

The London School of Economics and Political Science

*Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees Captured by
British and Dominion forces from the German Colonies
during the First World War*

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the previously unstudied treatment of German civilian internees and prisoners of war taken from the German colonies by British and Dominion authorities during the First World War. Through this study the links between the First World War in the extra-European theatre and the conflict in Europe will be examined. Five key issues are posited for investigation. These are: the centralised internment policy of the British Empire, the effect of the takeover of German colonies on the cultural identity of the British dominions, the effect wartime captivity had on German settlers, what extra-European internment tells us about twentieth century mobility and warfare, and the integration of the extra-European theatre of the war into the overall Global War narrative. The establishment of a global camp system run from the British imperial metropole involved the coordination of the military, the Admiralty, Dominion governments, and the Colonial and Foreign Offices. The general principles of international law were followed but often overridden through the use of reprisals, and the notion of trying Germans for 'war crimes' had an impact far into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The First World War and the internment of German civilians and military prisoners in the extra-European theatre undermined the notion of a common European civilising mission in the colonial world. It upset the established colonial racial hierarchies, and through 'enemy alien' legislation helped establish European hierarchies of race as defined by nationality, disrupting the pre-war world order of cultural globalisation. Through the analysis of German colonial settlers and soldiers in British internment, this thesis demonstrates that the First World War was not just a conflict between the European Great powers but that it also involved a world-wide remaking of ideas, institutions and geopolitics.

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Abbreviations

BA	Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde
B.E.Ö.K	Bundesvereinigung Ehemaliger Österreichischer Kriegsgefangener
BLO	Bodleian Library, Oxford
DHPG	Deutsche Handels und Plantagen Gesellschaft
DKG	Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft
ICRC	The International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva
LSE	London School of Economics Archives
RKA	Reichskolonialamt
RKB	Reichskolonialbund
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
TNAA	The National Archives of Australia

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Map 2. Locations of internment camps in Australia and New Zealand and the South Pacific.

Detail from, Hamburgischer Landesverein vom Roten Kreuz, *Karte von Großbritannien, Italien, Japan und den überseeischen Ländern: in denen sich Kriegs- oder Zivilgefangene befinden sowie Bestimmungen über den Postverkehr* (Friedrichsen, Hamburg, 1917). (See page 10 for key.)

Map Key*:

(All camps under the administration of the British Empire unless indicated otherwise)

Map 1:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 32. Las Palmas (Spain) | 61. Swakopmund |
| 34. Hammerwiek (Norway) | 62. Capstadt |
| 35. Aalborg (Denmark) | 63. Kimberley |
| 36. Tofta (Sweden) | 64. Winburg |
| 37. Odense (Denmark) | 65. Pietermaritzburg |
| 38. Bergen (The Netherlands) | 66. Durban |
| 38a. Wierkerchans (The Netherlands) | 67. Johannesburg |
| 39. Pamplona (Spain) | 68. Pretoria, Robert Heights |
| 40. Saragossa (Spain) | 69. Lourenço Marques (Portugal) |
| 41. Alcala (Spain) | 70. Beira (Portugal) |
| 42. Aranjuez (Spain) | 71. Macequece (Portugal) |
| 43. Chios (Greece) | 72. Blantyre |
| 44. Es Saff | 73. Tabora (Belgium and Britain) |
| 45. Ras el-Tin/ Sidi Bishr Alexandria | 74. Morogoro |
| 46. Cairo | 75. Zanzibar |
| 47. Es Saff | 76. Mombassa |
| 48. El Kantara | 77. Nairobi |
| 49. El Ferda | 78. Dagshai |
| 50. Ismailie | 78a. Summerpur |
| 51. Maghil | 79. Delhi |
| 51a. Tanooma | 80. Ahmednagar |
| 52. Aden | 81. Belgaum |
| 53. Sekondi | 82. Goa (Portugal) |
| 54. Accra | 83. Bellaray |
| 55. Lagos | 84. Colombo |
| 56. Zungeru | 84a. Ragama |
| 57. Loanda (Portugal) | 84b. Dyatalawa |
| 58. Grootfontein | |
| 59. Aus | |
| 60. Okanjande | |

Map 2:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 83. Bellaray | 95. Langwarren |
| 84. Colombo | 96. Bourke |
| 84a. Ragama | 97. Liverpool |
| 84b. Dyatalawa | 98. Sydney |
| 85. Mergui | 99. Berrima |
| 86. Kuala Lumpur | 100. Trial Bay |
| 87. Singapore | 101. Brisbane |
| 88. Tenom | 101a. Enogerra |
| 89. Jesselton | 102. Hobart |
| 90. Sandakar | 103. Bruni Island |
| 91. Rottnest Island | 104. Devonport |
| 92. Fremantle | 105. Somes Island |
| 93. Mitcham | 105a. Motuihi Island |
| 93a. Port Cook | 106. Rabaul |
| 93b. Torrens Island | 107. Nauru |
| 94. Melbourne | 108. Guam (United States) |
| 94b. Port Cook | |

* Not all the numbers refer to actual camps, some were military hospitals and other holding stations and French-run internment camps are not indicated. Not all the camps numbered will be referred to in this thesis but map locations will be indicated on a camp's first reference.

Introduction: Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees Captured by British and Dominion forces from the German Colonies during the First World War

This thesis discusses the previously unstudied treatment of German civilian internees and prisoners of war taken from the German colonies by British and Dominion authorities during the First World War.¹ The First World War outside Europe has often been regarded as a sideshow to the main theatre of war in the Western Front. While this was true with regard to the extent that the extra-European operations determined the outcome of the war, for the men and women whose lives were affected through expulsion from their homes, internment, and the confiscation of their property, the war outside Europe was an integral part of the global conflict. Colonial settlers' multiple identities such as planters, traders, missionaries and reservists meant the lines between who was to be classed as a civilian internee and who as a military prisoner were often blurred, making it necessary here to study prisoners of war and civilian internees in tandem. Matthew Stibbe's observation that the uprooting and imprisonment of so many civilians within Europe constituted an important aspect of the war's 'radical transformation of social relations and its destruction of common European values'², is also applicable to the extra-European theatre. The colonial theatres of the war, where previously racial roles and hierarchies had been more rigidly defined than in Europe, were characterised by social transformation influenced through the expansion of the European Great War into a global conflict.

In European historiography the outbreak of the First World War is seen as a departure from the relative Great Power cooperation that facilitated a peace lasting from 1871. However, this masks the fact that the wider world, in the years before the war, was indeed a violent place. The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 proved that not even Europe was immune from outbreaks of armed conflict. In the extra-European world, the First World War certainly marked a massive escalation in violence, but it was not a break from the norm. Previously, the Russo-Japanese

¹ The German colonies were Togo, Cameroon, German South-West Africa, German East Africa, New Guinea, Samoa, The Kiaochow Bay concession, China (with the port town referred to here by its older name of Tsingtao, although the modern Pinyin alliteration is Qingdao), and a number of islands in the Pacific.

² Matthew Stibbe, 'Civilian Internment in Europe. 1914-1920', in *Immigrants & Minorities*, 26, 1/2 (March/July 2008), pp. 49-81, p. 49.

War (1904-05), and the Italo-Turkish War, in Libya (1911-12), saw innovations in land and air warfare that were taken further on the Western Front in 1914-1918. Another key innovation that extra-European warfare contributed to the conflict in Europe was the concentration camp. The institution of *reconcentrados* was introduced by the Spanish military in Cuba during the Ten Years War (1868-1878) where civilians were concentrated in villages and towns under Spanish control, and the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902) saw the first instances of 'white Europeans' interned in modern concentration camps.³ The abuses of Africans, as in King Leopold's Congo colony in the 1900s or during the brutal suppression of the Herero uprising in German South-West Africa (1904-1907), were well known to contemporaries and provided a common stock of public images of colonial violence, such as mutilation, which were drawn on in the popular understanding of the fighting in the First World War.⁴ Violence escalated in the colonial sphere with the outbreak of the First World War, but it was not new. One of the major differences, however, which this thesis analyses, was that this violence was also being directed at Europeans.

Yet, in the longer term, as Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski argue, it was not the links between internment in the colonial sphere and the concentration camps of the Second World War, but the radicalisation of society within Europe during the First World War that was the key factor in leading to the gates of Auschwitz.⁵ This then raises the question: to what narrative does the story of Europeans in captivity in the colonies belong? Does this narrative

³ See, Ian Smith and Andreas Stucki, 'The Colonial Development of Concentration Camps (1868–1902)', in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, 3 (2011), pp. 417-437. Lord Kitchener, British Chief of Staff during the Boer War, did, however, refuse to recognise the Boers as European, referring to them instead as 'uncivilized Africander savages with only a thin white veneer'. Ibid., p. 419. The concentration camp system was mirrored in the compounds for African labour in the South African diamond and gold mines. See page 56.

⁴ The abuses in King Leopold's Congo are also currently well-known thanks to the commercial success of Adam Hochschild's work. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (MacMillan, London, 1999).

⁵ Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, 'Hannah Arendt's Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz', in *Central European History* 42, 2 (2009), pp. 279–300. A lot of work has been done on Germany's abysmal treatment of Herero captives, in 1904-07, and the influence this may or may not have had on German moves to mass intern people in the Second World War. See, Benjamin Madley, 'From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South-West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe', in *European History Quarterly* 35, 3 (2005), pp. 429–64, Jürgen Zimmerer, 'Annihilation in Africa: The "Race War" in German Southwest Africa (1904-1908) and its Significance for a Global History of Genocide', in *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 37 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 51-57. Seven of the twenty-two articles in Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (Taylor and Francis, New York, 2011) are dedicated to the Herero genocide. See also David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide* (Faber and Faber, London, 2010).

belong within a European context that has repercussions for internment in later conflicts there or is it to be confined to the colonial sphere? Can one separate the extra-European and European narratives? One answer which this thesis investigates is that internment, through international negotiations over treatment and exchange, and through reprisals against prisoners in the colonies for action taken against their counterparts in Europe, linked the extra-European and European theatres together.

In analysing the treatment of German prisoners of war and civilian internees from the German colonies, five main themes will be discussed. First, the management of camps in the extra-European world was dependent on the centralised policy of the British Empire. This policy meant the transfer of European norms of camp management in terms of rules, rations and even the physical lay-out of camps through fences and barracks were brought in line with European technical innovations.⁶ A camp system that had initially been developed in what one could consider the experimental field of the colonial periphery was now being re-exported to the extra-European world.⁷ This resulted in the establishment of the 'modern' European internment camp, physically symbolised through barbed wire fences and watch-towers, in the extra-European theatre.⁸

Second, following the centralised nature of the camp system, this thesis will address the effect of the presence of German civilian internees and prisoners of war in Dominion and other colonial territories of the British Empire on the development of a strengthened British imperial identity. John Darwin has argued that the 'digger myth' that emerged in the second half of the war in response to the disaster at Gallipoli was not at odds with the 'Britannic' tradition and in fact fitted neatly with 'conservative imperial nationalism'.⁹ While this was ultimately true for Australia and New Zealand, during the war there were tensions between London and the

⁶ Heather Jones, 'Kriegsgefangenenlager: Der moderne Staat und die Radikalisierung der Gefangenschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg', in *Hamburger Edition*, 20, 4 (August/September 2011), pp. 61-65.

⁷ Alan Kramer, 'Einleitung' in Bettina Greiner and Alan Kramer(eds), *Die Welt Der Lager: Zur >Erfolgsgeschichte< einer Institution* (Hamburger Edition, Hamburg, 2013), p. 17.

⁸ Internment in the early twentieth century was marked by two major innovations. First, a technological revolution allowed a certain synergy between the character of internment and scientific advances leading to a bureaucratization of camp management, most notably in Britain, where during the First World War there were two competing governmental prisoner of war departments. Second, the camps became emblematic of modern states and their ability to wage civilised (or uncivilised) warfare. Heather Jones, 'Eine Technologische Revolution? Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Radikalisierung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers', in Greiner and Kramer, *Die Welt Der Lager*, pp. 117-119.

⁹ John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System 1830-1970* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009), p. 342.

Dominions (and India), which were often at odds with one another over the treatment of prisoners of war and internees. However, the presence of German prisoners of war and civilian internees taken from within the Dominions and from the German colonies helped to consolidate a common British identity, one that was in opposition to the German 'other'.¹⁰ The ensuing 'enemy alien' legislation in Britain and the Empire has been seen as a 'watershed' in British Imperial history and would contribute to the development of a purely British identity.¹¹

Third, the development of the camp system and the enhancing of a British imperial identity in opposition to a German one meant that the prisoners themselves had to reassess their position in the extra-European world. Because of the extension of the war into a colonial conflict, 'whites' were no longer identified as Europeans but were now singled out by nationality. Daniel Steinbach has argued that the war in Africa challenged German settlers to re-think their relationship not just with fellow Europeans but also with the Reich.¹² The loss of the colonies and the colonial role-reversal embodied in internment, and the inability of Germany to alleviate their suffering, all contributed to this reappraisal. This colonial role-reversal can be highlighted by the example of Herr Hornung, a German farmer not interned but on parole, who, after the Australian takeover of New Guinea in late 1914, returned to his plantation to find it burned down and abandoned by his workers. One of his former employees, a Melanesian, approached him and asked if it were now true that the 'natives' were allowed to kill white Germans.¹³ The outbreak of war in Europe triggered the takeover of the German colonies and challenged the colonial social structures. Through internment and subsequent deportation German colonial settlers were knocked down the social ladder. The imperial space of the camp viewed from without was certainly British, but, within the 'contact zones' of the camps themselves, a particular German space could be created.¹⁴ This thesis will reconstruct

¹⁰ Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010), p. 20.

¹¹ John C. Bird, *The Control of Enemy Aliens in Great Britain 1914-1918* (Garland Publishing, New York, 1986), p. 345.

¹² Daniel 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-Suprian, (eds), *Untold War: New Perspectives in the First World War* (Leiden, Boston, 2008), p. 180.

¹³ BA, R1001/2615, Krieg in Deutsch-Neuguinea 1914 – 1918. Kaiserlich Deutsches Generalkolonialamt für Niederländisch-Indien Batavia, Bericht des Stationsleiters Schmaus, 14th April 1915. 'Die Eingeborenen fragten ihn gleich, ob es wahr sei, dass die Eingeborenen jetzt die deutschen Weissen töten dürften.'

¹⁴ Emily Rosenberg, 'Transnational Currents in a Shrinking World', in Emily Rosenberg (ed), *A World Connecting: 1870-1945 (A History of the World)* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2012), p. 819.

this narrative and address questions relating to imperial prestige, racial hierarchies, violence and reprisal, and the links between colonial and European internment.

Fourth, the fluid camp system that will be outlined in this thesis connects to the idea of twentieth century mobility and modernity.¹⁵ The British policy of evacuating prisoners of war and civilian internees from the German colonies reversed, to a certain extent, the pre-war routes of labour mobility and migration.¹⁶ Nothing better highlights the intertwining geographies of empire and modernity than the establishment of a global internment network by the British during the First World War.¹⁷ In addition, as Uta Hinz argues, the treatment of prisoners of war was an essential aspect of twentieth century warfare, with reciprocal escalation and limitation of reprisals on both sides.¹⁸

Finally, the analysis of German prisoners of war and civilian internees from the German colonies shows that the colonial theatre, while not being decisive for the overall outcome of the war, was actually far from being a mere sideshow to the main event on the Western Front. Reprisal punishments (threatened or enacted) against prisoners of war and civilians in the colonial sphere were often the direct result of action taken against prisoners and civilians in Europe, thus linking the two fronts of internment. Isabel Hull, in her examination of the central role played by international law in the conduct of the War, highlights the key role the waves of reprisals (exercised with 'lethal stubbornness') played in disfiguring the Great War.¹⁹ Inspections by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and neutral governments were meant to allow for transparency in prisoner treatment. However, reports of the bad

¹⁵ For discussion on internment camps and modernity see the contributions in: Greiner and Kramer, *Die Welt Der Lager*.

¹⁶ In the early 1900s there were controversial debates on the freedom of movement and boundaries and immigration limitation in Europe, South Africa, the United States and Australia. As Sebastian Conrad shows, interest in these debates revealed a global consciousness that developed among German political actors especially when these migratory flows of Germans were redirected back to Germany. Conrad, *Globalisation*, p. 9.

¹⁷ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, 'Empires and the Reach of the Global', in Rosenberg, *A World Connecting*, p. 297.

¹⁸ Uta Hinz, 'Humanität im Krieg? Internationales Rotes Kreuz und Kriegsgefangenenhilfe im Ersten Weltkrieg', in Jochen Oltmer, (ed), *Kriegs gefangene im Europa des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Paderborn, Munich, 2006), p. 217. Horace Rumbold of the Foreign Office felt that a 'policy of reprisals seems to pay with a nation of bullies like the Germans.' TNA FO383/110, 165279, 5th November 1915, Horace Rumbold, memorandum.

¹⁹ Isabel Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law during the Great War* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2014), p. 278. Hull shows that reprisals, the direct means by which a belligerent may try to force an opponent to behave within the law, were held by contemporaries as the only sanction upholding international law. Ibid., p. 279.

treatment of prisoners harmed British imperial prestige in the eyes of neutrals and might also lead to reprisals by Germany against its British captives. Internment in the extra-European theatre also provided the German government with fuel for propaganda to be used in Europe by harking back to a pre-existing 'colonial imagination'²⁰ that provided the imagery for what internment in the colonies was like, even if this image was at odds with reality.

With these factors in mind, the experience of captivity in the British Empire is presented as differing from, but linked to the European narrative of internment. The prisoner experience in Europe was written and shaped mainly by former officers focusing on six 'narrative event-scenarios', as summarised by Robert Doyle, which were: pre-captivity, capture, removal from the front, daily life in captivity, repatriation and finally reflections on time lost.²¹ The colonial narrative followed this basic outline but differs in that removal from the colonial theatre was a long and drawn-out process with an emphasis on transport and movement. The understanding of 'race' is a key element in forming the narrative of internment in the extra-European world. As Heather Jones argued, 'race' was a defining cultural paradigm that underpinned the hierarchies of European imperialism.²² Internment and the loss of the colonies symbolised for German settlers a severe racial role reversal that fundamentally changed their position in colonial society.²³ They were no longer fellow Europeans but were now 'enemy aliens,' often under the watch of indigenous guards, and did not enjoy the rights and freedoms that gave European whites a superior social status. This role reversal is central to understanding captivity in the colonies.

²⁰ Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Duke University Press, Durham, 1997), p. 9.

²¹ Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Berg, New York, 2002), p. 9. Rachamimov's analysis is taken from Robert C. Doyle, *Voices from Captivity: Interpreting the American POW Narrative* (Kansas University Press, Lawrence, 1994). This may be a somewhat crude summary as not all memoirs corresponded to these event scenarios.

²² In Jones's view the plural meaning of the term 'race' which encompassed both imperial and intra-European racial hierarchies is crucial to understanding how Germany saw the colonial prisoners of war it had captured. Heather Jones, 'Imperial Captivities: Colonial Prisoners in Germany and the Ottoman Empire', in Santanu Das, (ed), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), pp. 178-180, based on Annette Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande guerre: Humanitaire et culture de guerre, 1914-1918: populations occupées, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre* (Noësis, Paris, 1998).

²³ We will follow Jones's multi-faceted definition of race at the outset of war as containing biological, ethnic and national dimensions influenced by 'social Darwinism.' Jones, 'Imperial Captivities', p. 178. (Although a more fitting term to better reflect the variety of influential nineteenth-century theories on race, as Francisco Bethencourt argues, would be 'social evolution'. Francisco Bethencourt, *Racisms, From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2013), p. 301.)

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, each dealing with a different theme or aspect of internment in the extra-European world, which will be explained below. In approaching a topic which is global in scope many options are available. Firstly, one could take a colony-by-colony approach and dedicate each chapter to a single case study. The obvious danger here is that the case by case option would sacrifice much of the integrative and comparative analysis that this thesis wishes to develop, as well as being a chore for the reader who would have to read the same analysis six or seven times in what would essentially be a collection of mini theses. Alternatively, one could take a chronological element and provide a year-by-year analysis. Again, this would weaken the comparative approach, as, for example, internment in Cameroon was short lived while that in German East Africa remained open-ended, due to the continuation of hostilities up to and beyond the armistice in Europe. The thematic approach best serves this analysis as it allows for the transnational and comparative nature of internment in the extra-European theatre. Each chapter will be given a theme, within which framework we can consider each colony and how the Dominions and British government handled specific cases of internment. To maintain coherence in the narrative, however, each theme will be treated chronologically, with most chapters extending their analysis throughout the course of the war.

The first chapter will incorporate a historiographical review of the existing secondary literature on prisoners of war, focusing on three works which represent the three main trends in prisoner of war studies, by Alon Rachamimov, Matthew Stibbe and Heather Jones.²⁴ When looking at internment in the extra-European sphere through the prism of existing work on camps in Europe, the question also arises of how to mould the geographical context of this thesis into a coherent narrative, and to incorporate the unique issues geography raises that do not apply to the existing European case studies. To deal with this, reference will be made to literature dealing specifically with the war in Africa, the Pacific and indeed to global studies of the First World War. With race and imperial prestige playing prominent roles in the coming chapters, these fields of historical study will also need to be discussed. Finally, the transnational nature of internment in the extra-European theatre (with German citizens, not only from the Reich's colonies but also those living in British protectorates and Dominions, at

²⁴ Heather Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain France and Germany* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, and Matthew Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany: The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-18*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2008).

its core) will necessitate an engagement with transnational history (the history of the movement of peoples, ideas, technologies and institutions across national, or colonial, boundaries), and the absolute racial differences established in the German colonies.²⁵

It will be necessary, in chapter two, to go through the colonies individually in order to show where the prison camps were established and how they were administered, before the thesis moves to the main thematic treatment. This chapter will tell the reader how many prisoners there were, who they were and where they were held. It will not only take each colony one by one, but it will also show how internment policies meant the crossing of national boundaries, with Britain interning prisoners of very heterogeneous backgrounds in various locations of differing climate and other conditions while at the same time seeking a uniformity of treatment. This chapter will also hint at the difficulty of categorising prisoners, and of tracking them as their internment developed.

Chapter three will begin the thematic analysis by looking at acts of violence from three angles: violence against prisoners by indigenous populations, violence against prisoners by camp guards and authorities, and violence committed by prisoners themselves. Although the violence exhibited towards prisoners outside Europe paled in comparison to that inside Europe, the role reversal of the Germans from colonial administrators to captives was signified through violent processes. The main focus of this chapter will be in assessing how acts of violence, mainly perpetrated by authorities on the periphery, and the British reaction to them, helped shape policy towards prisoners and in turn created a more centralised prison administration. Violence, although sporadic, was the key prism through which German colonial settlers viewed the takeover of the colonies, and subsequent internment and aspects of violence will return in subsequent chapters.

The fourth chapter will consider how incarceration or restriction of movement led to an increased awareness of a German national identity. The effects of internment on prisoner identities and the notion of the camp space have been explored through lenses supplied by Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Benedict Anderson and will be the subject of chapter

²⁵ As opposed to German attitudes to racial differences in continental Europe, which were based on perceptions of a higher level of ethnic similarity and cultural common ground. Conrad, *Globalisation*, p. 177.

four.²⁶ Do the camps established in the extra-European world conform to these interpretations? For example is it possible to follow Matthew Stibbe's examination of *Ruhleben* and the formation of the *imagined camp community* and transplant this technique onto Ahmednagar camp in India?²⁷ This chapter, following Sebastian Conrad's ideas on the 'renewal' of the nation at the periphery', will sketch the effect that internment of German colonial settlers (and their interaction with other Germans while in internment) had on their sense of identity in terms of patriotism, class and gender.²⁸ In internment German settlers became much more than an 'appendix of the Kaiserreich'.²⁹

Chapter four will conclude with a look at the attitudes of interned German Askari (although this is a subject that certainly requires more extensive analysis than this thesis can provide).³⁰ While the documentary evidence about Askari in internment is scant, a lot has been written on the myth of the loyal Askari, and this literature will be drawn upon to provide an insight into the internment of indigenous troops and their attitudes to Germany and Britain.³¹

Chapter five looks at how internment and the defeat of the German colonies were reported in Europe and how Britain presented the takeover of the colonies to the local population. It looks at prisoners' communications with the outside world and attempts by returned colonial Germans to publish their experiences in Germany. Internment in the colonies received

²⁶ Foucault explores the use of punishment and the prison camp. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (Penguin, London, 1979), Agamben's study of the camp space builds on Carl Schmitt's idea of a state of exception where the rule of law is transcended. For Agamben this is highlighted in the camp space and this notion has been very influential in shaping the study of internment, although more in relation to the concentration camps of the Second World War. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (University Press Stanford, Stanford, 1998). Anderson's ideas on how nationalism is conveyed through an imagined community again finds its expressions in camp society, most notably in Matthew Stibbe's work on *Ruhleben* in Berlin. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, New York, 2006).

²⁷ Stibbe's analysis of *Ruhleben* sees the camp as an 'imagined' or 'symbolic' community with prisoners' experiences of internment mediated by differences in class, race, nationality and level of education. Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, p. 4.

²⁸ Conrad, *Globalisation*, p. 26.

²⁹ Andreas Eckert, 'Germany and Africa in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: An Entangled History?', in Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (Berghahn Books, New York, 2009), p. 227.

³⁰ While mainly used in reference to German East African troops, here Askari will refer to all indigenous troops used throughout the German colonies.

³¹ The image of the African soldiers is becoming more nuanced. See, Michelle Moyd, 'We don't want to die for nothing': Askari at war in German East Africa', in Das, *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, pp. 90-107. Unfortunately this thesis will be unable to contribute much to the development of this side of the history of the war, as black prisoners of war rarely appear in the British and German archives.

coverage in the German press. The term 'propaganda' acquired its modern connotations in Europe during the First World War and was an important part of the overall struggle for dominance.³² Newspapers served to inform and also to influence opinions on the war. This was especially important, as the print media were at the height of their influence, meaning that public justification for fighting the war had to be sought through them, not only to motivate one's own soldiers and civilians but also to influence neutral opinion. Through newspaper reports, journals and other publications this chapter will seek to assess how the colonial campaigns and the taking of prisoners from the extra-European theatre were woven into the narrative of the war in Europe. It will focus on German perceptions of captivity in the colonies and attempts by former prisoners to have their voice heard in mainland Germany. It will also look at official German attempts to expose acts of 'barbarism' by indigenous troops in the colonial theatre, as part of a wider propaganda campaign that included the demonization of colonial troops on the Western Front in an attempt to show the Allies as having broken with 'colour solidarity'.³³

While the thesis draws on the historiography of internment within Europe for its conceptual framework, comparative models will also be sought in the extra-European theatre itself. Chapter six, therefore, takes the two contrasting examples of the internment of German colonial settlers in French West Africa and Japan for comparisons with British internment. While the focus will be on these models, mention will also be made of Germans interned in other empires such as the Spanish and Portuguese. These other extra-European camps were well-known to the British and indeed to the contemporary popular press, and will provide interesting contrasts. Importantly, both the French and Japanese examples left longer lasting legacies, one negative and one positive, than did the British.

Chapter seven will focus on the repatriation of prisoners and the inter-war years. Movement of prisoners was continuous throughout the war. The key difference from Europe was that by the end of the war, German civilian internees from outside Europe (especially German East Africa) were considered by the British and Germans alike as separate from those civilians held in the British Isles and thus could not avail themselves of the same repatriation schemes afforded to those held in Europe. This chapter will look at this movement and the interdepartmental

³² Alice Goldfarb Marquis, 'Words as Weapons: Propaganda in Britain and Germany during the First World War', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13, 3 (July, 1978), pp. 467-498, p. 468.

³³ Marc Ferro, *Colonization: A Global History* (Routledge, London/New York, 1997), p. 79.

tensions it caused between the Foreign Office and the Admiralty. Repatriation was an ongoing process during the war, although not everyone qualified to be sent home. By the end of the war more practical considerations concerning the lack of shipping and resources came to the fore, but the eventual goal of repatriation to Germany of captives from the colonies remained in force although this was affected by the Versailles Treaty and the establishment of the Mandate system.

Chapter seven will finish with a look at former colonial Germans in Germany in the 1920s and the integration of the treatment of German prisoners of war and civilian internees during the War into the 'black shame on the Rhine' propaganda produced in response to the Allied occupation of the Rhineland in the wake of the war.³⁴ In the immediate years after the Paris Peace Treaty there was little sign of official irredentist claims on the German colonies. Once Germany joined the League of Nations in 1926, however, there was a revival in interest in the colonial question and when the Nazi party came to power in 1933 the return of the German colonies became government policy.

In conclusion, conditions for prisoners from the former German colonies could have been very different had the war in the colonies remained more distinct from the conflict in Europe, perhaps showing stronger continuities with the neglect shown to internees during the Boer War. The global dimensions of the war, however, meant that stronger checks and balances were in place during the First World War. Public opinion, British imperial prestige, and the need to conform to international law played large roles in how internment was managed. The ability of the metropolitan government to intervene and moderate the role of military and Dominion authorities was of crucial importance in prisoner treatment. However, the main differentiating factor between the colonial theatre of the First World War and previous colonial wars was that the enemy (Germany) held large numbers of British prisoners. Fear of reciprocal action was a major determining factor in prisoner treatment. Through its analysis of German colonial settlers in British extra-European internment camps, this thesis follows the idea that the First World War was not just a conflict confined to the battle fields of Europe but

³⁴ This was in reaction to France's stationing of between thirty and forty thousand African soldiers in the Rhineland after the war. Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), p. 191.

it was also a development that forced a world-wide remaking of ideas, institutions and geopolitics.³⁵

³⁵ William Mulligan, *The Great War for Peace* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2014), p. 13.

Chapter One: Internment in the First World War and the Global Context (Historiography)

This chapter discusses the current historiography on captivity in the First World War and on the integration of the extra-European theatre into the narrative of the war as a global conflict. It first offers an outline of the primary source material used in this thesis and then discusses the significant secondary literature relating to the global dimensions of the war and internment. Recent studies of prisoners of war and civilian internees in Europe during the First World War have focused on violence, mismanagement of camps and the use of forced labour.¹ With regard to the European theatre, Richard Speed's concept of a 'liberal tradition of captivity'² existing in contrast to the new modern form of totalised combat has been comprehensively challenged. However, is this evident in the theatres of war outside Europe? The war is increasingly no longer looked at as just a European affair and following the new trends towards global and transnational history, the voices of those from the extra-European theatres are being heard more often in the historiography. Coupled with this, more stress is being placed on cultural perspectives on the war. The importance of the present study is that through analysis of German prisoners from the former Reich colonies it addresses a glaring gap in the historiography of not only prisoner of war treatment in the twentieth century, but also deals with the study of empires in transition, race, violence and transnational movements of people.

Popular understanding of the war in the colonies, at least from the European perspective, has been coloured by such comic historical novels as *Mimi and Toutou go Forth* or *An Ice Cream War*.³ These represent the war in the colonies as an eccentric side-show to the conflict in Europe, between colonial settlers who were neighbours forced to fight one another in response to their patriotic duty but with no real animosity on either side. This can best be highlighted through the final scene of the Côte d'Ivoire film *Black and White in Colour*, where

¹ See: Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War*, and Matthew Stibbe (ed), *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe during the First World War*, (Routledge, London/New York, 2009).

² Richard Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats and the Great War: A study of Diplomacy in Captivity* (Greenwood, New York, 1990) p. 152. Rather than being an exception to the idea of Total War, Heather Jones sees captivity as an integral part of the conflict which transformed our idea of warfare.

³ Giles Forden, *Mimi and Toutou Go Forth: The Bizarre Battle of Lake Tanganyika* (Penguin, London, 2005), William Boyd, *An Ice Cream War*, (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1982). Also worthy of note is the 1951 John Huston film, *The African Queen*.

after defeating the German garrison the victorious French and British white troops invite the German officers for drinks and dancing, much to the bemusement of the Africans who had suffered during the fighting.⁴ However, academic attention is turning more and more towards the colonial conflict and it is now a subject of serious study rather than fodder for 'ripping yarns'.⁵ Studies focus on the displacement of indigenous populations, the enforced enrolment of carriers and the transfer of African, Indian, Chinese and Indo-Chinese soldiers and labourers to Europe. The colonial contribution to the war is now regarded as an integral part of the conflict and no longer a mere 'side show'.⁶

There is a vast amount of primary source material relating to prisoners from the former German colonies in the British National Archives (TNA). The Prisoners of War and Aliens Department was set up by the Foreign Office in 1915 and continued its work until well into 1919. The 547 large bound volumes left behind by the department under the code FO383 deal with the imprisonment or internment of members of the armed forces, civilians and merchant seamen, both Allied and foreign, during the First World War, and the period following the Armistice, leading up to the conclusion of the peace treaties with the enemy countries in 1919-20. These files have been used by many authors when looking at British prisoners in Europe but have yet to be exploited fully by those looking at Germans in captivity in camps outside Europe.⁷ The files provide an invaluable insight, through inspections, petitions and complaints, into how exactly these camps were run and how they developed during the course of the war. Added to this, the files contain many extracts from diaries, letters and postcards that were

⁴ Original title: *La Victoire en chantant*, (Artco-Film, France 3 cinéma, Côte d'Ivoire, 1976).

⁵ For example the numerous books written about Gunther Plüschow who escaped from Tsingtao and England, the latest being, Anton Rippon, *Gunther Pluschow: Airman, Escaper and Explorer* (Pen and Sword Military, London, 2009).

⁶ David Killingray and James K. Matthews, "'Beasts of Burden': British West African Carriers in the First World War", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 13, 1-2 (1979), pp. 5-23, and Melvin E. Page (ed), *Africa and the First World War* (Macmillan, London, 1987), were two prominent works on the colonial contribution to the war. A few examples of the more recent work on the colonial contribution and experience of the war are Santanu Das (ed), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, Heike Liebau, Katrin Bromber, et al (eds), *The World in World Wars (Studies in Global Social History)* (Brill, Leiden, 2010), Xu Guoqi, *Strangers on the Western Front: Chinese Workers in the Great War* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011), Timothy Winegard, *Indigenous Peoples of the British Dominions and the First World War* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), and Michelle Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa* (To be published by Ohio University Press, Athens, July 2014).

⁷ For example see Uwe Schulte-Varendorff, *Krieg in Kamerun: Die deutsche Kolonie im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Ch.Links, Berlin, 2011) which although making excellent use of German source material neglects the British archives.

intercepted by and brought to the Foreign Office's attention by the censor. These documents enable a much greater understanding of how the prisoners viewed themselves and also highlight the fact that they often saw the war as very much an interruption of everyday business and expected normality to return after peace. In addition to the Foreign Office files, the Colonial Office, War Office and Admiralty contain in their records some further insightful information, especially with regard to the initial capture and shipping of prisoners.

The British War Office established a Department of Prisoners of War in August 1914 under Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Belfield. This department controlled the treatment of prisoners in Britain, regulating camp conditions and, importantly, regulating the use of violence against captives.⁸ The Foreign Office, as mentioned above, had its own competing department, the Prisoners and Aliens Department under Sir Francis Dyke Acland. This department dealt specifically with inquiries about the treatment of British prisoners, and with enemy prisoners who were in captivity overseas. Within the Foreign Office it was one of four specific departments established at the outbreak of war to deal with the challenges of fighting a global conflict.⁹ It was predictable that the prisoners departments in the War Office and in the Foreign Office would come into conflict, mainly over responses to the treatment of British prisoners in Germany. Except in the cases of some officer prisoners, the Foreign Office maintained autonomy over the management of prisoners taken outside Europe and was able to ensure as the war progressed a more or less uniform treatment of prisoners by the Dominion governments.¹⁰

Foreign Office primacy in prisoner affairs in the extra-European theatre was known to the prisoners themselves, who sought to bypass the Dominion governments in their correspondence and questioned the legitimacy of independent policies enacted on them.¹¹ Regular inter-Departmental meetings were held between the Admiralty, Foreign, War and Colonial Offices to discuss and come to agreements over aspects of prisoner treatment. The four departments all had different concerns. The Admiralty were always keen to limit the amount of unnecessary shipping traffic, the War Office argued for the military necessity of the

⁸ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 16.

⁹ The others were, The War Department, Parliamentary Department, and Contraband Department. As the war went on, more departments were established to make an eventual total of eighteen emergency departments.

¹⁰ In contrast, the War Office took primacy over the dealings of prisoners on the Western Front. This reflects the more civilian nature of internment in the extra-European theatre.

¹¹ See chapter five.

removal of Germans from territory taken and the Colonial Office backed this up but were also reluctant to allow prisoners be sent to areas such as India or South Africa where they might arouse sympathies from the local population. The Foreign Office's guiding view was that it was necessary to ensure the best possible treatment of German prisoners, as it was ever mindful of the threat of reprisals against British prisoners in German hands, and the reactions that any bad treatment of prisoners would cause among neutral countries.¹² This was especially true before the United States, which had been the liaison between Britain and Germany in regard to prisoners' affairs, joined the war.

Apart from the Foreign Office files, this thesis will draw on files from the other ministries. The Colonial Office was not primarily concerned about prisoner treatment, but its responsibility for property claims meant it had to deal with German inhabitants of the colonies and it had a vested interest in the acquisition and security of Germany territory. The War Office files are important for accounts of fighting in the colonies and are particularly useful through the collection of captured diaries, most notably the diary of Heinrich Schnee (Governor of German East Africa 1912-1918). As this project will refer to maritime transportation in terms of its restrictions during the blockade and the repatriation of prisoners and internees, the Admiralty files are also important.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) archives in Geneva house an extensive archive of correspondence and reports on prisoner camps. These archives are only recently being exploited to their full potential. Heather Jones used them effectively in *Violence Against Prisoners of War*. The ICRC were involved in the inspection of camps and also acted as go-betweens in establishing meetings and conferences between the belligerents. One of the key advantages of these archives is the clarity with which they describe each camp, something which the Foreign Office files do not do particularly well. The archives are rich in material relating to the camps, with the ICRC compiling scrapbooks of newspaper and other media reports on each one. The archives also hold letters from prisoners of war. In addition, the ICRC published a journal of their reports on the camps that they visited, which along with the British military's plans of the layout and administration provide the reader with a detailed portrayal of the complicated nature of the camp systems outside Europe.

¹² However, the Foreign Office Prisoners Department was certainly willing to reply to German reprisals with its own reprisals. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 310.

Independently of the ICRC, the German Red Cross at Hamburg and Frankfurt also kept detailed records of press reports on prisoners of war in the colonies.¹³ The archives, now housed in the Bundesarchiv in Berlin-Lichterfelde (BA), are divided by region and by camp in the R67 series.¹⁴ Apart from keeping cuttings from newspapers, the Red Cross also catalogued their weekly reports on a camp by camp basis, these reports being drawn from ICRC inspections and correspondence. They also provide letters and postcards from family members of prisoners and internees and through these well catalogued files one can gain an appreciation of the global scale of internment in the First World War.

In Germany the main government archive to be drawn on will be the Bundesarchiv in Berlin-Lichterfelde. The most fruitful files here have been those of the Reichskolonialamt (RKA), R1001. The RKA received copies of almost all correspondence relating to prisoners of war and civilian internees from the colonies. This series has obvious advantages, for the researcher, over the files of the Auswärtiges Amt (the German Foreign Office) as the RKA filtered out a lot of the files related to Europe. Apart from merely copying correspondence the RKA was the ministry most concerned with the colonial settlers, and did more than any other government department to compile files relating to their treatment. This thesis will also use the files of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (DKG), R8023, mainly for its correspondence in the inter-war years. Theodor Seitz (Governor of German South-West Africa, 1910-1915) and Heinrich Schnee, among other influential German colonialists, were key members of this organisation and it was the first place that former prisoners and internees turned to when seeking advice on a return to their colonial homes, lodging complaints or requesting financial aid.

In the interwar period, the Great War as fought in the trenches dominated the historical narrative. There was relatively little space for discussion of prisoners, let alone those taken in far flung colonies that had ceased to exist. Wilhelm Doegen's 1921 book, *Kriegsgefangene*

¹³ Both also published pamphlets for general sale. For example, in April 1917 the Hamburg section published a map and the postal rules for all the known camps in Great Britain, Italy, Japan and the extra-European world. Hamburgischer Landesverein vom Roten Kreuz, Ausschuß für Deutsche Kriegsgefangene, *Karte von Großbritannien, Italien, Japan und den überseeischen Ländern: in denen sich Kriegs- oder Zivilgefangene befinden sowie Bestimmungen über den Postverkehr* (Friedrichsen, Hamburg, 1917).

¹⁴ 'Archiv für deutsche Kriegsgefangene des Frankfurter Vereins vom Roten Kreuz und für Kriegsgefangenenforschung, 1914-1919.'

Völker, was one of the first to publish facts and figures for camps.¹⁵ The book mainly focused on prisoners in Germany: in agreement with general German public opinion, he argued that the treatment of prisoners there was very humane. The most important text, for this study, to come out of the inter-war years relating to prisoners' experiences of captivity was Hans Weiland and Leopold Kern's *In Feindeshand*.¹⁶ While Weiland was a member of the Christian Social Party and the *Bundesvereinigung ehemaliger österreichischer Kriegsgefangener* (B.e.ö.K.)¹⁷ and had close links to the Austro-Fascist elite, especially Kurt Schuschnigg (Chancellor of Austria 1934-1938), the book did publish memoirs from a broad political spectrum.¹⁸ This monumental, two-volume work gathered together memoirs, Red Cross reports, and analyses of captivity from around 477 contributors, including Paul von Hindenburg. It is one of the few published sources that deals directly with the experiences of prisoners from the former colonies, with chapters dedicated to Cairo, Singapore, South Africa and Japan among others. It remains a vital primary source text and has extensive chapters dedicated to and written by former prisoners in the Reich colonies. Alon Rachamimov used it extensively in his work, as should any author who is concerned with the study of captivity in the First World War. The biggest limitation of these two volumes is that they were mainly written by officers and others who were higher up the class ladder, thus providing the reader with an experience of captivity that was different from that of the ordinary German soldier or colonial farmer.

Apart from some popular fictionalised accounts of internment in the First World War the other major work published in the 1930's was *Theater Ohne Frau*.¹⁹ This book helped create the perception that the German prisoners had a comfortable life in captivity. It looked at the growth of amateur theatre and its role in the camps in maintaining the prisoners' spirits and

¹⁵ Wilhelm Doegen, *Kriegsgefangene Völker. Der Kriegsgefangenen Haltung und Schicksal in Deutschland, herausgegeben im amtlichen Auftrage des Reichswehrministeriums* (Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, Berlin, -1921).

¹⁶ Hans Weiland and Leopold Kern (eds) *In Feindeshand: Die Gefangenschaft im Weltkriege in Einzeldarstellungen* (2 Volumes: Bundesvereinigung der ehemaligen österreichischen Kriegsgefangenen, Vienna, 1931). Volume two mainly deals with civilian internees and the war outside Europe.

¹⁷ The B.e.ö.K., an association of former Austrian prisoners of war, established an archive and museum of internment in 1927 that eventually led to the publication of the collected volumes *In Feindeshand*. Hannes Leidinger, *Gefangenschaft, Revolution, Heimkehr: Die Bedeutung der Kriegsgefangenenproblematik für die Geschichte des Kommunismus in Mittel- und Osteuropa 1917-1920* (Böhlau Verlag, Vienna, 2003), p. 94.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Hannes Leidinger for this information.

¹⁹ Hermann Pörzgen, *Theater ohne Frau: das Bühnenleben der kriegsgefangenen Deutschen 1914-1920* (Ost-Europa Verlag, Königsberg, 1933).

although mainly focusing on camps in Russia it has chapters dedicated to the Dominions and Japan. It provides an interesting insight into an aspect of camp life but has perhaps overplayed the role of such dramatics and downplayed the harshness of camp life.

The DKG, which one would expect to have published memoirs of prisoners' experiences in captivity, dedicated little if any time to reminiscing about the actual fighting of the First World War in the colonies and was more concerned with advertising the glory and the just nature of German colonial rule in the face of international accusations of Germany's unsuitability to run colonies. In the inter-war period there were many works of German colonial revisionism, arguing for a return of Germany's rightful possessions. Many of these were overseen by Heinrich Schnee and accompanied with colourful illustrations highlighting the good work done by Germany outside Europe such as the *Lexikon Für Deutsch Kolonial Geschichte*.²⁰ Although Schnee had been governor of German East Africa during the war and was president of the *Bundes des Auslandsdeutschen* and DKG, he rarely wrote about internment in the German colonies. It was as if the First World War had never happened, and none of the colonial settlers had experienced imprisonment, but somehow the colonies had been lost. This may be due to Schnee himself being part of the myth of Germany being undefeated in the field, with no place for internment in this myth. It is interesting that although the DKG used the Versailles treaty as the main rallying point for the return of the colonies, they never emphasised the imprisonment and deportation of German colonial citizens, even though this had been a bone of contention during the war itself.

While published memoirs of captivity are not as numerous as on other aspects of the war, there are a few key publications by prisoners themselves. At the forefront of the German colonial project (as in many other colonial projects) were Christian missionaries, and many of them were interned once the war broke out. The *Berliner Missionsgesellschaft* and the Basel

²⁰ Schnee was the most prolific writer of all the German colonialists and published quite extensively, with some of his work being translated into English. See: Heinrich Schnee, *Als letzter Gouverneur in Deutsch-Ostafrika: Erinnerungen* (Queller und Meyer, Heidelberg, 1964), *Nationalismus und Imperialismus* (R. Hobbing, Berlin, 1928), *Die deutschen Kolonien vor, in und nach dem Weltkrieg* (Quelle und Meyer, Leipzig, 1935), translated by and with a very sympathetic introduction by William Harbutt Dawson, *German Colonization, Past and Future: the Truth about the German colonies* (Allen and Unwin, London, 1926) and the *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon* (3 volumes: Quelle und Meyer, Leipzig, 1920). Due to the war Schnee was not involved (although surprisingly Theodor Seitz was) in the large edited volume of articles which had contributions from many of the main players in colonial revisionism, such as Paul Leutwein, Theodor Seitz, and even Carl Peters just before his death: Wolf Grabowski and Paul Leutwein (eds), *Die Zukunft der Deutschen Kolonien* (Friedrich Andreas Verlag, Perthes OAG, Gotha, 1918).

Mission²¹ published pamphlets and regular magazines detailing the war and its effect on missionaries in Africa and elsewhere. The Basel Missionaries in Cameroon in particular were vocal about what they felt was maltreatment by the British. A few other private memoirs survive that deal with time in internment. Albert Achilles, a member of the Schutztruppe ('Protection Force', the German colonial armies) who fought in German East Africa, for example, provides an insight into daily life in the camps in India that would be impossible to find in the archives of the ICRC or elsewhere.²² In the inter-war period there was a spate of publications of 'Afrikabücher' (Travelogues, novels, geographic and anthropological studies related to Germany's former African colonies), the most famous being Hans Grimm's *Volk Ohne Raum*²³ with 480,000 copies in print by 1940. These books used internment during the war (although usually only briefly dealt with, if at all), and mainly the loss and decline of the colonies to portray Germans as the victims of British and French colonialism. As Britta Schilling points out, these publications expressed a combination of the 'communicative' and 'cultural' memory of Germany's colonial period.²⁴

In addressing current historiography, the study of the treatment of prisoners by the British and Dominion forces, by shifting the focus away from Europe, brings the paradigm of prisoners and the First World War into a more global and transnational context. Sebastian Conrad has shown the processes through which emigration and immigration linked the *Kaiserreich* both mentally and physically with a world that had been fundamentally restructured by modern colonialism.²⁵ We follow this transnational thread and take it one step further by analysing the forced internment and expulsion of Germans in and from the colonial world, and its effect on German identity. The internment of Europeans in the extra-European world broke through one

²¹ Although based in Switzerland its membership was predominantly German.

²² Albert Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft im Mixed-Transit-Camp Ahmednagar und Erholungslager Ramandrog in Indien während des ersten Weltkrieges 1914-1920*, (Traditionsverband Ehemaliger Schutz- und Überseetruppen, Berlin, 1977, reprinted 2004). Similarly Karl Fischer's memoirs offer an invaluable insight into the war and internment in West Africa; Karl Fischer, *In Französischer Hölle: Kriegsgefangen in Dahomey* (Boll und Pickhardt, Berlin, 1918).

²³ Hans Grimm, *Volk Ohne Raum* (2 volumes: Albert Langen Verlag, Munich, 1926).

²⁴ For discussion of the 'Afrikabücher' see, Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of an Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford Scholarship Online, Oxford, 2014), Chapter One, 'The Africa Book 1915-1925'. It would be more accurate to describe them as 'Kolonialbücher' as they also included accounts of Germany's former colonies in the Pacific and China, although Africa certainly received the majority of the attention.

²⁵ Conrad, *Globalisation*, p. 21. Although the War meant the closing of borders in the colonial world many transnational links, for example support societies in Brazil for Germans in Africa, remained.

of the 'racialised' notions of space in Imperial policy.²⁶ In Africa there was the feeling among the vastly out-numbered Germans that Europeans, whilst they might fight each other at home, would not do so abroad. They felt that colonial neutrality was enshrined in law under the articles drawn up by the 'unprecedented, if ineffective, experiment at international control of the tropics' that was the Berlin Act of 1884/85.²⁷ Keeping up the appearance of colonial solidarity was not just desirable for the German settlers but they also considered it a legal obligation. It simply was not possible, however, to contain the First World War and its effects on national identity to the European sphere.

Christian Koller's useful review of the literature on the war in Africa²⁸ investigates how far Hew Strachan's characterisation of the First World War as a 'global conflict' is reflected in the new narratives of the First World War.²⁹ Koller argues that the development of the historiography of the First World War in relation to Africa directly mirrors the developments in history in general over the last sixty years. The 'post-colonial turn', with imperial and colonial warfare being a topic at the intersection of 'new military history', global history and imperial and colonial history has attracted increased attention in recent years and resulted in a range of new studies on the African theatres of war.³⁰ General histories of the war still focus on Europe although it now is almost obligatory to feature chapters on Africa and further afield.³¹ The *Encyclopaedia of the First World War*, published in German in 2003 and in English in 2012, includes entries on 'African' topics such as colonial warfare, colonial troops in Europe, South

²⁶ Ballantyne and Burton use the example of the Amritsar massacre in 1919 in India, which they claim dramatized British anxieties over the racial ordering of space in colonial cities. The 'interweaving' of space, race and empire also featured heavily in German nationalist thought from the 1890s to the Second World War. Ballantyne and Burton, *Empires and the Reach of the Global*, in Rosenberg, *A World Connecting*, p. 309.

²⁷ William Roger Louis, 'African origins of the Mandates Idea', in *International Organization*, 19, 1 (Winter, 1965), pp. 20-36, p. 26. The act was more commonly referred to as the Congo Act.

²⁸ Christian Koller, 'Historiography 1918–today (Africa)', in *1914-1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (2014), http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/historiography_1918-today_africa.

²⁹ Hew Strachan, 'The First World War as a Global War', in *First World War Studies* 1, 1 (2010), pp. 3-14.

³⁰ Perhaps the key work in sparking 'post-colonial' critiques of Imperialism was Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Illinois University Press, Urbana, IL, 1988), pp. 271-313. The most recent single-volume overview of the war in Africa is Anne Samson, *World War I in Africa: The Forgotten Conflict Among the European Powers* (I.B. Tauris, London, 2013).

³¹ With the onset of the centenary First World War studies are beginning to take a more global approach, for example see, Oliver Janz, *14: Der Grosse Krieg*, (Campus, Frankfurt, 2013) and Mulligan, *The Great War for Peace*. The First World War from a transnational perspective is looked at in Emily Rosenberg (ed), *A World Connecting: 1870-1945* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2012), Jörn Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora: Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (C.H. Beck, Munich, 2014).

Africa, German South-West Africa, German East Africa, and North Africa, as well as an introductory article on the war's global aspects. The *Blackwell Companion to the First World War* also deals with the African dimension, although it ignores China and the Pacific.³² Lawrence Sondhaus' textbook *World War One. The Global Revolution* looks at the war in Africa and Asia but condenses these theatres into one chapter.³³ Hew Strachan's *To Arms* remains the most complete attempt to look at the war's extra-European theatres from a military perspective.³⁴ Most recently the *Cambridge History of the First World War*, particularly volume one, offers a comprehensive introduction to the global aspects of the war.³⁵

Annette Becker's landmark 1998 publication, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: humanitaire et culture de guerre, 1914-1918*, sparked an increase in the study of prisoners of war in the First World War and how their treatment fits or does not fit into the treatment of prisoners and captives in war time over the course of the twentieth century.³⁶ However, the treatment of German prisoners outside Europe remains a missing element in our understanding of the conflict.³⁷ The question to be addressed is: to what narrative do Europeans in colonial

³² Gerhard Hirschfeld et al. (eds), *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg* (Ferdinand Schoeningh, Paderborn 2003); idem et al. (eds), *Brill's Encyclopedia of the First World War*, (Brill, Leiden, 2012) and John Horne (ed), *A Companion to World War I* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2010).

³³ Lawrence Sondhaus, *World War One. The Global Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011).

³⁴ Hew Strachan, *The First World War, Volume One: To Arms* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003) For other recent publications on the war from a global perspective see John H. Morrow, *The Great War. An Imperial History* (Routledge, London/New York, 2004); Michael S. Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War. A Global History* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006); William Kelleher Storey, *The First World War. A Concise Global History* (Rowman & Littlefield, New York, 2010).

³⁵ Jay Winter (ed), *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (3 Volumes: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014).

³⁶ Becker, *Oubliés de la Grande Guerre: humanitaire et culture de guerre, 1914-1918*. For lack of an English translation of this work, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18 Understanding the Great War* (Hill and Wang, New York, 2002), repeats some of the main arguments. This builds on John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (Cape, London, 1976) and George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1990).

³⁷ A lot of work has looked at civilian internees in Britain during the war, but there is nothing substantial relating to civilians in other parts of the empire. See Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain*, David Cesarani and Tony Kushner (eds), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (Frank Cass, Portland, 1993) and Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain During the First World War* (Berg, New York, 1990). Panikos Panayi's latest book deals with internment in Britain and focuses some of his research on Germans in the colonies. His work however looks exclusively at internment in the British Isles. Panikos Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain: German Civilian and Combatant Internees during the First World War*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2012). Daniel Steinbach focuses on British prisoners of war and civilian internees in German East and West Africa in his recently completed PhD dissertation 'Colonials in Conflict: The First World War in British and German East Africa' (Doctoral Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2014). Kate Ariotti at the University of Queensland in

internment belong? Iain R. Smith and Andreas Stucki asserted that the colonial development of internment followed a different path from that of Europe leading to the development of 'new villages' in Malaya in the 1950s and the 'strategic hamlet' system in Vietnam in the 1960/70's instead of the European narrative of internment that resulted in the camps of the Second World War.³⁸ The prisoners from the German colonies should be placed somewhere in between these narratives of European and extra-European internment.

It is difficult, if not impossible to understand fully the changes in German colonial policy after the First World War without looking at the experiences of the almost 20,000 Germans who spent the war incarcerated or repatriated to Germany and witnessed first-hand the collapse of the overseas Reich.³⁹ Historical research has focused on the build-up of German colonies and the effects on the indigenous population, the development of genocidal ideology in the colonies and its alleged export to Europe.⁴⁰ The Germans who were taken prisoner were the living legacy of the German colonial policy and their influence after the war through the DKG and through the rebuilding of the colony in South-West Africa (albeit under direction from the Union of South Africa's government) kept the flame of colonial revisionism alive. The existing historiography on internment in the colonies offers questions that can be applied to this project.

As Isabel Hull maintains for Germany, Britain also approached the war in the colonies from within the framework of its military culture.⁴¹ How the British Empire reacted to war in Africa

her current research looks at Australian prisoners of war in the Ottoman Empire, bringing the focus of prisoner studies to the extra-European world.

³⁸ Smith, Stucki, 'Colonial Development of Concentration Camps', p. 433. For discussion on counter-insurgency and internment see Moritz Feichtinger, 'Concentration Camps in All but Name? Zwangsumsiedlung und Counterinsurgency 1950-1970', in Greiner and Kramer, *Die Welt Der Lager*, pp. 302-327. Isabel Hull refers to colonial concentration camps as 'Collection Camps', in reference to the different meaning that the term concentration camp came to signify in the latter half of the twentieth century: Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction, Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2005), p. 73. However, for this thesis we shall adhere to the contemporary denotation of camps as concentration camps.

³⁹ This number has been calculated from the various camp reports in the TNA FO383 series.

⁴⁰ See footnote five on page 12 for discussion of these connections. For more general works on German colonial policy see: Pascal Grosse, *Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850-1918* (Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, 2000), Woodrow D. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (North Carolina University Press, Chapel Hill, 1978) or W.O. Henderson, *The German Colonial Empire 1884-1919* (Frank Cass, Portland, 1993).

⁴¹ Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, p. 3. Hull's book has been most influential in debates on the connections between colonial internment and its link to Nazi extermination policies. See also Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz?: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Lit Verlag, Berlin,

was coloured by its experience in the Boer War and some continuities remained, explicitly illustrated through the recycling of camps used during the Boer conflict to house Germans in the Great War. The number of prisoners and the geographical scale were much larger in the 1914-1918 conflict, and the threat of reprisals from Germany against British prisoners acted as a huge controlling influence. In reaction to this threat, the Foreign Office had to constantly remind the Dominion governments that it held primacy over the treatment of prisoners of war.

Most works cite the comparatively good treatment of captives by Britain but none factor in the treatment of prisoners *outside* Europe under British or Dominion administration.⁴² In the colonies we see a more 'modern' brand of prisoner treatment and management which clearly marked a break with nineteenth century values, especially racial solidarity among European colonisers. This was a traumatic breaking point not just for those captured but also for some of those who did the capturing. The forced evacuation and mass shipment of prisoners across the globe contained elements of both twentieth century modern warfare and nineteenth century humanitarian ideals. German officers were not offered parole after a fair fight as had happened in previous conflicts between Great Powers outside Europe.⁴³ The spread of 'Wilsonian' ideals of self-determination and the necessity of portraying Germany as the guilty party in conducting the conflict forced a reappraisal by the British government of how exactly it was going to ensure that its new colonial possessions were to stay British after the war.⁴⁴

2011). This thesis will move from comparisons of colonial and European warfare to investigating whether colonial internment is properly comparable to European internment.

⁴² Heather Jones, in her comparative analysis on violence, cites Britain's treatment of prisoners of war as following a 'Sonderweg' in that cultural factors restrained extreme violence against prisoners of war. Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 376. Alan Kramer countered the myth of good prisoner treatment in the case of the Central-Powers but did not look at Britain. Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007), p. 62. Alan Kramer has also looked at Italian prisoners in Austria-Hungary. Kramer, Alan, 'Prisoners in the First World War', in Sibylle Scheipers (ed), *Prisoners in War* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010). Another key work discussing the harsh realities of internment in Austria-Hungary, which unfortunately has not been translated into English is, Giovanna Procacci, *Soldati e prigionieri italiani nella Grande Guerra: con una raccolta di lettere inediti* (Bollati Boringhieri, Turin, 2000).

⁴³ Russian Officers captured during the Russo-Japanese war were allowed to return home after signing an oath of neutrality. Olive Checkland, *Humanitarianism and the Emperor's Japan 1877-1977* (St. Martin's Press, London, 1994), p. 47.

⁴⁴ Woodrow Wilson was against a formal annexation of Germany's colonies but through the establishment of the Mandate system, settled for something similar. David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War* (Penguin, London, 2004), p. 516.

The First World War, as John Darwin argues, marked a violent rupture with the nineteenth century world in which the expansion of the British Empire had been possible.⁴⁵ While seeing more transition and development in the British Empire than Darwin's idea of rupture, this thesis discusses the nature of warfare in the extra-European theatre of the First World War.⁴⁶ Was it a war in the old nineteenth century tradition with better weaponry or was it a modern, total war which marked the beginning of the *Urkatastrophe* that was the short twentieth century? Prisoner of war studies have been at the forefront of this debate. Alon Rachamimov and Richard Speed both argued that the treatment of prisoners of war was organised on the lines of gentlemanly diplomacy and humanitarian consideration of older traditions ensuring good treatment of captives, although both see a radicalisation in prisoner treatment in Russia.⁴⁷ These ideas have been challenged, especially in regard to the forced labour camps directly behind the lines in Europe during the war where the treatment of prisoners fits more with the brutality that followed in the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War.⁴⁸

Captivity also caused tensions between captors; the British government had to take a strong line to ensure uniform treatment of prisoners in the Dominion-run camps. Hermann Hiery's work has looked at the effect of the 'sub-Imperial' (understood here as the takeover of a German colony by one of the British Dominions) mission in Samoa and New Guinea as carried out by the New Zealand and Australian governments respectively.⁴⁹ The Union of South Africa also had to be dealt with carefully at the beginning of the conflict, to ensure its loyalty.⁵⁰ The treatment of prisoners in the Dominions has been overlooked in studies of these 'sub-Imperial' missions. The Australians' treatment of their German captives in New Guinea and in their own prison camps caused great tensions between the Australian government and the British, who feared bad treatment of prisoners would lead to reprisals against British captives in German hands. This issue has not previously been looked at in any detail, but it is vital in explaining why the British intervened more directly in Dominion affairs. The other major work focusing on

⁴⁵ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 307.

