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Colonials in Conflict

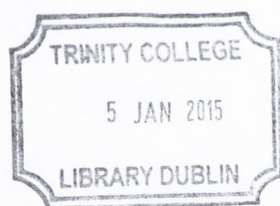
Europeans in British and German East Africa and the First World War

Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Daniel Steinbach

Trinity College Dublin

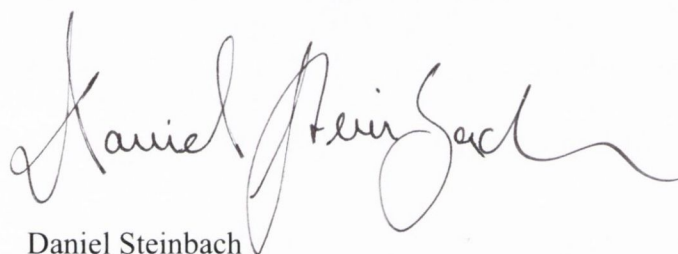
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Daniel Steinbach

Dublin, 30th October 2013

Research conducted and sections written for this thesis provided the basis for the two following publications:

Daniel Steinbach, 'Challenging European Colonial Supremacy. The Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in British and German East Africa during the First World War', in James E. Kitchen, Alisa Miller and Laura Rowe (eds.), *Other Combatants, Other Fronts. Competing Histories of the First World War* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), pp. 153-175.

Daniel Steinbach, 'Power Majorities and Local Minorities: German and British Colonials in East Africa during the First World War', in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Germans as Minorities during the First World War: A Global Comparative Perspective* (London: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 263-288.

Summary

This thesis analyses the experience of conflict in the colonies of British and German East Africa in the context of the First World War. In particular, the focus of this research is on the, to date under-examined, perspectives of the Europeans who inhabited, and fought for their nation in, these colonial territories. To explore the varied European perspectives on the war as it unfolded, the thesis draws on four case studies that represent the most dynamic fields of research within current First World War studies: the outbreak of hostilities, the internment of enemy aliens, the experience of war from the soldiers' perspective, and the occupation of conquered territory. Within each of these case studies, the focus is on how European actors – civilians, missionaries, administrators, and military personnel – understood warfare through the typical lens of nationality but also through the additional lens of colonialism, and how these dual perspectives intersected or diverged and together shaped individual thoughts and actions. Ultimately, this thesis argued that bringing national conflict into the colonial sphere created tensions between nationalist sentiments and the desire to uphold the core principles on which colonialism was based, namely European solidarity in the service of a 'civilising mission'. Because of this tension, individual actors had to manage carefully the conduct of warfare, and in spite of the clearly national basis of the war, shared colonial understandings, which united rather than divided British and German interests, often took precedence.

The thesis is divided into two sections that each contain two chapters, as well as an overarching Introduction and Conclusion that contextualise the work and provide an integrative discussion. The first section focuses the situation within British and German East Africa and the debates that occurred among the colonials themselves. This section first comprises the chapter on outbreak, which details the ways in which people living within British and German East Africa anticipated war and the justifications that were presented for this once war became inevitable. The initial hesitance to engage in war as well as the shifts in public opinion that occurred once war had been declared, nicely reveal the dual relevance of colonial

and national frameworks for thinking about warfare and its possible impact on life within these territories. These ideas are pursued further in the following chapter, which focuses on the arrest and internment of 'enemy aliens'. Again, the mostly relaxed approach to arrest and the changing treatment of individuals as they transitioned from fellow civilians to prisoners reveal the ways in which colonial perspectives constrained straightforward distinctions between friend and enemy, and how this necessitated certain forms of treatment that differed from might have been expected outside of the colonial world. The second half of the thesis then draws in the wider picture of European involvement in the East Africa campaign, first by exploring the experiences of various distinct groups of soldiers who were engaged in the East African campaign. As this chapter shows, the experience of soldiers deployed to Africa from Britain differed significantly from those deployed from other parts of the empire and from those who fought as colonials. Contrary to what might be assumed, empire and colony were not relevant concepts to the average British soldier, and without access to these frameworks it was difficult to find meaning in fighting a campaign that represented a mere 'sideshow' to the 'real war' at the Western Front. The following chapter turns to the issues that were raised by the occupation of German territory by Allied forces, a situation that was unique within the overall First World War as this was the only German territory that fell into hands of Western Allies. However, as was argued in this chapter, rather than aggressively asserting their control over this new territory, the British administration, in particular, was careful to strike a balance between taking over while also maintaining continuity in systems, structures and symbols of the colony. Again, this balancing act reveals the tension between the dual perspectives, nationalism and colonialism, through which war in East Africa was approached, and the ways in which upholding colonial assumptions often took precedence.

In closing the thesis and drawing out and integrating the above insights, the final chapter also considers the legacy of the East African campaign in popular memory. As already established in the introductory chapter, the East African campaign, although relegated to the status of an unimportant sideshow militarily,

formed an exotic and exciting backdrop to numerous cultural products, including memoirs, fictional novels and films. Contrary to some assertions, this was not, therefore, a 'forgotten war'. Nonetheless, by working through the memory of this war it becomes clear that although it was not forgotten, it was misremembered. More important, the manner in which this memory developed reflects the same tensions that were apparent in each of the preceding chapters. The threat war in East Africa posed to colonial ideologies necessitated certain forms of reconstruction when it was subsequently remembered, a process that covered over the harsh brutality of this campaign and replaced it with the narrative of a 'gentleman's war', in which European adversaries engaged each other with civility and respect against the backdrop of exotic landscapes and exciting escapades.

Together, this work contributes both to current developments in First World War studies, which increasingly emphasise the global nature of this war, and to colonial studies, which to date have focused on exploring these events from the perspective of the African population. Exploring the distinct perspective of the Europeans who inhabited and fought for the colonial space, this research shows how colonial ideologies intersect with the more nationalist concerns associated with warfare. In that sense, this research brings the global war into the colonies rather than simply using the colonies as a further example of the war's global nature. In so doing it provides unique insights into the meaning of war that is simultaneously on the edge of European concerns and at the centre of colonial ones.

Table of Contents

I. Acknowledgments	11
II. List of Abbreviations	13
III. Map of German East Africa.....	14
1. Introduction.....	15
1.1. Introduction	15
1.2. Historiography.....	26
1.3. Sources	33
1.4. Terminology	38
1.5. Structure	38
2. Colonial Unity, National Division, and the Prospect of War in East Africa .52	
2.1. Introduction	52
2.2. Nationalism, Internationalism, and Racial Belonging	52
2.3. Rejecting the War.....	56
2.4. Embracing the War	64
2.5. Uniting for the War	75
2.6. Conclusion.....	83
3. Upsetting the Colonial Order: Arrest and Internment of ‘Enemy Aliens’ in the Colonial Sphere.....	84
3.1. Introduction	84
3.2. Arrest and Deportation in British East Africa.....	92
3.3. Arrest and Control in German East Africa.....	100
3.4. Internment Camps in German East Africa	104
3.5. Arrest and Internment in German East Africa	107
3.6. Internment in India	117
3.7. Internment of Indian soldiers in German East Africa	121
3.8. Conclusion.....	128

4. Engaging in Global War: Soldiers' Perspectives on the East African Campaign	130
4.1. Introduction	130
4.2. European Soldiers from East Africa	135
4.3. Professional British Soldiers from India	138
4.4. Soldiers from Britain	140
4.4.1. Journey to East Africa.....	142
4.4.2. Arrival in East Africa.....	148
4.4.3. Connection with Home and with Africa	152
4.5. War Aims in East Africa	156
4.6. Conclusion.....	161
5. Balancing Friends and Enemies: Interactions between Occupier and Occupied in German East Africa	163
5.1. Introduction	163
5.2. Life in German East Africa prior to the Occupation.....	166
5.3. Encounters between Occupier and Occupied.....	174
5.4. Organising the Occupation.....	180
5.5. Deportation of Germans from East Africa	189
5.6. Conclusion.....	196
6. The Cultural Legacy of the First World War in East Africa	198
6.1. Introduction	198
6.2. Early British Memoirs, 1917-1923	199
6.3. East African Memories in Germany, 1918-1945	211
6.4. The 'forgotten' Campaign in Britain, 1928-1938	214
6.5. Conclusion.....	218
7. Conclusion	220
7.1. Key Findings & Contributions	220
7.2. Further Directions	222

8. Bibliography	226
1. Archival Sources.....	226
1.1. Australia	226
1.2. Germany	226
1.3. Kenya.....	228
1.4. Tanzania	228
1.5. United Kingdom	228
2. Newspapers & Magazines	231
3. Literature.....	232

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II. List of Abbreviations

AA	Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin
AdFSt	Archiv der Franck'sche Stiftungen, Halle/Saale
BA	Bundesarchiv, Berlin
BEA	British East Africa
BL	British Library, London
BMW	Archiv Berliner Missionswerk, Berlin
CMS	Church Mission Society Archive, Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham
CMW	Council for World Mission, School of African and Oriental Studies, London
DOA	Deutsch Ostafrika
FL	Fryer Library, University of Queensland, Brisbane
GEA	German East Africa
HAB	Hauptarchiv der von Bodelschwingh'schen Anstalten Bethel, Bielefeld
IOR	India Record Office
IWM	Imperial War Museum, London
KNA	Kenya National Archives, Nairobi
LA	Liddle Archive, University of Leeds
LAELKB	Landeskirchliches Archiv der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern, Nürnberg
NA	National Archives, London
NAM	National Army Museum, London
RH	Rhodes House Library, Oxford
TNA	Tanzania National Archives, Dar es Salaam
WMN	Archiv der Westfälischen Missionsanstalt Nazareth, Bielefeld

III. Map of German East Africa



Source:

John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. xvi.

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The First World War in East Africa is a peculiar historical event. Publications on the First World War in East Africa feature the adjectives ‘forgotten’ or ‘untold’ in their titles and point to the fact that most of the studies that deal with the First World War ignore the fighting in East Africa.¹ Yet, as will be detailed below, this apparently ‘forgotten’ war also provides the inspiration, or at least the backdrop, for a continuous flow of novels, two Oscar-winning Hollywood films and last, but not least, an episode of *Young Indiana Jones*. What is it about this war, in this setting, that makes it simultaneously forgotten and culturally significant?

Contemporary accounts already relegated the military campaigns in Africa and Asia, often together with the naval operations, to being a kind of annex to the main narrative of the slaughter at the Western Front. However, novelists happily picked up the exotic setting and dramatic events of the African campaign, which differed in so many respects from the dominant narrative of the First World War as a brutal, fruitless and muddy affair. This fascination with East Africa was most evident in the English-speaking world, where it has lasted, nearly uninterrupted, for the next ten decades. One of the first writers to use this war as a setting was Francis Brett Young, whose subsequently long and successful career as an author started with the publication of his experiences as an officer during the conquest of German East Africa. Already in 1917 he was able to publish *Marching on Tanga*, in which he combined his war experience with detailed descriptions of the African

¹ Ross Anderson, *The Forgotten Front. The East African Campaign, 1914-1918* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004); Edward Paice, *Tip and Run. The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007); Anne Samson, *World War I in Africa. The Forgotten Conflict Among the European Powers* (London: Tauris, 2012). It might be considered fitting that my first academic publication appeared in an edited book with the word ‘untold’ in its title: Daniel Rouven Steinbach, ‘Defending the Heimat. The Germans in South-West Africa and East Africa during the First World War’, in Heather Jones, Jennifer O’Brien, and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian (eds.), *Untold War. New Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 179-208.

flora and fauna as well as the African population and their customs.² In the same year he published a volume of poems written during his time in East Africa, followed by a work of fiction set in the colonies a year later.³ Twelve years later he returned to the topic in his epic novel *Jim Redlake*, which is a fictionalised account of that time in his life, with his war experience as a focal point.⁴ More famously, in 1935, C. S. Forester published his novel *The African Queen* about the adventures – and developing love – of an English riverboat skipper and a female missionary who attempt (unsuccessfully) to torpedo a German gunboat on Lake Tanganyika.⁵ The theme of the war as an adventurous endeavour was also picked up early by the writers for youth – especially boys’ – adventure stories. The popular pre-war imperial and colonial subjects of exploration, hunting, and scouting were enriched and updated during the war with tales of combat, espionage, and escapes. Early examples of this are two books by P. C. Wren and P.F. Westerman, but undoubtedly a systematic search through the abundance of boys’ and youth magazines and novels would unearth many more.⁶

In interwar Germany, literary interest in the war in East Africa was of course intertwined with the loss of the German colony in 1919. One of the most prolific authors of that time who specifically dealt with the campaign was Friedrich Wilhelm Mader. Known as the ‘Swabian Karl May’, he published numerous youth and adventure novels set overseas before the war. In 1927, during the increased public interest in the war in general, but before the colonial revival of Nazi propaganda, he penned three short novels, published in the companion *Die*

² Francis Brett Young, *Marching on Tanga. With General Smuts in East Africa* (London: Collins, 1917). See also Michael Hall, *Francis Brett Young* (Bridgend: Seren, 1997), pp. 89-107.

³ Francis Brett Young, *The Crescent Moon* (London: Collins, 1918); *Ibid.*, *Five Degrees South* (London: Martin Secker, 1917).

⁴ *Ibid.*, *Jim Redlake* (London: Heinemann, 1930). He also published a short story of a German and a British veteran of the campaign who meet again in London after the war: *Ibid.*, ‘Armistice’, in *The Cage Bird & Other Stories* (New York/London: Harper, 1933), pp. 110-124.

⁵ C. S. Forester, *The African Queen* (London: Heinemann, 1935). Although set in East Africa the inspiration for the plot was likely the deeds of the German missionary Alphons Hermann in the Cameroons who played a key role in efforts to sink ‘HMS Dwarf’ using homemade torpedoes. I would like to thank Kenneth Orosz for this information.

⁶ Percy Francis Westerman, *Wilmschurst of the Frontier Force. A story of the conquest of German East Africa* (London: Partridge, 1918); Percival Christopher Wren, *Cupid in Africa or The Baking of Bertram in Love and War* (London: Heath Cranton, 1920). See also Michael Paris, ‘Boys’ Books and the Great War’, *History Today* 50 (2000), pp. 44-49 here pp. 94-99.

Helden von Ostafrika, which became hugely successful and went through several editions until 1945.⁷ He returned to the topic of East Africa ten years later in *Die Schlacht bei Tanga*.⁸ Similarly successful were the works of Joseph Viera, a veteran of the East Africa campaign and an active colonial revisionist. His various adventure novels set during the war went through several editions in the 1930s and 1940s and were combined under the title *Erzählungen aus den deutschen Kolonialkämpfen im Weltkrieg*.⁹ The end of the Second World War and the Nazi regime reduced the market for colonial fiction in Germany, and it was not until 2007 that, with *Eine Frage der Zeit*, the Swiss author Alex Capus published the first German language novel about the First World War in East Africa.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the English-speaking literary world rediscovered its fascination with the war in East Africa in the 1960s, and at least one new novel drawing on this setting has been published every decade ever since. The Rhodesian-born British author Wilbur Smith set his fourth novel *Shout at the Devil* during the war, using the winning formula of combining historical events with fictional adventures. He returned to the topic forty years later in *Assegai*, which was part of his successful Courtney family series.¹¹ In the 1970s, the South African novelist Alan Scholefield published two adventure novels, *Lion in the Evening* and *The Alpha Raid* with similar popular appeal.¹² In 1980 the Canadian William Stevenson centred his novel *The Ghosts of Africa* on the endeavours of Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, the commander of the Schutztruppe in East Africa and celebrated military hero.¹³ Three years later, in *An Ice-Cream War*, William Boyd took a less glorifying view on the campaign and stressed its absurdity.¹⁴ The novel was

⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Mader, *Die Helden von Ostafrika* (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1927-1928).

⁸ Ibid., *Die Schlacht bei Tanga* (Gütersloh Bertelsmann, 1938).

⁹ Josef Viera, *Erzählungen aus den deutschen Kolonialkämpfen im Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Loewe, 1936-1937).

¹⁰ Alex Capus, *Eine Frage der Zeit* (Munich: Knaus, 2007).

¹¹ Wilbur Smith, *Shout at the Devil* (London: Heinemann, 1968); Ibid., *Assegai* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2009).

¹² Alan Scholefield, *Lion in the Evening* (London: Heinemann, 1974); Ibid., *The Alpha Raid* (London: Heinemann, 1976).

¹³ William Stevenson, *The Ghosts of Africa* (London: Harcourt, 1980).

¹⁴ William Boyd, *An Ice-Cream War* (London: Penguin, 1982).

shortlisted for the Booker Prize and remains, together with *The African Queen*, one of the only fictional works concerned with the war to achieve some recognised cultural status. Finally, there is the short story *Journey Into A Dark Heart* by the renowned Danish author Peter Høeg about an imagined encounter between Lettow-Vorbeck and Joseph Conrad.¹⁵

In addition to these two dozen literary works come three full-length movies and two television productions. The first film concerned solely with the war in East Africa was *Die Reiter von Deutsch-Ostafrika* of 1934.¹⁶ The German propaganda film was directed by Herbert Selpin, who later directed the (in-)famous *Carl Peters*, and centres around a German settler couple and their interaction with their 'loyal' African staff and the British officers of the occupying forces. Of course, the most important and most successful artistic product concerned with the East Africa campaign is the film adaptation of *The African Queen* of 1952, directed by John Huston and starring Katherine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart.¹⁷ Although based on Forester's novel, by the end of the film the protagonists succeed – with dramatic effect – in sinking the German gunboat. In 1976 Smith's novel *Shout at the Devil* was also adapted into a film, directed by Peter R. Hunt and starring Lee Marvin and Roger Moore. Despite this stellar cast, the film about two adventurers who turn from poaching ivory in East Africa to sinking the German battleship 'Königsberg' proved to be unsuccessful.¹⁸ Yet, one of the most successful films of the 20th century, *Out of Africa*, released in 1985 and nominated for eleven Academy Awards of which it won seven, was also set around the war in East

¹⁵ Peter Høeg, 'Rejse ind i et mørkt hjerte', in *Fortællinger om natten* (Copenhagen: Rosinante, 1990), pp. 9-42. The story is inspired by Isak Dinesen aka Karen Blixen, *Den afrikanske Farm* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1938).

¹⁶ Herbert Selpin, "Die Reiter von Deutsch-Ostafrika," (Germany: Terra-Filmkunst, 1934). The film script by Marie Luise Droop is based on the book by the animal sculptor Fritz Behn, *Kwa Heri, Afrika! Gedanken im Zelt* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1933). See also more general Wolfgang Struck, 'Die Geburt des Abenteurers aus dem Geist des Kolonialismus. Exotistische Filme in Deutschland nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg', in Birthe Kundrus (ed.), *Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus* (Frankfurt (Main): Campus, 2003), pp. 263-281.

¹⁷ John Huston, "The African Queen," (USA/UK: United Artists/Horizon Pictures, 1952).

¹⁸ Peter R. Hunt, "Shout at the Devil," (UK/USA: Hemdale Film/American International Pictures, 1976).

Africa.¹⁹ The hugely popular television series *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* from the early 1990s had several episodes concerned with the First World War, including one involving the campaign in East Africa.²⁰ Finally, the German television miniseries *Afrika, mon amour* of 2007 followed a similar plot to *The African Queen*.²¹ Starring Iris Berben and Robert Atzorn, one could regard this production as proof that the fictionalisation of history repeats itself, first as tragedy then as farce.

In addition to this already long and varied list of cultural products inspired by or concerned with the war in East Africa, there has been a regular output of popular histories on the campaign, which occupy a space somewhere between proper history and adventure stories.²² More systematic academic interest in the events in Africa, however, has been limited to 'pure' military history, on the one side, and African history on the other. Similarly to the popular history books, military historians have focused primarily on the 'guerrilla' aspect of the campaign. Following the anti-colonial uprisings in the 1950s and 1960s in Kenya, Malaya and Vietnam, there was a renewed interest in Lettow-Vorbeck and the Schutztruppe as European 'earlier adapters' of guerrilla tactics and strategies. In addition, one can find detailed studies of the naval and air war, even though these were actually quite peripheral to the campaign. In contrast to these military studies, Africanists working in and on the newly independent states in East Africa were most interested in the impact of the war on specific regions and on specific segments of the populations. While military historians relied on official sources

¹⁹ Sydney Pollack, "Out of Africa," (USA: Universal, 1985). The film is mostly based on Blixen, *Den afrikanske Farm*; Frans Lasson (ed.), *Isak Dinesen. Letters from Africa, 1914-1931* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981).

²⁰ Simon Wincer, "German East Africa, December 1916: The Phantom Train of Doom," in *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, ed. George Lucas (USA: Lucasfilm/Paramount, 1992).

²¹ Carlo Rola, "Afrika, mon amour," (Germany: ZDF, 2007).

²² Robert Brian Gardner, *German East. The Story of the First World War in East Africa* (London: Cassell, 1963); Leonard Mosley, *Duel for the Kilimanjaro. An Account of the East African Campaign, 1914-1918* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963); Peter Shankland, *The Phantom Flotilla. The Story of the Naval Africa Expedition, 1915-1916* (London: Collins, 1968); J. Roger Sibley, *Tanganyikan Guerrilla. East African Campaign, 1914-1918* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971); Edwin P. Hyot, *Guerrilla. Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck and Germany's East African Empire* (London/New York: Macmillan, 1981); Charles Miller, *Battle for the Bundu. The First World War in East Africa* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1974); Giles Foden, *Mimi and Toutou Go Forth. The Bizarre Battle of Lake Tanganyika* (London: Penguin, 2005).

and the memoirs of European participants in the war, the studies of Africanists were based largely on oral history. Interviews with African veterans of the colonial armies or their descendants provided insights into how the war, and the resulting change of colonial rule, impacted everyday African life and culture. Considering these different academic approaches and backgrounds, it is perhaps not surprising that these military historians and historians of Africa developed their work in parallel rather than in collaboration. The site of most overlap between these different domains of work is in the exploration of the African porters working for the German and British army. Here elements of military history were combined with the anthropological approaches of Africanists.

All in all, it seems that the war in East Africa has left many imprints on mainstream culture, art, and in the academy. So how, then, has it come to be considered a 'forgotten' war and an 'untold' campaign? This contradiction, at least with respect to the apparent gaps in academic interest, might at least in part reflect the relatively recent reassessment of First World War studies in the last two decades, in which the cultural and civilian aspects of the war have moved into the foreground of research. The vast majority of these 'new' histories of the war have centred on Europe and especially the Western Front, largely ignoring the events overseas.²³ In the last ten years, a growing number of First World War historians have approached the war on other fronts, especially in Eastern and South-eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, using the same analytical and methodological tools developed and tested on the history of Europe during the war.²⁴ However, to date, only a handful of studies have approached the war in East Africa in that manner. In particular the role Africans played in the campaign has been reassessed, and several German historians have debated the myth and

²³ For example: Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich, and Irina Renz (eds.), *Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch... Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext, 1993); Gerhard Hirschfeld et al. (eds.), *Kriegserfahrungen. Studien zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext, 1997); Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *1914-1918. Understanding the Great War* (London: Profile Books, 2002).

²⁴ For a (now) classic example see Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front. Culture, National Identity, and the German Occupation in World War One* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

cult created after the war around Lettow-Vorbeck and the Schutztruppe.²⁵ Alongside these developments, there are examples of initial attempts being made to capture the international aspect of this campaign in several overview studies.²⁶ Other than German East Africa and the surrounding British colonies – British East Africa, Uganda, Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia – and especially South Africa and India had distinct interests in, and impacts on, the campaign. The roles of the neighbouring Belgian Congo and Portuguese East Africa have only been explored partially, again with a strong focus on traditional military and diplomatic history. One thing that is still surprisingly absent from this contemporary work is an understanding of how the war history intersects with the colonial history of Africa. One goal of the work presented in this thesis is to bridge these literatures, both of which are clearly relevant to the First World War in East Africa.

As may be apparent from the cultural and artistic output discussed above, and from the historiography that will be discussed below, the interaction with the campaign in East Africa in the last fifty years has been dominated by – if not even limited to – the English speaking world. It would be beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full exploration of the campaign in a truly international context: Soldiers from 22 different countries and colonies participated, including individual US Americans and Australians and regiments from the West Indies and

²⁵ For the German debate see Eckard Michels, *"Der Held von Deutsch-Ostafrika." Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Ein preußischer Kolonialoffizier* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008); Ibid., 'Deutschlands bekanntester 'Kolonialheld' und seine 'Askari'. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck und der Feldzug in Ostafrika im Ersten Weltkrieg', *Revue d'Allemagne* 38 (2006), pp. 541-554; Tanja Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika: Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegführung, 1885 bis 1918* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2011); Thomas Morlang, *Askari und Fitafita. Farbige Söldner in den deutschen Kolonien* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2008), pp. 72-76; Stefanie Michels, *Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten. Mehrdeutige Repräsentationsräume und früher Kosmopolitismus in Africa* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009), pp. 79-94; 116-151. For a more general discussion on African soldier in German East Africa see Michelle Moyd, *Becoming Askari. African Soldiers and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa, 1889-1918* (Cornell University, 2008); Ibid., 'We don't want to die for nothing.' Askari at War in German East Africa, 1914-1918', in Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire, and First World War Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁶ Hew Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Anne Samson, *British, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918. The Union comes of Age* (London: Tauris, 2006); Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme. South Africa in the First World War* (London: Penguin, 2008).

Nigeria, and the campaign impacted on Malta, Egypt, and Southern France where military and civilian prisoners of war were interned. Instead, this study limits itself to Germany and Britain, or more specifically to German and British East Africa. The reasons for this are twofold: First, soldiers fighting for Germany and Britain were the main opponents in this campaign, both in terms of numbers as well as in the perception of the contemporaries. Second, the main interest of this study is not to provide a chronological narrative or an all-encompassing overview of the military and political aspects of this war, but rather to elaborate four case studies that explore the most dynamic fields of recent research of the First World War: the outbreak of hostilities,²⁷ internment,²⁸ the experience of war,²⁹ and occupation.³⁰ Through each of these case studies, this thesis aims to explore how the Europeans living or working in Africa – mainly soldiers, settlers, administrators and missionaries – experienced and justified fighting against another colonising power with the assistance of African forces, and how the perceptions of ally versus enemy changed throughout the war.

Putting the European colonials at the centre of my investigation of course raises questions about the role of Africans. As combatants and civilians, Africans quantitatively and qualitatively contributed the most to the campaign, and their lives were affected by it in the most pronounced manner.³¹ Undoubtedly,

²⁷ Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United. Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

²⁸ Matthew Stibbe, *British Civilian Prisoners of War in Germany. The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War. Britain, France, and Germany, 1914-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁹ Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War. Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction. Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction. Military Culture and the Practice of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY/London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

³⁰ John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914. A History of Denial* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 2001); Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

³¹ For an overview see Timothy J. Stapleton, 'The Impact of the First World War on African People', in John Laband (ed.), *Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime Africa. From Slavery Days to Rwandan Genocide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2007), pp. 113-138.

historical research on the First World War in general has been focused on white men fighting at the Western Front, often overlooking the role of other ethnic groups in contributing to the war. Only very recently have a number of studies balanced this picture and stressed the importance of the African and Asian troops deployed in Europe by the colonial powers.³² For the East Africa campaign, however, this observation is only partially correct. While many popular histories have engaged solely with the deeds of Lettow-Vorbeck, the Schutztruppe and its British opponents, marginalising the role of Africans and the impact of the war on these, or utilising them only as statistics in a narrative that celebrates European warfare, parallel to these there are several excellent and detailed studies that have explored the impact of the war on different African communities and social groups, mainly by Melvin Page³³ and David Killingray.³⁴ Furthermore, despite the lack of reliable sources, a comprehensive study of the importance of African porters in the campaign has existed since the 1980s.³⁵ A number of PhD thesis have also concerned themselves with the role of African soldiers, the most substantial ones detailing the Rhodesian regiment, and the King's African Rifles

³² Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom. A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999); Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting their Own War. South African Blacks and the First World War* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987); Gregory Martin, 'Koloniale Truppenkontingente im Ersten Weltkrieg', in Gerhard Höpp and Brigitte Reinwald (eds.), *Fremdeinsätze. Afrikaner und Asiaten in europäischen Kriegen, 1914-1945* (Berlin: Zentrum Moderner Orient, 2000); Christian Koller, 'The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War', *Immigrants & Minorities* 26 (2008), pp. 111-133; Philippa Levine, 'Battle Colors. Race, Sex, and Colonial Soldierly in World War I', *Journal of Women's History* 9 (1998), pp. 104-130; Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France. Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

³³ Melvin E. Page, 'The Great War and Chewa Society in Malawi', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 6 (1980), pp. 171-182; Ibid., 'Malawians and the Great War. Oral History in the Reconstruction of Africa's Recent Past', *Oral History Review* 8 (1980), pp. 49-61; Ibid., *The Chiwaya War. Malawians and the First World War* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000).

³⁴ David Killingray, 'Labour Exploitation for Military Campaigns in British Colonial Africa, 1870-1945', *Journal of Contemporary History* 24 (1989), pp. 483-501; Ibid., 'The War in Africa', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *World War I. A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 92-103; Ibid., 'Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast', *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), pp. 39-59; David Killingray and James Matthews, 'Beasts of Burden: British West African Carriers in the First World War', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 13 (1979), pp. 5-23.

³⁵ Geoffrey Hodges, *The Carrier Corps. Military Labor in the East African Campaign, 1914-1918* (New York/London: Greenwood, 1986); Donald C. Savage and J. Forbes Munro, 'Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate 1914-1918', *Journal of African History* 7 (1966), pp. 313-342.

and Schutztruppe.³⁶ Just as it is not fully correct to say that this campaign was ‘forgotten’, it is also not fully correct to say that the Africans have been ‘overlooked’.

The scarcity of sources, and the different methodological approaches taken by scholars concerned with the African population during the war, might be one explanation why there is as yet no monograph dedicated to the war experience of the Africans in East Africa. Nonetheless, the same is true for the Europeans in East Africa, something that provides some justification for the particular focus of this thesis. While the military aspect of the war with its European leaders has been extensively explored, and while several smaller studies have been dedicated to the economic and political impact of the war on the settler communities, no study has put the European civilians and their experiences at its centre. Even though they were a quantitative minority in the colonies, and a negligible footnote in the overall population affected by the war around the globe, looking closer at the war experience of the Europeans in German and British East Africa allows us to understand certain dynamics that appear to be universal, and others that were specific to the colonial context. More specifically, this thesis will develop the argument that the traditional boundaries within society along gender, political, social and racial lines were challenged and reset during the war in interesting ways. One general question for this research is whether or not a ‘colonial identity’ or an ‘imperial identity’ existed among the Europeans in these colonies, and how the First World War helped or hindered the creation of such an identity. The term ‘colonial identity’ refers to a certain regional identity of the colonials on the ‘outposts of the Empire’, whereas ‘imperial identity’ includes a broader identity that exists beyond the geographical boundaries of the nation. Ultimately it will be argued that while colonial identities, and attendant racial identities, were more

³⁶ Moyd, *Becoming Askari. African Soldiers and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa, 1889-1918*; Timothy J. Stapleton, *No insignificant part. The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006); Timothy H. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File. Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999); Page, *The Chiwaya War. Malawians and the First World War*.

relevant to Europeans in the colonies, war brought national identities more strongly into focus, with unsettling consequences for these other bases of identification.

A further argument for the comparison between the British and German cases is that it not only provides insight into the similarities and differences between these nations' perspectives with respect to these overarching questions, but it also highlights how the identity of each country, and within each colony, was shaped through their broader interrelationship. In the colonial context, lives within these different societies were deeply intertwined.³⁷ The demographic, economic and social character of the two territories was also very similar and distinctly different from the other colonies involved in the war. Unlike the exploitation and plantation colonies of Uganda, Northern Rhodesia or Belgian Congo, both colonies had a small, but important, permanent settler community, which identified itself strongly with the respective colony.³⁸ However, unlike South Africa, which by that time had already begun to develop a distinct national identity, and was neither politically nor economically dependent on the metropole, both German and British East Africa were places where European rule was not yet universally enforced and that were still negotiating their position within the wider imperial network.³⁹ Thus, for a number of reasons, German and British East Africa provide an excellent basis for a comparison.

Yet this study is not, and cannot be, a direct comparison between the German and British colonial war experience: The first two chapters that follow this

³⁷ See Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa, Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1967). More recently Ulrike Lindner, 'Colonialism as a European Project in Africa before 1914? British and German Concepts of Colonial Rule in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Comparativ - Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Geschichtsforschung* 19 (2009), pp. 88-106; Ibid., *Koloniale Begegnungen. Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika, 1880-1914* (Frankfurt (Main): Campus, 2012).

³⁸ For an overview on the different forms of colonial settlement see Jürgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2005).

³⁹ For the history of British East Africa before 1914 see Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London: James Currey, 1992); Maurice Peter Keith Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968). For German East Africa see John Iliffe, *Tanganyika Under German Rule, 1905-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Ibid., *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

introduction deal with the outbreak of hostilities and the internment of ‘enemy aliens’ in the first half of the war, and allow for comparisons between two societies and governments that were on similar playing fields. However, the second half of the war – and the second half of this thesis – highlights the difference between Britain’s and Germany’s campaign in East Africa. While Britain was able to deploy soldiers and officers from Britain, India and its other colonies and dominions, Germany remained dependent on its dwindling local resources – and while the Allied troops could ultimately occupy and take over control of the German colony, the German Schutztruppe had to withdraw to Portuguese East Africa to avoid surrender. In addition to the very different history of the war from the German and British perspective, the surviving source material makes a direct comparison difficult. As will be discussed further below, the German sources that survived in German East Africa differ considerably from those from British East Africa because the former were decimated through the war, whereas many of latter were lost through the destruction of the records of the Secretarial Office in Nairobi in 1939 through fire. The same is true for official files in the metropole, where an abundance of British civilian and military sources contrasts with only very few German ones. However, despite their incompleteness, these variegated sources do allow – in combination – a varied and balanced perspective on the events in East Africa.

1.2. Historiography

As has already been suggested in the previous sections, the perception that the ‘real war’ was taking place somewhere else has influenced the literature on the war in Africa, both by contemporary and recent scholars. Stunned by the mass slaughter of the Western Front, contemporaries, and even some of its participants, regarded the campaigns in Africa as mere a ‘sideshow’. In historical overviews of the First World War, the African campaigns were often portrayed together with the naval war or in a short chapter at the end merely outlining the main events. The following overview will, therefore, discuss publications whose focus lies

entirely on the war in Africa and its consequences: firstly works dealing with the war in all parts of the continent, followed by studies that have concentrated on East Africa specifically.

If one excludes the operations organised by the British from Egypt against the Senussi in Cyrenaica and the Ottoman Army in the Middle East, three Allied campaigns took place against German colonies in Africa: the conquest of German Southwest Africa by South African troops; the Anglo-French operations against the Cameroons and Togoland in West Africa; and the joint- Allied war against German East Africa. The majority of the publications dedicated to the war in Africa deal with the latter. Paradoxically, the British official history of the war in East Africa only released the first volume, while the German counterpart was never officially published, in both cases the projects were brought to end by the outbreak of the Second World War.⁴⁰

In addition to the works already mentioned, there are a number of studies that provide overviews of the conduct of the war from the perspective of military history. The most recent publications include Hew Strachan's book, which is a revised section of his larger history of the First World War,⁴¹ a special issue of *Small Wars and Insurgencies*,⁴² the more popular history book by Byron Farwell,⁴³ and several overviews in handbooks on the First World War.⁴⁴ The war experiences of the indigenous African population is the focus of the book edited

⁴⁰ Charles Hordern, *History of the Great War based on Official Documents. Military Operations in East Africa, 1914-1916*, vol. 1 (London: H.M.S.O., 1941). The German book was published privately after the war: Ludwig Boell, *Die Operationen in Ostafrika* (Hamburg: Privatdruck ehemaliger Deutsch-Ostafrikaner, 1951). Additionally compare the semi-official work: Charles Lucas, *The Empire at War*, vol. 4 (Africa) (London: Oxford University Press, 1924).

⁴¹ Strachan, *The First World War in Africa*; Ibid., *The First World War: To Arms*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴² Richard Connaughton, 'The First World War in Africa, 1914-1918', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 12 (2001), pp. 110-113.

⁴³ Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918* (New York: Norton, 1986).

⁴⁴ David Killingray, 'The War in Africa', in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (Oxford: Wiley, 2010), pp. 112-126; Ibid., 'The War in Africa', pp. 92-103; Wolfgang Petter, 'Der Kampf um die deutschen Kolonien', in Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse* (Munich: Piper, 1994), pp. 392-413; Helmuth Stoecker, 'The First World War', in Helmuth Stoecker (ed.), *German Imperialism in Africa. From the Beginnings until the Second World War* (London: C. Hurst, 1986), pp. 270-296.

by Melvin Page, which includes articles dealing with the war in different parts of sub-Saharan Africa,⁴⁵ as does a special issue of the *Journal of African History*.⁴⁶

The body of literature discussed so far can be divided clearly into studies by military historians and studies by Africanists focusing on specific ethnicities. Although they occasionally reference each other, these bodies of work stand mainly in separation. Hence, it is not surprising that only a very small number of academic studies have tried to examine the consequences of the war for the European civilian population in Africa. In the consideration of such works, one has to exclude the case of South Africa, where European rule was securely established and the conflict lines during the war ran less between the Europeans and Africans, but rather between the British and Afrikaner population.⁴⁷ Other studies have been dedicated to the impact the war had on the European population of Northern and Southern Rhodesia.⁴⁸ The underlying question in these publications, however, mainly concerned the relationship between the two territories and the neighbouring expansionist South Africa, which aimed to incorporate Rhodesia into the Union. Most important for the topic of this thesis is an article by Kent Forster, which examined the quest for neutrality by the settler community in East Africa during the first months of the war.⁴⁹ He argues that the majority of the settlers were neutralists not for reasons of pacifism, but because

⁴⁵ Melvin E. Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 77-79.

⁴⁶ Stapleton, 'The Impact of the First World War on African People', pp. 113-138. For an overview see also Richard Rathbone, 'World War I and Africa: Introduction', *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), pp. 1-9.

⁴⁷ James Ambrose Brown, *They fought for King and Kaiser. South Africans in German East Africa* (Johannesburg: Ashanti, 1991); Gerald L'Ange, *Urgent Imperial Service. South African Forces in German South West Africa 1914-1915* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1991); Bill Nasson, 'War Opinion in South Africa, 1914', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23 (1995), pp. 248-276; Kent Fedorowich, 'Sleeping with the Lion? The Loyal Afrikaner and the South African Rebellion of 1914-15', *South African Historical Journal* 45 (2003), pp. 71-95; Samson, *British, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918. The Union comes of Age*; Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme. South Africa in the First World War*; Simon Ellis Katzenellenbogen, 'Southern Africa and the War of 1914 to 1918', in M. R. D. Foot (ed.), *War and Society. Historical Essays in Honour and Memory of J. R. Western 1928-1971* (London: Paul Elek, 1973).

⁴⁸ Peter McLaughlin, *Ragtime Soldiers. The Rhodesian War Experience in the First World War* (Bulawayo: Books of Zimbabwe, 1980); Timothy J. Stapleton, 'Views of the First World War in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1914-1918', *War and Society* 20 (2002), pp. 23-44.

⁴⁹ Kent Forster, 'The Quest for East African Neutrality in 1914', *African Studies Review* 22 (1979), pp. 73-82. For the diplomatic history see Jonathan E. Helmreich, 'The End of Congo Neutrality, 1914', *Historian* 28 (1966), pp. 610-624.

they were focused on what was best for themselves in the colonial society. His study, however, falls short of explaining why and how the civilian population ultimately volunteered for war service and came to support the mobilisation efforts of the military authorities. Providing some explanation for this has been attempted in a small study, which was conducted in preparation for this thesis, and which examined the attitude and motivation of the German population in Southwest and East Africa regarding the war.⁵⁰ Further details of this work will be incorporated into a subsequent chapter.

Finally, a third body of works deals with the political and diplomatic history of the European powers in Africa during the First World War. Following the standard study by Wm. Roger Louis on the Allied policy regarding the German colonial empire, a number of works have examined the war aims of the Allied powers in Africa⁵¹ and the subsequent establishment of the League of Nations mandate system.⁵² These works provide the background for the humane ideology and the much more dispassionate *Realpolitik* of African self-determination and the outlook on colonial rule in the interwar years. For the German perspective, only a few works have added details to Fritz Fischer's ground-breaking work on German war aims and the establishment of a vast colonial empire, known under the

⁵⁰ Steinbach, 'Defending the Heimat. The Germans in South-West Africa and East Africa during the First World War', pp. 179-208.

⁵¹ Gaddis Smith, 'The British Government and the Disposition of the German Colonies in Africa, 1914-1918', in Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa, Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 275-300; Christopher M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, 'The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims, 1914-1918', *Historical Journal* 17 (1974), pp. 79-106; Brian Digre, *Imperialism's New Clothes. The Repartition of Tropical Africa, 1914-1919* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990); Ronald Hyam, *The Failure of South African Expansion 1908-1948* (London: Macmillan, 1972); William Roger Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Peter J. Yearwood, 'Great Britain and the Repartition of Africa, 1914-1919', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 18 (1990), pp. 316-341.

⁵² Michael D. Callahan, 'Nomansland: The British Colonial Office and the League of Nations Mandate for German East Africa, 1916-1920', *Albion* 25 (1993), pp. 443-464; Andrew J. Crozier, 'Establishment of the Mandates System 1919-25. Some Problems Created by the Paris Peace Conference', *Journal of Contemporary History* 14 (1979), pp. 483-513; Digre, *Imperialism's New Clothes. The Repartition of Tropical Africa, 1914-1919*; Lovett Elango, 'The Anglo-French 'Condominium' in Cameroon, 1914-1916: The Myth and the Reality', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18 (1985), pp. 656-673; William Roger Louis, 'The United Kingdom and the Beginning of the Mandates System, 1919-1922', *International Organization* 23 (1969), pp. 73-96.

watchword *Mittelafrika*.⁵³ However, in recent years a number of studies have been concerned with the importance of the loss of its colonial empire for interwar German politics and society.⁵⁴ These works provide useful information regarding the legacy of the East African campaign in German society and culture, but do not differentiate between the activities of organisations dedicated to German colonialism as a form of a general revision of the Versailles order and those groups formed by German colonials who were expelled from the German colonies and regarded themselves as victims of the war.

Complementing this general literature concerned with the First World War in Africa, are a number of previous works dealing specifically with East Africa, which will now be discussed. As mentioned earlier, a separate historiography exists concerning the military history of the war and studies conducted from an anthropological perspective. The works of the military historian Ross Anderson thoroughly examine the operational and strategic aspects of the East African campaign, and provide a thorough overview of the military operations.⁵⁵ Edward Paice in his recent book *Tip and Run* sought to broaden the purely military angle of the events and includes, for example, useful information on the conflicts between the British East African administration and the military command and draws special attention to the Portuguese contribution to the war.⁵⁶ In her two books on the campaign Anne Samson focuses in particular on the South African

⁵³ Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967); Jan Esche, *Koloniales Anspruchsdenken in Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg, während der Versailler Friedensverhandlungen und in der Weimarer Republik, 1914-1933* (University of Hamburg, 1989); Rolf Peter Tschapek, *Bausteine eines zukünftigen Mittelafrika. Deutscher Imperialismus und die portugiesischen Kolonien - Deutsches Interesse an den südafrikanischen Kolonien Portugals vom ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000).

⁵⁴ Marcia Klotz, 'The Weimar Republic. A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World', in Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal (eds.), *Germany's Colonial Past* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp. 135-148; Wolfe W. Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919-1945* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1964); Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, 'Imperialism and Revisionism in Interwar Germany', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Imperialism and After. Continuities and Discontinuities* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp. 90-122; Sandra Maß, *Weißer Helden, schwarze Krieger. Zur Geschichte kolonialer Männlichkeit in Deutschland, 1918-1964* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006).

⁵⁵ Ross Anderson, *The Battle of Tanga 1914* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002); Ibid., *The Forgotten Front. The East African Campaign, 1914-1918*.

⁵⁶ Paice, *Tip and Run. The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa*.

contribution and the connection between the political and military interaction between the governments involved.⁵⁷ Finally, *Ende eines Kolonialreichs*, the only German monograph dedicated to the campaign, by the Africanist Michael Pesek puts special emphasis on the transition of power between Africans and Germans through the collapse of the colonial order by drawing on his previous works on colonial representations and symbolism of power.⁵⁸

Most of the works mentioned above include, to a greater or lesser extent, chapters on the contribution of African and Indian troops to the war. However, only a limited number of studies have specifically examined the role of indigenous soldiers in the East African campaign. Timothy Parsons deals with the professional soldiers in the King's African Rifles, while Timothy Stapleton examines the role of the Rhodesian regiment.⁵⁹ Only one work has been dedicated to the enormous contribution of the Indian army, but it solely focuses on the military aspect of the campaign.⁶⁰ Geoffrey Hodges, among others, wrote the standard book on the African labour corps, whose African carriers were crucial for the conduct of the East African campaign for all armies involved.⁶¹ The ruthless recruitment of Africans, and the colossal death toll, had lasting negative consequences for the indigenous societies. These impacts, as well as hardships through illness and the famines caused by this form of total warfare, are at the

⁵⁷ Samson, *British, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918. The Union comes of Age*; Ibid., *World War I in Africa. The Forgotten Conflict Among the European Powers*.

⁵⁸ Michael Pesek, 'Für Kaiser und Allah. Ostafrikas Muslime im Grossen Krieg für die Zivilisation, 1914-1919', *Bulletin der Schweizerischen Gesellschaften Mittlerer Osten und Islamische Kulturen* 19 (2005), pp. 9-18; Ibid., *Koloniale Herrschaft in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Frankfurt (Main)/New York: Campus, 2006); Ibid., 'Der Koloniale Körper in der Krise. Koloniale Repräsentationen, Ordnung und Gewalt während des Ersten Weltkriegs in Ostafrika, 1914-1919', in Jörg Baberowski, David Feest, and Maike Lehmann (eds.), *Dem Anderen begegnen* (Frankfurt (Main): Campus, 2009), pp. 59-82; Ibid., *Ende eines Kolonialreichs. Ostafrika im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt(Main): Campus, 2010).

⁵⁹ Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File. Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964*; Stapleton, *No insignificant part. The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War*.

⁶⁰ S. D. Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa, 1914-1918* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1991).

⁶¹ Savage and Munro, 'Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate 1914-1918'; Hodges, *The Carrier Corps. Military Labor in the East African Campaign, 1914-1918*; Ibid., 'African Manpower Statistics for the British Forces in East Africa, 1914-1918', *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), pp. 101-116; Killingray, 'Labour Exploitation for Military Campaigns in British Colonial Africa, 1870-1945'.

centre of a detailed study by Melvin Page on Nyasaland as well as some smaller works by scholars on the indigenous population in German and British East Africa.⁶²

In the last decades, a consistent interest has been on the social structure of the settler communities, especially those of the 'White Highlands' of British East Africa.⁶³ Surprisingly, the war itself, in which a significant number of settlers volunteered and died, and its public memory do not receive so much attention. Exceptions are a study which deals with the post-war settlement scheme⁶⁴ and two historians concerned with the economic changes the war brought to the relation between British East African settlers and African farmers.⁶⁵

As earliest European representatives in Africa, a vast body of work has accumulated around British and German missionaries, and the impact of these on the African societies. This literature has created its own historiographic tradition. For the present purposes, only survey studies dealing with the history of the different mission societies active in East Africa during the war, and selected specialist studies, will be drawn on to provide the necessary background information for understanding the role of missionaries during the war period.⁶⁶

⁶² Page, *The Chiwaya War. Malawians and the First World War*; Gregory Maddox, 'Mtunya. Famine in Central Tanzania, 1917-1920', *Journal of African History* 31 (1990), pp. 181-197; Ralph A. Austen, *Northwest Tanzania under German and British Rule. Colonial Policy and Tribal Politics, 1889-1939* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).

⁶³ Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White. Settlers Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987); Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya*; Elspeth Huxley, *White Man's Country. Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1953).

⁶⁴ C. J. Duder, 'Men of the Officer Class'. The Participants in the 1919 Soldier Settlement Scheme in Kenya', *African Affairs* 92 (1993), pp. 69-87.

⁶⁵ John Overton, 'War and Economic Underdevelopment. State Exploitation and African Response in Kenya 1914-1918', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 22 (1989), pp. 201-221; Ibid., 'War and Economic Development Settlers in Kenya, 1914-1918', *Journal of African History* 27 (1986), pp. 79-103; Ian R. G. Spencer, 'The First World War and the Origins of the Dual Policy of Development in Kenya, 1914-1922', *World Development* 9 (1981), pp. 735-748.

⁶⁶ Thorsten Altena, *'Ein Häuflein Christen mitten in der Heidenwelt des dunklen Erdteils.' Zum Selbst- und Fremdverständnis protestantischer Missionare im kolonialen Afrika, 1884-1918* (Münster: Waxmann, 2003); Klaus Fiedler, *Christentum und afrikanische Kultur. Konservative deutsche Missionare in Tanzania, 1900-1940* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1983); Gordon Hewitt, *The Problems of Success. A History of the Church Mission Society, 1910-1942*, vol. 1 (London: SCM Press, 1971); Gustav Menzel, *Die Bethel-Mission. Aus 100 Jahren Missionsgeschichte*

Besides the importance of the war for mission activity in Africa so far no substantial study has been dedicated to this topic.⁶⁷

Finally, works dealing with the history of colonial rule in British and German East Africa in general provide the basic information on long-term developments outside the timeframe of interest to this thesis. As previously mentioned, although the First World War can be regarded as a decisive moment in the history of the two countries, the war and its impact have not received much scholarly attention.⁶⁸ Books examining the history of German East Africa tend to either cover the period before the outbreak of the war, or only start after the establishment of British rule in 1920.⁶⁹ An exception is the standard work of John Iliffe on Tanganyika, which includes a detailed chapter on the war and its consequences for the development of the country as a whole.⁷⁰

1.3. Sources

The main criterion for the selection of sources for this study was to avoid material published after the war and use as many ego documents as possible. The richest sources for the war in East Africa are the letters, diaries and memoirs left behind

(Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986); Aylward Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa. The 'White Fathers' during the Colonial Scramble, 1892-1914* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006); Robert W. Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa. Anglicans and Africans in Colonial Kenya, 1875-1935* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1978); Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika, 1891-1941. Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Ernst Dammann, 'Die deutsche Mission in den ehemaligen deutschen Kolonien zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen', in Klaus J. Bade (ed.), *Imperialismus und Kolonialmission. Kaiserliches Deutschland und koloniales Imperium* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1982).

⁶⁷ One example is Richard Pierard, 'World War I, the Western Allies, and German Protestant Mission', in Ulrich van der Heyden and Heike Liebau (eds.), *Missionsgeschichte, Kirchengeschichte, Weltgeschichte. Christliche Missionen im Kontext nationaler Entwicklungen in Afrika, Asien und Ozeanien* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), pp. 361-372.

⁶⁸ Kenneth Ingham, *A History of East Africa* (London: Longmans, 1962), pp. 245-269.

⁶⁹ Iliffe, *Tanganyika Under German Rule, 1905-1912*; Detlef Bald, *Deutsch-Ostafrika 1900-1914. Eine Studie über Verwaltung, Interessengruppen und wirtschaftliche Erschließung* (Munich: Weltforum, 1970); *ibid.*; Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft in Deutsch-Ostafrika*; Philippa Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation. European Settlement and Settlers in German East Africa, 1900-1914* (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer, 2006).

⁷⁰ Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*.

by soldiers from Britain employed in the campaign. The Imperial War Museum, the National Army Museum, and the Liddle Archive at the University of Leeds hold material from about fifty individuals, allowing for a balanced assessment. Soldiers came from all four nations (England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland), with a wide spectrum of social and economic backgrounds. What these all had in common was that they had in many cases never been outside the British Isles, and thus allow a rare insight not only into their experience of war, but also their attitude towards Africa and the British Empire. Details from these sources contribute to the understanding of events during the war and the nature of warfare in Africa. However, under a more systematic analysis, as done in Chapter 4, they also provide important insights into the attitude of ordinary British men towards the global aspect of the war and the relevance of fighting in Africa to defend the British Empire.

What makes these sources particularly useful is that they are a unique example of people who travelled to Africa from Europe without any preparation or impetus of their own. Unlike other temporary visitors to the colonies – like administrators, engineers, scientists or tourists, who have been the subject of many studies –⁷¹ in many cases these men only became aware of their destination en route, aboard a ship, and accordingly they had very little or no idea of what to expect in East Africa. Furthermore, unlike the British soldiers who fought in the Second South African War ten years previously,⁷² these men did not volunteer to fight in Africa or in some cases did not volunteer at all. For most of them the war in East Africa was a ‘sideshow’ to the events at the Western Front and this perspective deeply shaped the memory of the campaign. Papers by British officers from the British Army in India – as well as one illustrious Australian – permit the making of some comparisons, mainly of the campaign’s purpose and aims, of the role of African

⁷¹ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric Empire. Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993); Anna Crozier, *Practising Colonial Medicine. The Colonial Medical Service in British East Africa* (London: Tauris, 2007).

