring to Africans, it will be as natives, Blacks, or Negroes, while Asians are called Indians. I shall not, however, take over the term Africans for German colonists who liked to call themselves we old Africans, or we East Africans, except sometimes for Whites in South Africa who may be referred to as South Africans. The British and Britain will usually be referred to as English.

In the course of his inquiries, Dr Iliffe had made use of the newspapers published in Tanzania by the Germans during their reign, which were kept in the library of the University of Dar es Salaam. He felt that it might be worthwhile if somebody would read through these newspapers (and also those from the English period) systematically in order to establish how German and English attitudes towards their subjects changed in the course of time. That, at least, is how I understood his proposal. But, as is usual in underdeveloped countries, he was just about to leave Tanzania and I have had no contact with him since then. To cut a long story short: I have found no changes of the kind Dr Iliffe probably had in mind, but there may be several reasons for that: (a) my own scant knowledge of the period in question at the time I started reading the papers; (b) the very short period covered (1901-1915);⁶⁾ (c) the incompleteness of the material. This last fact made any effort to conduct some kind of systematic content analysis useless, but as I have notes covering every single year of the period from at least one newspaper, the picture I obtained of what the settlers and their counterpart in Dar es Salaam wanted should be rather accurate, coloured only perhaps by my choice of material and the fact that a third language was needed as an intermediary between the original texts and this article.

Is there, then, any reason to bother about such a detail as the attitudes of a colony's settlers and officials as mirrored in the local press at the beginning of this century? I think there is. This close-up picture of contemporary opinions should clarify a number of later developments about whose results there is too much confused thinking. For those who wonder vaguely why the underdeveloped countries are underdeveloped the simple answer as contained in my data is: because underdevelopment was the purpose of the whole enterprise, even if it was called "development of the colony". Some Scandinavians are surprised and dismayed about the predicament of the Asians in East Africa, but, as will appear from this account, there is nothing new under the sun. Another important current topic, apartheid, is also

put into some kind of perspective: even if the term was not used then, the policy of apartheid in South Africa was already fully evolved around 1908, at least in theory. It will also be shown that the feelings of inferiority so hampering Black Africa were wilfully inculcated, or intensified where they were present from the start.

As a historical background to the material to be analysed I will give a very short sketch of the main events leading to the foundation of the German "Schutzgebiet" called Deutsch Ostafrika, German East Africa (in the text abbreviated to GEA). When, at the end of last century, the big scramble for Africa began, much of the continent was in turmoil. Whites had been pressing northwards from the Cape, slaveraiding covered large parts of the interior, and tribal wars, mostly a direct consequence of the first two factors, were upsetting the lives of many peoples. In addition, epidemics both among people and cattle herds took their toll.

In Europe the economic powers wanted new outlets for their rapidly growing populations in the form of (free) trade, a concept with a touch of magic to it, the need for it allowing almost any manoeuvres in order to obtain or maintain the "right" to it. Now it was Africa's turn to be divided between the big powers. East Africa, about which there had been very little interest up to then, was haggled about by Britain and Germany, with Belgium on the sidelines.

The long-standing interest of the Arabs on the coast were affirmed when the Sultan of Oman moved his seat to Zanzibar, from where he exercised his power over the whole length of the coast, its harbours, and the caravan routes to the interior. Zanzibar was the slave market of the region and also developed a plantation economy largely with Indian capital.

In Germany in the seventies, several societies were active in encouraging colonisation, sending missionaries and explorers, supporting people who wanted to emigrate, setting up trading

posts, and generally preparing the way for a foothold on the Continent. The most notorious of German adventurers was Dr Carl Peters, sent by the Society for German Colonisation (Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation) who made "contracts" with "chiefs" or other available authorities most of whom "sold" land and rights which they did not own. Whenever contracts could not be made Peters and his associates used brute force. The Chancellor of Germany, Bismarck, had not visualised his Reich as a colonial power, but by 1885 the Society for German Colonisation did get a charter for some districts west of the possessions of the Sultan, granting sovereign rights, actual ownership of the land, and the authority to dispense justice; it contained very little about duties. The actual work of appropriating land, settling German planters and farmers, and generally the execution of such functions as are necessary for the establishment of a new society, a new Germany beyond the seas, were assigned to the German East African Company (Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft), a business enterprise created by Peters. Its activities, however, provoked a serious revolt on the coast, and the Imperial Government had to send troops and take over the administration, thereby leaving only the strictly commercial activities to the Company.

In 1885 the Sultan signed a treaty which gave Germany certain privileges at Dar es Salaam and some other places. The British, too, were active in the region in much the same way as the Germans, and their manipulations led to an arrangement whereby Germany ceded Uganda and the part of the coast called Witu to Britain; the Sultan put himself under British protection and Germany obtained Heligoland in exchange. In the South a border was agreed upon with Portugal and in the West with England and Leopold II of Belgium. The first governor of the Schutzgebiet, von Soden, arrived in 1890. From then on it was only a matter of pacifying those tribes, spread over the country, who were still unwilling to be protected (the last gave in in 1898) and to let companies lay out plantations and farmers take possession of plots to cultivate. Only seven years later a large part of southern GEA rose against

their masters in what was called the Maji Maji rebellion. It took the Germans the better part of a year to subdue the rebels and another year to re-establish order.

The newspapers

As early as 1899 a private newspaper was started in Dar es Salaam called the Deutsch-ostafrikanische Zeitung (hereafter called the Zeitung), representing the standpoint and interests of the settlers in the widest sense. The chief editor was Willy von Roy, "a choleric man" who, judging by his articles, became increasingly venomous and unreasonable in his fanatical campaign against the government, with the Governor, von Rechenberg, as his special target and the Colonial Director, Dernburg, as a good second. Von Rechenberg started his own newspaper, the Deutsch-ostafrikanische Rundschau (hereafter called Rundschau) in 1908, "backed financially by the GEA Company and vehemently anti-settler".⁸⁾ The vicious quarrel between them was given much space in both newspapers, accusations and counteraccusations closely following each other, with only a change of personnel when von Roy was imprisoned in 1910. A third newspaper was the Usambara Post (the UP) published in Tanga from 1903 and representing more narrowly the settlers of the Northern District. Although this newspaper never got into such serious trouble as the Zeitung, it was bitterly opposed to von Rechenberg and his men, and used a language as abusive as the Zeitung, its editor, Hermann Wilder, setting the pace. After the UP was suspended for half a year in 1906, it became noticeably less rude.

All three newspapers appeared once a week, but the Zeitung became biweekly in 1908. In the first place they were commercial papers, giving information and advice on crops, prices, exports, the economic state of the colony and the Empire. The Zeitung was the most persistent propagandist for a railway from Dar es Salaam to the west. In the second place they were a forum for all the local news, including the normal gossip about VIPs arriving and leaving, court cases and many "letters to the editor", often from quarrelsome settlers.

They were lavish with reprinting articles that had appeared in large and small newspapers in Germany, in the "Koloniale Rundschau" and other periodicals; they also printed articles by missionaries and such authorities as professors Edvard Westermarck and Carl Meinhof. In later years both the Zeitung and the UP printed articles by a remarkable man called Paul Rohrbach, doctor of theology, who travelled extensively in Asia and Africa, mostly in the interest of the Imperial Government. He served as Commissioner for settlement in South-West Africa 1903-1906 and then returned to journalism. He also farmed in South-West Africa for some time and was one of Germany's foremost imperialist writers.

As I mentioned, the newspaper collection on which I worked in the University Library of Dar es Salaam in 1970/71 was very incomplete. Of the Zeitung the first two volumes, the whole first year of the Maji Maji rebellion, and the years 1907 and 1911 were missing, while it ended abruptly in August 1914. Of the Rundschau there were only the years 1908-1911. For all the volumes the sad truth was that parts, sometimes considerable parts, were damaged by damp or in some other way. Moreover, my notes of the years 1912 and 1913 of the UP have mysteriously disappeared.

Before I begin my actual analysis one question remains to be considered: how far does my way of treating a large amount of printed matter convey anything like a fair image of what the German press contained? Making very condensed notes on very long articles, quoting a couple of sentences out of pages full of sentences, translating them, putting them in a certain order, may not leave intact much of the original material. Still, if it seems too boring I must point out that the newspapers themselves were far more boring than anyone could imagine; if anyone thinks that concentrating the material makes for exaggeration I can assure him that reading through all this matter was more often than not a repulsive business, just because of the endless repetition of the same crudities and of the one, stubborn pursuit of self-interest and nothing but self-interest.