⁴⁶ Jörn Leonhard sees the First World War as acting as a 'Scharnierfunktion' (Hinge) between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁷ See, Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, p. 187.

⁴⁸ See, Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War*.

⁴⁹ See Hermann J. Hiery, *The Neglected War: The German South Pacific and the Influence of World War I* (Hawaii University Press, Honolulu, 1995). One of the main incidents of prisoner violence, the public flogging at Rabaul is only briefly treated here, pp 36-38.

⁵⁰ For the impact of the war on South Africa see, Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme: South Africa in the Great War 1914-1918* (Penguin, Johannesburg, 2007).

Australia and its treatment of prisoners is *Enemy Aliens* by Gerhard Fischer.⁵¹ The book gives a detailed account of civilian captivity in Australia, but misses out some vital sources that are available in the Foreign Office relating to violence against prisoners. Fischer's and Hiery's books see captivity in Australia and the Pacific as generally humane and just, but do not explore the use of prisoners in projecting the sub-imperial mission into the Pacific.⁵²

As mentioned, the study of prisoners of war has established itself in the historiography of the First World War. Thanks to work by historians starting with Richard Speed, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, and Alon Rachamimov, one does not need to start with a blank slate. Three main texts that highlight the different approaches in the prisoner of war field are Alon Rachamimov's *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front*, Matthew Stibbe's *British Civilian Internees in Germany: The Ruhleben Camp, 1914-18* and Heather Jones's *Violence Against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1920*.⁵³ As this thesis uses the analysis of Rachamimov, Stibbe and Jones as the back-bone of this project it will be necessary here to discuss each work and explain how this thesis to develops their ideas further.

Rachamimov maintained that the memory of the Great War is focused on the mechanisation and mass mobilisation of modern warfare, and that the minor role that prisoners of war play in the historiography of the First World War is due to five factors, four of which are relevant to this study and will be discussed here.⁵⁴ The first is that the relative comfort that prisoners of

⁵¹ Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia 1914-1920* (Queensland University Press, St Lucia, 1989).

⁵² Andrew Francis discusses the longer term consequences of the war on immigration into New Zealand with the establishment of anti-Enemy Alien legislation that was mirrored in Australia. Andrew Francis, *'To Be Truly British We Must Be Anti-German': New Zealand, Enemy Aliens and the Great War Experience, 1914-1919* (Peter Lang, Oxford, 2012).

⁵³ Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War*. One may also add, Uta Hinz, *Gefangen im Großen Krieg: Kriegsgefangenschaft in Deutschland 1914-1921* (Klartext, Essen, 2006) and Oltmer, *Kriegsgefangene im Europa des Ersten Weltkriegs*.

⁵⁴ Rachamimov's fifth reason for the lack of discussion of prisoners of war is the break-up of the Habsburg Empire and the political discontinuities created by the chaotic post-war European political climate, which overshadowed the prisoner narrative. A comparison can be made with the break-up of Germany's colonies. While the collapse of the German colonial Empire has been well documented, the fate of its German inhabitants has not. Although recent works have looked at the colonial revival in interwar Germany, none of these adequately deal with events in the colonies during the war. For example, Shelly Baranowski devotes a very small section of her book to the fall of Germany's colonies in the First World War: Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), pp. 80-81. Britta Schilling's new work

war enjoyed in comparison to the soldiers in the trenches makes the history of First World War internment look rather quaint. His book dealt with prisoners who were interned in Russia, and does paint a rather rosy picture of their internment.⁵⁵ There are parallels with the prisoners from the German colonies. From the point of the view of those fighting on the Western Front, internment in well organised camps in far-flung India or New Guinea may have been preferable to modern mechanised combat, and the hardships of the prisoners seem insignificant in comparison to the suffering in trenches.

Secondly, Rachamimov raised the familiar nature of prisoner of war misery. The majority of the prisoners in Europe suffered only *normal* deprivation: the main problem, he claims, as the war dragged on, was boredom, that led to *Stacheldrahtkrankheit* or 'barbed wire disease'⁵⁶ which in the colonial context was compounded by tropical neurasthenia. This does not mean that there were no problems with the camp systems anywhere in the belligerent countries. However, prisoners' suffering was relative, as in the camps outside Europe they were far removed from the death and suffering of the Western Front. Nonetheless, they still felt the effects of incarceration; as one prisoner in South Africa summed up: 'Would even the most sumptuous feast replace freedom? Would even the most magnificent dwelling replace liberty?'⁵⁷ In addition, prisoners through internment were cut off from their societies and as Annette Becker shows, the physical boundaries of the camp served as a metaphor of the 'double exclusion' of prisoners from German society - the society before 1914, and, for military age men, the trench society from 1914 to 1918.⁵⁸

Third, one has to look at the social background of prisoner of war memoirists. As Rachamimov noted, the contributions in *In Feindeshand* were mainly from the officer corps whose experiences, in general, were far more comfortable than, and altogether different from, those of the rank and file. This aspect is even more apparent in the case of prisoners from the Reich's colonies: not only were there cases where the officers were kept in separate houses; there

is the most comprehensive account of the memory of the colonial war in post-war Germany. Schilling *Postcolonial Germany*.

⁵⁵ For a different perspective on prisoners of war in Russia, see; Reinhard Nachtigal, *Kriegsgefangenschaft an der Ostfront 1914 bis 1918* (Peter Lang, Bern, 2005).

⁵⁶ Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, p. 224. Tropical neurasthenia was a curious disease that only affected Europeans who spent extended periods in tropical climates, see the chapter two.

⁵⁷ TNA, FO383/540, 5699, 16th June 1919, J. Tiedemann, inmate Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

⁵⁸ Annette Becker, 'Paradoxien in der Situation der Kriegsgefangenen 1914-1918', in Oltmer, *Kriegsgefangene im Europa des Ersten Weltkriegs*, p. 27.

were also cases of them being incarcerated in separate countries, as in the case of the separation of rank and file and officers from East Africa, who were sent to South-West Africa, India, Malta or Egypt, depending on rank and status. Finally, for Rachamimov, prisoner internment during the First World War lacked not only the pathos but also the dramatic quality of narratives from the fighting and, in the case of the war in the colonies, dealt with victimisation. According to these memoirs, it was first and foremost an outrage that one civilised colonial power would attack another. Fighting in Europe was one thing but to bring the war into Africa was quite another. According to most German narratives, the extension of warfare into the colonial sphere threatened to destroy Europe's prestige and put the stability of imperial control at risk.

Matthew Stibbe's work on British civilian prisoners in Ruhleben (Berlin), through its pursuit of the image of an imagined community held together along national and linguistic lines, adds more complexity to our understanding of captivity in the First World War.⁵⁹ In Ruhleben, the British prisoners were able to hold on to and cultivate their national identity through the setting up of various institutions, such as sports teams, educational classes, theatre and even a mock election to send representatives to the British parliament. In the camp one can see a microcosm of early twentieth century British society with all its attendant social distinctions such as one old Etonian who was able to hire a valet from among the lower-class prisoners in the camp.⁶⁰ Stibbe views the camp in terms of a 'symbolic community' and looks at how prisoners' experiences varied depending on their education level, class, race and nationality.⁶¹ This community was born both from the prisoners' detachment from Britain and from the converse need to establish closer connections with the nation under whose flag they were being held captive.

The significance of Stibbe's work for this project is that, although he looks at the legal structures, his main focus is on camp culture. His book also brings out an interesting comparison between the image and reality of internee treatment. The Foreign Office was interested in Ruhleben and the conditions in prisoner camps. It strongly denied any reports of German good treatment of prisoners, used for propaganda purposes. Even though they had

⁵⁹ Based on Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁶⁰ Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, pp. 95-96.

⁶¹ John Ketchum, *Ruhleben: A Prison Camp Society* (Toronto University Press, Toronto, 1965), also explores this class issue.

their suspicions that treatment was not so bad in Ruhleben, it was unacceptable to the British propaganda effort for the Germans to be seen as humane.⁶² Stibbe concludes that the facts of Ruhleben do not match the propaganda, and despite some earlier findings to the contrary the reputation of Ruhleben being a prisoners' paradise, albeit an unexciting one, is justified. Ruhleben shared some similarities with some of the camps outside Europe, such as Ahmednagar, Maharashtra State, India (Map 1, no. 80)⁶³, which will be focused on in chapter four. The 'imagined community' at Ahmednagar exhibited the class structures of German colonial society but also highlighted tensions between Germans coming from different contexts, those who had been in India before the war and those who were transferred to Ahmednagar from German East Africa.

Heather Jones is the only one of these three writers to take a comparative approach, looking at the treatment of captives by France, Germany and Britain. She focuses on the forced labour camp system as a tool to highlight the continuities of violence in captivity in the twentieth century. The policy of ignoring international law and forcing prisoners to work in labour camps highlights how immediate necessity and reprisal doctrine often overshadowed humanitarian concerns in war time. By focussing on Europe, Jones overlooks the role played by Germans in captivity outside the continent in justifying reprisals against British prisoners in Germany. The camps at Ahmednagar, Pietermaritzburg (South Africa), Liverpool (New South Wales), and others provided the Auswärtiges Amt with ample evidence, either real or false, of the mistreatment of German citizens at the hands of British or Dominion Authorities.

In the face of reprisal threats the treatment of prisoners needed to be uniform across the British Empire.⁶⁴ This was true not just of those incarcerated but also related to civilians on parole. The example of French prisoners in Germany being sent to labour camps in the Rhineland marshes in reprisal for France's maltreatment of its German prisoners in Africa was not lost on the British. Conversely, Britain used internees from colonial camps, especially East

⁶² Horace Rumbold, of the Foreign Office, noted in a letter to John B. Jackson on 30th April 1915 'An angel in heaven could not satisfy all the prisoners at Ruhleben, unless he opened the gate and told them all to leave, even then a good number might wish to remain.' Quoted from Gilbert Martin, *Sir Horace Rumbold: Portrait of a Diplomat 1869-1941* (Heinemann, London, 1973) p. 130.

⁶³ Map references will be made to camps where possible, and not all those camps marked on the Hamburg Red Cross maps will be referred to.

⁶⁴ The Foreign Office was directly responsible for the maintenance of prison camps in the colonies and Dominions. However, the initial stages of the war did see a certain amount of independent action taken by the host governments.

Africa, to exact reprisals for the maltreatment of British civilians in German-occupied Belgium and France. Negotiations between Germany and Britain over exchanges and prisoner treatment ensured that some of those civilians were spared evacuation from East Africa and the hardships of internment in India.

Jones's book concludes that even though First World War incarceration took place within the hypertrophied legal context of The Hague and Geneva Conventions and military, naval, and civil law, there remained ample space for abuse of these regulations. Building on Annette Becker's work it brings violence back into the analysis of prisoners of war. Up until this work, the prevailing image of prisoners during the First World War had been, as in Jean Renoir's 1938 film *La Grande Illusion*, of prisoners engaged in quaint pastimes such as gardening, putting on theatre performances and mounting gallant escape attempts. Jones's book brings the more powerful paradigm of violence into prisoner treatment, thus connecting captivity in the First World War more concretely with the Second World War and twentieth century captivity in general. The groundwork laid through the comparative approach in Jones's work serves as a useful model to locate the narrative of internment of Europeans in the extra-European world.

This study takes a global and transnational view of the history of internment in the extra-European world. It will not only look at the experiences of prisoners from diverse colonial locations of internment under the British Empire, but will also use the models of the French and Japanese empires (chapter six) for comparison and to highlight the transfers of prisoners across colonial borders. These models also fit with an 'interactive comparative method', i.e. they will allow us to comment on the phenomenon of internment in the extra-European theatre from outside the borders of the British Empire.⁶⁵ However, France will feature in this thesis not only for comparative purposes but also because the contemporary propaganda and literature produced in Germany mainly dealt with France, connecting internment in the colonies to the French use of 'Senegalese' troops on the Western Front and post-war 'black shame' propaganda connected to France's occupation of the left bank of the Rhine.⁶⁶ France,

⁶⁵ Deborah Cohen, Comparative History: Buyer Beware, in *German Historical Institute Bulletin* (Autumn 2001), pp. 23-33, p. 30.

⁶⁶ For France's use of colonial troops, see, Joe Lunn, *Memoirs of the Maelstrom: A Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Heinemann Educational Books, Portsmouth USA, 1999) and Richard Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2012). France, unlike Britain, also sent prisoners from Europe to the colonial sphere, with transfers of prisoners of war for work in labour battalions in Algeria, Jones, *Violence*

mainly fighting on the West African fronts held fewer German prisoners than the British in Africa but their internment in Dahomey, Benin, provided the major propaganda campaign in Germany during the war with regard to internment in the extra-European theatre.⁶⁷

Japan provides a counter-balance to both the French and more importantly British Empires' treatment of prisoners. Similar to the trajectory of captivity in other colonies, except East Africa, a large haul of German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners was taken early in the war, after the siege of German-controlled Tsingtao by Japan, and thus had to endure almost five years in captivity. The historiography of the camps in Japan is much richer and better developed than that of the camps under British and Dominion administration. Charles Burdick and Ursula Moessner's book on German prisoners in Japan has been the standard work in English on the topic, but is now dated and although based on German sources, almost completely overlooks the Japanese angle.⁶⁸ In Japan there has been, and still is, an avid interest in the camps as they provide a positive example of Japanese humanitarianism from a century overshadowed by events in 1937-1945.⁶⁹ The main focus of these studies has been on the camp at Bando, Shikoku, but increasingly the research is expanding to cover other camps. In building upon this research, it is important to situate the experience of German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners in Japan within the overall paradigm of First World War imprisonment.

Against Prisoners, pp. 110-116. The section on France will rely almost completely on archival sources from the Bundesarchiv and the ICRC.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Karl Fischer, *In französischer Hölle: Kriegsgefangen in Dahomey* (Boll und Pichardt, Berlin, 1918).

⁶⁸ Charles Burdick, and Ursula Moessner, *German Prisoners of War in Japan, 1914-1920* (University Press Publications of America, New York, 1984). For an in-depth study of the prisoners in relation to international law see: Ulrike Klein, *Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in japanische Gewahrsam 1914-1920, Ein Sonderfall* (PhD Thesis, Albert Ludwigs Universität Freiburg, 1993). Gerahrd Krebs, 'Die etwas andere Kriegsgefangenschaft. Die Kämpfer von Tsingtau in japanischen Lagern 1914-1920', in Rüdiger Overmans (ed), *In der Hand des Feindes: Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Böhlau Verlag, Cologne, 1999) touches on the influence of former prisoners on Japan in the inter-war years.

⁶⁹ Research on POWs in Japan is in a very healthy state thanks to the work of the Tsingtao-War German Prisoners Research Society which along with its research publishes an annual journal. Some choice works which focus on the Bando camp are: Tamura Ichiro, *板東俘虜収容所の全貌* (The Full Story of Bando Internment Camp) (Sakuhokusha, Tokyo, 2010), Yokota Arata, *板東収容所長松江豊寿* (Bando Camp Commander Matsue Toyohisa) (Rekishijunju Publishers, Wakamatsu, 2005), Tomita Hiroshi, *板東俘虜収容所* (POWs in Bando) (Hosei University, Tokyo, 1991). A comprehensive study of the Japanese camp system in general in First World War Japan is Seto Takehiko, *青島から来た兵士たち* (Soldiers from Tsingtao) (Dogakusha, Tokyo, 2006). Most interestingly Otsuru Atsushi sketches a comparative study of internment in Japan and Austria-Hungary in the final chapter of his book *捕虜が働くとき* (Prisoner of War Labour), (Jinbunshoin, Tokyo, 2013). Fukiura Tadaki's concise history of internment places Japanese internment in the First World War in the long-term context of internment in general, *捕虜の文明史* (Prisoners of War and Civilisation) (Shincho Sencho, Tokyo, 1990).

The reputation of Japan for good treatment of prisoners was prevalent among belligerent countries even during the war and became accepted as fact. Though there have been a few dissenters, it is difficult to disagree with the evidence that in Japan during the First World War prisoner treatment was humane when compared with contemporary standards.⁷⁰

To conclude, German colonial settlers as prisoners of war and civilian internees during the First World War is a forgotten aspect of German colonial history. William Roger Louis's *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies 1914-1919*, published in 1967, scarcely mentions internment and in most accounts of Germany's defeat in the colonial theatre and (with a few exceptions) little has since changed.⁷¹ Hiery has revived interest in the study of the colonies during the Great War,⁷² but although some of his work deals with prisoners, he looks at them exclusively in relation to the takeover of colonies by the 'sub-Empires' but not from the perspective of twentieth century captivity. This analysis of the treatment of prisoners of war will look at this 'sub-Imperial' process and following the work of Jack Robinson and Ronald Gallagher, argues that internment policy was driven by European considerations.⁷³ Recent work on the rise, fall and re-emergence of the colonial movement in Germany has almost completely overlooked what happened to the men and women who, throughout their captivity, maintained the hope that the colonies would be returned and they could go back to their homes.⁷⁴ Studies of the German colonies through the war have focused their attention on German East Africa and have tended towards military history.⁷⁵ The campaign there was dramatic and through the character of Colonel (later General) Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (commander of German troops

⁷⁰ A conference, 'The East Asian Dimension of the First World War: The 'German-Japanese War' and China, 1914-1919', held Bochum in September 2014 debated the myth of Japanese good internment and looked in more depth at Japan's role in the First World War.

⁷¹ Louis, William Roger, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies 1914-1919* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1967) and Gifford Prosser and William Roger Louis, (eds), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1967).

⁷² Hiery, *The Neglected War*.

⁷³ William Roger Louis, *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New Viewpoints, New York, 1976) p. 3.

⁷⁴ See George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Pre-Coloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa and South-West Africa* (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2007), Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011), Bernd G. Längin, *Die deutschen Kolonien, Schauplätze und Schicksale 1884-1918* (E.S. Mittler and Sohn GmbH, Berlin, 2004).

⁷⁵ See, Edward Paice, *Tip and Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa* (Phoenix, London 2008). Anne Samson, *World War I in Africa*, focuses almost exclusively on the East African front.

in German East Africa) had a great publicist.⁷⁶ The myth of an army undefeated in the (colonial) field would overshadow the experience of those who were captured in German East Africa and spent the war in captivity, in India, Egypt or Malta.⁷⁷ This thesis seeks to recover this experience and the consequences it has for our understanding of diplomacy, internment and identity in the First World War.

The geographical scale of internment outside Europe was huge, with a much larger variety of resources used than in previous colonial conflicts to deal with this through the Admiralty, the Colonial and India Offices, and the governments of the Dominion countries. The treatment of prisoners required a much greater coordination of effort between various departments, setting norms in place that were in turn ready-made and applied in the Second World War.⁷⁸ This study of combatant prisoners and internees outside Europe contributes to the completion of the picture of captivity in the First World War and brings to light new and important information on how strategies to take over the German colonies were developed and their long lasting consequences. It also reassesses the nature of the First World War, placing the world-wide internment network run by the British Empire in the Great War firmly alongside the battles on the Western Front in the category of modern warfare, rather than as a final hurrah for nineteenth century aristocratic ideals. The management of prisoners of war in the extra-European theatre of the First World War was indeed global and the camp and transport systems that evolved to deal with these prisoners helped to mark the First World War as the first truly modern war of total mobilisation. The next chapter will map out the geography and evolution of the global camp network.

⁷⁶ His memoirs were widely read in Germany and abroad, Paul Emil Lettow-Vorbeck, *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika* (Koehler, Leipzig, 1920).

⁷⁷ The development of this myth and its hero worship is looked at in depth in, Michale Pesek, 'Colonial Heroes: German Colonial Identities in Wartime 1914-1918', in Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds), *German Colonialism and National Identity*, (Taylor and Francis, New York, 2011), pp. 126-139.

⁷⁸ Germans civilians were once again interned in Dar es Salaam and an internment camp was also set up in Mafeking, South Africa. Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, pp. 165- 174. Another example of this was the treatment of Japanese prisoners in India during the Second World War, which is discussed in T.R. Sareen, *Japanese Prisoners of War in India 1942-46: Bushido Behind Barbed Wire* (Global Orientated Ltd., London, 2006). Although he does not discuss the links between the First and Second World Wars the continuities are readily apparent.

Chapter Two: The Geography of Internment

Before embarking on the thematic analysis of this thesis, it is important to map out internment from each German colony, and the global camp network, (including the transfer of German nationals across borders) that was established during the First World War. The First World War needs to be understood 'in transnational terms even if it was fought for national needs' and imperial interaction was at the heart of the conflict.¹ The first shots British shots were fired by the West African Frontier Force and the first territory taken was by the New Zealanders when they took over the island of Samoa. The Chief of Naval War Staff, Sir Frederick Doveton Sturdee, recorded two days before Britain entered the war, 'it would be well to accept all offers from Dominions to attack German colonies. Besides being a powerful threat, it will help stimulate the Imperial idea'.² The planned territorial gains from the takeover of the German colonies were hoped to strengthen the British Empire spiritually as well as geographically. It was clear from the outset of the war, as one prisoner noted, that Germany was vastly outnumbered in the struggle for its place in the sun.³ Internment and expulsion would be the key policies enacted throughout the former German colonies once under British control and linked to an Empire-wide strategy. Deportation as an imperial strategy was not new to the First World War; it had previously been applied to French-speaking Acadians in North America in the 1750s and was again put into use against the Kikuyu and the Ganda in East Africa as recently as the 1950s.⁴ What was different in the First World War was that the deportation policies were aimed at 'Europeans' and they were to be permanent.⁵

Although colonial aims were not the main motivation in mobilising the British Empire for war, once conflict broke out, it acted swiftly to take over all of Germany's overseas possessions.⁶ In

¹ James Kitchen, Alisa Miller and Laura Rowe (eds), *Other Combatants, Other Fronts: Competing Histories of the First World War* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2011), 'Introduction', p. xxxiii.

² TNA, ADM137/4, FCD Sturdee to First Sea Lord 2nd August 1914. Sturdee would later gain fame as the man who defeated von Spee's squadron at the battle of the Falklands. Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 83.

³ BA, R67/263, Unterofficer Hans Buttkreit to his parents, Maadi internment camp, Cairo, 16th July 1917.

⁴ Dirk Hoerder, 'Migrations and Belongings', in Rosenberg, *A World Connecting*, p. 541.

⁵ During the Boer war many Boer civilians were expelled from the colony to camps in Ceylon, St Helena, Bermuda and India, but were allowed to return after the conflict was over. From the beginning of the First World War, however, it was clear that return to the colonies would not be an option for German colonial settlers. Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 23, and Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, p. 186.

⁶ The British Empire did not act alone. The other major colonial power, France joined forces with the British in West Africa and Japan helped itself to the German territory on the Shandong peninsula and to its North Pacific islands. Belgium and Portugal also took part in the fighting in Africa. Germany attacked

the opening exchanges of the war in Europe the British did not capture significant numbers of prisoners but rather suffered many losses due to men captured. In the colonies it was the reverse, with most German colonies, with the exception of East Africa, having fallen to British, British Dominion, French or Japanese forces by 1916.⁷ Because of the huge areas covered and the great differences in the process of capture and treatment the British needed centralised control over their prisoner management in order to ensure uniform treatment, a consideration that grew ever more pressing as the number of British captured by the Germans rose and the threat of reprisals became more real. Nonetheless, the British Empire had to face a number of challenges regarding its internment practices, which were similar across different geographical regions. This chapter looks at what controls the British put in place, and then moves on to a colony by colony commentary on the nature of capture and internment. It will estimate how many prisoners were held overseas in Allied camps and consider where and how their internment developed. Internment in one colony did not operate in isolation but was linked to the overall camp network established during the war. Once this groundwork has been laid in the following chapters will take up the thematic threads as described in the introduction.

At the outbreak of the war there were an estimated 25,000 Germans living in Togo, Cameroon, South-West Africa, German East Africa, New Guinea, Samoa, Tsingtao (the Kiaochow Bay concession in China) and some other small Pacific islands such as the Carolines. The settler population had increased significantly since the beginning of the century (in 1902 there were only 7,500 Germans living in the colonies), but there was still a demand for more settlers.⁸ Germany's policy on the defence of these possessions was never very clear. Grand Admiral of the German navy, Alfred von Tirpitz, was delighted that Germany had acquired the excellent deep water port at Tsingtao, but was less interested in developing its potential as a naval station. Germany's policy in the extra-European world seemed to be more one centred on a

the Portuguese in Angola in 1914 but Portugal did not officially declare war on Germany until March 1916.

⁷ One should also note the roles of Portugal and Belgium in the fighting in Africa. The Portuguese fought on the South-West African and East African fronts, while Belgium sent troops from the Congo to German East Africa. The Belgian Congo also provided a major reservoir of manpower for carrier units.

⁸ Mary Evelyn Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918* (MacMillan, New York, 1930), p. 270. The RKA reckoned a figure of 19,900 Germans living in the German colonies (excluding Tsingtao) at the outbreak of war. These figures were: South-West Africa 12,400, German East Africa 4,200, Cameroon 1,650, Togo 320, New Guinea 1,000, and Samoa 330. BA, R1001/879, *Behandlung deutscher Kriegsgefangener aus Deutsch-Ostafrika in Gefangenenlagern und deren Heimschaffung, 1915 – 1925*. RKA (Undated).

peaceful co-existence with its Great Power colonial neighbours.⁹ Indeed, outlying areas such as Samoa were almost completely reliant on British help. To illustrate this dependency, the Amtmann (District Officer) of German Sawai'i, now part of Fiji, was an Irishman named Williams who, when called to Berlin, met an incredulous Kaiser who asked 'How is it you are a Governor of a German island and cannot speak the language?'¹⁰ It was difficult to attract even adventurous young men to the hard lifestyle of building a remote colony from scratch, to say nothing of women.¹¹ To make up for in this short-fall in numbers initially the colonies accepted large numbers of other Europeans to settle within their borders. The drive to recruit more and more Germans to settle abroad was still in development in 1914. Relations between the German settlers and their British neighbours remained cordial until the outbreak of the war.¹²

Unlike in western Europe, where now as then, the majority tend to see 'peace as the default position, the normal state of mankind, and are surprised when it fails',¹³ in the colonies, before the First World War, unrest and warfare were normal but usually the targets of imperial aggression were the indigenous others, not fellow Europeans.¹⁴ German colonial administrators pinned their hopes on the 1914 war not extending beyond the borders of continental Europe. The German colonies were not built for defence, their security resting on International law and a sense of a common European mission. The colonial administrators and German government hoped that the Berlin Conference (also known as the Congo Conference) of 1884/85 had enshrined colonial neutrality in a legal document and that the other Powers were prepared to

⁹ This cooperation reached its apex in China in 1900, with the German Field Marshall Alfred von Waldersee taking the lead in the Great Powers' suppression of the Boxer Rebellion. Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience and Myth* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1997), p. 55.

¹⁰ Williams informed the Kaiser that he knew of one German word, 'Prost', much to Wilhelm's amusement. Hermann J. Hiery and Arthur Knoll, (eds), *The German Colonial Experience: Select Documents on German Rule in Africa, China and the Pacific* (University Press Publications of America, Maryland, 2010), p. 132.

¹¹ For the initiatives to recruit women for the colonies see, Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Duke University Press, North Carolina, 2001).

¹² The German archives note the unfortunate case of a Herr Strauwald, who, on the assumption that Germany and Britain were going to annex Portugal's African possessions, purchased a 5,000 hectare farm in Angola in April 1914. Shortly after moving to his new farm he was arrested and placed in a Portuguese civilian internment camp for the duration of the war while his possessions were confiscated. BA, R67/1382, Bericht 106, 'Erlebnisse in Angola' in the *Nordallgäu Zeitung*, 9th September 1918.

¹³ Strachan, Hew, 'Review Article: The Origins of the First World War', in *International Affairs Special Issue: The Great War*, 90, 2 (March, 2014), pp. 429–439, p. 432.

¹⁴ Although the French and British had come close to conflict at Fashoda in 1898 and Germany and France had nearly clashed over the Morocco (1905/06) and Agadir (1911) crises. Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (Penguin, London, 2012), pp. 132, 155-157, 204-213.

honour it.¹⁵ During the war the German government upheld this position, as highlighted in this excerpt from a Note Verbale to the British Foreign Office in 1916: 'The German government has always maintained the view that it is contrary to the laws of nations to arrest and deport the peaceful population of occupied territory [...] if these considerations apply to the case in the European theatre of war, they apply in a greater degree, in the opinion of the German government, in the case of African territory. At the beginning of the war the German government, mindful of the common interests of civilised nations (Kulturvölker) on African soil, was prepared to restrict itself to within the limits defined by Act One of the General Acts of the Berlin Conference [...] and to abstain from the introduction of war measures in colonial territory in Africa.'¹⁶

It was, however, easy to cry foul-play when faced with overwhelming odds but as the Berlin Conference only specifically named neutrality on the Congo River, any legal obligations it could offer to the African colonies of Togo, Cameroon, German East Africa and South-West Africa were only indirect at best. Nonetheless, either genuinely or for propaganda purposes Germany saw the takeover of the colonies as a breach of international law, and often referred to it in tit-for-tat exchanges with the British who they claimed had been the main offenders in breaking international agreements.¹⁷ The German government was of course arguing from a position of weakness in attempting to dissuade its enemies from attacking its colonies.

The German captives were also well aware of their rights under the Geneva and Hague conventions and made explicit references to them in their complaints, often highlighting abuses of international law under British officers (to the embarrassment of the Foreign Office). International law played a key role in the war and prisoner administration with the conventions being the most important texts for the treatment of prisoners of war. In the African, Pacific and Asian colonies, the conventions were not only applicable with regard to the treatment of prisoners of war but also gave them a legal standing for protection of their property. Article 46 of The Hague Treaty, (stating; 'Family honour and rights, the lives of

¹⁵ For the text of the Berlin Act see, 'General Act of the Conference of Berlin Concerning the Congo', in *The American Journal of International Law*, 3, 1, Supplement: Official Documents (January, 1909), pp. 7-25.

¹⁶ TNA, FO383/198, 149734, 1st August 1916, Note Verbale from the German government.

¹⁷ Hew Strachan, *The First World War: A New History*, (Pocket Books, London, 2006), p. 68-69. TNA, FO383/162, 22648, 5th February 1916, Letter to US Ambassador in London from P.W. Brünger and ten other Germans (who had been navigating the river Niger at the outbreak of the war) protesting at their internment in Wakefield as a breach of the Berlin Act.

persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated.’),¹⁸ which was often cited by the Germans, put the responsibility upon the British, under international law, to ensure that German-owned houses and land were protected and that once hostilities were over, captives would be free to return to their daily lives. The convention, while mainly honoured in the case of prisoner treatment, was not respected in the same manner as regards property. While property rights were generally respected in the treatment of civilian internees in Europe, in the colonies the requisition of German property was an important military objective and once taken there was no question of it being returned to the original owner. It will be shown that circumventing The Hague Convention on property rights was foremost in the Foreign Office’s mind in its policy of deporting civilians from the Reich Colonies.¹⁹

Using the opportunity provided by the war, the Allies took over German-held territory and secured it for their own colonial ambitions. France, Portugal and Belgium all sought gains in Africa. The war, sparked in Europe, enabled the colonial powers to once again redraw the map of Africa, albeit cloaking their ambitions in the language of tutelage of what were perceived as less-developed peoples instead of mere imperial expansion. Japan perceived the war as a once in a century opportunity to establish a strong foothold not just geographically but also politically in a China that had been destabilised by the 1911-12 revolution.²⁰ The Australians and the New Zealanders saw the war as a chance to establish their own spheres of influence in the Pacific. They felt that Germany had not been worthy of running the colonies and through its laissez-faire approach to colonial management had left its possessions wide open to the expansionist ambitions of Japan. Japan, although the British Empire’s ally, was viewed with suspicion: this was after all a period of heightened anxiety over the ‘Yellow Peril’.²¹ Taking over Germany’s colonies would not only prevent them from falling into Japanese hands but would also create a buffer zone against any direct threats to the mainland from the Japanese Empire in the future. Similarly, South Africa used the war to expand its sphere of influence into German South-West Africa and even into German East Africa. Britain was also keen, from a

¹⁸ The Hague Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18th October 1907 http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/hague02.asp.

¹⁹ During the Boer War the permanent confiscation of property was viewed as contrary to the laws of not only the Cape Colony but also international usage. Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, p. 186.

²⁰ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 108.

²¹ ‘Yellow Peril’ propaganda presented the Chinese (and indeed all Asians) as the other, and a threat to western civilisation. See, Conrad, *Globalisation*, pp. 222-223.

military and naval viewpoint, to eliminate the German presence overseas. The immediate necessity of taking over the colonies to dismantle any ports which could be used for German shipping, wireless communications or coal bunkering, and the rounding up of German civilians to prevent agitation among the local populations, fitted into the more long-term objective of confining Germany to Europe and disabling its naval threat, to ensure British dominance in sea power.²²

For a clear understanding of the geographical context of this thesis it will be necessary to look at each colony and its respective camps individually. The camps run by the British and the Dominion governments covered a huge area. Where there were Germans, there were camps. Prison camps were not just established for captured colonial troops, but as in the Boer War previously, all enemy civilians were registered or rounded up for internment. It was a huge task in administration and engineering, larger than the concentration camp system established in the 1899-1902 conflict in South Africa.²³ Prisoner of war and civilian internee camps were set up in areas as remote as Bermuda, where thirty-nine Germans spent the war in captivity, or Tenom, North Borneo (Map 2, no. 88), which housed only five. There were naturally larger complexes set up in areas that had bigger enemy populations. In Australia, for example, there were a number of civilian internee camps, the largest being Liverpool in Sydney which had a prisoner population of 4,500 (Map 2, no. 97). The camp system was vast and there were around twenty-four camps (excluding hospitals, and ships which were often counted in ICRC reports as camps) under British and Dominion administration that either partly or exclusively housed German prisoners from the colonies, as well as camps in Japan, the Belgian Congo and French and Portuguese Africa.²⁴ The following section will look at each colony in this study individually. It will highlight where and when the prisoners in each colony were taken and where they were interned.

Togo was the smallest of Germany's African possessions and the first one to fall. It was taken in August 1914 by a joint British and French force. While it may have been geographically insignificant, the town of Kamina in the colony possessed Germany's only radio transmitter,

²² Louis stressed the geo-political importance of the colonial issue and argued that the war was in fact fought with the aim of containing Germany in Europe. Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies 1914-1919*, p. 2.

²³ The Boer camps were more deadly, however, with about 25,000 Boer and around 14,000 indigenous deaths recorded. Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 49.

²⁴ Apart from camps in the former German colonies themselves, there were camps in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, The Union of South Africa, Nyasaland, India, Malta and Egypt.

apart from that at Nauen outside Berlin, powerful enough to transmit across continents.²⁵ This was significant as capturing it cut communications and prevented the relaying of information from Germany to the colonies. More importantly, German ships could no longer receive radio transmissions, further crippling the German navy. The telegraph was the communications hub that connected Germany to its African possessions: once the wire was cut and the telegraph shut down, not only Togo, but also the rest of German Africa lost a vital link to the metropole.²⁶ The introduction of the station had led to the development of a curious class system in the colony whereby the telegraph operators enjoyed higher wages and better links to home. This seems to have caused some conflict with those German settlers who had been in the Togo longer and had worked hard to develop the colony.²⁷

As Togo fell so early in the war, the experience of the prisoners taken there illustrates the initial stages of British prisoner treatment. The takeover of Togo had been under a joint British-French force but the British did deal with a lot of the prisoners, although many of them (especially males) were handed over to the French.²⁸ The acting Governor Hans-Georg von Doering was interned in French West Africa for his part in the defence of the colony.²⁹ Rather than interning the civilians of Togo the British arranged for them to be shipped back to Britain via the Gold Coast, but allowed married women the option of joining their husbands in internment by the French in Dahomey.³⁰ Once in Britain, arrangements were made with the neutral Dutch government for their transportation from Liverpool to Rotterdam (via train to London), where they were then allowed to cross the border home to Germany. The main

²⁵ Strachan, *To Arms*, p. 506.

²⁶ While the disabling of German communications was of primary strategic importance for the British, it affected their ability to exchange information on prisoners with Germany, making the whereabouts of British prisoners taken in the fighting in the German colonies difficult to ascertain. Thus the War Office, with the approval of Edward Grey, agreed to allow Berlin to use British cables to transmit information to the colonies. TNA, FO383/47, 2325, 15th January 1915, B.B. Cubbit to Grey.

²⁷ The wireless operators and their families were interned by the French in Médéa, Algeria. BA, R1001/3972, Freilassung in Frankreich inhaftierter Deutscher aus Kamerun und Togo, 1915 – 1919. Anton Codelli's father to Staatssekretär Wilhelm Solf, 25th May 1916.

²⁸ The territory was split lengthwise between the British and French. Conrad, *German Colonialism*, p. 50. See chapter six, for the handovers of prisoners to France.

²⁹ TNA, FO383/46 1384, Togoland, 5th January 1915. The actual governor of the colony, Adolf Friedrich zu Mecklenburg was in Germany at the outbreak of the war and was in fact able to serve as an officer in both the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman armies. Mecklenburg survived the war and lived long enough to be invited to the celebrations of Togolese independence in 1960. Conrad, *German Colonialism*, p. 198.

³⁰ BA, R67/485, Abschrift Anny Heck, 6th June 1916. The British discouraged German women from going to French West Africa. H.J. Read's response to a German Note Verbale maintained that the British government could make no guarantees for what would happen to those who chose to go to Dahomey. TNA, FO383/72, 103987, H.J. Read to US Consul, Berlin, 30th July 1915.

military action in Togo was the destruction of the radio station by its operators, which prevented the Allies making use of it. There was no real military presence in Togo, only a small police force of ten German police officers backed up with 600 indigenous troops.³¹ At this early stage of the war, Christian missionaries were allowed to remain in the colony and at their stations, a policy that was to be revised as the war continued and the 'spirit of 1914' turned sour.³² Total figures for those deported during the course of the war from Togo are difficult to ascertain, but initially 243 people were shipped to the United Kingdom and the group of missionaries were eventually sent to the Gold Coast for internment in 1916.³³ Around 280 Germans were handed over to the French and interned in Dahomey.³⁴

Although Duala (Douala), the main port in Cameroon, was taken early in the war (September 1914), the rest of the colony fell in early 1916.³⁵ As the colony was not under Allied control for some time the treatment of civilians was harsher than that in Togo and showed a development in the general attitude toward prisoners.³⁶ After the capture of Duala the German residents were rounded up and publicly marched to the docks before being put on board ships and in the same fashion as those from Togo sent back to Germany or kept in incarceration in Britain, mainly at Knockaloe on the Isle of Man.³⁷

Cameroon, again like Togo, was taken by a joint British-French force. France had taken over the bulk of fighting in Cameroon by the end of the conflict there in 1916. There were some cases where the British handed over captives who were wanted for crimes by the French, but in general they followed the policy of deportation of officers and other ranks back to Britain and repatriation of civilians to Germany. Those Germans who were repatriated voiced their

³¹ For the military campaign see, Strachan, *To Arms*, pp. 505-509 or Peter Sebald, *Die Deutsche Kolonie Togo 1884-1914: Auswirkungen einer Fremdherrschaft* (Ch. Links Verlag, Berlin, 2013), pp. 173-181.

³² Jeffrey Verhey has challenged the myth of this spirit in his influential book *The spirit of 1914 militarism, myth and mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000).

³³ TNA, FO383/32, 5890, Letter to the RKA from German officials interned in Queensferry, 16th January 1915.

³⁴ According to a letter from two civilians in Togo, the prisoners wanted to be interned by the British and claimed that the British authorities had promised to do so. Just as they were about to set sail for Britain a French officer came on board their ship and informed them they were to be transferred to Dahomey. BA, R1001/3950/5, Kolonialdeutsche aus Kamerun und Togo in französischer Gefangenschaft, 1917 – 1924. Letter from Berth. (possibly Bertha) and Hanna to their mother in Germany, 22nd October 1914.

³⁵ For the military campaign in Cameroon see, Schulte-Varendorff, *Krieg in Kamerun*, pp. 55-70.

³⁶ Many German civilians were allowed to remain on parole in the Togolese capital, Lomé, when it was under British control. In contrast, in Cameroon all Germans were immediately shipped away from the colony.

³⁷ Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, p. 17.

displeasure at their treatment. Once back in Germany or on neutral territory they were free to publish uncensored and sometimes sensational accounts of their period, no matter how short, in enemy hands.

Unlike in Togo, the British wasted no time in rounding up Christian Missionaries; they were especially suspicious of the Baseler Missionsgesellschaft. Basel Missionaries had been at the forefront of the Christianizing mission in Africa, having established churches in Togo and the Gold Coast by 1828 before founding its first mission in Cameroon in 1885.³⁸ Although the Basel mission had its headquarters in Switzerland, its membership in the colonies was mainly German.³⁹ There could, therefore, be no possibility of allowing them to remain in Cameroon as they were very much 'enemy aliens'. General Charles Macpherson Dobell (Commander in Chief of British operations in West Africa) claimed that while not all were on active service at the time of capture, 171 of the Basel missionaries were reservists.⁴⁰ The mission houses were confiscated by British troops and its buildings in the Gold Coast were converted into an internment camp to house missionaries from Togo, Cameroon, Nigeria and the Gold Coast itself, before their deportation to Germany.⁴¹ The missionaries, men and women, wrote of their accounts of mistreatment at the hands of not only white but also black British troops adding further weight to the German contention that the British had no respect for international law.⁴²

³⁸ The mission had also established itself in India. Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire*, p. 44.

³⁹ The Basel mission was not purely spiritual, as it was also a relatively successful business venture that at the outbreak of the war had changed its name to the more neutral sounding Société commerciale des missions, as opposed to the previous German title of Mission-Handlungs-Gesellschaft.

⁴⁰ On 15th October 1914 British troops dug up 14 German rifles, 1 bayonet, 265 rounds of ammunition, 4 pouches of gunpowder and 2 rifles hidden under the main building of the Basel Mission in Duala. TNA, FO383/49, 65457, Dobell's letter to the Foreign Office, 25th May 1915.

⁴¹ The Basel mission president, Reverend Paul Christ, sent a letter to the British Foreign Office outlining the list of five grievances they had concerning their disciples in Africa. Firstly, if the missionaries were all to be deported, they should be allowed enough time to gather the necessary luggage for their voyage. Secondly the missionaries 'should not be committed to custody in the presence of natives in a way that would undermine their authority and disgrace them.' The missionaries should be spared any hardship or privation on their return journey, and it was the duty of the British authorities to ensure that their property in Africa was to be protected from plunder. Finally he requested the Foreign Office to return any of the missionaries who came from neutral countries back to their stations so that they could continue their work. TNA, FO383/49, 63764, Requests from the Basel Mission to the Foreign Office relating to the treatment of their German missionaries, 21st May 1915.

⁴² The British collected and responded to a lot of this literature: IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915.

One novel aspect of the conflict in Cameroon was the situation concerning Fernando Po, a Spanish possession off the coast of Duala. The British and French Armies had by 1916 taken over the entire colony of Cameroon, but a large contingent of the German Schutztruppe, around 200 European Officers and 12,000 indigenous troops, including their wives and children, fled and sought refuge in Spanish Guinea.⁴³ From there they were taken to Fernando Po, where they were to be interned for the duration of the war. Under the leadership of the former Governor of Cameroon, Karl Ebermaier, they virtually took over the island and started plans to re-arm and re-take Cameroon. This naturally set off alarm bells in Britain and France, which threatened to invade the Spanish colony if the King of Spain did not take matters under his control. The problem was solved by shipping the European captives to Spain where, much to the annoyance of the British, they were kept in relative luxury and were allowed to communicate freely with Germany.⁴⁴

The development of camps in German South-West Africa was complex. It was the only German colony in Africa actually to have formal prisoner of war camps established on its territory.⁴⁵ The initial stages of the war saw a now familiar pattern of expulsion of civilians and military from the colony but with some prisoners being transported to the neighbouring Union of South Africa. The camp established at Pietermaritzburg in South Africa (Map 1, no. 65) was enormous by colonial standards, housing around 2,600 inmates, most of whom had been living in the Union prior to the war.⁴⁶ The camp contained a mix of prisoners of war and civilian internees from South-West Africa, South Africa, Rhodesia, the Belgian Congo and German East

⁴³ These were the estimations made by the Admiralty, who also presumed there were around 5,000 carriers attached to the troops. TNA, ADM116/1494, Case 2167, Germans interned at Fernando Po: Proceedings of S.N.O., West Coast of Africa, 13th August 1916 – 10th January 1917. Questions and answers (undated). Quinn, Frederick, 'The Impact of the First World War and its Aftermath on the Beti of Cameroon', in Page (ed), *Africa and the First World War*, p 176, gives a figure which roughly corresponds to the Admiralty's estimations.

⁴⁴ TNA, FO383/328, 132583, British Embassy Madrid to Foreign Office, 4th July 1917. The behaviour of the Germans from Cameroon in Spain was apparently 'boorish' and they were regarded negatively not only by locals but also by their German compatriots who had been in Spain before the war.

⁴⁵ The camps within German East Africa remained ad hoc and prisoners were normally transported to India or Egypt.

⁴⁶ Of course it pales in size when compared with camps in Europe, for example Milowitz prisoner of war camp in Austria-Hungary held around 19,000 as early as January 1915. Hannes Leidinger and Vereme Moritz, 'Verwaltete Massen: Kriegsgefangene in der Donaumonarchie 1914-1918' in Oltmer, *Kriegsgefangene im Europa des Ersten Weltkriegs*, p. 41.

Africa. In addition, the authorities allowed 750 Germans to live on parole but under observation.⁴⁷

The war in Southern Africa was problematic for the British. The declaration of war and the attempt to mobilise the Dominion immediately sparked a rebellion from Boer officers who had suffered at the hands of the British a little over a decade before. The rebellion was quickly put down, giving the authorities time to focus on South-West Africa. However, internment also carried a heavy legacy from the Boer War and South Africa was reluctant to intern German civilians, due to a feared public backlash. This never really materialised and as the war developed the South African public became more and more anti-German. However, the South African authorities were keen to maintain their new possession as a white colony and saw no need to evacuate civilians en masse as in the other German colonies; rather they felt that Germans would integrate themselves into an expanded South Africa much as the Boers had before them.⁴⁸

Administratively there was quite a strain on the Union government, which became increasingly reluctant to accept new prisoners and began to send civilian internees back to German South-West Africa, provided they could pay their own way.⁴⁹ The main argument for repatriating civilians back to South-West Africa was that there was a shortfall in the number of white settlers needed to establish control of the newly taken colony. German South-West Africa had been the scene of the brutally put down Herero uprising and it was feared that the European war might once again plunge the colony into chaos. 144 civilian internees were allowed to return to the colony and their farms and jobs. A special commission was even set up under Dr Ludwig Kastl and the former Governor Theodor Seitz, which was allowed to receive funds

⁴⁷ TNA, FO383/67, 131661, 15th September 1915, Medical inspection of Pietermaritzburg. The compound consisted of five camps, one for officers and four for the remaining 'enemy subjects'. Civilians had been interned in Pietermaritzburg during the Boer War, and the camp would be used again to house Italian prisoners of war in the Second World War.

⁴⁸ This was not universally welcomed, however. In 1924 the Administrator of the South-West African Mandate, G.R. Hofmeyer noted that as a result of retaining the German population they had a 'white problem as well as a black one.' London School of Economics Archives (LSE), E(I)/403. The Mandated Territories of South-West Africa, 23rd July 1924.

⁴⁹ TNA, FO383/167, 25477, Bonar Law to Buxton, 9th February, 1916, maintained that Article 43 of the Hague convention did not make the crown responsible for the costs. Those who could not maintain themselves and the colonial officials [excluding Seitz as will be explained below] were to be repatriated to Germany.

directly from Germany to support the returned Germans.⁵⁰ The money was to be designated exclusively for the relief of destitute settlers and not to be given to officers or colonial officials.⁵¹ Nonetheless it must not be forgotten that the Union of South Africa government had to tread carefully for fear of any agitation that might be caused by disgruntled South-West Africans, who were after all closely connected to many Boer residents within the Union.⁵²

In conformity with The Hague agreements, and due to the Union Governments reluctance to allow military prisoners on its territory, two camps were established in South-West Africa. There was one camp exclusively for officers established at Okanjande (Map 1, no. 60) and another for the rank and file at Aus (Map 1, no. 59), although some officers volunteered to join the rank and file camp as camp leaders. The camps were administered along the lines of those in Britain. The 1,461 prisoners at Aus were relatively free and any work they undertook was voluntary and in the interests of camp maintenance.⁵³ Some of the more menial jobs such as cleaning the latrines were done by Askari prisoners. Local workers initially did the cooking, but after protests the prisoners were allowed to cook for themselves. The problem of importing the food-stuffs that the Germans were used to remained, but the mood of the camp changed noticeably once the prisoners could cook and pay out of their own pockets for extra rations.⁵⁴ The officer camp at Okanjande was much more casually run, and those interned there did not undertake any work and were free to have their servants attend to their needs. They were

⁵⁰ Dr Kastl would later be the first German appointed to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations in September 1927. Andrew Crozier, 'Imperial Decline and the Colonial Question in Anglo-German Relations 1919-1939', in *European History Quarterly* 11 (1981), pp. 207-242, p. 217.

⁵¹ TNA, FO383/167, 629, Relief for Germans in S.W. Africa, 1st January, 1916. A separate fund was established to deal with the payments of officers and officials, TNA, FO383/167, 3338, Despatch enclosing correspondence with US Consul in Cape Town, 6th January 1916. According to Louis Botha, all but twenty-three civilians were sent back to German South-West Africa, eighteen had declined to give parole, two had no means subsistence, two were detained in the interests of the state and one was in hospital. TNA, FO383/167, 34931, Botha to the Foreign Office, 23rd February 1916. In any event, the German government was allowed to transfer funds for the destitute, sending 100,000RM to Kastl in mid-1916, TNA, FO383/168, 109868, Relief of German Subjects in S.W. Africa, 7th June 1916.

⁵² This fear of a Boer rebellion waned after the failure of Maritz's initial rebellion on 9th October 1914. Lieutenant-General Manie Maritz, with around 500 troops moved into South-West Africa where they struck various agreements with Seitz although Seitz eventually distanced his government from the rebels for fear it further united South Africa against Germany. For the Maritz Rebellion see, Samson, *World War I in Africa*, pp. 74-76.

⁵³ TNA, FO383/168, 113853, US Consul report on internment camps in South-West Africa, 13th June 1916.

⁵⁴ Johann Bruwer, *Kriegsgefangenenlager Aus 1915-1919: Errichtung, Bestehen und Schließung des Kriegsgefangenenlagers* (National Monuments Council, Windhoek, 2006). The Author is very grateful to Anne Samson for providing a copy and translation of this book.

even allowed the luxury of going on hunts that could last for three days.⁵⁵ There were no complaints about the food, bedding or climate as there had been at Aus.

Partly due to resistance in South Africa, German civilians were not expelled from German South-West Africa as they had been in Togo, Cameroon or East Africa.⁵⁶ Former Governor Theodor Seitz was never interned and kept on in the colony and his initiatives in relief for the civilian population influenced the War Office and Navy in coming up with plans to send Germans from East Africa to be housed with farmers in South-West Africa, this transport being relatively easy and their accommodation costing little to the Crown. However, these plans were never fully realised, but with a respectable bulk of the German administration remaining in South-West Africa during the war, paroled civilians and interned prisoners of war in the former colony benefited from their political influence and fund raising.⁵⁷

This decision not to intern Seitz was surprising: he had after all been the leader of the German military efforts in the region, and the British were considering trying him for human rights abuses in a post-war war crimes trial. The main reason for not bringing Seitz to trial immediately was the threat of reprisal against British officers in Germany, and the War Office reasoned that there was no reason to conduct a hasty trial now, when there would be plenty of time after a British victory to try him as they pleased.⁵⁸ One other reason for his lenient treatment may have been his status with the Auswärtiges Amt. The German government was keen to get Seitz back to Germany, and on a number of occasions it offered man for man exchanges with captured British officers. It is not clear if holding Seitz in seemingly comfortable captivity helped improve the lot of British officers in Germany is unclear. What is clear, however, is that Seitz was initially scheduled for repatriation but was discovered attempting to smuggle a large number of diamonds out of the country.⁵⁹ Whether these were for personal gain or to protect German assets, it put an end to any idea of Seitz being allowed

⁵⁵ BA, R67/1638, Bericht 51, 4th December 1915.

⁵⁶ TNA, FO383/286, 227809, Telegram to Governor of South Africa, 20th November 1917.

⁵⁷ This was abandoned in favour of sending civilians from German East Africa to Australia, partly due to South African resistance. The policy of sending internees to Australia was agreed on but never implemented due to the Armistice.

⁵⁸ TNA, FO383/168, 97578, Report of Commission of Enquiry into the treatment of PoWs by the German Protectorate Authorities during the late hostilities, 22nd May 1916.

⁵⁹ TNA, FO383/171, 924, Buxton to the War Office, 1st January 1916. According to Sydney Buxton (Governor-General of South-Africa), Seitz had around £160,000 worth of diamonds.

out of German South-West Africa and the British government would no longer entertain any exchange proposals for this accused 'swindler'.⁶⁰

As Anne Samson has shown, Louis Botha, the Prime Minister of South Africa, resisted calls during the war for deportation or internment of civilians in South-West Africa for fear of the white population being overwhelmed and outnumbered by the black, making any uprisings in the unstable colony more difficult to suppress.⁶¹ This fear extended to how South Africa fought the war: the Union of South Africa government refused offers from black troops to fight in the takeover of German South-West Africa but did enrol between 23,000 and 24,000 non-white labourers for service in building railways and in transport work there.⁶² There were still a number of transfers of civilians into internment in South Africa during the war and the comparison between their perceived maltreatment and that of not only the Boers in the previous war, but also of black workers in diamond mines, was not lost on them.⁶³ In 1918, there were around 12,000 Germans still living in South-West Africa, but around half of them were deported later that year.

Similar to the other colonies, German East Africa was initially felt to be 'much too near to be dangerous. Just a handful of comrades who spoke German, over the border as it were... So nobody worried.'⁶⁴ However, hostilities there would last beyond the armistice in Europe. The guerrilla warfare in East Africa is the most extensively covered aspect of the war in Africa, and overshadows the prisoner narrative. Lettow-Vorbeck was able to return to Berlin in 1919 *im Felde unbesiegt*, and was used as a prime example of German military genius. However, the reality was quite different. Lettow-Vorbeck could claim to have diverted, through his guerrilla campaign, valuable manpower and resources that the British could have used to focus on Europe, but in protecting the colony, he failed. The key strategic points in German East Africa were quickly taken and although Lettow-Vorbeck's skirmishes, led from within Portuguese territory, were an annoyance, they were never going to result in a retaking of the colony.

⁶⁰ TNA, FO383/77, 155626, 22nd October 1915. Horace Rumbold memorandum.

⁶¹ Samson, *World War I in Africa*, p. 85.

⁶² Solomon T. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, (Originally published by P. S. King, London, 1916), University of Botswana, Electronic texts, Chapter 20. <http://www.thuto.org/ubh/etext/nlisa/nl20.htm>.

⁶³ The *Kölnische Zeitung*, in September 1915, likened the entrance to the camp at Robert Heights in South Africa, with its corrugated iron and barbed-wire façade to the camps for 'black' diamond mine workers. BA, R67/1365, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 'Das Lager Robertshoogte bei Pretoria', 30th September 1915.

⁶⁴ Paice, *Tip and Run*, p. 14.

The development by both sets of belligerents of the myth of Lettow-Vorbeck as an honourable fighter who gave the British a good chase lasted until well after the Second World War and still resonates today. This feting of Lettow-Vorbeck by the British in the inter-war years and his willingness to participate in it disillusioned some of the lower rank soldiers who had served with him in Africa; 'Have we forgotten that the British and their Allies have stolen our colonies and property.[?] We Germans abroad have who fought with every means available for the recovery of our colonies have been stabbed in the back'⁶⁵ Lettow-Vorbeck's code of honour as a warrior in the nineteenth century tradition was central to this myth and his treatment as a prisoner in 1918, while not completely driven by ideals of honour, reflected this.⁶⁶

Heinrich Schnee as governor of German East Africa initially opposed Lettow-Vorbeck's strategy, and favoured a conciliatory approach towards the British. But, once Lettow-Vorbeck forced his hand through military action, Schnee enthusiastically threw his lot in with the army and enjoyed the fruits of the legend of being undefeated in the field (in the inter-war period). Schnee's internment was brief: he was merely held in transition 'camps' in late 1918 until he could triumphantly march with Lettow-Vorbeck through Berlin in March 1919.

Keeping track of prisoners from East Africa is a major headache for the historian. The movement of prisoners was very fluid and would have been even more so until the armistice ended British plans to transfer to Australia those who had been captured and sent to India. Initial captives were sent to Cairo for internment, where the numbers swelled to around 1,300.⁶⁷ Some of the officers were then transferred either to Malta, to join the 1,000 prisoners from various parts of the British Empire and the Mesopotamia front who were held there, or sent on for internment in Britain itself. In Malta the main camp was Verdala with the Red Cross estimating around 700 inmates there in February 1917.⁶⁸ Egypt was also a major transport destination for prisoners from German East Africa. In Egypt the main camp was Sidi Bishr in

⁶⁵ 'Haben wir vergessen, dass die Engländer und Alliierten unsere Kolonien stahlen und unser Eigentum.[?] Uns Auslandsdeutschen, die wir mit allen Mitteln in Wort und Schrift für die Rückgewinnung unserer Kolonien kämpfen, wird damit in den Rücken gefallen.' BA, R8023/666, Karl Müller to Heinrich Schnee, 9th December 1930. Müller who had lived twenty one years in German South-West Africa, was outraged that Lettow-Vorbeck was attending a banquet in his honour in London; 'Hätte der französische General Mack Mahon [sic] dies nach 1870/71 wohl auch getan?' (Would the French General MacMahon have done the same after 1870/71?)

⁶⁶ To his credit Lettow-Vorbeck appointed Askari to NCO positions and protested when they were not treated with the same respect as white officers. Samson, *World War I in Africa*, p. 229.

⁶⁷ Hermann Röseler, 'Bilder aus englischer Gefangenschaft im deutsch-ostafrikanischen Kolonialgebiet, in Ägypten und in England', in *In Feindeshand*, p. 105.

⁶⁸ BA, R67/1333, Bericht 85, 3rd February, 1917.

Alexandria, although a number were interned in the predominantly Turkish camp at Ras el-Tin, also in Alexandria (Map 1, no. 45).⁶⁹ Sidi Bishr was divided into two camps, one civilian and one military. The civilian camp was small and not strictly civilian in nature as it held fifty officers and eleven colonial officials from German East Africa. In comparison to Ahmednagar (India) there were fewer complaints from these camps, as the inmates found the climate to be suitable for Europeans who had spent long periods in the tropics.⁷⁰

India accepted a large influx of prisoners from East Africa. Due to a rolling repatriation system in place in India and the transfer of prisoners in and out of the country, it is difficult to establish exactly how many prisoners spent time interned in India over the course of the war. Ahmednagar camp, a former British army barracks, was originally opened to house prisoners who were in India at the beginning of the war. By 1917 the camp population was up to 1,621 as the camp accepted prisoners from the East African front.⁷¹ Ahmednagar was the biggest camp in India and although not exclusively for German East Africans, they made up the bulk of the camp population.⁷² The camp was divided into officer, rank and file, and civilian areas. The camp buildings for officers and civilians were all made out of stone, whereas those for the rank and file varied between stone and tin. The camp came to resemble a village, albeit without women, much like Ruhleben camp as discussed by Stibbe.

A civilian camp, purpose-built for women and children, was established in Belgaum, India (Map 1, no. 81).⁷³ It was not initially designed to be a permanent camp, just one where women could stay while they awaited repatriation to Germany. Restrictions due to the blockade, German unrestricted submarine warfare and the Navy's need to divert ships to other aspects of fighting the war severely limited Allied shipping and the repatriation of women was interrupted.⁷⁴ Moreover many of the women protested at the thought of having to take the arduous trip back to Germany, with their children, but without their husbands and without any prospects once they arrived back in the Fatherland. These two factors forced a rethink in strategy and

⁶⁹ BA, R67/1369, Bericht 62, 24th June, 1916.