⁷² Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Frank Emery, *Marching over Africa. Letters from Victorian Soldiers* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986); Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes. British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994).

soldiers and civilians, and between soldiers deployed from Britain and those from other parts of the British Empire. Unfortunately, the hitherto largely untapped ego documents of South African soldiers could not be included in this study, other than a handful of incidental traces in other collections.

The sources that deal with the war experience of the European colonials in East Africa provide a varied spectrum. The most important collections are those based in the Rhodes House Library in Oxford and the National Archive of Kenya in Nairobi, which hold a number of ego documents of long-time Europeans residents and which offer insights into the uncertainty the Europeans felt towards the war on their doorstep. Unfortunately, there was never a systematic attempt to collect personal papers of German residents of the colonies. Combined with the disruption of postal communication between German East Africa and Europe, which reduced the number of letters that could have survived, this makes tracing German sources rather difficult. There are also no unedited letters or diaries by German colonials who fought the war, other than the semi-official diaries by Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and Heinrich Schnee which of course do not reflect the war experience of the average soldier. This lack of contemporary sources has forced most historians concerned with the war to resort to published German accounts. However, while these may offer insights into the conduct of the campaign, they are of course influenced by the justificatory atmosphere of German colonialism and by the campaign for the restoration of the German overseas possessions.

This gap in the record can be partially filled by drawing on the rich collection of mission archives. For this study, nine archives of Protestant missions in Britain and Germany have been consulted, something that has not been done previously. Missionaries offer a surprisingly varied perspective on the campaign as they were at both the centre and the periphery of the colonial society.⁷³ As mission societies were active in East Africa prior to the creation of formalised colonies, one finds

⁷³ Rosemary Seton, 'Archival Sources in Britain for the Study of Mission History', in Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton (eds.), *Missionary Encounters. Sources and Issues* (London: Curzon Press, 1996), pp. 240-255.

British missionaries active in German territory and vice versa. The Church Mission Society was especially active⁷⁴ as was the London Missionary Society on the border to German East Africa.⁷⁵ German missions, mainly the Berlin Mission, Bielefeld Mission and Leipzig Mission,⁷⁶ were – with the exception of the latter – active in German East Africa. The missionaries also provide important insights into the Allied occupation: they not only had to pen regular reports of their mission station, but had a habit of keeping regular personal diaries and an active correspondence with colleagues and family members. The excellent recordkeeping of most mission and church archives allows for the assessment of a wide range of different sources.

The survival of official sources by German and British government departments is as patchy and unbalanced as the personal papers. The files of the German Reichskolonialamt in the Bundesarchiv in Berlin offers a less rich picture of the situation in African than their British counterparts at the National Archives in Kew. This is attributable both to the communication links between German East Africa and Berlin being disrupted or unreliable and to the collapse of the German colonial administration after the Allied invasion.⁷⁷ Particularly with respect to the internment and deportation of 'enemy aliens', the files of the respective foreign offices offer important additional information as do the papers of the India Office in the British Library in London.⁷⁸ In addition to the files held in Europe, a

⁷⁴ Rosemary A. Keen (ed.), *Catalogue of the papers of the missions of the Africa (Group 3) Committee. East Africa Missions (Nyanza, Uganda and Ruanda)* vol. 4 (London: Church Missionary Society, 1981).

⁷⁵ Susannah Rayner, 'Go ye into the world.' Missionary archives in the School of Oriental and African Studies', *African Research and Documentation* 98 (2005), pp. 41-60.

⁷⁶ Ulrich van der Heyden, 'The Archives and Library of the Berlin Mission Society', *History in Africa* 23 (1996), pp. 411-427.. See also Jan-Georg Deutsch and Ingeborg Halene (eds.), *Afrikabezogene Nachlässe in den Bibliotheken und Archiven der Bundesländer Berlin, Brandenburg und Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1997); Anette Volk (ed.), *Afrikabestände im Archiv des Missionswerkes der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern, Neuendettelsau* (Leipzig: University of Leipzig, 1999).

⁷⁷ Michael Hollmann, *Findbücher zu Beständen des Bundesarchivs. Reichskolonialamt, Bestand R 1001*, vol. 98 (Koblenz: Bundesarchiv, 2003).

⁷⁸ Marion Wallace, 'Accidental Archives. Tracing Africa in the India Office Private Papers in the the British Library', *African Research and Documentation* 98 (2005), pp. 23-40; Anne Thurston, *Guide to Archives and Manuscripts relating to Kenya and East Africa in the United Kingdom* (London: Hans Zell, 1991).

significant number of papers remained in the national archives of Kenya and Tanzania. Both collections offer important insights into the local administration and their challenges with the war. However, for several reasons the collection is very uneven. The fire that destroyed the Secretarial Office in Nairobi in 1939 led to the loss of the files of the central government and the Nairobi provincial commissioner.⁷⁹ However, the papers of the provincial commissioner of the Coast Province, who was based in Mombasa, survived the destruction and allow at least some insights. The files of the German colonial administration were either destroyed in the bombardment of Dar es Salaam or in the subsequent evacuation and transfer of the capital first to Morogoro and then Tabora. Before the flight of the administration in 1916, a number of files were buried and only recovered in 1920 by a delegation from Germany. The remaining and rediscovered files kept in Dar es Salaam are mostly in good physical condition while those of the British administration are not well-catalogued.⁸⁰

By the time of the outbreak of the war, both German and British East Africa had an established newspaper culture. For the present research, the war editions of the *Usambara Post* (Tanga) and the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung* (Dar es Salaam), as well as the *Leader of British East Africa, Uganda and the Lakes* and the *East African Standard* (both Nairobi) have been consulted.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *A Guide to the Content of the Kenya National Archives*, vol. 2 (Nairobi: Kenya National Archives, 1983).

⁸⁰ Eckhart G. Franz and Peter Geissler (eds.), *Das Deutsch-Ostafrika-Archiv. Inventar der Abteilung 'German Records' im Nationalarchiv der Vereinigten Republik Tanzania* (Marburg: Archivschule, 1984²).

⁸¹ For Germany colonial press see Fritz Lange, 'Zur Geschichte des Pressewesens in den deutschen Kolonien', *Zeitungswissenschaft* 4 (1929), pp. 355–358; Alfred Zintgraff, 'Die Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung. Ein Beitrag zu Geschichte der deutschen Kolonialpresse', in Karl-Friedrich Baberadt and et al. (eds.), *Beiträge zur Zeitungsforschung und Zeitungskunde. Festgabe für Wilhelm Waldkirch zum 60. Geburtstag* (Heidelberg: Braun, 1930); Dietrich Redeker, *Journalismus in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1899–1916. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Presse in den frühen deutschen Kolonien* (Frankfurt (Main): Diesterweg, 1937); Rainer Pöppinghege, 'Mit mittelmässigen Geistesgaben und Vorkenntnissen ausgerüstet.' Über das Verhältnis von kaiserlichen Behörden und Presse in den deutschen Kolonien 1898 bis 1914', *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 3 (2003), pp. 157–169. For British East Africa see Hubert W. Peet (ed.), *Sell's World's Press. The Handbook of the Fourth Estate* (London: Sells, 1914); Shiraz Durrani, *Never Be Silent. Publishing and Imperialism in Kenya 1884-1963* (London: Vita, 2006); Simon J. Potter, *News and the British World. The Emergence of an Imperial Press System 1876-1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003). For comparative perspective see Andreas Osterhaus,

1.4. Terminology

Every scholar who deals with the history of colonialism is faced with the problem of terminology. Historically, the geographical names applied to Africa by the European colonial rulers, and the expressions that describe its populations, are strongly connected with an unjust, racist, and exploitative social, economic and political system. However, to use the current terms would mean artificially distancing the events described in this study from their original place in time. Hence, in this work, the names given to territories, regions, and cities are those used in 1914. For practical reasons, however, the expression 'British East Africa' will be used instead of the official name 'British East African Protectorate'. The phrase 'East Africa' refers generally to the area covered by the modern-day countries of Kenya and Tanzania (including Zanzibar) and the expression 'Africa' generally refers here to sub-Saharan Africa, unless otherwise indicated. To describe the inhabitants of colonial Africa, the terms 'Africans' and 'Europeans' will be used instead of 'Blacks' and 'Whites', except where it is unavoidable, for example in direct quotations where the original expressions will remain. All other terms, for example expressions in German or Swahili, will be explained in due course. However, the words 'Schutztruppe' for the German colonial army and 'askari' for the East African soldiers will not be 'apostrophised' as they appear regular throughout the thesis.

1.5. Structure

In the following section, the structure of the thesis is briefly outlined along with some elaboration of the key aspects of the line of argumentation that will be developed. As noted above, the basis of this thesis are four case studies of the different aspects of the war – outbreak, internment, fighting, and occupation – and what these reveal about colonial identities and the challenges posed by colonial

Europäischer Terraingewinn in Schwarzafrika. Das Verhältnis von Presse und Verwaltung in sechs Kolonien Deutschlands, Frankreichs und Großbritanniens von 1894 bis 1914 (Frankfurt (Main): Peter Lang, 1990).

warfare. These four substantive chapters are followed by a concluding chapter that not only draws together the main themes that emerge from these case studies, but also returns to the question of how this war is remembered and what this, in itself, says in relation to the focal concerns of this thesis.

Before discussing the outbreak of hostilities, the Chapter 2 also provides an overview of the political, social, and racial structure of German and British East Africa prior to 1914. Although this will be covered in more detail in that chapter, some background to these aspects also is presented here in order to understand the arguments that are advanced in the chapters that follow. Prior to the immediate outbreak of the war, Anglo-German relations with respect to their colonial empires was one of the few fields in which both governments were cooperating closely. In particular, there was co-operation over a possible redistribution of Portuguese possessions in Africa, if Portugal's republican regime should prove unable to maintain the colonial empire. On the other hand, one can also find officials and powerful imperial lobbyists who were not content with the way both colonial empires were supposedly blocking each other's geographical and economic development. The focal point for this conflict was German East Africa. While the Germans regarded East Africa as the potential heart of a central-African empire, the British regarded it as an obstacle for the Cape-to-Cairo railway. Both of these colonial projects were highly symbolic and linked to the 'imperial icons' Carl Peters and Cecil Rhodes, whose supposedly ingenious plans were blocked by weak politicians in the 'appeasement period' of the 1890s. These historical conflicts, which were not at all mirrored by any real problems on the ground, came to play an important role in the war propaganda. Another important feature of Anglo-German relations at the level of colonials and imperial pressure groups was the reciprocal observation of the economic and infrastructural development, as well as the policy towards the indigenous populations, including their legal status, forced labour, or the intermarriage ban.

These factors lead to one key underlying concern for this thesis: the colonial hierarchy, which was of course strongly linked to the economic and legal system.

Both colonies had a similar social composition, which included a much-varied indigenous African population, a long time established Arabian community, a growing number of Indian entrepreneurs, and Europeans from different national backgrounds, including Afrikaners.⁸² Most European colonials believed that their prestige was to a large extent reliant on their rule over the Africans. To uphold this 'white prestige', a variety of rules and regulations, both for Africans and Europeans, were implemented over the decades of European rule. Many of these became part of general idea of colonial rule and lifestyle, to the extent that by the outbreak of the war these were widely regarded as 'natural'.

The more both British and German East Africa developed towards settlement colonies, the more important the boundaries between the races became. This stretched from the citizen law, the intermarriage ban, and the unequal application of law, to more subtle forms such as the regulated use of transport. These measures were, however, not only directed towards the suppression of the African population, but also to the creation of a sense of belonging and solidarity between the heterogeneous European communities. There is little evidence that there was any conflict between German and British settlers before the war,⁸³ and one could even argue that the conflict lines were not so much along national boundaries, but rather along social ones. On the one hand, both East African colonies were regarded as playgrounds for affluent gentlemen farmers, 'adventure seekers', and hobby game hunters. On the other hand, a growing number of 'poor whites', like prostitutes or manual labourers from Italy or Greece, had settled in the colony. These groups – in very different ways – contrasted with the middle or upper-middle class background of the permanent settlers who aimed to create a stable 'classless' society. Hence the outbreak of the war was – as in Europe – connected

⁸² Brian M. Du Toit, *The Boers in East Africa. Ethnicity and Identity* (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1998); Robert G. Gregory, *India and East Africa. A History of Race Relations within the British Empire, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Jürgen Becher, *Dar es Saalam, Tanga und Tabora. Stadtentwicklung in Tansania unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft, 1885-1914* (Stuttgart 1997).

⁸³ William Roger Louis, 'Great Britain and German Expansion in Africa, 1884-1919', in Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa, Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, CT/London: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 3-46.

with the hope that the conflict would create a sense of an overall solidarity among the white Europeans.

Foreign nationals played an important role in the development of both German and British East Africa, as explorers, businessmen, and settlers from the early establishment of the colonies. Despite the Southern Europeans and Afrikaners already mentioned, there was a common attraction for both Germans and British to settle in the other colony, especially along the border in the Kilimanjaro area. The most important and most influential among these foreigners were Protestant missionaries. Generally, most of the mission societies active in Eastern Africa were established institutions by the time of the outbreak of the war. The missionaries, regardless of their nationality, played an important role in supporting the colonial state in implementing its power over the African population. In the years before the war, a growing number of planters regarded the work of the missionaries among the Africans as harmful for the development of the colony, since western knowledge ‘spoiled the natives’ by making them disobedient. Additionally, among the Protestant missionaries there were further interesting divides. On the one hand, most of them had strong patriotic sentiments, which is especially true for the members of German mission societies, which had strong links with the state churches. On the other hand, they shared a sense of Christian solidarity that spanned national boundaries. British and German missionaries were active in both East African colonies and, as a pamphlet of an Anglican society declared in the year before the outbreak of the war, they were ‘enjoying the goodwill of the German Colonial Government [...] and having succeeded, after years of patient, honest, incessant labour in breaking down the prejudices of former days, there is every reason to believe that the Mission has a prosperous future before it.’⁸⁴

As will be argued in Chapter 2, the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914 and the following first weeks of the war challenged and threatened the balance of power

⁸⁴ Church Missionary Society, *The C.M.S. Mission in German East Africa* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1913), p. 26.

in the two colonies. Like their counterparts in Europe, the colonials in East Africa were torn between patriotic fever and the fear of war. In the colonial context, however, the general fear of war was exacerbated by a fear of uprising by the colonised population should the European powers decide to fight each other in Africa. This fear was strongly linked to the concept of white prestige, as outlined above, and the idea of allowing African soldiers to fight against Europeans was intensely disquieting to many European civilians in both colonies. The conflicts between the colonial administrations, which in both British and German East Africa were reluctant to turn the 'cold war' of the first days after the declaration of war into an active conflict, and between the military commanders of both sides who regarded an attack on the neighbouring colony as essential, has been identified in several studies.⁸⁵ However, the debate among the European population in general has not yet received sufficient attention, despite the importance of this debate for understanding how members of a relatively secluded society became convinced and sufficiently self-motivated to volunteer as soldiers for the purpose of defence and invasion.⁸⁶ Furthermore, this war stood in sharp contrast with the idea of the 'rational west' which solved its problems in a 'civilised' manner and the 'irrational Africa' where conflicts were solved by fighting, hence the requirement of a European presence to prevent this.⁸⁷ The debate about participating in the war was quickly over-shadowed by fears of invasion from the neighbouring colony, and the recurring allegations of espionage undertaken by Europeans and Africans for the other side. These dynamics helped to convince large parts of society that war in East Africa was inevitable, and led to the ultimate breakdown of European solidarity.

⁸⁵ Helmreich, 'The End of Congo Neutrality, 1914'; Eckard Michels, 'Ein Feldzug – zwei Perspektiven? Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck's und Heinrich Schnee's Erlebnisberichte über den Ersten Weltkrieg in Ostafrika', in Michael Epkenhans, Karen Hagemann, and Stig Förster (eds.), *Militärische Erinnerungskultur. Soldaten im Spiegel von Biographien, Memoiren und Selbstzeugnissen* (Paderborn et al.: Schöningh, 2006), pp. 152-168.

⁸⁶ The article dealing with the reaction of the settler community is looking mainly at the 'negative' reaction at the outbreak of the war: Förster, 'The Quest for East African Neutrality in 1914'. For the distinct patriotic reaction of the settler community in Southern Rhodesia see Stapleton, 'Views of the First World War in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), 1914-1918'.

⁸⁷ Steinbach, 'Defending the Heimat. The Germans in South-West Africa and East Africa during the First World War', pp. 179-208.

The chapter following this (Chapter 3) will then address the consequences of this end of European unity via the internment of enemy aliens and, as the war progressed, with European, African, and Indian prisoners of war. It will rely on a number of studies published in recent years which focused on the internment of aliens, both combatant and civilian.⁸⁸ These have contributed to the understanding of the increasingly totalised warfare in which the internment of enemy soldiers was not only aimed at 'neutralising' them as combatants, but also at using them for labour at the front and in the camps.⁸⁹ The treatment of the soldiers, more so than that of the officers, differed significantly depending of the ethnicity on the interned and the duration of the war. For example, although they were few in number, soldiers from India and Africa who fought for Britain and France respectively were separated from the rest of the Allied prisoners when they became prisoners of the Germans, which has led to a suggestion of inherent racism among the German authorities.⁹⁰ In the course of the war, the treatment – and alleged ill-treatment – of all prisoners of war became an important propaganda tool with which to blame the enemy for not obeying the international rules and laws of warfare. What was true for prisoners of war was especially true for the civilian internees.⁹¹ All nations involved in the war interned significant numbers of civilians as enemy subjects, including women and children. In many, but not all, cases these internees were respected citizens who lived for years or

⁸⁸ V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa* (London: James Currey, 1988); Michael Adas, 'Contested hegemony. The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology', *Journal of World History* 15 (2004), pp. 31-63.

⁸⁹ Rüdiger Overmans (ed.), *In der Hand des Feindes, Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 1999); Jochen Oltmer (ed.), *Kriegsgefangene im Europa des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006); Heather Jones, 'The Final Logic of Sacrifice? Violence in German Prisoner of War Labor Companies in 1918', *Historian* 68 (2006), pp. 770-797.

⁹⁰ Gerhard Höpp, *Muslime in der Mark. Als Kriegsgefangene und Internierte in Wünsdorf und Zossen, 1914-1924* (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1997).

⁹¹ Matthew Stibbe, 'A Question of Retaliation? The Internment of British Civilians in Germany in November 1914', *Immigrants and Minorities* 23 (2005), pp. 1-29; Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy Aliens. Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia, 1914-1920* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1989); Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst. Germans in Britain during the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 1991); Stibbe, *British Civilian Prisoners of War in Germany. The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-1918*; Christoph Jahr, 'Zivilisten als Kriegsgefangene. Die Internierung von 'Feindstaatenausländern' in Deutschland während des Ersten Weltkrieges am Beispiel des 'Engländerlagers Ruhleben', in Rüdiger Overmans (ed.), *In der Hand des Feindes, Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 1999), pp. 297-321.

decades in their host countries, often holding professional jobs. This policy allows additional insight into the totalisation of modern warfare, for which the First World War functioned in many regards as a watershed.

The internment of soldiers and civilians in the African colonies has to date not stimulated great interest, although these events are worthy of examination. As outlined above, the mass internment in Europe is not only significant for understanding modern aspects of the First World War, but also provides insight into the administrative mechanisms of societies at wartime. Firstly, prisoners were the enemy individuals the common soldiers and ordinary citizens came in closest contact with, hence the interaction between prisoners and guards is especially revealing. The situation in the African colonies differed, of course, from that in Europe; hence this is also worthy of investigation. In German East Africa, the treatment of the prisoners and internees was managed by the men on the spot, since the colony had only sporadic contact with the government in Berlin. It seems that the internees were kept by the German authorities more for symbolic reasons than out of real concern about any damaging impact they might have on the war effort. The British colonies interned civilians and prisoners of war, too. But nearly all of them remained in East Africa for only short periods of time before they were shipped to camps in Egypt, Malta or India, from where they were again relocated to Germany after the war.

As mentioned previously, the treatment of the prisoners differed depending on their social and ethnic backgrounds. The European colonies in East Africa at the outbreak of the war had a wide range of non-indigenous inhabitants: the members of the main colonising powers, Britain and Germany; a growing number of Afrikaners; and a significant group of southern Europeans, mainly Italians and Greeks. Furthermore, as a result of long established trade links, there was a large number of Indians who were citizens of the British Empire. However, there are very few sources that would allow for deeper insights into these groups of prisoners. Among this international community, the missionaries had a special position. Many of them had been in the colony for years or decades, and had

played an important role in interactions between the colonial administration and the African population. The arrest of white Europeans in general broke one of the iron rules of the pillars of European colonialism. But imprisoning missionaries potentially threatened the control of the colony altogether.

However, the internment of civilians in tropical Africa caused great problems not only with respect to colonial doctrines. Both Britain and Germany faced huge organisational problems in housing and feeding the prisoners, and assuring their physical health. While the administration in British East Africa was quick to outsource these problems by shipping the interned Germans to India and Egypt, for the German administration the captured enemy subject created great difficulties. However, the occupation of German territory meant that growing numbers of Germans fell into the hands of the British forces. Because of shortages in shipping facilities and political factors, these Germans remained in Africa well after the end of the fighting. Hence it is possible to compare the British and German approach towards prisoners.

A final group of those who experienced internment, and the most numerous, were Africans and Indians. The majority of these were prisoners of war, many of whom voluntarily joined the army or were forced into the carrier corps. The boundaries between regular soldiers, conscripts, labourers and prisoners grew increasingly vague the longer the conflict lasted. A study of African prisoners of war could therefore be misleading. However, although small in number, civilian Africans were also interned. These were mostly educated Christian men working for an enemy mission society, as either laymen or trained artisans. They were either interned together with the European mission staff or arrested separately as spies or collaborators for the enemy and kept in separate camps, together with Indian soldiers. These Africans and Indians have left few marks in the official sources but, as comments in memoirs of interned European missionaries suggest, they were treated far worse than any other prisoners and seemed to have functioned as 'scapegoats' and slave labourers.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the soldiers who fought in the East African campaign. As outlined in the discussion about the sources, it is impossible to reconstruct the war experience of German members of the Schutztruppe as no ego documents exist and the memoirs, even those based on diaries, published after the war cannot be regarded as a sufficient substitute. However, a significant and varied number of sources left behind by British participants of the campaign allows for some further exploration of the theme of national and imperial identity. This chapter will consider the three main British participants of the campaign: local colonial British soldiers and officers, professional British officers of the Indian Army, and soldiers and officers recruited in Britain. It will also discuss briefly the fate of the German members of the Schutztruppe, but it unfortunately cannot deal with the important role played by South Africans, overwhelmingly Afrikaner, in the campaign.

After overcoming their initial reluctance for the colonies to participate in the war, the British residents of British East Africa regarded volunteering for active duty as important. On the one hand, their motivation to fight was as much based on patriotism as it was on their desire to defend the colony itself. As such, their focus was very much on their German opponents, and on the ways in which their local actions contributed to the broader British war effort. On the other hand, colonial motivations were also at play. Many felt the necessity to display proactive and martial behaviour towards the African population, so as not to undermine their position as strong, resourceful, and ultimately superior.

Considering the attitude of professional officers of the Indian Army who were deployed to East Africa offers an important insight into the more global motivations to fight the war. On the one hand, these soldiers were happy to be deployed outside India and to display their professionalism as soldiers and their value to the broader British Empire. On the other hand, however, most of these professional officers would rather have been deployed to places where their skills mattered most, which in their mind was on the battlefields of Europe, not East Africa. Career progression was also a motivator for this group, and the idea that

this would be undermined by fighting Africans in an ‘inferior’ war was also one of their concerns.

Most important, however, are the British soldiers from Europe, as they allow for a deep and varied insight into attitudes towards the British Empire and the First World War as a global conflict. The vast majority had expressed no desire to defend Britain in Africa, let alone to conquer new territory from the Germans, while this was a motivation for some of the local colonials. In a detailed analysis of their letters and diaries, both before and after their arrival in East Africa, it is possible to show how little importance notions of empire had for these men. Their deployment in East Africa was a manifold challenge, as they could not relate to the local European colonial population. Nor did the specific features of the campaign, with its high illness rates and communication difficulties, allow for the creation of an ‘intimate’ atmosphere and the comradeship of the trenches. Most men were unable to find any sense of meaning in fighting in East Africa and regarded the African environment not as a source of adventure – contrary to what subsequent memoirs may suggest – but as a threatening and dangerous place. Finally the interaction with the African civilian population and the African soldiers offers a diverse spectrum of reactions to questions of race and the meaning of this for non-colonial combatants.

This chapter closely connects to the following chapter, which deals with the interaction between the Germans and British in East Africa during and after the change of power in the colony. Specifically, Chapter 5 deals with the conquest and occupation of German East Africa by the Allied troops. While the emotions and actions within British and German East Africa can be compared at the time of the outbreak of the war and during its first months, their experiences diverged significantly in due course: most of the civilians in British East Africa were only indirectly affected by the war, whereas the experience of their counterparts in German East Africa of the war and the occupation was more immediate.

One of the remarkable things about the First World War is the fact that the victorious powers never succeeded in occupying any territory of the Central Powers until the end of the war. By comparison, German and Austria-Hungary were not only able to hold their position in Belgium and Northern France until the last months of the war, but conquered vast territory in Eastern and South Eastern Europe where they established an overall stable rule which was seen – at least by the Germans and Austria-Hungarians – as a predecessor administration to a peacetime government. Recent studies examining the policy and the politics of occupation in Lithuania and Serbia have shown that both were, to an extent, influenced by the ideas and practices of European colonialism.⁹² The German tropical colonies of German East Africa, Togoland, and the Cameroons are the only examples where Britain – and to a lesser extent France, Belgium and Portugal – gained control over a significant territorial area with a numerous enemy population. Thus the war in East Africa reveals a unique context within the overall First World War: here, German territory was occupied and German civilians were consequently expelled.

Of course, an outright comparison between the German policy of occupation in Europe and the Allied invasion of German colonies in Africa is not possible. One should, however, bear in mind that by the outbreak of the war most European colonial powers regarded their overseas possessions as integral parts of their empires, and the European population there identified very strongly with the respective colony and were, for example, very resistant to any plans to adjust boundaries or exchange territory with neighbouring colonies of another power.⁹³ Not only did most of the German civilians experience the takeover of German East Africa as a hostile operation, many of the ordinary British soldiers shared the feeling of occupying foreign territory. Consequently, the war experience of

⁹² Vejas G. Liulevicius, *Kriegsland im Osten. Eroberung, Kolonisierung und Militärherrschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg 2002).

⁹³ When territory was handed over from one colonial power to another after the turn of century these were mainly areas that had no European settlements (e.g. the transfer from the French Congo to the German Cameroon before and from British Somaliland to Italian Somaliland after the war).

British soldiers who were employed in the East African campaign, and who were fighting in German East Africa, differed significantly from that of their comrades at the Western Front. Except for those who became prisoners of war in Germany, the British soldiers in East Africa were the only ones who had contact with German civilians and who actually occupied German territory as victors. Conversely, the British military and civilian authorities faced the problems of supplying not only a force on a stable front, but also of providing for an army that stretched over vast areas, expecting – at least to some extent – access to the same food, medical help, and communication with their families as their counterparts on the Western Front. The peculiar mixture of this campaign (colonial war and European combatants) extended to the war aims: it was obvious to most soldiers in the field that the argument by most British politicians that the campaign in Africa was being fought to liberate the African people from their German suppressors stood in sharp contrast to how the African population was treated in the British colonies and by the army itself.

The German experience of the war in East Africa differed significantly from that of the Germans in Europe. Although the German colonial army did, at considerable cost, successfully escape an outright defeat by the British troops, it was not able to prevent an invasion of the colony. The enlisting of all European men of military age left the women behind on remote farms. Again this stood in sharp contrast to the important doctrine of European colonialism, to protect white women at all costs, and it also led to economic difficulties. Many colonials did not expect to be drawn into a war that lasted so long. As will be seen in Chapter 2 on the outbreak of the hostilities, these expectations were based on a decisive battle in Europe. The mobilisation in Africa was regarded by many as a merely symbolic gesture, but the successful actions of the Schutztruppe laid the foundations for what was to become a long war, and, to some extent, a total war. As the imperial troops moved deeper into German East Africa from 1916 onwards, the German population had either to abandon their plantations and houses and flee, or to fall into the hands of the enemy, whose African troops were expected to be dangerous, undisciplined ‘savages’. However, to allow a certain level of security and supply

of provisions, most civilians were by then concentrated in the urban centres in the interior, which the British army occupied mostly without any serious defence. As will be argued in this chapter, the relationship between the occupying forces and the enemy civilian population differed significantly from similar settings in Europe, since the European troops were in the paradoxical situation of being conquerors on the one hand and guardians for the safety of Europeans on the other.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 6) will draw together the key emergent points from these chapters and will return to the theme of the memory of this 'forgotten' war, in Britain, Germany and Africa. For the German case, a number of studies have been concerned with the importance of the 'heroic' defence of German East Africa for the revisionist colonial propaganda during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. The focus of this research rested mainly on the figure of General von Lettow-Vorbeck whose involvement in the 'Freikorps' activities made him an important figure for the colonial cause itself.⁹⁴ For the British case, the memorialisation focused on the difference between Europe and the colonies of British and former German East Africa. While in Britain during the war, as outlined above, the exotic setting of the East African campaign functioned as a distraction from the grim fighting on the Western Front, this narrative did not fit with the way the war was remembered in the 1920s. By this time, the First World War was not regarded as a common endeavour of the British Empire crowned with a glorious victory. Instead, the focus shifted to the suffering and sacrifice of the ordinary soldier in the mass battles of the Western Front. The supposedly 'lighter side of the war', as one participant remembered the fighting in Africa, could not be remembered along these lines.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Michels, 'Ein Feldzug – zwei Perspektiven? Paul von Lettow-Vorbecks und Heinrich Schnees Erlebnisberichte über den Ersten Weltkrieg in Ostafrika', pp. 152-168; Klotz, 'The Weimar Republic. A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World', pp. 135-148.

⁹⁵ A. Cecil Alport, *The Lighter Side of the War. Experiences of a Civilian in Uniform* (London: Hutchinson, 1934).

For the settlers in British East Africa, the war became a turning point for securing dominance within the colonial state, mainly due to their improved economic standing and the introduction of a forced labour system during the war.⁹⁶ This development was contrary to the expectation that an armed conflict between Europeans in Africa would lead to a weakening of the colonial system. Hence this thesis will explore how the memory of the war was expressed and celebrated publicly in forms of monuments and festivities, and how the British colonials balanced the recognition of the contribution of the African population to winning the war, while also maintaining their own superior position.

⁹⁶ Spencer, 'The First World War and the Origins of the Dual Policy of Development in Kenya, 1914-1922'.

2. Colonial Unity, National Division, and the Prospect of War in East Africa

2.1. Introduction

Europeans living in Africa at the outbreak of the First World War were minorities in a double sense. On the one hand, they were ethnic minorities relative to the indigenous populations of the lands they occupied. On the other hand, they were also often residing within lands occupied by other colonial powers, powers that would become enemies with the outbreak of war. These two aspects of minority status intersect with each other in interesting ways: notions of European solidarity in opposition to the indigenous population were challenged by the outbreak of war and the necessity for more nationalist forms of identification. Yet, as European minorities, colonial populations were reluctant to fully abandon notions of shared European-ness in favour of more simple nation-based rivalries. The aim of this chapter is to explore how the British and German colonials living in East Africa in 1914 dealt with the notion of becoming enemies – from how they initially resisted the war, to the conditions under which they eventually came to support it, and, finally, the ways in which national unity was created in the service of war.

2.2. Nationalism, Internationalism, and Racial Belonging

In the decades prior to the First World War patriotism and nationalism became more embedded within colonialism and imperialism. It is debatable how much the ordinary working- or even middle-class citizen of Britain, France and Germany identified with their nation's overseas possessions at the beginning of the 20th century.⁹⁷ But there can be little doubt that the crises caused by Fashoda and

⁹⁷ For Britain see John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire. The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 145-152. For the impact of imperialism on German national identity see Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (London: Routledge, 2011); Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (eds.), *The Imperialist Imagination. German*

Morocco, as well as the Second South African War and the Herero War in German Southwest Africa, raised the awareness of the European empires and influenced public opinion and politics in relation to these. The sentiment that colonial possessions were vital for the survival of the respective nation was actively propagated by the numerous lobby groups dedicated to the cause and was closely linked to the military strength of the nation, especially its navy.⁹⁸

It is also debatable how much national identity was changed and shaped by the notion of European racial superiority and imperialism. In this regard, nationalistic narratives of imperialism can be contrasted with the notion of the 'European civilising mission' rooted in the assumption of a shared European responsibility towards the 'uplifting' and 'enlightening' of Asians and Africans through Christianity, western education, or commercial activity. This paradoxical perception of the 'colonial project' as both national and international (or at least pan-European) was shared by colonial activists in the metropole as well as by the 'men of the spot'. For example, in her recent study of Anglo-German colonial relations Ulrike Lindner points out that besides economic competition, German and British colonial administrators working in and on Africa had reached a high degree of understanding by the outbreak of the First World War.⁹⁹ The sentiment that Britain and Germany should work together 'in developing the material resources of [Africa] and in upholding the credit of European civilisation among their backward people' was shared by those at the top of the colonial hierarchy, like Viscount Alfred Milner or the German colonial secretary Wilhelm Solf.¹⁰⁰ Correspondingly the concept of 'friendly competition and collaboration' was also supported by 'men on the spot', like Heinrich Brode, the long-term German

Colonialism and Its Legacy (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998); Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds.), *German Colonialism: Race, The Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

⁹⁸ Jan Rüger, 'Nation, Empire and Navy: Identity Politics in the United Kingdom 1887–1914', *Past & Present* 185 (2004), pp. 159–187; Stefan Manz, 'Nationalism Gone Global: The Hauptverband Deutscher Flottenvereine im Auslande 1898–1918', *German History* 30 (2012), pp. 199–221.

⁹⁹ Lindner, 'Colonialism as a European Project in Africa before 1914? British and German Concepts of Colonial Rule in Sub-Saharan Africa', p. 104. See also Gifford and Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa, Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*; Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen. Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika, 1880–1914*.

¹⁰⁰ 'United Empire', *The Royal Colonial Institute Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1914, pp. 136–137. See also Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914–1919*, pp. 16–32.

consul in Zanzibar and Mombasa who forecasted in 1911 that 'Germany and England will work together for the expansion of civilization in East Africa'.¹⁰¹

The British and German Protestant mission societies were also in regular exchange, cooperating closely both in Europe and in Africa. Even though Protestant missionaries identified themselves more strongly with their respective national state than their Catholic counterparts, a sense of a trans-national Christian belonging was fostered by an increasingly closer co-operation between the different British and German mission societies.¹⁰² These regarded Islam and Catholicism (in changing priority) as their common foe. Missionaries of both nationalities were active in both German and British East Africa and usually supported the colonial administration in its efforts to establish formal rule in remote parts of the colony.¹⁰³ Shortly before the beginning of the war, Egbert Hudson, a British missionary of the Universities Mission Society in Luatala in German East Africa, wrote not only about the 'personal friendship' and 'best hospitality' British missionaries and German planters shared, but also about their co-operation to 'educate' the African labourers.¹⁰⁴ Thomas Westgate, an English member of the Church Missionary Society in Kongwa, underlines the excellent co-operation between mission and colonial administration in German East Africa:

¹⁰¹ Heinrich Brode, *British and German East Africa. Their Economic and Commercial Relations* (London: Arnold, 1911), p. 167. See also W. O. Henderson, 'British Economic Activity in the German Colonies, 1884-1914', *Economic History Review* 15 (1945), pp. 56-66. See also RH, MSS Afr. s. 1277, Richard Gethin, *Memoirs*.

¹⁰² Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), pp. 277-302. For the cooperation in Africa see Michael Fröhlich, *Von Konfrontation zur Koexistenz. Die deutsch-englischen Kolonialbeziehungen in Afrika zwischen 1884 und 1914* (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1990); Christian Weitnauer, *Die lutherische Gemeinde 'Schlesien'/Morogoro (Tansania) von 1908 bis 1960. Mission unter ungünstigen Bedingungen und Gemeindeaufbau in großer Verschiedenheit* (Neuendettelsau: Augustana, 1992), pp. 45-72.

¹⁰³ Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika, 1891-1941. Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands*; Rainer Tetzlaff, 'Die Mission im Spannungsfeld zwischen kolonialer Herrschaftssicherung und Zivilisierungsanspruch in Deutsch-Ostafrika', in Klaus J. Bade (ed.), *Imperialismus und Kolonialmission. Kaiserliches Deutschland und koloniales Imperium* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1982); J.C. Winter, 'Missionsmethoden der größeren protestantischen Missionsgesellschaften in Tansania im Überblick', in Gerhard Mellinghoff (ed.), *Lutherische Kirche Tansania. Ein Handbuch* (Erlangen: Verlag der Evangelisch-lutherischen Mission, 1990), pp. 77-100.

¹⁰⁴ Egbert C. Hudson, *A Central African Parish* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1914), p. 50f. See also SOAS, CWM, Central Africa reports, Box 4, report by Dr H.E. Wareham, 29 September 1914.

In the minds of the German Colonial Authorities, our mission is looked upon, to say the least, as an asset to this part of their colonial empire. [...] The Church Mission Society's German East African staff have retained the confidence and esteem of a succession of wise and capable Governors and the leading members of the ruling power, through all the years that have passed.¹⁰⁵

The line between British and German nationals was further blurred by the fact that a significant number of ethnic Germans had British nationality as they originated from South Africa before moving to East Africa.¹⁰⁶ Again, this highlights the fact that citizenship in the colonial context has to be considered secondary to racial belonging. Inclusion in the colonial society required a total commitment to the written and unwritten rules of colonial life (e.g. acceptance of racial boundaries or anti-Socialism). Here one's social status was based less on nationality or religion, and more on length of residence in Africa, economic success, and group loyalty.¹⁰⁷

However, the generally positive sentiment of colonial progress, and the atmosphere of friendly co-operation between European colonials, should not overshadow the fact that the tropical colonies in East Africa at the outbreak of the First World War were anything but thriving places for European colonialism. While a number of larger European trading companies and plantations did run profitable businesses, a significant number of European settlers and planters who lived permanently in the colonies struggled financially. This led to on-going conflicts in both German and British East Africa between the settler community and the colonial administration, especially about the treatment of Africans as

¹⁰⁵ CMS, 491, Thomas B. R. Westgate, F15 Printed Stuff, 2 brochure 'Twelve Years with the Church Mission Society under the German Flag, 1902-1914'.

¹⁰⁶ There were about 300 British nationals living in German East Africa in 1913, but this number includes citizens of British colonies and dominions (esp. South Africa). Karl Schneider, *Jahrbuch über die deutschen Kolonien*, vol. 7 (Essen: Baedeker, 1913), p. 226. There were 165 Germans and Austrians living in the British East Africa in 1914.

¹⁰⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989), pp. 134-161; Kennedy, *Islands of White. Settlers Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939*.

labourers, investment in infrastructure, and the purpose of maintaining overseas colonies.¹⁰⁸ The German settlers in particular regarded themselves as the 'core of the colony' and stressed that only through their permanent presence in the colony and sacrifice for the 'greater Germany' would the German overseas empire thrive. The self-perception, and self-presentation, of German colonials as better and purer Germans nonetheless stands in contrast with the fact that German East African settlers were also eager to embrace and copy the lifestyle of an international upper-class. Curiously, these 'fantasies of upward mobility' were shared by most German colonials and often expressed themselves through imitation of the British gentleman farmer.¹⁰⁹ Generally, although colonialism was inevitably bound to empires and therefore nationalism, there was more evidence of transnational (racial) belonging in the colonies than there was of strict nationalism. This balance was, however, severely challenged by the outbreak of the First World War and the decision by the belligerent powers to fight the war in the African colonies as well.

2.3. Rejecting the War

Comparative studies conducted in the last decades have established that the majority of the population in Europe did not experience the outbreak of war in August 1914 as a moment of joyful excitement. Rather, a complex picture of differing and often ambiguous reactions has emerged, from which it is nearly impossible to generalise.¹¹⁰ This is especially true for the colonial population in

¹⁰⁸ For the German colonies see Norbert Aas and Harald Sippel, *Koloniale Konflikte im Alltag. Eine rechtshistorische Untersuchung der Auseinandersetzungen des Siedlers Heinrich Langkopp mit der Kolonialverwaltung in Deutsch-Ostafrika und dem Reichsentschädigungsamt in Berlin, 1910-1929* (Bayreuth: Breiting, 1997); Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation. European Settlement and Settlers in German East Africa, 1900-1914*.

¹⁰⁹ George Steinmetz, "'The Devil's Handwriting'. Precolonial Discourse, Ethnographic Acuity, and Cross-Identification in German Colonialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45 (2003), pp. 41-95 here p. 53. For East Africa see Bald, *Deutsch-Ostafrika 1900-1914. Eine Studie über Verwaltung, Interessengruppen und wirtschaftliche Erschließung*, pp. 129-130. For a more general discussion see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 150.

¹¹⁰ Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany*; Pennell, *A Kingdom United. Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and*

both German and British East Africa who were hesitant to accept that the colonies should turn into a theatre of war. While most of them were enthusiastic about the idea of fighting ‘the perfidious Brit’ or ‘barbaric Hun’ in Europe, there was a great sense of discomfort about engaging in war against another colonising and civilising power on African soil.¹¹¹ This theme was repeated in subsequent narratives of the war in East Africa and was often linked to more general concerns about the ‘legality’ of the war with respect to the Congo Treaty of 1885, which stipulated that African possessions in the Congo basin would be neutral in the event of war between the European states.¹¹² Undoubtedly, however, such concerns were also linked to the image of who, exactly, would bear arms should war come to Africa. The very idea that indigenous soldiers would be allowed to capture and kill Europeans on the battlefield, as well as to conquer and plunder European property, disconcerted settlers, administrators and missionaries alike. Notwithstanding these points, however, it should not be overlooked that significant sections of colonial civilian society in both German and British East Africa did react enthusiastically to the prospect of a war between Britain and Germany, not only in Europe, but also in Africa. Given these contrasting responses, it is necessary to delve deeper into the sentiments, concerns and arguments exchanged in East Africa in August 1914 to gain a fuller, and more systematic, picture of the themes put forward by supporters and opponents of the war.

When considering the situation in German and British East Africa in summer 1914, it is important to bear in mind that only a limited amount of information from Europe was available, in the form of short and neutral cable messages or

Ireland; Christian Geinitz, *Kriegsfurcht und Kampfbereitschaft - Das Augusterlebnis in Freiburg. Eine Studie zum Kriegsbeginn* (Essen: Klartext, 1998); Benjamin Ziemann, *Front und Heimat. Ländliche Kriegserfahrungen im südlichen Bayern, 1914-1923* (Essen: Klartext, 1997).

¹¹¹ Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1920), pp. 27-28; Wilhelm Arning, *Vier Jahre Weltkrieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Hanover: Jaenecke, 1919), p. 18.

¹¹² See e.g. Huxley, *White Man's Country. Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya*; Richard Meinertzhagen, *Army Diary, 1899-1926* (Edinburgh/London: Oliver and Boyd, 1960). For an academic discussion see Helmreich, 'The End of Congo Neutrality, 1914'; Forster, 'The Quest for East African Neutrality in 1914'.

newspapers sent by post that arrived weeks later. As one resident of Mombasa put it: 'One feels very much in a backwater out here at such a time. Reuter's cables are only of the scrappiest nature and no doubt severely censored.'¹¹³ As a result, the colonials had to develop their own opinions about the news of the war and find ways of expressing their feelings. In this regard, existing, familiar patterns of patriotism and nationalism provided a reassuring cultural framework. But these also had to be adapted to, and combined with, the particular demands of the colonial setting.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the 'July Crisis' were, of course, covered in the local colonial press, but war was not as strongly anticipated as it was in the popular press in London or Berlin. The inhabitants of Nairobi or Dar es Salaam did not experience the heightened atmosphere of belligerence that affected the middle class public and its press in Europe in the last week of July, but rather concentrated on local issues like the opening of the colonial exhibition in Dar es Salaam or other local news. When the news of a war of all major European powers reached East Africa, the majority of the population as well as the press were taken by surprise; as one settler wrote, the news 'shook the peace in these East African solitudes'.¹¹⁴ The residents of small settlements and remote farms rushed to the urban centres to gather news about the state of affairs, which added to the general 'state of confusion'.¹¹⁵ The atmosphere in the different towns ranged from 'very gloomy' in Mombasa, where 'nearly everything [was] coming to a standstill', to the situation in Nairobi, where 'the war fever would appear to have taken a firm hold on the populace'.¹¹⁶ Similar contradictory sentiments can be observed in German East Africa, where the colonials reacted with panic and 'pale, scared faces' upon the news of war and were concerned about the impact of the war on the colony.¹¹⁷ This apprehension was counterbalanced with calls to remember the commemoration of the Wars of Liberation, which had been

¹¹³ RH, MSS. Afr. s. 1876, William McGregor Ross, letter to his mother, 5 August 1914.

¹¹⁴ KNA, MSS/52/5, Papers of Raymond Mitford Barberton, Journal of Mary Mitford Barberton, 6 August 1914.

¹¹⁵ RH, Micr. Afr. 586, Peggy Forrester, letter from Alton Forrester to his sister, 24 August 1914.

¹¹⁶ *Leader of East Africa*, 8 August 1914.

¹¹⁷ IWM, PP/MCR/150, Sir Norman King KCMG, diary, 1 + 5 August 1914.

intensively celebrated in the colony only a year earlier, and the colonials' duty to stand with the fatherland in this hour of need.¹¹⁸

In all, a significant number of colonials in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi reacted in ways that were similar to their counterparts in any other German or British regional centre. On hearing that their country would walk the 'path of honour and duty,' one newspaper editor observed his joy about 'the scenes [...] demonstrative of patriotism and loyalty.'¹¹⁹ 'The sound of martial music and the tramp of armed men' marching to the governor's residence in order to express their loyalty filled the streets and 'created intense excitement' in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi.¹²⁰ As Verhey argues in relation to Germany, the masses in these demonstrations 'followed an unwritten script,' rehearsed at prior anniversaries of historical events at places like the regional castle or town hall. Participating in such demonstrations channelled the uncertainty and anxiety of war into reassuring and familiar patterns of behaviour.¹²¹ These demonstrations should, first and foremost, be regarded as expressions of loyalty by the colonies to the metropole, especially as the relationship between the settler community and the colonial administration in both British and German East Africa had been strained in the decade before the war.¹²² The colonials aimed to show that 'the independent spirit of the self-governing colonies spelt [no] dissension when the Mother Country went to war'.¹²³ Additionally war enthusiasts in both German and British East Africa hoped, like their middle-class counterparts in the metropole, that the war would have a cleansing effect on their respective nation and end the political and social struggles of the previous years. One British colonial, who worried about the looming civil war in Ireland, rejoiced that 'a common peril has taught us that there are bigger issues at stake than our own internal troubles and dissensions [and]

¹¹⁸ *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 12 August 1914; *Usambara Post*, 8 August 1914.

¹¹⁹ *Leader of East Africa*, 8 August 1914.

¹²⁰ *Leader of East Africa*, 8 August 1914. One Nairobi resident compared the atmosphere to a picnic, see RH, Micr. Afr. 596, Brian Havelock Potts, Memoir, pp. 27-40.

¹²¹ Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany*, p. 36.

¹²² Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation. European Settlement and Settlers in German East Africa, 1900-1914*; Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*; Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*.

¹²³ *Leader of East Africa*, 8 August 1914.

may be the salvation of England.'¹²⁴ The editor of the *Usambara Post*, who was concerned about the labour movement, similarly declared that 'the war will bring a refreshment of the purpose of life and starve out socialism in Germany'.¹²⁵ Despite all these declarations of support for the nation's war effort, there was a simultaneous understanding 'that the war was thousands of miles from us' and that the residents of East Africa 'can't be much involved out here of course'.¹²⁶ Supporters of the war both in German and British East Africa agreed that the conflict had to 'necessarily be fought out in Europe' or, more specifically, in the North Sea.¹²⁷

Ultimately, the dominant sentiment among colonials in both British and German East Africa was one of conflict between feelings of patriotic loyalty to their nation and broader notions of 'white solidarity' and a commitment to the shared European civilising mission. These mixed feelings can be seen in the declaration of the most influential paper in British East Africa, the Nairobi based *East African Standard*:

The first duties of these protectorates, now as in the past, is to maintain proper control over the great native areas...Whatever the national sentiments may be, the settlers of British East Africa and German East Africa must, during the crisis, continue to carry the white man's burden. [...] Therefore, it is well to remember, our attitude must be one simply of defence.¹²⁸

Expressions of similarly mixed feelings can be found in the newspapers across the border in German East Africa, which declared that the colony should stand

¹²⁴ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1379, Selwyn M. Grier, letter to his mother, 11 August 1914.

¹²⁵ *Usambara Post*, 24 October 1914.

¹²⁶ SOAS, CWM, Central Africa reports, Box 4, report by Dr H.E. Wareham, 29 September 1914; RH, MSS. Afr. s. 1876, William McGregor Ross, letter to his mother, 5 August 1914.

¹²⁷ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1179, John Augustus Elliot, letter to his father, Sotik 18 August 1914; *Usambara Post*, 15 August 1915; *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 2 September 1914; RH, Mss. Afr s 1372, Bruce L. Bremner, letter to his mother, 7 August 1914.

¹²⁸ *East African Standard*, 8 August 1914.

dutifully by its fatherland should Britain attack but also that ‘true patriotism is neither shown in ill-considered action, nor expressed in senseless and useless death,’ but rather through protecting the economic value of the colony.¹²⁹ It is not surprising that plantation owners and traders were particularly concerned about the impact the war would have on the colonial economy. The East African territories, both German and British East Africa, but also Uganda and Zanzibar, were interlinked and dependent on each other with regard to transport infrastructure (e.g., the Ugandan Railway and boat services) as well as to logistics as several trade companies had offices in Mombasa and Dar es Salaam.¹³⁰ More importantly, however, the colonies’ main agricultural products, like sisal, cotton and coffee, were meant for export, and a war would disrupt the flow of trade, potentially bankrupting the plantations.¹³¹

These material concerns (whether real or imagined) were undoubtedly important in guiding attitudes about war. However, an equally important concern was the fear of an uprising by the African population who, it was felt, might capitalise on the distraction of the European military powers and rebel against their colonisers.¹³² The fear ‘that native risings are likely to occur’ was rooted less in any factual observation,¹³³ and more in the general feeling of angst among the European community in Africa which sometimes bordered on paranoia. The press in both colonies warned that the African population should not be allowed to gain the impression that the Europeans colonials were too occupied with matters outside the colony and too distracted to control the Africans.¹³⁴ Linked to this concrete concern was the anxiety that a war between two colonising powers

¹²⁹ *Usambara Post* 33, 15 August 1914.

¹³⁰ Henderson, ‘British Economic Activity in the German Colonies, 1884-1914’, p. 63.

¹³¹ The war actually increased the European share of the colonial export market: Overton, ‘War and Economic Development Settlers in Kenya, 1914-1918’.

¹³² While the African population rebelled neither in British nor German East Africa, colonial rule the neighbouring colony of Nyasaland was challenged in a serious revolt in 1915. See G. Shepperson and T. Price, *Independent Africa. John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting, and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958).

¹³³ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 15, 11 August 1914; *Leader of East Africa*, 15 August 1914, letter to the editor by G. P. Jennings, Chania Bridge.

¹³⁴ *East African Standard*, 13 August 1914; *Usambara Post*, 22 August 1914.

would harm or even destroy 'white prestige',¹³⁵ which was generally regarded as the underlying principle of colonial rule. This notion of prestige rested on an assumption that the rule of the Europeans was based not only on military power, but also on the respect and admiration that the Africans had for the local white population. Hence there were strict rules of behaviour for the white population, which dictated that they should avoid putting any colonial in a situation where he or even she could be seen as weak, vulnerable or disgraced.¹³⁶ A war fought with the aid of African soldiers against a European power would inevitably lead to a loss of 'white prestige', and, through this, might further threaten the future of European colonialism altogether.¹³⁷

Finally, linked to these ideological and economic concerns was an overall fear of the breakdown of the 'European civilising mission' through the war.¹³⁸ As one concerned British settler wrote to his mother in England:

What a ghastly business modern warfare is. I think it is a pretty poor advertisement for our much vaunted civilisation when the greatest and most civilised nations in the world are trying to murder each other like a lot of benighted savages.¹³⁹

Especially missionaries and certain long-term administrators were afraid that the war would destroy both the material and intellectual progress which had been brought and created in East Africa by the Europeans in the last three decades. While damage to infrastructure could probably be repaired, and harm to 'white prestige' countered, the war would 'undermine the basis of European rule in

¹³⁵ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1997, M.C. Masters, letter to his family, 28 August 1914.