This came out most strongly in the newspapers' writings about the natives as a labour force. Everybody involved in the colonies considered the indigenous population as a potential labour reservoir; opinions were divided only over the way in which it could and should be activated. Therefore, the first and largest section of my analysis will deal with the natives as labour. As a good second comes "race", its theory and practice. It is not a heavy preoccupation in the beginning, but flares up as the results of racial contacts become more visible. I shall treat it in close connection with, and directly after, the labour problem. My third subject is Missions. Contrary to what I expected there was very little about these, and what little there was was usually connected with Islam. Therefore I have taken these two subjects together.

In South-West Africa, German colony since 1884/85, the main tribe, the Herero, rose against their German masters in 1904 and kept them fighting for three years in what is known as the Herero War. I did not find much about it, but I shall give it a small section because it led to some interesting reflections in the newspapers. As far as the nearest neighbours are concerned, I take up some utterances about events in the Congo which I think are worth notice, and likewise about the British in Kenya.⁹⁾ This leads up to the subject of South Africa on which I have far more, partly because the colonists in GEA had direct experience of Boers who had moved there, partly because South Africa seemed to the young German colony the fulfilment of their own ideals.

The last and very large issue is the Asians whose mere existence was and remained a thorn in the side of the settlers who by way of their newspapers time and again gave vent to their hatred of them.

The settlers and their problems

During the very first years of the Zeitung the editors gave voice to a kind of euphoria (now, boys, we have reached our goal, just apply yourselves to your task and all will be well) which even left space for sentimental stories about courageous

Germans saving poor natives from getting drowned or eaten by lions, and long accounts of travels through unknown territories some even with ethnographic information.

It soon became clear, however, that a wide range of problems was waiting for solution. Fundamental among these was the question of what kind of colony the Schutzgebiet should be, and, closely connected with this, the fact that there were quite a lot of people in the territory including natives who would not work for the farmers, and Indians who pursued their own ends. There were also disturbing factors like diseases, and lack of knowledge of soils and climate. Behind these issues lay a set of notions about the nature of white and black people and about living in the tropics which were all but axioms: White men are supermen and because of this (or perhaps in spite of it?) they cannot do manual work in a hot climate without losing their health or even their life; black men - and brown ones too for that matter - belong to inferior races and it does not harm them to work with their hands and bodies, wherever they are. Moreover, in the tropics the fruits of nature fall into peoples' laps as in the land of Cockaigne: if only the indigenous people would do some work, infinite riches could be collected.

The Dutch and the British had found the southern end of the continent an agreeable place - so that was theirs. South-West Africa which Germany had obtained in 1884-85 was suitable for ranching; the highlands of British East Africa (Kenya) were being marked out as "white men's country",¹⁰⁾ Uganda was the right area for native cultivations of produce for the European market. For the better disposal of this produce a railway had been planned from Mombasa westward. This had reached Kisumu on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria by 1901. Indian coolies were imported to do the manual work.

Since the German protectorate was a large country with a hot and humid coast, hot and dry steppes, high plateaus with or without regular rainfall, mountain ranges and lonely mountain peaks, large lakes at the periphery but no navigable rivers,

it was not possible to create a clear strategy for one type of colony with an economy of either large plantation, small farms, of the Uganda or West Coast (of Africa) kind. Nor was there unanimity over what sort of settlers were to be let in and on what conditions. Nor did the young German Empire possess the political and administrative bodies to design and carry through a consistent colonial policy. The German state, an amalgam of some 25 constituent states with Prussia dominating, had a constitution in which colonies were not even mentioned. Until 1907 when an independent Colonial Office came into being, there was no single central authority responsible for colonial affairs.¹¹⁾ As my subject is the opinions of the colonialists themselves, I need not here elaborate on the exact division of power in the complicated German political system: the settlers, in fact, did not see much beyond the effects of what the individuals filling certain crucial posts were saying and doing, and what the Reichstag decided on the local budget of the colony and its local taxation, over which it could decide by simple majority. "By threatening to refuse expenditure under a particular title, members could oblige the administration to change its policy" and "... it gained an authority over the details of administration which it was neither designed nor competent to exercise".¹²⁾

Among the many bones of contention between the imperial government and the settler community in GEA were projects for which money was needed, the home front usually assuming that the colony should provide the means all by itself, the colony objecting that they could not even think of earning their keep as long as they had not got a start. For this start a railway from Dar es Salaam to Morogoro and further abroad was an absolute necessity. After some years of hard struggle the Reichstag in 1904 voted so much money that the building of the railway could begin in 1905. It reached Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika in 1914. The Usambara railway, the first stretch of which was built as early as 1897, was eventually extended to Moshi (1911). Other altogether reasonable requests to come from a colony were demands for more white troops, subsidies for small farmers, for regular

steamer traffic along the coast, telegraphs and roads, and, on the nonfinancial level, demands for a separate Colonial Office and better colonial legislation.

The imperial idea

To make it quite clear to the reader what "developing the colony" meant, why Europeans states had colonies in the first place, let me quote some statements to that effect. "To civilise the natives in a way that does not directly emerge from the economic needs of the Whites does not make the natives more valuable to the White man".¹³⁾ In discussing the right way to "solve the problem of colonial sociology" a pure "Schutzpolitik" would lead to a movement striving for an "Africa for the Africans". "That, however, cannot possibly be the purpose of an alien power that has first had to take possession of the country with heavy sacrifices of money and blood."¹⁴⁾ The answer to the question "Is an East African Germany possible?" is, according to Dr Paul Rohrbach: "... at all places where Germans can live, it is their political and economic interests which are to be considered and not those of the Blacks."¹⁵⁾ One of the more articulate colonists, Mr. E.Th. Förster, wrote in an article about "Settlers - Missions" in 1910 that these two groups, who have had a relationship of long-standing antagonism, have now been drawn nearer to each other, knowing that the target of all is "unconditional integration with the economic and moral aims of the whole German population. To build up our national character, to make our people healthy and strong - that is the uppermost law" (Der Ausbau, die Gesundung, Kräftigung, Entwicklung unseres Volkstums - dies ist der oberste Grundsatz...).¹⁶⁾ And again, some years later, the Zeitung stated explicitly: we want to earn (since we have invested so much capital) and we want to be the masters.¹⁷⁾

Such opinions are not specifically German, of course. The Rundschau quoted with approval a statement by Winston Churchill, when he discussed the future status of Uganda, where he did not want white small farmers: the native population is growing fast and will soon need all the land, but that is all to the good,

they will be the consumers of British industrial products in exchange for cheap colonial commodities and so serve British interests (1909).¹⁸⁾

Natives as labour force

Given this ideology the great issue was how to realise it most effectively. The settlers and planters knew: they wanted to stake out land, plant whatever they thought best, and sell at a profit. But, as was the case in "Schutzgebiete" all over the world, the native population showed no great eagerness to become incorporated into the economic activities of their new masters. So here, too, the stratagems that never failed were applied: make the people work on public works for certain periods, including the cultivation of "communal shambas", or make them pay taxes instead, in the form of hut- or pool-tax, and create new needs, mainly for clothes and utensils, so that they have to earn money.

As "all white colonists depend on native labour on purely medical grounds"¹⁹⁾ they had to have labourers at their disposal. The colonial government, on the other hand, had to consider other factors as well, such as keeping the population at peace, satisfying opinions among pressure groups at home, attracting capital and keeping the goodwill of (or giving in to claims of) vested interests in East Africa.