⁷⁰ BA, R67/1612, Bericht 97, 13th October, 1917.

⁷¹ TNA, FO383/277, 245755, Red Cross booklet on Camps in India, 31st December 1917. The booklet showed 850 in camp A and 362 in Camp B, however, no mention was made of camp C.

⁷² TNA, FO383/347, 12638, Swiss Consul Report, 4th September 1917

⁷³ In present day Karnataka state in South-West India.

⁷⁴ TNA, FO383/277, 245755, Red Cross booklet on Camps in India, 31st December 1917. The Red Cross reported 214 inmates at Belgaum, including seventy-five women and eighty-two children.

although requests for husbands to be transferred to Belgium to be with their wives were refused, easier communication between the two camps was opened.

A camp at Blantyre in Nyasaland (Malawi, Map 1, no. 72) was also opened up to deal with civilians, again mainly women.⁷⁵ Women in the colonies according to British thinking needed to be removed to impress upon the Germans and indigenous population alike that the colonies had been lost and now belonged to the British.⁷⁶ How to manage these women and children became a problem when they could no longer be easily shipped back to Germany. South Africa was willing to accept women and children from East Africa but only on a temporary basis. Plans to send them to Australia were tabled as the best answer to the problem, but the Foreign Office in early 1918 was attempting to negotiate an exchange of these civilians for British civilians who were kept in Belgium and it was deemed inadvisable to move them so far away. Belgium was unpopular and was rightly criticised by the German government for its unsuitable climate, but for the time being there was nowhere else to send them.⁷⁷

The surrender on 25th November 1918 and brief spell in captivity of Lettow-Vorbeck's army was notable for the lack of animosity on the British side towards them.⁷⁸ Schnee and Lettow-Vorbeck, on surrender, were sent to Dar es Salaam where they were housed in European-style accommodation and in the interests of maintaining European prestige were allowed to march with their men as far as the docks fully armed.⁷⁹ The British authorities were worried about how humiliating fellow whites might affect the future running of the new territory in their hands. This only further helped reinforce in Schnee and the rest of the German troops' minds that they had indeed been undefeated in the field and only the cessation of hostilities in Europe had forced them to give up.

⁷⁵ TNA, FO383/204, 249697, 11th December 1916, Telegram from the governor of Nyasaland stating twenty-five combatant and eight civilian males, fifty-five women and eighty children interned in Blantyre. The governor was expecting eighty more combatants to arrive and was requesting the removal of women and children to make space for them.

⁷⁶ TNA, FO383/430, Interdepartmental Conference on Repatriation, 8th February 1918. Comments from Mr Evans of the Admiralty.

⁷⁷ TNA, FO383/430, 10148, Harry Lambert to the Foreign Office, 17th January 1918.

⁷⁸ This can of course be partly attributed to the fact that the war in Europe was over at this stage.

⁷⁹ TNA, WO158/907, General van Deventer Telegram to War Office, 6th December 1918. Jaap van Deventer was also worried that given they had they acquired Lettow-Vorbeck's surrender through a 'judicious mixture of firmness and bluff' it would be unwise to demand that Lettow-Vorbeck and his men were ipso facto prisoners of war. This had not been a worry for the British in Cameroon who felt that black troops in Cameroon were less likely to revolt against the imposition of a new colonial ruler.

As mentioned, Australia and New Zealand were anxious to use the war as an opportunity to take over Germany's colonies and create a buffer zone that would protect the two countries from a feared attack by the Japanese. They reached an agreement whereby Australia would take New Guinea and New Zealand would take Samoa. *The Daily Telegraph*, in September 1914, outlined the main goal in capturing the German South Pacific colonies for Britain: 'As a matter of fact, but for one thing, we might have waited until the end of the war before bothering about either Samoa or German New Guinea [...] but the important point about the capture, so far as the war is concerned, is that the New Guinea wireless will now come under British control.'⁸⁰ As in the capture of Togo, the disrupting German communications was a key part of strategy. In Australia and New Zealand, too, the Foreign Office retained primacy over prison camp management, causing tension between both Dominion governments and their increasingly anti-German citizens. The camps run in mainland Australia were maintained by the government but those in New Guinea came under the direct control of the occupying Australian army.⁸¹ New Zealand took over Samoa and transported most of its Germans inhabitants out of the colony.⁸²

With the agreement with New Zealand in place, Australia moved into New Guinea and on to the island of Nauru (part of the German Marshall Islands protectorate, map 2, no. 107). The entire Australian fleet was mobilised to take over New Guinea.⁸³ Even though they had overwhelming numbers, the Australians met some initial resistance from the Germans who had mobilised troops to protect the island. This gave the Germans more bargaining leverage in the surrender than their numbers should have permitted. Its terms would become important later on when disputes over evacuations and property rights arose. The system set up in these areas resembled the situation in South-West Africa, albeit with the absence of prisoner of war camps. As in Togo there was no major military presence in these colonies and to make up for the initial lack of Australian troops, German police were allowed to operate as usual in the more remote areas of the colony. Apart from the arrests of the chief of police and a few others

⁸⁰ BA, R1001/2611, Krieg in Deutsch-Neuguinea 1914 – 1918. *The Daily Telegraph*, 14th September 1914.

⁸¹ The phosphate rich island of Nauru was almost de facto controlled by the Pacific Phosphate Company, a British trading concern. Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 40.

⁸² See Francis, *To be Truly British*, pp. 113-153.

⁸³ Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 23

who had put up resistance, the terms of the surrender allowed for other police in the interests of security, especially in outlying areas, to remain at their posts.⁸⁴

Although most of the Germans were essentially free on parole, they were not allowed to leave New Guinea and their correspondence with the outside world was restricted. German was no longer used as the official language of the colony, and there were a number of incidents of Germans being beaten by Australian soldiers. It was naturally difficult for a German who had been treated in this way to seek redress through the Australian courts that were established. There were periods when the administrators of the colony failed to maintain discipline among the occupying troops. In 1915, in response to fears that the German settlers were planning to acquire arms, all Germans including women and children were rounded up into concentration camps, and almost all Germans were removed from the colony and sent to Australia by November 1915.⁸⁵

Eduard Haber, the Deputy Governor of New Guinea⁸⁶, was initially taken to Australia and from there deported to Germany via the United States in January 1915. Haber used his trip through the United States to speak to various newspapers and publicise the Germans' plight in New Guinea. Haber was an honourable soldier but once back in Germany, and allured by the chance to return to the fighting, very much regretted having given his parole to the Australians as part of the surrender terms.⁸⁷ Writing to the Auswärtiges Amt in March 1915 he noted, 'my desire is and was to remain fully at the disposal of the German Imperial authorities.'⁸⁸ A man of his word, Haber proposed the idea of a parole exchange. On the outbreak of war he had captured the Australian Lieutenant General Wylde, who accepted Haber's offer of parole. Haber now proposed that if his parole were nullified he would in turn rescind Wylde's (who was no longer on German territory). William Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, refused on the grounds that there was 'considerable doubt as to Dr Haber's authority to bind his government by

⁸⁴ TNA, FO383/50, 7871, New Guinea Surrender Terms, 21st January 1915.

⁸⁵ Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 40. This removal of Germans also helped in the administration of the colony. The Administrator at Nauru noted that 'since the departure of these German subjects, I am happy to state the change of attitude of the natives has been marked.' TNA, FO383/175, 192220, 7th September 1916, Office of the Administrator of Nauru, 7th February 1916.

⁸⁶ He was filling in for Albert Hahl who had been on sick leave in Germany since 1913.

⁸⁷ Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 275.

⁸⁸ 'Mein Wunsch war und ist natürlich der kaiserlichen Regierung unbeschränkt zur Verfügung zu stehen.' BA, R1001/2638, Krieg in Deutsch-Neuguinea 1914 – 1918. Haber to the Auswärtiges Amt, 29th March 1915.

accepting a surrender of Lieut. General Wylde's parole.⁸⁹ Helmuth von Moltke, now in the role of *stellvertretender Chef des Generalstabes der Armee* (Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Army), was also unconvinced of the success of the plan, arguing that the British often referred to Wylde as a 'damned old fool' and it served British interests better to keep Haber on parole than release Wylde. In the end, von Moltke argued, 'Whoever gives their word of honour must accept the consequences',⁹⁰ meaning Haber's experience of the war conformed to Speed's 'liberal tradition' and the gravity with which giving parole was treated. However, the following year the German government, in a Note Verbale to the Foreign Office, stated that any parole given by a German civilian would 'be regarded as incompatible with his military duties and will therefore have no effect on the fulfilment of these duties.'⁹¹ The example set by Haber would not be repeated, signifying the shift towards total warfare.

Samoa was the first German colony to fall to another power after New Zealand's rapid takeover of the island. New Zealand was also the first British Dominion to intern civilians (August 1914). Curiously, the fall of Samoa was initially welcomed by the German business men who had been operating there. They felt that New Zealand administration would benefit the colony due to New Zealand's proximity, opening new markets and enabling a closer home country – colony cooperation that had not existed under German rule.⁹² This optimism soon turned to despair as almost immediately after the occupation German businesses were forbidden to import or export, the German Mark was replaced by the Sterling under the newly established bank of New Zealand and most of the Germans were deported to camps in New Zealand.

The Germans left on parole in Samoa were much more restricted than those in New Guinea and their situation was a far cry from the conditions of those in South-West Africa. There were many worrying incidents of alcohol-influenced attacks on German residents and their servants. These attacks were perhaps overshadowed by attacks on the Chinese coolies who, in contradiction to 'race patriotism',⁹³ were imported to work on the island.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ BA, R1001/2638, William Hughes to the US Consul General in Australia, 13th January 1915.

⁹⁰ 'Wer das Ehrenwort gibt, muß die Folgen tragen.' BA, R1001/2638, Helmuth von Moltke to the Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes, 11th April 1915.

⁹¹ TNA, CO323/719, 9428, 28th February 1916. Note Verbale from the German Government.

⁹² Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 154.

⁹³ Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 330.

There were two camps in New Zealand for prisoners from Samoa, one at Motuihi, off the coast of Auckland (Map 2, no. 105a), and the other on Somes Island in Wellington Bay (Map 2, no. 105). Conditions on Somes Island were terrible. The barracks were wooden, damp, unheated and dirty. The regime in the camps was also harsh with, as at Ahmednagar, frequent cases of solitary confinement for minor infringements. In contrast to complaints about the adverse conditions of tropical weather in other camps in this study, the inmates in New Zealand frequently complained about the intolerable cold and rain that was totally unsuitable for those who had spent years in the hot weather of Samoa. The former Governor Erich Schultz's complaints highlight one major aspect of the camps in New Zealand: officers and rank and file were not being treated altogether differently.⁹⁵ The main difference was that officers were interned in the slightly more climatically suitable Motuihi, while the rank and file were on the wetter Somes Island.⁹⁶

Internment in Japan, (along with French West Africa) will be looked at in more detail in chapter six. However, to complete the survey of internment in the German colonies a look at the Kiaochow Bay concession in China and the German Pacific islands north of the equator is necessary.

The siege of Tsingtao ended in victory for the Japanese, who acquired a strategic new territory and around 4,800 combatant prisoners. Unlike the British, the Japanese never interned civilians during the war even in Japan itself, much to Britain's consternation. In Germany, on the outbreak of war, approximately eighty Japanese civilians were interned, but after Japanese protests they were released. Japan also refused to agree to exchange its prisoners for British or French prisoners in German hands, a point which understandably caused further tension between the partners in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

The military prisoners in Japan were held in twelve camps which were spread throughout three of the four main islands of the country.⁹⁷ The camps varied from purpose-built wood and

⁹⁴ Germany had recruited many Chinese labourers to the island and the New Zealand government continued this tradition, leading to negative press reports about the dangers this posed to 'white' New Zealand. Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 220.

⁹⁵ Erich Schultz was the only German governor apart from Alfred von Meyer-Waldeck, from Tsingtao, who actually spent whole war in internment.

⁹⁶ TNA, FO383/239, 148780, US Consul Report on Somes Island, 31st July 1916. The US consul reported 215 Germans were interned on Somes Island, all of whom wished to be transferred to Motuihi where the weather and camp buildings were reportedly better.

⁹⁷ Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku; no prisoners were held on Hokkaido.

brick barracks to temple grounds. The largest was Bando, which was built in 1916 and housed inmates from three previous camps, to total around 1,100 prisoners; and the smallest was Shizuoka, which housed 108. Japan's experience of housing 40,000 Russian prisoners of war in 1904-05 meant it was prepared structurally for dealing with captives.⁹⁸ The camps as elsewhere were initially not without teething problems: the Germans were not accustomed to the food, conditions and having to take orders from what they perceived to be a 'lesser race'. However, there were no major incidents of violence or deprivation as occurred in other camps. With the opening of the purpose built Bando, internment in Japan acquired a reputation for prisoner care that was unparalleled in twentieth century wartime captivity.⁹⁹ Meyer-Waldeck, on his arrival in Japan, publicly expressed his gratitude to the Japanese for their good sense in allowing German officers to keep their swords and praised the Japanese army for putting up a good fight.¹⁰⁰ The camps in Japan, especially Bando, became an arena for cultural exchange between the German prisoners and not just their guards but also the wider Japanese public and are the most well-known camps in the extra-European theatre of the First World War.

Like Japan, Britain also had recent experience of dealing with large numbers of captives, as they had interned around 150,000 Boer civilians and a similar number of black Africans during the war in South Africa. Britain's policy of interning all German civilians within the Empire and any of those picked up by the navy led to the creation of a global integrated camp network. The camp system, with its reliance on the navy to transport prisoners from location to location, was not a new concept but was much more developed during the First World War than in previous conflicts.¹⁰¹ The camp network was as vast as the British Empire itself. It centred on four main hubs; Britain, Australia, South Africa and Canada. There were camps in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago which took in any German civilians in the Caribbean, Trinidad housing around fifty inmates.¹⁰² As well as being holding centres for prisoners destined for the more permanent settlements in Canada, they were used to hold prisoners who had been captured at

⁹⁸ For internment during the Russo-Japanese War see, Checkland, *Humanitarianism and the Emperor's Japan*, Chapter Four.

⁹⁹ Yoshiya Makita, 'The Alchemy of Humanitarianism: The First World War, the Japanese Red Cross and the Creation of an International Public Health Order', in *First World War Studies*, 5, 1 (2014), pp. 117-129, p. 122.

¹⁰⁰ *The Japan Times*, 20th November 1914. Public praise of the Japanese may also have been a barb at the British, who the Germans deemed to have taken a backseat in the siege due to cowardice.

¹⁰¹ The navy usually did not allow prisoners on their own ships, but approved chartered vessels and dictated what routes those ships could follow.

¹⁰² BA, R67/313, Dominions US reports. US consul inspection 2nd November 1916.

sea, either from U-Boats or other ships, before they were again moved on to Canada or Britain. U-Boat crews were the most problematic and due to the bitter nature of unrestricted warfare, they were often denied POW status and held as criminals to be tried by court martial.¹⁰³

The initial strategy at the outset of war was a policy designed to remove German civilians from their colonies and from the British ones and repatriate them to Germany. Through their transportation the German prisoners came into contact with one another, for example those captured in Togo sharing ships with those from Cameroon and West Africa. Although coming from different colonial backgrounds, prisoners were able to find common cause in what they felt was their mistreatment under international law, as shown by protests and petitions sent to the Foreign Office.

Within Europe, the boredom and inactivity of long years in internment could lead to 'barbed wire disease', which became a legitimate reason for internment in Switzerland.¹⁰⁴ In addition, prisoners in the extra-European theatre were also affected by conditions particular to tropical climates.¹⁰⁵ The camp doctor in Ahmednagar argued that there were major differences between internment in Europe and in the colonies: 'Life behind the wire without any comforts, separated from one's relatives and in anxiety about the future has a very different effect upon one's health in the tropics than it would at home.'¹⁰⁶ The nineteenth century idea of the adverse effects of the colonial climate on Europeans prominently featured in camp complaints. The German government often called for the repatriation of its citizens, citing the unsuitability of the climate as the main reason. In some cases such as that of Ludovica Schultze in Samoa, the diagnosis of *neurasthesia tropica* was grounds enough for repatriation to Germany, or removal to Europe.¹⁰⁷ The *Institut für Tropenkrankheiten* (Institute for Tropical Diseases) in

¹⁰³ The Admiralty strongly protested when in June 1918 British representatives negotiated an exchange agreement for prisoner exchanges that included submarine captains. David Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918* (Penguin, London, 2012), p. 324.

¹⁰⁴ Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, p. 224. Sufferers of the disease exhibited mood swings, irritability, failure of memory and difficulty in concentrating, symptoms that would today fall under post-traumatic stress disorder.

¹⁰⁵ C.E. Callwell's influential book, 'Small Wars' described colonial warfare as being as much a war against nature as against men. C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, Third Edition (Harrison and Sons, London, 1906), p. 57.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, FO383/164, 218210, Dr H. Finck's report on Ahmednagar, 31st October, 1916.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, FO383/58, 178838, Medical report of Dr Zieschank, German Doctor in Samoa, 26th November 1915. Neurasthesia Tropica was a disease that affected Europeans through long exposure in the colonies. Frau Schultze had been working in Samoa as a teacher for around twenty-two years and the doctor considered it necessary for her to be allowed to leave Samoa as soon as possible.

Hamburg wrote to the RKA listing the ill effects of living in internment for extended periods of time on the East African coast. According to the institute, not only were diseases such as malaria and Blackwater fever common in the area; the climate itself was damaging to north-Europeans. They believed that the adverse climate caused sleeplessness with negative mental effects, and was particularly damaging for women as it disturbed menstrual cycles, leading to anaemia. In children, the climate apparently caused a loss of appetite hampering their development. The institute concluded; 'A long period, especially over years, of continuous residence on the German East African coast is extremely unhealthy, even life-threatening, for North Europeans.' If they were not to be allowed to return to Germany, the institute argued that families should at least be allowed to travel to the cooler climes of the mountains once a year to recover their strength.¹⁰⁸

Although the Red Cross report noted that Ahmednagar was one of the most suitable places in India for internment camps, the climate remained the main point of complaint from the inmates and German government alike. A Note Verbale from the German government stated, 'To shut up Europeans, when not thereto necessary, in a compact prisoners camp in a tropical place like Ahmednagar is a measure of unwarranted rigour and cruelty.'¹⁰⁹ There was an outbreak of bubonic plague in the camp in November 1916. The disease was isolated and contained but only provided Germany with further evidence of the unsuitability of the area for Europeans. The British did not see the camp as a permanent fixture and discussed various plans as to what do with these prisoners of war.¹¹⁰ Once the objective had been completed of evacuating prisoners from the immediate war theatre, it was then hoped to implement plans to remove prisoners from India. In addition to problems of climate India, German prisoners of war were not popular among the local British population who saw them as a threat to the peace and stability of the region. The Foreign Office certainly took climate into consideration when moving prisoners to other camps with repatriation, internment in South Africa or Australia being the most widely discussed options.

¹⁰⁸ 'Ein längerer, insbesondere über Jahre sich erstreckender ununterbrochener Aufenthalt an der deutsch-ostafrikanischen Küste ist für die Nordeuropäer durchaus unzutraglich und im hohen Grade gesundheits-, ja lebensgefährlich.' BA, R1001/881, Behandlung deutscher Kriegsgefangener aus Deutsch-Ostafrika in Gefangenenlagern und deren Heimschaffung, 1915 – 1925. Institut für Tropenkrankheiten Hamburg to the RKA, 4th March, 1918. Signed by Professor Nocht the director of the institute.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, FO383/277, 214520, 8th November, 1917. Note Verbale from German Government.

¹¹⁰ Achilles in his memoirs referred to it as a 'mixed transit-camp'. *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, p. 1.

The transfer of modern European camp norms to the extra-European camp system is highlighted in the example Okanjande in German South-West Africa. Barbed wire was such an enduring symbol of the war and internment that prisoner of war societies in the inter-war period wore pieces of the twisted metal on their lapels as a badge of membership. It was not just among prisoners that barbed wire had the 'artistic role of evoking the monstrous sublimity of the forces of destruction liberated by modern war',¹¹¹ but it came to symbolise the war as a whole. Okanjande, however, was surrounded not by barbed wire but by thorn trees, a material that evoked only too strongly among the German inhabitants memories of a different war; the Herero war of the previous decade.¹¹²

The brutality of treatment and the high death rates of the Herero in internment will not be discussed here, but the symbolism was not lost on the German inmates who were now corralled behind the same barrier that they had used to incarcerate the Herero.¹¹³ Using the same material that enclosed animals or indigenous farmers' *Kraals*¹¹⁴ to intern prisoners was seen by prisoners as calculated to humiliate the Germans in the eyes of the indigenous population. The thorn tree fences were deemed to be unhygienic by the prisoners, who complained that the rubbish from the camp was building up in the thorns. They also prevented the prisoners from enjoying the health benefits of a strong breeze. However, the complaints also referred back to the lack of European-style internment for the prisoners. Being interned behind bushes and in tents was not a treatment befitting European soldiers. George Murphy of the United States Consul, in his report on Aus and Okanjande agreed that the bushes should be removed. He considered they provided no real obstacle to escape and the bush-barrier 'unnecessarily humiliates them in the eyes of the natives.'¹¹⁵ If prisoners on the Western Front

¹¹¹ Olivier Razac, *Barbed Wire, A Political History* (Profile Books, London, 2002), p. 52.

¹¹² TNA, FO383/168, 113853, US Consul report on internment camps in South-West Africa, 13th June 1916. Thorn trees were used throughout the German and British colonies in Africa to fence off livestock. They provided a readily available alternative to barbed-wire. The main complaint from the camp was that the inmates wanted the removal of the bushes and in accordance with what they felt were European norms, the installation of barbed-wire fencing around the camp perimeter. The Germans had established three small concentration camps at Okanjande in 1905 which housed 1,500 Herero. Olusoga, and Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust*, p. 171.

¹¹³ See: Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, pp. 70-90.

¹¹⁴ In the correspondence the word *Kraal*, and the connotation that it was meant for animals or indigenous peoples, was explicitly used to refer to the prison camp, differentiating it from *Laager* which was used for white encampments. I am grateful to Anne Samson for this information.

¹¹⁵ TNA, FO383/168, 113853, US Consul report on internment camps in South-West Africa, 13th June 1916.

were provided the luxury of barbed wire, then those Germans who fought in the colonies should be treated no differently.

Of all the prisoners looked at here, those from German East Africa were most mobile, with some travelling from East Africa, to India, on to South Africa, and then to Britain before finally being repatriated through the Netherlands. The Union of South Africa government became less willing to hold prisoners as the war dragged on, and the Admiralty would not allow the transportation of prisoners through the Suez Canal. Travel constraints became problematic in exchange negotiations. At the various Hague meetings that were attended by Britain and Germany agreements on prisoner exchanges were discussed. It was agreed that all civilians over forty-five years old would be either sent back to their home country or interned in a neutral country, in Switzerland or the Netherlands. The British were clear that these agreements would not be extended to those prisoners held outside the United Kingdom, so prisoners in the Dominions and other parts of the Empire were denied a chance of a return to Europe.

The numbers of prisoners of war were also not entirely equal. Although, the British Empire as whole held more prisoners and internees than Germany, in Europe Germany held more.¹¹⁶ Hence, the German proposal of a man for man exchange was rejected, with the British trying to push for an all-out exchange which would have meant roughly one German for every four British. The proposals stalled, but as the British feared any reprisals that might have been exacted against their civilians in Belgium, they postponed plans to move all German East Africans to Australia.¹¹⁷ Medical corps personnel were in fact exchanged, leading to one example of a former colonial prisoner almost returning to battle: Max Zupitza, former head of the medical corps in German South-West Africa, who had been repatriated from Togo through an exchange agreement in 1916. Zupitza then masterminded a plan to send supplies to Lettow-

¹¹⁶ Heather Jones amalgamates figures from various different sources and shows anywhere from 175,000 to 360,000 (Alon Rachamimov's estimation which is at odds with others) British prisoners in Germany during the war and around 306,000 to 328,000 German prisoners captured by Britain. Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War*, pp. 20-22. The exact number of civilian internees is difficult to ascertain but runs into several hundred thousand. Stibbe, 'Civilian Internment and Civilian Internees In Europe, 1914-1920', in Stibbe (ed), *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, p. 49.

¹¹⁷ TNA, FO383/430, 10148, Harry Lambert to the Foreign Office, 17th January 1918.

Vorbeck's troops by airship. The plan was not perfectly thought out, however, and failed, forcing him and his crew to return home.¹¹⁸

As the war continued, the British military and the navy saw the opportunity not just to remove Germans from the former German colonies, but also from all parts of the Empire where their presence might prove problematic in the future, resulting in, for example, the shipping of prisoners from Bermuda to Canada.¹¹⁹ The largest numbers of prisoners on the move found themselves in Australia. With China's entry into the war, the civilian internment camp on St John's Island in Hong Kong was closed down and captives there, along with the 3,000 Germans who had been living in China, were sent to Australia. The camps in Australia swelled in number, with new additions from Asia coming at regular intervals. In addition to the Chinese Germans, captives from Singapore, Borneo and Ceylon followed.¹²⁰

In June 1918 the Foreign Office, for the purpose of prisoner exchange, undertook a survey to establish exactly how many civilian prisoners of war Britain had and where they were being kept. They found that there were 32,000 civilian prisoners in total with 11,000 of them being held outside Britain and dotted across the Empire.¹²¹ These figures do not however convey an accurate sense of the total number of prisoners that were taken over the course of the war. The mobility of prisoners, as seen throughout this chapter was varied. Some prisoners were only interned for a short time in 1914 and then sent back to Germany, while others, such as those in Samoa, would have to spend the duration of the war in virtual isolation on Somes Island. The movement of prisoners also caused logistical problems once the war ended. Were these displaced Germans to be brought back to Germany? How would property rights in the former colonies be dealt with? These questions will be dealt with in more detail in chapter seven. The repatriation effort at the end of the war was a large scale shipping operation that had to be paid out of the Reich's diminished coffers. The lack of available vessels or the funds

¹¹⁸ Paice, *Tip and Run*, pp. 347-350.

¹¹⁹ ICRC, C G1 A 20-17, Rapports de la commission suisse sur ses visites de camps de prisonniers allemands aux Etats-Unis, 21st November 1917- 8th January 1918. Inspektion des Kriegsgefangenenlagern auf Ports Island, Bermuda am 1., 2., 5. Und 8. Januar 1918.

¹²⁰ There were three camps in Ceylon, Colombo, Ragama and Dyatalawa (Map 1 and 2, nos. 84, 84a and 84b)

¹²¹ TNA, FO383/416 198294, 29th June 1918, memorandum. Stibbe gives a figure of 36,000 German and 11,000 Austro-Hungarian civilian internees being held in the British Empire. Stibbe, *Civilian Internment and Civilian Internees in Europe, 1914-1920*, in Stibbe, *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, p. 73.

to finance them and wrangling between the Allies meant that some prisoners would have to spend an extra year in captivity before they were finally shipped home.

Because of the nature of German colonialism with its focus on the spread of business and enterprise and its lack of military preparedness, categorising prisoners was a difficult task. Germans in the colonies often had dual or triple identities: the Basel missionaries, for example, could be identified as priests, businessmen, or soldiers depending on the context. National identities were not as readily defined; colonisers geographically detached from mainland Germany sought support and trading contacts from the more proximate British Empire. Thus, in the Union of South Africa, there were examples of Germans, once identified as such, having to apply to Berlin for passports to ensure that they would receive legal benefits and protection from their forgotten homeland.¹²²

Captivity provided a chance for the Germans in the colonies to reach out and meet one another. The South-West Africans eagerly volunteered to accept and support their counterparts from the East. The camps themselves provided a meeting ground for Germans from various backgrounds. Those who were permanent residents in India found themselves incarcerated with Germans from Africa and the Middle-East. These transnational, cross-border meetings must surely have cemented a common cause between the Germans overseas. Once back in Germany, memories of the period of incarceration during the war influenced how the future revisionist aims for the colonies took shape. How the captives were treated will be the subject of the following chapters.

¹²² TNA, FO383/204, 253423, US Consul Report on Pietermaritzburg, 15th December 1916.

Chapter Three: Rum, Solitary and the Lash: Violence against Prisoners from the German Colonies

Recent work on the treatment of prisoners in the First World War has deconstructed the long held image of just and humane treatment of captives during the war that was prevalent up until the early 1990's.¹ In colonial theatres of war, as Smith and Stucki pointed out for all the European colonial powers, fighting an enemy categorised as 'uncivilised' lowered the barrier to more extreme measures of warfare.² While German settlers were undoubtedly members of the colonial elite, Germany's invasion of Belgium and the ensuing atrocities committed by German troops gave the British grounds for referring to their fellow Europeans as also being at the level of uncivilised 'barbarians'.³ Here we address the question of violence against prisoners of war and civilian internees from the German colonies and how the image of colonial violence against prisoners came to exemplify the racial role reversal that took place through the internment of white Europeans in the colonial world. While looking at incidents from all across the global camp network, this chapter will highlight some examples of actual and alleged violence against captives focusing on the camp administration on Somes Island, New Zealand, punishment policy in Ahmednagar, India, transportation of prisoners from Duala, Cameroon, rioting in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, and the public flogging at Rabaul, New Guinea (Map 2, no 106).

In assessing violence against military and civilian prisoners we will address four main questions. Firstly, this chapter will address the question of what forms violence took. Secondly, were public displays of violence against prisoners purposefully used as a tool for the takeover of the colonies? The final two questions are inter-connected, linked to the overall argument of this thesis, and will look at who or what was placing restraint on the uses of violence and how reactions to violence within the British Empire show the cohesion, or lack of cohesion,

¹ See chapter one.

² Smith, Stucki, 'Colonial Development of Concentration Camps', p. 419.

³ German outrages in Belgium were covered comprehensively in John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2001). The German violation of Belgian neutrality was the key justification for Britain in fighting the war, offering as, Isabel Hull summed up, a four-in-one reason for Britain to enter the war: security, self-interest, the principle of law and upholding Britain's public reputation. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 41.

between Britain and the Dominions. Did, as Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker put it, common cause and ethnic and cultural unity rally the Dominions?⁴

The 'short twentieth' century saw new forms of mechanised warfare and a further strengthening of extreme nationalist ideologies. The treatment of prisoners also changed radically; in one respect, with the foundation of international law through The Geneva and Hague Conventions, prisoners had more legal backing than before with regard to their treatment. International Law only applied to 'civilised' nations, however, meaning Germans could claim protection under it, whereas the unfortunate Herero in 1904-07 could not. On the other hand, hatreds that developed during the war ensured that the image of the prisoner as a noble enemy who deserved decent treatment was put to one side. The sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 and the reaction to it among camp guards and the general public, as the British Foreign Office records show, made life for German prisoners that much worse.⁵

A broad definition of violence can be explained through a joke in Slavoj Žižek's book on the term: a factory worker is suspected of stealing by his boss. So every day the boss has the security guards check the contents of the worker's wheelbarrow as he leaves the factory each evening. This continues for a few days and yet the boss can find no evidence of stealing, until the penny drops. What the worker is stealing is the wheelbarrows.⁶ What the joke highlights is that, in looking for the more explicit forms of violence in beatings, torture and other physical forms of maltreatment, it is often forgotten that the capture and confinement of prisoners is in itself a symbol of state violence. Captivity in warfare functions through the threat of violence, no matter how well treated the captives are. As Heather Jones says, to become a prisoner of war was to come under the control of systems of power based on physical force.⁷ However, while keeping this in mind, this chapter focuses on more explicit forms of violence, defined by Jones as the use or threat of physical force, both discriminate and indiscriminate, against a prisoner of war, by an enemy subject.⁸ It is difficult when researching the camps in Asia and Africa to distinguish between what were real cases of violence against prisoners and what were in fact lies, made up by prisoners in order, either to better their lot as captives, or to

⁴ Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *14-18 Understanding the Great War*, p. 97.

⁵ TNA, FO383/49, 63764, 21st May 1915. Requests from the Basel Mission to the Foreign Office relating to the treatment of their German missionaries.

⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Violence, Six Sideways Reflections* (Picador, New York, 2008), p. 1.

⁷ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

serve as anti-British propaganda. Nonetheless, violence was the key lens through which many prisoners from the former Reich colonies viewed their experience of internment.

The often sporadic nature of violence and the remoteness of some of the camps led to a lot of misinformation, either purposely or not, coming through to Berlin and then being fed on to London through neutral embassies. The following looks at some examples of abuses of prisoners, beginning with the often alcohol-fuelled physical punishment of prisoners by guards and then on to incidents of rioting. This will serve to highlight the perpetrators of violence, and show that violence was not limited to its use by custodians against prisoners; the examples used show violence from within the camp, including violence committed by the prisoners themselves.

The distance of the camps from Europe and from efficient postal routes often led to misinformation. The contemporary imagination of what life was like in the remote areas of the German and British Empires did not need much prompting to conjure up images of colonial violence in the camps. Even though accusations of abuse often turned out to be false, the British took them seriously enough to file official reports. For example, in June 1918, the Foreign Office received a Note Verbale from Germany asking about the alleged spearing to death by 'natives' of five German planters in New Guinea.⁹ This was a recurring theme in German complaints over the course of the war and was one which the British, for prestige reasons, seriously sought to limit. Although New Guinea was under direct Australian control (and Samoa was under New Zealand), it was the British who were accused of allowing the local population to attack Europeans and while these accusations often proved fraudulent, they played a central role in propaganda related to the colonies.

In Samoa the colonial recruitment policy of the New Zealand authorities created space for the abuse of German civilians.¹⁰ According to Erich Schultz, the new Administrator of Samoa, Robert Logan, addressed the Germans upon the takeover with the threat: 'You are prominent men of the colony, you have to suffer first, think what you Germans are doing in Belgium.'¹¹ Under the terms of the surrender, the majority of German civilians were allowed to remain on

⁹ TNA, FO383/441, 102837, New Guinea Death of Limberg, Hellwig, Weber, Schmidt and Mueller, 10th June, 1918. The author was unable to locate further archival sources on these alleged killings.

¹⁰ A fictional work, L.P. Leary's book *New Zealanders in Samoa*, makes reference to a 'Cockney Tommy' who 'made it a duty to thrash at least one German a week.' L.P. Leary, *New Zealanders in Samoa* (William Heinemann, London, 1918), p. 97.

¹¹ BA, R67/1339, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 'Die Besetzung Apias', 15th August, 1916.

parole.¹² Germans who lived outside the main settlements were even allowed to carry revolvers, to protect themselves rather than having a European family 'placed at the mercy of the Chinese'.¹³ This rule stayed in force until early 1918 when the New Zealand authorities placed more severe restrictions on the movement of Germans within the colony, resulting in civilians who had previously been on parole being sent to join the 'rough and undesirable elements, [...] middle-aged men of the working class'¹⁴ who had been interned on Somes Island immediately after the takeover of Samoa.¹⁵ Hermann Hiery has looked into the mal-administration of the colony in detail and pointed out one aspect that had direct consequences for German civilians on Samoa: alcohol abuse. The New Zealand office of military administration, in an effort to meet the demand for beer decided to draw supplies directly from one of the largest breweries in Australia, and Hiery claims that had the Guinness book of records existed during the war, the Samoa occupying force would claim the record for the smallest force with the largest capacity to drink.¹⁶ Needless to say, the effective management of the colony was not at the forefront of these troops' minds.

In late 1916 the Foreign Office commissioned a report to look into abuse of prisoners on Somes Island, the camp where most of the prisoners from Samoa had been sent. The commission sat for twenty-two days, interviewing 113 witnesses. The report found that there was systematic abuse by the guards, caused by the fact that the guards had 'not all been men fit to hold such positions.'¹⁷ The commission recommended that greater care needed to be taken in future and that a complete ban on alcohol, not only for the prisoners but also for the guards, should be enforced on the island.¹⁸ Indiscipline among the guards on Somes and among the occupying troops in Samoa caused problems throughout the war and cases of violence against prisoners at the hands of camp guards who took their own initiative was a continuing headache for the Foreign Office and one which the German government sought to exploit for propaganda purposes.

¹² Rules for civilians were set under the *British Military Occupation of Samoa, Proclamation number 30*, 28th April 1916.

¹³ TNA, WO95/54542, *Occupation of German Samoa by an Expeditionary Force from New Zealand* (Fisher Unwin, London, September 1915).

¹⁴ TNA, FO383/440, Treatment of POWs at Somes, report by H.G. Harrison, 112117, 29th August 1918.

¹⁵ TNA, FO383/434, 17236, 28th January 1918. Report on Somes Island dealing with 1915/1916.

¹⁶ Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 158.

¹⁷ TNA, FO383/440, 112117, Treatment of POWs at Somes, report by H.G. Harrison, 29th August 1918.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Samoa was not, however, the only place with alcohol problems; in New Guinea there was a similar situation. District judge Gustav Weber equated newspaper reports from Australia on the moral improvement of the Australian people with the fact that they had sent all the bad elements in Australian society to colonise New Guinea.¹⁹ Colonel F.B. Heritage, of the New Guinea administration, admitted that alcohol was a problem, but claimed that, due to a drought on the island, there was not enough drinking water and troops were resorting to alcoholic drinks to slake their thirst.²⁰ Roy Alexander, a British prisoner on board the German cruiser *Wolf*, sarcastically remarked that it was only when the *Wolf* captured a ship bound for Rabaul containing the island's liquor supply 'that Rabaul began to realise the full horrors of warfare [...] the prospects of a scarcity of booze were too terrible to contemplate.'²¹ Most problematic was not the fact that Australian soldiers were getting drunk, but that once intoxicated they were abusing the German and local populations.²² Cases of Germans being forced to sing the British national anthem and drink toasts to King George V, and more serious, looting and beating of German civilians and their servants were all reported to the British Foreign Office.²³

When faced with real acts of officially sanctioned violence against Germans in the colonies, however, the Foreign Office was quick to directly intervene and push for punishments, through dismissal, demotion or cashiering of those who had been responsible. The increase in incidents of violence against prisoners forced the Foreign Office to remind the Dominion governments who was in charge when it came to prisoner policy.

On 11th October 1915, the German government sent its concerns to the Foreign Office about rumours of public floggings of prisoners at Torrens Island in South Australia (Map 2, no. 93b).²⁴ The British were candid about the investigation of the flogging; it was decided that it would be

¹⁹ TNA, FO383/280, 3041, Weber's statement, 4th January 1917.

²⁰ TNA, FO383/280, 3041, Heritage's statement, 4th January 1917.

²¹ Roy Alexander, *The Cruise of the Raider Wolf* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1939), p. 93. The raider *Wolf*, had a remarkable war experience. It left Kiel in November 1916 and sank many tonnes of Allied shipping, before returning home safely in February 1918 with around 460 captives, taken from enemy ships.

²² A court of inquiry on 21st April 1915 noted that while looting by Australian soldiers had not been rife, 'the administration of the military police was deplorable.' IWM, 03(94).81/3-0, William Hughes, Rabaul: Alleged Misuse of Red Cross Gifts and Looting by Military Officers and Privates, 22nd July 1915.

²³ TNA, FO383/280, 3041, Heritage's statement, 4th January 1917.

²⁴ TNA, FO383/34, 147981, Alleged Floggings of German subjects at Torrens Island S. Australia, 11th October 1915. The floggings were not public, but the inmates of Torrens Island were ordered to be present.

best to 'make a clean breast of it.'²⁵ Although admitting that the British did 'not come very well out of this'²⁶, the Foreign Office hoped that it would not have to express regret as, from its point of view, the flogging was no worse than the German practice of tying British prisoners to posts in the winter.²⁷ The inquiry into the flogging was launched in August 1915. It found that the flogging of two prisoners, John Gerdes and Wilhelm Holmann (who claimed, but could not prove Swedish citizenship), had been ordered on their re-capture after attempting to escape. Although The Hague Conventions stated that disciplinary measures could be taken against those who escaped, flogging was deemed too harsh by the Germans and Robert Cecil, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, concurred.²⁸ The punishment was humiliating, Gerdes describing it in detail: 'They tied my hands up to the tree above my head. They pulled my trousers down and put my shirt over my head. They gave me thirty strokes with the cat.'²⁹ The punishment was carried out with the other prisoners present by way of setting an example. However, of most concern was that one of the prisoners had photographed the punishment and had tried to send prints home. Sergeant Mackintosh, who ordered the flogging, was reprimanded for his behaviour and cashiered.

Interviews conducted with the Camp Commander, Captain G.E. Hawkes, showed that he believed the punishment was justified as way of instilling discipline in the camp. He maintained that insolence was rife in the camp with the prisoners often referring to the guards as 'British Bastards'.³⁰ Perhaps more worrying for the prestige of the empire was that the prisoners had also taken to scrawling 'filthy and insulting remarks across portraits of members of the royal family'.³¹ Hawkes claimed he had had 'unlimited powers as to the use of the bayonet and the rifle'.³² He was a notorious drunkard who on one occasion fired shots into a tent wounding a prisoner, a Mr Raetzsch. To add further insult Hawkes was quoted by a number of prisoners

²⁵ TNA, FO383/80, 167230, 9th November 1915. Horace Rumbold memorandum.

²⁶ TNA, FO383/293, 26737 Torrens Island, 3rd February 1917. Robert Vansittart memorandum.

²⁷ TNA, FO383/80, 167230, 9th November 1915. Horace Rumbold memorandum.

²⁸ The Hague Convention Section 1 Chapter 2 Article 8,
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/hague02.asp.

²⁹ TNA, FO383/80, 167230, 9th November 1915, Gerdes's statement at the inquiry 10th August 1915.

³⁰ TNA, FO383/80, 167230, Hawkes's statement at the inquiry 10th August 1915.

³¹ Ibid.

³² TNA, FO383/293, 225487, 27th November 1917. Transcript of the Inquiry into Torrens Island camp. The General Inquiry proved that Hawkes had been given a copy of the Royal Warrant of 3rd August 1914 for the maintenance of discipline among prisoners of war and a copy of the military manual which outlined the forms of punishment that were acceptable. These documents in no way entitled him to the powers he believed he had. Hawkes had been decommissioned before the inquiry.

interviewed as bawling at the men: 'you are German bastards, stinking rotten pigs, low down dogs, if you were not tied up I would knock you down and drown you.'³³ The camp doctor, Dr Meyer, claimed he had inspected nine men who bore the scars of bayonet wounds, and the guards themselves had mentioned that they were under orders to use bayonets on the prisoners.³⁴ The findings of the inquiry at Torrens were that although the flogging was unjust, it had had an immediate effect on improving discipline at the camp. Tellingly, a ban on the possession of cameras was now implemented in the camp.

Along with the flogging at Torrens Island and another in Langwarren camp (Melbourne, map 2, no. 95) there was a further case of humiliation of civilian prisoners at Liverpool camp on mainland Australia, where after visiting hours the inmates (civilians) were forced to crawl through a six-wire fence in full view of their wives and relatives.³⁵ Moreover, the British Foreign Office had to reprimand the Australian government for using civilian internees as forced labour. The prisoners in Liverpool camp went on strike in protest and in reaction the camp guards staged a 'mock execution' of the ringleader, Captain Schmidt, who was taken to the forest by the camp, blind-folded and shots fired over his head. He was then sent to Berrima camp in New South Wales (Map 2, no. 99), but the impression given to the inmates of Liverpool was that he had been executed, with the guards showing the prisoners a freshly heaped mound of earth that was supposedly Schmidt's grave.³⁶ Robert Cecil, whilst acknowledging that forced civilian labour had been used, maintained that this and other instances of violence had occurred by 'mistake' and had been stopped.³⁷

Although Canada did not intern any German prisoners from Reich colonies it is important to make a few remarks on incidents of violence there to highlight this Empire-wide problem, as there were parallels with prisoner of war treatment in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. The vast majority of prisoners in Canada were civilian internees and Canada's policy of

³³ TNA, FO383/164, 2018882, Dr Meyer's report, 10th October 1916.

³⁴ There were further incidents of shooting prisoners by sentries in Australia. TNA, FO383/182, 117559, Inquisition into Shooting of Karl Rauscher and Jack Müller, 19th June 1916, TNA, FO383/182, 263526, Shooting of Tiedemann at Liverpool, 29th December 1916.

³⁵ TNA, FO383/164, 247872, Complaints pertaining to Liverpool camp by F.W. Mayer, 8th December 1916.

³⁶ TNA, FO383/305, 127223, 27th June 1917. Letter from Alfred Suhl written in July 1916.

³⁷ TNA, FO383/34, 124203, 2nd September, 1915. Robert Cecil's announcement. A similar situation occurred with civilians in Canada. TNA, FO383/163, 84192 4th May, 1916, William O'Reilly memorandum.

internment was similar to that of Britain and the other Dominions.³⁸ Canada, which had treated its own Chinese labourers harshly,³⁹ was the only Dominion to force its civilian internees into hard labour.⁴⁰ There were also many complaints from Berlin about the mistreatment of internees in Canada. For example, Richard Hein, an inmate of the camp at Kingston, Ontario, had strayed too close to the camp wire and was shot twice in the arm by a sentry. To avoid a scandal, Hein was released and allowed to go to America for medical treatment.⁴¹ With the fear of reprisals against their own troops in mind, the Foreign Office had to ensure that acts of violence remained isolated.

In February 1916, Britain received requests from the Germans for neutral inspections of the camps in Canada as they had heard of various abuses being committed in the camps in Banff, Amerherst, Calgary and Leithbridge. The Germans were concerned that civilian internees were being used as forced labour and also demanded that two Sergeants in particular, Sergeants Mellor and Hume, be brought to trial for the way they abused their prisoners. The Germans gave the British a deadline of 1st March to reply with full reports on all colonial camps, not just those in Canada. Failure to meet the deadline meant the German government would 'be forced, to their regret, to consider the question of adopting certain retaliatory measures without delay.'⁴² In response the Foreign Office duly gathered all US consul reports on all Britain's extra-European camps for dispatch to Germany.⁴³

The American reports on Canada highlighted some serious abuses in the camp system north of their border. In Leithbridge not only were civilian internees punished by being placed in dark cells and given a diet of bread and water for four to five days, but the camp authorities admitted to this being a policy. Prisoners were also handcuffed and trussed with little provocation. Sergeant Hume, the camp commander, had bayoneted one prisoner, Mr Koziol, thus hospitalising him. Hume had only received a caution for this attack. Samuel C. Read, who compiled the report, mentioned that the abuses had become more severe in the wake of the

³⁸ For a more detailed look at internment in Canada see: David J. Carter, *Behind Canadian Barbed Wire: Alien, Refugee and Prisoner of War Camps 1914-1946* (Eagle Butte Press, Alberta, 1998).

³⁹ See, Guoqi, *Strangers on the Western Front*, pp. 55-79.

⁴⁰ Tammy Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War*, (New York University Press, New York, 2010), p. 209. For more on internment in Canada see: Bodhan Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (McGill Queens University Press, Canada, 2002).

⁴¹ TNA, FO383/143, 20638, Alleged Shooting of Richard Hein, 2nd February 1916.

⁴² TNA, FO383/162, 27498, 12th February 1916. Note Verbale from the German Government to the US Embassy in Berlin, 17th February, 1916.

⁴³ Ibid.

Lusitania sinking. The potential repercussions of these revelations for British prisoners in Germany were obvious. They also affected Britain's ability to complain to German government over its treatment of British prisoners as Horace Rumbold noted; 'We hope that immediate steps will be taken to remedy the abuses complained of and that our position as regards making complaints to the German government about similar abuses [German mal-treatment of British prisoners of war] is [not] greatly weakened.'⁴⁴

Indiscipline among camp guards and commanders was a serious problem for the Foreign Office, reflected by the pains it took to investigate allegations. The more frequently cases came up of camp guards or soldiers over-stepping lines or breaking codes of conduct, the more difficult it became to present these as isolated cases. The freedom to write letters allowed prisoners to vocalise their complaints. However, letter writing was not the only way in which prisoners could make their opinions heard. In extreme cases the captives were prepared to riot to get their point across.

Riots broke out in many of the camps across the British Empire. The camp at Douglas on the Isle of Man experienced a riot which resulted in the death of six prisoners.⁴⁵ However, the most notorious riot to happen in British camps took place in Singapore in the wake of the Singapore Mutiny. Also known as the Sepoy Mutiny, the Singapore Mutiny, beginning on the 15th February, 1915, lasted around seven days and resulted in the deaths of forty-seven British soldiers and civilians.⁴⁶ It was sparked by rumours that the Sepoys were to be sent to Europe or Turkey to fight against fellow Muslims. The German prisoners housed in the Tanglin barracks (Map 2, no. 87), took advantage of the mutiny to riot and launch escape attempts.⁴⁷ The rioting in the barracks was quite serious and led to the wounding of nine camp guards and the successful escape of two German prisoners.⁴⁸

In response to the South African government's policy of asking German civilians to voluntarily identify themselves to the authorities on the outbreak of war, a limited pro-German rebellion took place in Pietermaritzburg in October 1914, leading to the denial of parole and the

⁴⁴ TNA, FO383/162, 36999, US Consul Report on Leithbridge, 25th February 1916. Horace Rumbold memorandum.

⁴⁵ Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain*, pp. 142-144.

⁴⁶ For an account of the Singapore Mutiny see, Sho Kuwajima, *Mutiny in Singapore: War, Anti-War and the War for India's Independence* (Parisham, Ahmedabad, 2006).

⁴⁷ Rudolf Wettenge, 'Das Interniertenlager bei Singapore', in *In Feindeshand*, pp. 110-111.

⁴⁸ TNA, FO383/436, 109002, 21st July 1918, Statement of H. Hannke.

internment of many German civilians. The camps were already overcrowded and in protest at the swelling numbers and cramped conditions, the prisoners rioted. Further riots in May 1915 in South Africa resulted in even harsher restrictions on parole for German civilians and the influx of prisoners from German South-West Africa. In response, plans were drawn up to expand the camps and improve conditions for prisoners. Even after suppression of the riots and rebellions, however, H.G. Harrison of the Foreign Office still complained that the 'Union government have an inevitable tenderness towards the Huns'.⁴⁹

Incidents of riots by prisoners continued throughout the war. In December 1917, unconfirmed reports reached the Foreign Office of rioting in Malta in response to the cutting off of communication between prisoners and the colonies in reprisal for Germany's treatment of British civilians in occupied Belgium.⁵⁰ After the Armistice, riots threatened to break out in Holsworthy camp in Australia. The Acting U.S. Consul General J.H. Anderson feared that unless the prisoners were given an exact date for their repatriation there would be a rebellion. The Foreign Office was quick to respond and sent back an approximate date if only to quell fears of riots.⁵¹ Riots, although an extreme tool, were to a certain extent effective in making the prisoners' voices heard and bringing about reforms or changes in the camps.

The incidents looked at here have highlighted two interactions of violence in captivity. Abuse of prisoners most often occurred because of bad management. It was difficult to get the right kind of manpower, firstly, to go out and take a colony and then to act as guards when they got there. The 'heat and inactivity'⁵² in Samoa drove the New Zealanders to drink and unlike in New Guinea where there were plenty of birds of paradise to shoot, the soldiers relieved their boredom on the local population.⁵³ Prisoners could also use violence to vocalise their own demands. The extreme cases of rioting and the threats of riots were taken note of by the British and steps in each case were taken to alleviate the situation, whether it was something

⁴⁹ TNA, FO383/540, 5531, 26th May 1919, Harrison memorandum.

⁵⁰ TNA, FO383/311, 238722, Alleged Riots in Malta, 18th December 1917. The ban on letter writing between camp inmates and their families was a particular sore point for the Germans, but one on which the British remained inflexible.

⁵¹ TNA, FO383/536, 4612, 24th April 1919, Response to Anderson.

⁵² Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 158.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

as straightforward as informing prisoners of the expected date of repatriation, or, as in the aftermath of the riots in Singapore, full scale camp evacuation to Australia.⁵⁴

In all cases, forms of violence provoked a reaction from the Foreign Office. Abuse by guards and riots for better conditions could affect the conditions of British prisoners in German hands. In addition, as will be explored in later chapters, accusations of violence by 'natives' against prisoners were the key thrust in German anti-British propaganda related to internment in the colonies and could damage British prestige among neutral countries. The next section of this chapter will look at public punishments of prisoners in India and the Dominions, and how they also prompted the Foreign Office to remind the Dominion governments of who was in charge of setting camp conditions.

For Europeans the maintenance of proper appearances was highly important. One only has to think of the scene from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* when Marlow meets the impressively dressed commercial officer in the Congo: 'Near the buildings I met a white man, in such an unexpected elegance of get-up that in the first moment I took him for a sort of vision [...] I respected his collars, his vast cuffs, his brushed hair. His appearance was certainly that of a hairdresser's dummy; but in the great demoralization of the land he kept up his appearance. That's backbone.'⁵⁵ Empires are to a certain extent built on prestige. Degrading the German settlers physically through public parade or corporal punishment helped psychologically to mark the transition of power from Germany to Britain and the Dominions. Yet although such actions could tarnish the image of the Germans in the colonies, they could do just as much damage to the prestige of the British Empire, which was after all trying to prove itself the more civilised of the two.

Having looked at violence in captivity from two angles, violence against prisoners by guards and violence by prisoners against guards, we now turn our attention to more official acts of violence against prisoners in the form of legally sanctioned punishments. This chapter will now look at three main examples of public displays of prisoners: firstly forced deportation of civilians, the handling of prisoners within the camp, and finally public punishments. Prisoners, especially prisoners of war, were not immune from punishments even under the terms of

⁵⁴ TNA, FO383/436, 109002, 21st July 1918, Statement of H. Hannke. Hannke who testified, and had helped British soldiers during the riots, was sent to India in order to be kept separate from the rest of the prisoners.

⁵⁵ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899, reprint Wilder, Radford, 2008), pp. 18-19.

international law.⁵⁶ However, the Foreign Office, as always, was eager to limit any punishments against prisoners. The ever present threat of reprisals against British prisoners in German hands shaped the Foreign Office's reaction to reports of violence or deprivation of rights of prisoners. Britain had ostensibly entered the war to protect Belgium and needed to maintain its humanitarian image, especially as the British intended to try Germany for war crimes after the war.⁵⁷ With this in mind it was vital to ensure that the Dominions treated their prisoners within the required boundaries of international law.

The most common reprisal punishments took the form of tit-for-tat exchanges between Germany and Britain. Most of these punishments were not overtly violent. By the end of the war these reprisals could be divided into five categories as outlined by Isabel Hull: non-notification of capture, denial of mail, use of prisoner labour in the fire zone, automatic reprisal for German action (the Hague agreements stipulated that two months' notice should be given before enacting reprisal), and treating German officers like common soldiers.⁵⁸ The longest running reprisal punishment for prisoners from the former Reich's colonies was the stopping of mail between camps and civilians, especially correspondence between India, Egypt, Malta and German East Africa.⁵⁹ This was, as mentioned in reference to the rioting in Malta, in response to German treatment of British civilians in Belgium. What concerns this chapter are the forms of punishment used in the camps in the colonies and how punishments were used not merely for their disciplinary effect but as a tool to instil the reality of the German defeat into the German settlers and local population alike.

Duala, in Cameroon, had fallen to the British in early 1915 but the rest of the colony was not fully under British (or French) control until 1916. The British policy of complete evacuation of the white civilian population was rushed and badly organised, bringing public complaints from the German settlers. As in other colonies, many of the Germans in Cameroon had not, even

⁵⁶ While Article 4 The Hague Convention states that prisoners must be humanely treated, Article 8 allows for disciplinary measures. 'Any act of insubordination warrants the adoption, as regards them, of such measures of severity as may be necessary.' http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/hague02.asp.

⁵⁷ This masked the hidden threat of a German victory in Europe to British Imperial power. Sophie de Schaepdrijver, 'Occupation, propaganda, and the idea of Belgium', in Ariel Roshwald and Richard Stites, *European Culture in the Great War: The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002), p. 331.

⁵⁸ Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 312.

⁵⁹ TNA, FO383/435, 86127, 15th May, 1918, Letter from the India Office 31st April. Prisoners, particularly those captured from German East Africa, were no longer allowed to write to or receive mail from their families in reprisal for German restrictions on the mail of British civilians in occupied Belgium from 1917 on.

after the defeat of the German army, expected to be deported from their homes.⁶⁰ The British, under General Charles Dobell, assembled the Germans in the courtyard of the town hospital, ostensibly for a roll-call. The Germans were told that they would merely be asked to register their names and address with the new authorities. It came as a shock when it was announced that they had only three-quarters of an hour to gather their belongings before returning to the hospital, where they would then be marched off to the docks, without the aid of their porters, and put aboard the *SS Obuassi* for transportation via Accra, the Gold Coast (Map 1, no. 54), to Britain.⁶¹

The Germans had to suffer the humiliation of being led to the docks for repatriation under black guards and watched by those who until recently had been their colonial inferiors. A German Lieutenant and Basel Missionary, Otto Wienecke, claimed that some of the onlookers jeered and 'men and women under the very eyes of the English and French Officers were buffeted with the hands and butt-ends of rifles of the [black] soldiers.'⁶² While the actual physical violence against the prisoners was minimal, the shame of being defeated and treated like colonial subjects was most humiliating. The British would not agree to allow the Germans to march to the docks and to board the ships by themselves, an act which might have rescued some semblance of dignity for the prisoners. They preferred to have them publicly shown as defeated, further confirming among the population of Duala and elsewhere that there was a new, stronger colonial regime, in the form of British troops, in charge.

The fact that German civilians living in the colonies had actually been taken prisoner was the first claim of ill-treatment. They felt that as non-combatants they were protected under The Hague Conventions and that the Berlin Conference of 1884/85 had legally obliged all states to remain neutral in Africa. The Director of Theology at the Basel Mission, Dr Theodor Oehler,⁶³

⁶⁰ See chapter two.

⁶¹ IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915. Lieutenant Wienecke's Petition 2nd December 1914. Similarly residents in Togo were given twenty minutes to decide their fate, BA, R67/485, Abschrift, Anny Heck, 6th June 1916. In Lüderitzbucht, German South-West Africa they got two and quarter hours to prepare before being shipped to Pietermaritzburg. BA, R67/1638, Aus Lüderitzbucht ins Gefangenlager, Hildegard Höner, 21st January 1916.

⁶² IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915, Lieutenant Wienecke's Petition 2nd December 1914. Horace Rumbold at the British Foreign Office did not think much of Wienecke's character, describing him as 'very muddle-headed and one of those Germans who – during his internment – broods over imaginary grievances.' TNA, FO383/49, 193295, 17th December 1915, Rumbold, memorandum.

⁶³ Although a Swiss mission, the Basel Missionaries were predominantly German-born priests and sisters. Oehler's sons, for example, were serving in the German Army. The missionaries were thus treated as enemy subjects.

published an article in the *Basler Nachrichten* that dealt with the way in which the German settlers in Cameroon were evicted from their land contrary.⁶⁴ He also reported that German civilians were gathered together at the hospital in Duala and given little time to gather their belongings before being marched through the streets struggling to carry what few possessions they could bring. They had to suffer verbal abuse from the British guards further humiliating them in public. As Dr G. Lohringer, another missionary, noted; 'only an African colonialist can appreciate what it means if British officers talk to blacks of whites as 'German swine' or if a German actually has to let himself be called a 'German pig' by blacks.'⁶⁵

Oehler's article drew on eye-witness accounts from within the missionary community. If it was not bad enough that the locals in Cameroon were spitting and throwing stones at the helpless German prisoners, according to one of the Mission's sisters, Charlotte Schöler, they were greeted with similar stones and jeers upon their arrival at Liverpool.⁶⁶ The men and women were then separated, with the women being sent to London and then on to the Netherlands for repatriation and the men transferred for internment in the United Kingdom.⁶⁷ Comparing the local Cameroonians to the Liverpoolians at the docks made it easy to equate colonial barbarity with British. General Charles Dobell claimed that the Duala population were angry with the Germans and that they were throwing stones at the Germans in retaliation for the way they had been treated under German colonial rule.⁶⁸ He did not, however, offer an explanation for the behaviour of the people of Liverpool, but he maintained that the captives

⁶⁴ A German planter, citing article 46 of the Hague Convention, protested about the takeover of his plantation in Cameroon. In all he considered that loss of revenue in cocoa, cotton, bananas, tobacco and cotton to German planters came to around 3million marks. The imprisonment of white settlers meant 'an enormous damage is caused to this territory of European colonization and to the private capital invested therein.' TNA. FO383/59, 35764, Meeting on the Removal of the White Population from the Cameroons, 14th April 1915.

⁶⁵ IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915. Excerpt reprinted from an article titled, *In English Hands: Experiences of Prisoners of War in the Cameroons*.

⁶⁶ German prisoners were greeted with stones almost everywhere they went. Incidents were reported in New Guinea also BA, R67/1322, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 28th July 1915.