¹³⁶ Kennedy, *Islands of White. Settlers Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939*.

¹³⁷ For a general overview see Adas, 'Contested hegemony. The Great War and the Afro-Asian Assault on the Civilizing Mission Ideology'.

¹³⁸ Jürgen Osterhammel, *Europe, the 'West' and the Civilizing Mission. The 2005 Annual Lecture* (London: German Historical Institute, 2006); Frank Furedi, 'The demobilized African soldier and the blow to white prestige', in David Killingray and David Omissi (eds.), *Guardians of Empire. The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, 1700-1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 179-197.

¹³⁹ RH, Micr. Afr. 599, Noel Smith, letter to his mother, Eldoret, 7 November 1914.

Africa and destroy moral values, which will be completely impossible to re-create.’¹⁴⁰ In their opinion, the basis of European rule in Africa rested on the mystique and appeal of the Christian doctrine and Western life to the African population, a mystique which would be destroyed.¹⁴¹

These concerns, all of which argued against a war in East Africa, were generally shared by the civilian authorities in both Nairobi and Dar es Salaam who were ‘very upset and [...] bewildered at the sudden catastrophe’ of war between Germany and Britain.¹⁴² Given this, it is not surprising that in the first two or three days after the declaration of war, the German colonial authorities allowed British and other foreigners to leave German East Africa for the neighbouring colonies. This relaxed attitude was also evident among the colonials themselves. Indeed, the British consul in Dar es Salaam, Norman King, noted in his diary that the ‘British subjects I could get in touch with [...] decided to stay’ and not follow him to Zanzibar, the British-controlled island in close proximity to Dar es Salaam.¹⁴³ Although he noticed that some of his countrymen appeared worried, none of them appeared to believe that a rapid escape to British territory was necessary and most maintained their trust in European solidarity. It is difficult to assess the degree to which the concept of ‘Europeanness’ or ‘European solidarity’ was solely limited to their experience of living in a racially structured society that required clear divisions and enforced a sense of belonging that would not exist outside this specific context. There were, however, some colonials who regarding living in Africa as a means to overcome national belonging and national sentiment altogether. One striking example is the German-born British national Clement Gillman who worked as a railway engineer in German East Africa.¹⁴⁴ At the outbreak of war he declared that he felt

¹⁴⁰ *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 19 August 1914.

¹⁴¹ Archiv der Franck’sche Stiftungen/Missionsarchiv (Halle), 82, Kamba-Mission während des Krieges, letter from the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland to German mission societies, 27 August 1914.

¹⁴² The British consul in Dar es Salaam on his meeting with German governor: IWM, PP/MCR/150, Sir Norman King KCMG, diary, 5 August 1914.

¹⁴³ IWM, PP/MCR/150, Sir Norman King KCMG, diary, 5 August 1914.

¹⁴⁴ For his Anglo-German background and upbringing see Brian S. Hoyle, *Gillman of Tanganyika, 1882-1946. The Life and Work of a Pioneer Geographer* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1987), pp. 33-64.

to be a member of the great community of all mankind, standing far above being merely a member of a nation. Those few who, like myself, consciously and as a result of deep reflection have become cosmopolitic [sic] in their views and ideas are, in a situation like the present, those who have to suffer most and who are – without doubt – the most unfortunate.¹⁴⁵

Despite the manifold arguments against war that were presented by the British and German colonials, one should not mistake these for expressions of pacifist sentiment. Pacifism and colonialism were unlikely bedfellows, even in peaceful times. In times of crisis, nearly all Europeans relied on, and expected, swift and harsh military action against any real or perceived enemy. The typical enemy in a colonial context was, however, the ‘black’ and not a fellow white. As such, the demands to keep East Africa out of the war can be seen to be rooted in the strong desire to keep the colonial order intact, rather than opposition to war *per se*.

2.4. Embracing the War

The reluctance to involve the colonies in the war lasted merely for the first days of August. Against the wishes of the colonial administration, the military commanders in both British and German colonies prepared them for an active war.¹⁴⁶ While the civilian administration was discussing the possibility of declaring the coastal settlements as ‘open ports’, the British navy bombarded the communication facilities in the harbour of Dar es Salaam on 8 August. A week later the German Schutztruppe under Lettow-Vorbeck crossed the border to British East Africa and attacked the settlement of Taveta. These events made it

For a shorter overview see Ibid., ‘Gillman of Tanganyika, 1882-1946: Pioneer Geographer’, *Geographical Journal* 152 (1986), pp. 354-366.

¹⁴⁵ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 15, 13 September 1914.

¹⁴⁶ Tanja Bühner, ‘Staatsstreich im Busch? Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870-1964)’, in Stig Förster, Markus Pöhlmann, and Dierk Walter (eds.), *Kriegsherren der Weltgeschichte. 22 historische Portraits* (Munich: Beck, 2006), pp. 287-304; Michels, ‘Ein Feldzug – zwei Perspektiven? Paul von Lettow-Vorbecks und Heinrich Schnees Erlebnisberichte über den Ersten Weltkrieg in Ostafrika’, pp. 152-168; Förster, ‘The Quest for East African Neutrality in 1914’.

clear that, in spite of any debates about colonial neutrality, the war would spread to Africa. Still, even then, ‘enthusiasm for a raid into German territory’ in British East Africa was limited to a small section of mainly young settlers who were denounced as irresponsible firebrands by the press and other settlers.¹⁴⁷ Similarly the newspapers in German East Africa warned against ‘Heißspornerei’ that could lead to ‘whites fighting whites’, a criminal scenario worthy of Don Quixote.¹⁴⁸ Yet, in the weeks subsequent to this, one can also observe a slow, but steady readjustment of public opinion towards the reality of war in East Africa, and a complete reversal of argumentation relating to the impact of inter-European fighting on the African population. Those who earlier criticised the war preparation were now accused of undermining the colonial system since it was believed that the Africans would undoubtedly interpret any passive or pacifistic attitude as weakness.¹⁴⁹ One letter writer, under the pen name of ‘Civis Britannicus’, summed up this position:

If anything is going to encourage a native rising in British East Africa, inactivity and a weak and waiting policy in operations with German East Africa will do so. I express my opinion with the utmost confidence that we are looking for trouble from the natives if we do not in a very short time make a forward move against German East Africa [or] it will generally be considered by the natives that [...] we are frightened to try it on.¹⁵⁰

While the reactions to the news of the war among the Germans and British in East Africa were almost identical, when examining the motives and rationale for defending the colonies several differences appear. In the years before the war, colonial propagandists in Africa and Europe liked to draw new maps of Africa depicting a large, continuous area designated as a German Middle Africa or the

¹⁴⁷ RH, MSS. Afr. s. 1876, William McGregor Ross, letter to his mother, 7 August 1914. See also RH, Micr. Afr. 586, Peggy Forrester, letter from Alton Forrester to his sister, 24 August 1914; *East African Standard*, 18 August 1914.

¹⁴⁸ *Usambara Post*, 15 August 1914.

¹⁴⁹ Karl Roehl, *Ostafrikas Heldenkampf. Nach eigenen Erlebnissen dargestellt* (Berlin: Warneck, 1918), p. 15; Arning, *Vier Jahre Weltkrieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁰ *Leader of East Africa*, 29 August 1914, letter to editor by ‘Civis Britannicus’.

British Cape-to-Cairo Connection.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Britain and Germany were in negotiations for dividing Portugal's colonial possessions or even exchanging significant territory to create a connected African empire.¹⁵² These colonial lobbyists saw the outbreak of war as an opportunity to advance their plans and became part of the semi-official war aims propaganda.¹⁵³ Here the gap between the colonial population in German East Africa and British East Africa is seen most sharply. The former focused their justification for fighting the war on the preservation of the colony and the defence of a territory they regarded as their 'homes.' Their contribution to the war effort was given not to actively enhance the geographical scope of the German overseas empire, but to prove that the colonies were not insignificant – a *quantité négligeable* – while, arguably, these were more of a burden than an asset to Germany.¹⁵⁴ Thus, in their perspective, the war in East Africa was solely a defensive war.

For their British East African counterparts, however, the idea that Britain would give up any of its colonies or regard any of them as anything other than an integrated part of the British Empire was not countenanced. Instead, as soon as East Africa turned into a warzone, British colonials regarded this as an opportunity to conquer the neighbouring colony. Thus, theirs was a war of conquest. As this Nairobi resident wrote to his mother in Scotland:

¹⁵¹ See, for example, the two booklets by Emil Zimmermann, published just before and during the war: Emil Zimmermann, *Was ist uns Zentralafrika? Wirtschafts- und verkehrspolitische Untersuchungen* (Berlin: Mittler, 1914); Ibid., *Das deutsche Kaiserreich Mittelfrika als Grundlage einer neuen deutschen Weltpolitik* (Berlin: Verlag der Europäischen Staats- und Wirtschaftszeitung, 1917); See also its English translation: Ibid., *The German Empire of Central Africa* (London: Longmans, 1918). Or for the British perspective see e.g. John H. Harris, 'Germany's Colonial Empire. Seven Reasons against Restoration', *Nineteenth Century* (1917), pp. 157-163; Gordon Le Sueur, *Germany's Vanishing Colonies* (London: Everett, 1915).

¹⁵² Tschapek, *Bausteine eines zukünftigen Mittelfrika. Deutscher Imperialismus und die portugiesischen Kolonien - Deutsches Interesse an den südafrikanischen Kolonien Portugals vom ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg.*

¹⁵³ The public debate about German claims in Africa became sharply polarized between annexationists and moderates most after the press censorship of the discussion of war aims was lifted in Germany in November 1916 (curiously at the time when Allied troops occupied the capital of German East Africa), Anne Lipp, *Meinungslenkung im Krieg: Kriegserfahrungen deutscher Soldaten und ihre Deutung 1914-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 64-65. For the general debate see Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War.*

¹⁵⁴ *Usambara Post*, 8 August 1914.

I may give you the “orrid secret” [sic] as by the time this reaches you, the news will be stale, but we are going to take over German East Africa. [...] This will be our little contribution towards the increase of the British Empire. One cannot help smiling at the idea that while all the nations of Europe are flying at each other’s throats, we are quietly snaffling all the colonies belonging to the common foe.¹⁵⁵

The conquest and the acquisition of German East Africa was justified through three main arguments: Firstly, the territory would merely ‘revert to the British flag’ as Germany had only gained control of this area that was already in the British sphere of influence through shrewd diplomatic manoeuvring in the 1880s.¹⁵⁶ Secondly, Germany failed to develop the colony economically and made ‘such bloomers with the treatment of their natives’ that it lost its right to be a colonising power.¹⁵⁷ Thirdly, and connected to this, was the argument that through sole British control the whole of East Africa would be in a position to make significant economic advances as transport links and trade routes, not least the one from the Cape to Cairo, would be unified.¹⁵⁸

Just as in Europe, where some ten thousand poems were published within the first months of the war, the colonials in British and German East Africa expressed their views on the war through poetry.¹⁵⁹ While most factually based articles were

¹⁵⁵ RH, Mss. Afr. s. 1372, Bruce L. Bremner, letter to his mother, 20 August 1914.

¹⁵⁶ *Leader of East Africa*, 5 September 1914.

¹⁵⁷ RH, MSS. Afr. s. 1876, William McGregor Ross, letter to his mother, 7 August 1914; *Leader of British East Africa*, 14 November 1914. The argument that Germany had failed as a colonising power became a main theme of British propaganda. See e.g. Evans Lewin, *The Germans and Africa. Their Aims on the Dark Continent and how they acquired their African Colonies* (London: Cassell, 1915); Frank Weston, *The Black Slaves of Prussia. An open letter addressed to General Smuts* (London: Universities' Mission to Central Africa, 1917); Frank R. Cana, 'German East Africa and its Future', *Journal of the African Society* 17 (1918), pp. 125-133; Hugh Clifford, *German Colonies. A Plea for the Native Races* (London: John Murray, 1918); Evans Lewin, *German Rule in Africa* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1918); Evans Lewin and M. Montgomery-Campbell, 'How Germany treats the Native', *Quarterly Review* (1918), pp. 372-376.

¹⁵⁸ *Leader of East Africa*, 15 August 1914; *Leader of East Africa*, 5 September 1914.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1866-1918. Machtstaat vor der Demokratie*, vol. 2 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1998), pp. 778-779; Cate Haste, *Keep the Home Fires Burning. Propaganda in the First World War* (London: Allen Lane, 1977); M. L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1982).

often dispassionate, these poems are an interesting source, and provide insight into how the colonials resolved and publicly expressed their emotions about the war.

In the first week of September 1914 William Monson published his first of many war poems in the *Leader of East Africa*. Monson, who worked in a high-ranking position for the government, had lived for many years in Nairobi and Mombasa and identified strongly with the colony.¹⁶⁰ In 'Marching to Moshi' he combined the most important elements of British, and more importantly British East African, war propaganda:

Rally round your country, boys, in her hour of need,
Never shall our land become the prey of German greed,
Show the world the sort of lads East Africa can breed,
As we go marching to Moshi. [...]

How the Kaiser's cheek will blanch to hear the martial sound,
Bitterly will Deutschland rue the day that he was crowned,
All their cherished colonies will soon be British ground,
As we go marching to Moshi.¹⁶¹

Although the first stanza of this poem seems to articulate defence as the primary motive for British war aims, it is also clear in the second stanza that conquest is an additional, if not more important, motive for the author. Also of interest is the degree to which the idea of conquest seems to be embedded within the idea of the retribution which the German people, as personified by the Kaiser have brought upon themselves. A similar pattern can be found in the poem 'Dar es Salaam'

¹⁶⁰ Meinertzhagen, *Army Diary, 1899-1926*, p. 118. Monson later published a number of his poems: William John Monson, *Lays from and East African Lyre* (London: Gay and Hancock, 1925).

¹⁶¹ 'Marching on Tanga' by William J. Monson in *Leader of East Africa*, 5 September 1914.

published by an officer six month later.¹⁶² Within his poem, the reason for enlisting is also conquest, although more specifically the conquest of Dar es Salaam, and the figure of the Kaiser is now enriched by a reference to local opponent Lettow-Vorbeck and 'his nigger crew'. Finally, conquest is also emphasised by the marching tune 'It's a long trek to reach Tabora', which was based on the popular music hall song 'It's a long way to Tipperary'. Its second verse combines the historic British claim on the area around the Kilimanjaro (Kibo), which Queen Victoria allegedly had handed to her grandson Kaiser Wilhelm II., with an undisguised expansionist policy:

See old Kibo's snowy peak against the evening sky
Very soon on Moshi Fort the Union Jack will fly
Floating where it should have floated twenty years ago.

In sum, as these poems reveal, the objectives that British colonials should pursue via this war are fairly straightforward. These centre on the conquest of German territory, and retribution for what was perceived as their illegitimate and unworthy governance.

To identify the motivations of the German colonials in East Africa, on the other hand, one has to focus on a rather more abstract concept: the relationship between the colony and the metropole.¹⁶³ The threat of war made it clear to the colonial population in German East Africa just how fragile this relationship was. Their British counterparts not only had a constant interchange with the metropole through letters and newspapers, but also the continual influx of troops from India, Britain and South Africa. As a result, there could have been little doubt about the

¹⁶² 'It's a long way to reach Tabora' by Anonymous in *Leader of East Africa*, 31 October 1914; 'Dar es Salaam' by G.H. Outram in *Leader of East Africa*, 15 May 1915.

¹⁶³ Steinbach, 'Defending the Heimat. The Germans in South-West Africa and East Africa during the First World War', pp. 179-208; Ibid., 'Carved out of Nature. Identity and Environment in German Colonial Africa', in Christina Folke Ax, et al. (eds.), *Cultivating the Colonies. Colonial States and their Environmental Legacies* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011), pp. 47-77. For further studies on the relationship between the German colonies and the metropole see Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin (eds.), *The Heimat Abroad. The Boundaries of Germaness* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

importance of the colony for Britain and the British Empire. The German colonials, however, felt the need to repeatedly stress that their contribution to the war was for the sake of the common German fatherland. Yet by asserting their loyalty to the fatherland, the colonials indirectly laid claim to the fatherland's loyalty towards them as well. In this way even if the colonies were in remote Africa, they could feel part of the strong nation state.

The absence of more explicit war aims did not mean that the colonials did not share Germany's claim to be a 'world power.' They regarded themselves as the Kaiser's overseas bulwark and considered the question of fleet building and naval superiority as issues that mattered particularly to them. Consequently, when they referred to the fatherland, they had in mind a strong state that was economically healthy and militarily well equipped for the war. But something more than the abstract idea of fatherland would be needed to motivate men to fight for, and to die for, Germany. Here the very German idea of *Heimat* becomes central to understanding the war motivations of German colonials.¹⁶⁴ The image of *Heimat* – represented by lonely, scattered homes, rural towns and happy families that were attacked from the outside – provided German colonials with their most effective motivation.

In a long poem by Otto Gerlach, a citizen of Dar es Salaam, written shortly after the start of the war, the connection between fatherland and *Heimat* comes into sharp focus. It starts with a description of a peaceful, rural *Heimat* in Germany, where people brought in the harvest while singing *Heimat* songs, until the enemy brought war to the land:

¹⁶⁴ For an overview on the importance of *Heimat* for the German national identity see Alon Confino, *The Nation As a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Ibid., 'The Nation as Local Metaphor. *Heimat*, National Memory and the German Empire, 1871-1918', *History and Memory* 5 (1993), pp. 42-86; Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990). For the concept of *Heimat* during the First World War see also Ziemann, *Front und Heimat. Ländliche Kriegserfahrungen im südlichen Bayern, 1914-1923*.

My German land! You feel the fiery steps,
 Where they rush through you on bloody feet,
 Where they have destroyed the quiet peace of German vales
 With thunderous voice that echoes everywhere,
 Where our harmless, joyful Heimat songs
 Are drowned out by the clarion call of war
 And the fair muses' garland is driven out.¹⁶⁵

Reference to German 'Kultur' and German work ('Arbeit') also appeared in publications in Germany. But, as these values were at the core of the cultural justification of colonisation, they had a special significance in the colonies. The mantra of the colonial population and the colonialist lobby in Germany was that the colonies propagated 'Germanness' ('Deutschtum') around the globe and benefited the national economy.

In the lines that follow on from the above, the construction of the relationship between fatherland and Heimat can be seen very clearly: the Heimat, with its soft, rolling hills, its bright colours and its quietness, evokes the female and consequently must be protected by a tough German fatherland that surrounds and incorporates all the different 'Heimaten' (homelands):

My German People! When around you at all borders
 The enemy, bristling with weapons, threatens you!
 You stand armed and ore-plated, shielding
 Your regions on all sides.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 23 September 1914, An unser Vaterland! by Otto Gerlach: 'Mein deutsches Land! Du fühlst die Feuerschritte/ Wo sie auf blutigen Sohlen dich durchheilt/ Wo sie der deutschen Täler stillen Frieden/ Mit Donnerstimme ringsum brausend brach/ Wo unsere harmlos frohen Heimatlieder/ Die Kriegsfanfare schmetternd übertönt/ Und fortgescheucht der holden Musen Kranz.' I would like to thank Christoph Schmidt-Supprian for his help in translating these poems.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.: 'Mein deutsches Volk! Wenn rings von allen Grenzen/ Der Feind, in Waffen strotzend, dich umdräut! /Gerüstet stehst du, schirmend deine Marken/ Nach allen Seiten, erzgepanzert da.'

Thus far, the verses of this poem replicate those found in multiple variations in regional wartime newspapers throughout Germany.¹⁶⁷ In the following verse, however, the author shifts focus to the colony and describes the passivity and powerlessness felt by the colonials who could not fight in the fatherland's war of conquest:

Alas – to protect the Heimat's meadows
We cannot do any brave deeds from here –
To scatter the enemies' superior numbers and
To conquer new lands in battle
And build new frontiers all around us.¹⁶⁸

As they could not fight for Germany directly in Europe, the colonials saw the defence of their African Heimat against an enemy as their way of contributing to the war:

Thus we will not sit idly by,
Merely apathetic, waiting for news from the motherland –
No – this rich earth, grown beloved,
Which has earned our deep gratitude,
Let us protect her, guard her like the Heimat,
So that here, too, no enemy on land or sea
Insolently will seize her from us.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Confino, 'The Nation as Local Metaphor. Heimat, National Memory and the German Empire, 1871-1918', pp. 63-64.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.: 'Doch – können wir zum Schutz der Heimatfluren/ Von hier aus keine Taten mutig tun/ Der Feinde Uebermacht rings zu zerstreun/ Um kämpfend neue Lande zu erobern/ Und neue Grenzen rings uns aufzubaun.'

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.: 'So wollen wir die Hand im Schoß nicht bergen/ Uns müßig nur der Mutter Botschaft freun –/ Nein – diese liebgeordnete reiche Erde,/ Der unser heißer Dankeszoll gebührt/ Laßt sie uns schützen, wahren gleich der Heimat/ Auf daß auch hier kein Feind zu Land und Meere/ In stolzern Uebermut sie uns entreißt.'

After a victorious end to the war, the author hoped that Heimat and its colonies would once more come to epitomise the Heimat idyll. Indeed, the war reveals the colony to be a true Heimat, and has bound it more closely to the Heimat:

And when our Heimat's meadows grow green once more
From fresh seed in blood-fertilised fields –
Then here, too, the last wound shall heal,
The last tear from cheeks vanish,
A German song will rush into the blue sky,
A German echo sound through the palm trees!
Then here, too, life shall be revived,
And tighter the bonds of loyalty bind.¹⁷⁰

Despite the flowery language, the image of Heimat remains very abstract in this poem. Only the palm trees hint at where this distant place is located, allowing for a broad identification with the colonies.¹⁷¹ Other writers provided more specific descriptions of the Heimat that outlined the geographical boundaries of the colonial region that was to be defended. At the same time, however, the use of well-established, colonial stereotypes meant that such writing was usually broad enough to reach a wide audience and to allow them to potentially identify with the location depicted. This can be observed in another adaptation of the German song '*Die Wacht am Rhein*,' the 'War song of the East Africans,' which called upon all Germans 'from Tanganyika to the ocean, from the Spekegulf to Rovuma bank' to defend the new Heimat:

There booms a call
From the beach fringed by palms
To the Kibo's glacier wall:

¹⁷⁰ Ibid: 'Und grünen wieder unsere Heimatfluren/ In neuer Saat auf blutgedüngtem Feld:/ Dann soll auch hier die letzte Wunde heilen/ Die letzte Träne von den Wangen fliehn/ Ein deutsches Lied zum blauen Himmel eilen/ Ein deutsches Echo durch die Palmen ziehn!/ Dann soll auch hier das Leben auferstehen/ Und fester schlingen sich der Treue Band. [...]'

¹⁷¹ Confino, 'The Nation as Local Metaphor. Heimat, National Memory and the German Empire, 1871-1918', p. 66.

Deutsch-Ost, this is about your treasure!
Who wants to be the mountain's protector?
Rest assured, dear fatherland,
We all stand by you, a loyal band! [...]

As long as the palm tree greets the sea,
Mount Kibo shimmers in Heimat-snow,
With a bullet still waiting in the barrel,
We will crush the mercenary peril!
Rest assured, fatherland dear,
[We will never let the enemy enter here!] ¹⁷²

As the symbol of German East Africa Kilimanjaro with the Kibo peak was declared a 'sacred mountain' that – similar to the river Rhine – was under no circumstances to fall into the hands of British enemy:

The Kilimanjaro is a prize worthy of the most noble of effort. When the massive arc of the Kibo's snowy summit glows in the morning sun, shining over hundreds of kilometres into English lands, when a tender Alpine glow at dusk, visible from far and wide, cloaks the snow in soft crimson, then this king of African mountains – so near and yet so far – must have aroused the senses, awakened the desire [of the English]. ¹⁷³

As we have seen earlier, the British colonials across the border were well aware of the symbolic importance of the mountain and incorporated it in their own propaganda.

¹⁷² *Usambara Post*, 1 January 1916, Kriegslied der Ostafrikaner by X.Y., Moshi: Verse 1: 'Es braust ein Ruf vom Palmenstrand/ Bis zu des Kibo Gletscherwand:/ Deutsch-Ost, es gilt dem Kleinod Dein!/ Wer will des Berges Hüter sein?/ Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein,/ Treu steh'n für Dich wir alle ein! [...].' Verse 2: 'So lange die Palme grüsst die See,/ Der Kibo glänzt im Heimatschnee,/ Noch eine Kugel dräut im Rohr/ Zerschmettern wir das Söldnerkorps!/ Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein,/ [Nie lassen wir den Feind herein!].'

¹⁷³ Arning, *Vier Jahre Weltkrieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, pp. 59-60. For the role of Kilimanjaro see Steinbach, 'Carved out of Nature. Identity and Environment in German Colonial Africa', pp. 47-77.

Although British and German colonials entered the war with different aims, and drew on different forms of imagery and argumentation to motivate the civilian population towards these, the one thing that they shared, like most other societies share, in this time of war was the need for unity and cohesion. Again, however, like most societies at war, unity is not always an easy thing to achieve. And despite the small size of the colonial population, the push for unity was undermined by many of the particularities of the colonial context.

2.5. Uniting for the War

Both in German and British East Africa there were strong calls for a ‘colonial Burgfrieden’ and to overcome internal divisions. Like their counterparts in Europe, the colonials felt that only a united society would be in a position to succeed militarily. The feeling of living in a permanent situation of crisis threatened both by the potentially hostile African population and by the lack of a functioning ‘civil society’, concerned the colonials deeply even before the outbreak of the war. With the transformation of the colonies into theatres of war, the colonials in both German and British East Africa felt even more acutely the strong necessity to create unity along both racial and, equally importantly, national lines. As could be seen in the poems discussed earlier, nearly all of these underlined how the colony should stand together in this hour of need. Here is another, rather blunt, example of a poem in which the different social and professional sections of colonial Nairobi are portrayed as being united in the face of war:

Staunch Nairobi men are we,
‘Neath the flag that shields the free
We have ‘listed for the cause for good or ill.
Though we mayn’t be soldiers all,
Yet at duty’s urgent call,

We can fight as well as others – and we will!
 Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching,
 Armed and eager for the fray;
 Railway, Parklands, Town, and Hill,
 From the workshop, desk, and mill,
 Waiting, waiting for the morn' that bring 'The Day!'¹⁷⁴

Here the author refers to the most important groups of Europeans residents of Nairobi: the engineers and railway employees, the civil servants who mainly lived in the parkland area, the traders and businessmen of the city and the farmers and planters in the surrounding hills. But, despite these calls for unity, both German and British East Africa were places in which vested interests, personal animosity and, of course, racial conflict prevailed. The lines of conflict not only separated the different ethnic groups—there were also profound animosities between the European colonials themselves. European civilians were not a coherent and cooperating group. Without resorting to the stereotype of alcohol-soaked troublemakers who regularly used violence against Africans and against each other, it is also undeniable that the Europeans in both British and German East Africa consumed larger than average amount of strong liquor and were quick to use violence.¹⁷⁵ Many farmers, planters and merchants struggled financially and led isolated lives without wives and children and often with very few social engagements. Far from being a 'happy valley', the lives of the European colonials were shaped by violence and suppression as well as considerable internal social conflicts.

¹⁷⁴ RH, MSS Afr. s. 2184, V.C. Young, Scrapbook of Major Joseph Corbet Ward, Commandant of Nairobi Defence Force (N.D.F.) [note: published in Nairobi paper in 1914].

¹⁷⁵ Justin Willis, *Potent Brews. A social history of alcohol in East Africa, 1850-1999* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002); Kennedy, *Islands of White. Settlers Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939*; Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation. European Settlement and Settlers in German East Africa, 1900-1914*; Bald, *Deutsch-Ostafrika 1900-1914. Eine Studie über Verwaltung, Interessengruppen und wirtschaftliche Erschließung*; Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*; Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*.

The most important conflict existed between settlers and the colonial administration and deeply shaped colonial life in both British and German East Africa. Disagreements about treatment of the African population, and over the economic development of the colonies, brought both territories to the brink of revolt in the decade before 1914. With the outbreak of war there was anticipation that the administration would be more willing to follow the demands of the settler community. However, as in Europe, the war did not unite opposing parts of society. Rather, it prompted increasingly acrimonious debates about for whom the war was fought and what to expect from its outcome. The most prominent conflict in German East Africa occurred between the district administration and the association of planters and settlers in the Kilimanjaro area, which was one of the most important regions of European settlement in the colony. At the centre of the continuous feud was the question of compulsory work of African labourers on European plantations. This issue had caused trouble in previous years, but by the outbreak of the war both sides had found a satisfactory *modus operandi*.¹⁷⁶ Yet the conflict resurfaced when the district administration limited the amount of hours African labourers had to work on European plantations. This policy was rooted in the fear of a food shortage and was intended to allow Africans, who grew potatoes and wheat, to provide for the local population and the *Schutztruppe*.¹⁷⁷ For the association of planters, however, this meant ‘nothing more but a relapse in that kind of native policy that is regarded from a higher point of view in the eyes of experienced “old Africans” as a fiasco’.¹⁷⁸

Many settlers and planters had hoped that through the war their influence on the political and economic decision making in the colony would increase. Yet through the war effort the needs of the *Schutztruppe* became paramount and the colonial administration felt the necessity to placate the African population as far as possible. Thus numerous settlers felt betrayed and frustrated, or in the words of Dr

¹⁷⁶ Bald, *Deutsch-Ostafrika 1900-1914. Eine Studie über Verwaltung, Interessengruppen und wirtschaftliche Erschließung*, p. 77; Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, pp. 144-145.

¹⁷⁷ TNA, G8/159, Wirtschaftlicher Verband am Kilimanjaro, Minutes of the meeting, 13 June 1915.

¹⁷⁸ TNA, G8/159, Wirtschaftlicher Verband am Kilimanjaro, Minutes of the meeting, 13 June 1915. The term ‘old Africans’ refers to long-term Europeans residents of the colony.

Foerster, the association's president: 'The discord, or to name it more pointedly, the deep-rooted bitterness felt by the planters towards the administration of this district is widely spread, because [...] of the lack of contact ['Fühlung'] by the leading powers with the settlers.'¹⁷⁹ The owner of a cattle farm, who was in a dispute with the civilian and military authorities over the cull of diseased animals, made his anger even more explicit. He declared that the war and the difficult situation for German East Africa were rooted 'mainly in many years of incompetent German colonial policies'.¹⁸⁰ He feared, and prophesied, a collapse of the colony – similar to the defeat of German Southwest Africa – which nearly resulted in a trial for treason. The colonial administration was equally disturbed, and one district commissioner complained that 'to make mischief in these grave times between Europeans and the administration proves how little understanding the [settler association has] about its role and displays a lowly degree of love of one's country.'¹⁸¹

Despite the difficult relationships between the administration and the colonial civilians, the positive legacy of the war in German East Africa would ultimately rest on the tale of a strong bond between the Schutztruppe and the German civilian population. The myth of the loyal askari combined with the narrative of European civilians and European soldiers who endured the war to create a stark contrast to the split that supposedly occurred in Europe where front and 'home front' fell apart and thus spoilt the victory for the German army, which until then had remained unbeaten in the field. Yet, even though evidence is scarce, the German civilians' enthusiasm for participating in the campaign was clearly not universally shared. And despite the early successes of the Schutztruppe under Lettow-Vorbeck, many members of the administration and the settler community remained sceptical about his intentions and feared the devastating impact of the

¹⁷⁹ TNA, G8/159, Wirtschaftlicher Verband am Kilimanjaro, letter from Dr Foerster (president of the WV) to governor Schnee, 24 June 1915.

¹⁸⁰ TNA, G8/897, Arbeiteransiedler Langkopp, letter from Langkopp to governor Schnee, Iringa, 26 July 1915

¹⁸¹ TNA, G8/159, Wirtschaftlicher Verband am Kilimanjaro, letter from district commissioner to governor Schnee, 15 July 1915.

war on the colony's economy.¹⁸² This sentiment manifested itself in the first hero narrative of the East Africa campaign, Captain Tom von Prince.¹⁸³ As an 'old colonial' and figurehead of the planter community, his death in the battle of Tanga in November 1914 led to a strong outpouring of grief and pride. The focus on the defence of the African Heimat, rather than the campaign Lettow-Vorbeck was planning, resonated more strongly with the sentiments of the German colonials.¹⁸⁴

In the first months of the war a certain resentment against a military 'takeover' of colonial life can be observed in British East Africa. With the arrival of the Indian Army in September and October 1914, the colonial administration and the settler community were accused of making 'no attempt to disguise their dislike of the military and obstruct the soldiers whenever possible.'¹⁸⁵ Officers and soldiers were surprised, shocked or appalled by how little the colonial elite in Nairobi cared about the war, and how they continued their social life with various balls and parties, sporting and hunting events. Yet the influx of a large number of European men to the colony also caused concern for the colonial order.¹⁸⁶ The officers arriving from Europe from 1915 onwards were generally welcomed as assets to the rather stagnant social circles and were made honorary members of sports and social clubs. However, most rank-and-file men found it difficult to relate to a society that they perceived as obsessed with class and hierarchy as 'white men and women all appear to be snobs, resenting the presence of new khaki and quite forgetting what old England is doing to keep them safe and secure out here.'¹⁸⁷

The colonials themselves were concerned about an influx of Europeans who lacked the racial knowledge, and who willingly or unwillingly crossed racial boundaries.

¹⁸² TNA, G21/630, Strafesache Bezirksamtmannd Wendt in Lindi wegen Beleidigung, letter by military commander of Lindi to district court Dar es Salaam, December 1914.

¹⁸³ Pesek, 'Der Koloniale Körper in der Krise. Koloniale Repräsentationen, Ordnung und Gewalt während des Ersten Weltkriegs in Ostafrika, 1914-1919', pp. 59-82, here pp. 346-354.

¹⁸⁴ *Usambara Post*, 7 November 1914. See also BA, R1001/874, Militärische Lage in D.O.A., Band 11, report by Mr Brandes, 25 February 1918.

¹⁸⁵ Meinertzhagen, *Army Diary, 1899-1926*, pp. 118-119.

¹⁸⁶ *East African Standard*, 12 December 1914.

¹⁸⁷ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, Mombasa, 21 November 1916.

The conflicts between the administration and the European civilian population were further complicated by the influence of the mission societies which, through increased funding and better co-operation, remained important actors both on the spot as well as the metropole. They confidently promoted the protection of their African converts and were powerful economic and administrative actors in remote parts of both colonies. Especially Protestant mission societies aimed not only to influence public opinion about colonial issues, but also to influence policy.¹⁸⁸ Through stressing the need to protect the Africans against exploitation, and the Christian aspects of the civilising mission, they often clashed with the majority of secular colonials, for whom the economic development of Africa was paramount. Accordingly, settler interest groups vocally and continuously blamed the influence of the missions for 'spoiling' the Africans and, through the Christian doctrine of equality and the teaching of languages, upsetting the racial order.¹⁸⁹ The war impacted less heavily on daily routines of the mission societies active in British and German East Africa than on secular businesses.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, most missionaries were either explicitly exempt from military service as ordained clergy, or were not expected to join voluntarily.¹⁹¹ However, several mission laymen did volunteer or were recruited for the Schutztruppe or the British East African forces as combatants. A few missionaries left their stations to serve as chaplains or medical officers,¹⁹² but many played other important roles based at their stations throughout the campaign. The mission stations provided a certain

¹⁸⁸ Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Altena, 'Ein Häuflein Christen mitten in der Heidenwelt des dunklen Erdteils.' *Zum Selbst- und Fremdverständnis protestantischer Missionare im kolonialen Afrika, 1884-1918*; Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, 1952); Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika, 1891-1941. Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands*.

¹⁸⁹ E.g. RH, MSS Afr. s. 1997, M.C. Masters, letter to his family, 6 September 1914.

¹⁹⁰ AFSu/M, 32, Nachrichten, Korrespondenz während des Krieges, 1914-1916, letter by Lisa Raum to her mother, Marangu, 23 August 1914; CMS, Original papers B.E.A., G3 A5/0, letter by G. W. Wright to Manley, Mombasa, 10 August 1914.

¹⁹¹ So far there is no study on missionaries in the First World War. For the most recent research on Protestant clergy in the war see Edward Madigan, *Faith Under Fire. Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War* (Manchester: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹⁹² TNA, G9/15, Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für DOA (Bethel), 1907-15; HAB, 2/51-9, Ost-Afrika-Mission 1917, Band II, Summary of war service for Pastor Siegfried Delius, October 1917; AFSu/M, 199, Dannholz, Jakob Janssen, letter by Aline Wagner to her parents, 6. Juni 1915.

level of continuity and stability in the regions and supplied food and manufactured material, like clothes and leather, for the troops. Furthermore, the mission stations organised educated Africans for messenger services and provided information on available food resources in their area.¹⁹³ Most importantly, the missions were active in recruiting carriers for the army as they often had good connections to the local chiefs.¹⁹⁴

However, some missions also represented an obstacle to recruitment as some missionaries regarded the intervention by the government or military as an erosion of their own power and status.¹⁹⁵ Others were genuinely concerned about the wellbeing of the Africans in their parishes as the mostly harsh recruitment drives impacted severely on the stability of family life and the local economy. Missionaries were particularly concerned when Christian converts were taken for carrier duties and suspected the influence of Muslim officials. Finally, several missionaries were openly critical of the mass recruitment.¹⁹⁶ It is debatable if this resistance was rooted in a general concern of the welfare for the Africans or rather about power and control over the Africans in a particular parish. One well-documented example is of the Catholic missionary Pater Damm in Ifakara, who was involved in a long lasting dispute with the military and civilian administration about the recruitment of porters and the economic role the mission station had to play in the war effort. The conflict started when the military doctor, Dr Schoenebeck, arrived in Ifakara and, without contacting Damm, ordered 84 men and women to be forcibly removed from their houses at night. In this process

¹⁹³ TNA, G21/604, Strafsache gegen Pater Damm wegen Beleidigung, letter by Missionary Damm to military station Mahenge, Ifakara 11 October 1914.

¹⁹⁴ Savage and Munro, 'Carrier Corps Recruitment in the British East Africa Protectorate 1914-1918'; Killingray and Matthews, 'Beasts of Burden: British West African Carriers in the First World War'; Hodges, *The Carrier Corps. Military Labor in the East African Campaign, 1914-1918*. For the support of the missions in British East Africa see KNA, PC/Coast/1/13/79, Porters for Military, letter from Military Commissioner of Labour to PC Mombasa, Nairobi 5 May 1917; KNA, PC/Coast/1/13/8, Porters for the Military, 1916/17, Memorandum by Military Commissioner of Labour to PC Mombasa, 18 June 1917.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, G9/23, Schwarze Väter (Heiliger Geist), 1911-16, letter from Bezirksamtman Bagamojo to governor Schnee, 30 November 1915.

¹⁹⁶ TNA, G9/14, Berliner Missionsgesellschaft, 1911-16, letter from Bezirkschef to governor Schnee, Mahenge 2 December 1915; TNA, G21/604, Strafsache gegen Pater Damm wegen Beleidigung, letter by Missionary Damm to Governor Schnee, Ifakara 15 January 1915.

numerous men were tied together as chain gangs with ropes around their necks. Damm was incensed about these and other acts of cruelty ('Roheiten'), like instances of beatings with sticks and slapping the faces of the men during the procedure, and the distress this caused for the families affected. Moreover he was generally concerned about the impact this behaviour would have on the public order in the area: 'I am downright flabbergasted how a representative of the military administration could turn through such reckless brutality the whole population in such great turmoil and show so little tact towards me.'¹⁹⁷ His subsequent intervention resulted in the release of a mission teacher and two older Africans who had both been severely beaten.

The German administration, especially, remained suspicious of the loyalty and support of certain missionaries and mission societies, in many cases Catholics. In combination with the fact that several mission stations had foreign staff members, who might influence the African population against Germany, the missions were accused of either profiteering from the war materially or not doing enough to support the war effort by instead focusing solely on the fate and the future of the mission itself.¹⁹⁸ The missionaries did, indeed, focus on the future after the end of the war, but many were concerned that their mission would be destroyed by the effects of the war in the colony. Not only did the recruitment of porters and soldiers diminish their flock, as those Africans who spoke German were in high demand by the army, but also material concerns affected many mission stations (e.g. destruction of property, loss of income). Even though most missionaries identified themselves at a personal level with the war effort,¹⁹⁹ they nonetheless perceived the war less through the impact it had on the nation and rather more through what it meant for their institution and religion.

¹⁹⁷ TNA, G21/604, Strafsache gegen Pater Damm wegen Beleidigung, letter by Missionary Damm to Governor Schnee, Ifakara 15 January 1915.

¹⁹⁸ TNA, G9/21, Weiße Väter, 1910-1916, Lists of nationality of different Catholic priests and laymen, January-December 1915. More general see M. Louise Pirouet, 'East African Christians and World War I', *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), pp. 117-130; Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa. The 'White Fathers' during the Colonial Scramble, 1892-1914*.

¹⁹⁹ HAB, 2/52-6, Lutindi 1915-1916, letter from missionary W. Nickel to Pastor Kuhlo, 4 June 1915; LAELKB, Bestand 205, Missionarsfamilien Raum und Wärtl 74, diary of Lina Raum, 21 January 1915.

2.6. Conclusion

The prospect of war in East Africa was neither simple nor straightforward for the Europeans living there. Instead, war threatened the structures of colonial rule and colonial order: war brought racial and national belonging into conflict. Unsurprisingly, then, enthusiasm for the war – at least for war on African soil – was initially tempered. Once war became inevitable, the colonials were challenged to find a narrative that justified their involvement in this campaign. The German colonials fell back on the well-established concept of *Heimat* and its defence as a means for mobilising the population. The British, in comparison, oriented their war aims toward conquest and revenge. Yet, both societies, through their deep divisions within the colonial elites, struggled to unite and to form a coherent and meaningful perspective on their involvement in the war. Again, this struggle reveals the complicated intersections between the national basis of war and the racialised basis of colonialism. In the following chapter, this clash will be further explored through the construction and subsequent internment of enemy aliens.

3. Upsetting the Colonial Order: Arrest and Internment of 'Enemy Aliens' in the Colonial Sphere

3.1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, the question of civilian and military internment has prompted a number of in-depth studies grounded in a variety of different academic approaches. The particular focus on civilian internment originates from the field of historical research on immigration and multicultural studies, and is as much concerned with the processes through which 'enemy aliens' were constructed and ostracised from society as it is with the act of internment itself. The primary focus of this chapter is also on the internment of civilians and the broader social processes surrounding these acts.

It is not surprising that early studies of civilian internment were concerned with the large migrant nations of Australia and the USA.²⁰⁰ Often in comparison to the racially-motivated imprisonment of Japanese civilians in the Second World War, historians of migrant history and multiculturalism have regarded the treatment of the well-integrated—and racially indistinguishable—German community as an early example of the fragility of civil society. Panikos Panayi's work on the internment of German nationals and ethnic Germans in Britain during the war was a ground-breaking study of foreign citizens in Europe.²⁰¹ Again his approach is embedded in the broader questions of immigration and integration. Only very recently has light been shed on the situation in Germany through Matthew

²⁰⁰ Fischer, *Enemy Aliens. Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia, 1914-1920*, pp. 278-281; Jörg Nagler, *Nationale Minoritäten im Krieg. 'Feindliche Ausländer' und die amerikanische Heimatfront während des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000). Compare also the two edited volumes Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Minorities in Wartime. National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia* (Oxford: Berg, 1993); Kay Saunders and Roger Daniels (eds.), *Alien Justice. Wartime Internment in Australia and North America* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2000).

²⁰¹ Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst. Germans in Britain during the First World War*.

Stibbe's book on the most important internment camp for British civilians.²⁰² Stibbe's study is, of course, of particular relevance to this chapter as it is the only source of comparison for interned Allied civilians as no research exists regarding the situation of these in Austria-Hungary, let alone Bulgaria or the Ottoman Empire.²⁰³

More importantly, with respect to the specific case of East Africa, no studies have been conducted on foreign nationals in any African or Asian colony or country and which could otherwise form the basis for a meaningful comparison.²⁰⁴ It is particularly surprising that no research has been conducted on the situation in South Africa as this was home to a large and well-established German community with some ties to the neighbouring colony of German Southwest Africa.²⁰⁵ In addition, the treatment of German and Ottoman residents in Egypt has not been examined, even though the cities of Cairo and Alexandria contained a significant number of foreign businessmen and the country became an important military front by the end of 1914.²⁰⁶ The same is true for British-ruled India, where German nationals not only worked as merchants and missionaries but also in considerable number in the civil service.²⁰⁷ In all three places, South Africa, Egypt and especially India, internment camps were set up for German military prisoners of war, mostly captured from warships, but also for civilians, residents and stranded travellers and seamen. As will be discussed in a later chapter, German nationals captured during and after the Allied occupation of German East Africa were sent to these camps as the British authorities avoided setting up internment facilities in the warzone. Although it would be worthwhile to study

²⁰² Stibbe, *British Civilian Prisoners of War in Germany. The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-1918*. Compare also the earlier studies Jahr, 'Zivilisten als Kriegsgefangene. Die Internierung von 'Feindstaatenausländern' in Deutschland während des Ersten Weltkrieges am Beispiel des 'Engländerlagers Ruhleben', pp. 297-321.

²⁰³ Stibbe, *British Civilian Prisoners of War in Germany. The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-1918* pp. 4-6.

²⁰⁴ Japan did not intern any German civilians. Compare Mahon Murphy's forthcoming article.

²⁰⁵ For a contemporary opinion compare J. K. O'Connor, *The Hun in the Hinterland. The Menace of G.S.W.A.* (Cape Town: Miller, 1914).

²⁰⁶ This recent study on Germany's role in Egypt does not mention any internees. Salvador Oberhaus, 'Zum wilden Aufstande entflammen.' *Die deutsche Propagandastrategie für den Orient im Ersten Weltkrieg am Beispiel Ägypten* (Saarbrücken: VDM Müller, 2007).

²⁰⁷ Ulrike Kirchberger, 'German scientists in the Indian forest service: A German contribution to the Raj?', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29 (2001), pp. 1-26.

this globalised system of internment further, it is also beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, this is clearly an important area for future research.

Considering the amount of research dedicated to the campaign in East Africa, it is equally surprising that only very few references to the fate of British and other Allied civilians and military personnel at the hands of the Germans have been made in any publication dealing with the military aspect of the war.²⁰⁸ To gather some information about the situation of prisoners, one has to consult books and pamphlets published by mission societies, which refer to the 'tragic' events of the First World War in overviews on the history of their mission work, but mostly refrain from giving more detailed information on the fate of the missionaries and their staff.²⁰⁹ A possible explanation for this gap in the literature is the lack of a solid body of sources. As discussed earlier, the majority of files of the German colonial administration in East Africa were lost during or after the war, which leaves the reconstruction of these events dependent solely on the perspective of the victims. However, as a number of different accounts of the war years exist, it is still possible to extract a convincing picture.

The most accessible information on the internment of British subjects is a short report by a British government committee on the issue, which was completed in October 1917 and published in the following year.²¹⁰ The report is based on interviews with British residents of German East Africa, mostly members of the Church Mission Society and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, both missionaries and their wives, but also laymen and nurses. Additionally, one British planter from the Kilimanjaro area contributed to the inquiry. Here one can

²⁰⁸ It is mentioned in Richard Pierard, 'Allied Treatment of Protestant Missionaries in German East Africa in World War I', *African Journal of Evangelical Theology* 12 (1993). And more recently in Pesek, *Ende eines Kolonialreichs. Ostafrika im Ersten Weltkrieg*, pp. 278-281.

²⁰⁹ Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society, 1895-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954); Baldur Edmund Pfeiffer, 'The Coming of the Mission to East Africa', in Baldur E. Pfeiffer (ed.), *Seventh-Day Adventist Contributions to East Africa, 1903-1983* (Frankfurt (Main): Peter Lang, 1985), pp. 11-40; Menzel, *Die Bethel-Mission. Aus 100 Jahren Missionsgeschichte*; Pierard, 'Allied Treatment of Protestant Missionaries in German East Africa in World War I'.

²¹⁰ *British Civilian Prisoners in East Africa. A Report by the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1918).

already see the pattern of the available eyewitness accounts, which is dominated by staff of the mission societies who formed the majority of civilian internees.

Ernest Spanton, one of the main contributors to the report, published his recollections at the end of 1917 as a book and thus shaped the image of the fate of the internees in the British public. Spanton was a member of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa and based in Zanzibar as principal of the St. Andrew's Teacher Training College. In summer 1914 he visited the mission station Msalabani near Tanga in German East Africa where he witnessed the outbreak of the war.²¹¹ The second account published during the war was written by Ernest Charles Holtom, a military surgeon on the H.M.S. Goliath who was captured by the Germans in November 1914 and is the main source from a non-missionary internee.²¹² The third memoir was published by John Briggs, a member of Church Mission Society in summer 1918,²¹³ while the fourth and final, monograph dedicated to the internment in East Africa was not finished until the beginning of 1919 by which time its author, Thomas Westgate, was unable to find a publisher and hence had to publish his account privately in Belfast.²¹⁴ Dr Westgate, a Canadian by birth, was sent to German East Africa in 1902 for the Church Mission Society to run and extend the training college in Kongwa where he was arrested in 1915. His account is important insofar as his diary and letters to his wife, on which he based his book, survived in the mission's archive.²¹⁵ This makes a comparison between the original and published narrative possible. A number of former internees also wrote about their experience in local British papers, such as missionary John Williams who wrote five articles based on his detailed diaries for the *Cambrian News* from Aberystwyth.²¹⁶

²¹¹ Ernest F. Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1917).

²¹² Ernest Charles Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy* (London: Hutchinson, 1918).

²¹³ John H. Briggs, *In the East African War Zone* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1918).

²¹⁴ T. B. R. Westgate, *In the Grip of the German* (Belfast: Private, 1918).

²¹⁵ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, 22 diary.

²¹⁶ IWM, 95/32/1, Williams, John Thomas, Five articles in *Cambrian News*, April 1917.

The national newspaper seemed to be less interested in this aspect of the war: *The Times* dedicated only two articles to the topic.²¹⁷ A peculiar angle on the issue is portrayed in *Wide World Magazine*, a popular weekly famous for its trademark eyewitness reporters and experts, and for their extensive photos, maps and pictures about explorers, adventurers and expatriates.²¹⁸ While the other publications are composed in a matter-of-fact tone, this article, based on the recollection of Hilda Field and Ernest Doulton who worked for the Church Mission Society in Mpwapwa, promises 'not only to make painful reading, but stamp the Hun as a veritable fiend incarnate'.²¹⁹ It appeared in a series of other accounts of the war in colonial Africa, which were published before and after the armistice and combined the experience of combat (or in this case internment) with the adventures of sub-Saharan Africa.²²⁰ This combination of narratives would become, as will be discussed in the last chapter of this thesis, the dominant form of war memoirs by veterans of East African campaign. An early – and one could even say bizarre – example of this combination are the reminiscences of Arnold Wienholt, an Australian politician, hunter and adventurer who served for British Intelligence in East Africa.²²¹ He was captured in July 1916, but was able to escape six months later and spent fifteen days crossing unfamiliar country to return behind the lines to his own troops.²²² This remarkable event is discussed on merely ten pages (out of 250), and by stressing that the German guards 'had treated me civilly and well' he already shapes the myth of the 'gentlemen's war'

²¹⁷ *The Times*, 30 December 1916, 'German Infamies in East Africa - Foul Treatment Of Prisoners'; *The Times*, 25 September 1917, 'The White Man In Africa: German Treatment Of Prisoners - Effort To Destroy British Prestige'.

²¹⁸ Kate Jackson, 'Doing Things Differently' and 'Striking While the Iron was Hot'. The Entrepreneurial Successes of the Media Magnate George Newnes, 1881-1910', *Publishing Research Quarterly* 12 (1996), pp. 3-23 here p. 12.

²¹⁹ Hilda Field and Ernest William Doulton, 'My Experiences as a Missionary Prisoner', *Wide World Magazine* 40 (1917), pp. 203-209.