The first to experience labour problems were the settlers in Usambara, where "the population is mostly weak, mentally retarded and has a deep aversion to work."²⁰⁾ Moreover, the slave trade had had a devastating effect on the coast, so that no labour reserve could be found there. In 1903 the Governor, (Count von Götzen, 1901-1906) spoke about experiments with forced labour, but said he could not yet express his opinion about this.²¹⁾ Later on, in 1906, he pointed out that this form of labour entailed too high costs for the government, both for the officials and for the military.²²⁾ A further complication was that one of the reasons given for occupying territories in Africa was to stop slavery, and even the settlers could perceive that "forced labour" might

smell too much of slavery to be politically feasible. Even calling it labour recruited with the help of "light pressure" would not remove this taint. At that time slavery in the Arab territories on the coast was not even officially abolished. When the District Council in Wilhelmsthal (Lushoto) held a meeting in 1903 it discussed this aspect and advised against allocating individual labourers to certain Europeans; increased tax pressure was considered too risky; the solution would be to attract people from Nyamwezi, a populous region south of Lake Victoria which used to furnish porters for the caravan trade, who then often stayed on the coast to work there for some time.²³⁾ But shortly after that the UP voiced the settlers' complaint that labourers who used to earn "fabulous wages" just disappeared, while the stayers-on were work-shy rabble (arbeitsscheues Gesindel)".²⁴⁾ So forced labour should be introduced as soon as possible. A meeting of the Planters in Amani (Usambara) in 1904 deliberated whether "a cheaper way of life for the natives is possible, since their achievements are not compatible with the wages paid",²⁵⁾ Among the many ideas on how to get and keep labour, proposed by editors and letter writers, were: passports; a fixed number of work days per year for a fixed wage; organisation of workers in a "pool" from which employers could choose; make all those who lived in a certain area plant coconut trees, or maize, or cotton, so as to keep them there; issue regulations which made it obligatory to build decent houses in the cities, because that would restrain superfluous movements to urban centres.²⁶⁾

In that same year, 1904, the Herero war gave further impetus to the opinion that "humanitarian indulgence" was disastrous, as is "clearly proven by the events in South-West Africa: through the atrocities of the Herero, the long battle between half-humans and humans (Halbmenschentum und Vollmenschentum) for equal or non-equal rights has at last, and, it is hoped, finally, been decided to the disadvantage of the wild coloured race" - those lazy men who even practice cannibalism and whose "habit of life is to do nothing - the climate provides for all their needs".²⁷⁾ It is no surprise that Carl Peters joins in

the chorus about the bad character of the natives: the Germans had had a foretaste of the effects of the systematic "Verhät-schelung der schwarzen Kanaille" in South-West Africa. The opposite could be seen in Rhodesia where the brutal repression of the native rebellion in 1896 was still very much alive in their memories. Everyone should realise that the missionaries are here to make the natives happy, the others to make a good living by working themselves. For this they need native labour, but that is destroyed by education. Education does not make them happy either, only dissatisfied.²⁸⁾ Some time later, the editor of the Zeitung remarked in connection with an explanation about education from the side of the missionaries: if we had to wait for the results of mission education it might take centuries before our colony would produce anything worthwhile.²⁹⁾ Still, the Germans did need people with some kind of training, and for that they had founded agricultural schools. But these had better change their system: they should not go in for training the sons of chiefs and other high-placed people, because when they returned home they forgot everything and carried on just as their fathers and grandfathers did. They ought to train personnel for the Europeans, among these some fifty to one hundred engine-drivers, herdsmen, milkers and gardeners, because there existed not one Negro who could milk a cow completely or saddle a donkey; they did not use manure either, although that was not because they were too stupid, because they lacked energy.³⁰⁾ (Zeitung 1906).

Governor von Rechenberg

At this point, when the whole complex of problems around labour recruitment, forced labour and labour regulations roused the passions of people all over the colony, a new governor took up his post in GEA, Albrecht, Freiherr von Rechenberg, a Roman Catholic aristocrat with many diplomats in his family tree, who had himself held consular posts, among others in Zanzibar. His experience and interests lay, however, in Eastern Europe, and he would have none of Germany's imperial pushing westward. He mistrusted the whole idea of colonial enterprise, believed that imperialism

destroyed the indigenous economy, and soon came to loathe the settlers and planters in his domain. African cultivators were much like Russian and Polish peasants and would react positively to opportunities for bettering their economic conditions, like any economic man. A vigorous peasant economy with a surplus of people to engage in wage labour was his ideal. In fact, von Rechenberg had little interest in the people living inland. He liked to associate "with Moslem sheiks and Indian merchants" and thought that the multiracial society of the coast was typical of East Africa. While he was a political conservative, his regime in GEA seemed liberal because he defended native interests.³¹⁾

The opposite was the case with the new Colonial Director, Bernhard Dernburg, appointed in the same year. A representative of modern big business, with humanitarian sympathies, skilful in manipulating people, given to enhancing his popularity, he considered colonies as an asset. But he knew nothing about colonies, and political developments in Germany led him more and more to steer a course of right-wing politics. Neither Dernburg nor von Rechenberg achieved their aims: it was the settlers who won, until the first world war put an end to all German colonial adventures. How conscious the settlers were of their power is nicely illustrated by what 'W.F.' wrote in the Zeitung in March 1914: All colonial and settlement policy has always been conducted from the right of the strongest. There is always opposition against the settlement of the healthiest parts of the colony, and the arguments against it, how silly they may be, do have an influence on the government. The only thing we need is labour and that's that. "Every race occupies in the colonial race hierarchy just that level which suits its capability and energy for work. Farms are no gold-mines, but within limits ... the extensive settlement of the Highlands will continue, whatever colonial politicians say or do."³²⁾

In 1907 Dernburg made a journey through East Africa. The "Dernburgians" got a warning and some good advice from "Satyr" in the UP: None of them has been in GEA before, and what they

will say is all according to government instructions.³³⁾ The visit in Usambara was no success, Iliffe tells us. The settlers wanted official government responsibility for labour recruitment, and Dernburg promised labour commissioners who would assist and supervise recruitment; he refused differential taxation which would stimulate the labour supply; he refused to alter customs tariffs which would oblige Africans to accept wage labour; and he refused restrictions on African cash-cropping.³⁴⁾

Labour recruitment remained a controversial subject. Competition between recruiters always seemed to lead to corruption and bribery of headmen and chiefs - all of which resulted in "high prices" per worker, without any guarantee that he would finish his contract. Nevertheless, the Rundschau wrote in 1908 that there was no labour shortage³⁵⁾ and repeated this in 1909 "so that the question of forced labour is a moot point. The treatment of labourers has, moreover, much improved."³⁶⁾ (Dernburg, on his journey in 1907, "had been shocked by what he saw", says Iliffe³⁷⁾). The Rundschau also thought that the hotly contested labour regulations of February 1909 should satisfy the planters, even though the right to punish was left out and the period during which a labourer could be absent from his work without therewith breaking his contract was eight days.³⁸⁾ The Zeitung and the UP were not at all positive about these ordinances. The UP commented, after printing them in full: the ordinance stresses the employer's duties but forgets about his rights.³⁹⁾ By 1911 the UP found the "Dernburg-Rechenberg negrophily flourishing to the perdition of the colonies - those notorious, superhumane, self-murdering tendencies caused by impotent weakness" (die bekannten superhumanen, selbstmörderischen Tendenzen impotenter Schwäche), because they wanted to limit the right to corporal punishment by the settlers and planters. The UP wanted "a legislation not based on negrophily, but one that gives us the opportunity to use our most precious possession, the natives, wholly in the service we render as agriculturists."⁴⁰⁾ The Zeitung pointed out: it is not possible to keep a country if one does not use it oneself, i.e. if it is not literally

ploughed by the colonists. If one lets the Blacks dominate the country it becomes theirs. Neither should we, Germans, despise work with our own hands a 'kaffirwork'. But that does not imply that the settlers can manage without native labour.⁴¹⁾ The British, too, have discovered that they will not continue to have a country full of natives and at the same time suffer from an everlasting labour shortage. They will found a Masters' Union to eliminate competition.⁴²⁾ The British do admit that "we need legislation on labour protection in our colonies so that we can meet the outside world with clean hands. The practical implementation is another matter which we do not take too seriously." That is what the settlers in GEA are going to do too.⁴³⁾

It is not that the newspapers never asked questions about what rights the Whites had to appropriate land and people for the own purposes. The UP wrote in 1904 in connection with the rebellion in South-West Africa that the natives' bitterness was aroused because the Germans had alienated their lands, taken away their right of self-determination and exploited the people;⁴⁴⁾ and in 1905 that all opinions about their physical and moral qualities were superficial and laden with colonialist bias.⁴⁵⁾ Sometimes a voice was raised in defence of a thorough knowledge of the black peoples' systems of justice and beliefs- which is only possible by living among and with the natives for a long time.⁴⁶⁾ In the Rundschau I found an article by a certain Mr. E.D. Morel in Liverpool⁴⁷⁾ who asked whether the Europeans had the right to occupy all land that did not belong to villages and was not, at the moment, cultivated. Does the land inhabited by the natives not belong to them and do they not have the right to trade its produce? The produce which the Europeans export happily is the only thing the natives possess in the way of economic power: are the Europeans raising a race of slaves? What do they intend, to build up or to destroy the tropics? Would they, please, remember that they often use land sold to them by chiefs who have no property rights in it? Morel also predicted that "a continuation of this behaviour will conjure up calamity and bring down infinite shame on us"⁴⁸⁾ (For

those who can savour the German formulation, probably a translation of a text written in English, I quote: so ist das Schicksal der äquatorialen Rassen Afrikas besiegelt und die Wirksamkeit Europas in jenem Weltteil wird binnen kurzem Unheil und Schmach ohne Ende auf uns herabbeschwören.)⁴⁹⁾

This did not mean that the existing humanitarianism went very deep. The Kölnische Zeitung wrote a long article on "The race Problem in South Africa" which treated all aspects of the society, its economy, politics and educational problems, and pointed out the contradiction involved in refusing the natives all civil rights and at the same time producing an educated class of native doctors, priests, engineers, lawyers etc. The author had found that Whites evaded this point when questioned about it and warned them that they had better see the situation as it really was: that South Africa's future was a "black future". All this the Rundschau printed and then remarked: this last statement is a little strange. We have understood that subtropical Africa will be White man's land, either through reducing the coloured race to half-slavery, or through their total extermination.⁵⁰⁾ The latter alternative did not apply to tropical GEA, but the chief editor of the Rundschau (Herman Passavant) did think that the climatologically suitable highlands ought to be declared out of bounds for coloured people.⁵¹⁾

In sum, natives existed, not as human beings, but for the sake of the white economy, as a commodity. As in other economic endeavours, opinions were divided only on the question of how one could best exploit this commodity without damaging it beyond repair.