⁶⁷ IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915. Report by Charlotte Schöler, 5th July 1915. In addition, Charlotte Schöler's eyewitness account made the observation that not only Germans were being evicted but also other 'whites, Dutch, Swiss, US and German were brought to Accra from the colony.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Dobell's response to embassies' enquiries 1st November 1915. Although the Duala welcomed the British and French as liberators, this welcome soon soured and in the post-war period they made a series of unsuccessful petitions to the League of Nations for a replacement of the French occupation authorities for an administration under the direct authority of the League. Richard A. Joseph, 'The German Question in French Cameroun, 1919–1939', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, 1 (January 1975), pp. 65-90, pp. 69-70.

were treated very respectfully and although there had been some plundering of German goods by non-Allied forces (i.e. the Germans themselves) and other locals the authorities had quickly put a stop to it.⁶⁹ Finally he argued, the Germans from West Africa were transferred to the United Kingdom as the weather there was more favourable to Europeans.⁷⁰

Public parades of Germans through the towns where they had once governed were a very visual way of expressing to the indigenous population that a new imperial power was in charge. Public punishments of prisoners, to put it in Foucauldian terms, provided visual manifestations of how the British Empire was able to assert itself as the primary armed power and not only demonstrated how it enforced its laws but also who its enemies were.⁷¹ One must keep in mind that the Germans were used to being top of the colonial racial hierarchy and to be placed in such a position through public marches was humiliating.

At the camp in Ahmednagar, India, a further public punishment was in place for prisoners. Ahmednagar mainly housed combatant prisoners from German East Africa. Prisoners who disobeyed camp regulations were liable to be placed in solitary confinement in punishment cells. These cells were visible from the road-side, meaning that passers-by could quite easily see the prisoners through the cell windows.⁷² Punishment had again become a spectacle. On hearing of this, the Foreign Office recommended that lattice work screens be erected to shield the prisoners from the gaze of the public.⁷³ While punishment cells existed in many camps, public punishment was not acceptable to the British authorities.⁷⁴

Forced labour was not prevalent in the extra-European camps of the British Empire, although it was used in Canada for extended periods. However, one camp, about which little information remains, Kanus, in German South-West Africa may also have been used for forced labour. From the available evidence it seems that the camp was established in reprisal for German

⁶⁹ TNA, FO383/34, 153629, 14th October 1915, Dobell report to the Foreign Office Dobell report 28th September 1915. Dobell's rebuttals may contain some truth: a Beti folk song in Cameroon alludes to looting after the Germans were taken away. Frederick Quinn, *In Search of Salt: Changes in Beti (Cameroon) Society 1880-1960* (Berghahn Books, Oxford, 2006), p. 121.

⁷⁰ TNA, FO383/49, 16554, 12th February 1915 Letter from the Colonial Office to the Foreign Office.

⁷¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 57.

⁷² TNA, FO383/163, 185495, US Consul Report on Ahmednagar camp, 1st June 1915.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ For example in Liverpool, Australia, there was a small compound attached to the camp where internees who were 'difficult to control' were housed. BA, R67/825, US Consul Report, 24th September 1916.

treatment of civilians in occupied Belgium and also as a transfer camp designed to hold prisoners who were unruly in other camps, mainly Pietermaritzburg.⁷⁵ Most disconcerting for Adolf Jelinek (an Austro-Hungarian inmate, whose letters to the Swedish consul in South Africa provide the main archival evidence for the camp), was that prisoners were being forced to complete manual tasks in full view of the indigenous population. According to Jelinek, the use of prisoner labour was, 'a disgrace to a nation laying claim to civilisation, and lowering the prestige of the white man, by extracting manual labour from civil POWs [...] while idle natives are looking on.'⁷⁶ In sum, through public parades, public punishments and allegedly forcing prisoners to work in front of the colonial other, German colonial settlers were 'subjected to a ritualised gaze that is an endowment of the power of the aggressor.'⁷⁷

In New Guinea there was another serious and much more public case of punishment, the flogging of Germans in Rabaul, which again tried the Foreign Office's patience and opened up the possibility of reprisals by the Germans against British subjects. Hermann Hiery referred to the 'Cox affair' (as the flogging became known) in his book on the war in the Pacific, but he omitted many details about the British and German reactions to it. He saw the incident as a rare moment in the history of a people where emotions were given free rein and recklessly broke down all the barriers raised by reason.⁷⁸

The *Sydney Wednesday* in April 1916 reported that 'The public whipping of Germans at Rabaul has deeply excited Germany where the occurrence is reviled as among the greatest horrors of the war.'⁷⁹ While this was a definite exaggeration, the Germans had received word of the public flogging of German subjects in New Guinea and sent their complaints to the Foreign Office

⁷⁵ There are some details on this camp in the Foreign Office records, but very little is available on the German side. Although relatively small in number (only eighty-eight inmates), the conditions in Kanus, if Jelinek's report is to be believed were quite severe. It was, according to Jelinek, 'preferable to be placed against a wall to be shot and made a speedy end to all these miseries, instead of being murdered by inches and to undergo a long drawn out bodily and mental torture in these camps of refined cruelty.' TNA, FO383/437, 90553, Transfer of Prisoners of War from Pietermaritzburg to Kanus, 22nd May, 1918, Adolf Jelinek to the Royal Swedish Consul Cape Town, 22nd February 1918. The camp appears in the Bundesarchiv in the letter of Eugen Gerber, a sailor in South Africa who was transferred to Kanus after serving two years in a regular jail for his part in unrest in Fort Napier (Pietermaritzburg) in 1917. He only spent fourteen days in Kanus before being sent back to Germany. BA, R8023/1071, Eugen Gerber to Seitz, 4th March 1920.

⁷⁶ TNA, FO383/437 90553, Transfer of Prisoners of War from Pietermaritzburg to Kanus, 22nd May, 1918. Adolf Jelinek to the Royal Swedish Consul Cape Town, 22nd February 1918.

⁷⁷ Allen Feldman, 'Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror', in Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, et al (eds), *Violence and Subjectivity* (California University Press, London, 2000), p. 49.

⁷⁸ Hiery, *Neglected War*, pp. 36-37.

⁷⁹ BA, R1001/2635, Krieg in Deutsch-Neuguinea 1914 – 1918. *The Sydney Wednesday*, 19th April 1916.

listing their demands, as well as a lengthy report on Rabaul. Most concerning was the flogging, and how it could have been allowed to happen. Flogging German civilians had, according to the German note, scorned 'all civilisation and every feeling for the pride of the white race, under the cloak of legal proceedings, subjected German subjects to a brutal act of force in public exhibition and thereby heaped upon the German name and dignity unheard of ignominy reaching far beyond the frontiers of New Guinea.'⁸⁰ William Holmes, the administrator who had ordered the flogging, had apparently wanted to set a public example. As the British Foreign Office noted, this had the potential for 'awkward' consequences for British prisoners.⁸¹ The flogging took place in Proclamation Square in Rabaul and was open to the white public; German citizens were ordered to be present. Holmes claimed to have ensured that no 'natives' were present and had had guards posted around the square to prevent them from entering. One of the Australian soldiers present was in possession of a camera and took photographs which went on to be circulated as picture postcards. The Germans had two main demands: Holmes and Provost Ravenscourt were to be put on trial, and all pictures and postcards of the event were to be confiscated.

The report ordered by the Australian government and written up by the principal medical officer for New Guinea, Dr Frederick A. Maguire, with comments from Professor of Law, Pitt Cobbett of the University of Sydney, reached the Foreign Office in January 1915.⁸² It outlined the events which led to the flogging. The accused had been tried and convicted for accusing Reverend William Cox of being a British spy and attacking him prior to the Australian takeover of New Guinea. *Regierungsarzt* Dr Braunert and seven other men, one night after taking a considerable amount of alcohol,⁸³ were found to have beaten Reverend Cox at gunpoint as if he were a 'Kanaka' (a Polynesian). In Cobbett's opinion the fact that Reverend Cox was white and humiliated in such a fashion necessitated the punishment of the Germans responsible, and the flogging was within the bounds of the Hague Convention.⁸⁴ The Australian Government added that the attack on Cox was calculated to bring the British character into contempt and

⁸⁰ TNA, FO383/73, 105459, 28th July 1915 Note Verbale from German Government.

⁸¹ TNA, FO383/35, 9522, Allegations of Flogging in Rabaul, 26th January 1915.

⁸² Maguire had returned to Australia in February 1915.

⁸³ One of the conspirators, Höpfel, was too drunk to take part. BA, R1001/2615 Kaiserlich Deutsches Generalkolonialamt für Niederländisch-Indien Batavia, Bericht des Sationsleiters Schmaus, 14th April 1915.

⁸⁴ TNA, FO383/163, 59444, 29th March 1916, F.A. Maguire's report of November 1914 with Pitt Corbett's comments 21st January 1916. Also in The National Archives of Australia (TNA) A2, 1917/3615 PART 4, German New Guinea - Flogging of certain German subjects at Rabaul.

to affect 'natives in attitude towards' the new occupying power.⁸⁵ The punishment which took place under the recently raised British flag was prompt and exemplary. The men to be flogged were each in turn spread-eagled face downwards over a large travelling trunk about three feet high, much like the one they had thrown Reverend Cox over when they beat him. They were handcuffed with the cuffs tied to a stake in front of the box while their legs were tied with rope behind the box. Before and after the flogging the men were medically examined. As Cobbett argued, 'the fullest publicity was given to the punitive proceedings, this being indeed essential to their efficacy as a deterrent and a military precaution.'⁸⁶

In the view of Kaiserliche Bezirksrichter, Gustav Weber, the result of the flogging would 'be that the natives will not consider the punishment as being inflicted to some individuals only but will regard it as a dishonouring punishment of the whole German population who in their eyes will forever be degraded to Kanakas.'⁸⁷ He also somewhat prophetically saw that the prisoners would rather commit suicide than suffer the flogging 'as not only their reputation but also their future and existence will be ruined.'⁸⁸ All Germans were ordered to be present and even the Catholic Bishop from the nearby island of Vunapope was invited to attend.⁸⁹ The report from Maguire and Cobbett was not what the Foreign Office wanted to hear. From the first complaints received from Berlin, they had suspected that the stories were exaggerated and would eventually even be proven to be false; now the information from the Australians proved otherwise. Dr Braunert, who had been so humiliated by the public flogging, attempted to commit suicide in his cell. He was, according to Kaufmann Kuhn 'completely broken', a personification of the impact that the colonial role reversal enacted by the takeover of the German colonies had on the German population.⁹⁰

The Foreign Office placed the responsibility on Holmes and had the Australian government reprimand him for his 'irregular' action.⁹¹ Contrary to Cobbett's and Maguire's opinions the Australian Prime Minister noted that not only did the subject lend itself to sensational

⁸⁵ TNA, A2, 1917/3615 Part 4, German New Guinea - Flogging of certain German subjects at Rabaul, Cable to Secretary of State, 20th January 1916.

⁸⁶ TNA, FO383/163, 59444, 29th March 1916, F.A. Maguire's report.

⁸⁷ BA, R1001/2615, Kaiserliche Bezirksrichter Weber to Administrator of New Guinea Holmes, 29th November 1914.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ BA, R1001/2615, Kaiserlich Deutsches Generalkolonialamt für Niederländisch-Indien Batavia, Berichts des Stationsleiters Schmaus, 14th April 1915.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ BA, R1001/2635, Grey to the Austwärtiges Amt, 31st March, 1915.

treatment and Germany would 'certainly seize upon the incident for use in neutral countries', but also flogging was 'completely opposed to the modern British spirit'.⁹² What should be noted here is that while the flogging of white Europeans was against the British spirit, flogging other members of colonial society was not.⁹³ A rather disturbing report on the disciplining of Chinese labour by the New Guinea Company in 1919 highlights this: 'An experiment was made by importing Chinese Coolies, but with no better result. The Chinamen did not thrive at Finchhafen and commenced to desert. In the beginning such an event was the signal for a cannibal feast somewhere in the neighbourhood, but after the company has [sic] promised the natives a reward in tobacco and loincloth for bringing back the escapees, the elusive Chinamen were triumphantly returned and duly flogged. The Chinamen naturally resented [sic], and the Chinese as a rule not estimating life very highly, they commenced hanging themselves with the least provocation, till at last it became quite a mania, apparently not troubling in the least about the loss of capital they inflicted on the company.'⁹⁴ The Australian attitude toward the Chinese was very different from that towards German settlers, with the Chinese being reduced to the status of a mere commodity good.⁹⁵

Rather than having the effect of maintaining order and discipline, harsh treatment of wartime German prisoners in the form of corporal punishment normally reserved for non-whites only had the effect of bringing the British Empire into disrepute. As after the incident at Torrens Island the Foreign Office feared that there would be reprisals against British prisoners in Germany.⁹⁶ The only positive aspect of which they could inform Berlin was that they were certain that the local New Guineans had been successfully kept out of Proclamation Square

⁹² TNAA, A2, 1917/3615 PART 4, German New Guinea - Flogging of certain German subjects at Rabaul, 25th July 1915. Memo from the Prime Minister's office.

⁹³ See David Killingray, 'The "Rod of Empire": The Debate Over Corporal Punishment in the British African Colonial Forces, 1888-1946', in *Journal of African History*, 35, 2 (July, 1994), pp. 201-16. Killingray's article highlights that, despite the military codes in place, corporal punishment was often more severe than officially permitted, not only with regard to African colonial forces but also toward African labour.

⁹⁴ BA, R1001/9533, Kriegslage in den Schutzgebieten und Forderungen nach ihrer Rückgewinnung nach Kriegsende. - Samoa, Neuguinea, Bismarck-Archipel, Marschall-, Karolinen- und Marianeninseln, 1914-1919. Report of the New Guinea Company, 1919, (exact date unclear).

⁹⁵ For an analysis of corporal punishment in New Guinea, see Hiery, *Neglected War*, pp. 80-85.

⁹⁶ TNA, FO383/80, 167230, 9th November 1915 Robert Cecil's comments.

and thus could not witness the punishment.⁹⁷ There were, however, quite a few other witnesses to the flogging. Most problematic were the photographs.

The photographs were printed as postcards by the soldiers and sold around the islands by Australian soldiers for 3d a piece and posted home. A. McKay, an Australian soldier present on the day, speaking in 1965 described how one of the onlookers hid a camera in his shirt while he and some others standing in the front row stepped aside to allow him to take photographs.⁹⁸ The photographs show clearly the scene in Proclamation Square. One can see one of the Germans tied over the trunk with his face obscured as the gathered crowd watches on. Although a graphic reminder of the end of Germany as a colonial power, the photographs also had potential as a powerful propaganda tool for Germany to show the British as barbarians. Therefore, while officially demanding that all photographs be destroyed, Berlin was keen to get hold of copies. A letter from Singapore informed the British Foreign Office that an American named Frank Macdonald was in the middle of doing a deal to sell the original negatives to the Germans.⁹⁹ The *Kaiserliches Konsulat* in Soerabaja (Surabaya) in the Dutch East Indies paid £50 for the photos. However, whether it intended to suppress the photographs or make use of them for propaganda purposes is not clear.¹⁰⁰ Macdonald claimed that contrary to the official reports the local New Guineans had been present to observe the punishments.

In the wake of the abuses on Torrens island and at Rabaul it was necessary to revise the handbook on war precautions that had been issued to the Australian authorities.¹⁰¹ In response to instances where the British felt the Dominions had overstepped their authority, they were willing to intervene and ensure a more unified policy, which would be important in the short term for preventing reprisals against British prisoners of war in Germany and in the longer term as the Empire looked to a post-war trial of Germans for war crimes.

The British were wary of punishing prisoners even for crimes that could legitimately have been acted on. A report of a commission of enquiry into the treatment of prisoners of war by the German protectorate authorities in German South-West Africa, before it was conquered by

⁹⁷ TNA, FO383/35, 32008, 19th March 1915 Report from Charles G. Manning Assistant Judge Advocate General.

⁹⁸ *The News*, Adelaide, Australia, 10th November 1965, <http://www.corpun.com/pgju6511.htm>.

⁹⁹ TNA, FO383/164, 247872, Complaints pertaining to Liverpool camp, 8th December 1916.

¹⁰⁰ BA, R1001/2635, Kaiserliches Konsulat Soerabaja to Reichkanzler Bethmann Hollweg, 19th March 1915.

¹⁰¹ TNA, FO383/33, 104429, 31st July 1915, Commonwealth of Australia, Manual of War Precautions (revised 27th May 1915).

South African forces, was written up in 1916. This report highlighted German abuses of British prisoners. Louis Botha claimed in his accompanying letter to the Foreign Office, that British prisoners had been treated 'worse than the natives would be treated in the Union'.¹⁰² There were also suggestions that an Oberleutnant Venuleth would be brought to justice for his part in murdering two 'Bushmen'.¹⁰³ No immediate action was taken on the murder and along with the report of abuse of British prisoners, it was to be used for propaganda purposes only. The War Office stressed that it was inadvisable to hold a trial of any of the Germans responsible, namely of Theodor Seitz for his role as Governor of the colony and responsibility for prisoners and of Venuleth, as the Germans might very well hold counter-trials based on the alleged British use of 'dum-dum' bullets. The report served as a piece of propaganda and the War Office hoped that the evidence taken from it would be useful at 'the conclusion of hostilities when we can consider the question of "war crimes" committed by Germany as a whole'.¹⁰⁴

The threat of reprisals could have a direct effect on prisoner punishment. The punishments the authorities in Samoa were handing down to prisoners had to be revised under pressure from the Foreign Office. In 1915, a prisoner, Franz Pfeill, was sentenced to three years in prison for 'escaping'. The Auswärtiges Amt quickly got word of this and threatened counter-measures against a prisoner, Lieutenant Templar, held in Germany. Pfeill, after Foreign Office intervention, was quickly released on parole.¹⁰⁵ In early 1916 Horace Rumbold, of the Prisoners of War Department of the Foreign Office, stated the need to 'hint that they [the New Zealand authorities] should be careful about the sentences they inflict on German prisoners in view of the fact that these sentences may react unfavourably on British prisoners in Germany'.¹⁰⁶

Two main factors influenced the Foreign Office when receiving reports on prisoner punishments. They were: first, would the punishments result in reprisals against British

¹⁰² TNA, FO383/168, 97578, Report of Commission of Enquiry into the treatment of PoWs by the German Protectorate Authorities during the late hostilities, 22nd May 1916.

¹⁰³ TNA, FO383/167, 38113, Oberleutnant Venuleth Trial, 28th February 1916. Venuleth had set up a drumhead court with two other German Officers in which he arbitrarily tried and sentenced the two 'bushmen'. After sentencing they were promptly executed.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, FO383/168, 112727, Suggested Trial of German Authorities in South-West Africa, 12th June 1916. Letter from the War Office to the Foreign Office, 10th June 1916.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, FO383/70, 84764, Franz Pfeill, 26th June 1915. Pfeill's case was not the only one brought to the Foreign Office's attention. In March 1915 the office had received a list of court cases and sentences from Samoa that seemed unnecessarily harsh. They included: seven months hard labour for one German changing his address, and six months for three Germans caught drinking in a public house after curfew. TNA, FO383/32, 35188, German Subjects in Samoa, Note Verbale, 26th March 1915.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, FO383/178, 37212, Sentence passed on Hanssen, 26th February 1916. Rumbold memorandum.

prisoners, and second, what effect would they have on Britain's image and attempts to put together a case against Germany for war crimes? The proposal of post-war trials acted as a 'public place-holder' for more drastic action which Britain could not immediately enact.¹⁰⁷ Therefore it was simply unacceptable that the Dominion governments were overriding Foreign Office authority over prisoner management and thus endangering the lives of British servicemen in enemy hands and tarnishing the Empire's reputation. From early on in the war, due to the reports of mistreatment of prisoners in the colonies, the Foreign Office had to reassert its authority over the Dominion powers in prisoner policy in order to ensure that the treatment of prisoners would be uniform.¹⁰⁸

To conclude, one of the primary reasons Alon Rachamimov listed for what he called the general lack of interest in prisoner of war studies was the familiar nature of prisoner of war misery.¹⁰⁹ Prisoners, he wrote, had the misfortune to suffer from hardships that had affected humanity over the centuries: hunger, over-crowding, disease and hard labour. These were all overshadowed by the modern style of combat that took place on the Western Front and the new forms of misery that it entailed. The camps and their locations, Rachamimov argued, were only novel in the traditional sense of the word, that they were located in a different country and thus within a novel cultural environment. Rachamimov argued this using the example of Siberia, but his argument does not exactly hold true. As Jones has recently shown, even within Western Europe, prisoners were witnesses to and victims of increasingly brutal acts which shared much more with the battlefields of the front than with the quaint image of gentleman prisoners surveying the surrounding flora and fauna of their respective camps.¹¹⁰

While the acts of violence against prisoners described here did not compare, in brutality, with the forced labour battalions on the Western Front, they were important for defining the colonial role reversal that took place with the loss of the German colonies. They have to be seen in the context of Allied accusations of German violence on occupied territory in Europe. The only German territory occupied by Britain during the war was the Reich's colonial possessions. Violence against the prisoners there was used by the German government as

¹⁰⁷ Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 312.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, FO383/70, 100281, Sentences enforced on German subjects in Samoa, 24th July 1915. The War Office re-sent a copy of the general instructions for sentencing prisoners of war to the New Zealand government.

¹⁰⁹ Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, p. 225.

¹¹⁰ Burdick and Moessner, *German Prisoners of War in Japan*, p. 74.

proof of the brutality of its enemy, who was willing to sacrifice the common European mission in Africa for territorial gain. Violence also had to be dealt with sensitively by the British. Punishment or maltreatment of prisoners in the occupied German colonies could harm British prisoners in Germany and British prestige. Fear of reprisals and the need to present Germany as the ultimate violator of international law meant that incidents of abuse of prisoners had to be limited to as few as possible. After entering the war in defence of Belgium, Britain needed a moral as well as a military victory.

After their capture and the loss of their colonies, the German prisoners went from being colonial masters to persona non grata. This role reversal will be looked at in more depth in the next chapter. This chapter has focused on highlighting how this reversal was effected through violence. Public displays of prisoners such as the marching of captives under guard to the docks as occurred in Cameroon, Accra, or South-West Africa encouraged anger towards captives. Now was a chance either for settling scores or simply getting caught up in the excitement of the event. It was the first time that many people would have seen white Europeans under black guards. In Samoa, where the social ranking was perhaps more complex, the Germans were pushed to the bottom of the social ladder, enjoying even fewer rights than the Chinese labourers in terms of freedom of movement.¹¹¹ Presenting defeat to the enemy was also important. The flogging of prisoners at Rabaul publicly displayed the relegation of Germans to the bottom of the colonial social order.

By denying the Germans a dignified surrender, the British authorities stripped them of their status as European equals among the colonisers. It was important for the British to show that Germany was defeated, not just to British but also former German colonial subjects. The deportation of Germans from the colonies underlined to the world that German influence would not be allowed to return. Violence against prisoners took many forms and this chapter has only looked at the more explicit manifestations of it. Participation in the war and the Dominions' takeover of the former German colonies helped make nations out of South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.¹¹² Nonetheless, the Foreign Office's interventions in reaction to acts of violence against Germans and the inability of the Dominions to deal with problems adequately also brought the British Empire closer to being a cohesive fighting unit. The strain this caused in the British Foreign Office can be summed up in Robert Gilbert Vansittart's

¹¹¹ Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 168.

¹¹² Strachan, *The First World War: A New History*, p. 327.

acerbic remarks on the Australian decision to deport Germans from the island of Nauru: 'If only the Australian Government could be induced to treat the matter [the deportation] seriously and with competence.'¹¹³ While actual violence against prisoners in the extra-European camps never went to the extremes characteristic of captivity in Europe, the image of violence still remained the key feature through that many prisoners attributed to their experience of internment. This image will be discussed further in later chapters but the next chapter will turn its attention to the realities of internment in the extra-European sphere.

¹¹³ TNA, FO383/280, 192647, New Guinea and Nauru Treaty, 6th October 1917.

Chapter Four: Der Krieg ist kein Afternoon Tea.¹ Identity and Internment in the Extra-European Camps

This chapter will address the extra-European internment camp network from within, by looking at the experience in captivity of the inmates and of those in the immediate localities around the camp. In keeping with common themes from other studies of prisoners of war, we will look at identity in the camps in terms of patriotism, class and gender. Although moving beyond the boundaries laid out at the beginning of the thesis, it will also be necessary to look at the internment of indigenous prisoners and to address, albeit briefly, debates on the identity of Askari troops and the myth of their eternal loyalty.² During the war in the extra-European theatre both captor and captured moved away from a common European identity in the colonies towards separate national identities. This chapter asks whether this creation, or re-creation, of German identity included all classes, or whether class differences in the colonies were too well established to be broken down. In addition it will examine the clear male-female divide and the difference in experience of internment between the two genders. It will analyse why Britain interned female settlers and the effects of the metaphorical 'emasculatation' of internment on these women.³ Building on the ideas brought out in chapter three on propaganda, it will consider attempts to connect the plight of prisoners abroad with the more stereotypically 'masculine' affair of the war on the Western Front.

Matthew Stibbe's work on the camp for British civilian internees at Ruhleben, Berlin highlighted the creation of an 'imagined community' within the camp. Indeed one could add that although internment was a real experience for those behind the wire, it was also an imagined, though more peripheral, experience for the captor nations and for friendly supporters at home and in neutral countries. In the context of this study we would have liked

¹ G. Vöhringer, *Meine Erlebnisse während des Krieges in Kamerun und Englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft*, (Abteilung Hamburg der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft, L. Friedrichsen and Co., Hamburg, 1918), p. 16.

² During the war in Germany itself, rather than being lauded as loyal natives of the German Reich, four Cameroonians were arrested and interned for defiling racial boundaries, presumably for having had relations with German women. Heiko Möhle, 'Betreuung, Erfassung, Kontrolle – Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenkunde', in Ulrich Van Der Heyden and Joachim Zeller (eds), *Kolonial Metropole Berlin: Eine Spurensuche* (Berlin Edition, Quintessenz Verlags-GmbH, Berlin, 2002), p. 244.

³ For discussion on emasculatation and internment see, Alon Rachamimov, 'The Disruptive Comforts of Drag: (Trans)Gender Performances among Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914–1920', in *The American Historical Review*, 11, 2 (2006), pp. 362–382.

to add a fourth dimension, internment of Europeans as an imagined experience among indigenous populations. However, the archival evidence consulted is not sufficient to do justice to such a study. Stibbe's exploration of internment was mediated by three factors, race, class, and nationality.⁴ In addition to external influences, the imperial space of the camp was also shaped from within. The four themes of patriotism, class, gender and race addressed in this chapter will provide a road map to understand how this occurred.

The maintenance of links, through the observance of patriotic customs, between the colonial periphery and the German centre were important in keeping the German Imperial mission alive. In fact, in Wilhelmine Germany one of the main arguments for the establishment of German colonies had been the fear of a dilution of German patriotism caused by German emigration. It would be much better for the metropole if adventurous Germans could be directed toward the German colonial sphere rather than have their labour and loyalties displaced to Brazil or the United States.⁵ The cultivation of this German colonial space was also heavily reliant on German women, not only in terms of debates on race mixing (the need to produce more white German settlers), but also in the image of female settlers as the cultural, economic and political partners of their male counterparts.⁶ Although the creation of a fully German identity, defined through a distinctly German work ethic, was underway in the colonies before the war, it remained subservient to the 'European/Native' distinction.

Ambitious plans for the establishment of German overseas empire belied the fact that before the war there was a distinct lack of Germans willing to move to the German colonies. This meant that the communities in the German colonies were formed of mixed nationalities, consisting of various European and American settlers. Thus, in the pre-war years there was a great deal of interaction between Germans and their fellow Europeans in the Reich colonies and beyond. As previously mentioned, the Germans in Samoa initially welcomed the idea of New Zealand taking over the colony, as it would strengthen the existing economic ties between the two sets of islands. Lord Kitchener, for example, had close ties to German East Africa; he was part of the Zanzibar Boundary Commission that divided German and British East Africa in 1885 and in addition to owning a coffee plantation close to the German East African

⁴ Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, p. 4. Stibbe separates class and level of education, although there was a distinct correlation between the two.

⁵ These arguments were based on the influential 1861 study on German 'work' by the writer, historian and ethnographer Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl. Conrad, *Globalisation*, p. 290.

⁶ Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*, p. 5.

border, he visited the German territory regularly. Kitchener indeed saw no reason for the extension of the war into the colonies, although of course it did so.⁷ The example of one German living in South Africa who, according to the *Kölnische Zeitung*, was interned in Robert Heights, Pretoria (Map 1, no. 68), even though he had fought in three wars under the British flag is an illustrative case of how the extension of the First World War to the extra-European world challenged European settlers' patriotic identities.⁸

Before the war, the *Teuton* clubs in places such as Singapore and Yokohama were the centres of European, not just German, social life with their ample supply of German-style beer, often brewed locally.⁹ German colonial settlers' pre-war connections to Britain meant that their patriotic identities were often not clearly defined. Joseph Karl Postel, captured in Cameroon, and interned in Baronscourt, England, complained bitterly of the 'English heads' in the camp, showing that not all internees were patriotic Germans. Pro-English feeling, he wrote, disturbed the camp harmony with the 'First Class Society' in Baronscourt having become 'English', praising the English officers and even making their Christmas speeches in English. 'They had ceased to become Germans, they were English.'¹⁰ Arthur Wilson, in his memoirs of the 1915 Singapore Mutiny, noted the difficulties experienced by 'hyphenated Huns' when he recalled an inmate at Tanglin barracks who was well known in Singapore before the war, bawling out 'Rule Britannia' at the top of his voice and got involved in arguments with another prisoner whom he accused of being a 'sanguinary German sausage'.¹¹ Pro-English sentiment might not only cause an uneasy atmosphere: it could also lead to violence. After the Singapore mutiny, one prisoner who was accused of being pro-British was transferred to India rather than

⁷ Samson, *World War I in Africa*, Samson argues that Herbert Asquith (the Prime Minister) had to send Kitchener to the Dardanelles in order to gain temporary control of the War Office and push for war in East Africa. pp. 193-196.

⁸ BA, R67/1365, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 30th September 1915.

⁹ TNA, FO383/70, 78735, Complaints from prisoners of war in Singapore, 16th June 1915.

¹⁰ TNA, FO383/81, 198923, Joseph Karl Postel, 27th December 1915. Postel's report from Sierra Leone also raised the fear of the effects of the racial other on German women. 'While in the enemy's country our enemies were spitting on us and venting their anger against us, our women folk had nothing better to do than make eyes at the soldier prisoners, English, French and Russians, and perhaps also niggers, Indians and Mongols. Shame on you! What shame you bring to our fatherland and what gratitude you women show to your brothers.' Ibid., p. 45.

¹¹ IWM, Singapore 1918. Arthur R. Wilson, *Mutiny Musings*, p. 40. Similarities can be seen with the hate campaign against hyphenated Americans in propaganda in the United States during the war. Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 691.

Australia with the other prisoners, out of fears for his safety.¹² In the main, however, with the outbreak of war and their subsequent internment, the 'symbolic differences' between colonial Germans and other Europeans became more defined.¹³

Patriotic displays were a prominent feature of camp life. An article in the *Daily Mail* in 1916 on internment in South Africa, noted that of the 2,500 German regulars in South Africa 1,000 were allowed out on parole while those in the camp flew the German flag and had a band strike up *Deutschland Über Alles* every night.¹⁴ Celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday have been marked out in accounts of German prisoners in Europe as the defining act of patriotism and an essential aspect in forming the imagined camp community. In the extra-European theatre this was no different. An article from *Die Freiheit* on Ahmednagar in 1915, noted that while there was a ban on alcohol in the camp the inmates were nonetheless able to celebrate the Kaiser's birthday 'in spirit but without *spirits*.'¹⁵ Further, it was not just Kaiser Wilhelm who was celebrated. The inmates at Malta (many of whom were from German East Africa) also celebrated Kaiser Franz Joseph's birthday in 1915 with a meal of oxtail soup, salmon, chicken and cheesecake with enough coffee and beer for 500 men, German and Austro-Hungarian alike.¹⁶ Prisoners were relatively free to express patriotic sentiment in the camps. In Ahmednagar it was found that 'the interned have full liberty to decorate their rooms with pictures, photographs, portraits of their sovereign and the German Generals, and with flags and patriotic emblems.'¹⁷ Through patriotic celebrations of 'German' events the prisoners could reaffirm a distinct German (or Austro-Hungarian) identity and connect themselves mentally to the struggle in Europe.

The war and the subsequent internment and expulsion of Germans had the effect of rallying them around the black, white and red flag. What had once been a sense of European identity in the colonies was now replaced by an awareness of German cultural heritage. Germans living

¹² TNA, FO383/436, 109002, 11th July 1918, Statement of Hannke. Hannke, a naturalised Dutch citizen, gave evidence at the court of inquiry into the Singapore riots. See chapter three.

¹³ For discussion on symbolic differences and perceptions of nationalism see Etienne Balibar, 'The Nation Form: History and Ideology', in *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 13, 3 (Summer, 1990), pp. 329-361, p. 347.

¹⁴ The *Daily Mail* correspondent wondered 'whether we are conquered or they? [...] and they are exceedingly cheeky, they say they are going to treat us as they treated the Belgians.' BA, R67/1638, *The Daily Mail*, 12th February 1916.

¹⁵ 'Geist und fast ohne "Geistiges".' BA, R67/251, *Die Freiheit*, 3rd April 1915.

¹⁶ BA, R67/1333, Bericht 40, 18th September 1915.

¹⁷ *Reports on British Prison Camps in India and Burma: Visited by the International Red Cross Committee in February, March and April 1917* (George H Doran and Co., New York, 1917), p. 26.

in the British Dominions quickly found their identities challenged by the war and many sought to reassert their national belonging. While the Germans from the colonies were being separated from their European counterparts they were coming more into contact with their countrymen from around the globe. Crews from German warships, such as the *Emden* ended up in captivity in the colonies, and their perhaps stronger patriotic bonds to Germany had an influence on their fellow captives.¹⁸ In the Australian case, as documented in Fischer's *Enemy Aliens*, Germans who before the war did not necessarily think about their patriotic identity had, through Australian attempts to intern all civilians with German backgrounds, to reconsider their standing on the continent.¹⁹ British subjects experienced a similar new awareness of national identity when they were interned in German South-West and German East Africa.

German missionaries, who made up a sizeable portion of the German settler population, were also divided between their higher calling and patriotic emotions. Reverend M. Heinrich, a pastor in South Africa, noted the difficulties of being a missionary and also a German national: 'I must admit that it is all very well to be in "Holy Orders" and to be thrown together with other nationalities, but in times of war it is dangerous, life is very hard. I would prefer to be allowed to live with the more than 1,000 German prisoners of war in Pretoria.'²⁰ Missionaries' statements or actions of pro-German loyalty resulted in internment. Bishop Munsch in German East Africa, already liable for internment as a German national, did not do himself any favours by declaring in January 1915: 'we trust that God will grant our [Germany's] arms victory also here in Africa and that our protectorate will not fall into the enemy's hands even temporarily.'²¹ The Bishop was subsequently interned.²² The case in Cameroon of Brother Alfons Herrmann, one of the 'pious gentlemen' of the Basel Mission, also deserves a mention here.²³ Brother Alfons was so determined to do his patriotic duty and help maintain German possession of Cameroon that he devised an 'infernal machine' with which to sink the British

¹⁸ The Captain of the *Emden*, Karl Müller, was taken first to Malta and then England for internment. Like Lettow-Vorbeck he was feted by both sides, being christened 'the Gentleman Pirate' by the British. BA, R67/1333, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 8th October 1915, 'Der Gentleman Pirat'.

¹⁹ Internment of Germans contributed to the manufacture of a 'war mentality' in Australia and served as a way to legitimise Australians fighting in Europe. Fischer, *Enemy Aliens*, pp. 62-63.

²⁰ TNA, FO383/105, 26145, Reverend Heinrich's letters, 16th March 1915.

²¹ TNA, FO383/289, 232691, Bishop Munsch to the Bezirksmann in Moshi, 5th January 1915.

²² A similar case of missionaries being interned was recorded in Togo. Four Swiss nationals of the Basel mission were expelled from the colony for 'noisily celebrating the sinking of the SS *Apapa* off the Gold Coast and interned in Britain. TNA, FO383/289, 234391, Telegram from Clifford, 11th December 1917.

²³ TNA, FO383/402 53149, Repatriation of Basel Missionaries from the Gold Coast, 23rd March 1918, Newton memorandum.

ship the *HMS Dwarf*, in order to block Duala harbour and to prevent other British ships getting through.²⁴ This 'infernal machine', essentially a boat loaded with TNT, failed to catch fire and Brother Alfons was arrested.²⁵ According to Frederick Lugard, Governor-General of Nigeria, when questioned how such action was compatible with his occupation as a missionary, Alfons, giving a good example of conflicting identities in the colonies, replied that he was 'a soldier first and a missionary afterwards.'²⁶

For these men in times of war, their national identity superseded the spiritual one. The British authorities were also suspicious of missionaries, carefully checking mission membership rosters across the British Empire and the former German colonies to weed Germans out, while non-German nationals (mainly Swedish or Swiss) were allowed to remain at their posts.²⁷ The internment and expulsion of missionaries from the colonies was met with mixed feelings in Britain; for example, the *Irish Catholic* newspaper objected to Jesuits being expelled from German colonies.²⁸ Along with providing newspaper coverage, the editor of the newspaper (and Irish nationalist), William F. Dennehy, wrote personally to Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, to lobby against their expulsion and the consequent damage it would cause to the Christianizing mission.²⁹ Dennehy unsurprisingly did not object to the expulsion of Protestant missionaries such as the Basel mission, as he believed that unlike Catholic Germans they were only interested in 'the extension of the power and supremacy of [their] own country'.³⁰ Rather than replying to Dennehy, the Foreign Office informed the Vatican directly that it was against the public interest to allow German and Austro-Hungarian missionaries to remain in the colonies whatever their creed.³¹ The attitude of the Foreign Office toward

²⁴ TNA, WO158/536, Lugard to Dobell, undated, written between November 1914 and June 1915.

²⁵ Brother Alfons was handed over to the French for internment in Abomey. BA, R1001/3973, Schicksal des Pallottiner-Bruders Alfons Herrmann in Kamerun, 1915 – 1920. Herrmann to the RKA, 26th April 1918.

²⁶ TNA, WO158/552. Captured German Documents with Translations. An account of the attack on the *Dwarf* is given in the captured diary of a town resident, M. Schumacher. On 15th September 1914, Brother Alfons used a mission boat, the *Max Broch*, which was laden with explosives to try and ram the *Dwarf*. The attempt failed but Brother Alfons nonetheless earned himself a reputation as a hero among the Cameroon Germans.

²⁷ Austro-Hungarian prisoners also received different treatment, but were mainly interned along with their German counterparts, although often not involved in reprisals such as the cutting off of mail.

²⁸ TNA, FO383/36, 141852, *The Irish Catholic*, 25th September 1915.

²⁹ TNA, FO383/36, 141852 Dennehy to Chamberlain 23rd September 1915.

³⁰ This was in opposition to the Catholic Missionaries who, the paper claimed, were 'devoted priests who are in a sense guests of the Empire, who have repaid a hundred-fold, by accumulated services, the hospitality extended to them.' *The Irish Catholic*, 25th September 1915.

³¹ TNA, FO383/34, 189951, Interdepartmental Conference on Missions, 13th December 1915.

German Missionaries was summed up in this statement from a 1916 report on East Africa: 'A German is a German, whether missionary or soldier, and as such will always be tempted to give the enemy (his own people) what assistance he can, so long as detection is difficult.'³²

Once interned, the most dramatic displays of patriotism in the camps were through escape attempts. The duty of officers to attempt escape was so much taken for granted that The Hague Convention legislated against harsh punishments for those who did try escapes.³³ Nonetheless, expressions of patriotism through escape came with a heavy and often humiliating price. One prisoner in Aus, German South-West Africa, Mr Bobbert, after his third failed escape attempt was returned to the camp in chains from Luderitzbucht with a number of 'negro criminals who were not handcuffed.'³⁴ In the extra-European theatre, perhaps the most daring and successful escape attempt was by one of the officers of the *Emden*, who used the opportunity afforded by the Singapore mutiny to make good his escape, eventually making it all the way back to Germany.³⁵ A German Red Cross report on Pietermaritzburg camp from 1916 noted that even though escape attempts were being punished with sentences ranging

³² TNA, FO383/193, 166758, 'Report on the Attitude of every Mission in German East Africa in Occupied and Unoccupied Territory in the Present War', 24th August 1916.

³³ Although previously mentioned The Hague Convention on prisoner punishments bears repeating here. The Hague Treaty 1907 Convention IV Chapter II Article 8: 'Prisoners of war shall be subject to the laws, regulations, and orders in force in the army of the State in whose power they are. Any act of insubordination justifies the adoption towards them of such measures of severity as may be considered necessary. Escaped prisoners who are retaken before being able to re-join their own army or before leaving the territory occupied by the army which captured them are liable to disciplinary punishment. Prisoners who, after succeeding in escaping, are again taken prisoners, are not liable to any punishment on account of the previous flight.'

³⁴ TNA, FO383/168, 113853, US Consul report on internment camps in German South-West Africa, 13th June 1916. The German Consular Secretary to Singapore, Lerch, also complained of being interned with black prisoners. A Note Verbale from the German government to the Foreign Office claimed that Lerch had been arrested on the Suez and was held under 'unheard of privations in company with 30 dirty coloured people of all kinds, where he fell ill with dysentery.' TNA, FO383/72, 119324, Note Verbale from German Government, 25th August 1915.

³⁵ The other German to successfully escape, August Diehn (the head of Behn and Meyer Co.), did not have such patriotic motives, however, preferring instead to seek asylum in the Dutch East Indies. There was apparently a bounty of \$2,000 put out for Diehn dead or alive and the six other escapees at \$300 each, BA, R67/1614, *Frankfurter Zeitung* 'Die Aufstand in Singapore', 20th April 1915. For a full account of the Singapore mutiny and the court of enquiry see IWM, P277, A.H. Dickinson, 'The First World War Papers of A.H. Dickinson'. The inmates at Tanglin camp in Singapore had also been digging an escape tunnel. IWM, Singapore 1918. Wilson, *Mutiny Musings and Volunteer Sketches*, p. 40.

from twenty-eight days arrest to fifteen months in prison, prisoners were still attempting to break out, concluding that; 'The patriotism of the prisoners remains very healthy.'³⁶

If those captured from the German navy were the most pro-active at putting together escape attempts, there were others who were keen to follow their lead. In Swakopmund, South-West Africa (Map 1, no. 61), an escape plot was hatched which involved help from locals sympathetic to the prisoners. German officers under the leadership of Naval Reserve Lieutenant Buester were continually sneaking out of the camp late at night to work on a boat that had been hidden for them by a local trolley operator, identified as a Mr Brugers, and by his foreman, Mr Schneider. They spent weeks saving up their rations and working on the boat. On the night of their escape attempt, however, they were discovered and captured, 'two of them by the wife of a Union Railway fitter armed with a broom whose slumbers had been disturbed by the noise.'³⁷ Where these officers were planning to sail to is unknown, but the court noted that given the condition of the vessel they were attempting to renovate, their plan was 'undoubtedly doomed to failure.'³⁸ However, what this incident does tell us was that the officers responded to their patriotic duty and duly made all efforts possible to escape.³⁹ Whether or not the attempt was realistic or not, at least they kept up appearances and followed the necessary patriotic protocol for a captured officer.

Prisoners in Ahmednagar proposed to escape via Afghanistan, 6,000 kilometres away, and collected money and Indian clothes in preparation. They even spent the weeks up to the escape sunbathing in a rather ridiculous attempt to blend in with the local population. The escape attempt was fruitless, with the escapees getting nowhere near the Afghan border.⁴⁰ Escape attempts from Ahmednagar were harshly punished and also served to highlight the racial role reversal of those interned in the colonies. In December 1916 four prisoners (three civilians and one officer), attempted to escape from the camp and were captured after two

³⁶ 'Der Patriotismus unter den Gefangenen ist aber immer sehr gut.' BA, R67/1172, Fort Napier/Pitermaritzburg Bericht 64, 1st April 1916. Achilles noted in his memoirs that one of the motivations for escape attempts apart from patriotism was that prisoners could simply no longer mentally tolerate being behind barbed-wire. Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, p. 42.

³⁷ TNA, FO383/310, 208816, Proceedings of Special Criminal Court of South-West Africa, 1st November 1917.

³⁸ Ibid. Brugers and Schneider were charged with War Treason and sentenced on the 12th of June 1917, to eighteen months and two and a half years hard labour respectively.

³⁹ Of course they may have been other motives (such as a spirit of adventure or a desire to escape from the constrictions of camp life) but it is reasonable to assume that patriotism played an important role.

⁴⁰ Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, pp. 42-43.

weeks on the run. As punishment for their escape attempt they were sent to a jail in Ratnagiri (in Maharashtra) where they were strip-searched by the Indian superintendent, a 'Parsee', with the emasculating proceeding that 'such parts as the human rectum had to submit to visitation.'⁴¹ They were then transferred to Bombay in handcuffs, followed by a crowd of spectators, and returned to Ahmednagar where they spent two months in solitary confinement. The sentence, especially having to submit to a bodily inspection, was not, according to the escapees, fitting punishment for a patriotic crime. 'We tried to escape and we expected proportionate and considerate punishment for obeying the call of patriotism, but we find it incomprehensible that after our re-capture we should have been subjected to such detestable uncivilised and degrading (to us as Europeans) handling at the hands of the natives [...] nothing on earth can compensate us for the trying ordeal and harsh treatment we have gone through.'⁴² How much of this ordeal actually happened was questioned by the British Foreign Office, but it felt the account was sure to be believed by the German government which would 'as usual institute reprisals to the detriment of some of our unfortunate PoWS in their hands.'⁴³

One final method of expressing loyalty to the German cause to be looked at was the official reassertion of one's ties to the German state. A report into Pietermaritzburg camp found 139 inmates who were applying for German citizenship. While many of these prisoners wished to reassert their German identity, some of those holding British citizenship may also have been applying for German passports to avoid charges of treason, which carried a heavier punishment than simply being an 'enemy alien'.⁴⁴ This may have been true in some cases, but the consular letter concluded that prisoners were appealing more on patriotic grounds: they 'could not help showing their German sympathies. They refused to deny their Fatherland now they are suffering for their love in the same manner as German citizens have to suffer, and

⁴¹ TNA, FO383/288 104382, B.B. Cubbit to William O'Reilly with transcript of a letter from Carl Marnitz (one of the four escapees), 25th May 1917.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ TNA, FO383/204 253423, US Consul Report on Pietermaritzburg, 15th December 1916. Those who lost their nationality were divided into five categories: 1. Those who had lived over ten years outside Germany and had not registered at a German Consulate. 2. Emigrants who came to South Africa with their parents or were paid for by the South African government. 3. Men who became naturalised British citizens. 4. Those born in South Africa and whose parents did not register them at a German Consulate. 5. Men who had emigrated before age 17 or had not completed military service.

their families suffer, in this hostile and excited country.’⁴⁵ The consular note, to be passed on to the Auswärtiges Amt, concluded with a request on behalf of these inmates in Pietermaritzburg: ‘It is their sincerest wish that their Fatherland will forgive them all sins of omission and commission, that they may thus regain a Fatherland of which they are now being deprived.’⁴⁶

In the light of the fact that preferential treatment was given to what were deemed of ‘friendly nationalities’, such as those from Alsace-Lorraine and certain parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, these prisoners’ decisions to actively seek out their German identity seem to have been driven by patriotism rather than narrow self-interest.⁴⁷ However, British patriotism, expressed through anti-German sentiment, in the colonies also played a role in forcing Germans into internment. One of the remarkable aspects of the war, from a South African angle, was how quickly the South African government was able to rally the population for war and with it to breed anti-German feeling among the general population.⁴⁸ An article from a South African newspaper, *The Star*, in December 1914, claimed that over 700 women had signed a petition to have all parole rescinded and all Germans interned.⁴⁹ An incident in mid-1915 when some German businesses were burned in South Africa led one German, Adolf Müller, to believe it was better to be interned rather than to remain on parole as ‘it is terrible, under the present circumstances, to remain free’.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ TNA, FO383/204, 253423, US Consul Report on Pietermaritzburg, 15th December 1916.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Admittedly, among those classed as friendly ‘enemy aliens’ was an Austrian-Italian interned in Belgaum who refused the release and freedom of movement that he was offered due to his Italian origins. He feared that, if his Italian background and potential release became known in the camp his business and possessions in Austria would suffer, and for this reason he preferred to remain ‘Austrian’. TNA, FO383/114, 147393, Request from Rudolfo Butowitch from Trieste, 28th July 1916. However, this case was abnormal, and usually the offer of preferential internment or release due to being, Alsatian, Italian or another ‘friendly ethnicity’ was taken up. This was especially true after the armistice when prisoners from Alsace-Lorraine or parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were repatriated before their German counterparts. TNA, FO383/516, 4084, Despatch to the Dominions from Alfred Milner, 3rd April 1919.

⁴⁸ At the outbreak of war there was a strong pro-German contingent among the Boer population; memory of the hardships of the war against Britain over a decade previously remained in force. The takeover of German South-West Africa was seen negatively by many Boers BA, R67/1320, *Burendank*, 2nd October 1915. Only after seeing action on the Western Front did South Africa fully get behind the war effort. See Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme*, p. 123.

⁴⁹ TNA, FO383/103, 10510, 28th January 1915, Article from *The Star*, dated 15th December 1914.

⁵⁰ ‘Es ist furchtbar, wie es scheint, draussen in der Freiheit zu sein.’ BA, R67/1172, Adolf Müller letter to his wife and daughter 23rd May 1915. This was also the case for B.F. Ottens in Maritzburg, who requested to be interned as he felt that the local population were so hostile to Germans that he feared

The difference between German and British had to be stressed in order to get the troops to fight in the colonies. The British had to be presented as the offenders. Theodor Seitz, in an address to a group of captured British soldiers in German South-West Africa, stressed the differences between Germans and British not only in their national customs but also in their methods of warfare; 'We did not invite you into this country. You invaded our country and fought us with natives. We are not like you English people with your beefsteaks and your ham and eggs. We are a frugal people; we have a small piece of bread and some coffee for breakfast.'⁵¹ This statement was intended as much as a rallying call to his troops as it was as an insult to the British captives. In the camps patriotic activities and displays of belief in a German victory were a way of keeping prisoners occupied through the monotony of daily camp life, and were allowed by camp authorities. Those who did not display the necessary patriotic fervour for Germany in their habits were in danger of being shunned by their fellow inmates. In addition, as one prisoner (Mr Striedl in Pietermaritzburg) noted, the conviction that Germany would win the war was the only thing that kept most of the inmates out of the 'Irrenhaus' (the insane asylum).⁵² However, if unchecked these celebrations of patriotism could cause trouble, as in the camp at Kimberley, South Africa (Map 1, no. 63), which housed prisoners of war from German South-West Africa. When celebrating the Kaiser's birthday in 1915, the prisoners under the influence of alcohol and a 'rebellious mood' burned down three barracks in the camp.⁵³ Expressions of patriotism, through escape attempts, reassertions of national identity and the observation of patriotic customs helped to unify prisoners and to cultivate a community within the camps. These elements of common experience, however, were offset by class differences.

for his own safety. TNA, FO383/23 44817, B.F. Ottens to the Prisoner of War Department, 6th March 1915. Ottens not only was an acting German vice-consul in Rhodesia and therefore ineligible for repatriation as other officials had been; he was also a reserve lieutenant further hampering his chances of returning to Germany. He was eventually allowed to live with his wife (who was English) on parole on a friendly farm away from large centres of population. TNA, FO383/24, 197686, B.F. Ottens, 24th December 1915

⁵¹ TNA, FO383/168, 97578, Report of Commission of Enquiry into the treatment of PoWs by the German Protectorate Authorities during the late hostilities, 22nd May 1916.

⁵² BA, R67/1172, Letter from Striedl, 19th September 1917.

⁵³ BA, R67/216, Report of August Attenberger of the German West African Schutztruppe, 18th December 1916. Even though the damage to the camp was severe, no one was punished for the burning and the camp commander only brought an end to the celebrations when the prisoners began to sing 'Die Wacht am Rhein'.

H.M. McAnnally, of the War Office, noted in a report on Ahmednagar that 'the most discontented and in certain ways most difficult to manage are those [prisoners] who are of a good social status [...] It is evident that the 'camp' at Ahmednagar holds many of this class – they are chronic grumblers.'⁵⁴ Most studies of prisoners of war focus heavily on the issue of class in the camps. Rachamimov focused on the aristocratic threads that connected the belligerent nations, helping them to allow official enemy envoys to inspect camps. As he noted, the list of camp inspectors 'reads like a *Who's Who* of Central European aristocracy'.⁵⁵ These aristocratic threads were also responsible for how the memory of internment was shaped during the inter-war years. In dealing with class it is impossible to ignore Richard Speed's idea of the 'liberal tradition of captivity'. The First World War for Speed transformed the nature of captivity in warfare. In Europe there was a disparity between the wartime practices of the Great Powers and the unattainably high standards set by the Hague Convention.⁵⁶ By the end of the war, according to Speed, Europe was left with two contradictory narratives of captivity, the liberal and the radical. The Russian Revolution had changed the nature of captivity and now captives were to be seen as potential recruits in the class war.⁵⁷ However, the historiography of prisoner of war and civilian internees remains very much a history of the officer and small businessmen.

In the extra-European world, as in Europe, camps were separated between prisoner of war camps and civilian internment camps, with a further division among the prisoner of war camps between those for officers and those for the rank and file. During the war in West Africa (Togo and Cameroon), internment was brief, with most civilians being repatriated quickly to Germany and the officers and other soldiers being absorbed into the camp network on the British Isles.⁵⁸ In the other colonies, internment was more long-term, and European-style camps developed. Class was an important defining feature in dictating how prisoners were to be treated.⁵⁹ In the early stages of the war and the evacuation of prisoners from the West

⁵⁴ TNA, FO383/162, 53425, Memorandum by H.M. McAnnally of the War Office, 21st March 1916.

⁵⁵ Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*, p. 6.

⁵⁶ Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats and the Great War*, p. 189.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁵⁸ The French and Spanish run camps, in Dahomey and Fernando Po respectively, complicated this picture.

⁵⁹ The case of the retired German officer Baron von Tucke is an interesting example. He had refused to sign an oath of parole and was held in solitary confinement for seven months at Yeruada prison in Bombay. The German ministry sent a telegram that threatened that an English officer of similar age (55) to von Tucke would be held in solitary confinement until Von Tucke's case received 'favourable

African theatre, German officers and other prominent colony men were interned in the relatively plush surroundings of Baronscourt or Lofthouse in the United Kingdom.⁶⁰ Here, these prisoners could mingle with other officers captured on the Western Front under conditions reminiscent of Richard Speed's idea of the liberal tradition of captivity. In the colonies themselves, camps developed along class lines. In Ahmednagar camp there was a clash between the established 'Indian Germans' and who saw themselves as being superior to the newly arrived German East Africans.⁶¹ Prisoners taken from Samoa were either kept at Somes Island or Motuihi, depending on whether they were officers, officials or men of 'the lower classes'.

In line with the Empire-wide practice of evacuation, most of the prisoners from German East Africa, after an initial period of internment in East Africa, were sent to camps in Malta, Egypt, India, and in a few cases, South Africa. Ahmednagar camp in India, however, was one of the very few places where a prisoner of war camp for officers, rank and file and civilian internees (male only) existed in the same space.⁶² Ahmednagar, a former British army barracks, was divided into three sections A, B and C. A camp was exclusively reserved for combatants while B camp included a mix of officers, missionaries and civilians. Work was voluntary; although there were attempts to get the prisoners to engage in labour, these were strongly protested against and camp commanders relented in the face of protests from the officers in A camp who refused to do 'coolie work'.⁶³ C camp, more commonly referred to as 'parole camp', was for male civilian internees and those who had negotiated a parole with the Indian Government. In C camp prisoners had the choice of sleeping in tents or in 'Coolie barracks'; most prisoners chose the former.⁶⁴ The camp was opened at the beginning of the war and initially housed prisoners of war and male civilian internees who had been living in India at the outbreak of war. Over the course of the war the camp experienced an influx of prisoners of war from the East Africa campaign. Due to the influx of combatant prisoners from East Africa, construction began in late 1917 on new officers' quarters.

consideration'. Von Tucke's case was quickly reviewed and he was given a bungalow in the civilian section of Ahmednagar camp. TNA, FO383/171, 38062, Government of India Report, 28th February 1916.

⁶⁰ For a detailed analysis of camp society in Britain, see, Panayi, *Prisoners of Britain*, pp. 166-200.

⁶¹ German settlers who had lived in India before the war, not Germans of Indian descent.

⁶² It contained prisoners from Mesopotamia, German East Africa, India and South-East Asia.

⁶³ BA, R67/251, *Hamburger Nachrichten* 11th April 1915, based on the Red Cross report on Ahmednagar.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

With respect to the social structure of camp life, Ahmednagar resembled many European internment camps. The camp had a tennis court, football pitch and boxing ring. In addition there was a theatre, and internees from Calcutta brought a well-stocked library of books with them. While the narrative of gender role reversal in Ahmednagar followed similar patterns to those within Europe, however it was the colonial role reversal that caused the greatest impact. Rachamimov's analysis of camp theatre also applies here; 'in terms of material well-being, officers enjoyed preferential treatment in comparison to rank and-file prisoners, but it was those cracks and fissures in their privileged sense of superiority that may have hurt the most. The dejection they felt about their loss of status and their sense of masculine vulnerability would find expression in the elaborate theatrical performances produced in officer camps.'⁶⁵ The theatrical performances may not have been as elaborate in the extra-European theatre but they provided the same outlet as those described by Rachamimov. Prisoners could also avail themselves of music lessons and engage in handicrafts as well as working on the publication of the camp newspaper.⁶⁶ However, the benefits of a thriving camp society were not open to all. One prisoner, transferred from German East Africa, noted that the camp shops were well stocked with tobacco, eggs, biscuits and wine. The only problem was that he could not afford any of these delicacies.⁶⁷

The main difference in the social hierarchy of the camp lay in where the inmates were captured. Many of the inmates who had lived in India at the outbreak of war belonged to English colonial clubs where 'before the war the British in India only recognised the difference between Europeans and natives and always stressed that no matter what the whites would have to stick together against the Indians.'⁶⁸ The war and internment, however, meant a relegation for these Germans down the Indian colonial social ladder. Within the camp itself, however, they remained the high-society as, in contrast, prisoners from German East Africa only had the clothes on their backs and no outside support network to provide them with extra money or packages. Albert Achilles, a member of the Schutztruppe captured in East Africa and interned in Ahmednagar, noted bitterly that 'Indian Germans' were bankers, businessmen or

⁶⁵ Rachamimov, 'The Disruptive Comforts of Drag', p. 368.

⁶⁶ Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, pp. 29-30.

⁶⁷ BA, R67, 251, Bericht 87, 3rd March 1917.

⁶⁸ 'Vor dem Kriege kannten die Engländer in Indien nur den Gegensatz zwischen Europäern und Eingeborenen und bei jeder Gelegenheit würde betont, dass den Indern gegenüber alle Weissen zusammenhalten müssten.' BA, R67/251, Report on Ahmednagar, March 1917.

engineers who could rely on a monthly allowance from their bank accounts,⁶⁹ while the German East Africans and other sailors were as poor as 'church mice' having to rely on Red Cross funds, especially as the currency printed in German East Africa was little better than a souvenir.⁷⁰ He complained that the camps, especially A and B, were 'hermetically sealed' from the outside world and that the prisoners could not receive any support, financial or otherwise, from Germany.⁷¹

This changed with the establishment of the internal 'Afrikaner Verein', run by the 'camp elder', Herr von Geldern. The Verein organised a pool of money to help new arrivals find their feet in the camp and provide necessary items such as soap and a change of clothes.⁷² This continued a colonial tradition of single men establishing 'Chummeries' to pool their financial resources to buy daily essentials and other luxuries that would be out of reach of someone on a single man's salary.⁷³ Here, Ahmednagar serves as a good example of the transnational encounters of Germans with one another. On repatriation, the discrepancy between the two groups remained noticeable. The Indian Germans needed carts and oxen to carry their possessions from the camp to the boats, while the German East Africans only had 'the shirts on their backs'.⁷⁴ Ahmednagar camp highlights that not all meetings of Germans in internment were harmonious and the colonial prisoners who were transferred into countries that already had well-established German populations did not always integrate smoothly.⁷⁵

Expressing similar concerns Karl Hanssen, the manager of the Deutsche Handels und Plantagen Gesellschaft (DHPG), noted in view of the planned removal of Germans from Samoa: 'I would not like to go to New Zealand as the New Zealanders have shown that they have no idea about the treatment of prisoners of war, and that a captured gentleman should be treated as such.'⁷⁶ This was not completely true as, prisoners in New Zealand were given better treatment according to their class which caused problems. The camps were divided on class lines, with Somes Island housing the rank and file and Motuihi, the more 'upper-class' members of

⁶⁹ Although Achilles did not clearly state, one assumes that these were accounts with British banks.