²²⁰ Compare for example J. A. Jordan, 'Ivory-Poaching in German East Africa', *Wide World Magazine* 38 (1917), pp. 345-355; James Henry Butcher, 'My Experiences in German East Africa', *Wide World Magazine* 41 (1918), pp. 211-219; J. Railton Holden, 'My Niggers', *Wide World Magazine* 42 (1919), pp. 225-229.

²²¹ Arnold Wienholt, *The Story of a Lion Hunt. With some of the Hunter's Military Adventures during the War* (London: Melrose, 1922).

²²² P. J. Greville, 'Arnold Wienholt, 1877-1940', in Diane Langmore and Geoffrey Serle (eds.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 1990).

which will be discussed further in Chapter 6.²²³ Furthermore, his personal letters sent from Africa to friends and family in Queensland contain no references to his internment.²²⁴

This aspect of the war cannot be found in the unpublished accounts of British civilian and military prisoners, of which only a small number have survived. Besides the already mentioned diaries left behind by Westgate and Williams,²²⁵ a further journal by a missionary, Frederick Johnson of the UMCA in Masasi, provides useful details in the different internment camps.²²⁶ Disappointingly, there are only two original sources of the experience of military prisoners of war, a letter written by C.K. Hilton about his capture in September 1915 and a short report by a medical officer of the Indian Army and both stress the positive treatment in the hands of their German capturers.²²⁷ These very limited sources, of course, do not allow for a meaningful comparison between civilian internees and military prisoners of war. However, as both groups were interned in the same camp, and were overall treated in the same manner by the German guards, it is possible to make general observations and conclusions about the Europeans' internment experience in Africa.²²⁸

The final ego-document regarding the internment of British subjects is also the most peculiar and deserves a longer introduction. It is the diary of Clement Gillman, who was a resident of Tabora working as an engineer for the Frankfurt-based company Holzmann.²²⁹ Gillman was the son of a British father and a German mother and grew up in Freiburg with his maternal grandparents in a

²²³ Wienholt, *The Story of a Lion Hunt. With some of the Hunter's Military Adventures during the War*, p. 173.

²²⁴ FL, UQFL90 Wienholt Family Papers, Box 1, letters by Arnold Wienholt from East Africa.

²²⁵ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, 22 diary; IWM, 95/32/1, Williams, John Thomas, diary, 1913-1916.

²²⁶ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary 1914-1916.

²²⁷ IWM, 05/53/1, Hilton, C.K., letter to father, 25 June 1916; IWM, K. 35303, Bayliss-Stokes, H., report of Experiences of a Doctor, Prisoner of War in German East Africa, n.d.

²²⁸ The terms 'prisoner' and 'internees' are used interchangeably at the time will be also in the chapter. However, when it is necessary to make to differentiate between military and civilians this will be made clear.

²²⁹ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, Diaries 1913-1918.

‘bildungsbürgerlich’ milieu.²³⁰ After finishing his studies of civil engineering in 1905 he took up a position in German East Africa where he was involved in the construction of the railway system. In August 1914 he was based in Tabora where he was living with his German wife and young son. Identifying as a German, and as a German colonial in particular, the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and Germany put Gillman in a precarious position as he was a British national and thus an ‘enemy alien’. His diary, first written in German and from the end of 1914 in – a very Teutonic – English provides insight into everyday life in Tabora before and after the occupation of Allied troops and the experience of internment in particular.

Recent research on civilian and military prisoners of war during the First World War has shown that the policy of internment, the subsequent management of the camps, and the treatment of their inmates – especially in the case of Germany – were important steps towards the mass detention and exploitation of civilians and combatants during the 20th century.²³¹ The registration and imprisonment of innocent civilians as suspected ‘enemy aliens’ for the duration of the war, or even longer, may seem to be part of the new development of total warfare during the First World War, as may the use of these internees and prisoners of war as hostages and forced labourers. However, these policies were well established by 1914 as all European powers had used these measures in the various wars in their overseas colonies.²³² One could almost argue that the camp, or lager, was an invention made in Africa as it was the Second South African War in which the British used mass internment and deportation against the Afrikaner and African population on such a scale that the term ‘concentration camp’ and the concept

²³⁰ For an overview of his life see Hoyle, *Gillman of Tanganyika, 1882-1946. The Life and Work of a Pioneer Geographer*.

²³¹ For an overview on recent research see Matthew Stibbe, ‘Civilian Internment and Civilian Internees in Europe, 1914-20’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 26 (2008), pp. 49-81. For the most comprehensive study on military prisoners of war in Germany see Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War. Britain, France, and Germany, 1914-1920*.

²³² For an overview on the colonial origins of the camp system see Iain R. Smith and Andreas Stucki, ‘The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps, 1868-1902’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39 (2011), pp. 417-437.

behind it entered the consciousness of the European public.²³³ Although the case of the interned Afrikaner population attracted great publicity, the usual victims of imprisonment and resettlement in colonial Africa were the indigenous inhabitants. These measures were regarded by most colonial administrators as useful and effective tools to prevent or subdue local unrest, often with the equally desirable side-effect of clearing land for European settlement.²³⁴

When seen in a broader colonial context, the image of white women and children kept behind barbed wire, which outraged sections of European public opinion during the 'Boer War', stood not only in contrast to the traditional idea of warfare, but also in contrast to the colonial racial hierarchy. In colonial Africa the people behind barbed wire, bars or fences were expected to be black not white. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the outbreak of the war challenged and changed these certainties, and the colonial authorities began registering, arresting, interning and deporting European civilians and prisoners of war. Even though the number of people affected remained low, their symbolic importance cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, the intimacy among the Europeans living closely together in Africa, and the few European officers and soldiers employed there, allows for a deeper insight into the process and experience of internment in comparison to the thousands of civilians and combatants imprisoned and deported in Europe during the war. For its theoretical perspectives, this chapter relies on research conducted on prisoners of war in other theatres of war, or in other periods, as so far no studies have been undertaken with specific respect to the internment policies in colonial Africa and Asia during the First World War.

²³³ Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Abacus, 1992 [1979]), pp. 508-516; Elizabeth van Heyningen, 'The Concentration Camps of the South African (Anglo-Boer) War, 1900-1902', *History Compass* 7 (2009), pp. 22-43.

²³⁴ The case of the Herero War in German South-West Africa furthermore illustrates how quickly these 'concentration camps' could turn into 'death camps' for its prisoners as wilful neglect or incompetence led to the death of thousands: Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Kriegsgefangene im Kolonialkrieg', in Rüdiger Overmans (ed.), *In der Hand des Feindes, Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: 1999); Jonas Kreienbaum, 'Vernichtungslager' in Deutsch-Südwestafrika? Zur Funktion der Konzentrationslager im Herero- und Namakrieg, 1904-1908', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 10 (2012), pp. 1014-1026.

3.2. Arrest and Deportation in British East Africa

At the outbreak of the war, the German community in British East Africa was a small, heterogeneous and fragmented group of people who numbered less than a hundred people.²³⁵ Most of them lived in the port city of Mombasa or in the administrative centre Nairobi, working for British or European merchant firms or plantations.²³⁶ Also several German trading houses, including O'Swald & Co, Hansing and Hintzmann, had branches in the colony, as Mombasa was the most important port on the East African coast.²³⁷ One notable example is the East African Trading Company in Mombasa, the colony's oldest merchant firm, and its owner Otto Markus, an Austrian citizen. Since its foundation in 1905 the company grew to be the largest, and one of the most successful, private companies in British East Africa and Markus was heavily involved in the economic development of the colony.²³⁸ Despite being both a foreigner and Jewish, Markus became a well-respected and important member of the European colonial society. He and his Austrian wife were members of several social, cultural and sport clubs (with the exception of the Mombasa Club which did not accept Jewish members),²³⁹ and the couple can be regarded as examples of the European intermingling in pre-war colonial societies described above. Markus not only served as president of the Mombasa Chamber of Commerce, but also socialised with high-level colonial administrators, like the Provincial Commissioner or officers of the King's African Rifles. As discussed in the previous chapter this trusted attitude towards non-British Europeans was also reflected in the fact that several government departments employed German staff. For example, in the

²³⁵ For a recent overview on German nationals in the British Empire see the introduction in John R. Davis, Stefan Manz, and Margrit Schulte-Beerbühl (eds.), *Transnational Networks: German Migrants in the British Empire, 1670-1914* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012). However, there is no detailed study for Germans living in the British colonies in Africa.

²³⁶ See the very positive account by the British travellers who visited German and British East Africa in 1913: Robert S. Meikle and M. E. Meikle, *After Big Game. The Story of an African Holiday* (London: Laurie, 1917), pp. 49-50.

²³⁷ KNA, PC/Coast/1/17/87, Controller of Enemy Firms, letter from Provincial Commissioner to Controller, 17 August 1915.

²³⁸ Eve Pollecoff, *Pioneer Merchant Trader: The Life and Times of Otto Markus* (London: Radcliffe, 2012). I would also like to thank Mrs Pollecoff for meeting me twice and sharing her memories on her grandfather Otto Markus and her life in interwar Kenya.

²³⁹ Edward Rodwell, *The Mombasa Club* (Mombasa: Rodwell Press, 1988), pp. 33-42.

Survey Department in Nairobi Germans had positions as surveyors, computers and draughtsmen, which gave them access to maps and other sensitive information.²⁴⁰ Even the first ‘municipal commissioner’ of newly founded Nairobi was German: Paul Huebner who had lived and worked in the colony since 1894 not only had excellent connections to the local administrators, but also access to colonial politicians in London.²⁴¹ Germans also owned or managed hotels, restaurants and bars, including the colony’s best establishment, the Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi which was run by Chris Blanke.²⁴²

Unlike the German-speaking minorities living in other English-speaking territories, like Australia or Britain itself, those in British East Africa neither created formal cultural or social networks, like sport clubs or choirs, nor did they participate in any political activities related to Germany and its imperial ambitions.²⁴³ Exceptions were the German missionaries of the Leipziger Mission who ran three stations in Ikutha, Mulango, and Myambani in the south of the colony.²⁴⁴ While colonial mission stations aimed not only to spread the German language but also the Lutheran interpretation of Protestant theology, these three were ailing, understaffed enterprises. The stations were located far from the urban centres and both interactions between ordinary colonials and German mission staff (three missionaries and their wives) and their influence on the local African population were limited. Yet the German missionaries cooperated well with British colonial administration and had a cordial rapport with the local district commissioner.

²⁴⁰ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1086, T.R.L. Nestor, unpublished memoir, p. 4.

²⁴¹ Herward Sieberg (ed.), *Zeitenumbruch in Ostafrika - Sansibar, Kenia und Uganga, 1894-1913. Erinnerungen des Kaufmanns R.F. Paul Huebner* (Hildesheim: University of Hildesheim, 1998), pp. 88+261-262. See also RH, MSS Afr. s. 1455, R. F. Paul Huebner, memoir.

²⁴² KNA, PC/Coast/1/17/87, Controller of Enemy Firms, letter from Provincial Commissioner to Controller, 17 August 1915; RH, MSS Afr. s. 1086, T.R.L. Nestor, unpublished memoir, p. 24.

²⁴³ Stefan Manz, 'Protestantism, nation and diaspora in Imperial Germany', *Nations and Nationalism* 18 (2012), pp. 744-764.

²⁴⁴ AFSt/M, 82, Kamba-Mission während des Krieges; D. Paul Fleisch, *Hundert Jahre lutherische Mission* (Leipzig: Verlag der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission, 1936); Steffen Lehmann, *Leipziger Missionare und kolonialer Alltag auf dem 'Missionsfeld' am Kilimanjaro, 1893-1939* (Leipzig: University of Leipzig, 2003).

Generally, Germans living in British East Africa before 1914 were present in all levels of the colonial society and conducted wide-ranging forms of work and employment. Mirroring the general demographic pattern of European residents in tropical Africa, the vast majority of Germans in British East Africa were unmarried men, or men whose families had remained in Europe. Of course it is difficult to judge how personal the integration between Germans and British colonials was in the colony and how much of this should be attributed to the perceived need to present a closed and coherent group towards the African population. However, even at the beginning of August before Britain and Germany entered a state of war, Otto Markus recalls the cordial atmosphere at a festive meeting of the Chamber of Commerce:

When I had finished [my speech] I sat down, and there was tremendous applause for several minutes. Finally a number of those present lifted me up into the air and carried me several times around the large dining room at the Mombasa Club. I mention this, because only a few weeks later those same people accorded me very different treatment.²⁴⁵

The breakdown of the European society and European solidarity, despite the original hesitance of large parts of the colonial public, was indeed very swift.²⁴⁶ While the debate about the dangers of a colonial war ebbed, parts of the British population began forming volunteer units which occupied themselves with shooting exercises, parades and patrols of streets, transport infrastructure and public buildings. Like in Britain this 'war fever' was intertwined with 'spy fever' directed towards the German, or suspected German, civilians aiding a potential enemy invasion through sabotage or intelligence.²⁴⁷ Following the British pre-war narrative of a German conquest of Britain through a naval attack, several newspaper articles reported the sighting of unidentified boats or even an aeroplane

²⁴⁵ RH, *Micr. Afr.* 593, Otto Marcus, unpublished memoirs, p. 99

²⁴⁶ Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst. Germans in Britain during the First World War*.

²⁴⁷ David French, 'Spy Fever in Britain, 1900-1915', *The Historical Journal* 21 (1978), pp. 355-370; Pennell, *A Kingdom United. Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland*, pp. 18-20.

and unexplained light signals on the shore.²⁴⁸ Yet the main fear was the prospect of the Germans being able to influence and persuade enough Africans to rebel against the British colonial rulers and thus aiding the German war effort. Here the deeply rooted fear of an African insurgence, which most European colonials shared, was merged with the new fear of a German attack. This caused a dilemma for the colonial administration concerning how to deal with the Germans in the colony: on the one hand, the aim was to maintain as much normality as possible and to not upset the racial hierarchy, on the other hand there was pressure to deal with potential enemies who intended to do exactly that.

The orders issued by the colonial administration in Nairobi regarding ‘enemy aliens’ on 7 August 1914 reflect this ambiguity. Unlike those measures taken in Britain itself, where only selected ‘suspicious’ men were arrested and interned, British East Africa originally announced the detention of all male German and Austrian citizens regardless of their age. The shock and disbelief experienced by the affected Germans upon their arrest was amplified by the fact that these arrests were in many cases carried out by men with whom they were acquainted.²⁴⁹ The men were kept for one or two nights in improvised surroundings, such as the office of the German consul in Mombasa, before they were all transported inland to Nairobi. Some might have hoped that the generally respectful treatment they received from their guards would continue in the capital and would lead to either the return to their normal life or the deportation to German territory. Yet upon their arrival, and to their great shock, the internees were ‘treated just like criminals’ and placed in the town’s prison.²⁵⁰

The fact that the internees were imprisoned in an ordinary jail used for African offenders caused concern not just among the prisoners, but also among some

²⁴⁸ *East African Leader* 20, 8 August 1914; *East African Leader* 20, 22 August 1914; RH, MSS Afr. s. 1179, John A. Elliot, letter to his father, Sotik, 18 August 1914.

²⁴⁹ RH, Micr. Afr. 593, Otto Marcus, unpublished memoirs, p. 99. See also Anonymous (“by one of them”), *Uganda Volunteers and the War* (Kampala: Cameron, 1917), pp. 43-46.

²⁵⁰ RH, Micr. Afr. 593, Otto Marcus, unpublished memoirs, p. 101.

British colonials.²⁵¹ Already concerned that war among Europeans in Africa would harm the prestige of the white population, these first measures lived up to their worst expectations. The situation eased after a couple of days as those prisoners over military age or unfit for military service were relocated to a local Girls' School and some German prisoners were released on parole. The conditions of parole included the usual clauses prohibiting support of the German forces or harm to the British war effort and restrictions to communication and movement. However, the parole issued in British East Africa nonetheless allowed prisoners to use their firearms and ammunition 'in case of revolt and disturbance of the non-European population against Europeans and their property.'²⁵² For parole to be granted, a local British citizen had to pay a bond. Yet, several colonials went even further in their support for German friends and colleagues and complained about their treatment, with some success.²⁵³ For example, Otto Markus and an associate were released and allowed to return to Europe following an intervention at the governmental office which led to a reassessment of his diplomatic status and subsequent release to Europe.²⁵⁴ The hesitation to exclude Germans from the colonial social sphere can be summed up by the fact that the Mombasa Club only decided in August 1915 to formally expel 'enemy aliens'.²⁵⁵ The British colonial authorities also showed restraint towards missionaries in the colonies, despite the fact that they would be in the best position to indoctrinate Africans against British rule. Between 8 and 12 August 1914 the local District Commissioner informed the three missionaries of the Leipziger Mission about the state of war between Britain and Germany. However, provided they did 'not to assist in any way the enemies of the state' the mission stations were allowed to continue their work undisturbed.²⁵⁶ At the beginning of September the missionaries were informed that they could henceforth neither leave the district

²⁵¹ IWM, PP/MCR/150, Sir Norman King, KCMG, diary 12 August 1914.

²⁵² KNA, AG/16/209, Position of Prisoners under Martial Law, Form of Declaration of Parole.

²⁵³ KNA, AG/16/209, Position of Prisoners under Martial Law, letter from Attorney General to Camp Commandant Military HQ, 18 August 1914.

²⁵⁴ RH, Micr. Afr. 593, Otto Marcus, unpublished memoirs, p. 101.

²⁵⁵ Rodwell, *The Mombasa Club*, pp. 33-44.. See also RH, MSS Afr. s. 1467, Nairobi Chambers of Commerce, Minute Book, vol. II, 8 July 1915.

²⁵⁶ AFSt/M, 82, Kamba-Mission während des Krieges, letter from District Commissior Kitui to J. Hofmann, 12 August 1914.

nor send private letters to Germany, and that their arriving post would also be censored. Life on the mission stations continued unchanged until December 1914, when the colonial administration decided to intern the German missionaries, even though they were 'always loyal, even after outbreak of war'.²⁵⁷ Together with their wives and children, the missionaries were then transported to Nairobi at the beginning of 1915 where the men were put into prison while the women were retained in a hotel.²⁵⁸

The colonial administration, like many British colonials, was generally dissatisfied with the presence of Germans in Nairobi, either on parole or incarcerated. After the beginning of war, transportation via ship had been scarce and expensive, making deportation to Europe impractical. Accordingly, the decision was made to deport the German prisoners from East Africa to India where the government had established camps for German civilian prisoners who had been captured in India or on seized merchant ships after the beginning of the war. The camps, to which the prisoners from East Africa were sent, were located in Ahmednagar, for male prisoners, and Belgaum, for female prisoners and families.²⁵⁹ After three months of internment in Nairobi the first German prisoners, including those captured in neighbouring Uganda, left from Mombasa for India in November 1914. After the three missionaries and their families followed in February 1915 no Germans or Austrians remained in British East Africa.

While the deportation of the German prisoners to India relieved British East Africa of a pressing issue it also caused unforeseen difficulties. For example, there

²⁵⁷ AFSt/M, 82, Kamba-Mission während des Krieges, Declaration by District Commissioner Scholefield, 1 December 1914.

²⁵⁸ AFSt/M, 347, Johannes Hofmann, Personal File. The German stations were taken over by the African-Inland-Mission which secured the continued presence of Europeans in the local area.

²⁵⁹ Ahmednagar, located 250km east of Mumbai, was a former prisoner of war camp during the South African War and later used for Indian soldiers; Belgaum, 500km south of Mumbai, was previously used to accommodate British officers of the Indian Army, see Hans Georg Probst, *Unter indischer Sonne. 19 Monate englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft in Ahmednagar* (Herborn: Oranien, 1917), pp. 20-21; Emmanuel Schoch, F. Thormeyer, and F. Blanchod (eds.), *Reports on British Prison Camps in India and Burma. Visited by the International Red Cross Committee in February, March and April 1917* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1917), p. 36.

was the case of R. J. Gluckselig, the Austrian manager of a mill in Maragua, who was the father of two children, aged nine and ten, and whose African mother had previously left the family.²⁶⁰ When his deportation became imminent, he petitioned the British authorities for financial support as he was not allowed to take the children with him and had no cash funds of his own to pay for their upkeep and education during his absence. The attorney general, on behalf of the colonial government, saw 'no legal obligation' to pay for these 'half caste children', but decided that on moral grounds they should be placed in a Catholic orphanage with the expenses covered by British African war fund.²⁶¹ While these circumstances were particular to the colonial context, a more frequent concern, as it was in Britain, was the issue of married Anglo-German couples, especially since wives took on the nationality of their husbands.²⁶² Exceptions were made for the British-born wives of German citizens, but the colonial government remained concerned about German-born women who had received British nationality as it was very difficult to expel them 'except for definite and serious reasons'.²⁶³ Most particularly, it was concerned about one British colonial, Jacob Wolffe, who planned to travel to India in order to marry his German mistress. She had earlier been arrested and deported from British East Africa to Belgium, but would be able to return to Africa with a British husband. The attorney general in Nairobi could 'not guarantee that her opinions are not pro-German' despite 'the lady being a Jewess', and he suggested that the government try to influence India to prevent this 'undesirable marriage'.²⁶⁴

Generally, the decision to deport Germans and Austrians, including women and children, to internment camps in India was widely regarded by the British colonial public as a sensible solution to a situation 'as irksome as it was unpleasant'. One

²⁶⁰ KNA, AG/16/209, Position of Prisoners under Martial Law, letter from R. J. Gluckselig to District Commissioner H.R. Tate, Nairobi Detention Camp, 6 October 1914.

²⁶¹ KNA, AG/16/209, Position of Prisoners under Martial Law letter from Attorney General to Chief Secretary, 14 October 1914.

²⁶² Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst. Germans in Britain during the First World War*, p. 59.

²⁶³ KNA, AG/16/209, Position of Prisoners under Martial Law, letter from Attorney General to Chief Secretary, 15 November 1915.

²⁶⁴ KNA, AG/16/209, Position of Prisoners under Martial Law, letter from Attorney General to Chief Secretary, 15 November 1915.

day before their departure, this newspaper article captured well the distinction that was still being drawn between fellow Europeans and ostracised prisoners of war, and the importance that was given to these individuals receiving excellent treatment:

As citizens and business men we have not a word to say against them: in social spheres they have shown themselves fine fellows indeed. But as prisoners of war, we hope we have seen the last of them. [...] But taken all round, it is a relief to everyone concerned that they are gone. Treated humanely, with kindness, with consideration, and with the respect due to their station in life, we can only hope that they will carry away with them a practical lesson well learned of how Britons treat prisoners of war, and as a set off contrast it with the inhuman conduct of their fellow countrymen to ours in like circumstances.²⁶⁵

Of course, the men and women affected by these deportations perceived their experience of arrest, their loss of social status, power and control and their expulsion to another continent very differently.

Before describing in more detail the experience of these German internees after they arrived in India, first the parallel experiences of their British counterparts in German East Africa will be detailed, including their internment in German East Africa prior to its occupation. This, then enables a comparison to the experiences of Germans interned outside the immediate colonial sphere of Africa and instead in India. Another important point of comparison that will be picked up later in the chapter is the experiences of the Indian soldiers who were interned by the German authorities. Together, the consideration of these varying experiences enables more general conclusions to be drawn about the specific circumstances of internment in a colonial context.

²⁶⁵ *Uganda Herald*, 20 November 1914.

3.3. Arrest and Control in German East Africa

The experience of the German residents in British East Africa at the outbreak of war was originally similar to those of British nationals in German East Africa. However, as the latter spent the duration of their internment actually in East Africa, their experience of arrest and imprisonment present an even clearer illustration of the dilemma the colonial society and the colonial administration faced with respect to the creation of white 'enemy aliens'. Furthermore, as there is a richer body of recollections by the people affected, it is possible to reconstruct the different stages of the development of exclusion, control and internment with respect to British citizens in German East Africa.²⁶⁶

The category of 'British citizens' in East Africa included a very heterogeneous group of people, mainly due to the fact that the largest subgroup within this were the colony's Afrikaner community who had *de jure* become British citizens in 1902.²⁶⁷ About 200 Afrikaners had settled after the South African War in the Kilimanjaro area near the border to British East Africa where they lived in mostly precarious conditions.²⁶⁸ The majority of the 'Boers' had never taken up German citizenship, spoke neither German nor English and had little social contact with other white colonials. Furthermore, there were about forty mission staff working for several British mission societies living in remote parts of the colony. Finally, there were a dozen of British planters, merchants and engineers in German East Africa living in close contact with the German population.

²⁶⁶ Several British internees wrote on their war experience Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*; Briggs, *In the East African War Zone*; Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*; Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy*.

²⁶⁷ The 9,000 Indians who lived in German East Africa were also British subjects, but were not treated as 'enemy aliens' by the German administration (see below). The war experience of the Afrikaners in German East Africa has left few traces in British and German archives.

²⁶⁸ Du Toit, *The Boers in East Africa. Ethnicity and Identity*, pp. 75-102; Brown, *They fought for King and Kaiser. South Africans in German East Africa*; Söldenwagner, *Spaces of Negotiation. European Settlement and Settlers in German East Africa, 1900-1914*, pp. 60-65.

The initial reaction to the outbreak of hostilities in German East Africa was similar to that in British East Africa. However, the bombardment of Dar es Salaam on 8 August 1914 and the termination of transport links brought home the reality of the war much more quickly. While the British colonials – despite the border raids and fear of unrest – could take comfort in the thought that the colony remained firmly within the imperial network, the Germans felt alone and cut off from the world. The expression of war enthusiasm could not push aside the reality that the colony was ‘encircled’ by enemies and ‘surrounded’ by a potentially hostile African population. Germans may have been the power-majority, but they were nonetheless a minority in East Africa. This constellation of forces shaped their actions during the first weeks of hostilities. Like in British East Africa, the fear of unrest was closely linked with spy fever, whereby British – or other ‘enemy’ – residents were suspected, or accused, of ‘stirring unrest’ among the Africans.²⁶⁹ Together with the suspicion that the British navy was receiving information from the mainland, this created an atmosphere of helplessness among the already anxious German population.

In the first week of August, the German authorities began to contact the foreign residents living outside the urban centres of the colony through a member of the Schutztruppe or through a local civilian official (e.g. the Bezirksamtmann) who were sent to inform them about the state of war and the new regulations. After learning about the state of war between Britain and Germany, most British citizens, actually expected to be expelled from German soil, and were therefore surprised and ‘deemed it fortunate’ that they were allowed to stay.²⁷⁰ Settlers and plantation owners, as well as some of the missionaries, were able to continue their normal work routine. Several missionaries, however, received orders that they were forbidden to undertake any ‘educational, evangelistic, and temporal’ work, and were only allowed to hold Sunday services and prayers, and to provide

²⁶⁹ See e.g. case against the French citizen who was falsely accused of spying near Lake Kiwu: TNA, G1/16, Baron de l’Epine, 1914/15, reports by several colonial administrators.

²⁷⁰ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 7.

medical services.²⁷¹ At this point the colonial civilian administration was still anxious to maintain a resemblance of normality to the extent that this was possible. As their primary fear was still of an uprising among the African population, they relied on the missionaries, German or foreign, to have a calming influence. Many shared the feeling of missionary Ernst Doulton of the Church Mission Society who wrote to his district commissioner Sperling in August 1914 that he has 'confidence that this calamity [the war between Germany and Britain] will not change the friendly relations which have existed between us for so many years.'²⁷² The exact level of trust they extended towards the British depended very much on the personal relationships that existed between the local officials and the missionaries themselves, which explains the differences regarding restrictions and their implementation.

The lack of a clearly enforceable policy towards the 'enemy aliens' in the first months of the war left the local civilian authorities with a certain latitude. For example, the protestant British missionary Ernest Spanton recalls in his book on his wartime experience how, shortly after the declaration of war, he was arrested as a spy by a small German military expedition on the road near the mission station of Msalabani close to the border to British East Africa.²⁷³ The military unit transported him to the district capital and duly put him in prison. He was, however, instantly freed by the local *Bezirksamtmann* who did not share the concerns of the military authorities. In order not to cause conflict with the command of the *Schutztruppe*, Spanton could not be released immediately, but was instead allowed to spend a week of arrest in a hotel after which he could return to his mission station, despite the fact that his mission was located in the strategically important border area.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² TNA, G36/15, Church Mission Society, 1910-15, letter by Ernest Doulton to *Bezirksamtmann* Mr Sperling, Buigani, 10 August 1914.

²⁷³ Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, pp. 5-6.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

Another contradictory experience is revealed in the treatment of six British missionaries who resided on a remote station near Masasi in the south of the colony. On 19 August, they were informed by the local German authorities to vacate their station. They were then transported to the coastal town of Lindi, but instead of the expected deportation they were put up in a hotel under the charge of ‘praying for King George in our public service and of stirring up natives.’²⁷⁵ Together with seven other British missionaries, they were kept in Lindi. Their time there reflects the half-heartedness of the German authorities to treat white ‘enemy aliens’ as real prisoners. On the one hand, the British missionaries and their wives had the status of prisoners, and accordingly they were kept under close watch by the German guards and were not allowed to leave the town. Whenever a British vessel was spotted outside the harbour, the prisoners were hastily deported into the hinterland of the town to deprive them of the possibility of signalling the ship.²⁷⁶ On the other hand, the German authorities were also anxious to treat the British missionaries respectfully and to ease their time as prisoners by organising outings in the countryside, a canoe trip or a day at the beach bathing. Usually they were only accompanied by one German guard and the only serious incident occurred when the missionaries were accused of having ‘violated all the common laws of decency’ by bathing at a stretch of the beach that was not a designated bathing area.²⁷⁷ They were informed that a recurrence of such behaviour would result in strict imprisonment. Generally, there can be no doubt that the German authorities did their utmost to maintain the colonial hierarchy by not employing African guards and by allowing the prisoners to keep ammunition and rifles in their possession.²⁷⁸ The British missionaries were held in Lindi for six weeks before being allowed to return to their stations on 2 November. Although the initial trial against the alleged stirring of unrest among the Africans was never carried out, the missionaries were now restricted to their station where they could be observed by local Africans who reported to the German authorities.²⁷⁹ This

²⁷⁵ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, pp. 13-14.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18-19

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28

arrangement to have fellow Europeans observed by African civilians gives a foretaste of the situation in the internment camps.

Finally, a third example might illustrate the experience of the majority of British missionaries and settlers who lived outside the urban areas. The missionary Thomas Westgate in Ugogo, in the centre of the colony, was visited by a German official in August 1914 who informed him about the state of war between Britain and Germany. Subsequently he had no contact with any civilian or military official for eight months until the following spring,²⁸⁰ when on 22 May 1915 he received 'an order from the Governor for us to prepare our things in view of an early removal to a concentration camp.'²⁸¹ These incoherent practices by the German authorities, as revealed through the previous three examples, contrast with the measures of the British authorities against German citizens, which were discussed previously.

3.4. Internment Camps in German East Africa

Before considering the British prisoners' experience of incarceration, it is useful to set the scene by introducing the actual sites within which the internment occurred. The German authorities organised the internment of 'enemy aliens' and subsequently military prisoners of war in three permanent camps: Kilimatinde, Tabora, and Kiboriani. The former two received prisoners from October 1914 onwards, while the latter was erected in the winter of 1914/15 after the battle of Tanga left British and Indian military prisoners of war in German hands. There is no official information or statistics about the camps and its prisoners as most German files from that period did not survive the war and post-war turmoil. Hence to reconstruct the layout, function and routine of the camps, one has to rely on diaries and memoirs written by former inmates.

²⁸⁰ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, 22 letter to his wife, 14 September 1915. The same is true for the mission station in Mpwapwa: Field and Doulton, 'My Experiences as a Missionary Prisoner'.

²⁸¹ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, F8 diary 1915, 22 May 1915.

For two of the camps, detailed accounts from varied sources exist, but only Holtom has left a rough description of the camp at Kilimatinde, which was located at the fort of the Schutztruppe, about one hundred kilometres west of Dodoma in the centre of the colony.²⁸² The first group of civilian ‘enemy aliens’, numbering about two dozen, arrived there in October 1914 and were joined by military prisoners of war about a month later. Subsequently a further camp was founded about one hundred kilometres east of Dodoma at a former mission sanatorium in Kiboriani, near Mpapua. By the end of 1914 this former C.M.S. institution was taken over by the German administration, and many British missionaries experienced their imprisonment in a former British church property as ‘humiliating and painful in the extreme’.²⁸³ Located far away from any settlement, the site was easy to guard and, as it was in the mountains, had a cooler and supposedly healthier climate. Hence the first twelve civilian prisoners who arrived there in January 1915 to form the nucleus of the new camp were considered to be ‘the best behaved and least troublesome of the Kilimatinde prisoners.’²⁸⁴ The camp was surrounded by a thorn and sisal hedge with a small cell hut at the entrance of the camp, which gave the camp a less prison-like atmosphere.²⁸⁵ The prisoners were kept in the main stone house of the former sanatorium and two further smaller dormitories. It is noteworthy that the German authorities converted the mission church into a kitchen, which resulted in a sharp protest from the prisoners.²⁸⁶ Finally, an open thatched dining hall was erected on the former tennis court and accommodation for the African carriers and soldiers was built. The latrines were located outside the camp, but as prisoners were allowed to walk in the vicinity of the camp, this was not a problem. In close proximity, but only mentioned in one account, were two camps or ‘native villages’ for Indian soldiers, who were interned separately from the Europeans.

²⁸² Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy*, pp. 63-135.

²⁸³ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, p. 22. Additionally see IWM, 95/32/1, Williams, John Thomas, diary, 5 March 1915.

²⁸⁴ Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, p. 44.

²⁸⁵ CMS, G3 A8/0, Original Papers German East Africa 1917, 48 letters and documents sent by Westgate, 10 September 1917, plan of Kiboriani camp.

²⁸⁶ IWM, 95/32/1, Williams, John Thomas, diary, 5 March 1915.

The third camp was situated further west at the outskirts of Tabora in close proximity to the local fort ('boma') of the Schutztruppe. About 500 Indian soldiers, who were captured in the battle of Tanga, were kept in this fort, but no further information about the conditions there exists.²⁸⁷ The camp for the Europeans was originally erected in the autumn of 1914 for the imprisonment of military prisoners of war, but there are no first-hand descriptions of these first months. The earliest accounts date from around May 1915 after the arrival of the civilian internees. The original camp was erected around two small buildings of a former school for African children to which a latrine shed was attached, and the whole complex was surrounded with barbed wire. After the camp was enlarged at the end of 1914, the remains of this latrine and a former rubbish dump were filled in and incorporated into the fenced compound. These turned into effluvious mud holes during the rainy season, which were regarded by the prisoners as offensive and injurious to health.²⁸⁸ After its enlargement, the camp was approximately 100 square meters large,²⁸⁹ with two sides of the compound enclosed by a two meter high barbed wire fence, which gave the whole structure the distinct look of a prison. The two remaining sides were enclosed by long corrugated iron sheds, which served as dormitories for the prisoners. These narrow sheds were just sufficient to have a bed placed by each wall with a passage down in the middle, with some beds separated by a blanket.²⁹⁰

In the centre of the camp, the two open stone buildings with thatched roofs of the former school, mentioned above, served as a hospital and a dining room, or mess, respectively.²⁹¹ The latter consisted of three long tables without tablecloths where the prisoners sat on benches. Nearby were a cooking galley and accommodation for interned officers or women, and the camp magazine. On the north-eastern side of the camp, a stone building functioned as an office for the guards and included

²⁸⁷ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 63.

²⁸⁸ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, p. 22.

²⁸⁹ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, 22 letter to his wife, 14 September 1915. In his book he gives with measure with 200 square feet: *ibid*.

²⁹⁰ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 60.

²⁹¹ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, 22 letter to his wife, 14 September 1915.

several cells for offending prisoners. The south-eastern corner of the camp housed the bathroom building, which included a latrine, shower and bath, that were described as sufficient 'if somewhat crude and to the English mind somewhat too public.'²⁹² At the end of 1915 a new kitchen and a small cotton factory were erected at the eastern side of the camp, which limited the prisoners' view to the outside greatly as only one side of the camp remained open.²⁹³

3.5. Arrest and Internment in German East Africa

As discussed above, the German government did not introduce a coherent policy regarding the treatment of 'enemy aliens' in the first months of war. Random controls and short periods of arrest stood in contrast to a generally *laissez-faire* attitude. By October 1914, however, the German authorities began implementing a policy of permanent internment of the remaining foreigners in the colony. It is difficult to assess who initiated this course of action for individual cases (i.e., an order from the metropole or the colonial administration on the spot) and to what extent this mirrored the practice in British East Africa. It is apparent, however, that the arrest and internment of foreign settlers and missionaries was not quickly enforced as it took at least until spring 1915 when the last 'enemy aliens' were located and transported to the prison camps. In all recollections and reports of prisoners, the moment when they were informed about their arrest, and the subsequent journey and the arrival at the camp as final destination, feature highly. It is worth highlighting the different stages of this process comprehensively as it illustrates the transformation from fellow white colonial to an interned 'enemy alien'.

Most foreign residents were informed about their arrest and the subsequent removal from their station or farm a day or two before. Evidently, all of the British missionaries, whose experiences form the primary basis for this aspect of

²⁹² IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 60

²⁹³ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, 22 letter to his wife, 14 September 1915, postscript written in January 1916.

the research, followed these orders without protest or even attempts to escape. Many provided refreshments for the German official who was in charge of the procedure. There is no evidence of any hostility and generally the European officer relied on the co-operation of the arrested foreigners.²⁹⁴ Illustrative of this, one missionary recalls that only one German soldier was in charge of thirteen European prisoners, whereas the 200 porters were observed by two askari. In retrospect he concludes that without difficulty the prisoners 'could have taken away [the] escort's rifle and returned, or made for the British border.'²⁹⁵

During their subsequent journey, which could last for a couple of weeks, the German guards generally ensured that the European prisoners were treated correctly. They also vigilantly maintained the traditional colonial order, for example as revealed when an askari received two floggings for 'incivility' toward two British prisoners.²⁹⁶ Most detainees note the respectful treatment that they received from the German guards and from German civilians they encountered during the journey. This treatment took the form of a ride in a private plantation trolley railway,²⁹⁷ a friendly chat on the veranda with a fellow missionary while listening to ragtime records,²⁹⁸ or at the campfire a guard's 'fusillade of yarns about the wonderful things he had accomplished in the days of old.'²⁹⁹ Nonetheless, overall the journey was experienced as a hard burden due to insufficient camping equipment, the lack of food and exposure to bad weather, which was generally blamed on insufficient preparation by the German authorities.

The somewhat intimate atmosphere of being 'on safari in the bush' changed with the arrival of the prisoners and their guards at the destination, normally a town with a railway station. On his arrival in Bagamoyo, missionary Spanton recalls

²⁹⁴ The same is true for military prisoners see Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy*, p. 63.

²⁹⁵ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 57.

²⁹⁶ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, F8 diary 1915, 25 April 1915.

²⁹⁷ Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, p. 15.

²⁹⁸ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 35.

²⁹⁹ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, F8 diary 1915, 22 May 1915.

that the prisoners and guards were formed into a kind of 'circus procession' as the porters were ordered to sing while entering the town to draw attention to the prisoners covered in 'mud and dirt'.³⁰⁰ This event was turned into a particular humiliation through the 'absurd' looking crowd of African and Arabs in their half-European uniforms that observed the spectacle. Yet, even in this case the racial hierarchy was swiftly restored as the local district commissioner, who – as Spanton pointed out – was married to an English woman, ensured that the prisoners received decent treatment.

The prisoners from the different parts of the colony were sent upcountry by train to Morogoro for the Kilimatinde camp, or to Tabora where the camp was in town, still unaware of their final destination. Upon arrival in either Morogoro or Tabora, the prisoners were kept on the platform in the 'gaze of a large crowd of natives',³⁰¹ to be observed and photographed by the German population.³⁰² After their arrival at the station, the prisoners were marched in line and under heavy guard to the camp itself. In their recollections, many former prisoners point out that it was only at that moment that they realised they were to be sent to a real prison. Typically, they were only allowed whatever luggage they could carry themselves, with the rest being left at the train station.³⁰³ This can be regarded as a deliberate degradation as the prisoners literally had to leave their old lives behind, unsheltered at the station platform. Without clothes to change into, or sufficient washing material, they only gained access to their belongings after being part of the camp routine for several days.

The arrival at the prison marked the final transition from detainee to prisoner. For most arrivals, the new order manifested itself in the fact that the European prisoners were left standing for the roll-call, which could last for half an hour or longer, without permission to sit down, while the African sentries were allowed to

³⁰⁰ Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, p. 19. Additionally comp. IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 57.

³⁰¹ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 59.

³⁰² Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, p. 25.

³⁰³ IWM, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 59. Comp. additionally Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, p. 26.

do so.³⁰⁴ In the colonial sphere such an occurrence could ordinarily be a punishable offence, as every African was obliged to stand and salute in the presence of a European. Equally unsettling was the fact that the German authorities did not distinguish between the different backgrounds of the prisoners and treated missionaries and other colonial dignitaries no differently to ordinary foreigners. The missionaries, especially, expected to have been afforded the same treatment as officers. Finally, to add insult to injury, the prisoners' luggage was inspected publicly and, as one observer noted upon his arrival in Kiboriani camp, even female prisoners had to 'shake their underwear in sight of some 150 natives.'³⁰⁵ Thus, the rules and roles from the outside world were left behind at the gate of the prison, or as Westgate recalled it: 'We were now of a certainty fully gripped by the German!'³⁰⁶

On their arrival at the camp, internees experienced disbelief that they were being treated like ordinary prisoners. If there were any remaining doubts about their new status, the rigorous discipline in the camps made them feel like slaves or criminals.³⁰⁷ The daily routine differed in the three camps at specific times, but the general schedule was as follows: the prisoners were woken at 6 a.m. with the command 'Aufstehen' and had half an hour for their toilet and for making their beds, which were then checked by the guards. At 6.30 a.m., the prisoners formed a line in the camp's court for the roll-call ('Antreten') and had to step forward when their name was called. This was followed by breakfast until 7 a.m., after which the prisoners had to form a line again to be allocated their daily work task. The work lasted until 5 p.m. with two hours for lunch break. A new roll-call at 6 p.m. was followed by dinner in the mess. A final roll-call took place in the dormitories at 9 p.m. before the prisoners were locked in for the night. In order to prevent an escape, all boots, sun-helmets, braces and belts were collected and only returned on the following morning.³⁰⁸ Several prisoners commented on the rigidity of this

³⁰⁴ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 60.

³⁰⁵ IWM, 95/32/1, John Thomas Williams, diary, 5 March 1915.

³⁰⁶ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, p. 21.

³⁰⁷ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 17, p. 8.

³⁰⁸ IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 119.

schedule as internees who turned up late, or left their bed unmade, were punished. Prisoners who failed to honour the German guards by standing up and removing their hats were also punished.³⁰⁹ As such servile behaviour was ordinarily reserved for Africans, this caused considerable humiliation:

To be forced, helplessly forced, to stand attention before a dirty little lieutenant, who in his private life is a government clerk, or before a N.C.O., who in his private life was the lowest of all my railway men, [...] these are mental sufferings exceedingly trying to the average civilised, learned and polished mind.³¹⁰

One of the most important issues for many inmates of the camps was the question of food. Despite objective measures of the quantity and quality of the food provided, the subjective attitude expressed in the various testimonies differs significantly. Alongside hygiene and clothing, food was an important symbolic marker in the colonial hierarchy. Missionary Westgate declared that ‘there were few things set before us which any European living in Africa would have on his table.’³¹¹ The German administration outsourced the supply of foodstuffs for the prison camps to external contractors who received 1.65 Rupees per day for each prisoner. Taking the price for commodities in 1916 as a guide (e.g. an egg cost 0.08 Rupee and one kilogram of meat or rice were 0.50 Rupee), this sum would have been adequate to supply a sufficient quantity of decent food. The conductor of the Tabora camp, however, used his monopoly to reduce the quality and quantity of the food delivered to a minimum without being sanctioned by the camp authority.³¹² It is unclear whether this neglect by the German administrators was a ‘wilful cruelty’ or a failure of the camp organisation system itself.

³⁰⁹ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 17, p. 9; Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, p. 50.

³¹⁰ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 17, p. 9.

³¹¹ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, p. 22.

³¹² RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 17, p. 5.

The typical meal in the camps consisted of the following: for breakfast the prisoners received half a loaf of bread and cold meat, leftovers from the previous supper. Lunch consisted of a thin soup, stewed meat, potatoes or peas and beans. Dinner similarly consisted of soup, roasted meat, potatoes or peas and beans again. All meals were accompanied by coffee without milk or sugar.³¹³ Apart from complaints about the food's general quality and the monotony of the diet, a recurring objection concerned the 'native' origins or ingredients of the meals. For example the prisoners protested about the sweet potatoes and the lack of green (i.e. European) vegetables, as well as the use of millet or manioc flour for the breads.³¹⁴ While the prisoners were typically allowed to purchase 'luxuries' from the camp store or grocery shops outside, such as tobacco, fruits, dairy products or sausages, they were restricted from purchasing any imported products, like tinned food, chocolate or tea. Their shortage, so the German authorities argued, made it necessary to reserve these for the German population. Thus, again, the authorities subtly drew a line between the 'aliens' and the 'Germans'.

As vexed and disputed as the strict regimen, and the question of food, was the subject of labour. Foremost, the questions of whether civilian internees could be forced to do work, and what kind of work this should be, were disputed throughout the war by all powers involved.³¹⁵ These issues were, however, especially contentious in East Africa due to the colonial position that Europeans should conduct no manual labour whatsoever, and that these tasks were instead to be delegated to Africans. This belief can be regarded as a basic law of colonial rule and was justified in two ways. First, it was widely accepted among colonials that whites, as their bodies were unaccustomed to the tropical climate, were not able to conduct strenuous manual work without seriously harming their physical and mental health. This peril of the sun led to the well-known symbols of colonial fashion—white linen clothes, huge sunhats or pith helmets and spine protectors—

³¹³ Ibid., pp. 5-6. Comp. additionally IWM, P473, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS, FJ1 diary, p. 61.

³¹⁴ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 17, p. 5.

³¹⁵ Matthew Stibbe, 'The Internment of Civilians by Belligerent States during the First World War and the Response of the International Committee of the Red Cross', *Journal of Contemporary History* 41 (2006), pp. 5-19.

and a lifestyle that revolved around the shadiness of verandas.³¹⁶ Second, this 'medical' explanation was closely interwoven with the belief that a strict division between African and European spheres was necessary to uphold white prestige and thus the colonial hierarchy. Hence performing the same manual labour 'as a native' would reduce the distance between coloniser and the colonised and damage the upheld image of the delicate, but nonetheless powerful, ruler.

Given this backdrop, British internees repeatedly levelled accusations at the German authorities that 'much of the work was deliberately calculated to degrade them in the eyes of the natives of the country.'³¹⁷ Indisputably, the camp authorities made the prisoners perform daily tasks, like cleaning, washing and cooking, which were normally carried out by personal house boys, who were dismissed within days upon arrival in at the camps. Beyond this, the most contentious work was the emptying of the toilet buckets, as this undoubtedly bore the mark of humiliation, and the internees wrote letters of complaint on several occasions to the German authorities demanding that the practice be abandoned. Interestingly, the practice was indeed ended by 1915, allegedly because the German colonial administration learnt from the better treatment of German prisoners in South Africa and felt that this tarnished the German reputation.³¹⁸ Nonetheless the toilet buckets featured prominently in the several memoirs written by former inmates as these symbolised the degradation they experienced. In addition to work that was somewhat necessary to maintaining the functioning of the camp, the prisoners were forced to take on manufacturing jobs, mainly the making of soap, iron nails and leather. The latter was carried out only under protest as the prisoners had the 'lurking suspicion that they were being made to toil in order to supply footgear to the enemy.'³¹⁹

³¹⁶ Dane Kennedy, 'The Perils of the Midday Sun: Climatic Anxieties in the Colonial Tropics', in John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and the Natural World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 118-140.

³¹⁷ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, pp. 33-38.

³¹⁸ CMS, 491, Thomas B.R. Westgate, C1 Correspondence, 22 letter to his wife, 14 September 1915.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

Besides the curtailment of food, crossing racial norms and boundaries was important as a form of punishment. This is exemplified by the internment of prisoners in 'native cells.' Camps that were erected next to a German military fort used the existing cells for African criminals, whereas in Tabora and Kilimatinde new cells were constructed out of bark ropes and grass that resembled a 'native hut'.³²⁰ These cells were six square metres large with only a very small window and a bed that was removed during the day.³²¹ Offenders, mostly prisoners who broke camp rules or disobeyed an order, were locked in these cells for up to a week, suffering from insufficient ventilation, heat and a lack of exercise. Prisoners, who committed more severe crimes, primarily those of planned or attempted escape from the camp, were confined in a 'dark cell', a hut with no windows at all, and received only water and bread. These dark cells were only used in exceptional cases. The prisoners referred to them as 'torture chambers' but their function was as much in the threat of confinement therein as their use in practice.³²²

The level of discomfort and violence the prisoners experienced during their internment is difficult to assess as there are no neutral reports that exist about the camps and the conditions there. All reports agree that the character of individual guards and camp commandants impacted deeply on the general atmosphere and concrete life of the prisoners. However, as became clear from the examples above, the perceived humiliation and violence was in most cases symbolic and has to be understood in the colonial context. Many humiliating acts were born out of the restraints of running the camps with limited human and financial resources, which made the involvement of the prisoners in the running of the camp necessary. Regarding the access to medical services, accommodation and even food, the conditions in Africa did not differ significantly from the experience of civilian internees in Germany, Britain or, as will be discussed in the next section, India. However, the self-perceived status of the majority of European colonials as

³²⁰ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, pp. 46-47.

³²¹ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 17, p. 9.

³²² RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 17, p. 9; Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy*, p. 102.

‘superior’ and ‘masters’ of their own fate made the internment itself a much more gruelling experience as they could no longer rule and to control others (i.e. Africans), and instead were being ruled and controlled themselves. This perception is, on the one hand, obviously correct, but it also carries with it an important symbolic element. Just by forcing the inmates to carry out ordinary tasks, like cleaning, cooking or manual labour, the German camp authorities could express their power over the prisoners without resorting to extreme punishments. Although one cannot deny the discomfort of being incarcerated in a grass hut with water and bread, the pain of this form of punishment stemmed as much from its symbolic and psychological features as from the physical realities: it pointedly demonstrated the ability of the Germans to reduce a European prisoner to the status of an African.

With the successes of the British troops, who invaded German East Africa from the North, and the Belgian troops, who pushed from the West, in spring 1916 it became clear to the internees and the camp authorities that an occupation of the colony was likely. In April 1916 the German administration abandoned the camps in Kilimantinde and Kiboriani and concentrated all prisoners in Tabora.³²³ To avoid overcrowding female internees, men above military age and selected missionaries were released and given accommodation in the town itself. Also in the camp the conditions for the European prisoners improved, as now African and Indian prisoners were brought in from the nearby camp to carry out the cooking and cleaning and the German authority stopped all work by the European prisoners, increased the quality of the food and generally relaxed the procedures. The Belgian troops finally occupied Tabora on 19 September 1916 without fighting as the German Schutztruppe had withdrawn the previous night. Hours before the arrival of the Belgians, the remaining German camp guards released the prisoners by literally opening the camp’s gate.³²⁴ With no place to go the vast majority of internees remained in the camp for the following night until they were

³²³ Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, pp. 85-86; Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, pp. 55-61.

³²⁴ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, *A Short diary of the Days of the Occupation of Tabora*, 19 September 1916.

ordered by the Belgian authorities to clear the camp within five hours so that German military prisoners of war could be interned in their place. The fact that 'the Germans treated civilians and soldiers alike, whilst the Belgians have only imprisoned soldiers' caused anger among former internees as the German civilians could remain in their houses, 'living in comfort and luxury'.³²⁵ After the Belgian military established themselves and restored order to the town, at the beginning of October it began to form a separate camp for German male civilians and housed female civilians in the town hall.³²⁶ There are no reports by Germans about their experience, but it appears that the civilians were not involved in any work and received sufficient provisions, while the German military prisoners had to carry out hard physical labour. The former internee Gilman approved of the harsh treatment of the German soldiers:

In this part of the world where so much depends on the impression one makes on the natives, it is only fair that these natives are made to understand that [...] their German masters are in no way superior beings, and accordingly, are treated in the same way was they treated their own prisoners.³²⁷

Again, one can see how the symbolic nature of work is justified for the particular colonial context. The interaction between occupiers and occupied will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

³²⁵ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, A Short diary of the Days of the Occupation of Tabora, 21 September 1916.

³²⁶ BA, R1001/874, Militärische Lage in D.O.A., Band 11, report by F.G. Rikli, Berne, 16 October 1916, p. 11.

³²⁷ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, A Short diary of the Days of the Occupation of Tabora, 12 November 1916.