Race

For all this highhandedness, disparagement, contempt and what followed from it, there was a suitable theory, developed during the 19th century, which proved that there was one noble race, elect and pre-ordained to reign over the earth - the white race; the other races were inferior and destined to serve the Whites. Of all the lower races, the black one was the

lowest (that is, when one had to do with Africa). In fact, it was so hopelessly retarded that the gap between the two can never be bridged, that their capacity for development and "culture" is infinitesimally small, everything offered simply rebounds on them. Four hundred years of colonial contact in West Africa have had no results whatever. Although they belong to the human species they have never achieved anything in handicraft or industry, either in historical or prehistorical times. So said the Zeitung in 1910 as a comment on a "marvellous study" by Dr Franz Stuhlmann who had long-time experience of Africa and was a great scholar concentrating on African ethnography and prehistory. He gives a sweeping picture of the waves of people and cultures moving from the East into Africa - his findings are in wonderful consonance with the brilliant theories of Meinhof and Westermann.⁵²⁾ Stuhlmann has made a grand synthesis. The article in the Zeitung was called "The Negro - a separate branch of humanity"⁵³⁾ and is too nonsensical to summarise more fully.

Being such a low race the Blacks have no needs either: food and fuel, that is all. And: the distance between fulfilling their minimum and maximum needs is very short: to eat one's fill - and to overeat (sich satt essen und sich satt fressen - Rohrbach). This meant also that they should be kept in their proper place, for if they are not, they become impudent and arrogant; if they must be perceived as children, (as some people think) they are malevolent children; they are lazy, and not at all innocent, but ill-natured, mean and crafty. The only treatment that helps is flogging - an ever recurrent theme in the newspapers: every White must be allowed to punish "his Blacks" as he sees fit.⁵⁴⁾ This was definitely not in accordance with the government's policy, but, said Staatssekretär Dernburg, we do not equate Whites with Negroes: we know very well what we can expect from them morally, but it cannot be helped, we must for the time being adhere to racial justice.⁵⁵⁾

Although as early as 1904 the UP was quite explicit about racialism ("race problems are power problems and in present

day life power problems means world politics"⁵⁶⁾ the settlers community did not want to see it as a factor in large scale conflicts: "the Herero war is a war of revenge, a national uprising against the Germans, not a racial battle between Black and White".⁵⁷⁾ Four years later the Zeitung wrote: "Whether we like it or not, we have entered upon the era of racial struggle on our earth. In Asia the signs of this battle are there to be seen ... We want to engage in a purposeful race policy ... and the Blacks will thereby fare as well as they themselves wish."⁵⁸⁾ So, even if the Europeans thought they had matters under control in Africa, in South India "the really precarious thing is that embitterment against the government is mixed with racial hatred for the Whites."⁵⁹⁾

If Negroes anywhere succeeded in building up a flourishing enterprise, surely it was time to stop them. In 1909 the Zeitung published a letter (which was actually first printed in the UP) from an angry settler about a group of "pensioned" askaris who had settled down at a cattle boma in the Moshi-Arusha area where they had furnished themselves with some cattle. The cattle had proliferated so that "now they own not only hundreds and thousands of rupees but tens of thousands. One of them has even built a stone house with a corrugated iron roof. Their respect for the Europeans is nil. When the military authorities gave them a couple of thousands of hectares they must have taken it for granted that that country would be transferred to settlers later on. The area is ideal, well-situated, well-watered, very suitable for small cattle farms, partly also for coffee, caoutchouc, maize and rice. But of course, here in GEA the black man comes first (as in Liberia). Moreover, the area is already overstocked." "The Blacks have had the country for thousands of years and not been able to do anything with it. So it is time that another race carry out the cultural tasks that until now have been neglected."⁶⁰⁾

If no direct action against the natives' enterprises was necessary or possible, they had to be ridiculed, and for this a denigrating, offensive vocabulary was always at hand. In

South-Africa, the so-called Ethiopian Movement, "born in missionised circles, of course"⁶¹⁾ was said to preach racial war, under a religious banner. In West-Africa, a "Christian" Negro Church existed where polygyny was extant.⁶²⁾ All very disquieting and solely the consequence of the British efforts to educate the Blacks.

It was, by the way, an old complaint that the authorities sometimes did stop greedy Europeans from taking all and everything. In 1904 the Zeitung expressed its vexation over a land law which - in their version - found its victims especially among small farmers who could lose all their property to any native who laid a claim before the government, without even getting fair compensation. "If it is proved that a grandmother of a living native ... once upon a time has planted a coconut tree (on a piece of land which a European wants) it means that the Negro has a right to at least one hectare around that tree." Of course whenever they see that a European has his eye on some place, they hastily settle there. This is an easy way to get money and so to free oneself from the obligation to work.⁶³⁾ In 1908, rising land prices were seen as caused exclusively by the government's efforts to give a better start to the natives - and the Indians. The government apparently wished "to prevent German settlement and to retain our beautiful GEA for the black element or to open it to sponging Asians."⁶⁴⁾

Black peril

All these issues helped to coin the term "black peril" (an odd way of speaking about one's colonial subjects). One facet of this "peril" was the "Hosennigger" whose pictures appeared in periodicals at home, "looking exactly the same as any other black lout grown fat by laziness"⁶⁵⁾ (sic!). Cases were reported with names and all of this or that black man who had married a German wife. "Will she work with the hoe in his field?" "How did Mr Mtoro⁶⁶⁾ get his papers? (in a report by the chief editor of the UP, Mr Hermann Wilder).⁶⁷⁾ There were those "Kolonialneger" in Germany who travelled round and gave lectures or were teachers at the Oriental

Seminar, or "Kultur neger", those who had been in Europe and therefore were more than useless - "they can cause more damage than one hundred unsuitable settlers ... It is time for the Gouvernementsrat (Governor's Council) to take up the question and reach an agreement to forbid all Whites to take natives with them to Europe.⁶⁸⁾

The cardinal concern in this racial complex is "the horrors of miscegenation", as the Zeitung called it,⁶⁹⁾ and its counterpoint, keeping the own race pure. That was something the South Africans knew about: Paul Krüger knew no history except biblical history, but "that a people who does not keep its race pure cannot colonise" is apparent enough when you look at the Spaniards. "To fight the bastard economy is as urgent a task as it is gratifying. Quietly and unswervingly advancing, shoulder to shoulder with our German women, we will march ahead to our fulfilment." (Die Bekämpfung der Bastardwirtschaft ist eine ebenso dringende wie dankbare Aufgabe. Ruhiges, zielbewusstes Vorgehen Schulter and Schulter mit der deutschen Frau wird zum Ziele führen.)⁷⁰⁾ Mixed marriages should be forbidden, as there is no longer any doubt about the inequality of the races. In 1906 the UP reported with approval that the Evangelical parish in Windhoek (SWA) had decided to refuse half-white children entry to their nursery school, a harsh measure, to be sure, because that same church had married the parents and baptised their children. There followed a twisted argument that this did not imply that the Church dodged responsibility for these children, since "the missionaries might choose to take care of them, while the White citizens could maintain their right to have things their own way. Even more important is the decision to shut out the parents who after all are virtuous citizens. ... these measures deserve the greatest attention as an unmistakable symptom of the race-proud man who know his duty. The German Reich will in the future have many coloured subjects, but never will there be coloured Germans, because colour and other racial characteristics imprint on every human bastard the ineffaceable signs of his descent."⁷¹⁾ Both the Zeitung and the Rundschau had a long, very technical

article on "The legal views on mixed marriages according to German Colonial Law" by Dr Friedrich in Giessen, who found that all marriages at the register's office in Germany or in the German colonies were null and void: they were concubinates and their offspring had to be treated as natives.⁷²⁾