⁷⁰ Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, pp. 8-9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷³ TNA, FO383/347, 172638, 4th September 1917, K. Ringger Swiss Consul Report on India.

⁷⁴ 'Was wir auf dem Leibe trugen.' Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, p. 7.

⁷⁵ The same could be said of the camps in the Dominions that took in prisoners from the former German colonies.

⁷⁶ TNA, FO383/178, 13577, 22nd January 1916, extract from the diaries of Karl Hanssen.

German society. In a newspaper report on Somes Island, some of the familiar class distinctions that Stibbe discussed were brought to life.⁷⁷ The 271 inmates of the camp on Somes Island were almost all from the 'working classes' and had very little, if any, contacts in New Zealand.⁷⁸ Here, according to the *New Zealand Herald Tribune*, were 'all kinds of Germans [...] swarthy men and fair, thick-set and slim; faces such as one sees in the photographs of Germans captured by the British and French on the Western Front are visible on Somes Island.' Similar to Ahmednagar, poorer inmates who had 'no fear of losing "caste" by handling a brush, a shovel or a bucket' could earn extra money from the more well off prisoners, who included those taken from Samoa.⁷⁹

Some of the prisoners on Somes were not happy with having to live in a camp with the working-classes. Somes was often described as a camp for working class prisoners, with Motuihi serving to house Government officials and others of higher economic social rank including one woman.⁸⁰ One Dr Glantz, writing from Germany on behalf of some prisoners in Somes in December 1916, requested that as members of the 'upper-class', they should be sent to Motuihi as 'preferential treatment of the better classes [...] awakes jealousy and discontent among the lower classes and creates unpleasantness for both the commandant and for the prisoners.'⁸¹ The camp population could be broken into three social groups, according to Dr Glantz, the thirteen prisoners from Samoa, the 'aristocratic democrats' and 'the rest.' In response to these petitions the Foreign Office had the German prisoners captured in Samoa transferred to Motuihi.⁸²

The camp on Motuihi housed prisoners from Samoa and also Germans who had been living in New Zealand before the war, who (like the Indian Germans in Ahmednagar) had better local support and were seen as an upper-class in the camp. The island was small (440 acres) and the food bad, but the prisoners could alleviate their boredom and supplement their diets with fishing and make monthly trips to Auckland. The camp was broken down into two sections,

⁷⁷ Stibbe, *British Civilian Internees in Germany*, pp. 95-96.

⁷⁸ BA, R67/1339, Bericht 101, 8th February 1918.

⁷⁹ BA, R67/806, quotations taken from 'Interned Aliens: Life on Somes Island' by L.S. Fanning in the *New Zealand Herald Tribune* 7th April 1916.

⁸⁰ BA, R67/1339, Bericht 101, 8th February 1918.

⁸¹ TNA, FO383/289, 20728, Petition by 7 Germans from Samoa, 23rd January 1917.

⁸² The transfer only applied to Germans who had lived in Samoa the 'aristocratic democrats' remained on Somes. TNA, FO383/289, 67432, Prime Minister's Office, Wellington to Foreign Office, 21st March 1917. However, more internees were brought to Somes Island from Samoa in late 1918.

fourteen men and two women as prisoners 'first class' and twenty men as prisoners 'second class'.⁸³ While it was small and had previously served as an animal quarantine, conditions on Motuihi were better than on Somes Island, but there were still complaints from those interned there.⁸⁴ From former Governor Erich Schultz's point of view it was an outrage that he had had to share transportation to Motuihi with lower class prisoners, and he demanded that he and his wife be either treated in accordance with their social status or, if the New Zealand authorities could not provide such conditions, they should be sent to Fiji, where he promised to assent to giving his parole.⁸⁵ Schultz and his secretary (his wife was repatriated due to illness) were given a separate six bedroom cottage to live in on the opposite side of Motuihi Island to placate him. Here Schultz spent the rest of the war brooding, and writing letters of complaint to the authorities.⁸⁶

Although remaining on the whole patriotic towards Germany, because the prisoners were 'hermetically sealed' from the outside world the camps formed into microcosms of German society in much the same way as Ruhleben, Berlin, became a model English village. They were also places where Germans not just from different class backgrounds came into contact with one another but also those from different colonies. One German officer, on his arrival in Sidi-Bishr, Egypt, met old friends from German East Africa and noted that the camp also held many Germans from Palestine and the Balkans.⁸⁷ Adolf Müller, a prisoner in Pietermaritzburg, was surprised by the differing social backgrounds of the inmates, noting that even 'Frankfurt Jews' were interned there.⁸⁸ Soldiers, workers, government officials, missionaries and the unemployed all spent the war together in European internment cut off from their colonial surroundings by barbed wire. While not all accounts were positive, there was a feeling of a 'national spirit' that in some ways transcended class, at least from the point of view of the officers. However, those from the bottom rung of the social ladder may have felt quite differently. The only inhabitants missing from many of these model German societies were women.

⁸³ BA, R67/267, Motuihi, Bericht 63, 18th March 1916. The US Consul report noted that there were seventeen first class and twenty-five second class prisoners in the camp. TNA, FO383/239, 146375, US Consul Report on Motuihi Island, 27th July 1916.

⁸⁴ BA, R67/1339, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 'Die Besetzung Apias', 15th August 1916.

⁸⁵ TNA, FO383/30 61909, Dr Schulz, Samoa, 18th May 1915.

⁸⁶ BA, R67/806, US Consul Report Motuihi, 26th April 1916.

⁸⁷ BA, R67/862, Bericht 98, 27th October 1917.

⁸⁸ BA, R67/1172, Adolf Müller letter to his wife and daughter 23rd May 1915.

While there were fewer female internees than male ones, many of the same class and patriotism issues also applied. Of course their experiences were intertwined with those of men and the metaphorical 'emasculatation' through racial role reversal was felt equally, if not more strongly among women. Propaganda in Germany in the pre-war years had focused on attracting the right kind of women to settle in the far reaches of Germany's new empire. Fears that German men were being led into sin and vice by the lack of European women and thus lacked opportunities to establish a stable homestead worried the RKA and not least the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft Frauenbund.⁸⁹ Repatriation to Germany did not alleviate problems for women: oftentimes it worsened them. Separation from their husbands who remained interned in the colonies caused hardship for married women, especially those with children, and many begged the British government to be allowed to remain in the colonies with their husbands, as in this extract from a petition received by the Foreign Office from India protesting against a planned repatriation of women to Germany; 'We beg to stay at the civil camp here until the end of the war. We plead that we have no homes now in our native countries, our homes having been where our husbands were [...] we beg to remain in the same country until the Indian government thinks it fit to remove us together.'⁹⁰

Three other camps in India were dedicated to housing civilian internees. There were also camps to house Ottoman Turkish prisoners, mainly taken from the Mesopotamian Front. Apart from C camp at Ahmednagar, the other camp to house civilians from the East African theatre was Belgaum, a fort town in present day Karnataka state in South-West India, which was initially reserved for women although after protests some husbands were allowed to cohabit in the camp. As at Ahmednagar, the camp numbers swelled with the new arrivals, although this had been offset by repatriations of some of the original inmates before the blockade was in full operation. The camp was divided up into two sections; bungalows for families situated outside the fort and barracks consisting of one room each subdivided by teakwood partitions. Unsurprisingly, more complaints were heard from those who were housed in the barracks. In one case the Red Cross inspector found two families, consisting of ten children and four adults,

⁸⁹ The Frauenbund, focusing on German South-West Africa, engaged in various *Kulturarbeiten* such as providing lessons for women in horticulture and furnishing libraries for the men, all with the goal of strengthening a German colonial identity. For the history of the Frauenbund see Katharina Wagenbach, »Die weiße Frau als Trägerin deutscher Kultur«: *Koloniale Diskurse über Geschlecht, »Rasse« und Klasse im Kaiserreich*, (Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, 2007), chapter four, pp, 83- 107. The Frauenbund, while subservient to the DKG, did not always work in harmony with its controlling institution, and unsuccessfully tried to break with the DKG after the War. Ibid., p. 104.

⁹⁰ TNA, FO383/163, 68485 11th April 1916. Petition from the civil camp at Belgaum 19th August 1915.

sharing one barrack room, much to their discomfort. After successful petitions and the decision to allow husbands to live with their wives and children, however, Belgaum came to be referred to as a 'family camp'.⁹¹ When J.H. Smith of the US Consulate visited in July 1916, out of a total of 124 there were twenty-nine men. The forty-four children in Belgaum were allowed to attend school at the local Catholic convent.⁹²

A camp for women and children from British and German East Africa was based in Nyasaland, but the inmates were eventually sent to Tempe, near Bloemfontein, South Africa, where through the assistance of the Dutch Consul, women were able to keep in touch with their husbands in other camps.⁹³ The South African authorities were not pleased about having to house women and children in camps. They had only agreed to maintain them on a temporary basis, but by October 1917 they had been in Bloemfontein for nine months necessitating the building of more permanent structures. F.S. Malan,⁹⁴ hoping to spur repatriation efforts, noted that the South African authorities were considering allowing the women and children to live with relatives or friends, if the internees had any in the area, to keep costs down.⁹⁵ Robert Vansittart's reply was simple: as Germany was not allowing women and children to leave Belgium, there would be no question of them being repatriated at that time.⁹⁶

As in the Boer War, the British government felt it necessary for the successful military completion of the campaigns in the colonies to round up German women and children. However, in the First World War the immediate military necessity masked a more long-term strategy. If the British were to deprive Germany of its colonies for good, it would be expedient to remove anyone who could lay claims to German property.⁹⁷ In contrast to this the RKA, using the same logic as the British, hoped to keep women and other non-combatants in place in the colonies. Thus, Otto Gleim, the Unterstaatssekretär of the RKA and former Governor of Cameroon, in a letter to General Erich Ludendorff argued against exchanges of women, children and other civilians. Writing in December 1916, Gleim realised that there was not much

⁹¹ BA, R67/822, US Report, 11th July 1916.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ BA, R67/1320, Bericht 98, 27th October 1917 and letter from Frau Anna Bauer concerning her sister Hildegard Elizabeth Bauer in Tempe, 20th October 1917.

⁹⁴ François Stephanus Malan, normally referred to as simply F.S. Malan, Minister for Mines and acting Prime Minister of South Africa in 1919, while both Smuts and Botha were at the Paris Peace Conference.

⁹⁵ TNA, FO383/311, 245638 31st December 1917, Letter from F.S. Malan to the Foreign Office Prisoner of War Department, dated 27th October 1917.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ TNA, FO383/430, Interdepartmental Conference on Repatriation, 8th February 1918.

hope of retaining the German colonies apart from German East Africa, which was still fighting. Exchange agreements for women and children would affect the one place where Germany did have a foothold, German South-West Africa.⁹⁸ On the other side, the South African government was also keen to hang on to the German population in the interests of maintaining a European population in the colony.

The fear that exchange agreements made for one colony, mainly German East Africa, would affect other colonies essentially put an end to any exchange agreements and brought civilian internees in German East Africa into the reprisal cycle whereby they were used to get concessions for British civilians in occupied Belgium.

The effect of the British takeover of property and the colonial role reversal attached to it affected women as much as, if not more than, men. They were not only expected to maintain the matriarchal roles of housewife and mother; they were also expected to provide a moral example for young adventurous men who were said to lose their morals once separated from Europe.⁹⁹ Indeed women in the colonies were the embodiment of would be *Deutschtum* ('Germanness') in Africa, a reference that was made in contemporary literature and more obviously in 1930s German films about the loss of the German colonies.¹⁰⁰ In contrast to Germany, where the woman's 'life-world' was outside the realm of public male society, in the colonies German women were key in maintaining German identity and the structures of colonial society.¹⁰¹ For women in the colonies, race gave them status.¹⁰² Much as Rachamimov described capture in the European theatre as 'a precipitous loss of status in the social and gender hierarchy'¹⁰³, the capture of women in the colonies and their internment illustrated the added loss of status for Germans in the colonial racial hierarchy.

For example, in her answers to an RKA questionnaire, filled out on arrival in Germany, Magda Bubeck-Rodatz (captured on 3rd September 1914 but remained on parole until transport to

⁹⁸ 'Es liegt nicht im deutschen Interesse, dieses Schutzgebiet von seinen deutschen Ansiedlern zu entblößen.' BA, R67/877, Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes to Ludendorff, 15th December 1916. This document will be looked at in more detail in the discussion on repatriation in chapter seven.

⁹⁹ German colonial women felt that their persistence in the colonies was essential for the long-term preservation of the 'German idea' abroad. Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁰ Conrad, *German Colonialism*, p. 192.

¹⁰¹ Ute Daniel, *The War from Within: German Working-Class Women and the First World War* (Berg, Oxford, 1997), p. 236.

¹⁰² Daniel Joseph Walther, *Creating Germans Abroad: Cultural Politics and Identity in Namibia* (Ohio University Press, Athens, 2002), p. 62.

¹⁰³ Rachamimov, 'The Disruptive Comforts of Drag', p. 364.

Germany), noted that women had had to give up their guns and that the English were lying when they claimed that women and children had chosen to leave the colony. It was not only the colonial men who were disempowered on capture by having their weapons taken away. She maintained that they were being forced out and she had to move from her home in Kribi, in southern Cameroon, to the port-town Victoria, where she had been under the charge of 'Negersoldaten' and a drunken British Sergeant.¹⁰⁴ Women displayed a similar attitude to the loss of the colonies as men: 'Es war für uns alle ein trauriger Gedanke, dass die Feinde nun auch von diesem schönen Flecken Erde Besitz ergriffen, und unser einzigen Trost war, dass der Krieg nicht in den Kolonien entschieden würde, und es zu Hause um uns gut stand.'¹⁰⁵ The shock of the role reversal entailed in the loss of the colonies can be summed up in the words of Frau von der Heyden, who was brought to Tabora, German East Africa (Map 1, no. 73) for internment; 'In Urundi the natives were terrible, I did not even once have someone to carry my child and had to carry him myself.'¹⁰⁶ That Frau von der Heyden had to carry her own child signified, for her, how far the German settlers had fallen down the colonial hierarchy.

The loss of the colonies affected the social standing of Germans. After defeat in Buea, Bubeck-Rodatz noted that her own house help had lost respect for her and was no longer willing to take orders from Germans. 'I experienced the he highest degree of insubordination when my long-serving black chef refused to work, and when I went to give him a clip round the ears, he raised his hand as if to strike me. Needless to say, I threw him out immediately.'¹⁰⁷ Not only did she have to deal with the loss of social status, but according to her answers to the questionnaire it was awful to have to abandon the country where Germans with so much 'effort and diligence established an area of *Kultur*.'¹⁰⁸ According to Bubeck-Rodatz such shameful behaviour was not limited to Cameroon as they were transported 'like a herd of

¹⁰⁴ BA, R1001/3943, Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. Magda Bubeck-Rodatz responses, 24th March 1915.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ 'In Urundi waren die Eingeborenen sehr schlecht, ich hatte nicht einmal einen Träger für mein Kind und musste es selbst tragen.' BA, R1001/878, Behandlung deutscher Kriegsgefangener aus Deutsch-Ostafrika in Gefangenenlagern und deren Heimschaffung, 1915 – 1925. Brief Frau von der Heyden Mission Diakonen, Tabora, 30th November 1916.

¹⁰⁷ 'Den höchsten Grad der Insubordination erlebte ich eines Tages, als mein langjähriger schwarzer Koch die Arbeit verweigerte, und als ich ihm darauf eine Ohrfeige gab, die Hand zum Schlage gegen mich erhob. Selbstredend warf ich ihn sofort hinaus.' BA, R1001/3943, Magda Bubeck-Rodatz responses, 24th March 1915.

¹⁰⁸ 'Mühe und Fleiss ein Stück Kultur geschaffen haben.' Ibid.

cattle' surrounded by black soldiers through three colonies.¹⁰⁹ In sum, the takeover of the German colonies upset the colonial racial hierarchy, expressed by one female missionary in her remark: 'The blacks walk around in our clothes.'¹¹⁰

The breakdown of the common European 'civilising mission' in Africa reflected the general breakdown in the development of a homogenous cultural globalisation that was disrupted by the Great War.¹¹¹ A Herr Simon, in response to the RKA questionnaires on his return from Cameroon, described how he felt it necessary to apologise to a 'Neger' in Freetown (and to record this apology in the questionnaire) for the behaviour of German soldiers in Belgium by telling him that 'it was not right what our soldiers did in Belgium, they tied women and girls to trees and raped them to death.'¹¹² The sense that the war had had discredited the civilising mission and upset gender relations is felt in this statement. German propaganda denounced the employment of colonial non-white troops on the European front as it was believed it would threaten the future of colonialism and the supremacy of the 'white race'. The argument, reflected in the statements of Magda Bubeck-Rodatz, was that once Asian and African soldiers were trained in the use of modern arms, and had participated in a war between white nations, experiencing white soldiers' 'vulnerability, they would lose respect for the white race once and forever'.¹¹³ In contrast, E.D. Morel, the British liberal, argued that Black soldiers should not be brought to fight in Europe, not because they would lose respect for Europeans, but to protect them from being tainted by European barbarity. Africa, he claimed, needed to be culturally

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. She and the other civilians were transported to the United Kingdom via Lagos, Accra, Freetown and Gibraltar.

¹¹⁰ 'Die Schwarzen laufen in unseren Kleidern herum.' BA, R1001/906, 'Grobe Verstöße' feindlicher Truppen gegen Freiheit, Leben und Eigentum der Deutschen in Deutsch-Ostafrika. Materialsammlung, 1916 – 1920. Berlins Missionberichte, March 1917, letter from a female missionary dated 16th November 1916.

¹¹¹ Conrad, *Globalisation*, p. 55. The 'civilising mission' is understood here as the idea held among Europeans that 'civilised' people have a task, or duty, to propagate their cultural values in order to pacify 'barbarians', spread Christian doctrine and to 'simply do what is good'. As Jürgen Osterhammel noted, this presupposed a firm belief in the superiority of one's (European) way of life. Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2014), pp. 826-827.

¹¹² 'Es sei doch nicht recht was unsere Soldaten in Belgien getan, dass sie Frauen und Mädchen an Bäume gebunden und zu Tode genotzüchtigt hätten.' BA, R1001/3944, Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. Dr Ernst Quartz, Regierungsarzt für Kamerun, questionnaire responses (undated but probably January 1915).

¹¹³ Christian Koller, 'Representing Otherness in Soldiers' Letters and Memoirs', in *Das, Race Empire and First World War Writing*, p. 128.

insulated from Europe.¹¹⁴ Faced with the realities of colonial conflict in Africa, however, German commanders put aside their beliefs in Social Darwinism, and black troops were employed out of necessity.¹¹⁵ The following section, although by no means doing full justice to the topic, will look at indigenous troops in captivity.

Michelle Moyd in an article on Askari in the East African Front has tried to move the historiography, and image of the Askari troops away from the idea of the *loyal soldier* that was so often touted in inter-war propaganda by Lettow-Vorbeck and others.¹¹⁶ In her analysis of the motivations for Askari to fight for Germany, patriotism or a sense of loyalty to the German authorities ranked very low down the list.¹¹⁷ However, the image of Askari loyalty, while essentially a German creation to counter Allied post-war accusations that Germany was not fit to run colonies, has been an enduring and powerful one in explaining why many Askari troops fought for Germany until the end.¹¹⁸ Moyd focuses in contrast on the idea of the masculinity of the fighting man rather than loyalty as one of the main forces for keeping indigenous troops fighting for the German side, but this also poses problems. British references to internment of African soldiers while scarce, present the loyalty of African soldiers as malleable. Willi

¹¹⁴ Paul B. Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), pp. 41-42. In a similar vein Heinrich Schnee writing on the impact of the use of African soldiers to fight European wars, argued that 'the militarization of blacks, however, is also a crime against both races the white and the black. The training in course of time of hundreds of thousands of blacks in European methods of warfare and the use of modern weapons, putting them in positions of authority over whites of a vastly higher stage of culture, such as was done in wartime in West Africa with German prisoners of war, cannot but involve the gravest danger to the future of the white race.' Schnee, *Past and Future*, p. 99.

¹¹⁵ These Social Darwinist beliefs never really shifted, even in attitudes toward one's own troops, as noted in a letter from Oberleutnant Engelbrechten to Hauptmann Gaisser in Cameroon. 'We are fighting amongst beasts, our soldiers as well as the British and the Negro beasts of the country make use of the war to rob and maltreat. The most difficult piece of work will be after the war. This war called up by the British not only destroys all European value here, but stirs up the whole infamy of the Negro soul.' TNA, WO158/552, Oberleutnant Engelbrechten to Hauptmann Gaisser, 24th November 1914. For the employment of colonial troops see, Tanja Bühner, *Die Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika: Koloniale Sicherheitspolitik und transkulturelle Kriegführung, 1885 bis 1918* (Oldenbourg Wissenschaft Verlag, Munich, 2011).

¹¹⁶ Moyd, 'We don't Want to Die for Nothing', in Das, *Race Empire and First World War Writing*, pp. 90-107. See also, John Iliffe, *A History of Modern Tanganyika*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978), Chapter 8.

¹¹⁷ Moyd argues that more important than loyalty were the expectations of what benefits continued membership of the Schutztruppe would bring, including certain levels of care and compensation from the German officers. Moyd, 'We don't Want to Die for Nothing', in Das, *Race Empire and First World War Writing*, p. 93.

¹¹⁸ Susann Lewerenz, "'Loyal Askari" and "Black Rapist"- Two Images in the German Discourse on National Identity and their Impact on the Lives of Black Germans 1918-45', in Perraudin and Zimmerer (eds), *German Colonialism and National Identity*, p. 175.

Federowski, who was captured in East Africa and sent to Ahmednagar, found that his black servants had moved into the employment of his arresting Officer, J.E.T. Phillips.¹¹⁹ In the case of professional African soldiers, this question of loyalties is becoming clearer in the light of new research. As Moyd argues, the Askari fought as and understood themselves as professional soldiers whose willingness to fight was based on their evaluation of their officers' mettle rather than an abstract loyalty to Germany.¹²⁰

The Askari's motivation for fighting, not unlike soldiers in Europe, was reliant on a number of factors. For example, from the early 1900's the chiefs of the Beti had been nurtured by the German administration and developed into a middle-class elite in Cameroon. Karl Atangana, the paramount chief of the Beti, had been schooled by the German administration and was even sent to Hamburg, eventually becoming an *Oberhäuptling* or *Paramount Chief*.¹²¹ Atangana not only spoke German fluently; he also wore European clothes and even had a house built in a German colonial style.¹²² The reason for Atangana's loyalty to the Germans is more apparent given these factors, not to mention the 1-1.5 million marks he and other Beti chiefs had banked with the Basel Mission before the war, funds that would not be accessible until a favourable German outcome to the war.¹²³ Not even British offers of amnesty or the offer of land in Bekoko (in Spanish Guinea), or the opportunity to join the new Cameroonian police force could deter the chiefs away from following the Germans to Fernando Po for internment and subsequently on to Spain itself.¹²⁴ Loyalty was not the only issue at stake for Atangana, his social status in Cameroon depended on Germany's retention of the colony.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ TNA, FO383/161, 85751, Report by J.E.T. Phillips, 6th May 1916. Federowski claimed he had horribly treated while in internment and threatened with flogging with a hippo-hide whip. TNA, FO383/161, 587, Willi Federowski, 1st January 1916.

¹²⁰ Moyd, 'We don't Want to Die for Nothing', in Das, *Race Empire and First World War Writing*, p. 92.

¹²¹ Quinn, *In Search of Salt*, p. 57.

¹²² See Frederick Quinn, 'Charles Atangana of Yaounde', in *The Journal of African History*, 21, 4 (1980), pp. 485-495.

¹²³ Luckily for the Beti the money was safely returned after the war. Quinn, 'Atangana', p. 491.

¹²⁴ Quinn, *In Search of Salt*, p. 76. How the British were going to secure land that belonged to the Spanish crown for transfer to Cameroonian chiefs was not considered. The amnesty was in place for all former Askari in Cameroon. It was not honoured by the French however, as a telegram from General Frederick Cunliffe to the War Office noted: 'one of the terms of the surrender was that natives who had to carry out German orders at the expense of the Allies should not suffer. France had already executed some natives captured at Garua.' TNA, WO158/541 Cunliffe to War Office, 21st June 1915.

¹²⁵ TNA, FO383/213, 72564, Disposal of German refugees and natives from the Cameroons, 17th April 1916. The Beti chiefs spent two years in Spain before returning to Cameroon in 1920, Quinn, *Atangana*, p. 491. Atangana's daughter Katerina, aged thirteen, was brought to Limburg with German missionary

Jan-Bart Gewald's study of Mbadamassi, a prisoner of war in Aus, German South-West Africa, offers a revealing account of the complex identities of African soldiers. Mbadamassi, a Nigerian, was a former British soldier who had served in the West African Frontier Force before being shanghaied into German military service in Cameroon. After being deported to German South-West Africa in the wake of the Banyo Mutiny in 1909, where fifty black Schutztruppen refused to carry out their officer's orders, he re-joined the German troops there. On the fall of German South-West Africa, Mbadamassi was interned with the other German troops in Aus where he was employed in sanitary work.¹²⁶ In another documented case, this time from the British archives, a former servant of the John Holts agency (a British company) in Duala, Chalgo alias Mateo contacted the British embassy in Spain asking to be allowed to return to Cameroon.¹²⁷ Although Chalgo was a member of the German Askari and still wearing a German military tunic, Arthur Hardinge, the British Ambassador to Spain, argued that 'whatever the political future of the former Cameroon colony, this man has for the time being ceased to be from our point of view a German subject.' It seems that Hardinge did not buy into the myth of the loyal to death Askari and hoped to use Chalgo's return to Cameroon as a chance to entice more to follow. 'The man's treatment by us may have a good effect upon his fellow countrymen and former fellow soldiers in the Cameroons.'¹²⁸ A similar case to this involving twenty-four Cameroon Askari who were brought as prisoners to Aus, was solved to the same effect.¹²⁹ The Foreign Office again did not object to their repatriation to the colony and twenty-three men, ten

women in August 1916. BA, R1001/3947. Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. Passengers on board the *Hollandia*, 30th August 1916.

¹²⁶ Jan-Bart Gewald, *Mbadamassi of Lagos: A Soldier for King and Kaiser, and a Deportee to German South-West Africa*, in *African Diaspora 2* (2009), pp. 103-124. Interestingly Gewald refers to a 'Native refugee camp' at Usakos where 'refugees' were to be employed on the railways, p. 116. There are no references to such camps in the British archives that this author is aware of.

¹²⁷ Karl Fischer, a resident of Duala, accused the John Holts agency of plying the locals with alcohol 'to poison them morally and physically'. (moralisch und physich vergiftet). Fischer, *In Französischer Hölle*, p. 22.

¹²⁸ TNA, FO383/294, 35250, 14th February 1917, Letter from Hardinge to the Foreign Office dated 8th February 1917. The one objection to Chalgo's repatriation came for the War Office, who objected on the grounds that he was classed as a prisoner of war and therefore his repatriation expenses would have to come out of army funds. They withheld their objection when the French, who by then controlled Duala, offered to pay. *Ibid.*, 52161, 10th March 1917.

¹²⁹ The sending of these men was arranged by the Governor General of the Union, the French Government and the British War Cabinet. These men may have been serving as Askari in order to complete sentences of hard labour passed to them in 1910. Bruwer, *Kriegsgefangenenlager Aus 1915-1919*.

women and one child were sent back to Cameroon on 28th October 1917.¹³⁰ As Atangana, Mbadamassi and Chalgo's diverse cases suggest, there was a lot more to Askari identity than 'treu bis den Tod' German loyalty.

The treatment of colonial prisoners of war was also affected by post-war concerns for the establishment of British influence in the former German colonies.¹³¹ In East Africa the majority of the Askari were housed at makeshift camps in Tabora. The treatment or mal-treatment of German Askari affected the German (and indeed British) imperial image. There were also allegations that Askari captives still in their German uniforms were chained together around the neck and forced to do quarry work.¹³² According to the German Hauptmann Kieckhöfer, through forcing Askari to work in chains while still in uniform 'the English endeavour to undermine German prestige in those parts of the protectorate under their occupation.'¹³³ Heinrich Schnee claimed that the British singled out the Askari for harsh punishments such as floggings of up to fifty strokes, twenty-five over the legal limit.¹³⁴

However, contrary to what Schnee believed, the British were not 'doing everything in their power to ruin our [German] prestige in front of the natives',¹³⁵ but were in fact, explicitly allowing the European rank and file to retain their arms 'in order that they should not lose prestige with their Askari.'¹³⁶ In addition, General Jaap van Deventer (Commander of the British armed forces in the East African region), was so wary of the unrest that could be caused by the veteran Askari that he argued for their quick release from internment even arguing that the Crown should pay the wages that were owed to them by the German government in order

¹³⁰ TNA, FO383/294, 21903, 3rd November 1917. Telegram from SW Africa to Foreign Office. One of the men remained to work in Luderitzbucht. Bruwer, *Kriegsgefangenenlager Aus 1915-1919*, p. 23.

¹³¹ See chapter seven.

¹³² TNA, FO383/303, 13655, German Note Verbale, 21st September 1917.

¹³³ TNA, FO383/303, 98992, Askari East Africa, 16th May 1917, Note Verbale. Whether Kieckhöfer would have complained had the Askari been out of uniform is unclear. The War Office countered that the Germans were forcing Indian Sepoys to work in leg chains. TNA, FO383/303, 11807, War Office reply, 4th June 1917.

¹³⁴ Which law was applicable here Schnee did not make clear. One may assume, however, that it was the law of the German colonial authorities which was not amended in many cases until after the war. BA, R8023/88, Translation in English of the report 'Togogreuel' published 7th May 1920 by the Wittembergische Gauverbandes. (The report was published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. The English translator Richard Fett had previously lived in Bombay but was barred from returning after the war.), p. 32. Perhaps it was unintended, but the title bears echoes of German propaganda about uncivilised warfare against Russia in East Prussia, 'Koskakengräuel'. Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 191.

¹³⁵ TNA, WO106/1460, Heinrich Schnee's Diary, 29th November 1918.

¹³⁶ TNA, WO158/907, General Jacob Van Deventer to Dirmiliat, 6th December 1918.

that they could return to their home villages. This he claimed would in the long-term be much better than the 'very serious trouble' the new occupying force would have 'if we repatriate nearly 3,000 veteran Askari and carriers practically penniless' or left them idle in large groups in the major towns.¹³⁷ Payment would, in his view, 'have an excellent effect. It may save us very serious disturbances and will be an excellent investment.'¹³⁸ However, due to good care of prisoners, or that van Deventer's fears were exaggerated, the Askari peacefully disbanded after reaching the camp at Abercorn.¹³⁹ The overall British attitude toward indigenous prisoners in the colonies seems, from the evidence available in Britain, to have been one of re-education. The general attitude taken was that once Germany was defeated the 'question of the natives will settle itself'.¹⁴⁰ How this worked in reality was certainly more complex and while a complete picture may never been drawn, this section has tried to highlight the treatment of black German troops once captured.

To conclude, this chapter sought to look at captivity from the perspective of the prisoners themselves. German colonial society did not exist in isolation in the years before the war, and the interactions between Germans, their neighbours in British and French colonies, and other Europeans and non-Europeans within their own borders shaped their identities. The outbreak of war forced a reappraisal of their place within the global and colonial sphere.¹⁴¹ After the war and with the return of the majority of Germans to Germany, the wartime experience of captivity, coupled with pre-existing identities forged in the colonial sphere, made it difficult for these Germans to adapt and settle down in the Weimar Republic.

From the German colonial settlers' point of view, the war in the colonies redrew the boundaries of nationality. Germans in the colonies were no longer Europeans, but became identified by the country of origin. This meant a further categorisation of peoples and caused a dilemma for the British as to where Germans fitted in racial hierarchies. It also made the Germans more German. In everyday life, patriotic displays throughout the camp network were

¹³⁷ TNA, WO158/906, General van Deventer to the General Staff, 20th November 1918.

¹³⁸ Ibid. There was also the fear that disturbances in German East Africa could cause political unrest in South Africa. Samson, *Britain, South Africa and the East Africa Campaign, 1914-1918: The Union Comes of Age* (Tauris Academic Studies, London, 2006), p. 139

¹³⁹ Bror Urme McDonell, *Mzee Ali: The Biography of an African Slave Raider turned Askari and Scout* (30 Degrees South Publishers, Johannesburg, 2006), p. 214.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, FO383/213, 72564, Disposal of German refugees and natives from the Cameroons, 17th April 1915. William O'Reilly memorandum.

¹⁴¹ Steinbach, 'Defending the Heimat', in Jones, O'Brien, and Schmidt-Supprian, (eds), *Untold War: New Perspectives in the First World War*, p. 180.

evident. Celebrations of the Kaiser's birthday, brewing beer and maintaining general 'German' standards of hygiene in the camps were all expressions of the imagined camp community. Such expressions were not only possible in the extra-European camps, but also conformed with similar expressions to those in the camps in Europe.

In common with prisoner of war conduct across the globe, many of the German colonial prisoners of war initially sought to perform their patriotic duty to attempt to escape. This was almost to be expected of officers, and The Hague Convention made provisions for escape attempts. Although very few were successful, they highlighted the prisoners' need to display patriotism and also to be seen to be fulfilling their masculine role as soldiers. There are no records of escape attempts by women.¹⁴² In contrast to prisoner narratives from the Western Front, the sense of shame at capture was not as strong in the colonies as it was elsewhere. The Schutztruppe knew from the outset that they were outnumbered and most likely destined to lose the battle for the colonies. They could, however, take comfort in the fact that they had performed their patriotic duty and would have to be content with watching from the side-lines the war in Europe, where they felt the future of the German Empire and its colonies would be decided.

The development of a closer sense of German belonging through patriotic acts did not disguise underlying class tensions. Within the camps the old class order was re-established, with the better off prisoners (if they had not been able to bring their own 'boys') being able to hire others to do various chores for them. The camps for prisoners from the German colonies were mainly stationed outside the colonies themselves and meant that prisoners from the German colonies were housed with fellow Germans who had often been better established in their host country, as in the example of the Indian Germans at Ahmednagar. While there were opportunities for those at the bottom of the camp class scale to gain extra funds through employment, there remained underlying resentment against those better off than themselves.

Female settlers suffered a harsher role reversal than perhaps the men. The reasoning behind the internment or repatriation of women lay in the long-term military strategy, as 'the removal of all Germans from the occupied territory is an urgent necessity on military and political

¹⁴² This is understandable in the case of German East Africa where women like Ada Schnee purposely had themselves interned to use up British resources in tandem with overall German strategy for the war in the colony. I am grateful to Anne Samson for this information.

grounds.¹⁴³ Leaving women on the various farms and plantations throughout the German colonies would firstly entail the risk of them harbouring and aiding the male soldiers. The logic of the Boer War continued here: intern the women, i.e. the base of support, and through lack of supplies, safe havens or concern for wives and loved ones, the men would be defeated or give themselves up. The Boer War, however, had the eventual goal that the defeated Boers would become loyal British subjects.¹⁴⁴ In the case of German colonial settlers, the long-term goal was a total takeover of their possessions. Therefore women and children were interned in camps outside the colonies or sent back to Germany, so there would be no one in the colony to directly lay claim to property that had been taken over by the British.¹⁴⁵

Women experienced the same ‘emasculatation’ as did men in having their guns taken away, Charlotte Deppe was armed and ready to fight against the British in East Africa, and experienced first-hand, through insubordination from her house help, the effect of the loss of the colonies on the local population. ‘It was remarkable how often one encountered theatrical-patriotism (Theaterpatriotismus) and how people with fundamentally nothing against another nation were now filled with hate because of the inconveniences caused or simply that one could now “shoot a man”.’¹⁴⁶ While the term ‘Theaterpatriotismus’ implies a very transitory notion, the patriotism that was unleashed by the war lasted well into the post-war period, forming a notion of ‘Deutschtum’ among former German colonial settlers that was at odds with the Weimar image of Germany and was taken more seriously than the term suggests.

The deportation from the German colonies of German settlers also highlights the general British attitude towards Germany’s colonial rule.¹⁴⁷ For Britain, following the outbreak of the First World War, German men and women did not belong in the colonial world and the First

¹⁴³ TNA, ADM116/1543, Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor General of the Union of South Africa, 20th November 1917.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, Stucki, ‘Colonial Development of Concentration Camps’, p. 427.

¹⁴⁵ TNA, FO383/430, Interdepartmental Conference on Repatriation, 8th February 1918.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Es war merkwürdig, wie oft man selbst damals noch auf Theaterpatriotismus stieß, und wie die Menschen nicht etwa grundsätzlich gegen die andere Nation als solche eingestellt waren, sondern nur gerade jetzt den einzelnen haßten, weil er ihnen vielleicht mal Unbequemlichkeiten bereitete oder „den Mann totschießen“ konnte.’ Charlotte and Ludwig Deppe, *Um Ostafrika: Erinnerungen von Charlotte und Ludwig Deppe* (Beutelspacher, Dresden, 1925), p. 98.

¹⁴⁷ Ulrike Lindner, ‘German Colonialism and the British Neighbor in Africa Before 1914: Self-Definitions, Lines of Demarcation, and Cooperation’, in Volker Langbehn and Mohammad Salama (eds), *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2011), p. 258.

World War afforded the British Empire a chance to send them 'home'.¹⁴⁸ However, in the case of the former German Askari troops and German colonial subjects, it was hoped, by people like van Deventer, that these could be made into British subjects and through the presentation of Britain as a benevolent ruler consolidate control over the newly captured territories. Control of how the war was presented was not just important for projecting British power in the colonies. It was also necessary to gain the favour of public opinion in Europe, to which the next chapter will turn.

¹⁴⁸ Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies 1914-1919*, p. 16.

Chapter Five: Presenting the War and Internment in the Colonies to Europe

What was the view from Europe on the conflict and internment in the extra-European world? This chapter discusses the communicative links between interned and repatriated German colonial settlers, and their influence in shaping the image in Europe of the war in the extra-European theatre. British maltreatment (real or imagined) of German colonial settlers was used by the German government as a propaganda tool to counteract the various atrocity stories that were connected to the German abuses of civilians in German-occupied Belgium and France.¹ As John Horne and Alan Kramer point out, comparisons were made between the 'foul deeds' of the Belgian population and the Herero of South-West Africa to justify German reprisals against Belgian civilians.² The image of barbarity in Europe partly stemmed from the pre-war colonial theatre. Violent colonial imagery 'intruded into the substance of the "atrocity" question.'³ Through examining propaganda, this chapter links the extra-European theatre to the European front with a focus on the Cameroon theatre as a case study for how some of the accusations of barbarous practices by colonial troops arose. An illustrative case study of the murder of two Germans in Spanish Guinea by British *levies* (locally recruited soldiers, spies and trackers)⁴ will show that British initiatives in rewarding troops to gather information and possibly capture Germans helped fuel anti-British propaganda in Germany and in neutral countries.

Official German propaganda did not concentrate on the war in the colonies, instead placing more emphasis on the alleged cruelty of Allied colonial troops fighting in Europe. Probably the most important propaganda document on this topic, the *Employment, Contrary to International Law, of Coloured Troops on the Western Front Upon the European Arena of War by England and France*⁵ (issued by the German government in July 1915), related solely to brutality by colonial troops against German soldiers on the Western Front and contained

¹ Chapter six will look at Germans in captivity in French West Africa.

² For the comparison between the Herero and Belgian civilians see Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914*, p. 135.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁴ In Cameroon most British levies were hired from among the Duala.

⁵ British Foreign Office translation. The original was written in Berlin on 30th July 1915. See <http://libcudl.colorado.edu/wwi/pdf/i7332209x.pdf> for British Foreign Office translation.

accounts of 'barbaric' practices such as mutilation. However, attempts were made to integrate the colonial theatre of the war into this propaganda narrative, as highlighted in this extract from a Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft pamphlet: 'France, Belgium and England, who claim to be fighting on behalf of civilisation, have considered it compatible with the dignity of the white races not only to bring over coloured ones, placed under their tutelage to Europe, in order to defend that civilisation; but also to treat the native population in Africa and elsewhere to the spectacle of white i.e. German, men and women being subjected to the utmost degradation.'⁶

The targets of the propaganda during the war were three-fold. First, Germany, although having had a head start over its enemies in the establishment of a formal propaganda administration under Matthias Erzberger, was on the defensive.⁷ Having invaded neutral countries (Belgium and Luxembourg), Germany needed to make its war aims clear to international opinion and also had to counter stories relating to abuses in occupied Belgium and France. The colonies offered a way to do this. Although Alice Goldfarb Marquis argued that the discussion of losses in the colonies was discouraged by the German government,⁸ once the colonies, with the exception of German East Africa, were irretrievably defeated, there was space to portray Germans as the victims of empires that did not have the common European civilising mission at heart. Prisoners who were sent back to Germany by the Allies shortly after capture were thus able to campaign against the British and bring the war in the colonies into German public discourse. On their return to Europe, they publicly expressed their dissatisfaction with their treatment in a way that those who remained in the camps in the colonies could not. They were also able to utilise connections and groups to which they belonged, like the Basel missionaries, as well as their associated publications.

The German colonies, as the only German territory occupied by the British, provided the terrain in which to seek propaganda stories. They also provided ready-made imagery of colonial violence in the form of a mental 'European colonial archive' (the common knowledge of the treatment, exploitation and extermination of 'sub-humans' accumulated by western

⁶ BA, R8023/88, Published in English as, *A Protest of the German Colonial Society of Berlin*, by the DKG in October 1917.

⁷ David Welch, *Germany, Propaganda and Total War 1914-18: The Sins of Omission* (Athlone Press, London, 2000), p. 21.

⁸ Goldfarb, 'Words as Weapons', p. 482.

powers over the course of colonial history) recognisable to the majority of Europeans.⁹ The key focus on the war in the colonies for the German propaganda campaign was racial and violent and drew on imagery of savage warfare and mutilation. According to this propaganda, the employment of colonial troops by the Allies on the Western Front violated the laws of war and white racial solidarity, and, after participating in warfare in Europe, colonial troops would become accustomed to the idea of killing white men, thereby weakening the legitimacy of European imperial rule.¹⁰ Hence the British, according to this narrative, through the mobilisation of their multi-racial empire for war and by turning against the Germans in Africa, had betrayed the common Christian civilising mission. Apart from the damage done to imperial prestige, this would, the narrative claimed, also spark unrest and rebellion.¹¹

Secondly, and conversely, it was necessary for the British, especially in the early stages of the war, to present their involvement in the war as a reaction to the German invasion of Belgium.¹² A large part of the literature on the war focuses on the 'rape of Belgium' as the key mobilising factor for the British. In terms of formal organisation, Lord Newton, controller of the Foreign Office prisoner of war department, also became the nominal head of the Foreign Office News Department which dealt with the organisation of propaganda.¹³ To maintain Britain's image as acting in the interests of defenceless Belgium, it was important that the British be presented as the civilised power in every aspect of the fighting, including treatment of prisoners of war in the colonies, to contrast with the Germans. The propaganda campaign also spread across borders and was seen as vital in winning over neutrals, with the United States in the first half of the war providing the main theatre for the propaganda campaign. The British monitored the

⁹ Here we follow Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski's definition of the 'colonial archive'. Gerwarth, Malinowski, 'Hannah Arendt's Ghosts', pp. 298-299. This is also present in Susanne Zantop's influential work on the representations of the colonial world in pre-colonial Germany and the influence of these images in the reality in the construction of a colonial Empire. Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*.

¹⁰ Mulligan, *Great War for Peace*, p. 85.

¹¹ The infamous appeal, *To the Civilised World*, signed by ninety-three prominent German figures from the arts, universities and politics and published in October 1914 argued that militarism had been essential to the defence of the German nation. One of the signatories, the 'Welterklärer' Ernst Haeckel, was one of the most influential proponents of the idea of Germany as the last bastion of European culture. Ernst Piper succinctly (but perhaps rather bluntly) summed up this argument as 'Goethe gegen die Neger'. Ernst Piper, *Nacht Über Europa, Kulturgeschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (Propyläen, Berlin, 2013), p. 219. (For the text of 'To the Civilised World' see Professors of Germany, 'To the Civilised World', in *The North American Review*, 210, 765 (August, 1919), pp. 284-287.)

¹² Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, p. 544.

¹³ Michael Sanders and Philip Taylor, *British Propaganda During the First World War, 1914-18* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1983), p. 49.

American pro-German press closely and were quick to rebut any negative portrayals of Britain's war effort.¹⁴

Finally, and in addition to the moral outrage caused by Germany's actions in Belgium, Britain looked to Germany's colonial record for fodder for the propaganda campaign. Britain shied away from trying Germans in the colonies for crimes committed during the fighting, preferring instead to keep a dossier that could be used in a future post-war war-crimes tribunal.¹⁵ The argument that the Germans, as the aggressors in Belgium, were not fit to run colonies or be the vanguard of the civilising mission was backed up through references to German atrocities against the Herero (1904-07) and during the Maji-Maji (1905-07) rebellions. As William Roger Louis argued, the doctrine of Germany's 'colonial guilt' began from the outbreak of the war and was linked to events in Belgium: 'Huns could not be trusted with the sacred task of civilising other peoples.'¹⁶ This of course signified that there was something different about Germany compared with other European colonising powers and that it was not to be counted as part of the great civilising mission. This propaganda about Germany's unsuitability to run a colony would become especially important after America's entry into the war and the imperial powers' need to stake their claims at the Paris Peace Conference on German territory not only

¹⁴ They were also keen to rebut any positive reports on British prisoners in German-run camps. TNA, FO383/190, 89391, May 11th 1916, The Foreign Office discussed what counter-action to take to an article in the *Bridgeport Telegram*, a Connecticut based paper, of 13th April 1916 entitled 'Englishmen play football in prison camp of the Germans'. The Foreign Office later faced allegations that they were censoring reports of good conditions in camps in Germany. Ibid., 99208, Foreign Office to Sir George Tomlin, 19th May 1916. After the United States' entry into the war the French felt that Britain was neglecting its image in neutral states. Lord Bertie, the British Ambassador in Paris, was cautioned that neutrals' opinions 'should not be estimated according to the material force of which they dispose.' TNA, FO383/289, 88350, Lord Bertie to the Foreign Office, 2nd May 1917.

¹⁵ To note two exceptions, however; Walther Böhmer, a settler in German South-West Africa, was sentenced to three years imprisonment for shooting two black labourers for deserting his neighbour's plantation in July 1916. Böhmer was perhaps only convicted as he had a previous record, having beaten one of his servants to death in 1912. TNA, FO383/191, 179872, Report on Walther Böhmer by F.S. Malan, 11th September 1916. From German East Africa, Captain Heinrich Naumann was sent to Britain to stand trial for the murder of Lieutenant Sutherland and 'cruelty to native women'. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment but returned to Germany in November 1919. Paice, *Tip and Run*, p. 315. The actual post-war tribunals, held in Leipzig were a 'mockery of justice' with only forty-five prosecutions (all of mid-level German Army officers) out of an initial list of 800 accused. This was partly due to the inability of the victorious powers at Paris to agree on a definition of 'war crime' and more to do with the British blocking extradition of German suspects in attempt at reconciliation with Germany. See Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014), pp. 1-2 and Alan Kramer, 'The First Wave of International War Crimes Trials: Istanbul and Leipzig' in *European Review*, Vol.14(4) (2006), pp.441-455, p. 449.

¹⁶ Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies 1914-1919*, quote from Professor Jean Stengers, p. 9.

through the right of conquest but also in the interests of the inhabitants of the colonies.¹⁷ It would also affect German colonial settlers' self-perception in the inter-war years, when they rejected this idea of a specific German 'colonial guilt'.¹⁸

Communication with Europe from the internment camps of the extra-European theatre was restricted through the difficulties in sending letters over long-distances in war time, limits on the frequency and length of prisoner letters, censorship and reprisal punishments. For example, Heinrich Schnee's wife, Ada, who was initially interned in Tabora and then moved to the Belgian Congo before her release in 1917, was not able to hear from her husband even after her return to Germany, mainly due to the guerrilla-style combat in German East Africa and the problems this posed for communication.¹⁹ The inability to communicate effectively increased prisoners' isolation and their fear of being forgotten in Germany. Reverend Hübner, of the *Berliner Missionsgesellschaft*, writing back to Berlin in 1916 expressed anxiety about the lack of information in Germany about the extra-European theatres: 'Hoffentlich erkennt man in Deutschland die wahre Bedeutung dieses Krieges, in dem es sich um Ausrottung aller Deutscher aus dem Kolonien nach den bisherigen Erfahrungen handelt.'²⁰

Erich Schultz (the former governor of Samoa) complained bitterly about the restrictions imposed on prisoner mail. He questioned the power structures that were in place to deal with prisoners of war in the extra-European theatre, in his case with the New Zealand authorities and their involvement in censoring mail. He argued that 'making the transmission to Europe of correspondence of Ps.o.W. [sic] dependent upon the assent of the New Zealand Government [...] simply empowers the latter [New Zealand] to control and prevent at pleasure all

¹⁷ C.M. Andrew and K.S. Kanya-Forstner, 'The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims, 1914–1918' in *The Historical Journal*, 17, 1 (March, 1974), pp 79–106, p. 99.

¹⁸ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, p. 15.

¹⁹ Ada Schnee, although a New Zealander, as previously mentioned, chose to be interned as a method of distracting Allied resources. She spent the war in Belgian internment from 1914 to January 1917. She summed up what it was like to be a prisoner in Africa succinctly; 'The monotony of tropical life, especially as a prisoner of war, does not tend to strengthen one's nerves. Tabora [German East Africa] is beastly but the Congo is worse, much worse than the Belgians say.' BA, R1001/878, Behandlung deutscher Kriegsgefangener aus Deutsch-Ostafrika in Gefangenenlagern und deren Heimschaffung, 1915 – 1925. Ada Schnee to Alfred Hafels, 29th November 1916. In a side note, in 1932 Heinrich Schnee faced a scandal when rumours were spread that Ada had 'Farbigen blut in ihren Adern' (coloured blood in her veins). BA, R8023/666, Schnee to Seitz, 22nd December 1932. He wrote directly to the Foreign Minister von Neurath, blaming jealousy within the Foreign Office over Schnee's posting to the United States in 1922/23 and proceeded to give an account of Ada's family tree citing her mother's background in the O'Donnell family. Ibid. Schnee to von Neurath, 22nd December 1932.

²⁰ BA, R1001/878, Abschrift Blantyre, 17th October 1916, Missionary Hübner to the Director of the Berliner Missionsgesellschaft.

communication between the Ps.o.W. and their diplomatic representatives in London as well as with their own government.²¹ Giving the New Zealand government the chance to censor letters before they reached Britain meant that any negative comments on the New Zealand authorities would be blocked. Moreover, prisoners, he argued, were 'being practically deprived of their status as British Imperial Prisoners and subjected to the arbitrary power of a British colonial Government which, although participating in the military operations of the British Empire under the British Flag, has no international standing and more particularly no standing as a belligerent unit.'²² Schultz throughout his time in internment argued with the Swiss Consul in Auckland and the New Zealand and British governments over correspondence, the lack of inspections of the camp, and his warranted distrust of the Swiss Consul (headed by a British citizen, William Pugh).²³ While these complaints were mainly self-serving, they at least kept the authorities aware of the camp and may have helped bring improvements in conditions there.

Censorship of mail also erected barriers to communicating with Germany. Avoiding the censor was difficult, as Karl Hanssen in Samoa found out when attempting to send his diaries home. Hanssen had been on parole in Apia, Samoa, until his diaries were intercepted by the censor in London. The diaries revealed sensitive information pertaining to the war and administration in Samoa and also that he was trying to establish a credit in San Francisco that could then be transferred to Hamburg.²⁴ For this he was sentenced to six months imprisonment in a common jail and to be retained as a prisoner of war until the cessation of hostilities, and six of his employees were fined for 'violation of the censorship regulation'.²⁵

Regardless of the potential punishments, however, some prisoners tried to send messages home through using codes or references that only family members or friends would understand. A simple, although very transparent, example from a prisoner in Egypt to his

²¹ BA, R1001/2629, Schultz to the Swiss Consul, 20th April 1919.

²² Ibid.

²³ Schultz refused to deal with Pugh, further complicating his attempts to communicate with Europe. BA, R1001/2629, Krieg in Deutsch-Neuguinea 1914 – 1918. Schultz to the Swiss Consul, 20th April 1919.

²⁴ Hanssen had no doubt that the 'sword of Damocles' swayed over him for his actions. TNA, FO383/178, 13577, 22nd January 1916, extract from Hanssen's diary, 21st December, 1914. For an analysis of Hanssen's diaries see: James N. Bade, *Karl Hanssen's Samoan War Diaries, August 1914-May 1915: A German Perspective on New Zealand's Military Occupation of German Samoa* (Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2011).

²⁵ TNA, FO383/178, 13577, 22nd January 1916, extract from a despatch from the Administrator of Samoa to the Governor of New Zealand no. 24, dated 27th October 1915.

parents noted: 'I find myself in an internment camp in Egypt. It is no wonder that Moses and his flock fled.'²⁶ Karl Grün, an internee on Somes Island, included a more sophisticated code in his bi-monthly letters to his sister.²⁷ When deciphered it read out 'warum hilft ihr uns nicht.' (Why do you not help us?) Using a reference to a mental health facility in Aachen, Illenau, he was able to indicate that nine men in the camp had gone insane.²⁸ The camp in Maadi, Egypt was similarly compared to 'Raspelhus' (a jail) and Stephansfeld (an insane asylum).²⁹ Hermann Degenhardt in Sidi Bishr, Egypt, in a letter to his uncle said of the camp that 'all in all it is like being in Moabit' (a Berlin prison). Degenhardt's letter also highlighted the separation of families; he had to write to Europe in the hope of finding out about his wife as he was unable to contact her for four months following his transfer from German East Africa to Egypt.³⁰ In one case however, the British were willing to relax their censorship. John Pabst, a prisoner in Malta, attempted to send a photograph of himself to his wife in Dar es Salaam. Although it was intercepted by the censor, Robert Vansittart of the British Foreign Office argued, 'I think we might in this case relax our prohibition and let the photo go to its destination. The prisoner does not look ill-fed or badly treated and the photo may be of some sort of use from a propaganda point of view.'³¹

Apart from content, the length and regularity of prisoner mail placed further restrictions on communication. The Swiss consul in a report on India in 1917 condemned the restrictions on mail; in Ahmednagar inspectors found the camp overall satisfactory but, 'a sore point with the prisoners is undoubtedly the question of correspondence, and I must say that their complaints are justified.'³² A further report into the same camp found that the restriction of prisoners to writing one letter per week on one small sheet of paper made correspondence 'practically illusory'.³³ Letter writing was the main method of contacting home, and although the camp network claimed to have standardised treatment, there were disparities in how mail was handled. Inmates at the camp at Verdala, Malta for example, complained at only being allowed

²⁶ 'Ich befinde mich in einem Gefangenlager in Ägypten. Es ist kein Wunder, dass Moses mit seine Schar floh.' BA, 67/263, Letter from Karl Humbert in Maadi, Egypt, 13th June 1917.

²⁷ Prisoners were allowed to send two letters a month from Somes Island.

²⁸ BA, R1001/2628, Krieg in Deutsch-Neuguinea 1914 – 1918. Karl Grün to his sister, 21st August 1918.

²⁹ BA, R67/263, Maadi, Abstract from a letter from prisoner 19532, 26th September 1917.

³⁰ BA, R67/263, Maadi, Hermann Degenhardt to his uncle, 14th September 1917.

³¹ TNA, FO383/435, 112090, Photograph of John Pabst, 28th August 1918. Vansittart memorandum. Similarly, twelve more photographs of prisoners of war were allowed to be sent to their destinations. Ibid., 115294, 15th October, 1918.

³² BA, R67/313, 22nd April 1917, Consulate for Switzerland Report on India.

³³ TNA, FO383/346, 172638, Consulate for Switzerland Report on India, 4th September 1917.

to write in English and their protests were published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* with the retort 'imagine the commotion the British would make were they restricted to writing letters only in German.'³⁴

Letters could also be used to agitate against British rule in the colonies. Reverend Jakob Hofmeister, in Cameroon, played a double role as Christian missionary and German soldier. During his brief spell in captivity he was caught smuggling letters to his converts among the Duala.³⁵ He wrote that any Duala who had supported the British would be punished after the inevitable German victory, threatening 'if Germans will have to return to Duala then all those that are against them will be killed without mercy.'³⁶ The letter had been read out to a gathering on the banks of the Wouri River and was subsequently handed in to the British authorities.³⁷ In fact, Hofmeister smuggled these letters out of his internment camp with the intention that they would be discovered, in an attempt to trick the British into thinking that he was at the forefront of a campaign to turn the Duala against British rule and thus distract British resources (however small) from the main theatres of war.³⁸ While, in this case, the Duala had been anti-German even before the war and Hofmeister's threats would not alter that,³⁹ the British nonetheless took measures to prevent agitation by German internees in the colonies (one of which was to deport Hofmeister to Germany), feeling it unwise to allow the spread of inflammatory anti-British propaganda.

³⁴ 'was würden die Engländer für einem Lärm anstellen, wollten wir denen vorschreiben, nur noch deutsche Briefe abzusenden.' BA, R67/1333, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 9th March 1915.

³⁵ The texts were written in the Duala language. The Basel Mission had previously clashed with Ebermaier over its insistence on using indigenous languages in its religious teaching. Ebermaier saw the lack of German being used in the colony as a 'grave national and political failure.' Curiously the DKG agreed with the Basel Mission and counselled against teaching indigenous people German (apart from a few tribal leaders). The logic was that, were the subordinate Africans to have a common language they could potentially unite against their colonial leaders. Kenneth J. Orosz, *Religious Conflict and the Evolution of Language Policy in German and French Cameroon 1885-1939* (Peter Lang, New York, 2008), pp. 161- 172, Ebermaier quote, p. 168.

³⁶ TNA, FO383/177, 61916, Hofmeister's Letter, 1st April 1916. The letter was addressed to 'the Christian Churches of the whole of the Duala District', by Jakob Hofmeister.

³⁷ TNA, FO383/177, 61916, Dobell to the Foreign Office, 21st February 1916.

³⁸ BA, R1001/3947, Jakob Hofmeister 'Bericht über meine Dienstleistung in Kamerun', 6th June, 1916.

³⁹ The Duala were the lead conspirators in an anti-German plot shortly before the outbreak of war. Their leader Rudolf Manga Bell was hanged for high treason in June 1914. TNA, WO158/552 Lieutenant Nothnagel's Diary 8th August 1914. William Bell, Rudolf's uncle, was in Lagos, Nigeria at the start of the war and helped to recruit guides, spies and pilots for the British. BA, R1001/3991, Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. *Blackwood's Magazine*, 'Doing Her Bit: Account of a Cruiser's Operations in the Cameroons', December issue 1915. Similarly Octaviano Olympio, the Afro-Brazilian uncle of the future president of Togo, Sylvanus Olympio, used the war as an opportunity to continue pre-war anti-German agitation with the support of Britain. Conrad, *German Colonialism*, p. 49.

Furthermore, in India measures were taken to cut communication between prisoners and the local population for fear of the potential for agitation. The Ahmednagar camp authorities feared that German prisoners had been specifically instructed to take up the study of 'languages of the Near East [...] to enable them to take up positions after the war where those languages are spoken and continue Germany's 'Drang nach Osten' (push eastwards).⁴⁰ While facilities were provided for the tuition of English, French and other European languages in the camp, for this reason none were provided for Turkish, Arabic, Persian or other Asian languages. This served two purposes. Firstly, knowledge of local languages could aid prisoners in making escape attempts, but more importantly and noted by the Foreign Office, it was undesirable for Germans to become fluent in a language through which they could agitate against the Crown. This fear of German agitation was far from illusory. The Berlin India Committee, established by the Auswärtiges Amt shortly after the break out of war, recruited prominent Indian activists in Europe and the United States with the express goal of creating unrest in the sub-continent. The British uncovered and foiled plans for an uprising in India scheduled for February 1915.⁴¹ Germany also set up special camps for the recruitment of would be Indian agitators and spies. The goal was to give first preference in any repatriation schemes to prisoners who were 'Deutschfreundlich'.⁴²

Most importantly for prisoners, reprisals disrupted the ability of prisoners to communicate with one another. The exact date of when reprisals, in the form of restrictions on mail, were enacted is unclear from the archival evidence but they seem to have been introduced in late 1916 to early 1917.⁴³ From this time on, prisoners could write to Germany but not to their families who remained in the colonies or in colonial internment camps.⁴⁴ Reprisals against the treatment of British civilians in occupied Belgium meant that 'no correspondence with German

⁴⁰ TNA, FO383/352, 8396, Study of Eastern Languages by prisoners of war interned at Ahmednagar, 11th January 1917. India Office report.