3.6. Internment in India

Germans who were arrested in British East Africa, and after the occupation of German East Africa, were transported to India, which developed as a central hub for civilian internees and military prisoners of war for Britain. The most important prisoner camp was located in Ahmednagar and consisted of about 1,600 male and mostly civilian German and Austrian prisoners who were housed according to their class in separate, but adjoining camps A and B, with the later addition of a separate camp C for those who had been given their parole.³²⁸ The largest camp A, with 1,000 men, also included about 400 military prisoners of war, mainly members of the German navy, but also about 20 members of the German colonial army captured in East Africa in 1914 and 1915.³²⁹ The prisoners were accommodated in four old stone barracks and newly constructed huts made of corrugated iron. The camp was surrounded by two barbed-wire fences, between which armed British soldiers kept guard. Overall, there seemed to have been a cordial relationship between the prisoners and their British guards, who could be bribed for cigarettes, letters or newspapers and who participated in football matches and other sports.³³⁰ Although there are complaints of 'cruelty' by several guards, the general rapport between prisoners and camp staff, including the commander, was

³²⁸ There is no published research on the camps in India yet. A report by the International Red Cross Committee on the different camps provides a general overview: Schoch, Thormeyer, and Blanchod (eds.), *Reports on British Prison Camps in India and Burma. Visited by the International Red Cross Committee in February, March and April 1917*. For the contemporary German perspective including several reference to articles by former interned missionaries, see Albrecht Oepke, *Ahmednagar und Golconda. Ein Beitrag zur Erörterung der Missionsprobleme des Weltkrieges* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1918). Finally, a number of memoirs have been published by former internees, although none of them was captured in British East Africa: A. Hübener, 'Kriegsgefangen in Indien', in Albrecht Oepke (ed.), *Ahmednagar und Golconda. Ein Beitrag zur Erörterung der Missionsprobleme des Weltkrieges* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1918), pp. 129-152; Johann Jakob Jaus, *Als Kriegsgefangener von Indien nach Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Missionsagentur, 1916); Probst, *Unter indischer Sonne. 19 Monate englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft in Ahmednagar*; Karl Paul, *Vom Missionsfeld vertrieben. Ein Kriegerlebnis der Leipziger Mission* (Leipzig: Verlag der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission, 1916); J. Maue, *In Feindesland. 18 Monate in englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft in Indien und England* (Stuttgart: Missionsagentur, 1918).

³²⁹ Afterwards German military prisoners of war from East Africa were interned in Egypt (rank-and-file soldiers) and Malta (officers).

³³⁰ Probst, *Unter indischer Sonne. 19 Monate englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft in Ahmednagar*, pp. 23-26.

friendly, especially as the British relied on the self-organisation of the camp and only intervened infrequently.³³¹

As discussed above, the most important issue for many internees was the quality, rather than the quantity, of food.³³² Unlike their German counterparts in East Africa the British camp administration was willing and able to provide a 'European' diet and access to additional Western products. The prisoners were served 'English white bread' with butter and tea or coffee with milk for breakfast; soup, meat, potatoes and vegetables for lunch and dinner each day. Besides this, affluent prisoners could purchase additional food and luxuries like mineral water, tobacco or whiskey.³³³ Yet, the internees' complaints referred to the negative effects of the tropical climate, as the European appetite required more varied and flavourful food than could be provided here, or the climate itself could harm their mental and physical wellbeing.³³⁴ This argumentation was linked to the wider discourse on the effect of the 'tropical climate' on the European body as seen in the previous section pertaining to the question of manual labour. As in Africa, physical work in India was solely reserved for indigenous labourers as the European would risk lowering himself in front of the indigenous population, who should only see him 'as a leader, a master, part of the ruling class.'³³⁵ Initially the British camp authorities ordered a number of German internees to assist in the construction of additional barracks in camp A at Ahmednagar. However, after sharp protest by the German prisoners this policy of 'forced labour' was not only abandoned, but any work by the prisoners was forbidden. With the exception of some kitchen tasks, the

³³¹ Hübener, 'Kriegsgefangen in Indien', pp. 129-152, here pp. 143-144.; BA, R1001/872, Militärische Lage in D.O.A., Band 9, report by missionary Franz Bornath to for German colonial office, 12 July 1916.

³³² For a detailed and excellent study on the camp culture see Stibbe, *British Civilian Prisoners of War in Germany. The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-1918*

³³³ Probst, *Unter indischer Sonne. 19 Monate englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft in Ahmednagar*, p. 51; Schoch, Thormeyer, and Blanchod (eds.), *Reports on British Prison Camps in India and Burma. Visited by the International Red Cross Committee in February, March and April 1917*, p. 28; Karl Foersch, *Unter Kriegswettern. Kriegererlebnisse der Goßnerschen Missionare in Indien* (Berlin: Buchhandlung der Goßnerschen Mission, 1916), pp. 55-56.

³³⁴ Probst, *Unter indischer Sonne. 19 Monate englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft in Ahmednagar*, p. 53.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Germans were barred from other manual occupation, which created a new dilemma for some prisoners. While they rejected the idea of carrying out ‘forced’ and ‘demeaning’ manual labour, they still lobbied for the establishment of artisan workshops for the use of the internees. They argued that a German suffers especially under enforced ‘boredom and laziness’ as it is against the German nature to be idle, and that this feeling was particularly strong for those ‘fresh young men’ who had decided to live and work in colonies overseas.³³⁶ Connected to the issue of the bodily experience of colonial internment are the continual complaints by several prisoners of the lack of shade, the heat in the corrugated iron sheds, and the constant presence of dust or mud which was not only regarded as harmful to the Europeans’ health, but also to their physical appearance.³³⁷

These conditions affected only those prisoners interned in camp A, which was regarded as a ‘punishment camp’. Middle-class Germans like traders or engineers, officers of merchant and war ships, as well as those colonial officers captured in East Africa who had been given parole, were lodged in camp B, which consisted solely of well-built stone buildings with ample interior and exterior space for exercise.³³⁸ Until October 1915 the internees were allowed to leave the camp all day to take walks in the surrounding countryside and in designated parts of the town. After a number of incidents, and an increase in the volume of prisoners following the blanket arrest of all remaining Germans in 1915, these privileges were revoked and the camp was locked. About fifty older civilians and those on parole were interned in camp C, the military fort of Ahmednagar, separate from both the town and the other two camps.³³⁹ Here the prisoners were provided with spacious, airy rooms and wide-ranging freedoms, like walks in the countryside and even the possibility of playing tennis or golf.

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 89; Oepke, *Ahmednagar und Golconda. Ein Beitrag zur Erörterung der Missionsprobleme des Weltkrieges*, p. 47. See also BA, R1001/874, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 11, report by Hauptmann Karl Kieckhöfer, June 1916, p. 39

³³⁷ Hübener, ‘Kriegsgefangen in Indien’, pp. 129-152, here pp. 133-134.

³³⁸ To the great anger of the Protestant missionaries only their Catholics colleagues were kept in this higher status camp originally. Ibid., p. 136.

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 141.

Interestingly, these were sports closely associated with British middle- and upper-class culture and thus were a popular colonial pastime. Through their exercise in plain view of the civilian population of the town, the German internees were therefore able to express their continued belonging of the colonial European elite.

A main concern for married prisoners was the separation from their wives and children who were interned in Belgaum.³⁴⁰ This camp, which was not fenced, was located in a 'healthier (i.e. cooler) climate' than Ahmednagar, had better conditions and the female internees were allowed to keep indigenous servants, to bring additional furniture, pianos or lace curtains and could leave the camp anytime during the day. The children could also attend school and kindergarten with classes being taught in English and German, and also received additional milk rations.³⁴¹ Whereas communication between the different camps in Ahmednagar was prohibited, married couples were allowed regular postal contact and some women were even permitted to travel to Ahmednagar to visit their husbands. After several petitions they were allowed in spring 1916 to be interned together, and the British authorities converted Belgaum into a 'family camp'. This rearrangement became possible as the British government had decided in November 1915 to repatriate the first cohort of women and children from Belgaum to Germany. These were followed in March 1916 by a group of 510 German and Austrian civilians, a third of which were missionaries, and included the German civilian prisoners from British East Africa.³⁴² This voyage on the steamer 'Golconda', via Cape Town to London, was marred by overcrowding which led to hazardous hygienic conditions and was exacerbated by the fact that the prisoners were not allowed to disembark at ports for the

³⁴⁰ AFSt/M, 82, Kamba-Mission während des Krieges, letter from Otto Thermann to his mother and sister, 12 April 1915.

³⁴¹ Oepke, *Ahmednagar und Golconda. Ein Beitrag zur Erörterung der Missionsprobleme des Weltkrieges*, p. 40; See also more generally Johann Jakob Jaus, *Kriegsgefangene Missionskinder* (Stuttgart: Missionsagentur, 1916).

³⁴² AFSt/M, 347, Johannes Hofmann, Personal File; Hübener, 'Kriegsgefangen in Indien', pp. 129-152, here pp. 145-152; Foersch, *Unter Kriegswettern. Kriegserlebnisse der Gofnerschen Missionare in Indien*, p. 65.

three months duration of the journey. After their arrival in Britain in May 1916, the male prisoners were kept for two to three weeks in the internment camp in Alexandra Palace before their captivity ended with their return to Germany.

3.7. Internment of Indian soldiers in German East Africa

Of course, British and German nationals were not the only populations to experience internment as a result of the fighting in East Africa. As outlined in the introductory chapter, East Africa was very cosmopolitan and included significant populations from many parts of the world other than Africa and Europe. In particular, there was a significant civilian population of Indians, who had come to East Africa as traders and workers and represented a well-established community by the time of the First World War. Indians were also present in East Africa as soldiers fighting for the British forces. The perception of these Indians, both in racial and national terms, and the treatment they received provides an additional source of insight into the social processes surrounding internment in the colonial sphere.

The role of Indian prisoners of war has recently become a much-studied area of the First World War.³⁴³ Germany had a special interest in these prisoners as they were regarded as important for the propaganda campaign directed towards inciting a Muslim uprising in India against the British colonial government. Furthermore, with the Ottoman Empire as an ally, the German military and government had an interest in not upsetting religious feelings by mistreating Muslim prisoners of war. Yet Hindi prisoners also received good treatment during their internment in Germany.

The Indian prisoners of war – together with French soldiers from North and West Africa – were undoubtedly among the better treated prisoners in Germany for the

³⁴³ For a recent overview on colonial troops in the First World War comp. Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

duration of the war. Interned in two special camps, these soldiers were provided with places of worship and recreation resembling their cultural background, for example the famous mosque of Wünsdorf, and received provisions that catered for their tastes and traditions.³⁴⁴ This propaganda effort was paralleled by an active research interest among German anthropologists, ethnologists, linguists, eugenicists, and musicologist who welcomed the opportunity to access their area of study at close quarters. Through numerous newspaper and magazine articles, and other popular and academic publications, these prisoners of war were very much placed in the spotlight for the German and European public.

Given the importance the German military and government attributed to the propaganda effort, one could expect that their counterparts in German East Africa would follow suit and would make use of the propaganda opportunity provided to them through the capture of hundreds of Indian soldiers and officers.³⁴⁵ This propaganda would have been useful as the German colonial administrators throughout the war had concerns about the loyalty of the Indian population living in the colony. However, the attitude towards the Indian inhabitants of German East Africa was one of the more hotly debated issues in the decade prior to the war.³⁴⁶ The long established and cohesive networks of Indian traders stood in competition with the interest of European merchants, who claimed that the influence of the Indians on local markets, and their role as intermediates between African producers and consumers, destroyed the benevolent influence of

³⁴⁴ Ravi Ahuja, 'The Corrosiveness of Comparison. Reverberations of Indian Wartime Experiences in German Prison Camps. 1915-1919', in Heike Liebau, et al. (eds.), *The World in World Wars. Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 131-166; Franziska Roy, Heike Liebau, and Ravi Ahuja (eds.), *When the War Began We Heard of Several Kings. South Asian Prisoners in World War I Germany* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2011); Höpp, *Muslime in der Mark. Als Kriegsgefangene und Internierte in Wünsdorf und Zossen, 1914-1924*.

³⁴⁵ For the role of the Indian Army in German East Africa see Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa, 1914-1918*. The book is solely concerned with the military aspect of the campaign and does not mention prisoners of war.

³⁴⁶ J. S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa, 1886-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Gregory, *India and East Africa. A History of Race Relations within the British Empire, 1890-1939*.

European colonisation.³⁴⁷ Additionally, in German East Africa the fact that the Indians remained British subjects, combined with suspicions that they transferred their profits back to India, meant that they were seen to be supporters of the British and not the German global economy. Indeed, in vicious press campaigns, the Indians were labelled as the 'Jews of East Africa' and were portrayed as having a bad influence not only on the economy, but also on the morale and wellbeing of the African population. Mission societies, in various parts, followed the line of accusing Indians of having a corrupting influence on African society, but they were more specifically concerned about the spread of Islam through Muslim Indians from the Punjab.

Accordingly, the outbreak of the war saw the German colonial administration and public divided towards the Indian population. On the one hand, they demanded strict measures and punishments against 'the price gouging of these foreigners' who were accused – similarly to the Jewish in Germany – of being war profiteers. A letter to the editor demanded that the Indians should either be interned or 'driven out of this territory as pestilenced vampires.'³⁴⁸ On the other hand, there were strong voices against any prosecution or internment of the Indians of East Africa as they could not be held accountable for 'deeds of the English' and because the war would be a great opportunity to show the Muslim Indians that they would be better treated in German East Africa than by their British masters.³⁴⁹ The German administration even attempted to encourage Muslim Indians to volunteer for the German troops in the name of the Jihad, but these plans were never properly followed through.³⁵⁰ Ultimately the German authorities neither won over the Indian population for the war effort, nor did they deport or intern any civilians. Yet these restraints were not mirrored in the treatment of Indian military prisoners of war.

³⁴⁷ E.g. Hans Paasche, *Im Morgenlicht. Kriegs-, Jagd- und Reise-Erlebnisse in Ostafrika* (Berlin: Schwetschke, 1907), pp. 319-321.

³⁴⁸ UP, 5 December 1914. See also UP, 30 December 1914; UP, 27 March 1915.

³⁴⁹ UP, 24 December 1914; DOAZ, 30 December 1914.

³⁵⁰ Pesek, 'Für Kaiser und Allah. Ostafrikas Muslime im Grossen Krieg für die Zivilisation, 1914-1919'.

For an Indian soldier or officer, the experience of being taken prisoner in the East African campaign differed significantly from that of their counterparts in Europe, and more importantly from white British soldiers and officers also taken prisoner in the campaign. Most Indian soldiers were captured in the first year of the campaign, mainly in the failed conquest attempts of the battles of Tanga and Longido in November 1914 and the successful counterattacks by the German forces in the battles of Jassini in January 1915 and Kasigau in August 1915. It is very difficult to reconstruct the internment experience of these soldiers as none of them left written documents behind and only a handful of European prisoners mention their Indian counterparts in passing. However, in 1919 the Indian Army in the Punjab Province undertook an investigation to collect evidence of 'breaches of laws and customs of war by German forces with special reference to the treatment of Indian soldiers in East Africa.' The collection includes statements of about thirty former Indian prisoners of war who were interviewed by British officers – with the aid of a translator – about their experience of arrest and internment. It has not been possible to find out how these statements were later utilised as they have not been used for any publication and have not been cited. The statements were given after the Indian soldiers were demobilised and the presence of a British officer might have influenced their content. Yet, given that they were collected by different officers in different parts of the province it appears that there was no blueprint narrative, even though the reports are mainly the same.

Nearly all statements of the former prisoners of war stressed that they were treated very badly from the onset of their arrests as the German and African members of the Schutztruppe insulted them verbally or even spat at them.³⁵¹ The Indians were forced to hand over their kit, uniform and boots immediately after their arrest, leaving the soldiers with only their undergarments and bare feet.³⁵² As these battles took place at the beginning of the conflict, the German army was not yet

³⁵¹ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Tatoji Rao Kadam, 23 July 1919.

³⁵² IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Lance Naik B. Arokiaswami, 10 January 1919; IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Subadar Vishnu Palao, n.d.

short of equipment, so this action was not born out of necessity, but instead can be seen as a deliberate humiliation. Several prisoners were transported straight from the battlefield to be employed as labourers conducting physically demanding work on private plantations and public works,³⁵³ like road building and the clearing of forests, in the proximity of the coast.³⁵⁴ The Indian soldiers were separated from their British officers and – more importantly – in many cases their Indian N.C.O., which left them without a command structure and literally voiceless, as many were unable to speak adequate English – let alone German – to communicate with their guards and supervisors.³⁵⁵

The rapid and degrading transition from regular soldier of the British Indian army to a mere labourer caused confusion, fear and despair as they were left with uncertainty about their status and impending fate. Several men – and one officer – pointed out that the Germans deliberately ignored the religious and social differences of Hindus and Muslims and did not allow prisoners to organise themselves according to their ‘caste’.³⁵⁶ They furthermore made no differentiation between the ranks, treating Indian officers and N.C.O. in most cases like ordinary soldiers, which again points to the overall perception of the Indian prisoners as primarily along unified racial lines.³⁵⁷ The Indian prisoners were kept in several makeshift camps until the German authorities began transferring the Indian soldiers from the coastal areas to the centrally located new camp in Tabora in autumn 1915. This shift in policy should be attributed less to a change in the general attitude towards the Indian prisoners of war, and more to the build-up of Allied troops and the anticipated attack on German East Africa. Indeed, the change of location to a regular internment camp did not see any improvement in the prisoners’ treatment. Several prisoners highlighted the horrendous conditions

³⁵³ TNA, G8/184, Ostafrikanische Bergwerks- und Plantagen AG, letter by plantation manager to government, Kibuku, 24 February 1915.

³⁵⁴ Only one European prisoner refers to the Indian prisoners in his diaries and confirms this forces labour. See IWM, Lieutenant Fredrick Johnson FRGS papers, P473, FJ1, diary, 57.

³⁵⁵ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Afrasil Khan, 6 March 1919.

³⁵⁶ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Sheikh Kudrat Ali, Sub-Assistant Surgeon, n.d. [1919];

IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Afrasil Khan, 6 March 1919.

³⁵⁷ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Jemandar Sakaram Gaikwad, n.d. [1919].

on their trek from the coast to the next railway station as they were forced to carry heavy loads without receiving any – or very limited – food and water. One Indian doctor described how the Indian prisoners were marched through the town of Pangani: ‘All were tied by neck as women laugh at them, greeting cheerfully, spitting on their faces as they passed by.’³⁵⁸ The railway journey to Tabora was no less strenuous as the prisoners were transported in overloaded cattle wagons with only two air holes and appalling hygiene conditions.³⁵⁹

The internment camp in Tabora was located several kilometres outside the town centre and away from the camp of the European prisoners.³⁶⁰ As this camp also contained African civilian internees who were regarded as dangerous, and a number of enemy askari, there is no question that the German military divided prisoners along racial lines instead of differentiating between civilian internees and military prisoners of war. Unfortunately there are no accounts of the African internees other than an order by the governor Schnee that fingerprints should be taken from all civilian internees.³⁶¹ It appears that the number of military prisoners of war was limited as the German military incorporated captured British askari and carriers into the Schutztruppe.³⁶² The statements given by the former inmates of the camp do not allow for a clear description of the design of this camp as they focus more on the devastating hygiene conditions and the lack of clean drinking water and insufficient food. However, it appears that the camp consisted mainly of crude huts or tents and was greatly overcrowded. Again, separating the Indian soldiers from their commanders left them without the possibility of organising themselves efficiently and of communicating with the German camp authorities. The Indian prisoners were forced into a rigid work schedule and ‘had to do the work of coolies’, for example making bricks, digging, cutting wood and

³⁵⁸ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Sheikh Kudrat Ali Sub-Assistant Surgeon, n.d. [1919].

³⁵⁹ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Sheikh Kudrat Ali Sub-Assistant Surgeon, n.d. [1919].

³⁶⁰ Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H.*, Royal Navy, pp. 154-155.

³⁶¹ TNA, G1/192, Erlass ueber die Anfertigung von Fingerabdruckkarten von eingeborenen Kriegsgefangenen, order by Governor Schnee, 18 Oktober 1915.

³⁶² Moyd, *Becoming Askari. African Soldiers and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa, 1889-1918*. 267

grass, from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. without any breaks.³⁶³ Again most prisoners reported very vividly the severe punishments they received from German askari, German officers and also Indian residents of German East Africa who worked for the German military. Two former prisoners reported that one of the latter, a man called Mirza Khan, urinated into the mouth of a prisoner.³⁶⁴ This conduct, even though not committed by a German guard, illustrates an atmosphere where behaviour like this could pass with impunity. Yet the most common and frequent form of punishments were either beatings with a kiboko (whip) or rifle butt, which in some cases led to severe injuries. Prisoners who attempted to escape were put into chain-gangs of 10 to 15 men for up to three months,³⁶⁵ a form of punishment that was not uncommon in colonial German East Africa, but that was also fiercely critiqued in the year prior to the war.³⁶⁶

This combination of insufficient food, hard labour and unhygienic accommodation led to widespread disease and a much higher mortality rate among the Indian prisoners than the European ones. However, as there are no official statistics it is impossible to even roughly estimate how many of the approximately 300 Indian prisoners in Tabora died of illness and exhaustion. One British doctor who was allowed to visit the Tabora internment camp recalls his impression of the inmates as follows:

What remained in the representation of fine stalwart Sikhs filed out of the banda [African hut] as emaciated men, naked except for a loin cloth, who

³⁶³ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Naik Nur Huassain, 13 January 1919. See also IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Lance Naik B. Arokiaswami, 10 January 1919; IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Lance Naik Sar Baz, 24 April 1919.

³⁶⁴ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Naik Nur Huassain, 13 January 1919; IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Lance Naik Umaro Ali, n.d. [1919].

³⁶⁵ IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Sepoy Noor Mohammed, 16 September 1919; IOR/L/MIL/7/18753, Statement by Saif Ali Sepoy, 17 September 1919.

³⁶⁶ For the issue of chain-gangs see Thaddeus Sunseri, *Vilimani. Labor Migration and Rural Change in Early Colonial Tanzania* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), pp. 55-65.

hobbled on the outer side of their feet folding up into apathetic whining heaps on the lee side.³⁶⁷

There can be little doubt that the treatment of the Indian internees by German military and civilian authorities was not simply worse than their European counterparts. The treatment they received was in obvious breach of not only the Hague Convention, but was also in stark contrast to the attitude of the German authorities in Europe, who approached the Indian prisoners as possible collaborators. Again, the colonial mind-set of regarding non-white soldiers as inferior beings is clearly reflected in this behaviour.

3.8. Conclusion

The different sources discussed above document that foreign citizens in East Africa relied on their status as fellow-Europeans, and that they were generally unconcerned about their future within German or British East Africa at the beginning of the war. Even when the colonial administration began to remove planters and missionaries from their farms and stations, the European guards and prisoners treated each other according to the traditional social norms of the colony – that is, with mutual respect. Only on arrival at the internment camps or after their deportation from Africa, and sheltered from the views of the indigenous population, did the veneer of white solidarity disappear and the prisoners were treated as prisoners.

The reaction and measures taken by the British and German colonial administration between the declaration of war and the final internment of ‘enemy aliens’ show many parallels and might have influenced decisions taken in the neighbouring colony. Also the behaviour of the colonial public towards their fellow Europeans reflects the discomfort of excluding members from the

³⁶⁷ IWM, K. 35303, Bayliss-Stokes, H., report of Experiences of a Doctor, Prisoner of War in German East Africa, n.d.

colonial elite. The treatment of the British and German prisoners within each colony changed over critical periods of the war from a certain nonchalance and conviviality to specific acts of denigration and humiliation within the confines of the internment camps. One could argue that these inconsistencies in treatment reflect the multiple concerns that the German and British colonials were trying to balance in the face of the war. On the one hand, their power and prestige was grounded in the idea of themselves as part of a European community in contrast to the African population, which they disregarded and distrusted in equal measure. However, conflict between the European powers disrupted this solidarity and required certain forms of action towards other colonials based on their nationality (i.e., British versus German). Rather than being straightforward, this requirement for treatment had to be handled carefully so as to meet the requirements of war without upsetting the overall balance of power by diminishing the Europeans' image in the eyes of the indigenous community.

4. Engaging in Global War: Soldiers' Perspectives on the East African Campaign

4.1. Introduction

The dilemma between colonial and racial order versus the order of war discussed in the previous chapters was of course also relevant for the soldiers involved in the campaign. Like the civilians at the centre of the previous chapters, the focus will here be on the British and German soldiers and officers. Even though these soldiers were small in number, their experience was crucial for the presentation of the war to a wider public, both through personal letters as well as publications in newspapers and magazines during and after the war. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on how the specific expectations of soldiers and their experiences in Africa shaped how they orientated to the war and communicated their impressions to others and back to their home countries.

In the last two decades the war experiences of soldiers have become one of the most active fields of studies of the First World War. With the re-discovery of front letters and trench newspapers a vast field of research developed,³⁶⁸ exploring themes like the connection between front and home, and insights into the soldier's life at the front.³⁶⁹ Scholars working on European fronts can delve into an abundance of letters, newspapers, photos and other personal documents, which allows for a differentiated picture. For the campaigns in Africa only a relative small number of ego-documents survived. Most are located in the Imperial War

³⁶⁸ Bernd Ulrich, *Die Augenzeugen. Deutsche Feldpostbriefe in Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit, 1914-1933* (Essen: Klartext, 1997); Klaus Latzel, 'Vom Kriegserlebnis zur Kriegserfahrung.

Theoretische und methodische Überlegungen zur erfahrungsgeschichtlichen Untersuchung von Feldpostbriefen', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 56 (1997), pp. 1-30; Hirschfeld, Krumeich, and Renz (eds.), *Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch... Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs*; Ziemann, *Front und Heimat. Ländliche Kriegserfahrungen im südlichen Bayern, 1914-1923*; Aribert Reimann, *Der große Krieg der Sprachen. Untersuchungen zur historischen Semantik in Deutschland und England zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Essen: Klartext, 2000).

³⁶⁹ Watson, *Enduring the Great War. Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918*; Robert L. Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Museum and the Liddle Archive in Leeds. Hence a few notes about the source material and the limitations of these are necessary. First, while varied and rich source material from Europeans who fought in East Africa does exist, the same cannot be said about African and Indian soldiers as there is not one surviving account. However, there is a solid and growing literature on the importance of African soldiers fighting both in Europe and in Africa. The most recent and most relevant for East Africa are Michelle Moyd's study of the German askari, Timothy Stapleton's work on Rhodesia and Timothy Sparton's book on the King's African Rifles in British East Africa.³⁷⁰ Together with some smaller studies these give a rounded picture of the difficulties faced both by the African soldiers coping in the extreme conditions of this campaign, and also by the European officers in charge of these troops who had to balance the often incompatible necessities of up-keeping 'white supremacy' and keeping their African troops together as a military unit. This well-researched aspect of the campaign contrasts with the lack of any systematic account of the Indian Army in East Africa that goes beyond the military aspect of the campaign. Another perspective that is lacking is that of the British allies, Portugal and Belgium, as well as South Africa and Northern and Southern Rhodesia. While some personal accounts from the latter are included and some good secondary material is available,³⁷¹ the same cannot be said for the Belgian and Portuguese soldiers who are only discussed briefly by Pesek and Paice.³⁷² Furthermore, there is also an imbalance between the German and British perspectives as the flow of communication between the German colony and the metropole was disrupted

³⁷⁰ Moyd, *Becoming Askari. African Soldiers and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa, 1889-1918*; Stapleton, *No insignificant part. The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War*; Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File. Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964*. For two older, but very detailed books on the King's African Rifles see William Lloyd-Jones, *K.A.R. Being an unofficial Account of the Origin and Activities of the King's African Rifles* (London: Arrowsmith, 1926); Hubert Moyse-Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles. A Study in the Military History of East and Central Africa, 1890-1945* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1956). For a statistical overview on Africans see Hodges, 'African Manpower Statistics for the British Forces in East Africa, 1914-1918'.

³⁷¹ Unfortunately, the studies dealing with South Africa soldiers during the war have not included personal accounts on their experience in East Africa, but see McLaughlin, *Ragtime Soldiers. The Rhodesian War Experience in the First World War*.

³⁷² Pesek, *Ende eines Kolonialreichs. Ostafrika im Ersten Weltkrieg*, pp. 172-175; Paice, *Tip and Run. The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa*, pp. 316-323.

throughout the war and there are no surviving diaries or letters by ordinary German members of the Schutztruppe.³⁷³

The European soldiers fighting in East Africa can be divided into several subcategories, each with different backgrounds and different perspectives on the war. In the case of German East Africa, only two groups of white combatants were present throughout the duration of the war. There were professional soldiers who served as officers in the Schutztruppe and, to a lesser extent, in the imperial navy and local police force.³⁷⁴ However, the majority of white soldiers were colonial civilians who were conscripted into the Schutztruppe after the outbreak of hostilities. These ranged from settlers to civil servants and missionaries. It is significant that most of the white participants in the war on the German side had a personal connection to the colony and were only employed in this particular theatre of war.

The picture for British troops is much more diverse. During the first three months of the war, one finds a pattern similar to the German side: professional soldiers of the King's African Rifles and settlers and other civilians who volunteered. Yet, there are significant differences regarding the perspectives of each of these groups on the war in comparison to their German counterparts. Unlike the German East African Schutztruppe, the King's African Rifles were not limited to one particular colony but covered all of Britain's East African possessions. Hence, its officers

³⁷³ There are the wartime accounts of Heinrich Schnee, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and Ludwig Boell, but these were all written as semi-public documents and not private notes. See Michels, 'Ein Feldzug – zwei Perspektiven? Paul von Lettow-Vorbecks und Heinrich Schnees Erlebnisberichte über den Ersten Weltkrieg in Ostafrika', pp. 152-168.

³⁷⁴ For an excellent recent study on the German colonial forces see Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika: Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegführung, 1885 bis 1918*. See also Kirsten Zirkel, 'Military power in German colonial policy. The 'Schutztruppen' and their leaders in East and Southwest Africa, 1888-1918', in David Killingray and David Omissi (eds.), *Guardians of Empire. The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, 1700-1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 91-113; Tanja Bühner, 'Ein "Parlamentsheer" ohne "preußische Erbstücke"? Die zivil-militärischen Konflikte um die Führungsorganisation der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppen', *Militärhistorische Zeitschrift* 71 (2012), pp. 1-24.

were less connected to a particular place.³⁷⁵ Additionally, the colonials who served as combatants were volunteers and not conscripts like their German counterparts.

This balanced constellation across German and British sides was valid for the first three months of the war, which was mostly characterised by raids on border posts and smaller skirmishes. However, this changed in autumn 1914 with the arrival of Indian troops, headed by British officers, in East Africa. While little is known about the Indian soldiers, their officers regarded themselves as professional experts and carriers of the imperial ideal.³⁷⁶ Their initial assumption of a swift victory over the German Schutztruppe was, however, crushed in the battle of Tanga in November 1914, which resulted in a year of stalemate in East Africa. The decision in late 1915 by the Imperial War Committee in London to finally settle the East African affair changed the dynamic on the ground. Not only was General Smuts installed as commander-in-chief, arriving with thousands of mostly Afrikaner troops from South Africa, but also about 3,000 British soldiers were shipped to East Africa from Europe. The latter's perspective on the war differed significantly from the colonials, something that will be explored in further detail below.

The two central years of the East African campaign were 1916 and 1917 as the British advanced from the north to systematically conquer the German colony. This aim was achieved by the end of the 1917—the entire German colony was occupied, and Lettow-Vorbeck and the core of his Schutztruppe withdrew into Portuguese East Africa. By early 1917, nearly all South African troops had been withdrawn, whereas most Indian troops were removed towards the end of that year. The following eleven months saw desperate attempts by the remaining Allied troops to stop the German Schutztruppe in its raid through Portuguese East

³⁷⁵ Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File. Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964*, pp. 104-120.

³⁷⁶ The only study dealing with the role of the Indian Army is focused on the combat history: Pradhan, *Indian Army in East Africa, 1914-1918*. However, a number of other works deal with the role of Indian Army in East Africa in some detail: Anderson, *The Battle of Tanga 1914*; Paice, *Tip and Run. The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa*, pp. 40-75.

Africa. Although this part of the campaign was no less fateful, for combatants and civilians alike, it received much less public attention.

In all its stages, the war in East Africa was a multifaceted campaign, including complex logistics, difficult interactions between various sections of the fighting forces, and varied encounters with civilians. Just as reducing the war on the western front to large battles and time in the frontline trenches has been questioned, it would also be as misleading to reduce the East African campaign to troops marching through the bush. However, the limited attention the campaign received from contemporaries during and after the war presented it either as an example of the barbarity of war and the end of European civilisation, or as a string of anecdotal episodes set against an exotic colonial backdrop. Analysing the war experience of the participants in more detail highlights the different aspects of the First World War and raises questions around civilisation, the sense of fighting – both at all and specifically in Africa – and the importance of empire.

To explore these themes, this chapter will start with the experiences of the colonial soldiers and volunteers in the first months of the war, and will compare the motivations and expectations about fighting their counterparts across the border. This will then be contrasted with the expectations and experiences of professional soldiers serving in the Indian Army who were employed in East Africa. The main part will be devoted to the British soldiers who were shipped to East Africa from 1915 to 1918. Their expectations highlight the perspective of the metropole and the encounter with the colonial sphere. As some of them already had fighting experience on the western front, this comparison is important too. Their attitude towards their comrades, the battleground and the enemy will be analysed in the context both of colonialism and of war. The most important developments of the war will be highlighted, but as the aim of this chapter is not to write a military history, the focus will be on aspects of combat experience (killing and being killed) and the special situation of fighting a war against an invisible enemy.

4.2. European Soldiers from East Africa

As seen in Chapter 2 the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Britain created a difficult tension within the European community in East Africa. Alongside more abstract ideas and problems regarding the broader economic and ideological implications of bringing war to the colonies, some very personal decisions had to be faced by every person in the colony.³⁷⁷ For example, would it be worthwhile to leave one's farm or business behind and in the hands of a European deputy, a woman, or even an African employee? The colonial administration in British East Africa issued no general mobilisation order and – to some extent – actively discouraged the European population from volunteering maintaining that any farmers 'who have elected to take indiscreet action [leaving their farms] have sustained loss in consequence of their absence the Government will not accept liability for it.'³⁷⁸ Accordingly, the civilian British population had to make their decisions, either through social group pressure or individually. Public employees in British East Africa were free from this pressure, as the government aimed to allow routine work of the government departments to be carried on as usual despite the war. All members of the government service had to apply for permission to serve with the force. These requests were in nearly all cases denied leaving a Sandhurst graduate and former officer unable to volunteer.³⁷⁹

As in Europe it was originally mainly young men who enthusiastically took up arms as they had the least to loose materially. For them the war provided an opportunity for adventure with the expectation of a swift and decisive encounter with the enemy. The Director of Public Works in Nairobi dismissed the motivation of these early war enthusiasts: 'The "bhoys" [sic] who would like it [war in East Africa] are chiefly sportsmen who would like to get over the border,

³⁷⁷ Forster, 'The Quest for East African Neutrality in 1914'.

³⁷⁸ KNA, PC/Coast/1/17/231, Desertion by European Settlers of their Farms, Memo by the Acting Chief Secretary (Monson) to all Provincial and District Commissioners, 28 September 1914.

³⁷⁹ KNA, PC/Coast/1/13/80, Volunteer Force. Enrolment of officials, Circular No 61 by Chief Sec., 6 August 1914. See also RH, MSS. Afr. s. 1876, William McGregor Ross, letter to his mother, 7 August 1914.

steal the stock of G.E.A. natives and come back rich men.³⁸⁰ For men living on remote plantations, farms or stations, going to Nairobi, or to a lesser extent Mombasa, was surely as prominent in their minds as getting to the frontline and fighting. Indeed, only very few of these men make reference to their motivation with regard to the defence of the British Empire or even the defence of the colony itself.³⁸¹ However, men in their 30s, 40s or 50s who, as gentlemen farmers or businessmen, belonged to the colonial settler establishment shared the sentiment that the war was a mere 'picnic' or an extended safari.³⁸² If anything, the opportunity to prove one's manliness to society and to prove oneself as a true colonial was represented in the image of the dutiful and sturdy farmer. The author Llewelyn Powys who lived in British East Africa during the war describes in a letter to a friend how his brother William left their farm to 'ride off to the wars':

He was splendid! I helped him saddle his mule, he might have been a cavalier in the old days, so strange and alien an occupation it seemed. He kept humming hymn tunes [...] and I don't think he is possessed by the 'war fever'. I think he goes simply as he would go if a Witcombe bull had run amok. I think he will not run away. I think he will give a good account of himself.³⁸³

The settlers, incorporating both the aforementioned younger volunteers and colonial establishment, created their own units, the most important of which were the East African Mounted Rifles and the Nairobi Defence Force.³⁸⁴ The exercise drills of these groups on the Nairobi race-course, however, did not create the uplifting atmosphere that was perhaps intended. Rather, these elicited concern among the civilian population about the low standard and poor organisation they

³⁸⁰ RH, MSS. Afr. s. 1876, William McGregor Ross, letter to his mother, 7 August 1914.

³⁸¹ One volunteer was a eighteen year old Norwegian who had lived in the colony for ten years and desired to express his connection to his new homeland. See RH, MSS Afr. s. 1792, A.T. Matson, Box 38, Alfred Johansen, Memoir, p. 66-67.

³⁸² RH, Micr. Afr. 596, Brian Havelock Potts, Memoir, pp. 27-40.

³⁸³ Llewelyn Powys, *The Letters of Llewelyn Powys*. Edited by Louis Wilkinson (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1943), p. 74.

³⁸⁴ Christopher James Wilson, *The Story of the East African Mounted Rifles* (Nairobi: East African Standard, 1938). See also Anonymous ("by one of them"), *Uganda Volunteers and the War*.

revealed. 'The confusion and muddle is beyond description. Everybody wants to do something and doesn't know how.'³⁸⁵ Also, by the end of August 1914 many volunteers were themselves 'dissatisfied, wanting to get back to their farms' as the colonial administration had 'no desire to invade German East Africa'.³⁸⁶ The employment of settlers as a recognisable unit lasted only until the end of 1914 and their record is, indeed, rather mixed. The border engagements and the frequent attacks by the German Schutztruppe on the Ugandan railway were the most visible and relevant military activities in the first weeks of the war. Of course, the subsequent campaign has overshadowed these early skirmishes, but these were nonetheless dangerous and often deadly encounters. Fighting in small units – either attacking or patrolling – in densely bushed territory required either personal courage or a rather defeatist character.³⁸⁷ Although generally well-equipped with good horses and firearms, the lack of reliable intelligence and – especially in the case of the British – no overall command made these months especially strenuous. The early German successes of conquering the border town of Taveta in mid-August 1914 and being able to repeatedly sabotage the railway line contributed to serious concerns among the British volunteers, and the rather indifferent – if not to say critical – press coverage. Given these factors, it is not surprising that the members of the volunteer force did not describe in any great length their experience after the war.³⁸⁸ The decision in October 1914 to deploy the British Indian Army to British East Africa was generally welcomed, as their professionalism had been integral to imperial practice and propaganda in the decades before.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁵ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1179, John A. Elliot, letter to his father, Sotik, 18 August 1914.

³⁸⁶ RH, Micr. Afr. 586, Peggy Forrester, letter by Alton Forrester to his sister, 24 August 1914.

³⁸⁷ For a detailed discussion see Anderson, *The Forgotten Front. The East African Campaign, 1914-1918*, pp. 42-50.

³⁸⁸ Only one resident of British East published his account of war, nearly twenty years of the armistice: Christopher J. Thornhill, *Taking Tanganyika. Experiences of an Intelligence Officer, 1914-1918* (London: Stanley Paul, 1937).

³⁸⁹ RH, Mss. Afr s 1372, Bruce L. Bremner, letter to his mother, 10 September 1914.

4.3. Professional British Soldiers from India

For a professional British officer serving in the Indian Army, the outbreak of the war opened a welcomed career opportunity. Regarding themselves as highly professional and – after the difficulties of the regular British Army in the Second South African War – as the most successful and active land forces of the Empire, the prospect of fighting for the overall defence of the British Empire was appealing.³⁹⁰ Younger officers were especially impatient to become involved. They feared being left behind in India for garrison duty to control the Indian population or being sent to the notoriously unruly outposts of the Raj. The prospect of fighting Afghans or Punjabis at the northern border was much less appealing than the prospect of fighting Germans or – to a lesser extent – Ottomans. One young Irish officer, and graduate of Trinity College, wrote to his mother that ‘it would have been too awful to be trained as a soldier, and not to do one’s share’ especial seeing the fact that ‘every ploughboy in England is having his chance doing it.’³⁹¹ Combined with the desire to serve the war effort was the thought of career advancement as ‘one would be a back number for life’ if as a soldier one had not fought in the war.³⁹²

A European employment was the most desirable posting; however most European officers were also content enough to be sent to Mesopotamia to conquer ‘new land’.³⁹³ Learning that they were instead to be posted to East Africa was typically met with disappointment, as neither the location nor the foe were seen to be particularly attractive.³⁹⁴ Concern over the unhealthy climate – something that was always prominent among colonials – was mixed with little curiosity to see this rather backward part of the world. At best, the idea of some big game hunting

³⁹⁰ For a recent overview see Kaushik Roy, *The Army in British India. From Colonial Warfare to Total War, 1857-1947* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

³⁹¹ LA, AFE 24, Pim, George A., 10 September 1914, letter to his mother; IWM, 74/48/1 & Con shelf, Major General Harold V. Lewis, DSO MC, letter to his mother, 24 January 1915.

³⁹² LA, AFE 24, Pim, George A., 10 September 1914, letter to his mother.

³⁹³ Priya Satia, ‘Developing Iraq: Britain, India and the Redemption of Empire and Technology in the First World War’, *Past & Present* 197 (2007), pp. 211-255.

³⁹⁴ Rhodes House, MSS Afr. s. 386-387, Gordon Covell, letter to his mother, Rawalpindi (India), 26 September 1914.

and the chance to be posted somewhere more interesting after a quick and successful campaign somewhat offset the disappointment of being deployed in East Africa.³⁹⁵ The enemy in the form of the German Schutztruppe was disregarded as merely a handful of Germans with African mercenaries. In the hierarchical thinking of the British officers, the latter could not be regarded as a martial race. This sentiment seemed to have been somewhat shared by the Indian high command as the selection of troops and preparation for the expedition shows a lack of commitment: the troops were unprepared, underequipped and under the command of inexperienced and incompetent officers.³⁹⁶

The sea voyage from India to East Africa was generally enjoyed by the officers, and their lack of concern about the forthcoming landing stands in sharp contrast to their arrival and the battle of Tanga in November 1914. The battle was a complete failure and can be regarded as the cause of the prolonged campaign in East Africa.³⁹⁷ It is very unfortunate that no personal accounts of this battle by Indian soldiers have survived – if indeed such accounts ever existed, as many of the soldiers were illiterate. The British officers were quick to blame their defeat in Tanga on substandard fighting equipment and the unfair defence tactics of the German troops.

With the advance in German territory coming to a halt by the end of 1914, both from the sea and from the land, in 1915 the European soldiers and officers entered one of the calmest and safest phases of any part of the war. The Indian army established itself on the border between German and British East Africa and successfully hindered further attacks or even conquest by the Schutztruppe by defending Jassini. The European colonial life – now concentrated in Nairobi, as trading declined in Mombasa – incorporated the British Indian officers as a welcomed addition to the social scene. Life became similar to peacetime duty, a

³⁹⁵ LA, AFE 24, George A. Pim, letter to his father, 17 February 1915; IWM, 74/98/1, Harold V. Lewis, letter to his mother, 24 January + 15 June 1916.

³⁹⁶ Paice, *Tip and Run. The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa*, pp. 40-58.

³⁹⁷ For details of the battle see Ross Anderson, 'The Battle of Tanga, 2-5 November 1914', *War in History* 8 (2001), pp. 294-322.

situation that most officers did not object to. Tennis matches, parties and especially hunting safaris became popular pastimes.³⁹⁸ One officer had sufficient leisure time to explore the different flogging devices used in East Africa to punish indigenous offenders and reported his findings back to India to suggest improvements for the punishments of Indian delinquents, which provides an unpleasant example of trans-colonial information exchange:

The “KIBOKO” is a most effective weapon, and I recommend it to the Indian Police as a far better way of stopping riots than the “lathi” [as] I defy any crowd to stand up to “KIBOKOS” for they sting like anything.³⁹⁹

The military stagnation of 1915 was changed rapidly by the decision of the British government to employ white South African and British troops by the end of this year. Bill Nasson and Anne Samson have shed some light on the murky picture of the South African troops fighting in the different theatres of war, but the role of South Africa in the First World War still remains much understudied.⁴⁰⁰ The diverse backgrounds shaped around an Afrikaner or British identity and their divided loyalties make them interesting groups to study, but the main focus has so far been on the situation in South Africa during the war and less on their deployment overseas.⁴⁰¹

4.4. Soldiers from Britain

With respect to their role in shaping the popular image at the time, and the subsequent memory of the war, the most relevant group to fight in the East African campaign were the British officers and soldiers shipped from Britain to

³⁹⁸ LA, AFE 24, George A. Pim, letter to his father, 1 May 1915.

³⁹⁹ IMW, P252, Kellie, Account: Experience of a Staff Captain in East Africa, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁰ Both books on the campaign in East Africa from a South African perspective mainly concentrate on the military and political dimension, see Samson, *British, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918. The Union comes of Age*; Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme. South Africa in the First World War*.

⁴⁰¹ Fedorowich, 'Sleeping with the Lion? The Loyal Afrikaner and the South African Rebellion of 1914-15'; Nasson, 'War Opinion in South Africa, 1914'.

Africa between 1915 and 1918. These men – with very few exceptions – were ordinary volunteers, and later conscripts, who either had fought already at the Western Front or for whom East Africa was their first deployment. Some of the officers – mostly through personal connections – were aware only weeks or days prior to their departure that they were to be deployed to East Africa. However, it seems that none of them specifically volunteered to serve overseas. Nonetheless this advance information allowed them to prepare themselves for their trip around the empire by purchasing guidebooks or novels as well as some personal equipment for the tropics.⁴⁰² However, for rank and file soldiers, and also for some officers, the news that they were to be sent to fight in East Africa was not revealed to them until they were already en route.⁴⁰³ Most were expecting to be fighting in France, and their reactions to the news that they were to fight in a theatre of war to which most had paid little or no attention were very mixed. Some of the more ambitious officers and very patriotic men reacted in a similar way to the British officers from India, discussed above. This group feared that their career and promotion chances would be compromised by fighting in this sideshow. Others saw no sense in defending their home country anywhere other than in Flanders. Ideas about imperial connectedness in defence, conquest (as found among the settlers in British East Africa), or the duty to defend the British Empire as whole (as found among the British Indian soldiers) cannot be found. Most men did not reflect much on their new deployment as the author Francis Brett Young: ‘I could perhaps even get a little satisfaction out of the fact that what we are doing is our duty as far as I realize what duty is, a plain thing, far removed from patriotic cant.’⁴⁰⁴

By 1916, at which point it was widely believed that the war in Europe would last for a long time and that service at the front was deadly and horrific, the dominant

⁴⁰² It is interesting that one soldier brought a selection of Rider Haggard novels, the classic colonial adventure literature, IWM, 06/35/1, Pakenham Erskine, letter to his parents, 27 March 1918.

⁴⁰³ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 11 February 1916.

⁴⁰⁴ Letter 480, 6 May 1916, in: Jacques Leclaire (ed.), *Tanga Letters to Jessie. Written by Francis Brett Young to his wife from German East Africa, 1916-1917* (London: Francis Brett Young Society, 2005), pp. 23-24.

reaction to the East African deployment became one of relief.⁴⁰⁵ Many men were happy to report to their partners and families that they were being posted to a theatre of war that seemed comparatively secure and that also allowed them the opportunity to 'see all the world a bit'.⁴⁰⁶

4.4.1. Journey to East Africa

Having negotiated the dangerous zone of German submarine activity in the North Atlantic, for most men the ship voyage turned into a pleasant experience comparable to a holiday experience or 'a long vivid dream'.⁴⁰⁷ Time was passed leisurely with reading, gaming or lounging on deck. For most officers, the experience resembled that of a seaside holiday combined with a sport club and thus had an air of familiarity.⁴⁰⁸ For most working class soldiers, this represented a completely novel and exciting endeavour. The atmosphere of idleness – scarcely interrupted by some fitness exercise or very limited drill – was such that some men even complained about losing their fitness and fighting ability or work ethic and that they might turn into 'a kind of jelly fish'.⁴⁰⁹ Not surprisingly, the deeply embedded class divide continued on ship, and the sentiment of comradeship and trust developed very slowly even among the officers and soldiers themselves. One soldier complained about 'several of our so called officers' that drink more than they should while at the same time have the under-ship [sic] searched for smuggled alcohol.⁴¹⁰ One N.C.O. compared the great 'amount of pilfering' on the ship with the trust and closeness of the 'society of real good fellows' at the

⁴⁰⁵ IWM, Con Shelf, Roland D. Mountford, letter to his father, March or February 1917.

⁴⁰⁶ IWM, 78/31/1, George F. Wilby, letter to his girlfriend, 29 April 1917.

⁴⁰⁷ IWM, Con Shelf, Roland D. Mountford, letter to his father, March or February 1917; LA, AFE 16, Quentin Madge, letter to his wife, 23 July 1917. Bart Ziino, 'A Kind of Round Trip. Australian Soldiers and the Tourist Analogy, 1914-1918', *War and Society* 25 (2006), pp. 39-52; Richard White, 'The Soldier as Tourist. The Australian Experience of the Great War', *War and Society* 5 (1987), pp. 63-78.

⁴⁰⁸ LA, AFE 16, Quentin Madge, letter to his wife, 29 July 1917.

⁴⁰⁹ LA, AFE 16, Quentin Madge, letter to his wife, 26 July 1917.

⁴¹⁰ IWM, 76/234/1, Thomas Moore, diary, 11 September 1916.

Western Front.⁴¹¹ Both in a positive and negative sense, this was not what anyone had expected war to be like.

Boredom quickly became the most prominent emotion. Accordingly, the first 'glimpse of Africa', for example in the form of a coaling stop in Freetown, Sierra Leone, or in some cases already on the Azores, was universally welcomed. As many of the men and officers looked forward to seeing something of the world (note: not Empire), sighting of the lush greenery of the African coastline was not only a relief from the monotony of the ocean, but also carried with it excitement and curiosity.⁴¹² Detailed descriptions of the beautiful scenery, with its mountain and the dark green flora, feature prominently in their letters and diaries. This generally positive attitude to the African landscape was not universally transferred onto the continent's inhabitants. Their first encounter with the indigenous population was with local traders and workers, who came up to the ships in small boats to help upload coal or to sell fruit and trinkets to the soldiers.

One can carve out three prototypical reactions to these encounters. The first cluster of reactions was the majority, who were positive in their overall description of the Africans. They neither used racialised language to describe their appearances and behaviour nor did they actively position themselves in a racial/social hierarchy. It is noteworthy that one working class soldier explicitly pointed out his feeling of solidarity and strongly disapproved of the mocking behaviour of some of his fellow soldiers.⁴¹³ The second cluster of reactions was subdued and undoubtedly influenced by racial superiority. It was common practice among the soldiers to throw pennies overboard and to enjoy observing the Africans diving for them, somewhat like an experience at a zoo.⁴¹⁴ Furthermore, even though their small boats, colourful if limited clothing, and friendly behaviour were conceived as positive and picturesque, there was no doubt of their inferior

⁴¹¹ IWM, Con Shelf, Roland D. Mountford, letter to his father, March or February 1917.

⁴¹² LA, AFE 16, Quentin Madge, letter to his wife, 5 August 1917.

⁴¹³ IWM, 79/3/1, A. Smith, diary, 1 September 1917.

⁴¹⁴ IWM, Con Shelf, Roland D. Mountford, letter to his father, March or February 1917; NAM, 2000-11-87, William J. Barber, letter to Mrs Buck, 14 June 1917.

status. The typical attributes of the childlike African, propagated both by supporters and critics of imperialism, sprang into action in the mind of these soldiers. It is noteworthy that most men did not feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable in the presence of an African as this situation – Europeans on a mighty steamship, Africans in small boats – represented the classic image most British of this era were familiar with through travel posters and reports, novels and pictures.⁴¹⁵ The third, and most limited, set of reactions was of open disgust and rejection of the Africans. The language they use to describe Africans is unashamedly racist and observations of mishaps, even accidents, by the Africans are greeted by this group with glee: ‘It was the funniest thing in the world to see these niggers yelling and struggling.’⁴¹⁶ It is surprising that these men, even in such an unthreatening and neutral situation of encounter – quite likely the first in their lives – nonetheless felt the urge to express such hostile sentiments. Africans were, after all, not the enemy they were sent out to fight.⁴¹⁷

It is worth pointing out that among these reactions, none of the soldiers expressed any sense of being excited about discovering parts of the British Empire. One felt pride that their pound sterling was accepted at these remote areas of the globe,⁴¹⁸ but this specific sentiment hardly mirrors any deeper emotion for the Empire as such, but rather stresses the strength of the metropole.⁴¹⁹ This constrained and rather passive experience of Africa and its inhabitants from the railing of the ship was for the soldiers the only glimpse they could get of Africa as only officers were allowed to leave the ship and explore the harbour and the town. Buying souvenirs and tasting exotic fruits enhanced, of course, the experience of a holiday outing.