Given that many or most Germans believed that mixture of races always leads to spiritual and moral inferiority (Prof. Hans Meyer in the Zeitung⁷³⁾) and degeneration (although the products are often, paradoxically, beautiful females)⁷⁴⁾, we can imagine how horrified they were when the Reichstag in 1912 voted for a resolution to recognise mixed marriages in all protectorates.⁷⁵⁾ All of the colonies in Africa (i.e. GEA, Cameroon, Togo, and South-West Africa) were opposed to it; the parsons in SW Africa were against it; "it is just a case of sentimentality, of misunderstood humanitarianism" - commentaries and criticism were rife in issue after issue of the Zeitung. But the most telling among my notes is a piece by Joh.W. Harmisch, called "In favour of race pollution" (Rassenvermauschelung). "There is no clearer proof that our experienced pioneers must be represented in the Reichstag. If they had been, there would be no such decision, this real "Greisenkind" ... of those rotten and mouldy Rousseau'an delusions about equality of all human beings - a decision that is simply the equivalent to besmirching our race. Relationships between the races cannot be avoided, but they must not be sanctioned by matrimony."⁷⁵⁾

This short survey makes it evident that "racial pride" stood for "white prestige" which again appeared as a necessary element in maintaining the position of the Whites as lords and masters of the earth. It was likewise a rationalisation of bad behaviour towards conquered peoples. Beliefs about the harmful effects of racial mixture were probably genuine, but at this stage of history no amount of proof against these theories would have changed colonial behaviour one iota.

Missions and Islam

In contrast to the sharp profile that could be drawn of colonial opinions and behaviour vis à vis the natives in their

various roles, no clear picture emerges from my scanty notes on missionary activity and the Colonialists' attitudes toward it. The situation was complicated enough, because all the parties involved, missionaries, their societies at home, the government in the protectorate and the diverse inhabitants in it, were always at cross-purposes. There had been missions in the region long before the Germans occupied it, and neither these nor the German missionaries who followed in the wake of the colonialists were enthusiastic supporters of the new policies, whether it was those of the international trading corporations, operating from Zanzibar, or the chauvinistic settler community.⁷⁶⁾ Among the missions many denominations were represented, and competition for land and souls often prevailed over the common aim of spreading Christianity among the people who "have an atavistic (sic!) longing for alcohol, contempt for work, who are cruel, bloodthirsty" etc.⁷⁷⁾ Those missions that came northward from South Africa had very different lines of conduct from the German Moravians, for example, and also from what the colonial government thought feasible. The missions were, from the beginning, the only intermediaries bringing literacy to the population (apart from Koran schools, but that is another matter). But the settlers, as we have seen, were not pleased with that aspect of mission work. Nor did the government find it appropriate for their needs for lower officials. The government wanted these to master Swahili, while the missionaries in general wanted to teach in the vernacular of their area.

None of the colonising agents liked the fact that Islam was spreading, radiating from the coast all over the country. The reasons for this phenomenon which was generally considered as undesirable, if not a direct danger to the "great cause", was analysed by clever people like Prof. Carl H. Becker who saw as the main factor the "spiritual make-up (Geistesbeschaffenhet) of the Negro, which predestines him to Islam while excluding him from the higher forms of Christian religion and European morality - for the time being, or maybe for ever."⁷⁸⁾ He was consulted by the colonial government when the so-called Mecca letters appeared in GEA in 1908. These were documents

with an eschatological purport. The Germans therefore connected them with Mahdist doctrines. Becker saw "any eschatological preaching" as "everywhere and always ... aimed at European rule". In fact, few Germans understood what lay behind these and similar phenomena,⁷⁹⁾ and that is reflected in the newspapers who took the Mecca letters in their stride, as yet another indicator of forces at work to thwart German aims.

There were also better articles on Islam, like Dr Karl Kumm's "The triumphal march of Islam in Africa" in which he dealt with the Sudan - and advised that the Moslems should be bound economically to the interests of the state so that "the fanatic who lives off religion gradually changes into a petty official living off the state."⁸⁰⁾ In 1913 an article in the Zeitung signed by "Civis", an industrious member of the staff, recommended something rather different. He pointed out that the real danger was that Islam united peoples who were formerly each other's enemies. Otherwise "there is not much difference between the rule of heathen witch doctors and the fanatic reign of Moslem teachers. Their faith is very superficial, but because the Negroes are so materialistic, the Christian spirit is of no avail ... But to attack polygyny, first undermining it by taxation, later perhaps even prohibiting it, that would be to put the axe to the root of the tree Islam."⁸¹⁾

In spite of the many dissensions among the parties they all agreed that it was the missions who should stop Islam, using whatever methods they saw fit. The chief editor of the Zeitung found, in 1904, that "false missionary doctrines (like general brotherhood) were taught. Instead the government ought to have full powers to formulate these doctrines in consonance with generally accepted principles."⁸²⁾ But he also pointed out that this belief in general brotherhood occurred only among the Evangelical Missions. The Catholics carried through the distinction between White and Black as master and servant to the full. Hermann Wilder of the UP wrote in 1905 that conversion to Christianity was (also) necessary to bring Europeans and natives nearer to each other, the more so because Islam was doing just the opposite.⁸³⁾ And again, in 1911, that

missions should get together with the colonists and act in solidarity with them, because only in that way could Christianity become influential among the natives.⁸⁴⁾ In the end Dr Rohrbach could note with satisfaction that the missionaries themselves were no longer restrained in combining nationalism and religious duties, and that that was a sign of growing nationalism.⁸⁵⁾ By that time Islam had, of course, got a very different import owing to troubles in the Balkan, Turkey, Persia and India, and to the partly new alignments among the great powers before the impending world war.

The Herero War

The Herero war was a subject with wide repercussions all over the colonial world.⁸⁶⁾ Rebellions were nothing unusual nor was their brutal suppression. But in SWA the Germans created a situation for themselves that seriously damaged whatever imperial reputation they had. The Germans in East Africa could not see this at the time and it is therefore natural that the Zeitung had not much more than regular reports from the theatre of war and the obligatory nasty comments. In the UP I found nothing at all except one article of which I shall give a rather extensive abstract, as it contains so many typical aspects of settlers' ideas in a condensed form. When the war had just broken out the editorial said: The disaster comes entirely unexpectedly. It happens in a country with many more Europeans, Christians, and missionaries than in our other colonies. Knowing the Negro character as we do, it is incomprehensible "that not one Herero felt so much devotion for his master, so much love for his spiritual adviser, his benefactor, that he understood that his behaviour must lead to his own destruction." Even if all that has been written about the events in SWA is true, it is still uncanny that no European official, private person, or missionary has had enough contact with the population to see the revolt coming. This makes it clear that a large number of Europeans ... does not suffice to give at least so much security that an uprising cannot break out without being anticipated. "Apparently not even Christianity is able to forge a strong enough bond between white and black. Skin colour has been vindicated as

the stronger factor." The article then says that GEA has a better system of administration: corrupt chiefs have been replaced by coloured district officers who keep a tight reign (ein straffes Beamtenregiment). In addition, letters have to be written in Latin script, Friday as a holiday is ignored, Koran schools are diminishing. Moreover, the natives are as much as possible drawn into the white community as collaborators, so that contacts with the population become much more intimate. The author doubts that this kind of regime could be introduced in SWA.⁸⁷⁾ After this outburst of disillusionment about the natives' insensibility and ingratitude there seemed to be nothing more about this war.