⁴¹ Maia Ramnath, 'Two Revolutions: The Ghadar Movement and India's Radical Diaspora, 1913-1918', in *Radical History Review*, 92 (Spring, 2005), pp. 7-30, pp. 14-15. In Germany, Roger Casement's visit to Irish prisoners with the view to converting them to the republican cause met little success but caused worry in Britain. Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (Allen Lane, London, 2005), pp. 104-106.

⁴² TNA, FO383/62, 57250, 10th May 1915, Rumbold memorandum.

⁴³ They were the cause of the alleged Riots in Malta referred to in chapter three.

⁴⁴ These reprisals were not applied to Austro-Hungarian prisoners and internees as Vansittart noted in reference to the case of Adolf Jelinek at Kanus, German South-West Africa: It 'was unfortunate that there are six Austrians at this camp (including Jelinek) as the ban on correspondence does not now affect Austrians.' TNA, FO383/436, 90553, Transfer of Prisoners of War from Pietermaritzburg to Kanus, 22nd May, 1918. Vansittart memorandum.

subjects in the former colonies can be permitted, other than short personal messages through the diplomatic channels. This is a consequence of the prohibition by the German government of correspondence with persons in the occupied districts of Belgium.⁴⁵ The inability to directly contact loved ones was trying, as noted in Degenhardt's case above, and in a letter from 'Hans', a prisoner in Sidi Bishr, to his mother in Germany: 'What tortures me most is that I have not heard from Annel in two years. I wonder how my poor children are. If only Germany would do something for the poor women in Africa rather than leaving them helpless in the tropical climate.'⁴⁶

The British, to make the reprisals effective, allowed the prisoners to mention them in their letters home as in the quoted extract from Hans's letter. There would be no reason in effecting reciprocal punishments if the German government could not hear about them. While the issue of legalising reprisals was raised at a conference at The Hague in June 1917,⁴⁷ throughout the war Britain was concerned about its reputation as a law-abiding nation and the vulnerability of British prisoners in German hands, and was thus not keen to enshrine reprisal practice in law.⁴⁸ Legalising the methods of reprisals might not have had much effect in any case, as the very reason for their use was to compensate for the inadequacies of international law.⁴⁹

German official sources on conditions in the extra-European theatre were often misleading and were coloured by pre-war conceptions of conditions in the extra-European world. A report, from the Auswärtiges Amt (supposedly written by an internee⁵⁰), on a camp in Tenom, North Borneo, reached the British Foreign Office on 22nd October 1915. According to the report, the internees in Tenom were living in terror and could not receive fresh food supplies or medical attention due to the thickness of the jungle making the camp inaccessible. To make matters

⁴⁵ TNA, FO383/435, 86865, Field Marshall Lord Methuen (C in C Malta), Draft Letter, 16th May 1918.

⁴⁶ 'Was quält ist, daß ich nun seit 2 Jahren nichts von Annel höre. Wie mag es mit den armen Kindern gehen. Wenn wenigstens die Heimat für die armen Frauen in Afrika etwas tun würde, aber sie überläßt die Frauen ohne Hilfe ohne alles dem tropischen Klima.' BA, R67/1612, 12th August, 1917, letter from 'Hans' to his mother.

⁴⁷ Attempts were made to legalise the practice of reprisals at the Hague in June and September 1917 on the condition that each side would have to give four weeks' notice before taking action against prisoners. Although the point was drafted the British were not keen to enshrine the practice in law. ICRC, C G1 A 09-08, Conférence entre les représentants des gouvernements anglais et allemand tenue à la Haye en juin 1917, 22nd August 1917 and ICRC, C G1 A 09-10, Conférence des Croix-Rouges des pays neutres tenue à Genève du 10 au 14 septembre 1917, 8th August 1916 – 22nd December 1917.

⁴⁸ Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 297.

⁴⁹ Heather Jones, 'A Missing Paradigm? Military Captivity and the Prisoner of War 1914-1920', in Stibbe, *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, p. 27.

⁵⁰ TNA, FO383/163, 71144, 14th April 1916, Response to Mr Nicholas's letter.

worse, the camp was allegedly surrounded by cannibals and head-hunters who had taken to the nasty habit of leaving severed heads, hands and feet hanging in the trees near the camp to dry, which was not only vile and threatening but also caused an unbearable stench.⁵¹ The authorities in Berlin were prepared to believe this outlandish story and threatened the British with reprisals.

The Foreign Office took the complaint seriously and requested that an investigation be launched. Fred W. Fraser, the deputy Governor of Northern Borneo, along with the neutral Mr Hanson of the US consulate, conducted the inspection and compiled a report. Their findings told a different story from the one sent by the anonymous internee. Fraser conceded that, although 'grossly exaggerated' there was a certain element of truth in the story: a few tribesmen from Keningar after a battle with their rivals, the neighbouring Rundum, had passed through Tenom with their trophies (severed heads). However they did not hang them to dry on any trees and not only were there no cannibals surrounding the camp, but cannibalism had never even existed in North Borneo. The report detailed that there were only five Germans interned in Tenom, all of whom were in excellent health, and in Fraser's view their treatment was very liberal as it was 'thought advisable to take into consideration the prestige of Europeans generally'.⁵² From these reports the Foreign Office decided that the five internees should be sent to India and Australia to spare the expense to the authorities in North Borneo and to stifle any opportunity for further complaints.⁵³ The distance of the camps from Europe and from efficient postal routes often led to this kind of misinformation. The contemporary imagination of what life was like in the remote areas of the German and British Empires did not need much prompting to picture scenes such as the one described above. Even though the accusations turned out to be false, the British took them seriously enough to file an official report to ward off any potential anti-British propaganda and to prevent reprisals against British prisoners in German captivity.

Repatriated prisoners provided a more reliable source of information for the German government. Apart from relating their own experiences of internment, repatriated prisoners

⁵¹ TNA, FO383/34, 155732, 22nd October 1915 Nicholas's Report from Berlin to the Foreign Office 11th October. 1915, 'durch Kanibalismus und Kopfjägerer die Gegend vor dem Gefangenlager verpestet wird.'

⁵² TNA, FO383/180, 71587, Fraser and Hanson's report on Tenom, 12th February 1916. According to German Red Cross reports the men were only interned because they were unemployed and a sixth who had a job was left unmolested by the British. BA, R67/1643, Bericht (unnumbered), 13th May 1916.

⁵³ TNA, FO383/162, 3027, 6th January 1916 Report from the Deputy Governor of Borneo to the Foreign Office.

were also a source of interest as they had been through the 'war zones' of the sea and transported through the United Kingdom as ships coming from Africa and the United States (carrying returnees from New Guinea and Samoa) docked at Liverpool and prisoners were then brought by train to London for transfer to the Netherlands. Thus, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* published a detailed report from an unnamed female prisoner who described her journey from Cameroon back to Germany. Although the journey passed without incident, perhaps of particular interest to the reader was the attitude of the British crews to the threat of U-boat attacks.⁵⁴

Moreover, the German government through the Auswärtiges Amt and the RKA organised a questionnaire for returning prisoners of war and civilians from Togo and Cameroon. This in itself was not unusual; all belligerent governments had similar practices. The questions asked, however, show the interest the government had in the way captivity created racial inversion in the colonies; and in particular, the interest in whites being mistreated by blacks. Of the twenty-two questions, (the others mainly dealing with; name, address, place of capture etc...) four made explicit reference to skin colour. The final question (Question 22) referred to the issue of bounties (Kopfgeld) as throughout the war in West Africa and indeed other colonial theatres, German troops had accused the British authorities of putting a price on German heads:

"To Make our own information more reliable can you state the name and address of anyone who was either interned or killed by enemy forces in return for a bounty or any other incentives? In particular, were Germans killed or handed over to the enemy by black Africans for such bounties?"⁵⁵

Responses to Question 22 were most often left blank. In cases where it was answered it was always in terms of hearsay as in this typical example from Albert Rexter, a priest in Rio del Ray: 'I have heard rumours of the capture and killing of German soldiers for a bounty but I do not

⁵⁴ BA, R67/1331, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 'Eine Fahrt durch die Kriegszone', 18th September 1915.

⁵⁵ 'Sind aus eigener Wahrnehmung oder durch Mitteilung zuverlässiger, mit Namen und Adresse anzugebender Personen Fälle bekannt geworden, in denen für die Gefangennahme oder Beseitigung Deutscher von den Feinden ein Kopfgeld ausgesetzt oder andere Vergünstigungen zugesichert worden ist? Haben insbesondere Farbige auf Grund solcher Zusicherungen Deutsche getötet oder den Feinden überliefert?' BA, R1001/3946, Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. Fragebogen (Questionnaire for returning Germans), 1915, p. 298.

have direct evidence of such.⁵⁶ Gustav Schwab, another missionary from Cameroon, had heard through a 'reliable' source of the murder of Arms and Lehning, two German businessmen who were killed in Spanish Guinea (this case will be discussed later), and that the British were offering bounties which were to be paid upon the presentation of ears.⁵⁷ Although inconclusive and based on rumour in relation to bounties, the questionnaires provide interesting accounts of the arrest and transport of German civilians in the colonies, which will be dealt with here.

As in other colonies, many of the Germans in Cameroon had not, even after the defeat of the German army, expected to be deported from their homes. Nicoletta Gullace's idea that atrocity propaganda in Europe was central to the Allies' privileging of an image of international law that placed primacy on the safety of women and the family has parallels in German portrayals of the war in the extra-European theatre.⁵⁸ Citing international law, German colonial settlers felt that, as non-combatants, they were protected from internment and deportation. Britain's breach of international agreements provided an opportunity to counter propaganda circulating in the United Kingdom regarding Germany's treatment of Belgium. For Germans in the colonies, bringing the war to Africa only served to undermine the basis of European rule and destroy the positive example of moral values that they believed had been set by the whites, which would be completely impossible to recreate.⁵⁹ The British were not only treating the Germans with particular cruelty, it was argued; they were allowing former German colonial subjects to do the same. A. Haberlein graphically detailed this argument in his memoirs: 'Black gangs and black soldiers brutally raped white women. They took white women from their beds, tied them, beat them and threw them on the ground.'⁶⁰

⁵⁶ 'Es sind mir wohl Gerüchte zu Ohren gekommen, daß für die Gefangennahme und Beseitigung Deutscher von den Feinden ein Kopfgeld ausgesetzt sei. Aber einen sicheren Anhalt für die Wahrheit dieser Gerüchte habe ich nicht. BA, R1001/3945, Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. Albert Rexter responses, 7th March 1916.

⁵⁷ BA, R1001/3945, Gustav Schwab responses, 7th April 1916.

⁵⁸ Nicoletta F. Gullace, 'Sexual Violence and Family Honor: British Propaganda and International Law in the First World War', in *The American Historical Review*, 102, 3 (June, 1997), p. 725.

⁵⁹ Steinbach, 'Defending the Heimat', in Jones, O'Brien, and Schmidt-Suppran (eds), *Untold War: New Perspectives in the First World War*, p. 190.

⁶⁰ 'Sie haben durch Schwarze Banden und Schwarze Soldaten Weisse unter den roheiten Vergewaltigung abführen lassen. Sie liessen durch Schwarze weisse Frauen sogar aus den Betten hohlen, sie haben durch schwarze Banden Weissen binden, ausziehen und prügeln lassen und schleppen sie so auf die Erde.' BA, R1001/3794, Grenzstreitfragen und Grenzverletzungen in Kamerun, 1889-1914. Haberlein, A., 'Erlebnisse in Kamerun in den Kriegsjahren 1914/1915', 27th August 1915.

Missionaries, through their organisational links, were better able to publicise their experiences than were ordinary prisoners trying to communicate with Europe through coded letters. The Basel mission gave Germans from the colonies a public voice in Germany and outside Germany's borders through its own publications in Switzerland and in the Swiss newspapers.⁶¹ The initial focus of the mission's publications on the war was the complaint that Britain had extended the conflict outside Europe, thus irreversibly damaging the European Christian mission in Africa. It had turned a war of nations into a world war.⁶² The reports the mission wrote up, especially after the Cameroon campaign painted a negative picture of British troops, an image that spurred reaction from the British Foreign Office. Once repatriated or interned in the United Kingdom, the former settlers of Cameroon published and sent a list of their complaints to the British government. For example, Otto Wienecke (encountered in chapter three), a prominent missionary and member of the Schutztruppe, delivered a lengthy and vivid list of complaints focusing mainly on the negative effects that ill-treatment of German settlers had on the local population. Wienecke's complaints were threefold and highlighted the importance the prisoners placed on their grievances. Firstly, contrary to promises from General Dobell, private property had not been respected. Secondly, the entire German population had been 'tricked' into being removed from Duala. The third point, and the one Wienecke most emphasised, was the placing of prisoners under black guards: 'I should especially like to bring forward that for Germans, it is impossible and incomprehensible to be under the orders of coloured men.'⁶³

Articles in *The Basler Nachrichten*, many written by repatriated Basel missionaries, echoed Wienecke's complaints in their damnation of British behaviour. Dr Theodor Oehler, the mission's director, accused Britain of needlessly extending a European conflict into the colonial sphere: 'England has wantonly carried the war into the colonies, and so made a world war out of the war of nations. England has turned the war into a fight against the guiltless and women. They have been made prisoner, drafted away and treated with revolting brutality.'⁶⁴ Oehler focused on the treatment of the missionaries in captivity. The twenty to thirty eye-witnesses he interviewed claimed that the missionaries had been rounded up and kept for twenty-four hours under the watch of black soldiers who 'carried out their duty of guarding them in a way

⁶¹ See chapter two.

⁶² IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915. *Basler Nachrichten* 20th February 1915.

⁶³ Ibid., Wienecke's report, written 2nd December 1914.

⁶⁴ Ibid., *Basler Nachrichten* 20th February 1915.

which decency forbids me to indicate more clearly.⁶⁵ Around 112 missionaries with their wives and families had been removed from the eight stations that the missionaries operated in Cameroon. Whole families had been 'torn asunder' by the British. The property of the missions was then plundered and on board the transport ships the white British officers continued to steal from them.

Moreover, on board the SS *Obuassi* the black crew were well provided for, while the Germans had to make do with meagre rations, including meat that was infested with maggots. These complaints were published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in an article written by Director Schreiber of the Missionshilfe in Berlin. Similar complaints were made about other transport ships. For example, repatriated Germans on the SS *Ascania* complained of having food stolen from them, among other general complaints about the ship. During transport to England four Germans on the *Ascania* died from fever.⁶⁶ More seriously, bounties were allegedly put on the heads of the German officers. Coupled with accusations of the maltreatment of women by or with the consent of British officers, this made for alarming reading in London.⁶⁷

On 26th February Sir Evelyn Grant Duff, the British Minister to Switzerland, at the request of the Foreign Office sent a communiqué to the *Basler Nachrichten* arguing that 'the statement that the missionaries were treated with brutality is a fable.'⁶⁸ The Foreign Office was aware that the letters from the missionaries were calculated to do the British harm and that any charges of ill treatment had to be rebutted.⁶⁹ Based on Dobell's reports from Cameroon, the British communiqué stressed the necessity for the removal of all civilians from what was essentially a war zone. According to Dobell the captives were treated respectfully and he maintained that due to the 'passive resistance' of the German population it was necessary to trick them into assembling at the hospital in Duala as they would not otherwise 'comport themselves in a reasonable manner.'⁷⁰ He also reasoned that as they were German citizens and not Cameroonians he was well within the bounds of International law in deporting them. In a

⁶⁵ TNA, FO383/49, 25467, 4th March 1915, Oehler's reply to British Consul in Switzerland.

⁶⁶ ICRC, C G1 B 04-02, Civils allemands en mains britanniques, 26th October 1914 – 8th February 1921. The British War Office to the ICRC, 20th April 1915.

⁶⁷ TNA, FO383/49, 7586, 20th January 1915, Message from Foreign Office to Grant Duff to deny missionaries' statements.

⁶⁸ TNA, FO383/49, 22757, Communiqué to Basel Mission, 26th February 1915.

⁶⁹ TNA, FO383/49, 7586, 20th January 1915 Message from Foreign Office to Grant Duff to deny missionaries' statements, dated 13th January 1915.

⁷⁰ IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915, Dobell's report, 28th September 1915.

letter to the Colonial Office, Dobell argued that while the area was under British occupation it was necessary on military grounds to close down all German trading concerns including the Basel mission as it was half Christian mission, half trading company and was helping the German war effort.⁷¹

Although mindful that repercussions in the form of reprisals against British prisoners in Germany could occur, articles on Britain's treatment of German colonial settlers came in the wake of the sinking of the *Lusitania* and according to Horace Rumbold, it was bold of the Germans to accuse the British of being 'barbarians', in view of the unrestricted U-Boat campaign.⁷² To bolster their image abroad the British had commissioned a report into camps in the United Kingdom in January 1915 for publication in the Swiss *Journal de Genève*.⁷³ The Foreign Office felt the missionaries' complaints in regard to their capture and repatriation were unjustified, and Britain had done enough through its own counter-propaganda to highlight the fact. In any case, the sinking of the *Lusitania* helped to turn public opinion against Germany, not just in Britain but among the neutrals also, especially the United States. This issue of the accusations of bounties will be dealt with below.

The image of violence conducted by colonial troops on the Western Front in German propaganda stemmed from pre-First World War colonial war-zones. So too did the image of atrocities committed by the Germans in occupied France and Belgium, some of which focused on mutilation among several other strands of Allied propaganda.⁷⁴ As Christian Koller highlighted, allegations that Africans and Indians engaged in brutal practices, such as mistreating prisoners, hunting for 'trophies' (fingers, ears or heads of the enemy) and the use of unlawful weapons (such as bush-knives) became a standard topic in German propaganda.⁷⁵ This propaganda was not just limited to colonial troops on the Western Front, but the image of the 'barbaric' colonial soldier was also used in the extra-European theatres. Hermann Röseler, a prisoner of war from the East African theatre, noted the fear induced by Belgian colonial troops, some of whom he claimed were cannibals, who would show their filed-down teeth to

⁷¹ TNA, FO383/177, 9831, 17th January 1916, Dobell's report dated 5th December 1915.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ The Swiss Colonel Dietrich Schindler was allowed access to camps in the United Kingdom and wrote a very favourable report. TNA, FO383/107, 5829, Colonel Dietrich Schindler, 15th January 1915.

⁷⁴ See Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*.

⁷⁵ Christian Koller, 'The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War', in Stibbe, *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, p. 122.

interned women and children 'and stare and the children and say: Let's eat!'⁷⁶ Although incidents of cruelty by colonial troops were isolated, they provided the basis for propaganda myths published in Europe, and returning prisoners from the colonies wrote about their experience of the war in the extra-European theatre through these images of colonial violence.⁷⁷ The following case study of two murdered German businessmen, Arms and Lehning, in Spanish Guinea, highlights some of the truth behind these myths.

In January 1916, the British Foreign Office received a report from the Spanish Embassy in London on the discovery of the bodies of two Germans in Ayameken (now Ayamiken in Equatorial Guinea) close to the Cameroon border:

"When the grave was completely reopened, we found the bodies of two Europeans already, considerably decomposed, with bush ropes around their necks, [...] Their features were unrecognisable, but from the build, the remains of the hair, and in one case the remains of beard, we could positively recognise Arms and Lehning who were both known to us. Both were naked and [...] from both the ears and left hands were missing, otherwise they were not mutilated."⁷⁸

Ángel Barrera y Luyando, the pro-German governor of Spanish Guinea, launched an investigation into the murders.⁷⁹ It would not look good for Spain as a neutral power, or Barrera's chances of getting (according to Karl Ebermaier) the 'Prussian decoration which he confidently hoped for,'⁸⁰ if two Germans had been murdered by Spanish colonial subjects. The investigation questioned why the Ayameken (the group from which the village took its name) would murder two Europeans in their own village. It would have made more sense, according

⁷⁶ 'und mit Hinweis auf die Kinder sagten sie: Aufessen!' The image of the cannibal was prominent in German propaganda and drew on pre-war racist imagery. Röseler, Hermann, 'Bilder aus englischer Gefangenschaft im deutsch-ostafrikanischen Kolonialgebiet', in *In Feindeshand*, p. 105.

⁷⁷ Paul A. Cohen in his study of the Boxer Rebellion in China makes a compelling argument that people may genuinely believe rumours in periods of high anxiety, especially when other members of their community are engaged in a similar suspension of disbelief. Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, p. 148.

⁷⁸ TNA, WO158/525, Extracts from Reports on the killing of Messrs Arms and Lehning, 13th March 1915. Translated 10th January 1916 by British Army intelligence.

⁷⁹ The Governor of Cameroon, Karl Ebermaier, lobbied the German government to reward Barrera for his work in helping Germany while at the same time noting that Spanish Guinea could be absorbed into an enlarged German Cameroon and that its population (who were 'exceptionally developed both mentally and physically, whose natural savagery has manifestly displayed itself in an arrogance inconvenient to administration, only because they have never felt a master over them') could be properly exploited. TNA, ADM1/8457/119, Director of Intelligence Division to Captain Fuller, 31st July 1916. Translation of Ebermaier to Colonial Secretary Berlin, 29th August 1914.

⁸⁰ TNA, ADM1/8457/119, Ebermaier to Colonial Secretary Berlin, 29th August 1914.

to the investigation, to have allowed the Germans to leave the village, follow them, and then kill them in the remote bush. The method of mutilation further cast doubt on local involvement. 'The fact is that among the Pangwe [an appellation for the groups in Rio Muni including the Ayameken] this kind of mutilation is unknown. They are accustomed to carry out others, not with the object of mangling corpses but in order to obtain certain organs of the human body with which to make medicines.'⁸¹

The report accused a party of 'five natives' under the command of the British Officer, Lieutenant Law, of the murders. Law was in charge of a vessel harboured at the small island of Dipikar⁸² which was monitoring Germans crossing the Campo River from Cameroon into neutral Spanish Guinea. The two leaders of the party of 'natives', British levies Undomingo and Makamendo, were accused of having received orders to follow the Germans into Spanish territory to seize documents 'which they could only do by killing them to get the letters or orders that they were supposed to have with them.'⁸³ Responsibility was judged to lie with Lieutenant Law. Barrera demanded that Makamendo, Undomingo and the three others responsible be handed over for trial for murder on Spanish soil. He also requested that the Naval Officer in charge be reprimanded for neglect of his duties.

In Germany, Arms' company, L. Pagenstecher and Co., based in Hamburg, wanted the RKA to take action. Firstly they wanted RM100,000 from the British government in compensation to be paid to Arms' mother. Secondly they pressed the Colonial Ministry to lodge a strong protest and take action. Although what shape this action should take was not discussed, without a strong line from the German government, the company argued, there would be negative repercussions for Germans living in neutral countries and a serious effect on German firms' ability to do business abroad.⁸⁴

In response, the British launched an investigation into the incident. Although unwilling to hand over British soldiers to Spain, they promised a thorough investigation and punishment of those responsible. Lieutenant Law was ordered to write up a report. Law denied that any reward had

⁸¹ TNA, WO158/525, Fernando Poo. [more commonly referred to as Fernando Po] Murder of 2 Germans at Ayameken. March-June 1915.

⁸² Dipikar is an island situated at the mouth of the Campo River and was part of the German territory at that time under British control.

⁸³ TNA, WO158/525, Fernando Poo, Murder of 2 Germans at Ayameken. March-June 1915.

⁸⁴ BA, R1001/3994, Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. Fall der Kaufleute Arms und Lehning, 1915 -1923. L Pagenstecher and Co. to the RKA, 4th November 1915.

been offered to the patrol. They had been ordered merely to bring in any weapons, ammunition and books or diaries that they could capture.⁸⁵ According to Law's investigation, Undomingo had ambushed and shot the two Germans, resulting in the looting of all the Germans' possessions. A large sum of money, apparently taken from the two Germans, had been divided among them, which Law recovered as well as their arms and ammunition, which he arranged to be sent to Fernando Po. The party that returned to Law (Undomingo and Makamendo had fled), reported to him that 'they had killed the European Germans and 4 natives, producing some ears to prove they had done so.'⁸⁶

What this incident highlighted from a propaganda point of view was a certain grain of truth in the accusations that the British were encouraging, through financial incentives, local mercenaries to murder and mutilate Europeans. The incident led Sir Edward Grey to pay a visit to the Spanish Embassy to clear up the matter. General Dobell, in a letter to Lewis Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies, referred to a practice which was probably the cause of the accusations and the perceived legitimising factor for the levies involved in the murder of the two Germans:

"As the reference made in paragraph 7 of Governor General Barrera's letter of the 3rd of April is the second that has reached me to the effect that pecuniary rewards are issued by the Allied Forces under my command for the death of Germans at the hands of natives[,] I have now stopped a practice which previously obtained of rewarding partisans for displaying exceptional gallantry in encounters with the enemy's levies and partisans. The issue of these small extra emoluments may have given rise to these small rumours."⁸⁷

What Dobell meant by exceptional gallantry is unclear and he did not state what exactly the emoluments were. This statement alone in no way proves that British forces in Cameroon were offering a bounty, but it left room for misinterpretation on all sides. The three Spanish

⁸⁵ TNA, ADM1/8457/119, HMS *Astraea*, Report of visit to Fernando Po, 1st June 1916.

⁸⁶ Law made no reference to the hands but he stated: 'After the death of the Germans the natives appear to have indulged in a debauch but removed the ears of the Europeans and 4 of their carriers as evidence of their action.' Law suggested that the party were intent on killing the Germans for the ivory they were supposedly carrying, although no ivory was recovered. TNA, WO158/525, Report of Senior Naval Officer in Duala, Captain Fuller, 12th March 1915. Assam, a third member of the party, was arrested and jailed for the duration of the war.

⁸⁷ TNA, WO158/525, Dobell to Harcourt, 1st May 1915. Lewis Harcourt was Secretary of State for the Colonies until May 1915, when he was replaced by Andrew Bonar Law who was, in turn, replaced by Walter Long in December 1916.

reports compiled on the murder frequently referred to the soldiers as saying they were under orders to kill the Germans and prove that they had done so by presenting the hands and ears. This may have been how the troops interpreted what gallantry in combat meant. However, regardless of whether the rewards on offer were enough to encourage levies to act above their station, or they were simply badly trained, the German press exploited the situation.

The Arms and Lehning murders fulfilled European preconceptions of colonial brutality with its echoes of mutilation in King Leopold's Congo⁸⁸ and many similar horror stories were reported in the German press, often written by returning prisoners.⁸⁹ According to an article entitled 'England's Price for Assassins' in the *Weser Zeitung* in February 1915 two Germans, a seaman Nickstadt and Quartermaster Schlichting from the ship the *Kamerun*, had been murdered for a fifty-shilling bounty, Nickstadt being drowned and Schlichting being 'cut to pieces'.⁹⁰ The writer, Fr Valentin Wolf, a prisoner repatriated from Cameroon, had published a similar article in the American-based *Detroit Abendpost* which focused on the looting and robbing of mission stations.⁹¹ The bounty, he claimed, was being offered not just on German men but also on the heads of German women and children.⁹² The DKG's *Kolonialzeitung* reported similar stories. British complicity in these 'native' attacks was often highlighted, as in the example of one German being slashed across the head with a machete in the train station at Duala in the open view of British soldiers.⁹³ Pauline Kessler, of the German Baptist Mission in Ndogongi (Cameroon), in her contribution to the mission's pamphlet, 'Hewn-Off Hands', claimed to have seen German workmen attacked, robbed, murdered, and 'their hands brought to Duala' (i.e. to

⁸⁸ Although in King Leopold's Congo the European-led regime had used mutilation as a punishment to coerce the population to produce more rubber.

⁸⁹ Cohen's study shows many instances of rumour targeting outsiders who were accused symbolically if not literally of seeking the annihilation of the society in which the rumours circulated. Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, p. 172. This can also be applied to German settlers during the First World War.

⁹⁰ IWM, [K] 6248, *Correspondence*, November 1915. *Weser Zeitung*, 23rd February 1915. Accusations of bounties on German soldiers were not confined to West Africa: similar practices were claimed to be in place on the East African front.

⁹¹ Wolf claimed he was originally hired by the British to provide accounts of German mistreatment of the local population under colonial rule in Cameroon. As an anti-German propagandist, however, Wolf was a miscalculated choice for the British, as they later found out from an intercepted German report thanking him for his role in aiding German troops in the colony. TNA, FO383/177, 51637, 18th March 1916, Report 1741 from the [German] Imperial Governor of Cameroon to Berlin, 14th November 1915.

⁹² Rumours of bounties being offered for uncaptured Germans were not restricted to Africa. The German government also sent a query to the American Ambassador in Berlin asking him to verify reports of a reward offered for the capture of German officers in Singapore. TNA, FO383/62, 54159, 4th May 1915. Note Verbale.

⁹³ BA, R67/1185, *Kolonialzeitung*, 20th February 1915. 'In Englischen Händen'.

the British authorities) to be exchanged for money. According to her the bodies of 'the mutilated and dead [were] lying near to our station.'⁹⁴ These claims were dismissed by the British, but with the evidence from the murder case in Spanish Guinea, appear to have at least some basis in reality. The main worry for the Foreign Office on reading these articles was that, whether the incidents were real or not, the German press were demanding reprisals in the form of 'employment without reference to their rank of French and British prisoners of war, on severe manual labour, such as the draining of marshes'.⁹⁵

Stories of mutilations in the colonies were spread by word of mouth and brought to Europe by returning prisoners. These accounts of Allied maltreatment of Germans were not just limited to reports in the German press. Spanish newspapers portrayed the war in the colonies as one of British-sponsored barbarism. A pro-German, Spanish newspaper, *ABC*, published a sensational account of the treatment of prisoners in (French) Dahomey but also alluded to misdeeds by British troops.⁹⁶ The paper claimed that Britain was hiring its levies from among cannibals and that not only had a German missionary been murdered 'por Negros Anglofilos' but also a German NCO and four of his black soldiers had been eaten.⁹⁷ Their use as a tool in propaganda also meant that there would be embellishments. But, as Heather Jones has shown in relation to prisoner of war propaganda relating to prisoners captured in Europe, there was often a certain grain of truth, although small, in captivity propaganda stories.⁹⁸ In the archives consulted, the only case of murder and mutilation for which there is actual hard evidence is that of Arms and Lehning, but there may have been more. What is known is that this case formed the basis for some of the more sensational stories such as that which appeared in *ABC*. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, further exaggerating the Spanish Guinea murders, reported that

⁹⁴ BA, R67/1185, *The Martyrdom of the Evangelical Missionaries in the Cameroons 1914; Narratives of Eye-Witnesses* (Steglitz, Berlin, 1915).

⁹⁵ TNA, FO383/34, 114273, Alleged Atrocities by Anglo-French in Togoland and Dahomey, 17th August 1915. It is not clear if any British prisoners of war were sent to work in the marshes in reprisal but many French prisoners of war certainly were.

⁹⁶ Dahomey will be looked at in more detail in chapter six.

⁹⁷ TNA, FO383/34, 114273, Alleged Atrocities by Anglo-French in Togoland and Dahomey, 17th August 1915. The series of letters purporting to be from West Africa were published in the *ABC* on 18th July 1915.

⁹⁸ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 371.

fifteen Germans had been murdered and had their hands and ears cut off in the Spanish colony.⁹⁹

The reporting and sensationalism of atrocity stories did lead to some policy changes on the ground. The British cessation of incentives for levies was a direct result of this propaganda and fear of misinterpretation in Europe with ensuing negative consequences for Britons held in German captivity. A fear of the misrepresentation of internment in the extra-European world was also a factor in British plans to send German prisoners to Australia. Through attempts to equate the barbarity of the war in the colonies with that on the Western Front repatriated German colonial settlers sought to integrate themselves into the German narrative of the war. The war in the colonies did, to some extent, stir the imagination of the metropole with its references to mutilation, torture and the ill-treatment of white women by black soldiers and echoes of it remained in inter-war German representations of the war.

To conclude, this chapter, building on chapter three, highlighted three aspects of the extra-European theatre of the First World War. First, contrary to the image of the war in Africa as an eccentric side-show, contemporary German colonialists saw the loss of their colonies as a radical shift in the balance of power that was carried out through violence. This violence, either real or imagined, was the determining factor through which they described their time in captivity with prisoner of war and civilian internee camps being compared with common jails and insane asylums. German writers hoped that reports of and publications about mutilations of Germans in the colonies would strike a chord with a European audience raised on horror stories of colonial violence. The notion of a common western 'colonial archive' as conceptualised by historians can be applied to propaganda on the treatment of German prisoners of war and civilian internees in the colonies: clearly these activated common ideas of the 'colonial'.¹⁰⁰

The portrayal of Britain as reneging on the European civilising mission through its treatment of German colonial settlers fitted with such ideas and triggered older images of colonial barbarity which internees in their reports sought to exploit. This theme is summed up in the comment published in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1916, 'it is a shame that Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes are no longer alive. One wonders what they would have to say

⁹⁹ BA, R67/1387, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 'Die Kameruner auf Spanischen Gebiet', 23rd August 1916. The story was repeated in the *Kölnische Zeitung*.

¹⁰⁰ Gerwarth, Malinowski, 'Hannah Arendt's Ghosts', p. 287.

about the embrace of the blacks and Anglo-Saxons.¹⁰¹ Britain was also aware of these issues. However, although conscious of its imperial prestige and image among neutral countries, Britain did carry out reprisals against German prisoners in the form of postal restrictions. These restrictions further cut off German colonial settlers in internment from Germany and the lack of reliable information on internment contributed to exaggeration, as highlighted in the extreme example of Tenom.

Secondly, the German government and press used the perceived violent racial role reversal of German colonial settlers that ensued upon the British capture of the colonies as a counter-balance to Allied propaganda about German-occupied territory. The German colonies were, in propaganda terms, Germany's Belgium. The incarceration of, violence against and deportation of German civilians outside Europe served as a strong propaganda tool to highlight to the German people and neutral countries that Britain was not the just and noble power which had the rights of civilians of weaker nations in mind that it claimed to be. The German propaganda employed was similar to that used in describing the multi-national makeup of the Allied forces in Europe and a direct link was made between savage practices on the Western Front and those in Africa and beyond. However, the fall of the German colonies and the ensuing treatment of German colonial settlers did not provide an adequate counter-balance to British propaganda. Michael Sanders and Philip Taylor argue that British overseas propaganda was only effective due to the inadequacies of its German counterpart.¹⁰² The Germans' propaganda was 'ham-fisted' and through their treatment of Belgian and French civilians and their U-Boat atrocities, they did themselves no favours.¹⁰³ In fact, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, the British Ambassador to the United States, noted that 'in the glorious annals of German achievement nothing is so remarkable as the fact that Germany has almost made England popular in America.'¹⁰⁴ In sum, propaganda relating to the mistreatment of German colonial settlers could not compete on an international stage with the 'defining act of the war - the "rape" of Belgium'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ 'Es ist schade, dass Joseph Chamberlain und Cecil Rhodes nicht mehr leben. Was werden sie wohl zu der schwarz-ängelsächsischen Umarmung gesagt haben.' BA, R1001/2635, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12th January 1916.

¹⁰² Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, p. 253.

¹⁰³ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 315.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Wodehouse Legh (Lord Newton), *Retrospection* (John Murray, London, 1941), p. 211.

¹⁰⁵ Gullace, 'Sexual Violence and Family Honor', p. 717.

In Germany, the colonial propaganda narrative during the war had to compete with that of the 'Senegalese' troops on the Western Front.¹⁰⁶ In attempts to link their experiences with that of Europe, the Germans from the colonies found themselves subsumed in and lost to greater events. However, the memory of take-over of the German colonies found its way into post-war propaganda and lobbying for the return of the colonies. The *Volksbuch unserer Kolonien*, published in 1938, carried accounts of black soldiers entering the bedrooms of sick and pregnant women during the war in Cameroon and stealing their money after roughly handling them.¹⁰⁷ In addition, as the next chapter highlights, France and its poor treatment of prisoners in Dahomey, French West Africa, became linked to German post-war 'black shame on the Rhine' propaganda and overshadowed Britain's better record.

¹⁰⁶ The post-war denunciations of 'barbaric African troops' drew heavily on images not only established during the war but also in the pre-war colonial sphere. Mulligan, *Great War for Peace*, p. 328.

¹⁰⁷ Paul H Kunze, *Das Volksbuch unserer Kolonien* (Georg Dollheimer, Leipzig, 1938), p. 86.

Chapter Six: The British Empire and the extra-European Camp System

The British Empire was not the only imperial power to intern Germans in the colonial world during the war. Building on chapter two, here attention will turn to Allied internment systems in other parts of the extra-European world. Not only will a focus on other Allied camps in the colonies provide models for comparison; but it will also serve to flesh out the picture of internment beyond the borders of the British Empire and through examining the interaction between empires will highlight how inter-connected internment in the First World War was, with the notable exception of Japan.

Firstly we will examine the mirror image of our study, British internees in German captivity in the extra-European theatre. Then, by way of comparison with the British Empire case, the chapter will introduce the camp systems of Belgium, Portugal and (neutral) Spain in Africa and conclude with a few notes on camps in the Americas and Asia. For the purposes of this study, Russia and the well documented camps in Siberia are included in terms of European internment and will not be discussed in any detail.¹ Internment in the Ottoman Empire will also, regrettably, be omitted, due to limited source material, although this is an aspect of the war that is receiving attention elsewhere.² With this overview a fuller picture of global internment will be presented, allowing us to focus on the two chosen case studies – France and Japan, for a detailed comparison.

France and Japan offer the best comparative case studies, for as well as being Allied powers, they both held internees from the former German colonies. Both France and Japan came into conflict with the British through their imperial aims: France in West Africa and Japan through its expansion into the Pacific. The camps themselves had a greater (but differing) impact on the post-war image of the belligerents than did the camps under British control. The French camps in Dahomey (Benin) became interlinked with post-war 'black shame' propaganda while

¹ See Reinhard Nachtigal, 'The Repatriation and Perception of Returning Prisoners of War, 1918-22', in Stibbe, *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, and Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War*.

² See Kate Ariotti's contribution, 'Australian Prisoners of the Turks: Diversity and Culture Clash in Captivity', in Joachim Bürgschwentner, Matthias Egger and Gunda Barth-Scalmani (eds), *Other Fronts, Other Wars?: First World War Studies on the Eve of the Centennial* (Brill, Leiden, 2014).

the Japanese camps, especially Bando on Shikoku Island, are still presented in popular history in Japan today as an outstanding example of transnational and cultural exchange.

It would seem natural to start this comparative chapter with a look at the experience of British prisoners in German hands. Due to British sea dominance and the nature of the guerrilla warfare that was waged on most of the extra-European fronts, German colonial prison camps were very much ad hoc affairs. With the exception of German East Africa and to a certain extent German South-West Africa, the war did not last long enough for any settled camp system to be developed.³ The campaign in Cameroon highlighted the logistical problems of maintaining prisoners for an army on the move with no real central base. More often than not, the German Schutztruppe simply handed over prisoners (on condition of parole) to enemy forces.

The improvised nature of prisoner internment in the German Empire and lack of facilities to maintain captives invariably led to abuses. A case of a British prisoner being tied to the 'wheel of a cannon and beaten by a native by order of a European' was heard of in East Africa, while the *African World* in September 1916 claimed a British woman in German East Africa had had her breasts cut off by German troops and the killing out-of-hand of members of the British forces was reported from the campaign in German South-West Africa.⁴ The German government's response to these accusations in a Note Verbale to British Foreign Office, was that either the stories were false, or (in the case of the 'wheel' punishment), the German officer concerned had some justification for punishing the soldier, who was 'doubtless a coloured man'. The British felt that this reply was not adequate and that the colour of the man's skin was not the issue. Even had he been black, they argued, 'the barbarity shown would not in any degree have been diminished'.⁵ From the archival evidence, German maltreatment of defeated British soldiers does not seem to have been related to any reprisals for

³ For German internment of British prisoners in German East Africa see; Daniel Steinbach, 'Colonials in Conflict: The First World War in British and German East Africa' (Doctoral Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2014).

⁴ TNA, FO383/204, 239335, 28th November 1916. Punishment on the 'wheel' was still in place in the British army at this time. However, the convicted was not beaten during this punishment as reported in the *African World*. The punishment, known as 'Field Punishment Number One', approved in 1907, involved cuffing a convicted man by the wrists and ankles to a fixed object, usually a gun-wheel, for up to several hours a day. Anthony Babington, *For the Sake of Example: Capital Courts Martial 1914-1920: The Truth* (Penguin Classic Military History, London, 2002, originally published 1983), p. 88. Germany also had a similar corporal punishment in place, *Anbinden*, whereby a prisoner was tied to a pole or tree. In the German case too physical beatings were not permitted. Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 152.

⁵ TNA, FO383/204, 249459, Foreign Office reply to Note Verbale, 11th December 1916.

mistreatment of prisoners in British hands, mainly happening in the immediate aftermath of capture. These cases, while used for their propaganda value by the British, were rarely brought to trial following the British takeover of the colonies. It was reasoned by the British Foreign Office that each reported atrocity would make an entry in the dossier against the German government to be used in a war crimes trial once the conflict in Europe had come to an end.⁶ Additionally, there never really was a German camp system along the lines that the British were able to establish.⁷

Moving to the Allied belligerents, the Belgian-run camp system was the most intertwined with the British and French. German troops captured by Belgian forces in East Africa were sometimes transferred to British hands or transported (In what German prisoners referred to as forced marches but may be more realistically referred to as the movement of internees under difficult circumstances where transport and infrastructures were limited and poor) across the Congo for either internment in Dahomey or further transport to Switzerland via North Africa. Belgian troops also controlled Tabora, German East Africa, for long periods during the war.⁸ Tabora was an important holding site for Askari troops, and German civilians, such as Ada Schnee⁹ were interned or on parole there. The Reichsdruckerei published a book on internment in the Congo in 1918 in which it accused the Belgian authorities of forcing women and children to endure periods of up to twenty-four hours without food or water while being taunted by black and European guards during their transport from Tabora to the west coast of Africa.¹⁰ Perhaps in an effort to balance out Allied propaganda on German brutality in Belgium, Germany accused the Belgians of also being complicit in the racial role reversal in the African theatre. First Leutnant von Botsch, writing about his transfer from the Belgian Congo to North Africa, noted 'I have had altogether the impression... that it was the expressed intention of the Belgians to shame and lower us before the natives as much and anyhow possible [...] Thus the

⁶ TNA, FO383/168, 97578, Report of Commission of Enquiry into the treatment of PoWs by the German Protectorate Authorities during the late hostilities, 22nd May 1916.

⁷ One former prisoner in German East Africa, Captain C.W. Palin, described the conditions as terrible with all European and Indian prisoners being kept in common camps, thus 'breaking their caste'. Provisions were running very short and Palin claimed they had to resort to fashioning loin-cloths out of tree-bark to clothe themselves. TNA, FO383/535, 4347, 14th April 1919. Captain C. W. Palin's Report dated 26th December 1918.

⁸ At the end of war the British took control of the camp there to release and repatriate Askari prisoners.

⁹ Discussed in chapter five.

¹⁰ *Die Kolonialdeutschen aus Deutsch-Ostafrika in belgischer Gefangenschaft* (Reichsdruckerei, Berlin, 1918).

Belgians have placed themselves [...] by the side of the French as regards inhumanity and contrariety of culture.¹¹

Belgian-British relations were also strained during the war. Jan Smuts (commander of the British forces in East Africa until 1917), in particular, was concerned about the possibility of Belgium using the conflict to encroach on German East Africa. Belgium had early on in the war gained control of Ruanda-Urundi (Rwanda and Burundi) and in the summer of 1916 it looked as if it might reach the southern shore of Lake Victoria, thus straddling the proposed British Cape to Cairo corridor. This led to a propaganda war between Britain and Belgium, with Belgian Askari accused by Britain of all manner of atrocities, even cannibalism, while Belgian officers were accused of brutality in their treatment of soldiers and carriers.¹²

Although Portugal did not enter the war in Europe until 1916 (after a German declaration of war), it had been fighting Germany in skirmishes in the colonies from August 1914.¹³ The Portuguese Empire 'interned' Germans and Austro-Hungarian males of military age in Goa at the outset of the war (Map 1, no. 82).¹⁴ While the Portuguese were nominally in control of prisoner treatment, the fact that the main postal network was run by the British had a significant influence on prisoners' affairs, ensuring that, in this aspect, enemy civilians in Portuguese India were treated very much like their counterparts in British India. Eventually those who were not repatriated, mainly men of military age, were transferred to camps in British India. This did not stop internees and prisoners of war in British India from trying to escape into Goa, as in the case of the Austrian, Erwin Alfred Klug, who was killed in a train tunnel in the colony after escaping from Ahmednagar. The investigation into Klug's death found that he had sought shelter with German sympathisers in Goa.¹⁵

In Africa, however, the Portuguese, unlike the Belgians, followed a more independent line in prisoner treatment. In the initial stages of the war, there was relatively heavy fighting on the border lands between Angola and German South-West Africa, resulting in the capture of many German prisoners who were interned in Loanda (Luanda, map 1, no. 57). The Portuguese also

¹¹ BA, R8023/88, 'Togogreuel', p. 32.

¹² Paice, Edward, *Tip and Run*, pp. 226-228.

¹³ For an account of the Portuguese Empire during the First World War see, Ribeiro de Meneses, Filipe, 'The Portuguese Empire', in Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela (eds), *Empires at War 1911-1923* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014), pp. 179-196.

¹⁴ It seems that the internees were mainly on parole in the colony.

¹⁵ TNA, FO383/193, 103262, Escape and subsequent death of prisoner E.A. Klug in Portuguese India, 30th May 1916.

fought similar battles on the borderlands of Mozambique and German East Africa for control of the Kionga triangle.¹⁶ However, in Africa the Germans were a secondary enemy for the Portuguese during the First World War. Portuguese colonial armies spent more time and resources quelling internal rebellion than fighting their neighbours. This was partly reflected in their treatment of their German prisoners with the Red Cross in Frankfurt citing unrest among the indigenous population as the main reason for the relatively good treatment of prisoners. It reported that; 'Portuguese treatment of the numerous German internees and the few prisoners of war helped create an amicable atmosphere between Germany and Portugal unlike the treatment of German internees by other enemies, namely in Africa where Germans are interned before the eyes of blacks.'¹⁷ The main holding camp for German prisoners in Portuguese Africa was in Mozambique at Lourenço Marques (Maputo, map 1, no. 69).¹⁸ The photographic evidence and Red Cross reports present the camp in a favourable light and comparisons can be drawn with the Japanese camp at Bando which will be described in more detail below. The Brazil based *Sociedade Beneficente Alemã o Gerente*, acting as a relief agency for German prisoners in Mozambique and South Africa, offered to repatriate prisoners from Lourenço Marques to Germany in summer 1918, but not all accepted. In total eighty-two prisoners asked to remain in the colony.¹⁹ This partly attests to the lenient treatment by Portugal of its German internees.

¹⁶ For Portuguese involvement in the fighting in East Africa see Edward Paice's critical account, Paice, *Tip and Run*, Chapter 24, pp. 267-277. The campaign had, however, according to the Portuguese Chief of Staff 'assumed a major importance for the nation to save its colonies.' Paice, p. 274.

¹⁷ 'Immerhin hat die Art und Weise der Behandlung der zahlreichen deutschen Internierten und der wenigen deutschen Kriegsgefangenen durch die Portugiesen dazu beitragen, daß zwischen Deutschland und Portugal aus diesem Anlaß keine so böse Atmosphäre entstehen konnte, wie aus Anlaß der schleußlichen Gemeinheiten unserer übrigen Feinde, namentlich in Afrika vor den Augen der Schwarzen.' BA, R67/1382, Bericht no. 106, 1st August 1918, Portugal, Die deutschen Internierten und Gefangenen bei den Portugiesen.

¹⁸ BA, R67/1383, According to the Dutch Consul inspection on 1st August 1917, the camp held 481 prisoners. The camp's location meant that outbreaks of malaria were common, with 243 cases for April 1917 alone.

¹⁹ BA, R1001/903, Behandlung der in portugiesische Gefangenenschaft geratenen Deutschen aus Deutsch-Ostafrika und deren Heimschaffung, 1916 – 1919. Letter from F. Wirth of the Sociedade Beneficente Alemã o Gerente to the RKA. 29th January 1918. The society is still active, celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2013. The society was founded by German colonialists in São Paulo to provide support for Germans in Brazil and is a good example of the transnational support networks for German colonialists, others being the Tientsin Hilfsorganisation which provided funds to prisoners in Japan, and the Boer organisations to support Germans in South-West Africa. In addition, Ada Schnee, although interned, was able to remain active in gathering funds to help other prisoners of war, allegedly selling a chimpanzee and a lion to raise funds for the Red Cross, TNA, FO383/514, 782, 13th January 1919. Letter

For Portugal, the Germans in Africa were a real threat. Germany exploited the unrest in Portugal's colonies that had been ongoing since before the start of the war, and although repelled in Angola, German forces were able to enter Mozambique, thus prolonging the conflict in East Africa.²⁰ As with the Belgians, Portuguese encroachment on German territory caused tension with Britain. The British were suspicious of Portuguese treatment of indigenous populations during and after the war, especially following reports accompanied by gruesome photographs of a post-war massacre in Kionga (German East Africa) that involved atrocities of 'so hideous a character that, if they were published [...] people would almost wonder whether such incidents were not too high a price to pay for the Portuguese Alliance'.²¹

The final ally to be looked at here is the United States. Before entering the war, the United States had served as a transport route for returning prisoners from the Pacific and Asia. These trips through the United States en route to Germany provided a platform for German prisoners such as Eduard Haber to publicise their treatment to a wider neutral (or even sympathetic) audience.²² With the American entry into the war in 1917, however, this was no longer possible and many Germans in the United States were interned and the transport route for repatriating prisoners was closed down. In all, the United States interned between 8,500 and 10,000 German civilians as 'enemy aliens' (around eight percent of German males living in the United States at the time).²³ Senator Frederick Hale of Maine introduced a resolution in the Senate on 3rd May 1917, calling for the transportation of German prisoners of war from Europe to the United States. The argument was that it would be cheaper and more efficient to feed prisoners in the United States, thus freeing up funds and manpower for the overall Allied war effort. Unsurprisingly this resolution was not well received by the American public.²⁴ Whether

from Major C.F. Bagenal (District Political Officer at Tabora) to the Senior Political Officer in Dar es Salaam.

²⁰ A key example of this is the German raid and battle of Naulila in Angola in December 1914. The Portuguese defeat here sparked a massive indigenous rebellion. Ribeiro de Meneses, 'The Portuguese Empire', in Gerwarth and Manela, *Empires at War*, p. 186.

²¹ TNA, FO608/216, 6911, 11th April 1919, Earl Curzon to Sir L. Carnegie, dated 2nd April 1919. British officials believed that the massacre could be used to Britain's advantage, as Curzon went on to write that should the atrocities come before the peace conference 'the account of them might react most unfavourably upon the claims of Portugal to retain her share of the administration of African territories and populations.'

²² See chapter two.

²³ Janz, *Der Grosse Krieg*, p. 300. Most of these were interned under the Sedition Act of 1918, Leonhard, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, p. 698.

²⁴ ICRC, C G1 A 18-18, Traitement des prisonniers de guerre en mains américaines: un article de presse, 16th May 1917.

because of anti-German hostility in the USA is unclear, but after the war Germans who were repatriated from Japan and other Asian locations did not travel through the United States but travelled via the Suez Canal.²⁵

Neutral countries also interned German civilians, often under pressure from neighbouring colonial powers or because of the need to win favour with British authorities. Siam interned many German civilians at the outbreak of the war, mainly taken from merchant vessels.²⁶ The Siamese government worked closely with the British Foreign Office in this respect. In South America the governments of Brazil, Venezuela and Chile, under pressure from Britain, also enacted legislation allowing for the internment of Germans taken from merchant ships. In the Dutch empire, Britain even considered a propaganda campaign through 'a few articles in the local press on the pleasures of life (with photographs if possible) in Australian internment camps' in a bid to attract Germans living in the Dutch East Indies to volunteer for internment rather than possibly ending up as spies for their government.²⁷ This plan was inspired by a letter the Foreign Office received from a German, Karl Martin in Batavia, who asked to be interned in a British camp. H.B. Warner of the Foreign Office recommended that Martin be 'discreetly' encouraged to go to the nearest British possession and that his internment 'might be advantageously used for the purpose of propaganda'.²⁸ However, this plan was aborted after the Colonial Office raised objections, arguing that the scheme would put the British in a difficult position with the neutral Dutch.²⁹

Spain and its African possessions, while neutral, were directly involved in the war in Cameroon. A large detachment of Schutztruppe, approximately 200 Europeans, 6,000 Askari, 6,000 Cameroonian women and roughly 4,000 servants and carriers, led by the German governor of Cameroon, Karl Ebermaier, fled across the border into Spanish Guinea during the war to seek

²⁵ On internment in the United States see, William B. Glidden, 'Internment Camps in America, 1917-1920', in *Military Affairs*, 37, 4 (1973), pp. 137-142 and Jörg Nagler, 'Victims of the Home Front: Enemy Aliens in the United States during World War I', in Panikos Panayi (ed), *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars*, (Berg, Oxford, 1993).

²⁶ BA, R67/1386, The *Frankfurter Zeitung* on 21st November 1917, reported that there were around 300 Germans being held in Siam. There were also internment camps in Guatemala, Cuba, Panama, and Puerto Rico. BA, R67/1976, Bericht 92, 16th June 1917

²⁷ TNA, FO383/204, 234003, Foreign Trade Department minutes, 21st November 1916.

²⁸ TNA, FO383/204, 234003, Warner to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 20th November 1916.

²⁹ TNA, FO383/204, 252770, Colonial Office reply, 14th December 1916.

internment under neutral Spanish authorities.³⁰ The majority of Spain's military elite were pro-German, including Ángel Barrera, the Governor of Spanish Guinea, discussed earlier in this thesis. However, even they realised that due to Spain's geographic and economic position it would be 'suicide' to join the German side. The best the pro-German military could do was to hope to keep Spain from joining the Allied side and to remain neutral.³¹ The German troops in Cameroon were aware of the likelihood of internment in the United Kingdom if captured by the British, or even worse, internment at the notorious camp in Dahomey if captured by the French, but as long as they could make it across the river Campo and into Spanish Guinea they would be safe. From Spanish Guinea they were then shipped to Fernando Po.

Governor Barrera believed that the war had offered an excellent opportunity for the development of agriculture on Fernando Po: the Cameroonians who followed the German officers were to be put to work on the farms and plantations.³² Barrera soon realised, to his dismay, that the German Askari were not keen to settle down to a life of farming on the island, as they were highly trained soldiers who 'despise[d] agriculture and all manual labour as fit only for slaves and have absolutely refused to work.'³³ The scheme backfired as the German army, vastly outnumbering the Spanish police, essentially took over the island and began plans to rearm in preparation for a renewed assault on Cameroon. Spanish ships smuggled munitions to the island for the Germans and the prisoners, having become the jailers, began to openly drill.³⁴

Under British and French pressure and with an eye on their status as a neutral power, the Spanish authorities arranged to ship all the German officers to mainland Spain, where they could be better supervised. Barrera was removed only in May 1918, in an effort to reassert Spain's neutral status.³⁵ The Foreign Office discussed the idea of allowing Germans in Spain

³⁰ Quinn, 'The Impact of the First World War and its Aftermath on the Beti of Cameroon', p. 176.

³¹ Francisco J. Romero Salvadó, *Spain 1914-1918: Between War and Revolution* (Routledge, New York, 2012), p. 11.

³² Not all of whom went to Fernando Po. Most remained in Spanish Guinea, with around 3,000 being moved to the island.

³³ TNA, FO383/214, 168924, Letter from Hardinge, British Embassy San Sebastián, 26th August 1916.

³⁴ TNA, FO383/213, 72564, Disposal of German refugees and natives from the Cameroons, 17th April 1916.

³⁵ This was commented on in the Auswärtiges Amt as a blow to German influence in West Africa. TNA, GFM21/81, Telegram from the German Embassy in Madrid to Berlin 27th April 1918. After the war Barrera was again able to take up his position as governor of the island. William O'Reilly of the Foreign Office maintained that Spain was being far too lenient on its prisoners and the 'internment in Spain is a farce.' TNA, FO383/449 109822, 26th July 1917. O'Reilly memorandum.

free passage to return to Germany, as there was 'no doubt that they are doing much more harm in Spain than they can in Germany [...] if it were not for the position of British women and children in Belgium I should see no objection to their returning to Germany.'³⁶ Again concerns for the treatment of British prisoners and civilians affected the conditions of German prisoners.

Hong Kong, being a British possession, had naturally acted early in the war to intern its German civilian population. Women and children were kept in a downtown hotel and were catered for by the chefs and staff there. The men, however, were placed on St John's Island, more commonly known by the less appealing name of Stone Cutter's island. This former quarantine colony with its inadequate housing was not suitable for the internment of the 226 civilian prisoners, and they complained of having to work like 'coolies'.³⁷ Efforts were made in the course of the war to have the prisoners shipped to Australia, with all internees in Hong Kong reaching Australia before the Armistice. In China, Germans and other nationals in Tientsin (Tianjin)³⁸ provided aid to German prisoners of war in Japan, in the form of clothing, food and money. For lower class prisoners of war this was a lifeline. Upon China's entry to the war, a similar evacuation of German and Austro-Hungarian civilians from Shanghai and other areas with enemy residents took place. Initially there were discussions about allowing the Japanese to take in the civilians, but as, Madeleine Chi argued, Britain was reluctant to allow this as Japan was treating its German civilians so well.³⁹ However, a more plausible explanation is that, as Japan did not intern German civilians in Japan itself it was unlikely to be keen on interning German civilians from China. It is still unclear from the records available who initiated the policy of evacuation from China after its entry into the war and how the British government was able to ship German civilians from independent China to Australia.

Before moving onto the analysis of France and Japan, it remains to touch on the Ottoman prisoners in the British Empire. The Turkish newspaper *Hilal* in November 1916 reported that Turkish prisoners were photographed for the amusement of British soldiers, although the paper noted that this amusement could take a nasty turn as in the killing of all wounded

³⁶ TNA, FO383/449, 51405, Propaganda in Spain, 21st March 1918. L.C. Memorandum (Name unclear). The Foreign Office also saw no way that the French would agree to returning German prisoners.

³⁷ TNA, FO383/32, 17001, George F. Anderson, US Consul-General, report on Hong Kong, 13th February 1915.

³⁸ The town had had heavy European military presence since the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, with Western nations garrisoning the area to maintain open access to Beijing.

³⁹ Madeleine Chi, *China Diplomacy, 1914-1918* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1970), p. 134.

Turkish soldiers in Basra. The newspaper maintained that if one were caught by the British or Australians then it was a sure way to suffer 'martyrdom'. The article contrasted this (for propaganda purposes) with the usually good treatment offered Turkish prisoners when captured by Indian troops.⁴⁰

Most Ottoman soldiers captured by the British were kept in India or Egypt, and these prisoners did not often come into contact with their German counterparts. Some of the camps used in Egypt to temporarily house German prisoners who were repatriated from India had previously been used to intern Ottoman prisoners. The closest German and Ottoman prisoners came to one another was in Ras el-Tin, Egypt, which had separate Ottoman and German sections. Those interned in India, as with their German counter-parts, all found the climate 'horrible'.⁴¹ Although separate, the treatment of Ottoman prisoners does not appear to have been very different from that of German ones, with one major exception, rations. The 'Oriental' diet allowed to Ottoman prisoners caused much more serious cases of nutritional deficiencies and related diseases such as pellagra than were suffered by the Germans who received 'European' rations.⁴² The ICRC reports on the camps in India reported similar complaints from the Ottoman prisoners to those of the Germans and made little of what was a serious dietary problem: 'It requires much practice and discrimination to pick out such complaints as have any solid foundation. A prisoner, in whatever country he may be, complains because he suffers. The loss of freedom upsets his sense of proportion. A porter from Constantinople or a fisherman from the Black Sea coast, though he draws every day the same rations as a British soldier, manages to complain about his food.'⁴³

France was second only to Britain in terms of the global reach of its empire, and its internment camps in West Africa were linked to the British camp network through transfers. Internment camps were established all across the French Empire, from Tahiti to Madagascar to Indo-China.⁴⁴ By 1916, the British government was willing to concede control of German West African ports in exchange for, as Andrew Bonar Law, the Secretary of State for the Colonies,

⁴⁰ TNA, FO383/339, 4869, 6th January, 1917, *Hilal*, 20th November 1916.