⁴¹⁵ John M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

⁴¹⁶ IWM, 77/147/1, Herbert B. Maxwell, letter to his niece, 4 November 1917.

⁴¹⁷ Manuel Köppen, ‘Im Krieg mit dem Fremden. Barbarentum und Kulturkampf’, in Alexander Honold and Oliver Simons (eds.), *Kolonialismus als Kultur. Literatur, Medien, Wissenschaft in der deutschen Gründerzeit des Fremden* (Tübingen/Basel: Francke, 2002), pp. 263–288.

⁴¹⁸ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 21 February 1916.

⁴¹⁹ For the controversial debate on the importance of the Empire for ordinary British, see Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists. Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 164–226.

The second leg of their journey led them to South Africa. This remained generally uneventful with the exception of the obligatory celebrations when crossing the equator. Some officers – or, if present, priests or pastors – tried to use the time on board to prepare the soldiers for the task ahead. However, these talks and lectures were by no means regular or systematic, as the advice on tropical medicine may illustrate. The medical officers were aware of the potential dangers facing Europeans in the tropics. However, most of them had neither the specific knowledge nor training that would enable them to prepare the British troops to avoid infections, rashes or death.⁴²⁰ One medical officer lamented the ignorance of the War Office on tropical diseases and the futility of ‘going through an anti-gas school’ before his deployment.⁴²¹ They focused instead on general truisms to keep clean, to wash all body parts and clothes regularly and, most importantly, to avoid any intimate and sexual contact with indigenous women. The latter seemed to have been the main concern as several soldiers reported on the lectures they received on the issue with the medical officers using gross exaggerations, like claiming ‘that 50% of native females are unapproachable’ as they are carriers of STDs,⁴²² to illustrate the mortal dangers of immoral behaviour.⁴²³ The topic of sexual intercourse also engaged the imagination of the ordinary officer and soldier. Several men mentioned the possibility of encountering African women in their letters and assured their wives or fiancées that they would stay clear of any temptation. One soldier assures his girlfriend in Chelsea with a very drastic description about his faithfulness to her:

Never under any circumstances could I go so low, as to have anything to do with them [African women]. I have much more respect for an animal than a nigger, they are all rotten with disease in that part of the country, + we have strict orders [...] not to touch them.⁴²⁴

⁴²⁰ LA, AFE 06, N.S. Bruce, Interview October 1980.

⁴²¹ IWM, 77/147/1, Herbert B. Maxwell, letter to his niece, 4 November 1917.

⁴²² LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 21 February 1916.

⁴²³ Comp. Mark Harrison, ‘The British Army and the problem of venereal disease in France and Egypt during the First World War’, *Medical History* 39 (1995), pp. 133-158.

⁴²⁴ IWM, 78/31/1, George F. Wilby, letter to his girlfriend, 29 April 1917. Only one former veteran explicitly confirms that sexual intercourse took place between European soldiers and

What can be seen in these accounts is that even in the particular situation of being en route to war and into an unknown field, British men were able to draw on images and phantasies of imperial symbols deeply embedded in Edwardian minds. The split between fear of the Dark Continent (diseases) and its population (STDs) was counterbalanced by the blissful ignorance of the dangers of relying on European habitats (keeping clean) and the possibility of sexual conquests.⁴²⁵ The same pattern can be observed with regard to the African environment: fear of the unfamiliar forests and bush, with its potentially dangerous animals, was offset by the desire to go big game hunting and the prospect of obtaining and bringing home a trophy. This symbolic (re-)conquest of Africa, the submission of its inhabitants and its nature, followed the lines of the imperial adventure hero as portrayed in many popular media at the time.⁴²⁶ Strikingly, what is absent from their contemplations of Africa is the reason they were on the journey in the first place: the war and the Germans. The enemy is not mentioned specifically,⁴²⁷ and nor is there any speculation about the kind of warfare that might be expected in the topics. This issue also does not appear to be discussed between the officers and soldiers in lectures. Finally, the rationale for sending men from Europe to fight in Africa against other Europeans, and the potential aims of the campaign, are also not mentioned.

The second stop on the journey to their destination in East Africa was the Union of South Africa. Presuming that the majority of men and officers were in their 20s and 30s they would have childhood and adolescent memories of the Second South

African women. These arrangements seemed to be tolerated by the British Army as long as the women were examined by a doctor before. See LA, AFE 25, H. B. Pratt, Interview, 1975. See also the report by a concerned British missionary on the widespread prostitution in occupied German East Africa, CWS, Box 18, letter by J. A. Kambole Ross, 5 August 1919.

⁴²⁵ Levine, 'Battle Colors. Race, Sex, and Colonial Soldierly in World War I'.

⁴²⁶ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes. British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities*, pp. 1-3; Roderick P. Neumann, 'Ways of seeing Africa: Colonial Recasting of African Society and Landscape in Serengeti National Park', *Ecumene* 2 (1995), pp. 149-169; John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature. Hunting, Conversation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 147-165.

⁴²⁷ LA, AFE 28, Charles Shaw, Interview 1973 ('the enemy was "impersonal" something to be smashed').

African War, the most significant international event in the decades prior to 1914. If there was a place that should arouse the sentiments of pride or rejection of British imperialism, it would be the approach to Cape Town, Durban or Port Elizabeth, where the soldiers' fathers' generation disembarked to fight the Afrikaners.⁴²⁸ However, continuing the theme of a lack of any specific or general contemplation of the Empire, and of Britain's global role, none of the soldiers mentioned the South African War in connection to their own situation. One soldier reported with great surprise about the 'big show' the population put on at Empire Day as 'the people here [in South Africa] think much far more of it [the Empire] than they do in England.'⁴²⁹ Still, as these three port cities (unlike the larger towns in the interior) were the most 'English' places in South Africa, the soldiers were surprised by the familiarity of the towns' buildings, layout and population. These positive impressions were deepened through the enthusiastic reception they received from the white South Africans. The soldiers were cheered during the landing, treated to free tram-travel or free film, music and theatre performances.⁴³⁰ The officers were invited by middleclass families to private dinners and garden parties. To find so much similarity to their lives in Britain, the innovative urban development and technological progress at the end of the world perplexed many of the British soldiers, especially as the South African cities compared often favourably to their respective hometowns.⁴³¹ This sense of wonder at British achievement must be connected to the images of the South African War in the British propaganda effort, which centred on burned farms, the infamous concentration camps, and the sieges of remote small towns with their desperate population. To encounter South Africa as a safe, clean and friendly place must have provided the soldiers with a very comforting, if somewhat surprising, experience.

⁴²⁸ Andrew S. Thompson, 'Publicity, Philanthropy and Commemoration. British Society and the War', in Andrew S. Thompson and David Omissi (eds.), *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

⁴²⁹ IWM, 78/31/1, George F. Wilby, letter to his girlfriend, 29 May 1917.

⁴³⁰ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 9 March 1916.

⁴³¹ NAM, 2000-11-87, William J. Barber, letter to Mrs Buck, 24 June 1917.

Yet, South Africa also provided the soldiers, especially those who stayed longer than just a couple of days, with insights into racial relations between white Europeans and black Africans. Although South Africa had not yet adopted its policy of apartheid, informal social segregation was, of course, very visible. As in their earlier encounters with Africans during the first stop in their voyage, different men drew different conclusions from these observations. Some soldiers took the racial separation as a confirmation of their expectations about colonial society and colonial order and felt no need to question any bad treatment they witnessed towards blacks. Only few commented on the unjust treatment of the non-white population ('The blacks do the work, the whites do the bossing') and challenged the 'expertise' of the South Africans in regard to this treatment – a pattern that will also be observed later with respect to the colonial settlers in British East Africa.⁴³² Altogether, South Africa – or at least its coastal cities – remained an important reference point for the British soldiers when they were fighting in East Africa. It provided them with the feeling of a home nearer than England itself and most left South Africa with an overall positive impression. As the author Francis Brett Young wrote about his impression of Durban to his wife: 'It was interesting to see the type of people evolved by Natal's conditions even though one didn't altogether admire them.'⁴³³

4.4.2. Arrival in East Africa

The arrival in East Africa itself can be described by three different experiences. The troops from Europe either landed in Mombasa in British East Africa or, after the conquest of most of German East Africa, in Dar es Salaam. When the war shifted to the south of the colony and into Portuguese East Africa, the troops were landed in the small harbour town of Lindi. It is worth describing these three experiences in more detail, as they deeply impacted the minds of the men from

⁴³² LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 11 February 1916. See also IWM, 83/31/1, Albert W. Nichols, Memoir, 28 May 1918; RH, MSS Afr. s. 1173, Eric C. Page, letter to his sister, 2 December 1916.

⁴³³ Letter 478, 3 May 1916, in: Leclaire (ed.), *Tanga Letters to Jessie. Written by Francis Brett Young to his wife from German East Africa, 1916-1917*, p. 21.

Britain and would shape their impression of the war itself. Deeper exploration of the arrival experiences also allows for some contemplation of their likely expectations and states of mind before facing the enemy and the task ahead of them.

Arriving on British territory in Mombasa can be seen as a continuation of the positive association with South Africa and the feeling of holiday. One officer compares the scenery with mango trees and coconut palms to a film set in 'California with Charlie Chaplin', something far removed from reality.⁴³⁴ After disembarking, many were put straight on the train to Nairobi, a journey passing through beautiful and animal-rich territory which reminded one of a 'glorified zoo.'⁴³⁵ The safety and familiarity of a train journey, while also observing giraffes, lions and other large animals, was one of the quintessential 'colonial experiences' popularised by the growing tourism industry, especially after Roosevelt's safari.⁴³⁶ The soldiers enjoyed the journey and the scenery, both of which seemed to remove them further from the war rather than closer to it. Nairobi, which in the 1910s was still a rather undeveloped place with the charm of a frontier town, nonetheless provided the British with pubs, clubs and cinemas. Especially for officers, this offered plenty of opportunity to tap into the delights of the colonial lifestyle. Reports about tennis, golf and polo tournaments, and drunken nights in clubs can be found in diaries and letters,⁴³⁷ which caused great anger among those assigned to the front.⁴³⁸ A significant number of men and officers remained within the safety of the urban centres of British colonial rule in East Africa Mombasa, Nairobi and Entebbe through being assigned to base duties, for example organising depots, telegraph communication, censorship, or the

⁴³⁴ LA, AFE 18, James E. Mitchell, letter to his family, 30 November 1917.

⁴³⁵ LA, AFE 18, James E. Mitchell, letter to his family, 30 November 1917.

⁴³⁶ RH, MSS Afr. s. 2351, C. J. Bagenal, diary 1917, n.d. See also MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature. Hunting, Conversation and British Imperialism*, p. 50.

⁴³⁷ LA, GS1528, F. O. Stansfield, diary, 14 July 1918. See also J. R. Gregory, *Under the Sun. A Memoir of Dr. Roland Wilks Burkitt, of Kenya* (Nairobi: The English Press, 1951), p. 27.

⁴³⁸ Letter 526, 29 October 1917, in: Leclaire (ed.), *Tanga Letters to Jessie. Written by Francis Brett Young to his wife from German East Africa, 1916-1917*, p. 89.

training of African conscripts and recruits and did not 'hear one shot fired.'⁴³⁹ Although throughout 1916 some of these duties moved further south with the progressing frontline into conquered German territory, many men never left the urban settlements of European rule and certainly did not encounter any action. Of course this can be true for some soldiers serving in other theatres of war, but maybe the contrast was even starker in Africa.

Arriving after 1916 in Dar es Salaam, or the nearby harbour town of Bagamoyo, was an equally smooth transition from transit to arrival. Especially Dar es Salaam was – even before the war – considered the best settlement along the east coast of Africa mainly through its impressive natural harbour and the harbour front, as well as its strict settlement regulations, which gave the soldiers the impression of 'disembark[ing] in the orderly, clean German town'.⁴⁴⁰ Furthermore, by landing on German territory, here the British troops experienced something that none of their countrymen shared during the war: occupying German territory, taking over the administration, and encountering German civilians. This of course led to a significant boost in confidence regarding not only the victorious outcome of the campaign, but also the expectation of a swift ending: If the colony's capital had been occupied, the rest of the campaign would surely be easily won. Yet, the campaign against the German Schutztruppe after the fall of Dar es Salaam lasted for another 2½ years with the front moving further south towards the border between German and Portuguese East Africa.

Far away from the urban centres, the troops arriving from Europe at the end of 1916 and throughout 1917 mostly landed in the small coastal towns like Lindi or Kilwa. Lacking the facilities to allow large ships to harbour there, the men disembarked the troop ships on small boats, often on rough seas, to be carried to

⁴³⁹ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1173, Eric C. Page, letter to his sister, 3 June 1918. One British soldier, for example, spent his entire time in East Africa from 1916 to 1919 at the Army Service Corps at the Base Supply Depot, Dar Es Salaam in East Africa, see IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden.

⁴⁴⁰ IWM, 67/256/1, Jim Elliot, letter n.d. See also LA, AFE 18, James E. Mitchell, letter to his family, 18 September 1916.

the shore on the shoulders of African carriers.⁴⁴¹ Having reached land, the Europeans were then faced with a small, but full, settlement of soldiers, many of whom were injured or ill, of different nationalities, housed in precarious conditions and with very rudimentary infrastructure. As one soldier recalled of his arrival:

Lindi, I shall never forget you. This is where Africa began to take hold of me; its dreariness + brilliance, its squalor + magnificence. Over the pier should be hung "Abandon Hope".⁴⁴²

With very few European civilians left, social and cultural activities had to be provided by the military, a task that fell mostly to the YMCA. Furthermore, unlike the relatively mild climate in the towns further north, these southern places were perceived as 'unhealthy' due to the swamps and mangroves that provided breeding grounds for numerous insects. And instead of clearly defined lines between town and nature, sea and land, the soldiers experienced here a muddled fluidity of boundaries, something that they found difficult to adjust to. Ultimately, many men and officers had very little time to acclimatise themselves to these African surroundings or to their new role as soldiers, as they were swiftly sent on to their designated units inland.

Regardless of the point of their arrival, the journey to their place of deployment was generally not straight-forward. Especially officers travelling by themselves, who were often trying to find out how to reach their designated unit, were not only lost in military bureaucracy but also lost in a literal sense as they tried to find both a mode of transport and the correct route to their destination.⁴⁴³ One medical officer recalls his sentiment after arriving in Kilwa and being unable to gather any information about his employment: 'Nobody seemed to worry whether I came or not. I was just a nobody and [...] it wouldn't have mattered if I hadn't arrived at

⁴⁴¹ LA, AFE 36, S. T. Whitty, memoir n.d.

⁴⁴² IWM, 83/31/1/, Albert W. Nichols, diary, 8 August 1918.

⁴⁴³ LA, AFE 11, Arthur Victor Groves, report on war service in East Africa [1919]

all.⁴⁴⁴ This feeling of being lost and displaced was expressed by many men and officers and reflects their inability to identify with the purpose and aims of the campaign as discussed further below.

4.4.3. Connection with Home and with Africa

For the soldiers fighting in the First World War, communication with their families at home was an essential mechanism for coping with the stresses of life at the front. A number of studies have explored how the 'front mail' functioned as a reminder of 'normal' civilian life, providing mental relief, a perspective regarding something worth fighting for and also reminders of a home life worth returning to.⁴⁴⁵ Furthermore, parcels containing food, clothes, books and luxuries were important additions to the often meagre and repetitive cuisine and provided entertainment at the front or in the prisoner of war camp. Writing home about their life and experiences, however, was a more difficult endeavour.

At different times during the war, and for different countries, official censorship could be strict and intrusive. In contemporary accounts and memoirs, the 'letter' gains an exceptional status, and all belligerent powers went to great effort and expense to keep open the flow of communication. But self-censorship was more significant as soldiers tried to spare their families the harsh reality of life on the front. Finally, as important as the communication between front and home was communication at the front itself. Trench newspapers, despite their agendas and official propaganda, provided an important source of information relevant to a particular unit bringing events into context. These papers further functioned as an important resource for creating an identity for the soldiers as individuals and within larger groups: They provided both an outlet for frustration and a source of positive reaffirmation.

⁴⁴⁴ LA, AFE 06, N.S. Bruce, Interview October 1980.

⁴⁴⁵ Reimann, *Der große Krieg der Sprachen. Untersuchungen zur historischen Semantik in Deutschland und England zur Zeit des Ersten Weltkriegs*, pp. 117-120; Latzel, 'Vom Kriegserlebnis zur Kriegserfahrung. Theoretische und methodische Überlegungen zur erfahrungsgeschichtlichen Untersuchung von Feldpostbriefen'.

As mentioned earlier, the war experience of European soldiers serving in East Africa was distinctly different to those serving on the Western Front or any other European front as soldiers not only had to fight in a foreign territory, they also could not return home on leave and often found it difficult to stay in contact with their families. Their experience can be contrasted with that of the German soldiers of the Schutztruppe who mainly fought in their 'homeland' and in many cases could visit their families and friends from time to time, at least in the first two years of the war.⁴⁴⁶ Yet for those who wanted to keep in touch with their relatives in Europe it was difficult to communicate other than through letters smuggled via Portuguese East Africa. However, as virtually no genuine letters by Schutztruppen soldiers survived either in Tanzanian or German archives it is impossible to reconstruct a meaningful picture of their sentiments and motivation during the campaign as the memoirs which appeared after the war all glorified the campaign and the deeds of the Schutztruppe.

For the British soldiers employed in East Africa, the need to stay in touch with their relatives and to be informed of events in Europe was essential for emotionally surviving their time in East Africa which cut them off from most other sources of news. It is not surprising that discussions of the European fronts are much more prominent than discussions of events on the ground in German East Africa. Even though several soldiers commented on 'strict censorship', their letters show little or no sign of actual censorship activity.⁴⁴⁷ Both troop movement, and more importantly conditions, are discussed relatively explicitly. It is striking how closely interwoven the longing of the soldiers to get war news from Europe is with the news on family life. The air raids on London feature in a number of letters (even from soldiers whose families are in the countryside):

London must have had quite an exciting time with the Zepps. It is only a question of time before military authorities get down to methods of

⁴⁴⁶ Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika: Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegführung, 1885 bis 1918*, pp. 431-440.

⁴⁴⁷ LA, AFE 31. Ernest J. Speed, letter to his mother, n.d. [1917]; LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 3 April 1916.

dealing with this form of warfare. The people in London are having more excitement and danger than I am out here.⁴⁴⁸

Underlying all this was undoubtedly the fear of a German breakthrough at the Western Front and a possible invasion of Britain while one had to fight the war in Africa.

While soldiers on the Western Front longed for a return to the normality of life, those serving in East Africa explicitly longed for a return to civilisation itself. The fear of becoming unable to cope with civilian life was for them combined with the worry that living in Africa would lead to a form of barbarism. One of the soldiers explicitly declared that 'Civilization, London, are my dreams [...] and the West End the Mecca to which I must return.'⁴⁴⁹ Soldiers often mention in letters to their wives or parents how much effort they put into keeping up appearances and being informed about world politics and events in Europe. This was, perhaps, a way to prove that they still had contact with the 'normal world', and that they still had the ability to participate in civilised life.

If they were able to get hold of a British national newspaper some soldiers grew frustrated by how little attention the campaign in East Africa received in the British press.⁴⁵⁰ The few articles that did go beyond just covering the mere facts of the campaign received fierce criticism as the situation was perceived as being portrayed too positively and not reflecting the war experience of the soldiers themselves.⁴⁵¹ Nonetheless even those soldiers, or rather officers,⁴⁵² who wrote reports for their local paper often participated in the narrative of colonial

⁴⁴⁸ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1997, M. C. Masters, letter to his family, 5 November 1915; NAM, 1991-03-43, Alexander Frank Wallace, letter to his fiancé in Aberdeen, 24 November 1915.

⁴⁴⁹ IWM, 83/31/1/, Albert W. Nichols, diary, March 1919. See also LA, AFE 35, Thomas N. Whitehead, letter to his mother, 23 July 1916.

⁴⁵⁰ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1997, M.C. Masters, letter to his family, 6 November 1916.

⁴⁵¹ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 18 July 1916.

⁴⁵² For example Francis Brett Young who even provided photos for Illustrated London News: Letter 546, 28 December 1916, in: Leclaire (ed.), *Tanga Letters to Jessie. Written by Francis Brett Young to his wife from German East Africa, 1916-1917*, p. 101. Comp. *The Illustrated London News*, 148 (4047), 11 November 1916, p. 570.

adventure and focused less on the campaign itself, but rather provided 'a quaint story.'⁴⁵³ This is a pattern that we will encounter again in the discussion of memoirs in Chapter 6.

Although generalisations are difficult to make, it is safe to say that the average British soldier in East Africa felt more isolated ('as if we were exiled') than his counterpart in Europe.⁴⁵⁴ Personnel changes and fluctuation among the troops were very high, mainly due to illness, so personal relationships were even harder to forge than on the Western Front. Furthermore, there is no evidence that any form of newspaper existed to inform and entertain the soldiers. Communication was instead reliant on personal exchange and letters from home. While the mail system in Europe functioned well until the armistice, the same is not true for East Africa. Even soldiers serving at bases and depots – not to mention those in the field – were regularly left without post for weeks or even months, making the inefficient and insufficient postal system a major source of frustration, anger and complaint.⁴⁵⁵ Besides sending weekly, if not daily, letters to Britain (which seem to have arrived regularly), many soldiers gathered souvenirs and gifts to be sent home. Traditionally these consisted of bullets or other items taken from the enemy, often enhanced through carvings and other forms of personalisation. However, in addition to these war mementos were the much more sought-after souvenirs relating to Africa.⁴⁵⁶ Many soldiers bought objects made by African soldiers and civilians who often specifically produced them for a European taste, like carved statuettes or bracelets of elephant hair.⁴⁵⁷ Here the aspect of 'being on holiday' again comes into perspective. For most soldiers these souvenirs consisted of photographs and postcards often depicting flora and fauna as well small objects purchased from trading stores. Yet for those with a taste for the more exotic and

⁴⁵³ LA, AFE 24, George A. Pim, letter to his mother, 10 March 1915.

⁴⁵⁴ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 1 December 1916.

⁴⁵⁵ NAM, 2000-11-87, William J. Barber, letter to Mrs Buck, 16 February 1918; LA, AFE 28, Charles Shaw, interview February 1973; IWM, 78/31/1, George F. Wilby, letter to his girlfriend, 18 August 1918.

⁴⁵⁶ Richard Waller, 'Subversive Material. African Embodiments of Modern War', in Nicholas J. Saunders and Paul Cornish (eds.), *Contested Objects. Material Memories of the Great War* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 88-103.

⁴⁵⁷ IWM, 06/35/1, Pakenham Erskine, letter to his parents, 3 November 1918

expensive, a leopard or lion skin,⁴⁵⁸ 'original' tribal items taken from or exchanged with Africans, or even the notorious kiboko (whip) were sent back to Britain.⁴⁵⁹ One can only wonder about the reaction of the family receiving a whip, or the girlfriend receiving a postcard depicting a chain gang without any comment by its sender on the scene displayed.⁴⁶⁰

Yet, for most British soldiers deployed in East Africa the potential holiday element was quickly replaced by despair about the disorganisation and ineffectiveness of the campaign. After twelve months of service in German East Africa one soldier sums up his sentiments as follows:

Everything out here is so miserable and depressing with nothing but muddling along with very little apparent object and everyone one meets is full of pessimism and general fed-up-ness. The whole place and life is so deadly monotonous that one can never get any relaxation of any kind. Of course we are hundreds of miles from any attempt at civilization, and even then it is nothing to boast about.⁴⁶¹

Many British soldiers shared this feeling of fighting the wrong war in the wrong place as 'they would ten times rather be in France than' in East Africa.⁴⁶² This attitude also manifested itself in the discussion of the war aims in East Africa.

4.5. War Aims in East Africa

As mentioned in the previous discussion of the journey to Africa, the vast majority of British soldiers arriving from Europe had no concept of what they were fighting for in East Africa, or why. In this regard they differed from their white comrades who were residents of the colonies (and South Africa, which

⁴⁵⁸ LA, AFE 35, Thomas North Whitehead, letter to his father, 22 July 1916; LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 20 May 1917.

⁴⁵⁹ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 15 March 1917.

⁴⁶⁰ IWM, 74/48/1, Major General Harold V. Lewis, DSO MC, letter to Miss Jones-Lloyd, 28 August 1916.

⁴⁶¹ LA, AFE 16, Quentin Madge, letter to his wife, 19 August 1918.

⁴⁶² IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 1 June 1916.

wanted to gain territory) and from professional soldiers. In the following section, the outlook and expectation of these different groups will be discussed.

As raised earlier the professional officers the British Army in India and also the various colonial police forces that were semi-military (e.g. Rhodesia) expressed a strong desire to fight in Europe rather than Africa.⁴⁶³ Employment in East Africa was seen as a distraction from the main war effort and harmful to their career prospects. This attitude can be observed among the British Indian officers throughout the campaign as they could neither identify with the conquest of German East Africa, which they regarded as inferior territory, nor could they derive any satisfaction from commanding their troops whom many regarded as sub-standard or 'useless swine'.⁴⁶⁴ As one officer of the Indian Army reported:

From what I saw of the country it was hard to imagine what we were fighting for, and I felt that the best thing to do was to give the country to Germans and let them live there.⁴⁶⁵

Professional officers of the King's African Rifles, however, could easily identify with the idea of 'defending' British East Africa and took pride in using their African troops in battle. Together with the colonial volunteers, they saw the campaign in East Africa as their contribution in a world-wide effort to end the war and beat the Germans.⁴⁶⁶ Although the annexation of German East Africa was not part of the official war aims, as discussed in Chapter 2, the press in British East Africa took the attitude that the occupied territory would remain in the hands of the British. Although the propaganda still talked about the defence of British East Africa as late as 1916/17, for most soldiers it was clear that they were part of a

⁴⁶³ IWM, 02/6/1, Captain Laurence A. Russell, letter by his friend M. Daffon, 21 September 1914; NAM, 1991-03-43, Alexander Frank Wallace, letter to his fiancé, 31 October 1915; LA, AFE 31. Ernest J. Speed, letter to his mother, 10 August 1914.

⁴⁶⁴ NAM, 2006-12-60, Wilfred J. Mitchell, letter to his mother, 2 February 1916.

⁴⁶⁵ IMW, P252, Kellie, Account: Experience of a Staff Captain in East Africa, p. 15.

⁴⁶⁶ RH, MSS Afr. s. 776, Theodore R. Williams, diary, [n.d.] September 1914. Note a similar attitude by a British officer from Nigeria deployed in German East Africa, see RH, MSS Afr. s. 2051, Harry G. Miller-Sterling, letter to his mother, 22 September 1917.

conquest. Here there was a potential for conflict to arise as the South African troops were also under the impression that they were fighting for an enlargement of the Union of South Africa – either in the form of German territory itself or German East Africa as a prize for territorial exchange with either Portugal or Belgium.⁴⁶⁷ None of the British soldiers fighting in East Africa shared the views expressed by British East or South African soldiers as one noted in his diary:

We hear that Germany wants Peace, and exchange what she holds for the Colonies, well I will give her my bit of this I don't want it, only put me on a ship for Blighty.⁴⁶⁸

The idea of 'conquest' stood in sharp contrast with the self-image of the British troops as 'defenders' of British territory. The same British soldier recalls a speech by General Shepherd before the handover of the overall command to the South Africans at the beginning of 1916:

If it had not been for us the Germans would be in Nairobi now, and that we were only defending British East Africa, but it had been decided to take German East – so General Smuts the Boer general had come.⁴⁶⁹

Despite some soldiers referring to the defence of British East Africa, it was clear that the war took place on German territory and that from mid-1916 onwards the German Schutztruppe was in no position to mount any serious attack on British East Africa.

Also absent is an expression of the idea that this campaign contributed to a global effort of defending the British Empire, or that the action in German East Africa could somehow help the troops on the Western Front.⁴⁷⁰ The longer the campaign

⁴⁶⁷ Samson, *British, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918. The Union comes of Age*, pp. 149-170.

⁴⁶⁸ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 15 December 1916.

⁴⁶⁹ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 23 February 1916.

⁴⁷⁰ IWM, 79/3/1, A. Smith, diary, 19 December 1917.

continued, the more frustration increased over being ‘trapped’ in Africa as these soldiers could not see any purpose in their service and sacrifice.⁴⁷¹ This is equally true for those soldiers who were active on the front and those who were working in camps and depots, as they worried ‘about how much more use [they] would be at home than sitting in the middle of Africa and playing Patience’.⁴⁷² The lack of identification with the Empire in general, and with the colonial possession in Africa in particular, was increased by the interactions with the local colonial population of British East Africa. The perceived attitude of the civilian colonials, as snobbish and arrogant, made it even harder to sustain further the argument of defence.⁴⁷³ The civilian administration and population of Nairobi undertook efforts to counterbalance this negative impression and began promoting colonial British East Africa and tried to ‘convince young fellows now out here to remain and live a free life in this wonderful country.’⁴⁷⁴ Yet this soldier from London sums up the sentiment shared by many of soldiers from Britain:

Well, he [a colonial from Nairobi] may find here a Paradise on earth, but the lecture has still failed to alter my opinion that glorious England is the nearest approach to Heaven this earth can offer.⁴⁷⁵

Generally, the colonies were not worth defending and not worth conquering as German East Africa ‘was fit only for a native or a Hun to inhabit’.⁴⁷⁶ This English soldier was appalled by the devastation the Europeans and their war have brought to Africa and somewhat questioned colonialism in general: ‘Does our vaunted civilization go for naught? Are our intellects spell-bound by tradition? Here,

⁴⁷¹ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 7 June 1917.

⁴⁷² LA, AFE 16, Quentin Madge, letter to his wife, 29 September 1917.

⁴⁷³ LA, AFE 12, Edmund W. Hancock, diary, 23 November 1918; LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 26 November 1916; RH, MSS Afr. s. 2351, C. J. Bagenal, diary 1917, n.d.

⁴⁷⁴ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 2 September 1917. See also LA, GS1528, F. O. Stansfield, letter to his parents, 2 November 1918.

⁴⁷⁵ LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 2 September 1917.

⁴⁷⁶ IWM, 83/31/1/, Albert W. Nichols, diary, 28 May 1918

Nature was beautiful, and daily we are doing our utmost to render the country desolate!’⁴⁷⁷

The British soldiers admired their South African comrades, as they seemed to muster much more enthusiasm for fighting this campaign.⁴⁷⁸ This absence of abstract war-aims and a strong desire for peace can be found among many soldiers from all belligerent nations. However, it is interesting that there is little evidence that the soldiers in East Africa much cared about the outcome of the campaign itself. Only very few soldiers – mostly very young men – express any hatred towards the German troops and the aim of ‘catching’ them euphemistically disguised the deadly aspect of the war. It is noteworthy that Lettow-Vorbeck does not appear prominently in the letters and diaries of British soldiers. The amalgamation of Lettow-Vorbeck with the German Schutztruppe as a whole happened only after the end of the war and features prominently in memoirs by both British and German veterans as will be discussed further in Chapter 6.⁴⁷⁹

To some extent, the German troops were in an easier position to justify their participation in the campaign. As they were conscripted and unable to leave the colony to fight anywhere else, they had little space for wondering whether they could be more usefully deployed elsewhere. And any doubts during the first days of the war were swept aside with the early victories of the Schutztruppe. The British bombardment of Dar es Salaam and the failed landing attempt at Tanga left little doubt in the minds of the German colonials that the British were aiming to conquer their colony. This feeling of a defensive war was deeply linked with the war in Europe. Their goal was to hold out long enough for a German victory to be achieved against the Allies in Europe. Lettow-Vorbeck’s later argument that the Schutztruppe aimed to hold as many British troops as possible was not discussed at the time. The lack of ego-documents makes it impossible to say how

⁴⁷⁷ IWM, 83/31/1/, Albert W. Nichols, diary, 8 August 1917. See also IWM, 71/70/1, Private Taylor, letter to his wife, 10 January 1917.

⁴⁷⁸ LA, AFE 35, Thomas N. Whitehead, letter to his mother, 16 June 1916; RH, MSS Afr. s. 2351, C. J. Bagenal, diary 1917, n.d.

⁴⁷⁹ Michels, *“Der Held von Deutsch-Ostafrika.” Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Ein preußischer Kolonialoffizier*, pp. 306-310.

the perspective on the likely outcome of the war, and consequently morale, changed after the British conquest of most of the colony. Even the celebrated endurance of the remainder of the Schutztruppe, which fought in Portuguese East Africa in 1917/18, cannot be seen as typical, as the troops now consisted of only of 800 white men with a dynamic more comparable to a guerrilla unit. The average German soldier had by this stage fallen ill or became a prisoner of war – to be either interned or deported. Most British accounts reflect the relief of the German combatants at no longer being in the field.⁴⁸⁰ Yet at the same time they expressed a strong belief in the victorious outcome of the war in Europe. Indeed, in 1916/17 one could say that the successful British soldiers in East Africa had a more pessimistic view of the overall outcome of the war than the beaten German troops.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the expectation, preparation and motivation of various distinct groups of European soldiers and officers employed during the East African campaign. On both the British and German sides, there were professional soldiers present in the colonies and settler volunteers and who took up arms at the outbreak of the war. In addition, on the British side there were recruits from Europe deployed to fight for their country on African soil.

Contrasting these different groups, the volunteers and recruits from German and British East Africa had a clearer objective of what to fight for. In some sense they were fighting for the defence of their home and for the defence of their respective empires. Similarly, the professional armies (e.g., K.A.R and the British Indian Army) could rationalise their involvement in defending the British Empire. Even if they would have perhaps preferred deployment elsewhere else, they easily adapted to the particularities of colonial warfare and African colonial life.

⁴⁸⁰ LA, AFE 31. Ernest J. Speed, letter to his mother, 8 August 1917.

Uniquely, the European soldiers serving in East Africa faced a double challenge: not only did they have to adapt to the new situation of being at war, but also to the colonial context. Without being embedded somehow in the colony – either as a professional soldier or a settler – the soldiers from Europe did not have a solid rationale for fighting there. Abstract notions of Empire and colony were clearly not enough. In the absence of these motives, the experience of the war within this particular group was somehow dislocated. Ultimately, this group was not sufficiently prepared for the reality of war in East Africa, or anywhere other than the Western Front. On their voyage to Africa they received neither the practical nor intellectual tools for engaging in warfare in the colonies. Instead their voyage distanced them from the meaningful things that they might have been prepared to fight for, namely their families and home. On arrival in Africa, the sense of connection to each other (i.e., comradeship) that might have replaced these more obvious motivations also did not develop. As such, it was not clear what they are fighting for and many felt that they were fighting the wrong war.

5. Balancing Friends and Enemies: Interactions between Occupier and Occupied in German East Africa

5.1. Introduction

Over the last decade, the experience of territorial occupation during the First World War has attracted growing research attention.⁴⁸¹ While it is possible to see parallels to the general pattern of experiences of occupation in Europe, the situation in East Africa differed in many dimensions, both for the occupier and the occupied. The conquest of German East Africa was more than just a 'by-product' of defeating the Schutztruppe, but instead this became a war aim in its own right.⁴⁸² Corresponding with the success of the war in Africa was a growth in the propaganda efforts by colonial and nationalist groups in Britain and France, who argued against any return of the occupied colonial possessions to Germany.⁴⁸³ Nonetheless, the Allied powers, with the exception of South Africa, were reluctant to officially embrace a policy of imperial expansion and annexation. For people living in the colonies, both African and European, there was little doubt that the military defeat of the German troops would lead to an end of German rule. Obviously the prospect of a change of power meant very different things for the African and European civilians in East Africa.

⁴⁸¹ For example a special issue: Sophie De Schaepdrijver, 'Military Occupation, Political Imaginations, and the First World War', *First World War Studies* 4 (2013), pp. 1-5; Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire. The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 121-165; Jens Thiel, *'Menschenbassin Belgien'. Anwerbung, Deportation und Zwangsarbeit im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Essen: Klartext, 2007); Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction. Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War*, pp. 41-50; Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914. A History of Denial*, pp. 9-78.

⁴⁸² De Schaepdrijver, 'Military Occupation, Political Imaginations, and the First World War', p. 2.

⁴⁸³ For a general overview see Digre, *Imperialism's New Clothes. The Repartition of Tropical Africa, 1914-1919*. For Britain the standard is still Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919*. For France see Christopher M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, 'France, Africa, and the First World War', *Journal of African History* 19 (1978), pp. 11-23; *Ibid.*, 'The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims, 1914-1918'. On the sub-imperialism of India and South Africa see Robert J. Blyth, *The Empire of the Raj: India, Eastern Africa and the Middle East, 1858-1947* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 93-129; Herbert Lüthy, 'India and East Africa: Imperial Partnership at the End of the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 6 (1971), pp. 55-85; Samson, *British, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918. The Union comes of Age*, pp. 149-170; P. R. Warhurst, 'Smuts and Africa. A Study in Sub-Imperialism', *South African Historical Journal* (1984), pp. 82-100.

The British wartime propaganda, supported by some members of the mission community, presented the campaign as a fight against the incompetent and callous German colonialism, which mismanaged the colonial economy and exploited the African population. While this narrative fitted well with the overall wartime stereotype of Germany as a ruthless and inhuman regime, it had little to do with the real motivations of the British government, let alone its South African allies and the colonials on the spot. Far from aiming to 'liberate' the Africans of German East Africa, the overall goal was for a smooth and peaceful transition of power from German to British rule. It is, therefore, not surprising that none of the European soldiers involved in the campaign, and the subsequent invasion of German East Africa, referred to the liberation of the colony's indigenous population from German colonial rule. If the politics of occupation are 'extensions of the domain of political imaginations',⁴⁸⁴ the British colonial administration never imagined anything but an occupation that was not organised along well-established colonial and imperial rules.⁴⁸⁵ The main concern was to win the war against the German Schutztruppe, and accordingly methods, both 'amicable' and otherwise, were employed to utilise African civilians towards this goal. These were either drafted into the army or, more often, used as porters or servants. Only very few members of the African elite, who typically got (re-)instated into local positions of power, could regard the occupation as liberation.

For the European civilian population the occupation had, to some extent, a greater impact. Unlike African civilians, or civilians in occupied Europe, they were not forced to support the war effort of the occupying forces through administrative and other labour. Yet, they were also largely excluded from the running of the colony and its economy. Some plantation owners or shopkeepers were able to maintain their business for a while, but the majority of German colonials entered a state of limbo in which they became dependent on the occupying forces for their

⁴⁸⁴ De Schaepdrijver, 'Military Occupation, Political Imaginations, and the First World War', p. 3.

⁴⁸⁵ For an example of the economic aspect of colonial transition see Richard A. Goodridge, 'In the Most Effective Manner'? Britain and the Disposal of the Cameroons Plantations, 1914-1924', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 29 (1996), pp. 251-277.

upkeep. This situation was intensified as the areas occupied and administered by the British were deprived of men of military age, as these had either withdrawn with the Schutztruppe or been deported as prisoners of war. In January 1917, when civilian administration was established in the northern part of the colony, there were 329 women and 395 children but only 135 men remaining.⁴⁸⁶

The Allied soldiers and the military, as well as the civilian, administration were unsure about how to treat these German civilians. On the one hand, these were people in a precarious situation, in many cases deprived of their husbands and fathers, often housed in temporary accommodation with dwindling resources. Furthermore, besides being members of the 'enemy nation' they were also representatives of the European colonial elite. As such, they required careful treatment so as not to upset the balance of power towards the African population. On the other hand, the German civilians were, of course, a hindrance to the successful implementation of Allied control, and were a constant reminder to the African population of the potentially transient nature of colonial rule. It is this combination of factors, and how they shaped the encounters between the invading forces and German civilians, the policies during the occupation, and the subsequent deportation of all 'enemy subjects', that will be focus of discussion in this chapter.

The available sources that discuss the occupation of German East Africa are varied and provide different perspectives on these events. Several files of the German colonial administration on civilian life during the war survived in the Tanzania National Archives. These offer an insight into how the German administration and public tried to continue with 'normal life' right up until the conquest of the colony. In particular the files from the frequent court cases and reports by district and provincial commissioners allow one to develop a reasonably rounded picture from most parts of the colonies. Several missionaries kept private or official reports of the life on the mission stations, which in many cases remained functioning throughout the occupation. The most interesting

⁴⁸⁶ NA, CO 694/1, 13737, letter by Byatt, 14 March 1917.

insight into ordinary life comes from the aforementioned Clement Gilman, the Anglo-German resident of Tabora (see Chapter 3 on internment). His perspective as a former inmate of the internment camp is of course tainted, but he is also aware of this fact and tries to describe as neutrally as possible the events around him. In addition to his private diary, he also wrote a detailed summary of the town's occupation by Allied troops from September to December 1916.⁴⁸⁷ Finally, the Bundesarchiv in Berlin holds a number of accounts by German colonials who were interviewed or asked by the German colonial office to sum up their war experience, the occupation and subsequent deportation. Despite some of these being insightful sources, they are also documents intended to stress the hardship and sacrifice of the German population during the war and the unjustified expulsion from the colony by the British. Considering these accounts together it is possible to gain a somewhat rounded picture of the life of German civilians before and during the collapse of the colonial order in 1916 and 1917.

The British perspective on the occupation can be explored through the diaries and letters of the British soldiers who observed and commented on the fate of the German civilians they encountered during and after the campaign. Furthermore, the emerging British colonial administration was, of course, very concerned about the future of the remaining German population and the files of the Colonial Office provide insight into the dilemmas faced by the British men on the spot and in London.

5.2. Life in German East Africa prior to the Occupation

After the excitement of the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, and the subsequent military action in Dar es Salaam, Tanga and along the border in the following month, the year of 1915 saw a return of normality to many European civilians in German East Africa. As the feared uprising by the African population,

⁴⁸⁷ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, A Short diary of the Days of the Occupation of Tabora.

or an invasion of the colony by Allied troops, did not manifest itself, most Germans habituated to the new realities of war. It is difficult to reconstruct the sentiments at this time as the accounts given by returning colonials after the war, and the memoirs written by colonials that appeared during and immediately after the war, were already clustered around the three main propaganda themes of the colonial society at war: the resourcefulness and stoicism of the German civilians, the loyalty of the African soldiers and civilians, and the sacrifice of the Germans in general.⁴⁸⁸ To some extent this is also true for the few letters that were written during the war and that survived in mission archives – their writers were aware that these letters would be read by persons other than the immediate addressee, including a British or neutral censor.

Notwithstanding these caveats, it can be seen that the experience of occupation was shaped by the particular conditions the population previously lived under. The generally stable conditions, both on the military front and with respect to the quality of life in 1915, led to a general optimism that the colony would not be occupied.⁴⁸⁹ The success in preventing the landing of British troops in the battle of Tanga in November 1914 through ‘hard as steel and invincible resistance’, and the perceived victory in the battle of Jassini in January 1915 especially bolstered patriotic enthusiasm.⁴⁹⁰

In terms of the material conditions, the missionary Dannholz reports on ample rain and good harvest to his interned colleague Hoffmann in June 1915: ‘It seems

⁴⁸⁸ Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkrieg* (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1919); Ada Schnee, *Meine Erlebnisse während der Kriegszeit in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1918); Ludwig Deppe, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck durch Afrika* (Berlin: August Scherl, 1919); Ludwig Deppe and Charlotte Deppe, *Um Deutsch-Ostafrika. Erinnerungen von Charlotte und Ludwig Deppe* (Dresden: Beutelspacher, 1925).

⁴⁸⁹ BA, R1001/871, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 8, letter by Governor Schnee an Minister Solf, Tabora 20 May 1915.

⁴⁹⁰ AFSt/M, 32, Nachrichten, Korrespondenz während des Krieges, 1914-1916, report by mission inspector Weishaupt, spring 1915. RH, MSS Afr. s. 117, Gillman, Clement, diary 15; 30 January 1915.

that the Good Lord wants to give us extra plentiful [sic].⁴⁹¹ Most Germans also reported that they are not suffering any want, even though some 'luxury items' could not be obtained anymore.⁴⁹² These luxury items, like sugar, alcohol and processed meat, had a special status in the colonial way of life.⁴⁹³ Although the loss of these could have created a negative interpretation of the situation, the production of ersatz products created a sense of autarky and self-sufficiency and provided a source of strength. In the years previous to the war there was an attempt to incorporate African ingredients, mainly game meat, into the colonial's diet to create a stronger sense of belonging. Yet the main cuisine for most colonial Germans was almost exclusively based on preserved food imported from Europe supplemented with fresh produce in the form of green vegetables and potatoes grown locally. In preparation for a great colonial exhibition in Dar es Salaam, which was planned to be opened on 15 August 1914, German East Africa was exceptionally well-stocked with European food.⁴⁹⁴

As the stock began to dwindle, there were debates over who was allowed to consume what and which prices could be asked for certain products that were in danger of running out. As much of the trade in groceries was dominated by Indians, these were accused of profiteering. These accusations resembled earlier narratives based on anti-Semitic stereotypes. The government was reluctant to intervene, fearing hoarding and the creation of a black market. However, it encouraged both African and European farmers to grow food instead of cash crops and initiated the production of produce previously imported. As missionary Raum reports home on Whitsunday 1915: 'Sugar and salt are now produced in the country, and recently one manufactures even very nice soap here.'⁴⁹⁵ By that time,

⁴⁹¹ AFSt/M, 317, Dannholz, Jakob Janssen, letter to Johannes Hoffmann (interned in Ahmednagar), Tanga, 1 June 1915. See also HAB, 2/52-6, Lutindi 1915-1916, letter by Wilhelm Bokerman to his family, Lutindi, 15 Mai 1915.

⁴⁹² AFSt/M, 33, Nachrichten, Korrespondenz während des Krieges, 1916-1918, letter by Paul and Frieda Rother, Gonja, 11 June 1915.

⁴⁹³ Pesek, *Ende eines Kolonialreichs. Ostafrika im Ersten Weltkrieg*, p. 218.

⁴⁹⁴ BA, R1001/873, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 10, report by governor's office, n.d.

⁴⁹⁵ LAELKB, Bestand 205 Missionarsfamilien Raum und Wärlh, 98 Korrespondenz Johannes Raum, letter to his family, Marango, Whitsun 1915.

cigarettes were also being produced in the colony.⁴⁹⁶ The development of ersatz stuff was spearheaded by the Amani Institute near Moshi, which was established to provide basic research into tropical agriculture and medicine. Being an academic and scientific institution it never gained much publicity prior to the war, but afterwards it developed into a symbol of German inventiveness and resourcefulness. Throughout the war it was able to extract quinine, which at the time was considered a remedy against malaria, but also alcohol like whiskey and artificial sugar. It is unclear how popular these items were with the European public, for whom consuming ersatz products served as a daily reminder that the colony was cut off from the outside world. Yet it appears that the ersatz food was still more popular than consuming African food. As all accounts on this issue are based on post-war statements it could also be an indicator of retrospective attempts to portray the colony as not becoming 'Africanised'. It should also be noted that European civilians living in the colony's main centres never lacked food, even though it might not have been their food of choice, and that at the same time devastating famines swept through German East Africa affecting the African population.⁴⁹⁷ These were, to some extent at least, caused directly through the policy of the Schutztruppe in destroying farmland.

It is noteworthy that the positive view of the living conditions in the colony, and the general sense of confidence,⁴⁹⁸ stood in contrast to concerns about life in Germany and the changes to this about which most colonials had little or no little information.⁴⁹⁹ Yet, despite the generally positive assessment of their situation, there also seemed to be growing concern over how long the colony could remain in a state of war-readiness. With a substantial number of men being called up to serve in, or for, the Schutztruppe, women were taking over the running of

⁴⁹⁶ RH, MSS Afr. s. 117, Gillman, Clement, diary 16; 15 February 1916.

⁴⁹⁷ Maddox, 'Mtunya. Famine in Central Tanzania, 1917-1920'; Jan-Bart Gewald, 'Colonial Warfare: Hehe and World War I, the Wars Besides Maji Maji in South-Western Tanzania', *African Historical Review* 40 (2008), pp. 1-27.

⁴⁹⁸ LAELKB, Bestand 205 Missionarsfamilien Raum und Wärtl, 98 Korrespondenz Johannes Raum, letter to his family, Marango, Whitsun 1915.

⁴⁹⁹ AFSt/M, 33, Nachrichten, Korrespondenz während des Krieges, 1916-1918, letter by Paul and Frieda Rother, Gonja, 11 June 1915. See also RH, MSS Afr. s. 117, Gillman, Clement, diary 15; 13 September 1914.

plantations and farms. The pre-war problems with African labourers became more pronounced through the high demand on carriers and askari. One missionary wife declared in June 1915 that ‘all work has come to an end. Our buildings, with the foundations just finished, are overgrown with native beans [Eingebornen-Bohnen].’⁵⁰⁰ Even in this small quote, European progress and enterprise can be seen to be literally strangled by the African nature. The stalemate of the war also had a negative effect on the men serving, as ‘people, who since months had to endure posts like protecting the rail lines, were getting bored.’⁵⁰¹ At the end of 1915, Gillman observed:

a decrease in the, originally, so highly strung patriotic enthusiasm which, I presume, is closely connected with the fact that from day to day sacrifices are asked for in an increasing measure and that more and more of those who, up to now, had been spared are called up for “patriotic” duties. Nobody, as yet, dares openly complain and confess that they are fed up with patriotism but secretly, in private intercourse the high degree of satiety and even of disgust reached, may easily be noticed.⁵⁰²

This growing concern was intensified in early 1916 with the arrival of news that the Cameroons, the only other remaining German colony, had been occupied by Anglo-French troops and consequently that more attention and resources would be dedicated to conquering German East Africa. Again Gillman detects that this prompted further concern, and a further decline of the Germans’ spirits, even ‘though nobody, of course, as yet owes up to it openly’.⁵⁰³ Their concern was justified—the concentrated and renewed effort of the combined East and South African, Indian and British units, which attacked the colony from the North, and

⁵⁰⁰ AFSt/M, 199, Dannholz, Jakob Janssen, letter by Aline Wagner to her parents, 6 June 1915.

See also CWM, Box 17, Folder 1, letter by E. H. Clark, Kafukala, 29 November 1914.

No. 5738, Arrival No. 1102. For the discussion of food see also Pesek, *Ende eines Kolonialreichs. Ostafrika im Ersten Weltkrieg*.

⁵⁰¹ BA, R1001/871, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 8, Nov. 1915 – Feb. 1916, letter by Schnee to Solf, Tabora, 20 May 1915.

⁵⁰² RH, MSS Afr. s. 117, Clement Gillman, diary 16, 30 December 1915.

⁵⁰³ RH, MSS Afr. s. 117, Clement Gillman, diary 16, 15 February 1916.

the Belgian approach from the West in March 1916, led to the rather quick collapse of the northern part of the German colony.