The Zeitung had had notices about earlier disturbances in the South-West and when the real fighting started expressed to "our poor South-West our deep-felt wish to be able to send help to our fellow-countrymen and take revenge for the shameful deeds (Schandthaten) which the black riff-raff, always too humanely treated, have conducted in the most barbaric way against many worthy settlers, their wives and children." They would show that not only Englishmen could subdue rebellions.⁸⁸⁾ A little later they published an analysis of the situation by Dr Fuchs in Swakopmund: The deepest cause of the rebellion is the general hate the Herero feel for the Europeans, and they hate them so much because the Europeans have curtailed them both materially and culturally. The Herero do not acknowledge individual ownership of land and cattle. Their cattle have been grazing freely and all of a sudden there are farmers all around, taking their best pastures, forbidding them to use their own waterholes and seizing their best beasts as fines for trespassing. With the Whites came rinderpest and pulmonary disease etc. These Whites wanted to abolish polygamy, they wanted them to work for them. But work is paid for in money wages, and money is private property. The more direct causes are the many troops in Hereroland, called in to fight the Bondeltzwarts (a tribe that rebelled some time earlier) and plenty of rain, which allowed the pastoralists to move around more freely. The conclusion of the author was not, as one might hope, that some kind of compromise with the Herero

might be reached, no, the colonists have to be completely safe if reconstruction is to be carried out. They will get all the land that is not absolutely necessary for the Herero, who now are totally impoverished and therefore will have to work for the Whites. The correspondent ends his article with suggestions about indemnification of the Whites; about punishment of the Herero which will render them defenseless; speculations about how many heads of cattle there are left (maybe only one tenth), and a calculation that, as a matter of recompense, three, or even four heads of Herero cattle should be reckoned as equivalent to one European. The Zeitung added the remark: this war is not a page of glory in German colonial history.⁸⁹⁾

Neighbours: The Congo

It may seem somewhat unfair that the Germans had to put up with the great indignation of all the bystanders, when it is realised how the Belgians carried on in the Congo in the same period. It did sound rather ironical when the Zeitung wrote disapprovingly about the "Congo scandals" and immediately underneath printed a report on their own military exploits in the South-West.⁹⁰⁾ As a matter of fact, they glossed over the Belgian misdeeds shortly afterwards: atrocities occur in all colonies, but, of course, it is not state officials who are guilty, and the fact that private individuals break the law does not give other states the right to interfere. "The small group of the Congo Reform Association do not consider the regulation of the question of the Crownlands as 'plunder of the blacks'. Still less do their German kindred spirits. The practice of all colonial states gives the same right to the Congo state."⁹¹⁾ Otherwise, the writings of both the Rundschau and the Zeitung (the UP was not so interested) show that typical mixture of acrimonious rivalry and envious admiration that also characterised their stand towards the British in Africa.

Neighbours: The British

It is small wonder that the Germans used to look askance at British activities in East Africa: they were usually the

losers in the smaller contests and due to be beaten completely in the end. There were squabbles about trifling matters all the time. For example, the British contended that the "honour" of their officers was of a higher nature than that of their German counterparts because the latter were still given to duelling - as if punishing officers by flogging were not much worse! The British in Zanzibar did not convict the houseboy of a German physician who had stolen money from his master, because they felt they could well let the natives go on stealing as long as they stole from foreigners and left the English and the Sultan's relations alone. Under the heading "English lies" the Zeitung furiously denied that the Germans had treated badly some Englishmen at the Lupa Gold Field (in south west Tanzania). The Zeitung accused the British of deficiencies in the management of their cities and in handling their Indian immigrants. It also accused the British of disloyalty in connection with the Herero war, and of machinations with the Belgians and the Portuguese.⁹²⁾ Cries of alarm were raised when it was found that more and more of the larger plantations and also gold fields passed into British hands.⁹³⁾ But the Zeitung also applauded Lord Delamere, that protagonist of settlerdom in British East Africa, when he attacked the "ruinous policies" of his governor and demanded new labour regulations.⁹⁴⁾

The Germans were not only highly critical about, but also sensitive to opinions from the other side of the border. Just before the great campaign against Germany culminating in World War I started gathering momentum, they wrote with satisfaction how the "British East Africans" during eight years had systematically depreciated GEA, only pointing out failures and delays; but now that the colony was advancing fast (1910) they changed their tactics and brought forth GEA as an example. Whereupon the editor of the Zeitung needs must go along the well-trodden path: it is by sufficient capital and hard work we have achieved this, in spite of almost unbearable absolutism, a clique-system, caste-feeling, the government's carefully conducted policy of scarce labour, and the unwritten system of pushing Germans out of the colony by making life

there repugnant to them. The Colonist has succeeded; he knows: "Das Deutsche" maintains itself against all odds, "das Fremde" must retreat in the end.⁹⁵⁾

The Masai

One topic about which the Germans always had altercations with their northern neighbours were the Masai, the "warlike" pastoralists who perhaps more than most of the indigenous peoples had a mind of their own. The Zeitung led the discussion, quoting with approval a certain Bishop Hirth who had known the Masai for decades, as saying: the peace of the country cannot be restored before the last Masai has been exterminated. This sounds immoral at first hearing, but it is nevertheless a method that has been used by many civilised nations (Kultur-nationen) as a last resort, e.g. by the United States against the Sioux.⁹⁶⁾ It is very much a question of protecting the peaceful tax-paying tribes, living on the borders of the Masai territory, which have entrusted themselves to the protection of the Germans.⁹⁷⁾

In actual fact, the Masai were not exterminated, but were chased away from the good lands on the high plateaus and in the mountains of Kenya, and the people was split up into groups that were isolated from each other by settlers' farms and ranches, the Uganda railway, and the border between British and German East Africa. Typical of the relations between whites was that, when Masai cattle raids occurred in German territory, they were said to be conducted by Masai from the other side of the border where there was a cattle disease;⁹⁸⁾ when Masai in BEA were restive it was people from across the border who had fled because of bad treatment.⁹⁹⁾ One specialist on Masai, signing himself J.D. (who later on signed Jos Deeg) wrote in 1906 that it was, indeed, unfair and cruel to force these pastoral peoples who were used to live in the highlands, into a reserve in the plains where they suffered from fever, where water was scarce during the dry season and where livelihood was dependent on grain cultivation which the Masai did not know, and at the same time forbid them to go outside the reserve in order to buy grain. As usual, when a knowledgeable

person expressed an opinion, the editor of the Zeitung objected. He accused Mr. D. of being partial and going against the district council in Moshi, and emphasised: most Masai have been living in fever-ridden steppes before, they do visit markets near their habitaion and there are permanent rivers - that is to say, in the East and North of the reserve.¹⁰⁰⁾ Apart from this, both the Zeitung and the UP gave good advice about teaching them how to combat cattle diseases, raise sheep for wool, and oxen for slaughter.

South Africa and the Boers

Of all the relationships with subjects of the British Empire, those with the South Africans were no doubt the most interesting. During the Boer War (1899-1902) Germany had been very pro-Boer and after the Boers had been defeated there were great numbers among them who wanted to emigrate, for example to British and German East Africa. They sent delegations to evaluate the situation, and some of them were said to have bought large tracts of land; in one issue of the Zeitung there were complaints about all the ugly stories that were being told in South Africa about the colony and its "incredible conditions" - whether by jealous Englishment or by dissatisfied emigrants - with the result that the Boer population would not move there; but then again the colony was profusely praised abroad, even though the government acted stupidly as usual.¹⁰¹⁾ Anyway, in 1904 the first Boer trek occurred: fifty of them arrived at Korogwe. Rumors went around that they wanted a state of their own, but these were denied shortly after: they wanted guarantees that they would not be harassed on their own land for the fourth time.¹⁰²⁾

But by 1905 the Germans discovered that Boers were not what had been imagined. Their complaints might go like this: they do not cultivate the soil, or even keep cattle; their ox wagons are not suited to our geographical conditions, so that they do not undertake transportation, they just hunt and do some trading with cattle and seem to expect Germans to buy their land; they are no real cattle breeders, they just wait for a calf to grow into either a cow or a bull. We have enough

of that kind of people in the form of our natives. These Boers are without means, but should certainly not get government aid: aid ought to go to our own retired officers who want to settle and to our own smallholders.¹⁰³⁾ The UP found, in 1908, that the colony hardly needed any more foreigners. Like Elspeth Huxley in her memoirs from her childhood in Kenya¹⁰⁴⁾ it found the Boers hot-tempered, obstinate and prone to upset whatever balance the Germans had struck in their relations with the natives.¹⁰⁵⁾

Anti-English as the people in the Schutzgebiet were, they nevertheless rejoiced when the Union of South Africa became a fact, because if anywhere it was there that a really consistent native policy was conceived and carried out. The native problem had been hanging over the country like a black cloud, but now (in 1909) the people could enjoy the bliss of freedom and justice in peace.¹⁰⁶⁾ South Africa, the Zeitung said, will be White man's country. This is mostly the merit of the Boers, because they bring up the natives according to a steady, consistent method without draconic means so that they feel irrevocably dependent and inferior.¹⁰⁷⁾ Two years later the Zeitung stated contentedly: the Union is becoming Boer country, through their stubbornness and tenacity, particularly where their language is concerned. This is contrary to the belief of the British that the country would soon become anglicised. Boer is identical with champion of the Whites and of a harsh policy against Britain's brown citizens from India.¹⁰⁸⁾ Several times the East African colonists thought that South Africa had solved the Indian problem once and for all, in spite of the complications which the presence of people like Gandhi brought forth. As the Zeitung stated in 1912: Both Hertzog and Botha go in for social as well as spatial segregation - which means a policy of native reserves. "A grand policy, adapted to factual conditions."¹⁰⁹⁾

The Asians

If these last topics were such that they showed up in the newspapers (and my notes) only on and off, sometimes disappearing for long periods, one issue that was to the fore practi-

cally all the time was the Indians, as they were called. They were there when the Germans came, and in defiance of their strenuous efforts to push them out, the Indians were still there when the Germans left. Whatever policies the British applied during their mandate, they were still there when the country became independent. One cannot even say that the modern "Asian problem" is just a colonial heritage.