⁴¹ *Reports on British Prison camps in India and Burma*, p. 11.

⁴² Yucel Yanikdag, *Healing the Nation: Prisoners of War, Medicine and Nationalism in Turkey, 1914-1939* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 133-134.

⁴³ *Reports on British Prison camps in India and Burma*, p. 11. The rations drawn were not entirely similar, as shown in Yucel, *Healing the Nation*.

⁴⁴ According to a Red Cross report, Germans were used as forced labour in Tahiti up to July 1916. BA, R67/577, Bericht 35, 24th July 1916.

argued, 'a quid pro quo' of France relinquishing any claims it had in German East Africa.⁴⁵ This seemed to work well in France's favour, and indeed in the immediate aftermath of the war Britain had to deal with Portuguese and Belgian claims on Kionga and Ruanda-Urundi while France was free to deal with Togo alone and had the majority of influence in Cameroon. From the point of view of German propaganda, this newly enlarged French West Africa created the threat of former German colonial subjects being shipped to Europe to serve in the French occupation force on the left bank of the Rhine. From a captivity point of view, it meant that during the war, especially from 1916 on, any Germans captured in Cameroon were to come under French control.⁴⁶ Similarly to those captured by the British, they would all eventually be shipped back to Germany, although after a much longer period of internment.

France also established camps in North Africa: Heather Jones in her comparative analysis of German, French and British camps touched on these captivity systems. Her book refers to around 17,300 prisoners in 1916, in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, who were sent there from the Western Front.⁴⁷ The reception received by Germans in Algeria, where 'stood thousands upon thousands of people on the dock who began howling and growling with knives in their hands,' was similar to the rough send-off that other Germans had received elsewhere in Africa, when leaving their former colonies.⁴⁸ In the French case, as Jones shows, military necessity was not the only determining factor in sending prisoners to Morocco. The French Governor-General of Morocco, Louis Herbert Gonzalve Lyautey, specifically wanted German labour battalions in the colony in order to lower German prestige and confirm French superiority in the eyes of the indigenous population, as a way of reversing Germany's pre-war diplomatic overtures in the region.⁴⁹ The desire by the French military to 'humiliate took precedence over

⁴⁵ Andrew and Kanya-Forstner, 'The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims', p. 87.

⁴⁶ With the exception of those who fled to Spanish territory for internment. In the initial stages of the war Britain sent most captured officers to the United Kingdom. By 1916, with Britain's dwindling role in the fighting, it did not capture many prisoners from Cameroon.

⁴⁷ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 110.

⁴⁸ 'standen tausenden und aber tausenden Menschen an der Landungstelle, die uns mit Messer in den Hand mit Heulen und Gröhlen empfangen.' BA, R67/181, Letter from prisoner of war, Jakob, to his wife Marie, 20th May, 1916. Jakob was captured on the Western Front and by the time he arrived in Algeria he was much too ill to work and was invalided to Switzerland where he was pleased to note; 'In Frankreich gab es Steine, und in der Schweiz Blumen'. In contrast, German colonial prisoners were not entitled to be invalided to Switzerland, 'The agreement with the German government for the transfer to Switzerland of invalid combatant POWs is not regarded as extending to POWs who are interned overseas and it is not thought that there would be any advantage in extending it.' TNA, FO383/302, 103877, 24th May 1917, despatch from the Prisoners of War Department to Australia.

⁴⁹ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 111.

prisoners' welfare.⁵⁰ A similar process affected the German colonial prisoners taken to French West Africa from Togo and Cameroon.

Dahomey was colonised by the French in 1872 and incorporated into French West Africa in 1904. The internment camps in Dahomey received more attention in the German press than any other camp in the extra-European world.⁵¹ The name itself, Dahomey, became a by-word for 'barbaric' treatment and for a colonial race reversal whereby black guards watched over white prisoners. The image of the 'barbaric' black guard directly related to the image of the 'barbaric' black soldier on the Western Front. Dahomey comprised several different camps, but the focus of German propaganda was the civilian internment camp at Abomey, the area's main town. Konteradmiral Conrad Albrecht, commander of a torpedo boat flotilla in Flanders, wrote to the Reichskanzler in July 1917, almost three years after the capture of most of the civilians from Togo and Cameroon, asking him to use his influence to have these internees, who were now in France, transferred to neutral Switzerland.⁵² The grounds for this were the 'inhuman treatment' (unmenschlichen Behandlung) they had received during internment in Abomey, the adverse effects of the tropical climate and diseases, such as yellow fever, blackwater fever and typhus, and the flogging with ox-hide whips and application of thumbscrews along with other medieval tortures used by 'blacks' on the prisoners.⁵³

The French camps in West Africa, like the British colonial camps, saw a lot of movement of prisoners through transfers. While it was common for German prisoners from the British colonies to be shipped around the global network laid out in this thesis, it was unheard of for civilians who were first interned in the United Kingdom to be sent on to Dominion or colonial camps.⁵⁴ In the French system, however, before major German reprisals set in, some Germans (mainly combatant prisoners of war) were sent from mainland France to one of the many camps in Algeria and Morocco, although it is not clear if any of them were then sent on to Dahomey. This sparked some of the harshest and most deliberate reprisals from the German government. In response to the shipping of German prisoners to French North Africa and the continued internment of German civilians, the German government enacted the Rhineland

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 116.

⁵¹ Although conditions in the camps in Siberia were extremely harsh, here we count the Siberia as part of Russia and hence European.

⁵² Shortly before his retirement in December 1939, Albrecht led the operations of the Kriegsmarine in the German invasion of Poland.

⁵³ BA, R8023/141, Konteradmiral Albrecht to the Reichskanzler, 21st July 1917.

⁵⁴ There were plans to send prisoners from the UK to Canada, but they never came to fruition.

marsh reprisals. Around 400 French civilians⁵⁵ were sent to work under extreme conditions in the Rhineland marshes. In response to this the French government took prompt action and shut down Dahomey, transporting the prisoners to Algeria and then on to mainland Europe.⁵⁶ These German reprisals were part of a larger set of reprisals undertaken by the German government in response to French transfers of prisoners to North Africa.⁵⁷ In an attempt to force France to remove its German prisoners from North Africa, in 1916, Germany sent 30,000 French prisoners of war to work in reprisal camps in German-occupied Russia.⁵⁸ This had the desired effect and all German prisoners of war were evacuated from North Africa to France and then on to Switzerland within a year, further strengthening the German War Ministry's belief that reprisals were effective.⁵⁹ It was clear that in the first half of the war Germany had 'the whip hand' when it came to enacting reprisals.⁶⁰

Dahomey was only in operation for two years, but its reputation in Germany as one of the harshest camps of the war lasted well into the 1920s. The German Red Cross reports on Dahomey and Abomey (based on ICRC reports and press cuttings) noted that physical punishments were being carried out on prisoners in the form of canings.⁶¹ The *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* from 4th July 1915 carried a painting of prisoners labouring with pick axes in Dahomey, while one man lay collapsed on the ground all under the gaze of indigenous guards and the African sun.⁶² The *Frankfurter Zeitung* from the previous month described the treatment of Germans in Dahomey as a 'disgrace to the French Nation'.⁶³ While British camps certainly came in for criticism in German propaganda for the use of black soldiers as guards, they never gained the same notoriety as the French-run camps. This was due to two factors. As Jones argued for the North African camps, the French camps in the colonies were explicitly organised to humiliate prisoners, to lower German prestige among indigenous populations.

⁵⁵ ICRC, C G1 A 35-03, Cercle de représailles consécutif à internement de prisonniers allemands au Dahomey sous le garde de nègres: correspondance diplomatique, témoignages de prisonniers, 8th April 1915 – 21st February 1917, Abteilung für Gefangenensorge [Frankfurt Red Cross] to the ICRC, 20th July 1915.

⁵⁶ ICRC, C G1 A 35-03, Cercle de représailles consécutif à internement de prisonniers allemands au Dahomey.

⁵⁷ Max Militzer, '500 Tage in Marokko', in *In Feindeshand*, p. 95.

⁵⁸ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 115.

⁵⁹ Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 288.

⁶⁰ TNA, FO383/110, 165279, Alleged Reprisals Against German Prisoners in France, 5th November 1915. Rumbold memorandum.

⁶¹ BA, R67/175, Bericht 30, 14th June 1915.

⁶² BA, R67/24, *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, 4th April 1915.

⁶³ BA, R67/24, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 10th June 1915.

Reprisals against British and French prisoners in Europe also had an effect on how the British treated their extra-European prisoners. It was one of the contributing factors in the evacuation of prisoners from camps in Borneo, Singapore and Hong Kong to Australia, a predominantly white colony where the charges of racial defilement could not be maintained by the *Auswärtiges Amt*.⁶⁴ Secondly, the racist propaganda based on the post-war French occupation of the Rhineland used the established cultural 'colonial archive' of the West African theatre. Theodor Seitz, writing in *Der Tag* in May 1920, drew upon the wartime takeover of Cameroon, where he claimed German women had been raped, murdered or used as slaves by black troops, as a warning as to what would happen in the French-occupied Rhineland.⁶⁵

The French camp network in the initial stages of the war was inter-connected with that of the British, through British agreements to transfer prisoners taken in German West Africa to the French. In the West African campaign, with both powers working together, this was only to be expected. From the archival evidence it does seem that there was some reluctance on the British side to hand over prisoners to the French. One can cite the pragmatic factors, of preferring to keep prisoners as bargaining chips and the other advantages that holding enemy captives offered, as being the grounds for this reluctance. There is also evidence, however, that the British perception of French internment was not too different from that of their German enemies. In a letter to the firm Messrs Soedecker and Meyer concerning property claims made by their employee in Togo, a Mr Pette, Major General Dobell (C in C British forces in West Africa and therefore in charge of the occupation of Lomé, Togo), threw out the complaints, but noted: 'I may remind Mr Pette and other German prisoners of war in Lomé, that they have considerable cause for congratulation by reason of the fact, that they are permitted to reside where they are, and are not employed in road making in say - Upper Dahomey.'⁶⁶

⁶⁴ The Colonial Office was especially keen on the plan in order to evacuate the Germans from German East Africa. TNA, ADM116/1543, Interdepartmental Meeting Minutes, 20th November 1917.

⁶⁵ BA, R67/8023, *Der Tag*, Nummer 15, Berlin, 30th May 1920, Theodor Seitz, 'Die Schwarze Schmach'. BA, R8023/663, Herr Müller to his Aunt, 13th March 1925. Müller, a former Cameroon cocoa plantation owner, lost his land and was repatriated to Germany during the war. He noted in his letter that France was taking over West Africa 'bis zum Kongo' with the express purpose of recruiting indigenous troops for deployment to the occupied Rhineland.

⁶⁶ BA, R1001/3947, Government House of Lomé (General Dobell) to Messrs Soedecker and Meyer, 11th October 1915. Karl Fischer in his memoirs says the prisoners were well aware of what awaited them once they were handed over to the French: he quoted a German sea captain as saying 'Wenn wir jetzt in

In the wake of the Rhineland marsh reprisals in 1916, the British refused to transfer any other colonial Germans to French camps in Africa. This caused some tension between the two Allies when a French request for black prisoners for labour regiments in Morocco was turned down by the Foreign Office.⁶⁷ Britain had transferred German captives captured on the Western Front to French labour battalions but was very clear on how these prisoners were to be treated and where they were to be confined to work. Nonetheless, the German government threatened reprisals in the form of sending British prisoners to labour camps in German-Occupied Russia.⁶⁸ In April-May 1916, Germany sent 2,000 British prisoners, along with 30,000 French, to the Eastern Front, to work in Courland (Latvia), in direct reprisal for alleged French maltreatment of German prisoners in North Africa.⁶⁹ In light of this previous experience Britain was not prepared to transfer thousands of German and black prisoners to French Africa later in the war.⁷⁰ In a similar vein, in late 1916 Britain refused French proposals for a uniform Allied reprisal 'regime'. Britain did not trust that France (and Russia) were treating their captives well and did not want to be 'tainted' by association.⁷¹

In addition to the request for transfers of black prisoners to Morocco, the French government asked the British for a further consignment of German prisoner labour to be transported to Réunion. Again the British steadfastly refused on the grounds that the Germans would surely react with reprisals against British captives with Lord Newton, Controller of the Foreign Office Prisoners of War Department, noting: 'this proposal in view of the trouble the French have got us into over prisoners' questions is perfectly preposterous.'⁷² H.B. Warner of the Foreign

französische Gefangenschaft kommen, geht es uns sehr Schlecht; Wir werden sicher schwer in der Sonnehitze arbeiten müssen.' Fischer, *In Französischer Hölle*, p. 31.

⁶⁷ TNA, FO383/205, 255442, Letter from the French Ambassador to the Foreign Office, 11th December 1916.

⁶⁸ TNA, FO383/184, 92465, German prisoners of war transferred to France, May 16th 1916, noted that 2,700 German prisoners of war had been transferred from Britain to France for work. In response to the reprisal threat, Sir Arthur Nicolson, at the Foreign Office, commented: 'In view of what we have done we cannot well complain'.

⁶⁹ Kramer, 'Prisoners in the First World War', in Scheipers (ed), *Prisoners in War*, p. 81.

⁷⁰ Doubts were cast on French policy toward Askari earlier in the war, with the British fearing France was being too heavy-handed in their treatment of captured Askari. General Cunliffe in a telegram to the War Office, noting the execution of Cameroon Askari by French forces argued; 'I realise the difficult and delicate nature of this question: it is the methods of one nation against those of the other, but if we eventually take over the country in question [Cameroon] the present French methods will leave a ravaged country and increase our difficulties of future administration.' TNA, WO158/541, Cunliffe to War Office, 21st June 1915.

⁷¹ Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 300.

⁷² TNA, FO383/305, 120086, French Request East Africa Prisoner of War Labour for Réunion, 16th June 1917.

Office Prisoners of War Department explained in a letter to the Army Council that Newton was 'strongly opposed to this proposal, as it would certainly lead to reprisals and that he thinks that Monsieur [Jules] Cambon should be so informed.'⁷³ This protection of Britain's own soldiers and British prisoners in German hands did not transfer into policy towards captured African carriers serving with the German forces, however, and the transfer and displacement of hundreds of thousands of carriers continued throughout the war. In addition, British African troops were sent across the African continent between the various theatres as need dictated, with troops from Nigeria and the Gold Coast fighting on both the Eastern and Western African Fronts, causing some discomfort to Smuts and others in the South African government who feared the consequences of allowing black soldiers to fight against Europeans.

After the war the French African camps maintained a higher profile in the German press than the British ones. In 1921 flyers (Flugblätter) were published under the title *Französischer Sadismus: Szenen Sadistischer Verbrechen und Morde und ihre Opfer*.⁷⁴ This revived the accusations of barbaric treatment in France's wartime camps in Africa, particularly through the use of thumbscrews and whips on prisoners; 'Thumbscrews! Yes! The very same as used in the torture chambers of the Middle-Ages only slightly updated to be used as the latest colonial instrument of culture!'⁷⁵ Abomey, according to the German propaganda of the 1920s, was the testing ground for brutal methods of internment that would be exported to French-occupied Germany. The flyers contended that France had combined some of the worst depravities of medieval Europe with African barbarism. The thumbscrews, once fastened onto a prisoner's thumbs, were then linked to another prisoner's thumbs through a chain from which hung a block of wood. The prisoners had to suspend the block in the air or risk receiving a beating from a black guard if it were to touch the ground. Karl Fischer in his memoirs cited one case where one German was led through Abomey while attached to the thumbscrews by two black guards, in a public humiliation.⁷⁶ ICRC reports during the war were accompanied by sketches of the thumbscrews which were also reproduced in post-war propaganda. Although the ICRC never inspected Dahomey itself, it interviewed prisoners who had been transferred from there

⁷³ TNA, FO383/305, 120086, 16th June 1917, H.B. Warner to Army Council, 20th June 1917. Jules Cambon, head of the political section of the French foreign ministry during the war.

⁷⁴ BA, R8023/88, 'Flugblätter Deutscher Gegenrechnung feindliche Kriegsverbrechen', *Gesundblätter für Auslandsdeutsche*, 1921.

⁷⁵ 'Daumenschraube? Jawohl! Dieselbe wie in den Folterkammern des Mittelalters hier nur ein wenig modernisiert zum neuesten kolonialen Kulturinstrument!' BA, R8023/88, *Drei Gegen Einen 1 Akt eines fünftaktigen Kolonialkriegs*, 1921.

⁷⁶ Fischer, *In Französischer Hölle*, p. 52.

to Casablanca and found them to be in ill health mainly from a lack of quinine while interned in West Africa and it confirmed that thumbscrews had been used on prisoners.⁷⁷

German propaganda on the French camps in Africa was translated into English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Here again the 'Schreckenslager Abomey' (The horror camp Abomey) was singled out as the worst camp.⁷⁸ However the German propaganda was contradictory in its dealing with racial humiliation. On the one hand it spoke of Africa as a place where a 'never to be repaired disgrace [was] publicly in evidence which the white race by means of the shamelessly inflicted indignity on the Germans perpetrated before the eyes of the black.'⁷⁹ On the other hand this was not a collective European shaming; the charge was aimed at merely the French: 'The intuition of the Negro is as follows [...] if the white Frenchmen treat their white brethren, the Germans, so badly - however may they treat only one of us [...] all mistreatment of the French against us [German prisoners] failed completely in their design.'⁸⁰

More generally, contemporary comparisons between French and British colonial internment were firmly in Britain's favour. Letters and reports from prisoners taken in Togo and Cameroon often cited their disappointment at having been handed over to the French and not having been repatriated by the British. One such example from two sisters wrote of their, and 278 other Germans', despair at being taken off their ship by a French officer (the day before setting sail for Europe and being sent to Dahomey).⁸¹ Paul Müller, a missionary and employee of the British firm *F and A Swanzy*, in Togo, reported that while the British did plunder Lomé, it was preferable to capture by the French. He went on to state that German officers would have never surrendered to the French forces, and if necessary would have fought to the last man.⁸²

⁷⁷ For sources on Dahomey see ICRC, C G1 A 35-03, Cercle de représailles consécutif à internement de prisonniers allemands au Dahomey, C G1 A 35-04, Cercle de représailles consécutif à internement de prisonniers allemands au Dahomey sous le garde de nègres: correspondance diplomatique, témoignages de prisonniers (suite), 26th July 1915 – 18th May 1916, and C G1 A 35-05, Cercle de représailles consécutif à internement de prisonniers allemands au Dahomey sous le garde de nègres: correspondance diplomatique, témoignages de prisonniers, mémoire sur les dépôts de prisonniers en Afrique du nord (suite), 20th May 1915- 20th March 1917. Mémoire sur l'état sanitaire des dépôts des prisonniers de guerre en Afrique. (Undated)

⁷⁸ Fischer, *In Französischer Hölle*, p. 41.

⁷⁹ BA, R8023/88, 'Togogreuel', p 30.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 35, Councillor Dr Gruner's account of internment in Dahomey.

⁸¹ BA, R1001/3940/5, Krieg in Kamerun, 1914 – 1918. Berth. and Hanna to their mother, 22nd October 1914.

⁸² Müller claimed that the arresting British officer informed him that he had received a cable from the French governor of Dahomey with instructions to occupy Togo and not to take any prisoners. According

Whether this painting of Britain in a favourable light in comparison with the French had ulterior motives is difficult to say. It is however plain from the evidence that the Germans saw the British as the lesser of two evils.

The Japanese internment regime, in contrast, stands apart from the other case studies in this chapter. Internment in Japan has been memorialized through one of the most curious historiographies of the war. If the Western Front had its legend of Christmas truce football matches, the East-Asian front has a legacy of cultural exchange that is still being celebrated in Japan today. From a cultural perspective the memory of German prisoners in Japan is stronger than in any other country and remains a focus of attention in Japanese popular histories. The emphasis in this historiography has been on the relatively good treatment of prisoners by the Japanese government.⁸³ There is a wealth of sources and historiography available on internment in Japan in the First World War. A small cottage industry has developed around the German prisoners held by Japan during the war, taken at Tsingtao, with anything from books, films, cartoons and comics to cakes and hot-dogs being associated with them. Of course the romanticised image of prisoners of war in Japanese popular literature does not necessarily match the reality, but there are more and more serious studies of the prisoners in wartime, appearing in Japan, with which to balance the picture out. In terms of this thesis, comparisons between Japanese internment of German prisoners of war and the treatment of their compatriots held in the British Empire do not seem, on the surface, to be very apposite. However, similar themes link the two cases as regards the disruption of racial hierarchies through captivity and the development of the camp system. Moreover, with Japan largely isolated from the global camp network and not involved in prisoner transfers, it provides us with a well-documented, entirely separate control study to compare with the more integrated global internment system run by Britain. It also offers us a different model of how an imperial power at war used camp systems for security.

Japan's involvement in the First World War began at the harbour town of Tsingtao (Qingdao) on the Shantung peninsula in China. Tsingtao was taken by the German Reich in 1897 in reparation for the murder of German missionaries in Shandong (the Juye incident). Once in control of the town the colonisers completely levelled it and rebuilt it along German lines,

to Müller, the British had raced to Togo to seize the colony before their French partners to prevent the murder of Germans. BA, R1001/3940/5, Müller to RKA, 12th March 1915.

⁸³ See chapter one.

from installing a sewage system to building modern German red-roofed houses.⁸⁴ The development of Tsingtao was particularly galling for Japan, because Germany, as part of the Triple Intervention (with France and Russia) had directly intervened in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and denied Japanese claims to territory in China. Riots also broke out in Tokyo in response to the Japanese feeling that they had again been denied the spoils of a successful war after defeating Russia and signing the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905.⁸⁵ Japan entered the First World War in August 1914 determined not to be denied its just rewards for a third time.

Although no British or Japanese territorial possessions were under immediate threat from the Germans in the Far East, Britain asked Japan to join the war to protect shipping routes in the Pacific.⁸⁶ The Japanese foreign minister, Kato Takaaki, realized that Japanese combat participation in the war and the taking of Tsingtao was a once-in-a-century opportunity for the Japanese to gain greater political influence in China, and Kato almost single-handedly brought Japan into the conflict.⁸⁷ The Allies viewed Japan's entry into the war with mixed opinions. While the British felt the Japanese would be very useful in helping relieve the strain on the Royal Navy by patrolling the Pacific, the growth of Japanese influence in East Asia was not as welcome. In the decade before 1914, Australia and New Zealand had been particularly concerned about the 'Yellow Peril', fearing a possible Japanese attack since the Japanese takeover of Formosa (Taiwan) in 1895, a threat that became more real with the destruction of the Russian fleet in Tsushima a decade later.⁸⁸

Kaiser Wilhelm II, ever mindful of the 'Yellow Peril', allegedly remarked to the Governor of Tsingtao Alfred von Meyer-Waldeck that, 'to lose Tsingtao to the Japanese would shame Germany more than to lose Berlin to the Russians', but the garrison simply did not possess the necessary man power to prevent this.⁸⁹ The combined Japanese-British force that attacked Tsingtao under Japanese command vastly out-numbered the opposition. After the German

⁸⁴ Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting*, p. 434.

⁸⁵ Richard Sims, *Japanese Political History Since the Meiji Restoration 1868-2000* (Hurst and Co. London, 2001), p. 89.

⁸⁶ Hiery, *Neglected War*, pp. 25-30.

⁸⁷ Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1999), p. 36.

⁸⁸ Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 14.

⁸⁹ Ian Nish, *Alliance in Decline: A Study of Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-1923* (The Athlone Press, London, 1974), p. 134.

surrender, the Japanese gathered the 4,800 prisoners of war and arranged to bring them to Japan for incarceration. With particular historical irony the Germans were evacuated from Tsingtao on 14th November 1914, seventeen years to the day since they had first arrived there.⁹⁰ The German prisoners of war would be in captivity in Japan from November 1914 up to their release in early 1921.

The Japanese takeover of the Marshall and Caroline Islands in the Pacific, although agreed to by the Allied powers, caused further tension with Britain, the Dominions and the United States.⁹¹ In the takeover of the Islands in the North Pacific very few Germans were interned. From the available documents, it seems that only four Germans from the islands were added to the numbers of those taken from Tsingtao. Japan's policy in the islands and its attitudes toward the indigenous population differed from those of Australia and New Zealand in New Guinea and Samoa respectively. Whereas the Australians cut back on education and focused on economic exploitation, the Japanese opened schools. The motives were far from altruistic, as the school system was designed to 'civilise' the islanders along Japanese lines and expand Japanese cultural imperialism.⁹²

Coupled with the handful of prisoners taken from the Pacific, the large number of prisoners from Tsingtao presented an administrative challenge to the Japanese authorities, and the initial treatment of captives was improvised.⁹³ The round up and internment of the German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners in Tsingtao for transportation to Japan was harsh, with some of the prisoners having to sleep out in the open in a graveyard until eventually being afforded shelter with some local Chinese.⁹⁴ However, Japan had conducted itself well in its treatment of prisoners of war during the Russo-Japanese War and some of the camps used to house the German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners had been used in 1904-05 as well.⁹⁵ In the earlier

⁹⁰ To add further insult to injury the Japanese chiselled the date of the German surrender (7th November 1914) onto the memorial to Admiral Otto von Diederichs, a prominent landmark in the city. See Seto, *Soldiers from Tsingtao*, p. 30.

⁹¹ It was agreed between the Allies that Japan would take over Germany's northern Pacific possessions and the British Empire would take over those south of the equator.

⁹² Hiery, *Neglected War*, p. 142. The integration of the islands into the Japanese Empire was interrupted by the Versailles Treaty and the establishment of Mandates. Ibid., p. 147.

⁹³ Krebs, 'Die etwas andere Kriegsgefangenschaft', in Overmans (ed), *In der Hand des Feindes: Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, p. 324.

⁹⁴ Karl Krüger, *Von Potsdam nach Tsingtau: Erinnerung an meine Jugendjahre in Uniform 1904-1920* (Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt, 2001), p. 173.

⁹⁵ The good treatment of Russian prisoners was noted by most European powers, although it may have been exaggerated for propaganda purposes in order to show the Russians in a worse light. Japan had

conflict, Russian officers had even been offered their release once they signed a parole promising not to take up arms against Japan again.⁹⁶ Although no parole was offered to the German or Austro-Hungarian officers, they were allowed to keep their swords, a powerful symbol of martial spirit in Europe as well as Japan. Unlike the Russians, the Germans and Austro-Hungarians also received salaries and allowances comparable to their rank.⁹⁷ In the initial stages of internment, Japan again followed the norms established by international law and as in the Russo-Japanese war it incorporated the articles of The Hague Convention into its guidelines on how to treat prisoners of war. Notably, prisoners of war were not forced to work.⁹⁸

The contemporary Allied consensus on the treatment of prisoners of war in Japan was that they were, if anything, being too well treated. The French War Ministry noted in a letter to the British that the Germans in Japan were enjoying 'a certain level of freedom.'⁹⁹ The German press published positive reports on the takeover of Tsingtao and the internment of the defeated German garrison. 'Im ganzen haben sich die Japaner als sehr human bewiesen; wir könnten uns in dieser Hinsicht nicht beklagen. Auch die deutsche Kriegsgefangenen sind in Japan gut aufgehoben.'¹⁰⁰ Foreign media based in Yokohama made many references to the lenient treatment of German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners and civilians. Reporting initially focused on the 'most chivalrous courtesy'¹⁰¹ extended to prisoners by the Japanese. There was, however, a notable bitterness in articles in the pro-British *Japan Times* pertaining to prisoners of war. An article decrying the fact that the Japanese government was not adequately using the available prisoner labour force posed the question; 'Does Japan want

also learned a lesson from the Sino-Japanese war, during which its bad treatment of Chinese prisoners of war was publicised and commented upon widely in Europe, damaging Japanese prestige.

⁹⁶ 400 Russian officers availed themselves of this generous offer. Checkland, *Humanitarianism and the Emperor's Japan*, p. 47.

⁹⁷ *The Japan Times*, 15th February, 1915, 'German Prisoners do Themselves Well': reported that officers were receiving 70sen for daily food, with a 15yen monthly salary.

⁹⁸ Prisoners were allowed to volunteer for work in factories near their camps, although only in sectors that did not produce war materiel. Hence many prisoners earned money and a break from the monotony of camp life through the manufacture of toys, ladies' clothing and maintenance of machinery. Otsuru Atsushi 捕虜が働くとき (Prisoner of war Labour), (Jinbunshoin, Tokyo, 2013), pp. 104-108.

⁹⁹ TNA, FO383/199, 158087, French Ministry of War to the British War Trade Department 12th August, 1916.

¹⁰⁰ BA, R67/1648, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 22nd April 1915, report from Sister Magaretha. Sister Magaretha was allowed to remain in Tsingtao although she did note that the Japanese advised women not to go outdoors after 6pm as the streets had become more dangerous since the Germans had left.

¹⁰¹ *The Japan Times*, 12th January, 1915.

sausages or roads?’¹⁰² Clearly the post-war ‘myth of comfortable internment’¹⁰³ in Japan actually already existed amongst the Allied powers during the war and was a contributing factor to tensions between the British and the Japanese. In addition, the Japanese press was also critical of its own government’s good treatment of prisoners: the *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun* complained of hospitality in excess of the standards set by international law being extended to German prisoners.¹⁰⁴

Austro-Hungarian officer Adalbert Freiherr von Kuhn’s reminiscences¹⁰⁵ show the interactions in Japanese captivity between prisoners and their guards in a racial light. Published in 1931, von Kuhn was writing to dispel the myths created by those whose only knowledge about Japan came from reading Lafcadio Hearn or Pierre Loti and who imagined that prisoners in Japan had lived like emperors, in paper houses surrounded by geisha.¹⁰⁶ He felt that the Japanese had considered the prisoners more like children than men. As long as they behaved themselves well they would be treated well. Although von Kuhn criticized others who held stereotypical views on ‘quaint’ Japan, his own opinions were equally prejudiced, coloured by the ‘Yellow Peril’ and what he saw as the emphasis on *Bushido*.¹⁰⁷ Von Kuhn felt that the German and Austro-Hungarian officers, through their capture, had lost the respect of the Japanese soldiers and were merely to be treated as cattle.¹⁰⁸

Although very bitter at his perceived mistreatment, the only major complaints von Kuhn could make were in relation to the way the Japanese punished escape attempts.¹⁰⁹ He even remarked on what a comfortable place Japan was to live in, with its climate, sea and

¹⁰² *The Japan Times*, 24th February, 1915. In 1916 the newspaper was still complaining of the lax treatment of prisoners claiming it would lead to ‘a loss of trade and a loss of regard in the colonies and the home countries.’ *The Japan Times*, 9th May, 1916.

¹⁰³ Krebs, ‘Die etwas andere Kriegsgefangenschaft’, in Overmans (ed), *In der Hand des Feindes: Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, p. 327.

¹⁰⁴ *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi Shinbun*, 4th December 1914, in Makita, ‘The Alchemy of Humanitarianism’, p. 120.

¹⁰⁵ Von Kuhn was interned in Himeji and later transferred to Aongahara.

¹⁰⁶ Von Kuhn, Adalbert, ‘Kriegsgefangen in Japan. Ernstes und Heiteres aus meiner „Furionenzeit“’, in *In Feindeshand*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ *Bushido* (Chivalry) was well-known in Europe after Inzao Nitobe’s treatise on the topic for a European audience (1905). *Bushido* was in one way meant to present Japan to the Europeans as a country that while not Christian, had a moral code in line with European traditions. The main interest for Europeans, however, centred on *hara-kiri*.

¹⁰⁸ After Sergeant Kataoka’s visit, von Kuhn noted: ‘sein Excellenz hatte die Güte uns mit Ochsen zu vergleichen’. Von Kuhn, *Kriegsgefangen in Japan*, p. 80.

¹⁰⁹ Whereas The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 recommended only light disciplinary action for escapes, the Japanese, like other belligerents, tried those who attempted to escape under civil law for damaging property, stealing or other offences caused during escape, resulting in lengthy sentences.

mountains. The only problem, according to von Kuhn, was that it was inhabited by the wrong race.¹¹⁰ However the brunt of his ill-will focused upon the British rather than the Japanese. Other writers transferred an image of the English as cowards fighting in the rear lines of the Allies in Flanders (with colonial troops to the front, then the Belgians, followed by the French with the British taking up the rear) to the siege of Tsingtao.¹¹¹ British troops had taken little part in the siege, having only suffered thirteen dead. They were not involved in the major fighting, more due to the primacy of Japanese commanders than a lack of bravery on their part. However, the Germans saw this as an example of the British bullying Japanese soldiers to fight while they remained out of the action.¹¹²

Like most other camps during the First World War, those in Japan were open to independent inspection by the neutral embassy of the prisoners' protecting power and the International Committee of the Red Cross.¹¹³ The records of these inspections show disparities in treatment from camp to camp. As with the camp systems in Europe, there was no uniformity. The conditions a prisoner would have to endure depended on the luck of the draw when being assigned to a camp. Initially the prisoners were housed in improvised camps, mainly temple grounds or Red Cross buildings.¹¹⁴ Interestingly and importantly for cultural interaction, the camps were all located near large population centres. For example, before being moved thirty kilometres out of Tokyo to Narashino, 314 prisoners were held in the temple complex at Asakusa in the heart of the city.¹¹⁵ In contrast to their counterparts in Algeria, on arrival at Shinagawa train station in Tokyo the prisoners were greeted by throngs of people and handed yellow or white chrysanthemums as a welcome gift.¹¹⁶ As the war lengthened more permanent military-style barracks were constructed to house the prisoners, although this was not applied to every camp.¹¹⁷ German prisoners in Japan also never suffered from reprisals as there were

¹¹⁰ Von Kuhn, *Kriegsgefangen in Japan*, p. 80.

¹¹¹ Taken from Heinrich Hamm's diary, based on reports from the *Tientsin Shinbun*, 19-26 March 1915, 習志野市史研究 3, 2003 (Narashino-city Historical Research No. 3). Hamm, although exaggerating the figures, took pride in the prowess of the German soldiers, noting that it took 60,000 Japanese to defeat 4-5,000 Germans. Hamm, *Diary* 1st April, 1915.

¹¹² Klein, 'Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in japanische Gewahrsam 1914-1920', p. 17.

¹¹³ Inspections were carried out by the Japanese Government, the US Embassy and the ICRC. After the United States' entry into the war, Switzerland took over its inspection duties. The Spanish embassy was the protecting power for Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war in Japan.

¹¹⁴ The buildings were owned by the Japanese Red-Cross, not the ICRC.

¹¹⁵ Seto, *Soldiers from Tsingtao*, p. 95.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹¹⁷ Some of these new camps were designed for and used by the Japanese army after the war.

so few Japanese prisoners on the German side. They were relatively well treated and eventually repatriated, so reprisals were never seen as necessary for either state.¹¹⁸ The only punishments prisoners in Japan suffered were for insubordination, escapes or other actions that were within their own control.

Moreover, Japan never interned German civilians, which helped to provide imprisoned German combatant prisoners of war with an extra supply of income and rations, through local support, in addition to the adequate rations allowed them by the Japanese government. Japan's good treatment of German civilians was even known to prisoners in the British Empire colonies, as this complaint from prisoners in Pietermaritzburg highlights: 'We understand that in Japan civilians are treated in every respect as is becoming to international law and passed usage [sic]. They are neither interned there nor are they severely restricted from carrying on their business and everyday life.'¹¹⁹

The Japanese-run camps were more hermetically sealed from the world beyond Japan than were the camps in French West Africa. Few prisoners were repatriated to Germany and there were practically no prisoner exchanges. However, being released by Japan was no guarantee of freedom as six members of the German medical corps in Tsingtao, released by the Japanese and allowed to travel back to Germany via the United States, discovered. They were picked up en route to Germany by the British and interned at Knockaloe on the Isle of Man for possessing insufficient documentation.¹²⁰ Clearly Japan and Britain were not communicating with one another in this case. All the same, this cutting off of prisoners from the global camp network kept prisoners safe from reprisals. Conversely, exclusion from the global camp network, cut the German prisoners in Japan off from opportunities for repatriation and kept their plight out of the public eye. The prisoners were not part of any tabled exchange agreements. The British

¹¹⁸ Naraoka Sochi, 第一次大戦勃発時のドイツにおける日本人「捕虜」 Japanese in Germany at the outbreak of the First World War (prisoners), *The Tsingtao War German Soldiers' Internment Camps Research Society Journal*, 4 (2006), pp. 17-38. There were around eighty Japanese civilians interned in Germany at the outbreak of the war but they were soon released.

¹¹⁹ TNA, FO383/247, 230381, Petition from Pietermaritzburg written by inmate J.E. Rosenthal, 5th December 1917.

¹²⁰ TNA, FO383/199, 177567, Letter from six Red Cross members interned in Knockaloe, 24th November 1915, letter dated 8th November 1915. In addition, there were a German few escapees from Japan who were captured on ships leaving the United States and ended up in British internment, such as the famous airman Gunther Plüschow, whose escape from Tsingtao initially, then Britain, and return to Germany was the stuff of legend and was a popular 'Ripping Yarn' even in post-war Britain. See, Gunther Plüschow, *My escape from Donington Hall by Kapitänleutnant Gunther Plüschow, of the German Air Service*; (John Lane, Bodley Head Ltd, London, 1922).

Foreign Office in the early stages of the war looked into the possibility of Japan offering up its prisoners in exchange for British prisoners held in Germany. The Auswärtiges Amt, contacting Britain through the ICRC, had also sought the possibility of exchanging captured British officers for Germans captured at Tsingtao, in particular Alfred Meyer-Waldeck. The Japanese, however, were unwilling to even discuss the possibility of exchanges, further highlighting Tokyo's aloofness from the war in Europe.

Overall, the fighting in East Asia in the 1914-1918 conflict was brief, ending in November 1914, but the diplomatic war continued well into the peace conference, with Japan clashing with China, and America, pushing German prisoners in Japan further into the diplomatic background. As Shinichi Yamamuro argues, Japan was more concerned with a future Pacific conflict with the United States than the current war in Europe.¹²¹ Japanese expansion into China and the Pacific threatened America's influence in the Philippines. Paul Arendt, a former Kriegs Beamter in Samoa (who, as an official, was entitled to repatriation to Germany via the United States), was sent by New Zealand to Hawaii in 1916 where he spent the rest of the War. There he noted that the Americans were nervous about the influence of Japan on Hawaii and what it would mean for the future. Arendt, writing in 1920, added that during the war, the Japanese, 'like most other Orientals', were 'Deutschfreundlich'.¹²² Although Japan and America worked together in the Siberian intervention in the Russian Civil War, they were uncomfortable allies with the US essentially intervening to prevent Japan from having a free hand.¹²³ The First World War brought Britain closer to the United States and resulted in the deterioration of Anglo-Japanese relations, culminating in the end of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1923.

The camp network that was established during the Great War was not the exclusive domain of the British. The German colonial empire had camps to mirror that of its rival, but these were temporary affairs and the nature of the campaign in East Africa meant that housing prisoners of war was difficult, with them often being merely disarmed and sent to Red Cross tents

¹²¹ Yamamuro Shinichi, 複合戦争と総力戦の断層 日本にとっての第一次世界大戦 (The Discrepancy Between Complex and Total War, Japan in the First World War), (Jinbunshoin, Tokyo, 2011), pp. 95-107.

¹²² BA, R1001/2629, Paul Arendt to the RKA, 17th January 1920.

¹²³ The notorious Zimmerman Telegram of February 1917 (A German proposal for Mexican intervention in the war against the USA backed by Japan and Germany) contributed to the distrust. Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916-1931* (Allen Lane London, 2014), p. 66.

instead of being interned. In Africa France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and Spain were also involved in taking captives. France bore the brunt of the German propaganda campaign against internment in the colonies, with maltreatment in French internment seen as indicative of France having reneged on the European civilising mission. It also carried on into the inter-war years, when anti-French propaganda linked internment in French West Africa with the occupation of the Rhine. Belgium's involvement in the war in the colonies also provided a counter-foil to the image of innocent Belgium that was so often put forward by the Allied powers. Japan then was the exception: the contemporary image of treatment there was favourable and continued into the post-war period. This positive image of Japan's internment of its German captives has been absorbed into contemporary popular portrayals in Japan of its First World War experience. If one were to assess where British internment would rank in a table of humane treatment, then it would be somewhere between Japan and France. Britain's reprisals against German prisoners in the colonies were not as harsh as the French ones but there certainly was not the same positive image of Britain in Germany as there was for the Japanese.

France, like Belgium and Portugal, the other belligerents allied with Britain involved in fighting in the German colonies, integrated its internment system and policies into the overall global camp network. In the takeover of Togo and Cameroon, France and Britain worked quite closely together, with prisoners being handed over to either side. Mainly the French received prisoners of war from the British, while the French handed over civilians to Britain, although this was not always the case. The war in Europe, as in the British case, directly affected French treatment of prisoners in West Africa. Pressure through German reprisals against French civilians and combatant prisoners of war forced France to revise its policies on internment in Africa. This eventually led to the closing down of civilian and prisoner of war camps in Dahomey and the shipping of civilian internees to mainland France and on to neutral internment in Switzerland. While more research needs to be done on prisoners of war in French North Africa, prisoners there were kept in tough conditions, and had mainly been captured on the Western Front, thus representing a reverse Europe-to-colonies exchange, which differs from the pattern of direction of transfer we have become accustomed to throughout this thesis.

Britain viewed French internment in Africa negatively, as seen through its eventual refusal to hand over prisoners from Togo and Cameroon to the French, even advising German civilian women to choose repatriation over joining their husbands in Abomey. The knowledge of what conditions were like in French West Africa also dissuaded the British from transferring prisoners captured in East Africa across the continent. Whether this was for prestige reasons or due to fear of reprisal is difficult to tell. However, once Britain and France had agreed on their spheres of influence with France staying out of the conflict in East Africa and Britain giving up its influence in German West Africa,¹²⁴ the British showed no more concern for German prisoners under French influence and distanced themselves from French treatment of captives.

Japanese internment practices illustrated Japan's aspirations to 'civilised' Great Power status.¹²⁵ Japan played a peripheral part in the fighting, limiting itself militarily to taking over Tsingtao and the German islands north of the equator, although the Japanese navy did send some ships to the Mediterranean.¹²⁶ The treatment of prisoners of war in Japan was comparatively excellent. There were a few cases of maltreatment but on the whole nothing comparable to Dahomey, or even Australia. On the surface prisoners in Japan should have been satisfied with their lot, however, this isolation from the global camp network meant that there was no chance of repatriation. The overall positive reports of Japanese treatment of prisoners of war in the European and German press meant that the German government never seriously lobbied for their return. Japan's refusal to allow Germans in their captivity to be exchanged for British prisoners in Germany kept prisoners in Japan out of the, albeit largely unsuccessful, negotiations on prisoner exchanges.

Prisoners of war from Tsingtao are certainly the most well studied case of prisoners from the former German colonies; they were also the most isolated. Their role in this thesis is as that of a control experiment to highlight how treatment of prisoners could be handled when kept separate from the larger conflict. Japan was unsure where its loyalties lay in the First World War, and given the minuscule number of Japanese prisoners in Germany there was not much public pressure on the Japanese government to act on their behalf. Anti-German feeling in

¹²⁴ Britain retained some territory in Northern Cameroon, which was incorporated into Nigeria. Strachan, *To Arms*, p. 542.

¹²⁵ Although by the end of the war, Japan had begun to tire of trying to become accepted into the international Great Power community.

¹²⁶ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 150.

Japan was nowhere near as severe as it was in other belligerent countries, and in turn, the prisoners focused their ire not on their captors but on their captor's ally, Britain. Japan followed the Hague regulations closely and ultimately Japan had nothing to gain out of mistreating its prisoners of war. Rather, through the good treatment of prisoners, it could ensure cordial post-war relations with Germany and also maintain the image of Japan as a 'civilised' nation on a par with the other Great Powers while also finding favour with neutral countries.

Prisoners from West Africa who had been sent to Dahomey were, after a large public outcry in Germany and reprisals against French prisoners, transferred to Switzerland for internment. After suffering forced marches and the harsh climate of West Africa, it was deemed humane by the German government that they be sent to Switzerland to join other civilian internees whom the Swiss were keeping for the duration of the war. The French, under pressure from the German reprisals against their own civilians, agreed.¹²⁷ Prisoners of war from Tsingtao perhaps enjoyed the most lengthy but stable time in internment of all the extra-European prisoners. The post-armistice years in captivity in Japan were similar here to other camps around the world, although without the threat of rioting. The years of waiting for ships to come and take them home made the prisoners very disconsolate: as the Red Cross inspector Dr Fritz Paravicini noted, they felt themselves forgotten at the edge of the world.¹²⁸ However, as with Dahomey the legacy of Bando continued on well beyond the Armistice, although in a different way. Bando was revived in the 1970s, with the establishment of the *Doitsu-Haus Naruto* museum by the Japanese state, as an example of cross-cultural and transnational exchange in a period untainted by the horrors of the Second World War.

In Africa, Germany, France and Britain were not the only colonial powers with a stake in the outcome of the Great War in Europe. Portugal and Belgium also used the war to lay their claims to German colonial territory in what was essentially a second scramble for Africa. Spain, although neutral, hoped to make use of the situation to export a labour force from Cameroon to the Spanish island of Fernando Po. In the Pacific, the Japanese and British Empires clashed over control of Germany's islands. The repatriation of German prisoners from these contested spaces was a huge logistical undertaking and will be the subject of the next chapter.

¹²⁷ ICRC, C G1 A 35-03, Cercle de représailles consécutif à internement de prisonniers allemands au Dahomey.

¹²⁸ Fritz Paravicini, 'Die Kriegsgefangenen in Japan', in *In Feindeshand*, p. 84.

Chapter Seven: Repatriation and the Inter-War Years

The signing of the Armistice on 11th November 1918 marked the end of the hostilities between Germany and the Allies but logistically there was much to be done. Indeed November 1918 does not mark the beginning or the end point of the repatriation story, to which our attention now turns. Examining the camp network as outlined in chapter two, we will analyse how the British closed down the camp system across the Empire and how the prisoners and internees were repatriated. Most of the final decisions regarding repatriation were made by the War Cabinet, but the Foreign Office was the main party behind the planning.

Repatriation had in fact occurred during the conflict and was not something that had to be developed from scratch after the ceasefire. As Jean-Jacques Becker noted, 'diplomacy never ceased to matter during the First World War,'¹ and there were frequent attempts, either through the Red Cross or via neutral governments such as Sweden, to get the belligerent Powers together to discuss repatriation. Lord Newton, as head of the Prisoner of War Department, spent a considerable amount of time abroad at repatriation meetings. However, the changing nature of this diplomacy during the conflict meant that negotiations over repatriation were long drawn out and frequently came to nothing. This chapter will sketch out the process of repatriation during the war and the post-Armistice period. It also looks at how access to the extra-European world became more restricted for Germans and other 'enemy aliens' into the 1920s as well as at ideas of colonial irredentism in inter-war Germany.²

Of course German prisoners of war and civilian internees from the extra-European theatre of the war made up only a small percentage of the overall number of prisoners to be repatriated. Reinhard Nachtigal estimated a number of around 1.5 million prisoners that had to be sent home from the Western Front, with around 740,000 Germans captured by the Allies.³ The victorious Allies were naturally keen to secure the return of their 770,000 or so soldiers first

¹ Jean Jacques Becker, 'War Aims and Neutrality', in Horne, *A Companion to World War I*, p. 213.

² 'Enemy Aliens' became the preferred term to use when referring to Germans and Austrians; the term foreigner was too broad, and something more specific but not explicitly referencing the Central Powers needed to be applied. TNA, CO323/809, 44829, War Cabinet memorandum, August 1919, 'Exclusion of Germans from British Colonies and Protectorates' 27th June 1919. For in depth discussion on Enemy Aliens in Britain see Bird, *Control of Enemy Aliens in Great Britain*.

³ Nachtigal, Reinhard, 'The Repatriation and Reception of Returning Prisoners', in Stibbe, *Captivity and Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, p. 160.

before turning their attention to sending home prisoners from the Central Powers. Nachtigal also gives a figure of 300,000 prisoners of war in the Near East, the African Colonies and Asia. The majority of these were Ottoman prisoners held in French or British hands.⁴ This thesis began by stating a number of around 25,000 Germans living in the Reich colonies before the war, with an estimated 20,000 having spent time in Allied captivity. However, the fluid and sometimes temporary nature of captivity, coupled with various wartime repatriations, makes it difficult to say with certainty how many of these people were left in captivity at the end of the war. The cross-border internment of civilians from German South-West Africa in South Africa, for example, and the various attempts to repatriate them, either back to German South-West Africa, to Germany or by shipping of prisoners to Australia, complicates the tracking of these prisoners. If one includes those prisoners taken from Tsingtao, whose number stayed constant during the war, then one can hazard an estimate of 15,000 prisoners from the former Reich colonies still in captivity globally at the Armistice.⁵

The repatriation process was on-going and it was the constant desire of the British War, Foreign and Colonial Offices from very early in the war that all extra-European German prisoners should be returned 'home', leaving room for the British to expand their influence and secure their new and old colonies. Most of the civilian prisoners from Togo and Cameroon were sent back to Germany in early 1915.⁶ However, policy changed that year and repatriation became much more problematic. Disagreements between Britain and Germany over exchanges of civilians, invalids and men above military age meant that many people who otherwise would have been sent home had to spend the war under curfew or behind barbed wire.⁷ Prisoner policy continually evolved throughout the war and only really began to reach an established structure towards the end of 1918, with the decision to send prisoners in the British Empire to the final holding destination of Australia. However, before the escalation of

⁴ Ibid., p. 172. The ICRC estimated that in September 1917 there were 110,000 prisoners of war in Britain and the British Empire; they did not provide figures for civilian internees. ICRC, C G1 A 09-10, Note sur la situation actuelle des prisonniers dans les différents pays, Geneva, September 1917.

⁵ The Foreign Office gave a figure of 11,000 civilians in captivity in British hands outside Britain in the summer of 1918. TNA, FO383/416, 198294, 29th June 1918, memorandum. This figure seems to be an underestimation.

⁶ Excluding those in Dahomey and Fernando Po.

⁷ There were questions over whether military age was to be up to forty-five or fifty-five years old. Early on the war, the War Office voiced its reluctance to lower the age of repatriation to forty-five as Germany was short of officers. FO383/75, 11847, Reduction in age of internees, 24th August 1915.

unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 there had been extensive repatriation, especially of civilians.⁸

During the war there were extensive, if not altogether successful, talks on prisoner repatriation. Offers of parole, i.e. freedom to leave the camp, for captive officers were still in evidence in the colonies, and some were repatriated after giving their parole, as in the case of Eduard Haber discussed in chapter two. There were numerous petitions and appeals for exchanges sent to the Foreign Office or directly to some of its staff. While there were individual exchanges for consular officials and retired officers, the institution of *man for man exchanges* was not going to be the norm in the First World War.⁹ Edwin Williams, a released British prisoner from Ruhleben, the civilian internment camp in Berlin, claimed that one of the camp officials, a Herr von Kessler, treated prisoners badly because his son was interned by the British in Ceylon. Proposals to exchange von Kessler's son with a British prisoner in Germany were rejected as, according to Horace Rumbold of the Foreign Office Prisoners Department, 'we have absolutely set our faces against individual exchange.' Moreover in von Kessler's case Rumbold felt the British would be 'bribing the father to carry out his duties in a manner in which he ought to carry them out anyhow.'¹⁰ Similarly, Dr Walther Sulzbach, held in Ahmednagar, had appeals on his behalf from a friend in Germany for an exchange or, at least, a transfer to the more suitable climate of Britain turned down. As the India Office argued, 'personal convenience of the prisoner appears to be the only grounds urged for his transfer to a place of internment in England. We have refused similar applications made to us by prisoners of war at Ahmednagar and consider it undesirable to make [an] exception in this case.'¹¹

Personal ties in Britain did not usually help one get out of internment either.¹² In one situation Lord Newton received a request from an old family friend, Lady Courtney, that some friends of hers, Germans who were interned in the Belgian Congo, be transferred to internment in Britain.

⁸ In addition, the blockade became 'total' in March 1915 although there still remained holes until a permanent committee was established in Paris in June 1916. Stevenson David, *1914-1918*, p. 248. The blockade itself was not aimed at preventing prisoners from returning to Germany, but unrestricted German submarine warfare, the extra demands on shipping to bring in troops, food and raw materials from the Empire and elsewhere and the use of shipping to supply the Allies, especially France and Italy, made it more difficult to justify allotting valuable allied shipping to repatriating prisoners of war.

⁹ Bodleian Library, Oxford (BLO), MS Rumbold Dep 19, Rumbold to John B. Jackson 8th November 1915.

¹⁰ BLO, MS Rumbold Dep 19, Rumbold to Jackson 19th October 1915.

¹¹ TNA, FO383/77, 134067, 18th September 1915, Telegram from the Government of India to the Foreign Office.

¹² One exception being the elderly Baron von Tucke. TNA, FO383/171, 38062, Government of India Report, 28th February 1916.

He noted in his reply that it was no wonder in view of 'German precedings [sic] that they should object to being handed over to the Belgian government', but they were prisoners of the Belgians and would remain so.¹³

While the Foreign Office was keen to get any British civilians, notably those in Belgium, out of German hands and repatriated, shipping restrictions caused problems when it came to exchanges. Moreover, public perception of repatriation during the war was mixed. While newspaper articles at once decried the perceived bad treatment of British people in German hands and complained of the good treatment afforded Germans in Britain, the British government was still unwilling to agree to demands for exchanges. In a war that required the total and equitable mobilisation of society, exchanges could cause problems for the public war effort as, according to Rumbold; 'Only those who could command sufficient influence could bring about individual exchanges.' This would disadvantage those prisoners who were 'poor and unknown people whose cases might be ever so much more deserving than those of the better classes.'¹⁴ In any event, Britain, with its greater number of civilian internees, held all the cards, although negotiations over repatriation almost always broke down over German demands for full exchange i.e. the repatriation of all civilians, as opposed to Britain's proposed exchange quotas which would have left Britain with a surplus of prisoners.¹⁵

The repatriation of civilians from Cameroon and Togo fitted the ideal strategy for how the British wanted to deal with their internees. With some exceptions (internees who were handed over to the French, some missionaries who were allowed to move to the Gold Coast, or the handful of Germans who were allowed to remain in Lomé),¹⁶ all Germans were swiftly removed from Togo and Cameroon early in the war. The combatant prisoners and male civilians of military age were kept in Britain itself, mainly on the Isle of Man or at the officer camp at Lofthouse Park. Here we will look at the conditions on board transports.

¹³ LSE, Courtney MSS 12/58. Lord Newton to Lady Courtney, 9th May 1917.

¹⁴ BLO, MS Rumbold Dep 19, Rumbold to Jackson 19th October 1915.

¹⁵ Lord Newton noted that the Admiralty and the War Office were against full exchanges even for civilians, as they regarded 'every released civilian as an addition to the German Army.' Legh (Lord Newton), *Retrospection*, p. 227.

¹⁶ One representative (preferably non-German) from each firm based in Lomé was allowed to remain to handle the winding up of their respective companies' affairs.

On the fall of Duala, as discussed in chapter five, all German civilians were ordered to assemble at the hospital, ostensibly for registration, but in reality for deportation which soon followed.¹⁷ This was similar to the takeover of Lomé and Luderitzbucht (German South-West Africa), although civilians from Luderitzbucht were only brought as far as South Africa and then allowed to return home. In Duala, conditions on the transport *SS Obuassi* were deemed by General Dobell to be more than adequate and he considered that complaints about the rations, treatment and ships quarters were coming merely from a disaffected minority.¹⁸ Yet reports from the military headquarters in Sierra Leone were more in line with the German prisoners' complaints. Major General J.F. Daniel, commanding troops in West Africa, wrote; 'I think, however, it is my duty to point out that the ship, [*Obuassi*] as she is now, is in my opinion quite unfitted to convey so many men, women and children to England at this time of year; and could not be made fit without extensive alteration.'¹⁹ Daniel, who was in charge of providing guards for the ship, filed this report at his own initiative and strongly recommended that, 'if the *SS Obuassi* is to be sent out again to remove the prisoners from Sierra Leone²⁰ she may be properly fitted out first. In such an event it is essential that she be provided with a stock of warm clothing and great coats, as the prisoners here only have tropical clothing and the resources of the colony are inadequate to provide what is needed.'²¹

The paramount strategic objective for the British in fighting in the colonies was securing British military lines of communication and disrupting German ones. Prisoners of war were to be interned, and civilians were all ear-marked for repatriation to Germany. In the Cameroon campaign this was roughly how events transpired, although with some vocal complaints about the harsh manner in which German civilians were turned out of their homes and packed on transport ships for Europe with inadequate living quarters. In India, the camps at Belgaum and Ahmednagar were to be only temporary accommodations, with the view being that all civilians would be sent back to Germany before the conflict was resolved. However, with the sinking of the *Lusitania*, shipping shortages due to unrestricted submarine warfare and resources being directed toward Europe, and the lengthening of the war in East Africa this policy changed.

¹⁷ TNA, FO383/34, 153629, Dobell report to the Foreign Office, 14th October 1915, report dated 28th September 1915.

¹⁸ See chapter four.

¹⁹ TNA, MT23/418, J.F. Daniel, Military Headquarters Sierra Leone, to Secretary of the War Office, 2nd November 1914.

²⁰ Transports from Cameroon stopped at Sierra Leone en route to England.

²¹ TNA, MT23/418, J.F. Daniel, Military Headquarters Sierra Leone, to Secretary of the War Office, 2nd November 1914.

Most importantly the British government decided on 13th May 1915, about one week after the *Lusitania* sinking to intern all German males of military age as 'in existing circumstances, prima facie, all adult males of this class [German males of military age] should, for their own safety, and that of the community, be segregated and interned, or, if over military age, repatriated.'²²

Prioritising shipping lines for military and naval transports meant that the Admiralty was not just restrictive on shipping; it banned all passage through the Suez Canal, especially for ships containing enemy subjects, leading to the suspension of repatriation of German prisoners from India.²³ German unrestricted submarine warfare also limited British ability to repatriate prisoners.²⁴ In 1916 a letter from the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry argued that in evacuating female prisoners the British would be 'responsible for the lives and well-being of these passengers, the majority of whom are a better class of people, who are being forcibly repatriated in wartime and against the will of their husbands and fathers'. The Austro-Hungarians also complained about the use of third- and second-class berths for their civilian returnees. In response to the letter the British government pointed out that as German U-Boats were the sole danger involved in repatriation, the Austrian government would be best advised to ask Berlin to guarantee safe passage. Horace Rumbold responded to the 'impudent note' by writing; 'I am at a loss to know why "better class" people should be thought more entitled to protection from submarine attack than any other non-combatants [...] the only danger to them is the one for which the Austro-Hungarian and German governments are responsible'.²⁵ Britain did not intend to intern Germans in India in the long-term, however, limits on, and dangers to the shipping of prisoners influenced its decision making.

²² Statement by Prime Minister Asquith, House of Commons Debates 13th May 1915 vol. 71 cc1841-78, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1915/may/13/statement-by-prime-minister>.

²³ TNA, FO383/279, 50992, Admiralty to the Foreign Office, 9th March, 1917. Prisoners taken to camps in Egypt did, however, pass through the Suez Canal. Josef Kraupa, *Als Österreicher kriegsgefangen in Ägypten*, in *In Feindeshand*, p. 104.

²⁴ In response to a petition by prisoners in Malta for the release of their wives and children H.J. Read noted 'Mr Long desires to suggest, for the consideration of the controller of the prisoners of war department that the signatories should be informed that the detention of families in East Africa is wholly due to the German practice of indiscriminately sinking British and neutral ships and murdering passengers.' TNA, FO383/430, 16356, 26th January 1918 Reply to prisoners of war in Malta's letter.

²⁵ TNA, FO383/237, 1943, Expulsion of Enemy Women from India, 4th January 1916. Note Verbale and Rumbold memorandum. Rumbold went further to note that among the first batch of people to be repatriated were twenty prostitutes and five brothel keepers; 'I do not know whether these persons would be held to be included in the category of "better-class people".' TNA, FO383/237, 39306, Repatriation of Austrians on the *Galconda*, 29th February 1916, Rumbold memorandum.