As has already been suggested, the prolonged campaign also led to a shift in the gender dynamic of the colonial society. Mirroring all European colonies in Africa, there were four times as many European men as women in German East Africa at the outbreak of the war. The 'colonial women question' had been a fiercely debated issue between different colonial interest groups.⁵⁰⁴ While sections of the colonial office and colonial scientists rejected the settlement of women and children in the tropical colonies for economic and health reasons, most planters and settlers believed that only a permanent European colonial presence in German East Africa would secure the future of the colony. They rejected the assumption that European families could not thrive in a tropical climate as long as they avoided physical labour and relied on African workers. Despite these differences, the shared understanding of European colonials was that white women held a special position in the colonial hierarchy. They were regarded as harbingers of European culture and civilisation at the top of the colonial hierarchy, but at the same time they required special protection against the damaging and dangerous influences of the African environment and especially African men. Accordingly the recruitment of most men of military age and their long service created a dilemma for the German colonials. Many civilians, but also members of the colonial administration, were concerned about leaving European women and children behind on isolated farms and plantations in the hinterland, in fear of attacks by rebellious Africans. While the larger towns on the coast, especially Tanga and Dar es Salaam, were safe with respect to any potential uprising, these were also exposed to shelling by the British navy, which bombarded both towns several times in autumn 1914 causing substantial damage to public buildings and private houses. This situation led to the relocation of women and children from

⁵⁰⁴ For the debate on the role of women in German colonies see Nancy Reagin, 'The imagined 'Hausfrau': National Identity, Domesticity, and Colonialism in Imperial Germany', *Journal of Modern History* 71 (2001), pp. 54-87; Katharina Walgenbach, 'Die weiße Frau als Trägerin deutscher Kultur.' *Koloniale Diskurse über Geschlecht, 'Rasse' und Klasse im Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt (Main)/New York: Campus, 2005); Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), pp. 79-130.

the coast to the larger settlements in the hinterland, like Wilhelmstal, Morogoro or Tabora.⁵⁰⁵

Several plantations were also managed by German woman. One particular situation was the large plantation of Tom von Prince who was one of the most prominent colonials and belonged to the settler elite until he fell in the battle of Tanga in 1914.⁵⁰⁶ His wife Magdalene von Prince took over the management of the estate at the outbreak of war and continued after the death of her husband. The colonial administration was ambivalent about this arrangement, especially as the plantation ran into problems.⁵⁰⁷ On the one hand, it supported her financially as it would create an 'awfully embarrassing impression if the von Prince's plantation would have to close during the war'.⁵⁰⁸ On the other hand, the local administrator was concerned about the impression a lone female plantation owner would make on the African labourers and the local African population in general:

Every man, even the Negro, feels ignominious about being beaten by a woman. Hence Frau von Price should, if she cannot restrain herself from conducting the beatings herself which is of course unfitting for a lady, restrict these beatings to a minimum.⁵⁰⁹

Additionally, Frau von Prince was accused of being too emotional and unrestrained to remain in charge of the plantation as she was seen 'crying and

⁵⁰⁵ TNA, G3/99, Wohnungsfürsorge, letter by Governor Schnee, Tabora, 5 Februar 1915; TNA, G9/23, Schwarze Väter (Heiliger Geist), 1911-16, letter by Bezirksamtman Bagamojo to Gouverneur Schnee, 30 August 1915.

⁵⁰⁶ For an impression of his importance see the hagiographic account of his life Herbert Victor Petera, *Bwana Sakkarani. Deutsch-Ostafrika 1888-1914. Leben und Taten des Schutztruppenhauptmanns Tom von Prince* (Vienna: Krystall-Verlag, 1933). Also Pesek Pesek, 'Der Koloniale Körper in der Krise. Koloniale Repräsentationen, Ordnung und Gewalt während des Ersten Weltkriegs in Ostafrika, 1914-1919', pp. 59-82, here pp. 346-348.

⁵⁰⁷ This differed to the image created during and after the war where the role of the German colonial women was celebrated as ultimate sacrifice. See BA, R1001/872, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 9, letter by a German women from East Africa [K.K.], published in *Norddeutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung* 39, 9 February 1916 [reprinted in in *Post and Kölnischer Zeitung*].

⁵⁰⁸ TNA, G8/142, Plantagen des Hauptmanns a. D. Tom von Prince, Band 2, 1906-16, letter by Gouverneur Schnee to Bezirksamtman of Wilhelmstal, Taboria, 28 August 1915.

⁵⁰⁹ TNA, G8/142, Plantagen des Hauptmanns a. D. Tom von Prince, Band 2, 1906-16, letter by Bezirksamtman of Wilhelmstal to Gouverneur Schnee, Wilhelmstal, 10 September 1915.

lamenting the death of her husband' which would leave her vulnerable to the Africans⁵¹⁰

From the Allied perspective, the invasion and occupation of German East Africa was unnecessarily lengthy and costly. The other German colonies were more-or-less defeated and under Allied control within one year. Between the attempts at landing an expeditionary force at Tanga in November 1914, and the withdrawal of the remains of the Schutztruppe to Portuguese East Africa in December 1917, lay three years of continuous military, financial and political investment to secure the control of this strategically and symbolically important territory. It would, of course, take another year until the final surrender of Lettow-Vorbeck and the 'unbeaten' Schutztruppe. However, one could also argue that the invasion and occupation of German East Africa was a swift campaign, as between the most serious attack on the colony under the command of Smuts in March 1916 to the fall of wartime capital Tabora in September 1916 only six months passed. Within this time, the most important settlement areas around the Kilimanjaro and Meru, the towns on the lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, the coastal cities and the entire northern part of the colony – and thus the majority of European civilians – were under Allied control. Moshi fell first in March 1916, Tanga in July 1916, Morogoro in August 1916, Dar es Salaam in September 1916 and finally Tabora on 19 September 1916. During the months until the German Schutztruppe finally escaped to Portuguese territory in December 1917, the British forces were engaged in fighting, mostly in the southern half of the colony, while also establishing an administration over the rest of the colony.

⁵¹⁰ TNA, G8/142, Plantagen des Hauptmanns a. D. Tom von Prince, Band 2, 1906-16, letter by Bezirksamtmann of Wilhelmstal to Gouverneur Schnee, Wilhelmstal, 10 September 1915.

5.3. Encounters between Occupier and Occupied

The relationship between soldiers and civilians is the most basic form of interaction between occupiers and occupied, the first encounter of which is typically shaped by mistrust on both sides: fear of an attack from behind on one side, and fear of being killed or raped on the other.⁵¹¹ However, as has been highlighted elsewhere in this thesis, the situation in East Africa was further complicated by the question of race. In the main settlement areas around the Meru and the Kilimanjaro, race relations were strained by the constant question of plantation labour, and Europeans, who often inhabited isolated farms and plantations, lived in fear of a 'revenge' attack by resentful Africans. As discussed above, the German administration began to concentrate civilians, especially women and children, in the urban centres in the hinterland, like Arusha, Moshi, Wilhelmstal, including those who were removed from the coastal cities like Dar es Salaam to avoid the naval bombardment. While some women took over the running of the farm or plantation, for others being alone while their husbands were serving in the Schutztruppe was deemed to be dangerous. With the approach of the Allied forces in spring 1916, the situation became unsettled again as the Schutztruppe withdrew further south, leaving women and children in the presence and protection of only men who were either older or unfit for duty or 'neutrals', especially Greek citizens.⁵¹²

The withdrawal itself happened quickly, often only a day or even a few hours before the arrival of the Allied troops, thus minimising the possibility of a 'power vacuum'. When the Schutztruppe withdrew from an area, the policy towards the German, other European and African civilian populations differed. Some missionaries and other civilians reported that they had to vacate their station and follow the German troops. However, this policy was not universally adopted. In

⁵¹¹ Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914. A History of Denial*, pp. 250-260; Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

⁵¹² RH, MSS Afr. s. 279, Francis John Bagshaw, diary, 19 June 1916. For the ambiguous attitude of the German administration towards Greek citizens see TNA, G21/649, Patzimas Solirios (court file).

many cases, the missionaries preferred to stay at their station, either for the protection of the property itself or to make sure that the Christian converts were looked after.⁵¹³ Their concerns were less to do with being harmed by the approaching British troops, but rather that the African population would take the opportunity to plunder the mission station. The same is true for members of the neutral nations (mainly Greeks), who mostly stayed behind to greet the Allied troops upon their arrival in a town and – at least in some cases – to loot the houses of the departed Germans.⁵¹⁴ African rulers closely linked to the German colonial administration in some cases preferred to follow the Schutztruppe, either fearing for their own safety, with their own status and power closely linked to the status and power structures of the colony, or genuinely identifying themselves with the German cause.

The handover of a town or other settlement did not follow a clear script, but typically happened without any actual resistance. At the surrender of Moshi, the first urban settlement to fall, the German civilians fled the town before the arrival of the Allied troops and hid in the surrounding mountains. The troops were greeted by saluting ‘neutrals’ in the otherwise deserted town. There are few reports on the behaviour of the Allied troops when conquering a settlement, but one soldier reported that after the conquest of Moshi ‘there were not half a dozen sober men in the regiment at night as far as I could see but I could not see much as I was blind myself.’ While he passed out on the floor of an unoccupied building, others looted the town, which resulted in a number of court-martials for drinking and looting on the next day with sentences of up to nine months imprisonment. Only after ‘order’ was re-established in Moshi did the Germans return to the town from their hideouts.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹³ AFSt/M, 32, Nachrichten, Korrespondenz während des Krieges, 1914-1916, letter by Johannes Raum, Marangu, 20 August 1916.

⁵¹⁴ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 15 March 1916. See also BA, R1001/875, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 12, report by planter Rudolf Michel, 30 January 1919, p. 2.

⁵¹⁵ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 15 March 1916.

This description of looting and drunkenness is noteworthy insofar as it contrasts with how the British military portrayed their European soldiers as particularly well disciplined and whose treatment of African, but especially European civilians, was beyond reproach. The significance of this can be linked to the incidence of looting and drunkenness that occurred in the previous year during the first occupation of Bukoba in 1915. Here European soldiers joined African askari in ransacking the town, which was widely reported and condemned by the German administration, but also the British military.⁵¹⁶ One British soldier described the events:

We looted the town, all fine furnished houses, we took what we liked but we can't take much as we can't carry it and send it home, but we got a good assortment, then we burned the town, the hospital which had big red cross in front was full of ammunition, and every house had ammunition in it the arsenal blew up when it had been burning a bit, I had plenty of champagne.⁵¹⁷

In response to these incidents, the well-established argument was again brought forward that Europeans should act as role models for the African soldiers and that any example of disrespect towards fellow Europeans and their property, even when they were enemies, would harm the standing of the Europeans in colonial Africa in the long term. The same issue arose once again in the later occupation of Tabora in September 1916 by Belgian troops.⁵¹⁸ A temporary, but nearly complete, breakdown of discipline led to looting and misbehaviour in the town where a large number of European civilians were present. The British military and government were quick in blaming the incident on the inability of the Belgian officers and drew general conclusions as the incompetence of Belgian colonial administrators and their methods.

⁵¹⁶ Paice, *Tip and Run. The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa*, pp. 104-108.

⁵¹⁷ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 22 June 1915.

⁵¹⁸ Austen, *Northwest Tanzania under German and British Rule. Colonial Policy and Tribal Politics, 1889-1939*, p. 125; Pesek, *Ende eines Kolonialreichs. Ostafrika im Ersten Weltkrieg*, pp. 248-250.

The British administration had no coherent approach towards the civilians who fell into their hands. Generally, the fate of the inhabitants of a farm, mission station or town depended on the officer in command. The reports by nearly all civilians living on plantations or mission stations of their first interactions with the British troops are very positive. Some even expressed surprise that ‘the troops and officers did no harm to [them], but on the contrary were quite kind.’⁵¹⁹ One missionary pointed out that no German woman or child was harmed.⁵²⁰ Male civilians were in a more precarious situation as some were instantly put under ‘military guard’ and – often without interrogation – declared prisoners of war. They were interned together with regular soldiers in makeshift camps and within a week deported to Nairobi. From there, they were transported to the established prisoners of war camps in Ahmednagar in India where they joined the Germans expelled from British East Africa two years previously.⁵²¹ This policy affected even ‘neutrals’, like three Swiss Catholic priests who were accused of supporting the German war effort.⁵²² Notwithstanding this example, the British authorities generally allowed missionaries to remain on their stations throughout 1916 and 1917, and sometimes even provided funds for the continued running of these.

The mission stations were of special symbolic importance. For the European soldiers engaged in the conquest of German East Africa, the encounter with mission stations and mission staff was varied. For the soldiers from Britain, missionary work was generally perceived as the most positive aspect of colonial activity in Africa through ‘teaching the [African] people to keep clean, and cultivate their land, and stop murder and raiding’.⁵²³ This special status of religious institutions, especially of churches, as victims of war was, of course,

⁵¹⁹ AFSt/M, 32, Nachrichten, Korrespondenz während des Krieges, 1914-1916. letter by Johannes Raum, Marangu, 20 August 1916; BA, R1001/875, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 12, report by planter Rudolf Michel, 30 January 1919, pp. 2-3.

⁵²⁰ AFSt/M, 32, Nachrichten, Korrespondenz während des Krieges, 1914-1916. letter by Johannes Raum, Marangu, 20 August 1916.

⁵²¹ AFSt/M, 332, Hans Fuchs, letter to Reichskolonialamt, Bamberg, 20 February 1920.

⁵²² KNA, PC/Coast/1/3/111, Swiss subjects (missionaries) interned in GEA.

⁵²³ LA, AFE 24, George A. Pim, letter to his mother, 10 March 1915.

ingrained in the minds of the soldiers, especially after the propaganda campaign of 1914 focusing on the destroyed cathedral in Louvain.⁵²⁴ Hence it may not be surprising that none of the soldiers reported any damage to the German mission property on the advance into German territory. However, memoirs published during and shortly after the campaign by British participants do point to damage done to churches and mission stations that was deliberately committed by the Germans. For example, Francis Brett Young describes how the withdrawing Germans had mission houses 'fouled' by their askari, so they could not be used by the British troops, a frightful and filthy behaviour alien to an 'English mind'.⁵²⁵ A similar episode was reported by Clifford, who pointed out that the British troops in the battle at Lukuledi in October 1917 took care not to destroy the mission church whereas the German Schutztruppe displayed 'no corresponding scruples' and shelled the church's tall spire.⁵²⁶

These references to the self-destruction of the most prominent symbol of the German civilising mission symbolises not only the 'uncivilised' warfare of the German troops in general, but of course also disqualifies them as a colonial power. It is noteworthy how this narrative changed after the peace conference, when a general lamentation over the malevolence of the war and its impact on Africa was connected with the attempt to reconstruct the image of 'white prestige'. In his war recollections captain William Shorthouse uses an old German mission, a 'derelict ship on a small kopje with its grounds overgrown and sadly neglected', as a symbol for the destruction the military campaign brought to East Africa. Yet, instead of putting the blame for this on Germany he points vaguely to 'the devastating hand of war'.⁵²⁷ He expresses particular concern about how the destruction of this 'emblem' of Christianity will let the 'savage mind' of the Africans turn away to the past and leave the 'path of progress.' Thus the

⁵²⁴ Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction. Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War*, pp. 6-30.

⁵²⁵ Brett Young, *Marching on Tanga. With General Smuts in East Africa*, pp. 208-209. This observation is not mentioned in his letters and war diary.

⁵²⁶ Hugh Clifford, *The Gold Coast Regiment in the East African Campaign* (London: John Murray, 1920), pp. 182-183.

⁵²⁷ William T. Shorthouse, *Sport and Adventure in Africa. A record of twelve years of big game hunting, campaigning and travel in the wilds of tropical Africa* (London: Seeley, 1923), p. 251.

destruction of churches was made nation specific during the war (i.e., the Germans' fault), but then turned into being an outcome of war that was not specifically attached to nationhood thereafter.

From the perspective of the European civilian, the invasion of German East Africa was a non-violent event. It is unclear if any African civilians were harmed either by crossfire or through ad hoc executions as suspected spies or non-regular fighters. Despite the shelling of several towns, and the fighting in close proximity to mission stations and plantations, it is intriguing to note that only one German civilian died at the hands of Allied soldiers. The Seventh Day Adventist missionary Palm from Böblingen was shot on his station at Shirati near Lake Victoria on 28 November 1914 by British soldiers.⁵²⁸ This isolated incident prompted a detailed investigation and led to a three-year-long dispute between the German and British government about the nature of the event.⁵²⁹ The German version of the shooting was based on reports collected by the military commander of the Shirati district, which was in turn based on intelligence gathered by three African missionary staff and the subsequent autopsy of the disinterred body. The reports state that during the naval bombardment of Shirati, a unit of about 19 mounted British and three African soldiers approached the town around 6 a.m. and came across the mission station. Two soldiers ('an Englishman and a Boer') entered the house and shot the missionary from the doorway while he was sitting at his breakfast table. Great importance was put on the fact that Palm was unarmed, 'offered no resistance' and was shot without warning by a single bullet through his heart. The soldiers subsequently buried the body on the property and rode towards to the town to join the attack on its fort ('boma'). The British investigation, conversely, reported that Palm had a loaded rifle in his possession and was – most importantly – a member of the Schutztruppe. Consequently his death should be regarded as that of an ordinary combatant who 'fell in battle during the attack'. Furthermore, to undermine the credibility of Palm's status as a

⁵²⁸ In the overview work on the missions activities in East Africa this event is not mentioned. See Pfeiffer, 'The Coming of the Mission to East Africa', pp. 11-40, here pp. 37-38.

⁵²⁹ NA, FO 383/70, Note verbal from the AA, via US ambassador, 25 June 1915.

missionary the report pointed out that his house neither contained 'any bible or prayer books or any symbol of worship whatever'. The German authorities strongly rejected the claim that Palm was a combatant as missionaries like priests were exempt from conscription and active military service. Thus they accused the British troops of 'cowardly murder' and demanded the punishment of the guilty party.⁵³⁰ The British government strongly rejected any further investigation, especially by a neutral power; and the dispute seems to have remained unresolved. The available files make it difficult to judge if Palm was a genuinely innocent civilian victim of the war or merely presented as such by the German government to prove an Allied 'atrocities'. However, as a Seventh Day Adventist, an American sect with few followers in Germany, his death ultimately had little potential to be used for a propaganda campaign.

5.4. Organising the Occupation

The administration of the occupied areas rested with the post commandants, who conducted the civil administration with advice from political officers, who were recruited from the colonial service in British East Africa.⁵³¹ The political officers, although subservient to the military, played a very important role as intermediaries between the military, the African population and the German civilians. Initially their employment was closely linked to the needs of the invasion—for example, by providing advice to the military, by organising transport and supply, as well as providing information to the intelligence officer. The latter included aspects of the geography, the language spoken by the Africans of the area, and the 'native character'. Through their expertise in dealing with the indigenous population, they were ideally supposed to secure the assistance of the Africans, or at least to prevent any actions on their part against the British army. There was concern among the British military that some African civilians may

⁵³⁰ NA, CO 691, Note verbal from the AA, via US ambassador Berlin, 9 September 1916.

⁵³¹ For a detailed account by the political officer for Mafia, see IWM, PP/MCR/150, Sir Norman King KCMG, diary 9 February 1915 to 15 October 1916.

have armed themselves with weapons left by the retreating Germans, or that the Germans troops themselves could have handed out weapons to Africans before leaving an area to enable them to attack the arriving British troops.⁵³² Announcements were made to the African population that by carrying any form of arms, especially firearms, individual and collective punishments would be carried out. Weapons and ammunition were indeed taken by African civilians, but the concern about the German military arming African civilians to destabilise an area were unfounded.⁵³³ The well-studied example of Bukoba and the surrounding region shows that the opposite was, in fact, often the case. Through a 'sense of a common European colonialist front transcending the war' the local German administration prepared the African population for occupation and the shift of power, and local rulers were instructed to cooperate with the British military.⁵³⁴

The role of the political officers changed after the military left a specific area as they took over the administration. Now they had to manage the difficult balance between winning over the Africans for British rule without also upsetting the remaining German population as their co-operation was needed as well. One German planter from Arusha pointed out that the German settlers preferred the actions of the political officer to his German predecessor as he acted more in the interest of the economy.⁵³⁵ This friendly attitude was somewhat reciprocal as the political officer for the Kilimanjaro area expressed himself 'against the deportation of the German missionaries and settlers, as civilization would have a great setback and the plantations revert to wilderness.'⁵³⁶

⁵³² BA, R1001/875, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 12, report by Westhaus, secretary for the government of German East Africa, 2 August 1918, p. 15.

⁵³³ RH, MSS Afr. s. 459, W. S. Gerard Barnes, report August 1919.

⁵³⁴ Austen, *Northwest Tanzania under German and British Rule. Colonial Policy and Tribal Politics, 1889-1939*, pp. 116-118.

⁵³⁵ BA, R1001/875, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 12, report by planter Rudolf Michel, 30 January 1919, p. 10; HAB, 2/51-8, Ost-Afrika-Mission 1917, Band 1, letter by Magdalene Trittelvitz to father, Usambara November 1916.

⁵³⁶ CMS, G3 A8/0, Original papers German East Africa, 1914-1919, report from Archdeacon John E. Hamshire on his visit to Kilimanjaro, April 1917.

Overall, life for a civilian under the area of Allied control was based on the statutes of martial law declared by General Smuts on 12 March 1916.⁵³⁷ It is noteworthy that the regulations were issued for civilians regardless of their race and nationality, even though their application differed. Any civilian was, of course, forbidden to assist the German troops by providing them with shelter, provisions, clothes or munitions or helping them with conveyance and intelligence. Furthermore, any spying and kindred acts, like signalling with mirrors or lights, were prohibited as was any photographing or sketching of military infrastructure. These technical aspects of espionage reflect the paranoia at the outbreak of the war (as discussed in Chapter 2) and were mainly directed towards the European population. These could easily be observed, and it appears that there was no serious spying activity by civilians throughout the war in East Africa. However, the less clearly defined general 'spying' could potentially bring any African civilian into conflict with the military authorities. The British military was certainly still concerned about the trustworthiness of the Africans in the occupied area and the potential for German-incited revolt.⁵³⁸ Thus the spreading of false intelligence and alarmist reports, and the promotion of hostility and rebellion against the occupying power through seditious language and publications, were outlawed, and any criticism of the British King was especially barred. In the years prior to the war, the image of the monarch as a symbol of the compassionate imperial state was already promoted by both the British and German colonisers to the African population, a strategy that intensified after the beginning of the campaign.⁵³⁹

These regulations did not necessarily affect the everyday lives of most German, let alone African, civilians as long as they did not actively consider supporting the

⁵³⁷ NA, CO 691, 5233, copy of Declaration of Martial Law for occupied territory, 12 March 1916.

⁵³⁸ NA, CO 691, 60158, telegram by Byatt to Colonial Office, 7 December 1917. See also G. H. Mungeam, 'Masai and Kikuyu Responses to the Establishment of British Administration in the East Africa Protectorate', *Journal of African History* 11 (1970), pp. 127-143.

⁵³⁹ Terence Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 211-263.

German military.⁵⁴⁰ However, there were a number of rules that not only impacted deeply on the daily routine of the German civilians through the restriction of mobility and communication, but also could potentially interfere with their status as part of the colonising power. Martial law forbade the possession of telegraphs and telephones, and imposed a censorship regulation on all letters and cards.⁵⁴¹ Furthermore, in order to possess and use horses, mules, donkeys and saddles, as well as bicycles, motorcycles and cars, Germans had to apply for a special permit or hand them over to the military authorities. Outside the hours of curfew between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m., German civilians were allowed to move without restriction in the occupied towns, but had to seek authorization when moving from one area of martial law to another. Although these regulations of movement were a standard element of martial law, for the German colonials these infringements must have appeared especially harsh and humiliating: It was an established form of colonial rule to control and restrict the freedom of movement of the African population whereas the colonials regarded themselves as highly mobile with safaris being a popular pastime. Another important marker of racial boundaries was the consumption of alcohol.⁵⁴² While European colonials enjoyed beer and high-spirited drink in unrestricted quantities, the colonial state, with the support of the missions, regulated and limited access to alcohol for Africans. Under martial law the private possession of alcohol was also prohibited and its production and consumption highly regulated, again subtly undermining the power status of the German colonials. Yet, as the control of firearms, ammunition and explosives illustrates, the occupying forces still trusted their fellow Europeans enough to allow them to apply for a permit to possess and use weapons.⁵⁴³ While such a regulation would be unthinkable in the occupied areas of Europe, this policy in the colonies was a continuation of the generous attitude towards ‘enemy aliens’ at the

⁵⁴⁰ BA, R1001/875, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 12, report by planter Rudolf Michel, 30 January 1919, p. 5.

⁵⁴¹ BA, R1001/875, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 12, various papers related to the surrender of Dar es Salaam, p.5.

⁵⁴² Willis, *Potent Brews. A social history of alcohol in East Africa, 1850-1999*.

⁵⁴³ BA, R1001/874, Militärische Lage in D.O.A., Band 11, report by F.G. Rikli, Berne, 16 October 1916, p. 11.

beginning of the war (see Chapter 2), who were allowed to keep their weapons in both German and British territories.

Penalties against those who transgressed these rules of martial law were enforced either by a local officer or by a military court. The former was authorised to sentence offenders to two months imprisonment, to monetary fines or to twelve lashes with a kiboko whip. The military court was allowed to hand out death sentences, imprisonment for up to 14 years, deportation or whipping of 24 lashes. Of course corporal punishment was not actually awarded to anyone except 'Asiatics or Africans'. It appears striking that the British administration did not at least try to diverge from the sentencing practice of the German colonial regime, whose excessive use of violence was exemplified in the 12 and 24 lashes punishments. In general, the civilian administration was very careful not to change the established German system of running the occupied colony. Political officers were warned to keep 'in mind that any drastic changes may subsequently cause loss and hardship'.⁵⁴⁴ Instead of altering the local administrative practise their 'every endeavour must be to assist and augment local trade and restore the country to normal conditions as soon as possible'.⁵⁴⁵ For this aim, the military authorities approved the employment of certain German civilian officials, although it is not possible to verify how widespread this practice was. Finally, the German colonial and civil law and justice system remained in force during the occupation, with the only restriction being that it did not stand against the 'principles of English jurisprudence'.⁵⁴⁶

These formal regulations pertaining to life under occupation aimed to strike a balance between the need to avoid any threat to the status of occupying troops and administration as the new rulers of the colony, and the need to uphold the status of Europeans in general. This contradiction caused certain degrees of uneasiness

⁵⁴⁴ NA, CAB 45 CID, Duties and Powers of Political Officers Serving with East African force, 1916.

⁵⁴⁵ NA, CAB 45 CID, Duties and Powers of Political Officers Serving with East African force, 1916.

⁵⁴⁶ See also KNA, AG/30/135, Administration of the conquered territory of German East Africa, letter by Administrator of G.E.A. (Byatt) to Governor of B.E.A., Wilhelmstal, 9 August 1917.

among the occupiers and occupied in everyday interactions. German men were, for example, forced to lift their hat in the presence of British officers, behaviour normally expected from the African population.⁵⁴⁷ In it is not clear whether the Germans regarded this as humiliating, but it certainly caused discomfort among several British soldiers. Yet, at the same time, captured German officers in Dar es Salaam who had been given parole and a record of good conduct were allowed to walk around freely in the town and the foreshore. As they were allowed to wear their military orders, including the Iron Cross, and frequent cafés in the company of women, this antagonised several members of the British forces.⁵⁴⁸ There was generally a growing unhappiness about the perceived leniency towards the German population.

The majority of German civilians encountered by the British were women and children. Whereas the latter received their unconditional sympathy, their attitude to the former was more ambivalent.⁵⁴⁹ Many British soldiers complained about the lack of respect they encountered from German women who frequently insulted them or even encouraged their children to use swear words against the occupiers.⁵⁵⁰ Still there was also a fair amount of sympathy towards the women and children who were left without their husbands and fathers to struggle through the war, occupation and deportation. One British soldier reflects on seeing a group of them being put on a motor lorry to be deported from a large mission station:

It seems to me very pathetic to see those little children in the war zone with their toys (and the German children have tremendous number).

However, his sentiments are revealed to be more complex as he continues:

⁵⁴⁷ LA, GS1528, F. O. Stansfield, diary, 1 June 1918; IWM, 06/35/1, Pakenham Erskine, letter to his parents, 9 April 1918.

⁵⁴⁸ IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, diary, 30 November 1917; LA, AFE 29, Frederick J. Smith, letter to his wife, 4 November 1916; IWM, 99/15/1, S. Rigby, diary, 20 December 1920.

⁵⁴⁹ IWM, 79/3/1, A. Smith, diary, 30 January 1918.

⁵⁵⁰ NAM, 2006-12-60, Wilfred J. Mitchell, letter to his mother, 18 September 1918; RH, MSS Afr. s. 117, Clement Gillman, diary 16, 6 January 1917.

Yet one has to harden ones heart against them although they are not to blame. No doubt they have been taught to hate us. And they murder our women and children at home.

Finally, however, he comes to the conclusion:

What a curse war is and we have not yet wakened up to our foolishness.⁵⁵¹

It is noteworthy that none of the British soldiers refer to the particular situation of colonial opposition between white women and African men. It is not clear how much interaction the average British soldier had with German civilians, but as they were specifically instructed not to engage into sexual relationships with German women, it seems that there were a certain amount of 'dark deeds being enacted' in Dar es Salaam.⁵⁵²

The policy of the British administration to concentrate German civilians in Dar es Salaam and Tanga caused a shortness of suitable buildings for socialisation, which created a certain closeness between British and Germans. For example the main Lutheran church of Dar es Salaam held Sunday services in German and English consecutively, and the Y.M.C.A. then organised entertainment, which was also attended by German civilians. However, this intercourse might have been limited through the specific context of the church attendees. Although even here conflict was not always avoidable as, for example, the newly elected British Church Council protested against the rent they had to pay to the German Lutheran pastor for the use of the building, and one member complained that 'the "Powers that be" in Dar es Salaam could not even make the German Pastor hand over the keys.'⁵⁵³

The British administration was very careful not to appear as triumphant conquerors, yet at the same time they aimed to leave their mark on public spaces.

⁵⁵¹ LA, AFE 18, James E. Mitchell, letter to his family, 17 November 1917. See also NAM, 1991-03-43, Alexander Frank Wallace, letter to his fiancé, 30 August 1916.

⁵⁵² Talk by Major Walker, C.F. at the Y.M.C.A., quoted in IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, diary vol. III, 5 July 1918.

⁵⁵³ IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, diary vol. III, 26 April 1918. See also LA, GS1528, F. O. Stansfield, diary, 2 June 1918.

The most important symbolic takeover was the change of flags in the occupied cities, something that resembled the old image of imperial conquest. The German flags on public buildings were replaced in a ceremony by the British 'Union Jack'.⁵⁵⁴

A further symbolic – and also to some extent practical – step in taking over control of public space was the renaming of streets and squares. Traditionally the most important thoroughfares were named after the Kaiser or the chancellor Bismarck – or in the case of Dar es Salaam 'Unter den Akazien' [Under the Acacias] resembling the main boulevard 'Unter den Linden' in Berlin.⁵⁵⁵ However, in 1915 the city councils in Dar es Salaam and Tanga also named important streets after Lettow-Vorbeck and Tom von Prince to celebrate their success in the battle of Tanga.⁵⁵⁶ These politically-charged names were undoubtedly difficult for the British. However, when they replaced them in 1918 they chose a neutral system of numbering parallel streets and avenues consecutively instead of the perhaps more predictable model of replacing German names with similar names related to the British monarchy or Empire.⁵⁵⁷

This reflects a more general attitude of ambivalence whereby the occupying forces struck a balance between taking over the colony without simultaneously upsetting or discrediting the symbols of German colonial rule and national identity. This ambivalence can be seen in further examples. German colonial rule and national identity were particularly embodied in the statues of Bismarck, the Kaiser and several colonial heroes, which were erected in the decade prior to the

⁵⁵⁴ RH, MSS Afr. s. 117, Clement Gillman, diary 15, 2 March 1917; CMS, G3 A8/0, Original papers German East Africa, 1914-1919, letter by E.W. Doulton to pastor Manley, Tabora, 19 September 1916. Alfred Hollis recalls that upon his arrival in Tanga as Secretary to the Administration in G.E.A he received the German flag from the boma as a Christmas present from the District Political Officer Major Harries. In 1937 this flag was given to Joachim von Ribbentrop while serving as German Ambassador in London. RH, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 296-297, Alfred C. Hollis, memoir, vol. 4.

⁵⁵⁵ Becher, *Dar es Saalam, Tanga und Tabora. Stadtentwicklung in Tansania unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft, 1885–1914*, pp. 50-55.

⁵⁵⁶ *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 16 November 1915.

⁵⁵⁷ ⁵⁵⁷ IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, diary, 5 April 1918.

war in the central squares of nearly all larger towns in the colony.⁵⁵⁸ One might expect that these would be particularly obvious targets for occupying troops. However, even though the approaching British troops did soil the statue of Hermann von Wissmann in Dar es Salaam with white paint,⁵⁵⁹ there were no official steps undertaken to cover up or remove the statue following this. In Tanga, the political officer gave German women permission to lay wreaths at the foot of the Bismarck statue situated in the market square on the anniversary of his birthday on 1 April 1917. However, during the night before the event the heavy bronze statue was removed from its pillar. A subsequent investigation never ascertained who carried out the stunt or what became of the statue. Yet it was suspected that an officer of the King's African Rifles together with the commander of the H.M.S. Pickles bribed the African police in charge of controlling the marketplace to enable a number of British soldiers to remove the statue at night and to dump it in the bay.⁵⁶⁰ Others suggested that the statue was broken up and distributed among senior officers as souvenirs.⁵⁶¹ While the removal caused upset among the German population and potentially embarrassed the civilian administration, the official military report was light-hearted and concluded with the following limerick:

The people of Tanga said 'Harck!
What's that going on the dark?'
No one replied.
Next morn they espied
The pedestal minus Bismarck.⁵⁶²

This event triggered a number of copycats and 'in spite of threatened pains penalties and punishments' within weeks all but one statue disappeared.⁵⁶³ The

⁵⁵⁸ Joachim Zeller, *Kolonialdenkmäler und Geschichtsbewußtsein. Eine Untersuchung der kolonialdeutschen Erinnerungskultur* (Frankfurt (Main): IKO, 2000).

⁵⁵⁹ LA, AFE 26, John H. Seager, photograph; IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, photograph no 2.

⁵⁶⁰ RH, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 296-297, Alfred C. Hollis, memoir, vol. 4.

⁵⁶¹ RH, Micr. Afr. 599, Noel Smith, letter to his mother, 11 February 1918.

⁵⁶² RH, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 296-297, Alfred C. Hollis, memoir, vol. 4.

⁵⁶³ RH, Micr. Afr. 599, Noel Smith, letter to his mother, 11 February 1918.

remaining one was the defaced Wissmann monument which proved itself resistant against several attacks of destruction until it was taken down after the armistice was declared.⁵⁶⁴ It was transported to London in 1919 to be displayed in the Imperial War Museum before being returned to Germany in 1922 where it was re-erected outside the University of Hamburg.⁵⁶⁵

Clearly these examples show that members of the British military forces were interested in attacking symbols of German nationalism within their newly occupied territory. However, in terms of official colonial policy, there was little interest in systematically undermining these or replacing them with comparable symbols of British nationalism. Indeed, there seems to be at least some evidence of concern for the feelings of German civilians and a willingness to allow them to maintain certain forms of national sentiment. The uncomfortable coexistence between occupier and occupied led the British administration from early 1917 onwards to press diligently for the removal of both the growing number of official military prisoners of war, and also the civilian population.

5.5. Deportation of Germans from East Africa

From the beginning of the occupation, the British administration was concerned about the German civilian population. While it is true that Britain had no clear plan as to how to manage the African population in German East Africa, the same cannot be said about the Germans that came under its jurisdiction. The military authorities had a clear concept that German men of military age and military fitness had to be interned – ideally outside the colony – and they swiftly converted

⁵⁶⁴ IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, diary, 11 November 1918. See also Ferdinand S. Joelson, *The Tanganyika Territory (Formerly German East Africa). Characteristics and Potentialities* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1920), pp. 24-25.

⁵⁶⁵ For the subsequent turbulent history of the statue see Joachim Zeller, 'Deutschlands größter Afrikaner.' Zur Geschichte der Denkmäler für Hermann von Wissmann', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 44 (1996), pp. 1089–1111. On the spot of the Wissmann statue a monument for the askari was erected. For the memorials for non-European soldiers see Michèle Barrett, 'Subalterns at War. First World War Colonial Forces and the Politics of the Imperial War Graves Commission', *Interventions - International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9 (2007), pp. 451-474 here pp. 467-468.

the existing German internment camps in Tabora (see Chapter 3 for further details). However, the British administration quickly implemented a policy to concentrate the male civilian population from the towns in the hinterland of the coastal cities. Especially the port of Tanga, where a new camp was erected for men of military age, developed into a transport hub from which the Germans were shipped out of the colony.⁵⁶⁶ Initially they were bound for Ahmednagar, but after the government of India refused to take any more German prisoners of war,⁵⁶⁷ they were transported to camps in Egypt and later in Malta where the conditions appear to have been similar to those in the Indian camps. Originally, in 1916 both the military and civilian authorities hoped to keep, or rather revitalise, the plantations and mission stations for both economic and structural reasons, and some plantation owners, both Germans and neutrals, were offered the chance to stay put for 'the security of their estate to prevent them falling into decay.'⁵⁶⁸ Men of military age, however, were swiftly removed regardless of their background or employment, leaving their property and families behind. The separation of men from their families furthermore created a peculiar situation: the soldiers were housed and fed by the British military, but their women and children were left to fend for themselves. With a collapse of the colonial economy, and the dwindling savings of those who remained, there were fears that the German civilians would soon become a burden to the British authorities.⁵⁶⁹

This potential financial responsibility appears to be most important reason for the weight the British administration in occupied German East Africa put behind their argument of a quick and complete deportation of all German inhabitants. Yet, although there can be little doubt that Smuts, the civilian administrator of the occupied territory Byatt and other men on the spot were aware that a territory free of Germans might – in future peace negotiations – be easier to retain for Britain or

⁵⁶⁶ On the condition in the makeshift camp, see BMW, 1/3370, Personalakte Karl Jauer, letter to Pastor Axenfeld, Tanga, 2 June 1917; BA, R1001/875, Militärische Lage in DOA, Band 12, report by planter Rudolf Michel, 30 January 1919, p. 7.

⁵⁶⁷ NA, CO691, 45744, Telegram from Viceroy of India to India Office, 20 September 1916.

⁵⁶⁸ NA, CO691, 11816, Extract of memorandum by Chief Political Officers, Dar es Salaam, 1 December 1916.

⁵⁶⁹ NA, CO691, 15514, letter by Colonial Office to War Office, 30 March 1917.

South Africa, this realpolitik thinking only appears in passing.⁵⁷⁰ More important in the minds of Byatt and some of the political officers in the districts were arguments rooted in the traditional colonial thinking. The financial difficulties faced by some German civilians were in many cases linked with being re-housed in temporary accommodation in one of the urban centres away from their plantations or stations. This situation raised the prospect of creating destitute whites, which in the long run could undermine the 'prestige' of the Europeans in the view of the colonised.⁵⁷¹

Although some German civilians, especially in remoter areas, cooperated productively and amicably with the British, the majority – as discussed above – had little interest in collaborating with the occupier. The British administration was especially concerned about the potential problems of deporting the 450 German mission staff, even though several were of military age, as they lived scattered around the country and would require substantial numbers of porters to remove them and their belongings at a time when all transport was still needed for the war effort.⁵⁷² A variety of other factors further complicated this issue. As most mission stations contained large groups of German non-combatants, mainly women and children, any deportation of male missionaries would have to include these as well, as it would 'be dangerous to remove male missionaries with families and leave other women and children at the mercy of hostile natives'.⁵⁷³ Furthermore, most of the mission stations worked as self-sufficient farms and workshops containing important infrastructure and with substantial areas under cultivation. These would have to be left derelict due to the lack of resources for adequate protection. The option of leaving the station in the care of neutral or Allied missionaries working for German mission societies, like South Africans, Americans, Dutch or Belgians was not considered workable either, as many were

⁵⁷⁰ For the South African annexation aims towards German East Africa see Samson, *British, South Africa and the East African Campaign, 1914-1918. The Union comes of Age*, pp. 149-170.

⁵⁷¹ NA, CO 691, 13478, letter by Byatt to Colonial Office, 19 January 1917.

⁵⁷² NA, CO 691, 56936, letter by Smuts to War Office, 24 November 1916.

⁵⁷³ NA, CO 691, 32602, letter by Byatt to Colonial Office, 2 December 1916.

suspected of being anti-British and their pro-German influence on Africans as pronounced as that of German missionaries.⁵⁷⁴

The uncertainty about whether the German civilians opposed or supported the establishment of British rule created a feeling of insecurity among the British authorities as the Schutztruppe remained unbeaten in the south of the colony. Reports that individual missionaries or settlers, even those of supposedly neutral countries, secretly or openly spoke about a return of the German troops to certain areas caused great concern, especially as it was unclear how the local African population might react to this prospect.⁵⁷⁵ Hence in 1917 the decision was made in an agreement between the War and Colonial Offices, as well as the military and civilian authorities in East Africa, to deport all German, Austrian and Ottoman civilians – including all mission staff – as well as neutrals harbouring sympathies for the cause of the Central Powers.⁵⁷⁶ With the male population younger than 45 years and fit for the military being either still part of the fighting forces of the Schutztruppe or already deported, this left more than 1,500 women, children and unfit and older men to deport.

This decision caused unforeseen logistical and administrative difficulties, which would last for the next four years, with the last Germans leaving the colony in spring 1920. The foremost problem was the lack of available ships throughout the duration of the war. With troop transport taking priority, and the impact of the unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic taking its toll, the transportation of Germans civilians from Africa to Europe was low on the Admiralty's list of priorities.⁵⁷⁷ With India refusing to take on any more German prisoners of war, the preferred option for the British government was an internment in South

⁵⁷⁴ NA, CO 691, 2124, telegram by G.C.O. Smuts to Director of Military Intelligence, 7 January 1917.

⁵⁷⁵ NA, CO 691, 2124, Draft letter by Colonial Office to Foreign Secretary Balfour, 16 January 1917.

⁵⁷⁶ NA, CO 691, 2124, telegram by Director of Military Intelligence to G.C.O. Smuts, 23 December 1916.

⁵⁷⁷ NA, CO 691, 14325, Telegram by Colonial Office to Byatt, 27 March 1917. See also NA, CO 691, 17789, Draft telegram from War Office to G.C.O. East Africa, 4 April 1917.

Africa. A small number of German citizens from Nyasaland as well as some Germans from the south of German East Africa had already been deported to an internment camp in Tempe near Bloemfontein.⁵⁷⁸ Despite the repeated efforts of the Colonial and Foreign Offices, the government of South Africa refused to take on any German civilian or military prisoners for 'political and organisational' reasons.⁵⁷⁹ Even stronger were the South African rejections of the suggestion to deport the Germans from East Africa to the recently conquered German colony Southwest Africa, which itself had a large German population. Although it was not explicitly mentioned, there was sensitivity about not provoking Afrikaner sympathies towards Germany, and the large German minority in the Union itself and in German Southwest Africa, by bringing German women and children to be interned.⁵⁸⁰ The Colonial Office was sympathetic to this, but – under the increasing demands from East Africa – was ultimately running out of options. Finally in 1918 the British government fell back on its default destination for unwanted and troublesome people: Australia.⁵⁸¹ With shipping capacity still scarce, and the journey to Australia further than to Europe, it remains unclear how seriously this option was pursued, especially as no reaction from the Australian government was sought before the end of the war.

The end of hostilities in Europe and Africa increased the pressure on shipping facilities, as demobilised soldiers that were drawn from all over the globe to fight in Europe had to be returned to their respective home countries. In November 1918 the German population of German East Africa was scattered around the globe. The majority had ended up in Egypt, in camps in Sidi-Bishr, Tura and

⁵⁷⁸ Conditions in this camp appear to be rather well. See BMW, 1/3190, Personalakte, Paul Gröschel, letter by Marie Gröschel to Pastor Axenfeld, Tempe-Bloemfontein, 5 April 1918.

⁵⁷⁹ For the debate on prisoners of war in South Africa which caused similar concerns see Bob Moore, 'Unwanted guests in troubled times: German prisoners of war in the union of South Africa, 1942-1943', *Journal of Military History* 70 (2006), pp. 63-89.

⁵⁸⁰ NA, CO 691, 205, telegram by Secretary of State for the Colonies, Long to Governor General of Australia, 9 January 1918; NA, CO 691, 47013, letter by Colonial Office to POW department, 30 September 1918. For the lenient policy towards the German population under South African occupation see Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme. South Africa in the First World War*, pp. 84-85. For the role of Afrikaners during the war see Fedorowich, 'Sleeping with the Lion? The Loyal Afrikaner and the South African Rebellion of 1914-15'.

⁵⁸¹ NA, CO 691, 205, telegram by Secretary of State for the Colonies, Long to Governor General of Australia, 9 January 1918.

Maadi, and in Malta, to where circa 1,700 military prisoners of war and male civilians of military age had been deported. In the two Indian camps, in Ahmednagar and Belgaum, about 600 internees from German East Africa were kept, while 100 had ended up Tempe, South Africa. Finally, that left 1,500 women and children in the colony, concentrated in Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Wilhelmstal and Morogoro.⁵⁸²

While Lettow-Vorbeck and his remaining officers of the Schutztruppe had already returned to Germany in winter 1918, the majority of German civilians were at this time still in the colony. They shared this fate with the military prisoners of war in India and Egypt who also had to wait throughout 1919 for a journey back to Germany.⁵⁸³ However, by then the colonial administration in East Africa was also intensifying its pressure on the British government to repatriate the prisoners of war and other remaining Germans, for example by pointing out that the presence of Germans in the territory would impact negatively on the peace negotiations and the continuation of British rule there. Byatt explicitly argued that the end of the war might confuse the setting in which the British administration operated, as some of the released military prisoners of war demanded their return from India and Egypt to East Africa and it would become increasingly hard to reject these claims if the political status of the remaining Germans in East Africa was unresolved.⁵⁸⁴ However, by this point the majority of German civilians were in no position to either remain in the colony or to return because they had exhausted their finances. Being now effectively stranded, most were concerned about the impact of their prolonged stay in the tropics on their health, and especially the health of their children, and were now willing to return to Germany. The majority

⁵⁸² BA, R1001/884, Kriegsgefangene in DOA, Band 8, telegram by the Reichskolonialamt to German armistice commission, 10 November 1918.

⁵⁸³ WMN, N – PA 2369, Wilhelm Hosbach, letter to Pastor Otto Clarenbach, Tura – Kairo, 19 July 1919. For the difficulties to return prisoners of war after the armistice see Reinhard Nachtigal, 'The Repatriation and Reception of Returning Prisoners of War, 1918-22', *Immigrants & Minorities* 26 (2008), pp. 157-184.

⁵⁸⁴ See Ralph A. Austen, 'The Official Mind of Indirect Rule. British Policy in Tanganyika, 1916-1939', in Prosser Gifford and Roger William Louis (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa. Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 577-606; Callahan, 'Nomansland: The British Colonial Office and the League of Nations Mandate for German East Africa, 1916-1920'.

of Germans left the colony throughout 1919 and 1920, but it was not until March 1922 that the last German, the director of the 'native lunatic asylum' at Lutindi, who had been allowed to remain in his post, left East Africa for Europe.⁵⁸⁵ One British soldier, who worked in the supply depot in the harbour of Dar es Salaam, regularly observed the scenes of departure when a ship was leaving port asked him 'What must be the feelings of all those Germans?' He gives a surprisingly sympathetic answer himself:

Of the civilians, all unable to find a means of livelihood in the colony, were evacuated, some well nigh 70 years old, going to a bankrupt Germany. I witnessed much weeping and signs of grief at our Dépôt gates, as probably, long and close friendships were broken, perhaps, never to meet again.⁵⁸⁶

These questions about the manner, means and timing of the removal of German civilians, especially women and children, from occupied German East Africa concerned the British colonial administration greatly. The concerns were multifaceted. On the one hand, they were logistical with respect to how, exactly to remove them and to where. The concerns were also practical, in the sense that claiming the colony fully for British rule would be easier without the presence of remaining Germans. However, the concerns were also ideological, both with respect to the deteriorating well-being of fellow Europeans, but also to how their presence and visibility might influence Africans' perceptions of whites and the colonial order.

⁵⁸⁵ NA, CO 746, 30076, letter by Byatt to Colonial Office 19 June 1920 regarding the retention of German missionaries. See also Albert Diefenbacher, *Psychiatrie und Kolonialismus. Zur 'Irrenfürsorge' in der Kolonie Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Frankfurt (Main)/New York: Campus, 1985), pp. 119-120.

⁵⁸⁶ IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, diary vol. II, 17 January 1919.

5.6. Conclusion

As has by now become a recurring theme across this thesis, this chapter again reveals the ambivalent attitudes of Europeans in conflict in the colonial sphere, this time in relation to the interactions between occupied Germans and the occupying British forces, and military and civil administrations. Even prior to the occupation, German colonial society was experiencing challenges in relation to the maintenance of their living standards and the shifting demographics of the colony, especially in relation to gender. In the face of these challenges, colonials may have tried to emphasise the resilience and resourcefulness of their colony, but it is also clear that they were aware of, and concerned about, its apparent decline. With the advance of the Allied forces there is evidence of destructive behaviour on both sides, for example the destruction of infrastructure by the Schutztruppe and instances of looting by the advancing Allied troops. Yet, in comparison to the large-scale destruction in Europe, the impact on European settlements was limited and order was re-introduced very swiftly. Indeed, the transition to the new colonial administration was largely smooth and unchallenged. In part this is attributable to the balanced approach taken by the British military, for example as evidenced by the martial law imposed, which both restricted German citizens and enforced a degree of control, but also allowed them certain liberties that maintained their position in the colony especially with respect to the Africans. Perhaps more significant for this smooth transition, though, was the professionalism of the political officers, who were experienced in colonial administration and hence sought to cooperate with the Germans and operate within the existing structures of the colony.

The British administration had to find a balance between asserting their own rule – both practically and symbolically – without undermining the basis of colonial order, for example through humiliating the former German rulers. This can be seen in the bureaucratic decisions that were made about the renaming of streets – which, although these changed, did not fully reverse to comparable British versions – and the treatment of other symbols of German rule, for example statues

and monuments – which, although defaced, were shown at least some degree of respect by the administration. This careful sentiment towards taking over from but not fully negating their enemy can be seen also in the events on 11 November 1918 when, after the announcement of the armistice, the military issued an order not to celebrate. Hence there were ‘no demonstration, no signs of joy, of pride’ among the British in Dar es Salaam as the soldiers were not allowed to ‘show [their] pleasure for fear of hurting the feelings of the Germans population.’⁵⁸⁷ Finally, the ambiguous attitude manifested itself in the search for a new name for German East Africa. A brainstorming session among members of the British cabinet resulted in ‘Kingsland’, ‘Windsorland’, ‘Victoria’ or ‘New Georgia’, after the royal family, while ‘Smutsia’ was dismissed as ‘unpleasing’. The civilian administration in Dar es Salaam rejected these jubilant names and suggested ‘Eburnea’, the Latin name for ivory, or ‘Lacustria’, inspired by a Latin name for lake.⁵⁸⁸ Indeed, it was the colony’s largest lake which finally provided inspiration for the new name ‘Tanganyika Territory’.

⁵⁸⁷ RH, MSS Afr. s. 1175, Clement Gillman, diary 16, 12 November 1918; IWM, P393, A.F. Bowden, diary, 11 November 1918; IWM, 78/31/1, George F. Wilby, letter to his girlfriend, 5 January 1919.

⁵⁸⁸ NA, CO 691, memorandum for a new name for German East Africa, 16 May 1919.

6. The Cultural Legacy of the First World War in East Africa

6.1. Introduction

The First World War in East Africa left thousands dead or destitute. The soldiers who were brought there from Europe and India, as well as the African askari and the carriers who were recruited locally, succumbed to diseases and exhaustion. African communities were destroyed either by the direct impact of the war or through the famines that raged through this territory in the years after. Infrastructure, like railways, mission stations and plantations, which took decades to be built, was destroyed and the economy of East Africa was left in tatters. The German colonial community was forced to leave behind a land that many had come to regard as their 'Heimat' and was faced with an insecure future in Germany. Finally, although they were the victors, the British soldiers who fought in East Africa felt as though they had sacrificed their physical and mental health for a campaign that contributed little to the overall outcome of the war.

Yet, this campaign is not marked in collective memory for its horrors and hardships. Instead, as discussed in the introductory chapter, the cultural and public memory of the war in East Africa has reduced the campaign to a backdrop for stories of adventure, exoticism, and romance. This stands in contrast not only to the reality of these events but also to the way in which the First World War in general has been remembered—as a bloody and ultimately futile endeavour. Thus, although the campaign has not exactly been 'forgotten', its legacy does appear to be somewhat 'distorted'. The discrepancy between the realities of the war and its memory can, in part, be understood in light of the overall thesis presented in this volume: the war in East Africa sat uncomfortably within the colonial and imperial narratives that had become established in Britain and Germany, and accordingly its participants had to 'manage' war in ways that preserved these narratives.

To begin unpacking this idea, this chapter will explore the shift in the public presentation of the East African campaign during the interwar years, especially as

revealed in the memoirs published by combatant and civilian participants of the war. In comparison to the fictional novels and films related to the campaign in East Africa, these memoirs left few traces in the public and academic discourse. Nonetheless, these works provide an important insight into the evolving narrative of the campaign, and in many ways they foreshadow how this would come to be represented in more prominent cultural products.