There were many Germans who took the Indians' presence as a natural thing. An expression of this attitude is the introductory article in the first issue of the Rundschau in 1908 which said: There are a number of specialties imported from India which it is hard to compete with. There are centuries old links between the Schutzgebiet and India and therefore it is quite natural that Indians are here as traders. Many people consider them as an unnecessary evil and want them replaced by natives. But they should understand that that is impossible at short notice. It would be unwise to have Germans in their place, for the role of trader would not combine well with their position as "Herren": they would have to ask much higher prices, which would lead to lower turn-over and higher wages at the plantations. They need to travel home now and then and must earn enough for travel expenses. The usual complaint is that the Indians send home so much money and leave the country when they have made their pile, but that is, after all, not the rule.¹¹⁰⁾

Here I should first point out that the Indians were not a homogeneous group and thus represented a number of "Indian problems" and not only one.¹¹¹⁾ There were in the first place the large business men and bankers, often based in Bombay and operating from Zanzibar where they were "in league" with those large Hamburg commercial interests which the settlers hated so much.¹¹²⁾ As early as 1901 the Zeitung felt uneasy because exporters to India were inclined more and more to sidestep the European importers there and to make contact with the indigenous businessmen directly. This meant that in case of trouble no responsible owner could be found, or no owner at all.¹¹³⁾ Some years later the Zeitung found that the reason why the

colony did not develop better was that commercial firms in Zanzibar favoured the Indians (compare Dr Zache in Hamburg: the Indians are dangerous usurers).¹¹⁴⁾ When the English had started their "desperate efforts" to get rid of the Indian population in South Africa, the Zeitung could not help remarking that it was Indian capitalists who had advanced money for many enterprises there (and that Sikh soldiers had helped conquer the country).¹¹⁵⁾

The other group of unwelcome Indians were the small traders, artisans, washermen and their suit of very poor countrymen bringing plague and cholera epidemics. Dr Sonder, Marine Stabsarzt, told the Berlin branch of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft in 1903: "I call the Indians a cancerous tumour in East Africa: they suck the blood of the natives to the last drop" and then leave the country with all their money. They incite mistrust against the Europeans, so that natives even deposit their savings with them instead of at our "Sparkassen". The editor added: the Indians are not indispensable, as some people think. Nothing at all would happen if we put them over the border all at the same time. The British in South Africa take measures against continuous immigration and so should we.¹¹⁶⁾ Two months later the Zeitung had an article signed NN taking back all these ugly insinuations,¹¹⁷⁾ but in the meantime the newspaper went on and on, year after year, drawing attention to this actually not large but very visible group. During all these years especially the Zeitung never tired of warning against their dirtiness and diseases, pleading for putting a top to their immigration and trying to get the authorities to forbid their feasts, as they did with the natives' ngomas, which the settlers disliked too. The Ismaili community and their leader the "half-god" Aga Khan were particularly offensive, a situation that did not improve when von Rechenberg went to visit the Aga Khan in Kilwa, where, by the way, the host let the Europeans wait outside and received the yellow-and-black-skinned first (Rundschau 1909).¹¹⁸⁾ Indians were characteristically cheats, taking several hundred percent profit, not keeping books (or doing it in Gujarati or some such language),

faking bankruptcies or wriggling themselves out of the consequences of a real bankruptcy. They were penetrating further inland, threatening to usurp the whole of the expanding cotton-trade, and, worst of all, they could obtain land, where Germans had trouble, because of preferential treatment by the government.¹¹⁹⁾

As I have shown, the colonists were not usually gentle or polite toward the natives, but there was one exception: in reviling the Indians they often took the good of "their poor Blacks" as a pretence. Their concern for the natives as victims of Indian foul practices sounded rather hypocritical. When one party said that the Negroes have to become wise by experience (with the Indian traders) the other party countered by calling it an immoral attitude (which would also damage the general flow of trade).¹²⁰⁾ While the European did everything to enhance the native culture and tax-paying capacity (!), the Indian foiled it all by enticing the people, as yet wholly untouched by civilisation, with kind words into their duka (shop) (implying that they squandered the money they had earned for their taxes on useless articles).¹²¹⁾ The Indian trader also paid his labourers in kind (cloth), his carriers had heavier loads, which made their competition a disaster for the Europeans¹²²⁾ and, when there was a famine somewhere, the Indian was quick to exploit the situation to the full.¹²³⁾

The Germans wanted to eradicate "the unnatural" in their colonies: coloured officials earned larger salaries and had longer holidays than they needed.¹²⁴⁾ When employees of the East African Railway Company were on strike, it was mostly Goanese and Indian artisans who wanted better working conditions. "This proves that the Indian coloured people, half civilised and corrupted by undigested socialistic ideas, may become a danger to the public peace and order."¹²⁵⁾ (As a matter of fact, employers in Europe and America have been saying the same about their workers long after this was written.)

When the war with England started, the UP wrote: it is a scandal that this "indische Lumpengepack" is still here; now is the opportunity to expel these vampires who poison the country. By now, the Germans can take care of commerce with the help of the Blacks, so that they can drive out those elements who take their money out of the country.¹²⁶⁾ (Also a hypocrisy that is reiterated ad infinitum.) And: we have fought against the Indians for years, in oral and written form, with little success. Our strongest opponent has been the German government, again with the large commercial firms as their allies. Both parties have always maintained that we cannot manage without them, but by "we" they mean themselves, while "we" beg to be left outside. The UP found it "small wonder that periods such as that of von Rechenberg, literally breed Indian insolence". It is through the Aga Khan that Indian agitation is conducted, and "the work of colonists thinking and working in terms of the nation is made into a Quixotic enterprise".¹²⁷⁾

As a matter of fact, the Germans did have reason to fear immigrants from Bombay, where, since 1896, plague epidemics had occurred, spreading from there further abroad. Indeed, behind many of the measures advocated for keeping native, Indian, and Arab living quarters separated from their own, lay the sheer necessity to preserve their health as best they could. It is hard to realize how great was the ignorance of the causes and even treatment of most tropical diseases at that time. When Iliffe concludes that "fear of rebellion" (after Maji Maji) coloured every aspect of German rule, and became the decisive argument in any political debate"¹²⁸⁾ it is just as true that the ordinary settler in his daily life struggled along against the many odds of the natural milieu (including his servants and farm hands) which was the source of very real, immediate dangers. Apart from this, one gets the impression that, as far as they did live in fear, it was a generalised fear, as anybody living in a strange place would feel. From 1910 on the impending war with England (and France) gradually superseded other worries.

There are still some aspects to be stressed in order to keep some sort of balance in this picture of the colonial mentality. The press did publish such articles as the one by Dr. M. Bonn, "Privatdozent" in Munich, highly indignant about a theory conveniently held, to give Europeans free scope for their colonial endeavours: in those regions where Europeans can exist, the native population will die out, this is sad, but inevitable - it is simply how the law of the survival of the fittest works. This theory Leut.General von Trotha has drawn upon to justify his actions against the Herero. He suggests that everywhere in the African colonies that same law holds, which means that von Trotha has been functioning as the "Hand of World Fate" in hastening the inescapable course of events. Apparently some people still philosophise in that way when they refer to American Indians and Australian Aborigines, but it is clear that this "law" does not apply to Negro peoples. The Negro in the southern United States and the West Indies have not died out, nor have those in South Africa, where the white population has increased greatly, to be sure, but the originally small group of natives has grown still more rapidly, in spite of the fact that the Whites are committed to a policy of total segregation, and the milieu is very congenial to them. It makes no difference whether the Whites treat the Negro as a slave, put him in a reserve (Cape Province) or use him as a labourer on his farm, everything except pure slavery helps the Negro to multiply. Negroes die out only by armed violence; not by subjugating a tribe, but by killing every individual of that tribe. Perhaps behaviour like von Trotha's can be explained by special circumstances, but it is a "natural necessity" only if one considers the concept of the law of nature according to the formula "lucus a non lucendo" (meaning, literally, a glade without light - a wrong conclusion), and with that law explain such things as have not happened anywhere else.¹²⁹⁾

In the end, although it was rather too late for Germany as a colonial power, a "Society for the protection of the natives in the colonies" was founded, and whatever people like Paul Rohrbach, Regierungsrat Zache and members like Prof. Anton

wrote about the mistake of being a negrophile, about the extraordinary usefulness of forced labour and all the rest of it, it must have been symptomatic of changes in outlook trying to assert themselves in the face of what, all over the world, is still a grim fact, xenophobia and intolerance toward every deviation from the "normal". Every "mother-country" certainly had its own style of colonial behaviour. My overall impression of these Germans is of a species of uncultured, conceited and rude people, not adaptable, but capable of bending their surroundings to their will. They did this in such a way that today's Tanzanians say that, all in all, they were better masters than the English....