6.2. Early British Memoirs, 1917-1923

One of its best-explored aspects of the First World War is its impact in the arts. Especially literature, both high and popular, has provided a rich field for exploring changing attitudes towards the war in the interwar years and charting the polarisation of its memory.⁵⁸⁹ The focus of this memory is typically reduced to the events on Western Front – with the exception of Gallipoli for Australia – within which the suffering in the trenches has become synonymous with this war. Against this backdrop, this thesis began with the notion that the campaign in East Africa was a ‘forgotten’ aspect of the First World War. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, this representation of East African campaign is not entirely accurate. Instead, what is apparent is that this campaign has not been included in the conventional history of the First World War. Instead, explorations of this campaign have been left to the works of popular historians, or these events have been used as dramatic setting for popular novels and films. In this process, the suffering and devastation of the campaign have been replaced by exoticism and adventure. As such, the fears of at least one British soldier serving in East Africa appear to have become a reality:

⁵⁸⁹ The most important studies still are Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1975]), and Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995), which provide the background information for the following sections.

If the truth of this campaign is ever wrote in history, it will be worth reading, and I suppose it will be wrote in history, but I know they won't put all the truth as they dare not.⁵⁹⁰

In Britain, the shifting representation of this campaign over the interwar years can be observed through the works of veterans of the campaign that were published between 1917 and 1937. In these twenty years, thirty books were published in Britain on the topic of the First World War in East Africa, a small fraction in comparison to the avalanche of memoirs produced by former German soldiers, settlers and missionaries, the features of which will be discussed later.⁵⁹¹ The memoirs published in Britain can be divided into three distinct categories: first, books published by former internees and prisoners of war in German East Africa in 1917 and 1918; second, books by veterans of the campaign published between 1917 and 1923, and; third, a subsequent wave of these works published after 'the ten year gap' between 1928 and 1937.

The first group of men who were willing and able to publicise their experience in German East Africa during the war were the former internees and prisoners of war.⁵⁹² As discussed in the Chapter 3, the British and German colonials in East Africa regarded the internment of European civilians as an extreme measure. Hence it is not surprising that repatriated former internees were keen to publicise their fate and experiences. Already in 1917, half a year after his liberation from the internment camp of Tabora, the missionary Ernest Spanton was able to publish *In German Gaols*.⁵⁹³ This account, based on his diaries, recalls the different stages

⁵⁹⁰ IWM, 68/27/1, Harry H. Hopper, diary, 19 October 1916.

⁵⁹¹ There are also a number of memoirs published in South Africa, but these follow a different narrative and had little impact on the British market F. C. Cooper, *On Safari. Experiences of a Gunner in the East African Campaign* (Cape Town: Juta, 1917); A. W. Lloyd, *'Jambo' or with Jannie Smuts in the Jungle. Thirty East African Sketches* (Cape Town: Central News Agency, 1917); Frank Reid, *Foot-Slogging in East Africa* (Cape Town: Miller, 1918); John Johnston Collyer, *The South Africans with General Smuts in German East Africa, 1916* (Pretoria: Government Printer, 1939); C. W. Shackleton, *East African Experiences 1916. From the Diary of a South African Infantryman in the German East African Campaign* (Durban: Knox, 1940).

⁵⁹² For a general discussion on internees memoirs, see Stibbe, *British Civilian Prisoners of War in Germany. The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-1918* pp. 161-167.

⁵⁹³ Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*.

of the war, from its outbreak through to his ensuing arrest, internment, and eventual liberation. The book provides detailed description of locations, people, and events and aims to inform rather than to propagate an anti-German view. The tone of composed observation, restrained outrage, and moral superiority can also be found in two further accounts published in 1918 before the end of hostilities. The fellow missionary John Briggs⁵⁹⁴ and the doctor and medical officer Ernest Holtom also describe the different camps and interactions with German civilians, soldiers and guards.⁵⁹⁵ Finally, the missionary Thomas Westgate penned recollections of his internment, but throughout 1918 he was unable to find a publisher and thus had these printed privately.⁵⁹⁶ These four books were not only very similar in their structure and style, but also in the themes and opinions they presented. Their main aim appears to have been to inform readers about the conditions of civilian internment, its particularities in colonial Africa and the suffering involved. All four also stressed the humiliating conditions under which they had to live and work, with Spanton describing life in the camp barrack as ‘a very good preparation for a worse Inferno than ever Dante imagined’.⁵⁹⁷

In spite of their negative experiences, these writers did not level blanket accusations against the Germans or presented them as universally brutal. Rather, they delivered a balanced judgement of the different commanders and guards they encountered. Instead of being straight-forwardly portrayed as ‘evil Huns’, individual Germans were contrasted significantly in their approaches towards the prisoners. Those German civilians and officials who were characterised as helpful and respectful in the four books were either Anglophones, who had lived in Britain or one of its colonies, or Anglophiles, who were married to a Briton. These backgrounds and experiences taken to not only have made them ‘more civilised’, but also to have given them insights into adequate colonial methods and

⁵⁹⁴ Briggs, *In the East African War Zone*. He had previously published an article, see Ibid., ‘German East Africa during the War’, *Journal of the Royal African Society* 16 (1917), pp. 193-199.

⁵⁹⁵ Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy*.

⁵⁹⁶ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*.

⁵⁹⁷ Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, p. 81.

behaviours.⁵⁹⁸ In contrast, those Germans who showed a ‘uniformly brutal and repulsive severity of conduct’ towards the European prisoners were described as having ‘failed’ as colonials before the war had even started, as they were either economically or morally bankrupt through their unsuccessful businesses or their conduct towards Africans.⁵⁹⁹ This differentiation is noteworthy as the behaviour of ‘bad’ Germans was not regarded as an expression of the typical national character, but rather as a personal limitation, while the ‘good’ Germans showed an understanding of the colonial (i.e. British) world.

It is notable that in their accounts the three missionary witnesses related their experience of suffering only partly to internment itself, and none of them questioned the practice of interning civilians at times of war in general. Rather they argued that the circumstances of the colonial setting rendered internment particularly wicked as this degraded the Europeans in the eyes of the Africans. This argumentation fed into the general British wartime propaganda that German methods of colonisation were incompetent and uninformed – especially in comparison to the British – and thus that it was right that Germany should lose its colonies.⁶⁰⁰ In light of these ideas, it is not surprising that the books ended with passionate pleas to not return Africans to German rule as ‘to allow them to do so would be like letting loose a pack of wolves among sheep, or a legion of demons among men.’⁶⁰¹ Through the authors’ own suffering at the hands of Germans, and through their expert status as colonials, these zealous calls were given a certain gravitas.

⁵⁹⁸ Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy*, pp. 38-39; Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, p. 22.

⁵⁹⁹ Holtom, *Two Years in Captivity in German East Africa. Being the Personal Experiences of Surgeon E. C. H., Royal Navy*, pp. 132-134; Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, pp. 33-35; Briggs, *In the East African War Zone*, pp. 44-47.

⁶⁰⁰ For example see following colonial activists Weston, *The Black Slaves of Prussia. An open letter addressed to General Smuts*, pp. 11-12; Lewin, *German Rule in Africa*; Le Sueur, *Germany's Vanishing Colonies*, pp. 32-34.

⁶⁰¹ Westgate, *In the Grip of the German*, p. 90. See also Spanton, *In German Gaols. A Narrative of Two Years' Captivity in German East Africa*, pp. 101-111; Briggs, *In the East African War Zone*, pp. 79-88.

In contrast to the themes that emerge from these accounts of internment are those that are evident in the memoirs that were produced by veterans of the campaign, which constitute the second category of memoirs. The first of these, as mentioned earlier, was Francis Brett Young's *Marching on Tanga*. In this work one can find nearly all of the elements that re-occur in subsequent publications of this kind.⁶⁰² The most important of these elements is the interlinking of the narrative of the war with detailed descriptions of African nature and the African population. Unlike in his letters to his wife, which were discussed in Chapter 4, in which he lamented, like most of his British comrades, the fruitlessness of the campaign in 'a country that really isn't worth fighting for',⁶⁰³ in his subsequent memoir he proclaimed that through the 'invasion and conquest' of German East Africa he could 'experience emotions as had fallen to few Englishmen in this war at that time.'⁶⁰⁴ Yet, in spite of these nationalistic sentiments, the description he provided of the colony lacked any suggestion that it could have been actual German territory. Rather, it was presented as a country deprived of any history and civilisation, and a territory on which the Germans did not leave any mark:

I seemed again to be riding in the dawn of the world: and indeed this land was unvetted by man as any Thracian wild and the people as simple as those to whom the son of Zeus brought fire.⁶⁰⁵

Fitting this description of the country as 'soulless' and untouched, the African civilians were similarly portrayed as either 'uncivilised', exotic and even animal-like, or as helpless passive victims of the war who lived in 'hallucinated happiness'.⁶⁰⁶ Descriptions of actual military encounters remained vague, as were

⁶⁰² Brett Young, *Marching on Tanga. With General Smuts in East Africa*. The book's impact can be seen in having three succeeding editions (1919, 1935 and 1984) making it its most successful British book on the East African campaign. See also Hall, *Francis Brett Young*, pp. 89-104.

⁶⁰³ Letter to his wife, 15 July 1916, in Leclaire (ed.), *Tanga Letters to Jessie. Written by Francis Brett Young to his wife from German East Africa, 1916-1917*, p. 65.

⁶⁰⁴ Brett Young, *Marching on Tanga. With General Smuts in East Africa*, p. 21.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁶⁰⁶ He describes a female African as follows: 'She had a ridiculously small shaven head, which reminded me of the heads of the Mantis family of insects – so small that only an insect's intelligence could hide within it.' See *ibid.*, pp. 11-16 and also 236.

the descriptions of German troops, whose tactics were nonetheless judged as improper, either by deliberately destroying infrastructure ('a mission-house deliberately fouled'), abandoning the weak and ill or exploiting the African porters. These sentiments were contrasted with praise of the imperial troops, in which British, South Africans, Indians, and Africans soldiered and worked together in a 'spirit of admiration and brotherhood in arms'.⁶⁰⁷ While this image of imperial cooperation reflected the propaganda effort of Britain during the war, it did not – as discussed in Chapter 4 – reflect the experience of the soldiers serving in East Africa. The same is true for Brett Young's assessment of the South African General Smuts whose leadership and 'masterful courage' was celebrated like the archetypal imperial hero on horseback leading his men through the African wilderness.

The themes of African nature and exoticism also appeared very prominently in the second book on the campaign by Robert Doble, a medical officer and friend of Brett Young.⁶⁰⁸ The book's publication in the last phases of the war manifests itself in a propagandist style and, even more pointedly than Brett Young's book, its primary concern was the manner in which the German troops conducted the campaign. Doble's expectation that 'the East African Hun [is] a better fellow than his European brother' he finds to be incorrect, and he instead concludes that the German colonial was 'the identical savage'.⁶⁰⁹ He especially contrasted the behaviour of the Belgian troops conquering Tabora 'as correct and gentlemanly [and] as chivalrous to [white women] as German soldiers had been vile to the wretched people of Belgium'.⁶¹⁰ This contrast with the impression most British soldiers had about the Belgian troops in East Africa and indicates that the book was far more concerned in rousing general anti-German sentiments than reflecting his personal impressions of the campaign. This becomes clear as he dedicated a

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁰⁸ Robert V. Doble, *Sketches of the East Africa Campaign* (London: John Murray, 1918).

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 34. Similarly Brett Young refers to the askari as 'German savages' and Walmsley as 'Hun askari', see Brett Young, *Marching on Tanga. With General Smuts in East Africa*, p. 21; Leo Walmsley, 'An Airman's Experience in East Africa', *Blackwood's Magazine* 206/207 (1919/1920), pp. 633-652; 788-810; 653-669; 189-209 here p. 808.

⁶¹⁰ Doble, *Sketches of the East Africa Campaign*, pp. 19-20.

chapter of his book to the internment of European civilians and Indian prisoners of war and the 'inconceivably arrogant and cruel' behaviour of the German against them.⁶¹¹ While Doble also praised the conduct of the African and Indian troops, he showed himself concerned about the future of European colonialism as 'in this war, the black man has seen the white, on both sides, run from him [and] the war has done much to destroy the prestige that allows a white man to dominate thousands of the natives.'⁶¹² Ultimately he blamed the Germans for having jeopardised European rule in Africa through the 'Hunnishness' of their conduct in the campaign, picking up a theme propagated by the British government throughout the war.

The first book to appear after the armistice was by Angus Buchanan, an Anglo-Canadian officer, who was thus able to provide much more details on the military operations.⁶¹³ His account was free from any anti-German sentiment – the Schutztruppe was mostly referred to as the invisible and elusive enemy – both in the conduct of the campaign and the impact of colonial rule. Whereas both Brett Young and Dolbey emphasised the importance of Smuts, Buchanan only mentions him in passing, already pointing to Smuts' vanishing hero status. Buchanan kept up the style of dedicating much space to East African flora and fauna. Yet, while he did describe an elephant hunt in great detail, and dedicated an entire chapter to 'nature notes', he did not concern himself much with the impact of the war on the African population, who only appear in the form of 'naked children playing around the tree-trunk roots, in the shade, while old shrivelled up women, or labouring wives, together under the hut-eaves, croon their soft Swahili folk-songs, in tune with the doves in the tress, in tune, indeed with all that is African.'⁶¹⁴ This simplistic and paternalistic image of African life resonated with popular pre-war descriptions of African life and did not resemble the impression most soldiers got from the lives of African civilians during the campaign.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹¹ Ibid., pp. 43-65.

⁶¹² Ibid., p. 15.

⁶¹³ Angus Buchanan, *Three Years of War in East Africa* (London: John Murray, 1919).

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 145-146.

⁶¹⁵ Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', pp. 211-263.

In 1919/20 an additional three books were published and concerned themselves with documenting the service of African troops in German East Africa: Walter Downes on the troops from Nigeria, Hugh Clifford on the regiment from the Gold Coast, and finally Charles Fendall on the British East African troops.⁶¹⁶ All three books, written by either colonial administrators or professional officers, aimed to show the contribution of the African soldiers who 'sacrificed themselves willingly upon the altar of duty, side by side with their different brothers of the Empire, for the sake of that Empire that has given them freedom, justice, and all that makes life worth living.'⁶¹⁷ The narratives in these works follow the different stages of the campaign, dwelling on military operations, the sacrifices made, and the hardships endured by African soldiers and European officers. More pointedly than in previous accounts, these works explored the relationship between European officers and African soldiers. While the latter were universally praised for their bravery, their best characteristic nonetheless remained 'their fidelity to, and confidence in, their officers' and ensuring 'that their officers must on no account run into unnecessary danger'.⁶¹⁸ The sacrifices made by the African soldiers for the victory of the British Empire was ultimately symbolised in every British officer. Yet in these works the celebration of the European officer was also extended to the Germans, at least to Lettow-Vorbeck. Clifford acknowledged the British public's widespread 'admiration for von Lettow-Vorbeck, for the pluck and grit and resource which he displayed', but he also thinks that the praise for Lettow-Vorbeck is overrated.⁶¹⁹ Downes, while describing the Germans as 'the grey wolves of war who are ever willing to do their work of slaughter and destruction, be it in Europe or Africa', still did 'not think that in the whole history of the war there has ever been a more striking character than General von Lettow-

⁶¹⁶ Walter D. Downes, *With the Nigerians in German East Africa* (London: Methuen, 1919); Clifford, *The Gold Coast Regiment in the East African Campaign*; Charles P. Fendall, *The East African Field Force, 1915-1919* (London: Witherby, 1921). See also his article Walter D. Downes, 'The Apes at Sea', *Blackwood's Magazine* 103 (1918), pp. 539-548.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., *With the Nigerians in German East Africa*, p. 16.

⁶¹⁸ Clifford, *The Gold Coast Regiment in the East African Campaign*; Downes, *With the Nigerians in German East Africa*, p. 105.

⁶¹⁹ Clifford, *The Gold Coast Regiment in the East African Campaign*, p. 152.

Vorbeck, a man of indomitable spirit.’⁶²⁰ Through statements like this, one can observe a shift in 1919/20 away from Smuts as the central figure and hero of the campaign towards Lettow-Vorbeck and a more balanced approach towards the German Schutztruppe. There could be several explanations for this change, for example Smuts’ transition from soldier to politician through becoming prime minister of South Africa, the official establishment of a British mandate in Tanganyika, or the translation of Lettow-Vorbeck’s campaign recollection *Heia Safari* into English.⁶²¹ In his book, which became a bestseller in both Britain and Germany, Lettow-Vorbeck remarked that ‘the conduct of the British regular officers was invariably chivalrous, and that the respect they paid us was fully reciprocated.’⁶²² While he did not elaborate on this point, one can find here the seed of the narrative of the ‘gentlemen’s war’, a narrative that would go on to become the dominant representational frameworks of the war in the following years.

The next books to appear in Britain on the campaign had a very different tone and focus. The Yorkshire-born author Leo Walmsley, who served with the Royal Flying Corps in East Africa as a photographer, published a serialised account of his war experience in *Blackwood's Magazine*, which was subsequently published as a monograph with the title *Flying and Sport in East Africa*.⁶²³ While in his autobiography Walmsley regretted to have written the book ‘in a colloquial style, full of clichés and purple patches and with a vein of facetiousness running through’,⁶²⁴ his account nonetheless proved popular with the British public. As the

⁶²⁰ Downes, *With the Nigerians in German East Africa*, p. 298. See also Fendall, *The East African Field Force, 1915-1919*, p. 86.

⁶²¹ Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa*.

⁶²² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁶²³ Leo Walmsley, *Flying and Sport in East Africa* (Edinburgh/London: William Blackwood, 1920).. The book was serialised as: *Ibid.*, ‘An Airman’s Experience in East Africa’.. See also Peter Barton, ‘War Service 1914-1919’, in Nona Stead (ed.), *Shells and Bright Stones. A Biography of Leo Walmsely* (Otley: Smith Settle, 2001), pp. 24-57.

⁶²⁴ Leo Walmsley, *So Many Loves* (London: Collins, 1944), p. 138. Yet the book is a great success and he can publish several more articles on the topic: *Ibid.*, ‘The Aeroplane in African Exploration’, *Geographical Journal* 54 (1919), pp. 296-297; *Ibid.*, ‘Across East Africa in the Rainy Season’, *Wide World Magazine* 44/45 (1920), pp. 369-376; 475-481; 369-375; *Ibid.*, ‘Humours of Big-Game Hunting’, *Wide World Magazine* 46 (1920), pp. 248-257. He later is commissioned for a film and a further book on East Africa.

title suggested, the emphasis of this work was far less on the grisliness of the campaign, and accordingly he did not mention uncomfortable camps, the lack of provisions, water, and medicine for the soldiers that featured so prominently in the previous cluster of memoirs. His narrative instead focused on the fascination of African nature and countryside, a feature already present in several memoirs, but also emphasised the thrill of observing this from the air, which added, of course, a very different dimension. He contrasted the sophistication of aeronautics and its importance for modern warfare with the simplicity of the African surrounding by noting, for example, that each time a plane landed in a settled area 'the niggers pressed round and regarded the pilot with awe and wonder written in their faces.'⁶²⁵ Additionally, the book featured several harmless anecdotes and praised the 'spirit of unselfishness and patriotism that enabled von Lettow-Vorbeck to fight one of the most gallant campaigns in military history.'⁶²⁶ It is noteworthy that this praise of the German commander only appeared in the book of 1920 and was absent from his earlier magazine articles, something that further indicates the prominent position Lettow-Vorbeck would receive in the British popular memory of the East Africa campaign.

In 1922/23 two further books on the campaign were published that follow the same light-hearted tone. Arnold Wienholt, a rich squatter and politician from Queensland, who was big game hunting in Africa in 1914 and joined the British forces as an intelligence officer, published *The Story of a Lion Hunt*.⁶²⁷ Here he merged the pre-war story of his – unsuccessful – lion-hunting safari with the 'hunt' of the lion Lettow-Vorbeck. Wienholt had a limitless admiration for Lettow-Vorbeck, who in fact provided a preface to the book, and the way he conducted the campaign, especially in contrast to Smuts who with his troops 'had melted like butter in the sun.'⁶²⁸ His account of the campaign omitted references

⁶²⁵ Ibid., *Flying and Sport in East Africa*, p. 56.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., p. xi.

⁶²⁷ Wienholt, *The Story of a Lion Hunt. With some of the Hunter's Military Adventures during the War*. See also Rosamond Siemon, *The Eccentric Mr Wienholt* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2005), pp. 94-132.

⁶²⁸ Wienholt, *The Story of a Lion Hunt. With some of the Hunter's Military Adventures during the War*, p. 189.

to the insufficient supplies ('tucker') and the high rate of sickness and death among the soldiers, and instead described the military operations as tough and challenging, yet also rewarding and exciting. The same is true for *Sport and Adventure in Africa* by William Shorthose, an officer of King's African Rifles. This work is notable for including several long episodes on elephant hunting expeditions that occurred during the war.⁶²⁹ The themes of lion and elephant hunting must be regarded as a fixed staple of the imperial travel account. By combining this with the experience during the war, the lines between fictional adventure and the reality of war are blurred.⁶³⁰ Given the difficulties of selling autobiographical books by First World War veterans in Britain in the early 1920s, it is unlikely that a publisher would have taken on these two accounts if their emphasis had been solely on the war itself. Thus, to a certain extent the decision to 'hide' the war behind tales of adventure may have been a pragmatic one in order to reach a wider audience. Nonetheless, even this seems to have failed, as this specific genre did not re-appear in the following decade, confirming that there was little public appetite for war stories of any kind.

Overall one can find several themes developing across this second category of memoirs and that stand in contrast to the representations in the first category of works by internees. The first discernible theme centres on the image of successful and strong Europeans fighting in the African bush. Descriptions of suffering, boredom, loss, and exhaustion experienced by British soldiers faded increasingly into the background and progressively more emphasis was put on the active elements of the campaign, like leading African units or gathering intelligence behind enemy lines. This image fitted much better within the traditional imperial narrative of virtuous colonials than the image of a powerless European feeling lost in Africa. Hence it is not surprising that the story of the civilian and military prisoners of war, which were so prominent during the war, eventually disappeared completely from all narratives. The humiliation and degradation of European

⁶²⁹ Shorthose, *Sport and Adventure in Africa. A record of twelve years of big game hunting, campaigning and travel in the wilds of tropical Africa*.

⁶³⁰ MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature. Hunting, Conversation and British Imperialism*, pp. 147-165; Dawson, *Soldier Heroes. British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities*.

colonials behind barbed wire stood in direct contrast to the (self-)image of the British in colonial Africa. One could interpret that the recurring references to the loyalty of the different African troops, mostly offset by stories of the Africans' need for guidance and leadership, contributed further to the re-construction of the pre-war colonial hierarchy. There is little wonder that the 'liberation' of the African population from German rule was never attributed to the efforts of the Africans themselves, and that they were instead presented as victims and observers who benefited from Britain's civilising mission.

In a second theme, the early accounts portrayed both the German colonial civilians and the German officers and askari as immoral, cruel, and malevolent, and contrasted these characteristics very unfavourably with the behaviour of the Allied troops under their leader Smuts. However, shortly after the armistice a significant change occurred in which the German enemy was presented as fair, honest, and honourable who treated their European opponents with gallantry. Lettow-Vorbeck especially was stylised not only as a brilliant military strategist, but also as hard, but considerate, leader of his askari. The authors acknowledged that there might have been shortcomings in the German colonial methods, but Lettow-Vorbeck and his officers' behaviour towards their subordinate African soldiers was not seen as part of this problem. Accordingly, the conduct and characteristics of the German Schutztruppe were portrayed as less Prussian and rather more British. Thus all Europeans involved in the campaign upheld not only the rules of war, but – arguably more importantly – the rules of colonial hierarchy. This reinterpretation of the conflict as a 'gentlemen's war' became the basis for collective memory that could smooth over the challenges to colonial ideology that warfare between Europeans on African soil otherwise represented.

In the third theme, one can observe that the campaign in East Africa became progressively detached from 'main war' in Europe. In the interwar years, the First World War was not seen as a global conflict, but was reduced to the events on the Western Front with an increasingly limited set of recollected narratives. Against this general backdrop, the East African campaign merged with accounts of

imperial explorations and colonial adventures. However, by disconnecting the events in Africa from the overall struggle against Germany it became difficult to make sense of the campaign, as it can neither be told as a liberation struggle nor as an imperial war of conquest. As it will become clearer when discussing the third group of autobiographies in the 1920s and 1930s, this dilemma led the campaign to be – if not ‘forgotten’ – at least misremembered in interwar Britain. Before moving onto this third category of British memoirs, it is helpful to first take a brief look at the corresponding developments in interwar Germany.

6.3. East African Memories in Germany, 1918-1945

Given the sheer volume of memoirs, articles, and pamphlets produced by German veterans and colonial activists, it is impossible to discuss these publications in systematic detail. However, the importance of the loss of the German overseas possession after the Treaty of Versailles for the revisionist movement of the political right has been well explored over the past decades.⁶³¹ More important for the current purposes are a number of very recent studies that have explored more closely the narratives that developed towards the lost colonies after 1919.⁶³² These

⁶³¹ Mathias Mulumbar Rwankote, *Ostafrika in den Zielvorstellungen der Reichspolitik und der verschiedenen Interessengruppen im Rahmen der kolonialen politischen Aktivitäten in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik* (University of Cologne, 1985); Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919-1945*; Esche, *Koloniales Anspruchsdenken in Deutschland im Ersten Weltkrieg, während der Versailler Friedensverhandlungen und in der Weimarer Republik, 1914-1933*; Adolf Rüger, 'The Colonial Aims of the Weimar Republik', in Helmuth Stoecker (ed.), *German Imperialism in Africa. From the Beginnings until the Second World War* (London: C. Hurst, 1986), pp. 297-336.

⁶³² Klotz, 'The Weimar Republic. A Postcolonial State in a Still-Colonial World', pp. 135-148; Lora Wildenthal, 'Gender and Colonial Politics after the Versailles Treaty', in Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (eds.), *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects. Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn, 2010), pp. 339-359; Maß, *Weisse Helden, schwarze Krieger. Zur Geschichte kolonialer Männlichkeit in Deutschland, 1918-1964*, pp. 28-70; Michels, *Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten. Mehrdeutige Repräsentationsräume und früher Kosmopolitismus in Africa*, pp. 116-154. Michael Pesek, 'Colonial Hereos. German Colonial Identities in Wartime', in Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 126-139; Jörg Lehmann, 'Fraternity, Frenzy, and Genocide in German War Literature, 1906-1936', in Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 115-125; Annette Gumbel, 'Instrumentalisierte Erinnerung an den Ersten Weltkrieg: Hans Grimms "Volk ohne Raum"', in Helmut Berding, Klaus Heller, and Wolfgang Speitkamp (eds.), *Krieg und Erinnerung. Fallstudien zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), pp. 93-111.

narratives overlap to some extent with the themes picked-up by the British, for example the detailed descriptions of the African environment and the gallantry of the African troops. Yet, the 'loyal askari', the African soldiers who sacrificed themselves for their German colonial masters to whom they were deeply attached, occupied a special centrality in the German memoirs. Already in Lettow-Vorbeck's highly influential book this theme was developed in much detail and passion; indeed a stylised picture of an askari featured prominently on the book's cover.⁶³³ Combined with the endurance of the German officers and men over the prolonged campaign, the 'loyal askari' appeared in all memoirs by participants of the campaign.⁶³⁴ The characteristics attributed to them were also extended to the African carriers, who one colonial described as 'unconditionally faithful as good dogs',⁶³⁵ and the African civilian population in general who was characterised as loyal and longing for the return of their 'rightful rulers'.⁶³⁶ One of the shared aims of all these books – either explicitly or implicitly – was to prove wrong the Allied accusation that Germany was an incompetent and failed colonising power and thus unable to claim back their former colonies.⁶³⁷

A further recurring theme in these memoirs concerned the relationship between German civilians and the Schutztruppe. The authors, including Lettow-Vorbeck,

⁶³³ Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Heia Safari. Deutschlands Kampf in Ostafrika* (Leipzig: Hafe und Kohler, 1920).

⁶³⁴ Deppe, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck durch Afrika*; Richard Wenig, *Kriegssafari. Erlebnisse und Eindrücke auf den Zügen Lettow-Vorbecks durch das östliche Afrika* (Berlin: Scherl, 1920); Roehl, *Ostafrikas Heldenkampf. Nach eigenen Erlebnissen dargestellt*; Georg von Byern, *Die da drüben: Ostafrikanische Kriegsskizzen* (Berlin: Runge, 1918); Carl Christiansen, *Durch! Mit Kriegsmaterial zu Lettow-Vorbeck* (Stuttgart: Verlag für Volkskunst, 1918).. For later examples see Otto Inhülsen, *Abenteuer am Kilimanjaro. Urwald und Steppe wundern sich* (Leipzig: Koehler und Amelang, 1926); Rudolf de Haas, *Im Sattel für Deutsch-Ost. Auf Wildpfad und Feindesfährten* (Berlin: Brunnen-Verlag, 1927); Wilhelm Arning (ed.), *Deutsch-Ostafrika gestern und heute* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1936); Herbert Viktor Patera, *Der weiße Herr Ohnefurcht. Das Leben des Schutztruppenhauptmanns Tom von Prince* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, 1939).

⁶³⁵ August Hauer, *Kumbuke. Erlebnisse eines Arztes in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Dom, 1922), p. 46.

⁶³⁶ Albert Prübe, *Zwanzig Jahre Ansiedler in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Stuttgart: Stecker and Schröder, 1929), p. 6. This is also very prominent amongst missionary publications, see e.g. Bruno Gutmann, *Briefe aus Afrika* (Leipzig: Verlag der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission, 1925), pp. 19-20. Marcel R. Breynne, *Deutsch-Ostafrika ruft! Briefe und Tagebuchblätter aus dem Nachkriegs-Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Safari, 1926).

⁶³⁷ For a good summary of the contemporary arguments see Heinrich Schnee, 'Die koloniale Schuldfrage', *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* 21 (1924), pp. 91-130.. See also Pogge von Strandmann, 'Imperialism and Revisionism in Interwar Germany', pp. 90-122.

stressed the cohesion between all elements of the German population and their support for the war effort.⁶³⁸ Indeed, the resilience and resourcefulness of German civilians was credited with allowing the German army to concentrate on fighting the enemy.⁶³⁹ Together all these stories culminated in the triumph of the German Schutztruppe, who were not forced to surrender until after the armistice was declared in Europe. This narrative was developed in opposition to the myth that the Germany army at the Western Front remained 'undefeated in the field', suggesting that capitulation and defeat had been neither inevitable nor a military necessity, but instead was forced onto the army by a war-weary and defeatist 'home-front'.⁶⁴⁰ The war in German East Africa could, therefore, be presented as a counter-image in which neither the colonial 'home-front' revolted and nor were the military commanders obstructed by small-minded politicians. Moreover, it was readily apparent that the Allied troops were greater in number and better equipped in Africa than the Schutztruppe. As such, the German defeat was to a certain extent inevitable and could easily be rationalised. Taken together the German war effort in East Africa did not engender shame, as all the available material and human resources had been utilised for the extensive campaign, and because the British were only able to win through a combination of better equipment and dishonourable tactics – misusing African soldiers, ignoring international treaties, employing blockades – but not through bravery, military skill or love of their country.⁶⁴¹

Consistent with these themes, the German colonials who were expelled from East Africa felt as though they had lost not only their property, but that they had also been deprived of their 'Heimat'. The loss of this Heimat could not simply be

⁶³⁸ Hauer, *Kumbuke. Erlebnisse eines Artzes in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, p. 37.. See also Schnee, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkrieg*; Robert Unterwelz, *In Tropensonne und Urwaldnacht. Wanderungen und Erlebnisse in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Stuttgart: Strecker, 1923); Otto Reiner, *Achtzehn Jahre Farmer in Afrika* (Leipzig: Paul List, 1924); Deppe and Deppe, *Um Deutsch-Ostafrika. Erinnerungen von Charlotte und Ludwig Deppe*.

⁶³⁹ R. Kaundinya, *Erinnerungen aus meinen Pflanzernjahren in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig: Haberland, 1918), pp. 154-155.; Maria Gräfin von Matuschka, *Meine Erinnerungen aus Deutsch-Ostafrika, 1911-1919* (Leipzig: Xenien, 1924), pp. 66-67.

⁶⁴⁰ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat. On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (New York: Metropolitan, 2003), pp. 225-256.

⁶⁴¹ Walter Holtz, *Pflanzernleben in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Karl Siegmund, 1918), p. 64.

compensated for with money, and nothing short of the return of the beloved colony to German rule would suffice.⁶⁴² Hence it is also not surprising that the Allied troops were not presented in as positive a light in the German memoirs as the German troops were in the British publications. Despite the fact that Lettow-Vorbeck and others acknowledged the good manners of some British officers, the political reality in which the British subsequently took possession of the colony weighed more heavily in the judgement of most authors. Thus the German memoir literature on the First World War in East Africa was both shaped by and hoped to shape domestic and foreign politics, through continuous effort but with varying success. After 1918, and lasting into the Second World War, not a single year passed without the publication of a new memoir of this campaign.⁶⁴³ While after 1933 the colonial propaganda of the Nazis amplified the line of attack towards a restitution of the former German colonies, the main theme in these books remained basically unchanged.⁶⁴⁴

6.4. The 'forgotten' Campaign in Britain, 1928-1938

Contrasting with the developments in Germany, detailed above, in Britain the interest in the East African campaign waned, and no books on this topic were published for five years between 1923 and 1928. Thereafter, only five further

⁶⁴² Schnee, *Meine Erlebnisse während der Kriegszeit in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, p. 31; Artur Heye, *Vitani. Kriegs- und Jagderlebnisse in Ostafrika, 1914-1916* (Leipzig: Grunow, 1926); Prüße, *Zwanzig Jahre Ansiedler in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, pp. 4-6; Otto Pentzel, *Heimat Ostafrika. Aus dem Leben, Wirken und Schaffen eines Kolonialdeutschen* (Leipzig: Koehler, 1936). For the concept of colonial Heimat see Steinbach, 'Defending the Heimat. The Germans in South-West Africa and East Africa during the First World War', pp. 179-208.

⁶⁴³ See e.g. Peter Eckart, *Marineblau und Khaki. Der Heldenkampf des Kreuzers Königsberg* (Stuttgart: Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung, 1939); Bernhard von Matuschka, *Ein Pflanzeleben in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Weise, 1940); Ida Schuffenhauer, *Wir kommen wieder* (Berlin: Süßeroff, 1940); Carl Jungblut, *Vierzig Jahre Afrika* (Berlin: Spiegel-Verlag, 1941).

⁶⁴⁴ For a more detailed discussion on Nazi colonial propaganda see Pascal Grosse, 'What Does German Colonialism Have to Do with National Socialism? A Conceptual Framework', in Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal (eds.), *Germany's Colonial Pasts* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp. 115-134; Maß, *Weißer Helden, schwarze Krieger. Zur Geschichte kolonialer Männlichkeit in Deutschland, 1918-1964*, pp. 217-258; Michels, 'Der Held von Deutsch-Ostafrika.' *Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Ein preußischer Kolonialoffizier*, pp. 311-330; Uwe Schulte-Varendorff, *Kolonialheld für Kaiser und Führer. General Lettow-Vorbeck - Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2006), pp. 95-145.

books appeared until 1937 when Francis Brett Young lamented that ‘this “sideshow”, now almost forgotten save by those who happened to serve in it, has only produced a slender body of personal documentation.’⁶⁴⁵

In 1928, during the short revival of interest in First World War literature, William Campbell published *East Africa by Motor Lorry* describing his war experiences as a delivery and ambulance driver.⁶⁴⁶ This marks the beginning of the third category of British memorial works about the East African campaign. Campbell’s style of storytelling resembled Walmsley’s account of flying an aeroplane in Africa and much detail was given to African nature and his ‘strange adventures in East Africa’ while ignoring any details on military operations.⁶⁴⁷ In so doing, his account tapped into the well-established and popular theme of imperial adventure stories of a European conquering and mastering African nature through his ability and engineering skills.⁶⁴⁸ He described his ‘relief to take charge of a car’ after his arrival in East Africa as a car provided most Europeans travelling in Africa with a feeling of independence and a sense of cultural security.⁶⁴⁹ Additionally, several times throughout the book, the lorry provided the opportunity to portray ‘the simple native’s’ fear of all machines and his admiration towards ‘the white man as a wonderful being [...] devoid of fear [who] tackle work boldly, and master it quickly’.⁶⁵⁰ Fitting with this celebration of European supremacy was the admiration of Lettow-Vorbeck as an ‘indomitable’ and ‘valiant’ leader who had planned his campaign strategy precisely before the war.⁶⁵¹ Yet, the book did not resonate with other war memoirs at the time, which developed on the themes of the war’s futility and the veterans’ disillusion with the post-war world. Hence it

⁶⁴⁵ Francis Brett Young, Foreword, in: Thornhill, *Taking Tanganyika. Experiences of an Intelligence Officer, 1914-1918*, p. 11.

⁶⁴⁶ William W. Campbell, *East Africa by Motor Lorry. Recollections of an Ex-Motor Transport Driver* (London: John Murray, 1928).

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁸ James B. Wolf, ‘Imperial Integration on Wheels. The Car, the British and the Cape-to-Cairo Route’, in Robert Giddings (ed.), *Literature and Imperialism* (London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 112-127.

⁶⁴⁹ Campbell, *East Africa by Motor Lorry. Recollections of an Ex-Motor Transport Driver*, p. 40.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145+202.

was not surprising that it was the last publication dedicated solely to the experience of a British soldier in East Africa for the next ten years.

In 1932/33, two histories appeared of regiments that were employed – at least partially – in East Africa during the war.⁶⁵² Both books focused mainly on the operational aspects of the campaign and document the endeavours of the specific regiment. As such, these cannot strictly be regarded as memoir literature. Yet it is noteworthy that one of them ended with a praise of the German troops, which ‘had fought magnificently led by a magnificent leader’ and contributing to the theme of a ‘gentlemen’s war’.⁶⁵³ In 1933 the former colonial officer D. W. J. Cuddeford, who served as an officer in Nigeria, France, and East Africa, published his war memoir. Its title – *And all for what?* – captured the widespread contemporary disenchantment with the war.⁶⁵⁴ His short assessment of the East African campaign was also rather unusual compared with the memoirs discussed so far. As the only former veteran who wrote of their experience in East Africa, he explicitly pointed out that while he ‘cannot truthfully say to be sorry to get away from the hell’s kettle at the Western Front’, he nonetheless felt that he was wasting his time in Africa and sometimes wished to be back there.⁶⁵⁵ While this rather accurately reflected the sentiment shared by most British soldiers during the war in East Africa, Cuddeford was the only author who in the interwar years publicly expressed the feeling of futility of serving in Africa.

The two final memoirs concerned with East Africa appeared in 1937 and were written by former soldiers who came themselves from the ‘imperial periphery’. The Anglo-Kenyan Christopher Thornhill published *Taking Tanganyika*, and the

⁶⁵² William S. Thatcher, *The Fourth Battalion, Duke of Connaught's Own, Tenth Baluch Regiment in the Great War, 129th D.C.O. Baluchis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932); Harold C. Wylly, *The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment*, vol. 2 (London: Royal United Service Institution, 1933).

⁶⁵³ Thatcher, *The Fourth Battalion, Duke of Connaught's Own, Tenth Baluch Regiment in the Great War, 129th D.C.O. Baluchis*, p. 214.

⁶⁵⁴ D. W. J. Cuddeford, *And All For What? Some War Time Experiences* (London: Heath Cranton, 1933).

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 194–204.

former Indian officer Wynn E. Wynn wrote *Ambush*.⁶⁵⁶ Thornhill was the only resident of British East Africa who was either willing or able to publish his war memoirs, and his explicit aim was to counterbalance other accounts that were ‘unavoidably coloured by the ignorance of local conditions’.⁶⁵⁷ Wynn’s book was the only account by an officer involved in the failed landing in Tanga in 1914. It was presented as ‘the story of a war that was a secret’ since the fiasco of this battle was written out of the war history.⁶⁵⁸ Despite their grand ambitions, both authors ultimately penned books that conformed to the same themes that were established fifteen years earlier: the story of their war experience was combined with classic imperial adventure plots. Wynn, for example, explained his preference for serving in East Africa rather than at some other front as ‘there was more movement, more uncertainty, and a greater chance for individuals to show initiative’,⁶⁵⁹ and Thornhill dedicated much space to nature descriptions such as ‘the white dome of Kilimanjaro [and] those scorched open spaces’.⁶⁶⁰ Finally, both also praised Lettow-Vorbeck as ‘a gallant gentleman’, with Wynn even declaring that ‘we had more esteem and affection for him than for our own leaders’.⁶⁶¹

These authors of this third category of British memoirs had to face not only a waning interest in the war in Britain, but also a waning interest in the Empire overall. Though distinct in time, and with apparently different aims, they nonetheless continued the same familiar line of narrative as became established in the early 1920s. The campaign became progressively more disconnected from events in Europe, and located more firmly in the colonial sphere. This disconnection either contributed to ambivalence and disenchantment or it became the basis for stories of adventure. Finally, the portrayal of the German enemy was

⁶⁵⁶ Thornhill, *Taking Tanganyika. Experiences of an Intelligence Officer, 1914-1918*; Wynn E. Wynn, *Ambush* (London: Hutchinson, 1937).

⁶⁵⁷ Thornhill, *Taking Tanganyika. Experiences of an Intelligence Officer, 1914-1918*, p. 9. There are, however, several unpublished autobiographies in the collections of the Kenya National Archives and the Rhodes House Library.

⁶⁵⁸ Wynn, *Ambush*, p. 5.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁶⁶⁰ Thornhill, *Taking Tanganyika. Experiences of an Intelligence Officer, 1914-1918*, p. 29.

⁶⁶¹ Wynn, *Ambush*, p. 72+238.

continually revised. In contrast to their incompetence as colonials in the first category of memoirs, Germans, and especially their leader Lettow-Vorbeck, were now portrayed as model opponents and above all 'gentlemen'.

6.5. Conclusion

Despite its eclectic nature, the memoir literature on the war in East Africa reflects the uncertainties, tensions, and difficulties, this campaign created for those Europeans who had been involved in it. But, if one strips away the 'exotic' ingredients, the themes that appear in these works mirror many of the topics that have been explored in the previous chapters in this thesis. Throughout the thesis it has been observed how European colonials have managed the clash between colonial ideologies on the one hand, and military conflict between European powers on the other. The need to manage these opposing forces is equally apparent in the legacy of the East African campaign in collective memory. However, it is also apparent that the presentation of the war in East Africa developed in different, or even opposing, ways in Germany and Britain. The dissimilarities reflect the divergent aims and agendas of the colonial circles and interested public in both countries.

In interwar Germany, the colonial lobby groups and former colonials were engrossed in the drive to keep the 'colonial spirit' among the German public alive. This was a necessary aspect of their ultimate aim for a return of Germany's colonial possessions. Accordingly, they continually stressed the sacrifices made by civilian colonials, together with the support of the African population, to turn German East Africa into a civilised and successful colony, one that was defended by all elements of the colonial society during the war against external aggression. They vehemently rejected the British argument, which formed the basis for the takeover of the German colonies, that Germany was a failed colonial power that mistreated its African subjects. The memory of the campaign in Germany thus centred not only on the individual and collective effort of the German soldiers to

defend the colony, but always pointed towards the loyalty of the askari and African civilians. The portrayal of their shared sacrifice and suffering during the war was contrasted with the violent behaviour of the Allied troops and Britain's illegitimate colonial war aims.

By contrast, in Britain those concerned with colonial issues had little interest in keeping the collective suffering of European and African soldiers alive. Compared to the documented horrors of the campaign and the themes of personal and collective misery recorded by the soldier themselves during the war, progressively the memory of this campaign shifted towards something altogether different. Here, one can observe a twofold development. First, the memory of the campaign was merged with well-established patterns of colonial adventure stories (e.g., big game hunting and overcoming African nature). Second, the German opponents were transformed from unworthy colonials and 'barbaric' enemies, and into gallant, gentlemanly and worthy opponents. Unlike the German memoirs, the British ones neither dealt with a justification for the war in East Africa nor did they discuss moral claims to the new colonial possessions. Instead, and indeed because of this, the goal was to rehabilitate the image of the war such that it fitted more easily into the established colonial narrative. Overall, one sees how the memorial literature paved the way for the image of the war that was popularised through fictionalised accounts in novels and films, as discussed in the opening of this thesis.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Key Findings & Contributions

The foundational concept of this thesis is the idea that Europeans – at least Western Europeans – in colonial Africa had a shared sense of belonging that was grounded in more than simply separation along racial lines. As important as race undeniably was in colonial Africa, a trans-national sense of being ‘European’ was also a significant reference point and one that actively informed self-understandings and interactions between the different sub-groups of colonial society. By looking at these various sub-groups – administrators, settlers, and missionaries – it becomes clear that while meaning was found in racial and national identities, belonging within their particular colonial sub-group at least as important. Furthermore, sections of the colonial community in East Africa regarded themselves as part of a cosmopolitan elite, who moved easily between colonies and countries and to whom national belonging was somewhat secondary. Finally, both German and British East Africa had sizeable minorities of British and German nationals respectively, and in many cases these had lived in the colonies for considerable time and were regarded by both themselves and others as legitimate occupiers of the colonial space. A trans-national sense of oneself as European has more capacity to encompass these boundary-crossing relationships than simple national categories. Although colonialism was inevitably bound to empires, and therefore to nationalism, there was more evidence of transnational belonging in the colonies than there was of strict nationalism.

The central contention of this thesis is that the balance between a sense of national and of racial belonging was severely challenged by the outbreak of the First World War and by the decision by the belligerent powers to fight the war in the African colonies. The contemporary sentiment that war between European powers in colonial Africa should be avoided at all cost has been well-established in the literature. However, the thesis argues that the situation was more complex than this simple picture would suggest. While it is true that concerns centring around

the fear of an African uprising, the impact of war on the colonial economy, and the anticipated loss of 'white prestige' were all raised in response to the possibility of conflict, there were also those who argued that it was the colonies' duty to support their respective mother country and some even welcomed the opportunity to display their and their colony's patriotism. Here the conflict between a 'colonial' and a 'national' identity can be observed quite clearly as colonials in both German and British East Africa were torn between feelings of loyalty either to the 'colonial project' of civilising and developing Africa, which would potentially be discredited or destroyed through war, and their loyalty to their nation which was also threatened. The tension between these two things is at the heart of this thesis, and was explored in five case studies, focussing on the outbreak of war, the arrest and internment of European 'enemy aliens', the war experience of European soldiers, the occupation of German East Africa, and, ultimately, the memory of the war itself. In each of these domains, albeit in different ways, it is possible to see how colonial actors struggled to uphold the ideals of European solidarity in the face of a war that required conflict between Europeans.

In addition to pursuing this idea, the work in this thesis also fills a significant gap in the previous literature. As stated from the outset, the First World War in East Africa is not a 'forgotten' or 'untold' conflict. Rather, when it has received attention from historians, this has been almost exclusively through a focus on military and political histories, rather than social and cultural histories that consider these events from a human perspective. In comparison, to the extent that scholars working within colonial studies have taken into account human perspectives on the World War in Africa, these have focused largely on exploring these events from the perspective of the African population. Through exploring the distinct perspective of the Europeans who inhabited and fought for the colonial space, this work contributes to current developments in both these fields. Moreover, through exploring how colonial ideologies intersected with the more nationalist concerns associated with warfare, the research bridges theoretical terrain that spans across the sub-disciplines of First World War studies and

colonial history. In so doing, the work contained in this thesis brings the global war into the colonies rather than simply using the colonies as a further example of the war's global nature. In so doing, it provides unique insights into the meaning of a war that was simultaneously on the edge of European concerns and at the centre of colonial ones.

7.2. Further Directions

Several of the themes explored in this thesis would deserve a wider approach. While the comparative approach, contrasting British and German East Africa, sheds light on the areas of overlap – and important points of departure – in reactions to, and enactment of, the war, the general point of in this thesis was the events in Europe rather than the other African colonies affected by the war. This, of course, represents a significant limitation of the work presented here. As discussed in the historiography, the attention by historians on the war in Africa has traditionally been focussed on East Africa, with little research undertaken on Togoland, the Cameroons, and even German Southwest Africa. However, one can tentatively suggest that the themes developed in this thesis should also apply equally to the other German colonies during the First World War.

Other than German East Africa, German Southwest Africa is the only German colony whose history during the First World War has received ample scholarly attention. However, the character of this colony and the nature of the conflict there, were significantly different: German Southwest Africa was a settler colony with more than 10.000 German residents, including many families that permanently lived there. Both the defending German Schutztruppe and the attacking South African forces refused to enlist African soldiers, making the conflict distinctly different to all other campaigns in Africa, which were predominantly carried out with countless African combatants and auxiliaries. Furthermore, the social and political situation in South Africa before and during the war, with the air of mistrust between the Afrikaner and British segments of the

population, impacted on the policies of the South African occupying forces. The very lenient and generous conditions the defeated Germans in Southwest Africa received after the armistice in 1915 were to a large extent a concession to the many members of the Afrikaner community that had a cultural affinity with the German settlers. Furthermore, the sheer size of the German population in Southwest Africa made it necessary to adopt a very different policy than the British applied in German East Africa.

The lack of systematic research is an issue with respect to comparisons with the Cameroons, Germany's large plantation colony in West Africa, and the small, successful trading colony Togoland. The latter was occupied by French and British troops from neighbouring colonies within days at the end August 1914 without any serious German resistance. The speed and bloodlessness of this takeover allowed for an orderly transition of power, aided by the cooperation of German residents with the Allied occupiers. However, as yet, there are no detailed studies on this transition period, and nor are there any on the subsequent deportation of the German population. In the Cameroons, the war between British and French troops and the German Schutztruppe lasted until 1916, when the colony was finally occupied, nearly as long as the occupation of German East Africa. Although, unlike German East Africa, the Cameroons did not have a permanent settler population, many of its about 1.000 German residents had longer and deeper connections with the colony than the transient European population in Togoland or the Pacific colonies. It appears that the length of this campaign and France's prominent involvement led to a harsher treatment of the German population prior to and during their deportation. Here is the potential for very fruitful comparisons to be made between the different approaches undertaken in the Cameroons by the British and French colonial and military administration with those in German East Africa. However, it impossible to draw meaningful comparisons with the situation in East Africa as a systematic analysis of the events in the Cameroons, especially of the French military and civilian administration during the occupation, is still missing in the literature.

Of course, the colonial sphere was not limited to Africa, and comparisons could also be made with reactions to the war in the German colonial possessions in the Pacific, the colonies of Samoa and New Guinea. However, the combined European population of both colonies was less than 1,000 people, with no permanent settlers. As plantation and trading colonies both territories had a distinctly international character with many Anglophile members among the German elite. Moreover, there were numerous personal and economic interactions between these isolated colonies and the British territories in the region, especially Australia and New Zealand. Again this appears to reflect the general attitude of a shared European colonial identity. At the outbreak of war, these two dominions, driven by their own sub-imperialist agenda, occupied both colonies within days. In Samoa, the Germans offered no resistance against the New Zealand troops, and only one German officer died in the Australian conquest of New Guinea. The swiftness of these conquests was followed by the immediate deportation of the most of the German population for internment in Australia and New Zealand respectively. There are no accounts suggesting that the German soldiers and civilians were treated with anything other than consideration in the short period of time following the occupation, thus mirroring the pattern observed in East Africa.

In addition to these potential directions for geographical expansion, it would be both important and interesting to expand further on the legacy of the campaign, a topic only touched on in the present work. While the importance of the colonial revisionist movement, with its special focus on German East Africa and its influence on interwar German political culture, has been well explored, the cultural legacy of the First World War as a global conflict in Britain is still largely absent. Also absent is some understanding of how the First World War was commemorated within colonial Kenya and Tanganyika, especially in light of the various themes that are apparent in the commemoration of this war within European memory. Yet, even more interesting would be a systematic investigation of the various attempts by colonials, both in East Africa and in Europe, to reconstruct pre-war colonial sentiments. Especially German and British missionary societies never ceased communicating throughout the war and they

quickly resumed co-operation after its end. In addition, Germans were allowed to return to East Africa itself in stages from the mid-1920s onwards. It would be fascinating to explore further exactly how these former enemies were (re-) incorporated into colonial society. The influx of Germans, and especially Jewish refugees, into Kenya and Tanganyika in the 1930s provides a further interesting dimension, and one that would eventually lead to comparisons with the Second World War in East Africa. When war again returned to Africa, it is an interesting question of whether there were any connections between practices and thinking established during the First World War and the subsequent management of enemy nationals in the Second World War.

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