NOTES

1. Raph Uchewe, The follower race? In Africa, an international business, economic and political monthly, nr 25, Sept. 1973, p. 8.
2. William R. Ochieng, Ideology in African history. Africa, nr 20, April 1973, p. 57.
3. G.C.K. Gwassa, The German intervention and African resistance in Tanzania. In A history of Tanzania, ed. by I.N. Kimambo and A.J. Temu, Nairobi 1969, pp 85-122.
4. John Iliffe, Tanganyika under German rule 1905-1912. Nairobi and London 1969.
5. A history of East Africa II. Ed. by Vincent Harlow and E.M. Chilver, Oxford 1965.
6. I had no opportunity to study the British press.
7. See John Middleton and Jane Campbell, Zanzibar, its society and its politics. London 1965.
8. Iliffe, op.cit. p. 121.
9. The Portuguese, too, were neighbours, but what was written about them is of little interest to this study. I only mention that it sounds all very much the same then and now: trouble at the Portuguese border; the Portuguese are bad administrators; they maltreat the population; Portugal has no money to keep colonies - maybe they will sell Moçambique to England....
10. Elspeth Huxley, White man's country. Lord Delamere and the making of Kenya, London 1935.
11. See Iliffe op.cit. ch. 3.
12. Iliffe, op.cit. pp 37-38.
13. Z 29.9.06 (Z= Zeitung, R= Rundschau, UP= Usambara Post. The dates are written in continental fashion: day-month-year).
14. R 23.2.09
15. Z Febr. 1909
16. Z 29.10.10
17. Z 15.5.12
18. R 30.1.09
19. R 10.2.09

20. Z 14.5.01
21. Z 21.3.03
22. UP 24.2.06
23. UP 21.11.03
24. UP 17.12.04
25. UP 2.7.04
26. UP 28.1.05
27. Z 28.5.04
28. Z 17.6.05. In 1971 there were still Whites in Tanzania who thought the same.
29. Z June 1906.
30. Z 13.10.06
31. Iliffe op.cit. pp 43-45.
32. Z 4.3.14
33. UP 3.8.07
34. Iliffe op.cit. pp 80-81.
35. R 3.10.08
36. R 27.2.09
37. Iliffe op.cit. p 106.
38. For details about the regulations and their consequences see Iliffe op.cit. pp 103 f.
39. UP 27.2.09
40. UP 4.2.11
41. Z 17.7.09
42. Z 19.3.10
43. UP 3.4.09
44. UP 25.6.04
45. UP 25.3.05
46. Z 3.2.12
47. From a later issue of the UP it appears that Morel was Honorary Secretary of the Congo Reform Association. He

had praised Dermburg's realistic and humanitarian regime. This called forth the familiar abusive comments, this time from Mr Egon F. Kirschstein. (UP 8.10.10).

48. R 17.3.09
49. The calamity may be on its way, but feelings of shame in the industrial world are not yet very marked. If they were, it would not have been necessary to write this article.
50. R 11.11.11
51. R 15.1.10
52. Stuhlmann was a cartographer and zoologist. He served as an officer in East Africa before the turn of the century. In 1907 he published a study on the tse-tse fly. In the German bibliography of the time I also find works on southern Algeria and on handicraft and industry in East Africa. The work which the Zeitung praised so lavishly is probably a volume in a series "Deutsch-Ostafrika". I can not say to what extent the Zeitung's enthusiasm was justified. Prof. Carl Meinhof (†1944) was a linguist and Africanist who published works on language in East, West and South-West Africa, and on African religions. During this period he was much occupied with directing mission work. Prof. Diedrich Westermann (†1956) was also an adviser on mission problems and published a great number of works on diverse African languages and cultures, some of which were translated into other languages.
53. Z 3.12.10
54. These are just a small sample from the Zeitung and the UP. The more urgent the labour problem, the more frequent this kind of statements.
55. UP 21.3.08
56. UP 5.3.04
57. UP 25.6.04
58. Z 24.1.08
59. Z 18.8.08
60. Z 5.6.09
61. Z 17.6.05
62. UP 13.6.14
63. Z 2.1.04
64. UP 27.6.08
65. UP 5.5.06

66. Mtoro is the Swahili for runaway slave!
67. UP 16.9.05
68. These and other niceties occur in both the Zeitung and the UP during the last years of the German regime and are, of course, a direct consequence of growing social contacts.
69. Z 5.7.05 (I am not sure about the exact date.)
70. Z 24.12.08
71. UP 21.4.06
72. Z 28.7.09 and R 31.7.09
73. Z 9.2.10
74. Z 6.11.09
75. Z 24.4.12
76. For a detailed study of Luthern missions in the southwest of Tanzania see Marica Wright, German missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941. Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands. Oxford 1971.
77. Z 19.3.08
78. R 31.5.10
79. Iliffe op.cit. pp 190-199.
80. Z 23.4.10
81. Z 6.8.13
82. Z 19.11.04
83. UP 23.12.05
84. UP 8.7.11. About missions as willing or unwilling tools of imperialism see Stephen Neill, Colonialism and Christian missions. Foundations of the Christian missions, London 1966. It may be my bias that this book, far from exciting admiration, gives me a feeling of malaise because it describes so many such poor performances. See especially the chapter on the Congo.
85. UP 13.6.14
86. See Helmuth Bley, South-West Africa under German rule, 1894-1914, (Engl transl by Hugh Ridley), London, Ibadan, Nairobi 1971.
87. UP 14.5.04
88. Z 30.1.04

89. Z May 1904
90. Z 29.4.05
91. Z 17.6.05
92. Z 1903 and 1904.
93. Z 18.9.09
94. Z 1.4.08
95. Z 27.8.10
96. It may be superfluous to note that this is not the first time we see how the Germans defend their own immoral behaviour by referring to others doing the same.
97. Z 25.7.03
98. Z 25.4.03
99. Z 3.9.04
100. Z 28.7.06
101. Z, all through the year 1903.
102. Z and UP 1904.
103. Z and UP 1905.
104. Elspeth Huxley, The flame trees of Thika. Memoirs of an African childhood, London 1959.
105. UP 6.6.08
106. Z 22.9.09
107. Z 1910 (no date)
108. Z 29.6.12
109. Z 13.11.12
110. R 22.8.08
111. I do not see why the presence of Indians outside their country should surprise Whites, who take it for granted that their kith and kin are found all over the world. There is nothing unnatural in the circumstance that "foreign trade" is conducted by people who are "foreigners" in either of the trading countries. Those who build the better beats or own the camels will take care of transportation. It may be less evident why these same foreigners also go into retail business, but so they do in societies with a largely subsistence economy, e.g.

Levantines in West Africa, Indians and Chinese in Malay, Chinese in Indonesia, and, to take another example, Germans and Scotch in Sweden-Finland in the late Middle Ages and later. For East Africa see e.g., Portrait of a minority. Asians in East Africa. Rev. ed. by Dharam P. Ghai and Yash P. Ghai, Nairobi ...1970. Peter Marris and Anthony Somerset, African businessmen, A study of entrepreneurship and development in Kenya. London and Nairobi 1971. H.S. Morris, The Indians in Uganda. Chicago and London 1968.

112. Examples of this occur in the Zeitung 15.4.05, 6.5.05, 2.6.05.
113. Z 28.4.01
114. Z 29.2.08
115. Z 24.11.09
116. Z 18.7.03
117. Z 12.9.03
118. R 7.11.09
119. For examples of this see Z 15.1.02, 21.2.03, 6.5.03, 1.10.04, 26.4.04, 6.5.05, 16.2.10.
120. UP 19.12.03
121. Z Aug. 1903
122. Z 16.4.04
123. Z 18.1.13
124. Z 27.8.13
125. Z 17.12.04
126. UP 5.12.14
127. UP 1.8.14
128. Iliffe op.cit. p 28.
129. R 14.4.09