More importantly from a British Foreign Office perspective, the argument against repatriating prisoners also centred on the British population who were abroad. How would it look, commented one Foreign Office official, if they spent a great deal of resources on ensuring the safe transport of German civilians from India to the Netherlands while at the same time banning mothers and children who were in Australia from returning to the United Kingdom while the war was on?²⁶ This notion was succinctly put by the same official in November 1917; 'It is to my mind an intolerable thing, even for the sake of getting rid of these Germans out of our colonies, that we should give them safe-conduct back to their country so that they are free from the attacks of the German submarines, whilst our women and children are either obliged to remain abroad or have to face the perils of the submarine campaign [...] it is not right that we should accord to our enemies facilities which we are unable to accord our own people.'²⁷

The sinking of the *Lusitania* also signified a change in the attitude towards prisoners and internees in the Pacific. It was not only submarine warfare that brought the reality of war home to Australia and New Zealand: the sinking coincided with initial reports of the disaster at Gallipoli and the publication of the Bryce report which highlighted alleged German atrocities.²⁸ In Australia and New Zealand, this bred a more vehement form of anti-German patriotism that not only caused logistical problems, such as the refusal of crews to man ships carrying German prisoners or internees, but also initiated calls for the mass internment of all Germans, denying those who could have independently left the countries the means to do so.²⁹ This new stance created tension, for example, between the public and the New Zealand government, whose willingness to stick to the centralised rules on prisoner treatment enacted from London was seen as too lax.

Discussions over the repatriation of prisoners continued until after the end of the war but hit a number of problems. German protests over the treatment of its U-Boat crews in 1915, and as

²⁶ The war effectively ended migration within the Empire. In the post-war years there was a renewed determination to reinvigorate the Empire through a 'free passage scheme' for ex-servicemen and women from 1919-1922. The newly taken German colonies were to provide an outlet for the 'lust for adventure' that young British men gained from their experience in the trenches. Kent Fedorowich, *Unfit for Heroes: Reconstruction and Soldier Settlement in the Empire Between the Wars*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995) pp. 25-35.

²⁷ TNA, ADM116/1543, Repatriation of Enemy Aliens from British Overseas Dominions, 9th November 1917, memorandum and minutes, (signature illegible).

²⁸ Francis, *To be Truly British*, p. 247. For the full text of the Bryce report, see: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/brycereport.htm>.

²⁹ Francis, *To Be Truly British*, p. 133.

Heather Jones as shown, the use of forced labour were particularly thorny issues that disrupted negotiation.³⁰ In repatriation discussions, German civilian internees from the East African theatre, as well as all civilian internees outside Europe were considered by the British as a separate entity from those civilians held in the British Isles. Plans were enacted, although never completed, in July 1918 to have all civilian internees either in India, Hong Kong or Singapore, sent to Australia where they were to remain under the supervision of the Australian government.³¹ However, in reality, the Dominions and the India Office always followed the Foreign Office's guidance on prisoner treatment, leading to some protests in the local press in New Zealand and South Africa.

On 15th December 1915, Otto Gleim of the RKA sent a detailed report to General Ludendorff outlining its position on proposals to extend repatriation agreements between Germany and Britain for the exchange of women, children and other non-combatants in Europe, to the German colonies and German-occupied Europe. This was in preparation for the meetings between the two belligerents at The Hague the following summer. The report focused on each of the colonies in turn and came to the conclusion that any proposed exchanges should only count for civilians from the territory of German East Africa. 'Conditions have developed to the contrary where it is now only the release of women and children from German East Africa that is in question.'³² This brought the civilians of German East Africa into a bartering game between the German and British governments with regard to exchanging them for British civilians in occupied Belgium. But why would Germany omit the chance for exchanges of civilians from its other colonies?

Gleim's report presented the case for excluding the other colonies as follows: first, repatriation of civilians from German South-West Africa went against German interests in the colony.

³⁰ Winston Churchill felt that captured U-Boat crews should be held in naval detention barracks as 'criminals' rather than in prisoner of war camps. John Yarnall, *Barbed Wire Disease: British and German Prisoners of War 1914-1918* (Spellmont, Gloucestershire, 2011), pp. 91-92, and Jones, *Violence against Prisoners*, pp. 83-87. Before embarking for the prisoners of war conference at The Hague in 1918 delegates were given specific instructions from the Admiralty 'not to raise the question of submarine prisoners.' TNA, FO383/416, 101103, 7th June 1918 War Cabinet Minutes.

³¹ TNA, ADM116/1543, Telegram, Walter Long to the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, 9th January, 1918.

³² 'Die Verhältnisse haben sich im Gegenteil so entwickelt, daß eine Frage der Freilassung der Frauen, Kinder pp. zurzeit eigentlich überhaupt nur noch für das Schutzgebiet Deutsch Ostafrika von Bedeutung ist.' BA, R1001/877, Behandlung deutscher Kriegsgefangener aus Deutsch-Ostafrika in Gefangenenlagern und deren Heimschaffung, 1915 – 1925. Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes to Ludendorff, 15th December 1915.

Although initially many German civilians had been interned in South Africa or repatriated, by 1915 with the end of the fighting in the colony most of those interned were released and allowed back to their farms and businesses. According to the terms of capitulation almost all the civilians in German South-West Africa were not interned. The only prisoners present in the colony itself were the military prisoners of war at Aus and Okanjande although there were some civilian prisoners from German South-West Africa interned in Pietermaritzburg and Natal, but most including the ex-Governor Theodor Seitz remained on parole in Luderitzbucht and elsewhere in the colony. It would not help the German case in potential post-war discussions over retention of colonies if there were no Germans present. This logic is also present in the argument for excluding New Guinea from any agreements. New Guinea was a similar case to German South-West Africa, the terms of capitulation being almost identical.

In Togo and Cameroon, Gleim noted, there were no German civilians present by late 1915. The English and French, according to the RKA had 'evacuated all German settlers ruthlessly and in violation of international law'³³ Nonetheless, the question of repatriation was not applicable here as practically all German civilians had been repatriated and the military combatants were interned in the United Kingdom thus coming under separate exchange agreements.

In Samoa, the RKA found that all German plantations had been closed down and all Germans were now in New Zealand (although, in fact quite a few Germans remained in the former colony). As with civilians from New Guinea, and German South-West Africa, the RKA argued that civilians in internment in New Zealand were technically free to return home whenever they pleased. This argument was erroneous, and even if civilian internees in Australia and New Zealand had been free to leave their camps and return to Germany, how they were going to find and pay for transportation would have been a major problem. The RKA also added that those interned in Australia, South Africa and New Zealand came under the exchange agreement of 1915 covering civilians held in Britain at the outset of the war, as they were being held on British soil.³⁴ This was argued by former Governor Erich Schultz in relation to his internment and handling in New Zealand. As Britain was in charge of a centralised prison camp system and New Zealand had no direct relations with Germany, Schultz claimed that he was

³³ 'Als bald nach der Besetzung in rücksichtsloser und völkerrechtswidriger Weise gänzlich von ihren deutschen Bewohnern evakuiert.' BA, R1001/877, Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes to Ludendorff, 15th December 1915.

³⁴ Ibid.

essentially in prison on British territory and therefore entitled to the same treatment as those prisoners in Britain itself. Unfortunately for Schultz, the British disagreed and, due to a lack of exchange agreements, ensured that he stayed interned until the end of the war.³⁵

As the RKA believed that civilians from German South-West Africa, New Guinea and Samoa were technically free to go home whenever they wanted (although the reality was quite different) and those from Togo and Cameroon were already in Germany it only remained for the German East Africans to be dealt with. The RKA report urged General Ludendorff (perhaps showing the extent to which Ludendorff was the war leader at this point) to argue that the same conditions, i.e. freedom to return to Germany, be given to civilians from German East Africa. This would mean that there would be no exchange, rather just a release of German civilian internees in German East Africa, while Germany held onto its British civilians in Belgium and other occupied territory. The RKA did recognise the difficulty in the fact that war was still being waged in German East Africa, but attempted to argue that the same rules of exchange should apply to all German colonies. In the conclusion of their report they went as far as to argue that reprisals would be used to force Britain to release prisoners in German East Africa; 'as far as the unlawful internment of German women and children in East Africa is concerned it is not comparable to the internment of civilians in Belgium, but if necessary reprisals will be enacted to bring the British into line with the principles of international law and humane treatment.'³⁶ It appears from this report that the RKA wished to disconnect the colonies from the war in Europe while the British wanted to use internees from German East Africa to gain concessions for British civilians in Belgium. This had negative consequences for German civilians in internment in places such as Belgium, Entebbe and Blantyre as the breakdown in exchange negotiations not only prolonged civilian internment but also led the British to look to other parts of its empire to send their prisoners. The planned destination for prisoners was to be Australia, where the prisoners' presence was not seen as a threat to internal security, unlike in the other colonies.

³⁵ BA, R1001/2629, Schultz to the Swiss Consul, 20th April 1919.

³⁶ 'Der Fall der widerrechtlich gefangen gehaltenen Frauen, Kinder pp. In Deutsch-Ostafrika wegen der völligen Verschiedenheit der Verhältnisse mit der Zurückhaltung der feindlichen Untertanen in Belgien pp. nicht in Zusammenhang gebracht werden darf, vielmehr gegebenenfalls durch Vergeltungsmaßregeln eine den Grundsätzen der Völkerrechts und der Menschlichkeit entsprechende Behandlung der Frauen und Kinder durch die Engländer erreicht werden muß.' BA, R1001/877, Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamt to Ludendorff, 15th December 1915.

Internment in Australia, as outlined in Gerhard Fischer's comprehensive study on the subject, began with the outbreak of the war. Germans living in Australia were almost immediately rounded up and sent to civilian camps, the largest being Liverpool in New South Wales. As highlighted in earlier chapters, these internees were then joined by Germans from New Guinea. While not all Germans in New Guinea were evacuated to Australia at the beginning of the war, the vast majority were.³⁷ As the war dragged on, more and more New Guinea Germans were brought to the Australian mainland. Long after the Armistice, in 1923, the Australian government removed the last of the German settlers from New Guinea. Fear of the influence of Sinn Féin and Bolshevism among soldiers in Australia forced the government of Australia to seek outlets for those returning from the battlefields of Europe. This was in part influenced by the free passage scheme for British ex-service men and women that was in operation between 1919 and 1922.³⁸ As Kent Fedorowich argues, although the war had halted imperial migration from Britain, it subsequently presented Imperial policy makers with a chance to reinvigorate the British Empire.³⁹ This emigration was one of the reasons Fedorowich puts forward for the lack of extremism in British politics during the interwar years. Disgruntled servicemen would find their wanderlust after the experience of the battlefields in France satisfied in forging a living in a new land.⁴⁰ This also meant that there would be no room for former German colonial settlers in this grand scheme.

By 1918, Australia was to be the ultimate destination for all remaining colonial German civilian internees and prisoners of war.⁴¹ The Singapore mutiny in 1915 seemed to confirm British fears of the negative influence that German prisoners could have on a population whose loyalty was uncertain. However, retrospective investigations into the mutiny showed that, while some German prisoners took advantage of the unrest to escape, they were far from being the main instigators. Rebellion in Singapore was influenced more by the unrest of mainly Muslim Indian soldiers who were under the misguided impression that German prisoners of

³⁷ Dr Braunert, the accused ring leader in 'the Cox Affair' became an official camp doctor, and visited patients across all the camps in Australia.

³⁸ 86,027 ex-Servicemen and women took advantage of the free passage scheme. Fedorowich, *Unfit for Heroes*, p. 127.

³⁹ Fedorowich, *Unfit for Heroes*, p. 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴¹ These plans, mainly drawn up by the Colonial Office, were never fully realised before the end of the war. Australia was not the ideal choice but the alternatives of repatriation or internment in South Africa (another unpopular option) were closed and there was no question of the internees being transferred to the United Kingdom. ADM116/1543, War Office Prisoners of War Department Memorandum and Minutes, 18th March 1918.

war would immediately join them once they were freed from their camps. Although the role of Germans as a fifth column menace was overplayed, the Colonial Office decided it would be wise to have all the prisoners (especially those from German East Africa) sent to Australia.⁴² The Singapore German prisoners, mainly from the *Emden*, were sent to New South Wales, where they remained for the rest of the war in officers' camps.⁴³ In December 1918, a public meeting in Singapore resolved to petition the British government 'that for the safeguarding of the decencies of life and preserving good order and government, no German subject should for at least ten years after the declaration of peace be allowed to land, reside or trade within the Colony of the Straits Settlements or the Federated Malay States.'⁴⁴ A similar petition was signed at a mass meeting at Natal, South Africa, in January 1919, where a motion was passed that 'for the peace of the world and for the safety of the British Empire and the welfare of the native races, none of Germany's former colonial possessions should be restored to her and that all German and other enemy residents therein should be repatriated.'⁴⁵

After receiving complaints from civilian internees who were housed on Stone Cutter's island in Hong Kong, the Foreign Office decided that it would be best also to send these prisoners to Australia. Sending prisoners to Australia would serve two purposes: Australia was due to its large white population seen as somewhere where Europeans could live healthy lives, therefore removing any German grounds for complaints about its climate conditions. Secondly, as Fischer argued, it provided a good opportunity for Britain to shore up colonial holdings and remove any German commercial competition from the colonies.⁴⁶ Internment in Australia of Germans who were living there during the war and of later arrivals contributed to the upholding of the ideological legitimization for Australia fighting in Europe and created a concrete experience of war on the home-front.⁴⁷ However, the prisoners from Hong Kong likened their experience of being shipped to Australia to that of eighteenth-century convicts.

⁴² The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Walter Long, made the inquiries into if Australia was willing to accommodate these prisoners as South Africa could not accept them on 'political grounds' and they could not 'owing to German submarine policy be repatriated'. TNA, ADM116/1543, Telegram, Long to the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia, 9th January, 1918.

⁴³ TNA, FO383/436, 109002, Statement of H. Hannke, 21st July 1918.

⁴⁴ IWM, RP/1, *Singapore 1918*.

⁴⁵ TNA, FO383/494, 3751, Resolution Regarding the Solution of the German Colonies, 22nd March 1919. Meeting held 24th January 1919. Similar meetings with similar resolutions were held in Johannesburg, Richmond, and Port St. Johns among other South African towns. These resolutions were never officially acted upon by the South African government.

⁴⁶ Fischer, *Enemy Aliens*, p. 146

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

‘The notion of “transportation” became a powerful means to interpret their experience in Australia.’⁴⁸

There were, however, complicated talks between the powers during the war over the issue of possible internment in neutral countries. Although, as we have seen, the former Governor Schultz pressured the British government for a transfer to Fiji, he was denied. The main countries designated for neutral internment were the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The role that the International Committee of the Red Cross played in the treatment of prisoners has already been discussed. In line with its work in inspecting camps and helping prisoners get in touch with family and friends, it lobbied for exchange agreements. The most notable such agreement was that reached at The Hague in July 1917 between Britain and Germany to recognise ‘barbed wire disease’ and civilian and military prisoners’ eligibility for internment in camps in neutral Switzerland.⁴⁹ However, the first bilateral exchanges of prisoners were arranged in 1917 through efforts made by the Dutch and Swiss governments and not the ICRC. It was not a smooth process and there were never any conclusive agreements regarding who qualified for internment in neutral countries.

In March 1918 the debate on repatriation was still unresolved but arguments in favour were prevailing, especially once a proposed exchange had been worked out with Germany for British subjects in Belgium and France to be swapped for German East Africans. The problem remained that ‘if the arrangement is adopted the Colonial Office will be subjected to very great pressure to remove the ban which at present exists against British women and children crossing dangerous waters.’⁵⁰ Ship space was limited and reserving space for German civilians would naturally prevent British women and children taking spaces should they be allowed to travel. In addition, there was a natural reluctance to expose British nationals to the dangers of sea travel during the U-Boat campaign. Of secondary concern was that German civilians would gain an insight into the workings of the convoy system, but such information was ‘no doubt obtained from crews of neutral ships which join with the convoy.’⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 144.

⁴⁹ The first Conference was held at The Hague in June 1917, ICRC, C G1 A 09-08 and the second in Geneva in the following September, ICRC, C G1 A 09-10.

⁵⁰ TNA, ADM116/1543, 18th March 1918, Prisoners of War Department 34091, Memorandum and Minutes.

⁵¹ Ibid.

There was also the question of what ships to use. The Germans in negotiations were willing to foot the bill for chartering neutral Dutch vessels for the purpose, an offer which was refused on prestige grounds and connected to the travel ban on British subjects. There was also a problem with getting British crews. Australian crews had almost mutinied in Perth, and refused to board ships containing German civilians for repatriation. While the case of the Australian crews did not completely prevent repatriation, it did highlight a hostile public mood.⁵²

As Heather Jones argued in the case of German prisoners in France, even after the war the image of the German prisoner remained an inherently dangerous figure – ‘a potential perpetrator of violence.’⁵³ In a different context, prisoners from the colonies were seen as an inherent destabilising factor in the re-establishment of British authority overseas. The idea that ‘enemy aliens’ in India or the new Mandates would damage the prestige held by the British among indigenous populations through the mixed message of their return after having been thrown out of the colonies or through their potential to foment revolt themselves was widely held in the Colonial and Foreign Offices.

The absence of the controlling influence of colonial settlers, especially of missionaries certainly worried the British, but not to the extent that they retained German missionaries in the former German colonies.⁵⁴ After the expulsion of German missionaries in East Africa it was necessary to quickly replace them with trusted Allied ones in order to ‘spike the potential for false prophets’ and to introduce benevolent agencies to disprove German propaganda that claimed the British were merely ‘malicious militants’.⁵⁵ Any breakdown in Christian practices through the expulsion of missionaries would have dire consequences according to Bishop Neville of Zanzibar: ‘withdraw the missionaries and you withdraw the champions of order, law and

⁵² A group of thirteen German Catholic priests had to be removed from a ship bound for England after the crew refused to work. The priests were allowed to stay at a Catholic institution in Sydney until passage could be secured for them via the United States. BA, R67/825, Liverpool, New South Wales, US Consul report, 24th September 1916. A similar case occurred with the repatriation of missionaries from Cameroon when the crew of the SS *Tanius* refused to sail with the German priests. The solution there was to put the missionaries on Portuguese ships. TNA, FO383/179, 1777396, Crew of SS *Tanius*, 7th September 1916 and *Ibid.*, 88082, Crew of SS *Tanius*, 9th May 1916.

⁵³ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 257.

⁵⁴ The withdrawal of the Basel Missions from West Africa placed a large part of the work in the hands of African pastors and teachers and weakened the influence of orthodox Christianity. David Killingray, ‘Repercussions of World War I in the Gold Coast’, in *The Journal of African History*, 19, 1, *World War I and Africa* (1978), pp. 39-59, p. 53.

⁵⁵ Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1941: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971), p. 146.

civilisation, you undo the good work of half a century, and return the native to his primitive barbarism.⁵⁶ In Cameroon there were reversions to 'witchcraft' and other tribal practices.⁵⁷ The racially prejudiced attitude toward indigenous converts to Christianity was bluntly summed up in a report on German East Africa in 1916: Indigenous converts were 'cunning and deceitful to a degree seldom realised [...] but should their white masters be removed they become harmless and a danger to themselves for it is only as a carrier they excel and not as a collector of information.'⁵⁸ However, to establish stability and control in the newly taken-over colonies it was essential to win the indigenous population over to the British side while maintaining colonial social structures.⁵⁹ In January 1919, the British administrator of German East Africa, H.A. Byatt, requested the Colonial Office to retrieve the skull of Sultan Mkwawa from the Berlin Museum as 'this action would give the widest satisfaction to the Wahehe tribe and afford tangible proof in the eyes of the natives that German power has been completely broken.'⁶⁰ Consolidating power in the former German colonies after the war was important for the British and to do this it was necessary to show that Germany had been defeated and would not be returning to reclaim its colonies.

⁵⁶ TNA, FO383/289, 141406, Bishop Neville to Foreign Office, 30th December 1917. More recently, in the late 1950s, one of the contributing factors to the challenge presented to colonial administration in Kenya was the radicalisation of Kikuyu 'oathing practices'. Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (Owl Books, New York, 2005), p. 25.

⁵⁷ Frederick Quinn noted a revival of witchcraft among the Beti. Frederick Quinn, 'An African Reaction to World War I: the Beti of Cameroon', in *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 13, 52 (1973), pp. 722-731, pp. 725-726, also in Strachan, *To Arms*, p. 543. Marcia Wright highlights the example of the Holy Ghost appearing to one boy after the evacuation of the German missionaries. He began to speak in tongues, including German, and run about 'without any sort of clothing'. More worrying for the colonial administration, the movement sparked by this boy rapidly 'went downhill to the demonic'. Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika*, p. 141.

⁵⁸ TNA, FO383/193166758, 'Report on the Attitude of every Mission in German East Africa in Occupied and Unoccupied Territory in the Present War', 24th August 1916.

⁵⁹ Announcements were made to the indigenous populations to explain the change in administration. For example, in Rabaul, New Guinea, after the Australian take-over of the colony, a 'Proclamation to the Natives' was read out in Pidgin English explaining to their new subjects: 'You look him new feller flag? You savvy him? He belonga British (English); he more better than other feller.' It went on to explain that there would be a police force made of Melanesians before finally asking them to 'give three good feller cheers belonga new feller master. No more God save um Kaiser. God save um king.' TNA, CO667/11 *Rabaul Gazette* 1914-1917. It is difficult to gauge the reaction to these type of documents, but the *British Australian* newspaper noted that the 'three cheers were given with surprising vigour'. BA, R1001/2611, *The British Australian*, 19th November 1914.

⁶⁰ TNA, FO608/215/27, 'Recovery from Germany of the Skull of the late Sultan Mkwawa', 1st January 1919. The return of the Skull was the condition of Article 246 of the Versailles Treaty. However, the skull could not be located until 1953. Ana Filipa Vrdoljak, *International Law, Museums and the Return of Cultural Objects* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008), p. 85.

At the Paris peace conference there remained some faint hopes that the Allies would allow Germany to retain its former possessions. The Beti chiefs from Cameroon, led by Karl Atangana, even lobbied King Alfonso XIII of Spain for support for this idea.⁶¹ However, and despite the King's delusions of grandeur, Alfonso was not a decision maker at Paris and none of the victorious powers were keen to give up possessions they had won through bloodshed. The only positive note for Germany was that German civilians in German South-West Africa remained relatively unmolested. Japan's insistence at the Paris Peace Conference on retaining Tsingtao and the Kiaochow Concession, caused serious problems but secret Allied agreements made during the war to give Japan control of the area had to be honoured. Japan retained control of most of the Shandong peninsula, eventually ceding control of it not to Germany but to China. German East Africa was under the control of the British, who had bargained with the French and allowed Paris to control the former German West African colonies; this status quo was effectively approved by the Paris Peace Conference.⁶² New Guinea and Samoa were to be kept out of German hands and any non-Australian or non-New Zealander emigration to these colonies was controlled. For policy makers it was clear that German settlers could not be allowed to return to their plantations but would be shipped to Germany.

After the Armistice most extra-European prisoners returned to Germany via Rotterdam with a stop-off in Britain. Dealing with the disembarkation of prisoners in the Netherlands caused some problems between the Dutch and British governments. The Netherlands had remained neutral throughout the war and indeed many of the ships that transported German prisoners home were neutral Dutch vessels. Tensions had arisen between Britain and the Netherlands, (as well as with many other neutral countries) over British naval arrests of German citizens on board Dutch vessels. On arrival at Rotterdam each returning German prisoner and his/her possessions were searched by British naval officials. The Dutch in complaints to the Foreign Office objected to this practice, as it was a contravention of the Netherlands's status as a sovereign power.⁶³ Under pressure from the Dutch government Britain ceased this search policy, entrusting it to the Dutch, but it meant that more rigorous searches of prisoners were

⁶¹ Quinn, *In Search of Salt*, p. 76.

⁶² Orosz, *German and French Cameroon 1885-1939*, pp. 193-194.

⁶³ It also had the effect of lowering British prestige with the Dutch. The main culprit was a Captain Crossman who was responsible for 'treatment unworthy of human beings'. Captain Crossman apparently would not allow drinking water on the boat, struck civilians in the face and allegedly forced three women to strip naked for corporal examinations. TNA, FO383/501, 4989, Report by Ruoff (Secretary of the Committee of Repatriation), Rotterdam, 5th February 1919, received 9th May 1919.

conducted in British ports. This did not soothe the anger of ships' captains who claimed that after each trip to the Netherlands they had to replace ship cutlery and bedding that were stolen by their passengers.⁶⁴

There was tension during the war between the British and the Dutch over the Royal Navy's persistent stopping and searching of Dutch vessels at sea. These searches were conducted not just on Dutch ships, but also on other neutral vessels and resulted in the arrest of a statistically insignificant number of Germans. The Navy was successful in finding military supplies on board Spanish ships intended for the German Schutztruppe on Fernando Po.⁶⁵ The Netherlands were never implicated in the supply of aid to the enemy overseas, although there was some suspicion about the Dutch East Indies. Nevertheless Dutch ships were often stopped at sea. The searching of German returnees in Dutch ports by the British Navy was one affront to Dutch neutrality that was not allowed to stand, and the Navy had to back down.

Repatriation at the end of the war was a complicated issue. Who exactly was going to pay for the transportation? Would the German government have to pay, or in the interests of getting the prisoners back to Germany quickly and thus lessening the burden of their maintenance would the British cover the travel costs? There was also the issue of who was to ship them. The German government from a prestige point of view would have liked to bear the costs and arrange the shipping. Britain, with similar prestige concerns, decided early in 1918 that Germany would not be allowed to charter ships and that the British government would deal with all the costs and bill Germany later.⁶⁶ Thus, the ships were mainly hired from British or neutral shipping companies, although some vessels of the German Woermann line were used as in one case in South Africa where British crews refused to take German passengers.⁶⁷

As during the war itself, the swift removal of the Germans from the colonies was seen as the most desirable outcome. However, in France, prisoners of war had become part of the local economy. Immediately following the Armistice the French enlarged their prisoner of war

⁶⁴ TNA, FO383/501, 5065, Report of ill treatment of Germans on repatriation transport ships, 13th May 1919. It was decided to search the ships in Falmouth before leaving for the Netherlands. This did not stop the pilfering from the ships, however.

⁶⁵ TNA, ADM1/8457/119, Director of Intelligence Division to Captain Fuller, 31st July 1916.

⁶⁶ TNA, FO383/430, 122, Interdepartmental meeting on repatriation, 1st January 1918. Mr Green, of the Colonial Office suggested as early as January 1918 that Germany should not be allowed to charter ships, on prestige grounds.

⁶⁷ TNA, FO383/539, 3750, 22nd March 1919. Telegram, Buxton to the Colonial Office, dated 5th March 1919.

labour company system. The prisoners, far from being set free, were viewed not only as dangerous enemies but also as a vital labour source to be employed in the reconstruction of war damaged French towns.⁶⁸ In different circumstances, German-held Russian prisoners found their release delayed in a scheme to deny the Bolsheviks any potential new recruits.⁶⁹ In contrast, with the exception of Canada, where a large numbers of civilian internees were engaged in agriculture, the British Dominions wished to be rid of their mainly civilian internee camp populations. There was still a public balancing act to be played, of course. It would not have looked very good from the point of view of Australia, for example, if it returned all its German prisoners first, before receiving its own Australian prisoners of war back from Germany. Furthermore, the French refusal to send prisoners back at the Armistice also meant that the British and Americans, in the interests of keeping a united front delayed their repatriation schemes but eventually both broke ranks and the British repatriation of its German prisoners of war began in earnest in September 1919.⁷⁰

Albert Achilles' memoirs provide a good account of how wartime and post-war repatriation arrangements functioned on the ground. He noted; 'We were transported as prisoners on a German ship to Europe because the British could not stand the idea of Germany having colonies.'⁷¹ Achilles account shows that the transfer of prisoners from camp to camp did not end with the war. Repatriation from remote areas of the globe necessitated that prisoners be transferred in stages. Achilles wrote that he was first moved from Ahmednagar (where he had spent the majority of his time in captivity) to a holding camp nearer the port (Ramandrog). The lack of shipping meant he spent a further six weeks in this holding camp, before being sent back to Ahmednagar in December 1919 as the ships in Bombay were not forthcoming. He was eventually transferred to Port Said, Egypt, in mid-January 1920. As he was suffering from what he claimed was Spanish flu, Achilles and the many others who were afflicted were detained in Port Said for fear of infecting other ship passengers. This essentially meant further internment. After four months in Port Said, in April 1920, a ship was eventually found to take him and his fellow in-mates home. After a further stopover in Gibraltar, they arrived in Brunsbüttel on 20th

⁶⁸ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 260.

⁶⁹ Rüdiger Overmans, 'In der Hand des Feindes: Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg' in *In der Hand des Feindes* (Böhlau, Cologne, 1999), p. 13.

⁷⁰ Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners*, p. 301.

⁷¹ 'Auf einem deutschen Schiff wurden wir als Gefangenen nach Europa transportiert, nur weil uns die Engländer unsere Kolonien nicht gönnten.' Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, p. 81.

April 1920. They arrived at the quay to a large crowd waiting for them while the band struck up a song about a black child who had been kidnapped while playing on the beach,⁷² symbolising for Achilles how the German colonies were lost. The Germany the prisoners came back to was different from the one of their imagination over the long years of living abroad and then being interned, and the return home was bittersweet.

As previously noted, the German government was interested in getting stories of ill treatment of German civilians by black troops through its questionnaires for returnees on their experience of war. These questionnaires also dealt with property rights.⁷³ Alongside the immediate military necessity of securing the takeover of the colonies the acquisition of German property was seen as an essential part of the British long-term strategy. The German government was naturally keen to know about how the British dealt with German property, and this was reflected in the questions asked of returning Germans.⁷⁴

Complaints were written to the British about the loss of income from plantations, the forced evacuation from homes and the takeover of German property by British forces. Little was done after the war, however, to return any of these assets to their original owners. This was not only the case for the Germans from Togo and Cameroon but also for all the former German colonies and the British Empire as a whole. In the inter war period the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (DKG) received many petitions from former German settlers to investigate their property claims. It was a difficult position for the DKG, which had no real political power and could only direct claimants to contact the British, Australian, or relevant Mandate authorities.⁷⁵

In line with the wartime strategy of securing the German colonies through the expulsion of the German population, British policy makers hoped to devise a way to keep 'enemy aliens' from returning. The draft of the convention that was to replace the Berlin Act 1884/85 allowed for the citizens of any power to settle in the colonies. The Colonial and War Offices were, however,

⁷² Ibid., p. 93.

⁷³ See chapter four.

⁷⁴ For example, question fourteen which explicitly asked about the destruction, robbery and current uses of company and private property. BA, R1001/3946 Fragebogen (Questionnaire for returning Germans), 1915, p. 298.

⁷⁵ One unsuccessful proposal to secure the return of property was to set up a company through contacts in America that would buy back German property in the colonies. It was hoped that the Americans would be enticed to collude with promises of German-owned plantations contributing to the breakup of the British cotton monopoly. BA, R8023/864, Seitz to Foreign Minister Stresemann, 12th May 1927.

anxious to prevent Germans and Austrians from returning, especially to either British East Africa or mandated German East Africa. In the initial stages after 11th November 1918 the War Cabinet encouraged all the governments of Dominions and Protectorates to legislate prohibiting all Germans from entering, residing, and trading locally for a period of five years after the war. The consequences of the return of Germans to the colonies 'could only be grave internal disorder and possibly bloodshed'.⁷⁶ As well as the strong local feeling against the readmission of Germans to the colonies, there was the fear of Germans fomenting disloyalty to Britain and of the 'disastrous effect on the native mind of the return of the German whom he has seen ignominiously removed'.⁷⁷ Perhaps the single most important consideration alluded to in the Colonial Office memorandum to the War Cabinet was the effect of the return of Germans to the colonies on the development of British business. It was paramount, according to the Colonial Office, to exclude Germans and Austrians from colonies and Mandates, due to the 'importance of restoring our Oversea trade without being hampered by the unfair competition of our late enemies'.⁷⁸

While the Treaty of Versailles was unclear on the restriction of movement in British colonies, Protectorates and Dominions, it was clear about the Mandates: 'The Government exercising authority over such territories [the Mandates] may make such provisions as it thinks fit with reference to the repatriation from them of German nationals and to the conditions upon which German subjects of European origin shall, or shall not, be allowed to reside, hold property, trade or exercise a profession in them'.⁷⁹ This gave the British and other Mandate powers a free hand to decide who to allow into the newly defined territories. Despite this, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Walter Long, noted that once Germany joined the League of Nations it would be very difficult to maintain a policy of exclusion. The proposed solution was the passing of legislation enabling local governments (in Mandate cases, Britain and the Dominions) to keep Germans out but without laying down as a principle that all Germans must be excluded.⁸⁰ As usual in these cases, the Dominions were expected to comply and at the time

⁷⁶ TNA, CO323/809, 44829, War Cabinet memorandum, August 1919.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Article 122 of the Versailles Peace Treaty, <http://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/versa/versa3.html>.

⁸⁰ TNA, CO323/809, 44829, War Cabinet Memorandum, August 1919.

of the memorandum Canada had already, through an Order in Council, enacted exclusionary legislation.⁸¹

New Zealand too was ahead of the Secretary of State in this regard. In December 1918 the Wellington government brought in the War Legislation and Statute Law Amendment Bill, which required persons of 'enemy origin' to apply for and be granted a licence before purchasing land in New Zealand. The Bill also allowed for land that had been purchased legally by 'enemy aliens' to be taken back by the state for public purposes.⁸² The Bill was hotly debated, but was passed with only one amendment, that it did not apply to those born in New Zealand. The land seized from the German settlers was, as elsewhere, passed on to returning servicemen.

In New Zealand, the Revocation of Naturalisation Act⁸³ affected many of the settlers on Samoa, who had through the close links between the islands become naturalised British citizens. The most prominent case was of Karl Hanssen, which we have looked at in earlier chapters. Hanssen, who had been allowed to continue working for the Deutsche Handels und Plantagen Gesellschaft until his diaries had been intercepted by the censor, also had his naturalization revoked after the war. He was, however, one of the few lucky ones to successfully challenge the act and in 1923 had his New Zealand naturalisation restored.⁸⁴

Hanssen was fortunate. However, the DKG archives document many other stories of those who were not so lucky. For those in South-West Africa, the war affected them economically. Although the majority of civilians here had not been interned during the war and did not face repatriation, there were difficulties for those who had been bankrupted by the conflict in getting their family members back to South-West Africa. Although most of the German civilian population in South-West Africa were not interned during the conflict, the colony itself was affected by the hardships of war. Initial plans to transfer German civilians from German East Africa to South-West African farmsteads were abandoned due to protests from the farmers about lack of funds. The loss of links to Germany in the post-war era exacerbated some of these hardships. After the Versailles treaty negotiations and the establishment of the South African Mandate over South-West Africa, the South African government felt they had the

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Francis, *To be Truly British*, p. 257.

⁸³ The act came into force from September 1917.

⁸⁴ Francis, *To be Truly British*, p. 253.

opportunity to deport the remaining German civil servants who under the terms of the surrender treaty had been able to remain in the country as well as 'characters of whom the government desires to be rid, such as undesirable women, agitators and elements generally hostile to the Union Government.'⁸⁵

Similar attitudes were also visible in other parts of the Empire when the war ended. Anti-German sentiment did not disappear in Australia with the end of the conflict, as the treatment of internees shows. Although the Fijian government protested, Germans from Fiji were eventually allowed to return to their pre-war homes. All other colonial internees in Australia, the bulk of whom made up the population of Holsworthy camp were repatriated to Germany.⁸⁶ In comparison with Samoa and New Zealand, the commercial links between New Guinea and Australia were weaker and there were few Germans from New Guinea who had claims to Australian naturalisation. With the takeover of New Guinea by Australia and new legislation (although complicated by New Guinea's Mandate status), it was difficult for Germans to return to their plantations and even to the South Pacific at all.

Like New Zealand the Australians brought in legislation to restrict the admission of aliens after the war. The Aliens Committee, composed of representatives of the Departments of Defence, Home, and Territory, Trade and Customs and the Attorney-General, was entrusted with formulating cabinet policy. It dealt with four different areas: repatriation of Aliens, possible restrictions on the admission of Aliens after the war, changes in naturalisation laws and policy to be adopted concerning Alien property.⁸⁷ The committee consulted closely with Britain, as it stated a desire to achieve conformity so that its actions would best coincide with any similar policies that Britain was planning to enact domestically.

It was not until 1931 that anti-German prejudice began to abate in Australia and New Zealand. In an editorial that year in the *Sydney Morning Herald*,⁸⁸ Tom Inglis Moore, an Australian professor at the University of the Philippines, was encouraged by the dissolution of anti-German prejudice, which he argued was a main factor preventing efficient administration of

⁸⁵ TNA, FO383/539, 5018, Protest against repatriation from German South-West Africa, 10th May 1919. Harry Lambert's comments 9th May 1919.

⁸⁶ The 'undesirable elements' such as criminals and trouble makers who had spent time in 'sing-sing' were the first to be repatriated. The cases of naturalised Germans in Australia followed a similar path to those in New Zealand. Fischer, *Enemy Aliens*, p. 301.

⁸⁷ Fischer, *Enemy Aliens*, p. 285.

⁸⁸ BA, R8023/666, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15th April 1931.

New Guinea. The terms of the Mandate he argued had harmed the White Australia policy. In order to make up for the lack of immigrants from Germany and Austria, Australia had to rely on importing non-white workers such as the Chinese. German civilians were once again interned in the Second World War in Australia and New Zealand, but as Andrew Francis argues, anti-German sentiment was never as intense as it was during the First World War.⁸⁹

The establishment of 'enemy alien' legislation in Britain and the Dominions was designed to prevent Germans from resettling and claiming property in the British Empire, although it was complicated by the Mandate systems that were put in place at Versailles. However, the British Foreign Office was confident that by the time Germany became eligible to join the League of Nations, Britain would have consolidated its hold over the Mandates making a potential handover of control to the German government impossible. Conversely the German government itself supported the Mandate system, in the short term at least, as a means to facilitate its return to colonial activity which would be prevented by any attempt by the Allies to enact a de jure annexation of mandated territory.⁹⁰

The return to Germany was often a difficult one for the former prisoners of war and internees. Ludwig Deppe on his return from German East Africa in 1919 noted; 'We found our Heimat in a terrible state, much more terrible than our worst fears.'⁹¹ Achilles noted a telling example of how the situation in Germany had changed since the outbreak of war which occurred when a representative from the Auswärtiges Amt requested that the returning prisoners hand over the jackets they had received from the British or pay for them. Their reply was to laugh in the representative's face highlighting both the poverty of post-war Germany and the lack of respect the returning prisoners had for the new German authorities.⁹²

German colonial settlers had maintained strong links with Germany before the war and even in their long years of internment they overwhelmingly remained loyal to their nation. This did not mean, however, that they relished the thought of being sent back to Germany. The most noted example is that of German prisoners who were interned in Japan during the war. On their return to Germany in 1920 many of them found that the Germany of their memories did not

⁸⁹ Francis, *To be Truly British*, pp. 251- 261.

⁹⁰ Crozier, 'Imperial Decline and the Colonial Question', p. 217.

⁹¹ 'Die Heimat – wir fanden sie schwerer Krank, als unsere schwärzeste Bangnis befürchtet hatte.' Deppe, *Um Ostafrika Erinnerungen*, p. 153.

⁹² Achilles, *Erinnerungen aus meiner Kriegsgefangenschaft*, p. 94.

correspond to the reality.⁹³ A large number of them found a way to remain in Japan after the war and others after a few years returned to the land of their captors and became successful businessmen.⁹⁴ This was not an option for prisoners captured in other German colonies, and the transition to life in Weimar Germany was often difficult.⁹⁵ Indeed, it must be noted that it was not just former colonial German settlers who found it difficult to adapt to the post-war world. The 1920s in Europe, as Bruno Cabanes has shown, were marked by the disruption of collective identities, new borders resulting from the break-up of empires and revolutions, and the transition of society from war to peace.⁹⁶

The German government immediately protested against the loss of the German colonies at the peace conference but with the Allies in control of and established in all Germany's overseas territories there was no question of Germany regaining its colonies. Calls for a return of the German colonies after the war did not begin in earnest until the mid-1920s and Germany's entry into the League of Nations. This period also saw a rise of irredentist colonial organisations such as the DKG, which grew to 250 branches and 30,000 members.⁹⁷ The memory of the wartime experience and the reality of Weimar Germany led many former German colonial settlers to reshape their idea of *Deutschtum* and realign their patriotic allegiances. In Germany the *Dolchstoßlegende* (Stab in the back myth) took hold, and blame for Germany's failure to win the war was placed on internal enemies. Among the former settlers, however, a core felt that the whole of Germany was to blame. In East Africa, Germany had not been defeated, merely let down by the failures of the metropole. This led to a reformation of what German identity meant in the colonial context. The only place where many colonial Germans could find a pure *Deutschtum*, unsullied by the war, was in their memories.⁹⁸ Resentment of the Weimar government's inability to win back the colonies and the idea of the

⁹³ Some were discouraged from returning to Germany and sought employment elsewhere, such as Capitan Maurer at Bando who was encouraged by his contacts in Germany to move to Java rather than return home. ICRC, C G1 A 15-28, Japon: Bureau de renseignements sur les prisonniers de guerre du ministère de la Guerre de l'Empire du Japon; Croix-Rouge japonaise Tokyo, 7th November 1914 – 28th September 1918. Telegram to Maurer via the Red Cross, 25th October 1919.

⁹⁴ For example see Barth, Johannes, *Als deutscher Kaufmann in Fernost: Bremen, Tsingtau, Tōkyō, 1891-1981* (E. Schmidt, Berlin, 1984).

⁹⁵ For example, Ludwig Deppe noted about the new Germany; 'Aus dem Chaos der sich überstürzenden Nachrichten wirkte eine grotesk auf mich: Das Frauenstimmenrecht ist in Deutschland eingeführt.' Deppe, *Um Ostafrika Erinnerungen*, p. 149.

⁹⁶ Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, p. 301.

⁹⁷ Victor Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence* (Greenwood Press, California, 1977), p. 126.

⁹⁸ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, pp. 14-15.

Paris treaty as having enshrined German 'colonial guilt' led to a reshaping of the German colonial identity as the vanguard of 'Germanness' for many of those who had lived in the German colonies and their supporters.

In the *Soester Anzeiger* of 15th December 1925, the writer Hubert Hennoch-Breslau noted that at the Paris Peace Conference, the colonial question had been on everyone's lips. In the intervening years, however, there had been a lot more to think about than the 25,000 Germans who returned to Germany from the colonies.⁹⁹ He asked why, if German colonial rule had been so bad, did the Cameroonian chiefs follow Ebermaier to Spain or the Askari fight so loyally for Lettow-Vorbeck? Of course the colonial question had never taken the main stage in German political discussions before the war and domestic issues in the 1920s meant that there was even less chance of the colonies becoming a prominent issue then. While the loss of the colonies fitted into the unfair Versailles Treaty and reparations narrative, it took a backseat to the financial and social turmoil inflicted upon Germany by its defeat in the war.

The former colonial settlers themselves found the post-war years very difficult. In 1926 Adolf Nauer who, although he had been interned in Samoa from 1915 to 1919 and had lost his plantation, still remained on the island, wrote to the DKG for assistance in bringing one of his daughters back to Samoa. In 1913, like many colonial Germans before him, he had sent his daughters to Germany to receive their education. The only difference was that his daughters were half-Samoan, as Nauer had married a Samoan woman. He did not mention how he was able to remain in Samoa after being interned, but he was now destitute and could not afford the price of a ticket for his daughter. In the interests of promoting the *Deutschtum* abroad he felt the Auswärtiges Amt would pay for her return to Samoa. However, by 1926, the Auswärtiges Amt was not interested in taking up the case and neither the DKG nor its associated Frauenbund could spare the funds for her return.¹⁰⁰ His was not the only case of families being separated in the colonies. Grete Nouvack, the daughter of German missionary in German South West Africa, again of mixed race had moved to Germany before the war, in 1933 she requested financial help in getting her back home. In lieu of that she enquired whether it would be possible for the DKG to hire her in some capacity, as due to her racial

⁹⁹ BA, R8023/1106, *Soester Anzeiger*, 15th December 1925, 'Das Wiedererwachen des Kolonialgedankens'.

¹⁰⁰ BA, R1001/2345, *Verpflegung, Unterstützung und Heimschaffung mittelloser Personen. – Samoa, 1910-1935*. Letter from Mannheim to the Auswärtiges Amt, 8th January 1926.

background she was having difficulty getting work in Germany.¹⁰¹ The takeover of the colonies and property belonging to German planters and farmers caused many cases of destitution among the former colonial settlers and there were few sympathetic ears willing to aid them in their time of need.¹⁰² A narrative was developed and brought into the public sphere through the 'Afrikabücher',¹⁰³ of the colonial German settlers as victims of the war against the British, and the Treaty of Versailles had wrongly accused them of bring criminals.¹⁰⁴

However, by the mid-1920s cracks began to show in Britain's policy of keeping Germans out of their former colonies. In 1924, the British offered to allow Germans to recover their land in the British-controlled Cameroon at an auction. This was mainly because the British government had failed to attract a sufficient number of British settlers to the British section of the Cameroon Mandate. The British had unsuccessfully attempted to sell former German property in their section of the Mandate in 1922, in an auction restricted to British nationals. In 1924 they again put the plantations up for sale but this time 'without reserve and irrespective of the nationality of the owners'.¹⁰⁵ The new settlers would, however, be part of an immigrant community in the British Empire and not part of the German Reich. The French, in their sphere, maintained their restrictions on German immigration and were not pleased about Britain's decision to allow Germans to return.

A letter to the *Vossische Zeitung* in October 1925 explained the situation in the former German colonies and the chances of political control of them being returned to Germany. Written by Dr W.H. Edwards, it noted that while 'throughout the non-German world there passes today a

¹⁰¹ BA, R8023/666, Grete Nouvack to Schnee, 18th August 1933. Interestingly although of mixed race, she was a Nazi supporter who claimed that as the barrier to her getting work from her fellow former colonial settlers as she noted to Schnee: 'Meine nationalsozialistische Gesinnung wurde mir schließlich zum Verhängnis'.

¹⁰² One letter to the DKG concerned a former German South-West African requesting if anything could be done to help the widow of a Mr Richard Göltz. Göltz had passed himself off during the war as an American and was not interned, he was, however, repatriated to Germany in 1918. Göltz had survived in German South-West Africa through the war due to the aid of the Red Cross and food contributions from the local Windhoek community. Due to his war experience, the shock of returning to Germany and to alleviate the pain caused by T.B., he became addicted to opiates and died shortly after. His wife was left destitute as a result and the letter inquired if anything could be done help her. Seitz's short reply was that as Göltz had never been in the Schutztruppe, his widow did not qualify for a pension. BA, R8023/1072, Maria Luise Schlusse to the DKG Frauenbund, 14th September, 1926, Seitz reply 29th November 1926.

¹⁰³ See chapter two.

¹⁰⁴ This was linked to British accusations that Germany was not fit to run colonies, especially in the light of its conduct during the Herero and Maji-Maji wars. Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ Joseph, 'The German Question in French Cameroun', p. 75.

strong current of anti-Imperialism', the imperial powers were not about to give up on their costly colonial experiments by handing them over to Germany. South Africa, while perhaps the most German-friendly of the Mandate holders, would not simply hand South-West Africa back, as the mineral deposits there were vital for the economy and it would not tolerate 'two different native policies' in the region. Britain too was strengthening rather than weakening its grip on East Africa and its rich cotton and coffee crops. The construction of costly engineering projects such as railways highlighted that Britain had no intention of letting East Africa go.¹⁰⁶

In 1933 with the accession of the Nazis to power, Adolf Hitler integrated the return of the German colonies into his *Grossdeutschland* programme, and colonial revision became part of official Nazi policy to deconstruct the Versailles Treaty.¹⁰⁷ Films about the colonies were popular in the 1930s and helped add to calls for a return to Germany's place in the sun. Perhaps enthused by these films, the DKG received many letters from former colonial settlers inquiring about a potential return to Africa, or offering plans and advice on how to win the colonies back.¹⁰⁸ Propaganda pushing for a return of Germany's colonies had an impact not only in Germany but also on the League of Nations and the colonial officials in France and Britain.¹⁰⁹ As part of Britain's attempts at appeasement of Germany's expansionist desires, Neville Chamberlain contemplated the return of Togo, Cameroon and Tanganyika to Germany.¹¹⁰ However, the reality was that Germany was now looking firmly at Europe for its Lebensraum policies and even though the *Reichskolonialbund* (RKB), the successor organisation to the DKG, the return of Germany's colonies was not a primary foreign policy objective.¹¹¹ Indeed, Andrew Crozier shows that the RKB's main task was merely to push overseas demands in order to make the British more amenable to granting Germany concessions in Europe.¹¹² This is not to say that Germany under Hitler was indifferent to colonial revival, more that for the Nazis the primary goal was hegemony in Europe: Africa

¹⁰⁶ BA, R8023/864, *Vossische Zeitung* no. 262, letter from Dr W.H. Edwards, 30th October 1925.

¹⁰⁷ Le Vine, *The Cameroons*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁰⁸ One such scheme was proposed in 1934 by Franz Antoni, who, inspired by reading *Mein Kampf*, suggested that Schnee, in charge of the DKG, should find and hire 12-24 German *Lawrence of Arabias* to infiltrate the colonies and initiate a take-back. Schnee politely refused to publish Antoni's plan in official DKG organs. BA, R8023/666, Schnee to Antoni, 16th March 1934.

¹⁰⁹ Joseph, 'The German Question in French Cameroun', p. 68.

¹¹⁰ Andrew Crozier, *Appeasement and Germany's Last Bid for Colonies* (Palgrave MacMillan, London, 1988), p. 133.

¹¹¹ The RKG had two million members by 1940. Conrad, *German Colonialism*, p. 192.

¹¹² Crozier, 'Imperial Decline and the Colonial Question', pp. 226-227.

could wait. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the colonial question was no longer a matter for negotiation, but a problem to be settled on the battlefield.¹¹³

The repatriation of German prisoners from the extra-European theatre of the First World War was a complex and constantly developing process. The obvious difference between prisoners who were interned in Britain and those in India, Egypt, the Dominions and elsewhere overseas was the distance from Germany and the logistical complications of getting them back there. There was also the issue of who was going to finance the repatriation. In some cases, prisoners who could afford to pay their own passage were allowed to return to Germany, although this was in no way the norm. Eventually prisoners were repatriated by British-chartered ships with Germany expected to foot the bill. German consular officials expected their own repatriation to occur through reciprocal agreements on the exchange of diplomats. However, this did not always happen, as the cases of former Governors Erich Schultz and Theodor Seitz demonstrate.

The basic military aim of Britain in the takeover of the German colonies was the removal of any possible future military threat. This combined with the economic objectives of Dominion governments and private businesses, such as the takeover of Nauru for its phosphates.¹¹⁴ In contrast to the situation on the Western Front, it was often argued in the British Foreign Office that German prisoners from the colonies would do less harm if they were allowed back to Germany than if they were to remain interned in their colonial locations. The development of the war affected this strategy and with the tightening of the blockade, unrestricted submarine warfare, and shipping shortages, simply sending Germans back was no longer an option.

Once the Paris Treaty was signed and the Mandate issue settled, Britain and the Dominions, with the exception of South Africa, could again concentrate on the objective of removing all Germans from their territory. South Africa (which was to be granted control over German South-West Africa) did not evacuate many of the German population there during its wartime occupation and allowed those present in 1919 to remain. This was due to two factors: the relationship of the Boer population with the German settlers and the perceived need to

¹¹³ Joseph, 'The German Question in French Cameroun', p. 69. In June 1935 Hitler concluded a naval agreement with Britain in which he recognised British maritime superiority and renounced Germany's claims to a return of its former colonies. Brendan Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy 1453 to the Present* (Penguin, London, 2014), p.350.

¹¹⁴ Hiery, *Neglected War*, pp. 125-126.

maintain a white settler colony.¹¹⁵ In New Guinea the final removal of the German population made room for ex-servicemen to take over their plantations. It also, as Gerhard Fischer and Andrew Francis argue, left a long lasting legacy for immigration policy in Australia and New Zealand. Before 1914, apart from a few restrictions on immigrants who wished to work in mines, there had been no immigration barriers for Europeans emigrating to the Pacific Dominions. During the war this changed and based on existing Australian legislation designed to limit the number of Chinese immigrants, German and Austro-Hungarian nationals (enemy aliens) were restricted in their movements.¹¹⁶ While anti-German sentiment was weaker in the Second World War (being overshadowed by anti-Japanese propaganda and the direct threat from the Japanese Empire), the German community in Australia and New Zealand, and by extension New Guinea and Samoa, never recovered its numbers and its self-image was transformed radically. Stibbe's argument for Central Eastern Europe can be applied to Australia and New Zealand where through 'enemy alien' legislation, wartime 'expulsion fantasies' and demands for ethnic (white British) homogeneity were brought closer to reality.¹¹⁷

The return to post-war Germany was undoubtedly a shocking experience for returning German internees. While Albert Achilles remembered triumphant songs being played on their return in 1920, the reality of conditions in the turmoil Germany was going through did not take long to register. Although restrictions on the return of Germans to the colonies were slackened in the mid-1920s, it was clear that political control of the colonies was not going to be handed over to Germany. Being cut off from the metropole during wartime may have strengthened German settlers' fondness for their colonial Heimat.¹¹⁸ However, the return of the colonies to Germany was never going to be a reality and the only comfort former colonial settlers, like Ludwig Deppe, could take was to close their eyes on sunny days and dream of Africa.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme*, p. 81.

¹¹⁶ In the United States, Germans perhaps more easily reverted to their pre-war position in society, although the war did have a huge impact on the German community there. Wittke, Carl, *The German Language Press in America* (Kentucky University Press, Kentucky, 1957), p. 281.

¹¹⁷ Stibbe, 'Civilian Internment in Europe', in Stibbe (ed), *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, p. 69.

¹¹⁸ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, p. 35.

¹¹⁹ Deppe, *Um Ostafrika Erinnerungen*, p. 153.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the links between the internment of German colonial settlers in the extra-European theatre of the First World War and the conflict in mainland Europe. The initial reasons for embarking on this project were to fill a major gap in the history of the Great War and to improve our understanding of how the British Empire functioned when faced with the threats and opportunities that the conflict presented. As Lenin maintained in 1917, the First World War was fought, on one level, as a struggle for imperial redistribution.¹ However, the links between the conflict in the extra-European theatres of war and Europe have only recently been seriously investigated. Five issues were posited at the outset for investigation. These were: the centralised internment policy of the British Empire, the effect of the takeover of German colonies on cultural identity in the British dominions, the effect wartime captivity had on German settlers, what extra-European internment tells us about twentieth century mobility and warfare, and the integration of the extra-European theatre of the war into the overall Global War narrative. In the concluding remarks that follow each issue will be dealt with in turn.

Internment in the extra-European theatre of the First World War functioned as a tool of British diplomacy and therefore needed an empire-wide administration. The Foreign Office's primacy in dealing with prisoners outside Europe was in contrast to the war in Europe where the War Office had the controlling voice. Experience during the Boer War had produced officially corroborated criticism which triggered reforms that ultimately vastly improved Britain's capacity to wage land warfare, in a future war, including its captivity policies, while remaining within the limits of international law.² Some camps were even recycled from the Boer War during the First World War but were refurbished and standardised along European lines. While the overall treatment of prisoners in the extra-European theatre in 1914-1918 could not be said to have been as harsh as that in Germany, Russia or even France, it was worse than British treatment of prisoners of war and civilian internees in Britain itself, or prisoners interned by

¹ Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 'Preface to the French and German Editions' (26th April 1917), <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref02.htm>.

² Hull, *Absolute Destruction*, p. 194.

Britain in France. Britain still circumvented international regulations through reprisals and the confiscation of property. However, one can reasonably assume that Britain, perhaps with the benefit of hindsight from the Boer War, was more aware of the force of public opinion, domestic and international, in reference to prisoner treatment.

While channels of communication may have been cut for extra-European prisoners during British reprisals, reprisals themselves kept diplomatic channels open. The escalation of such reciprocal actions coupled with the need to maintain the image of an adherence to international law, brought Germany and Britain to the negotiating table at The Hague and Geneva. Although the talks never achieved their aims, constant dialogue over exchanges, treatment and reprisals maintained contact between the belligerent powers. Prisoners in German East Africa in particular, were caught up in reprisals which were based on German treatment of British civilians in Belgium.

Changes in wartime Dominion cultural identity influenced how the relationship between captors and captives changed as the war developed and attitudes hardened, worsening the conditions for internees. If the battle of Gallipoli was the foundation of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps' (ANZAC) 'digger myth' and catalysed the establishment of new Australian and New Zealander identities, then this new identity was first brought into practice domestically through anti-German legislation. In the case of New Zealand, which was not hostile towards its German population before the war, anti-German sentiment reached boiling point during the conflict.³ Before the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the disaster at Gallipoli there was even a certain sense of respect for the German fighters. *The Sydney Morning Herald* in October 1914 was able to publish a positive account of prisoners taken from New Guinea, especially delighting in the tale of a wounded German who displayed his stiff upper lip by refusing chloroform while his hand was being amputated, preferring instead to smoke a cigar. The paper noted: 'In its incongruities, how absurd is war? One tries all day to kill an enemy and the very next day, it may be, one is shaking him by the hand with all the cordiality of old established friendship.'⁴ Only a few months later this type of story would not have been

³ BA, R67/1339, *Kölnische Zeitung*, 'Die Besetzung Apias', 15th August 1916. Anti-German sentiment worked from the top down, with the *Kölnische Zeitung* claiming that the New Zealand Governor, Lord Liverpool, referred to the Germans as 'Giftige Pflanzen' on the islands. The paper also made claims that British soldiers attempted to rape German women during the takeover of Samoa. While this is certainly possible, any arrests of the alleged perpetrators do not appear in the archives.

⁴ BA, R1001/2611, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13th October 1914.

published. The participation of Dominion troops in the fighting in Europe drastically changed these attitudes.

The effect of the war on the Dominions' relationship with Britain can best be summed up through Gerhard Fischer's comments on Australia's internment of German civilians: 'This episode of the World War constitutes, within the larger context of a history of Australia, a relapse into a kind of colonial dependency: a policy in which the ministers of the Commonwealth Government, in their eagerness to prove themselves worthy sons of the Empire, slipped back into a role of subservient colonial dependent, keen to oblige and to meet every demand of the Home Office. Ironically this happened while Australian soldiers at the front, fighting in the trenches of Gallipoli, began to discover that their history and their experiences as Australians gave them their own identity: the beginning of an act of emancipation from the bondage of colonial tutelage that the officials who were administering Australia at war from their offices in Melbourne did not, and perhaps could not, share.'⁵

This analysis can be applied to the other Dominions and indeed to the government of India. The First World War provided national foundation myths and helped to encourage and accelerate pre-existing anti-colonial movements throughout the British Empire especially in India. Paradoxically, through the treatment of German internees taken from within the colonies, at sea and from the former German Empire there remained a wilful subservience to the metropole of London. In New Zealand, popular opinion pushed to go further than United Kingdom policy, expressed in the media through calls for harsher policies such as the internment of all German civilians, the introduction of forced labour for German captives, and cuts in their rations. This placed the New Zealand government in an uneasy middle position between its electorate and the British government. This radicalisation of public opinion helps to explain legislation enacted in New Zealand and Australia during the war and after which prevented many Germans from returning to their homes in the former German colonies in this region or in Australia and New Zealand themselves.

The camp network that was established in the extra-European theatre of the war provided the structure through which Germans from the former German colonies and other extra-European locations came into contact with one another. In addition, the loss of the colonies, as symbolised by Germans being led to the docks of their former towns under black guard and in

⁵ Fischer, *Enemy Aliens*, pp. 138, 139.

turn being identified as 'enemy aliens' who could no longer own property or return to their homes, saw a complete racial role reversal for Germans from being at the top of the colonial hierarchy to being located at the bottom. Prisoners in the camps saw their capture and experience through the lens of colonial violence, either real or imagined. While physical acts of violence were isolated and mainly reserved to the initial stages of captivity and the period of active military conflict, they became the prism through which prisoners viewed their internment and certainly the one through which they chose to attract attention to their plight.

The war in the colonies affected identities from many angles: above all it affected German-British relations and the personal interactions between these two groups of colonisers, it then affected the relationship between the Germans and their former colonial subjects as well as enacting a racial role reversal, with the internment of whites under the watch of black or Indian troops. This role reversal was initially felt in the German loss of control not only over property but also over the servants hired to do domestic work. Magda Bubeck-Rodatz, in Cameroon, was horrified to find that one English Officer had allowed his 'boys' not only to cook for themselves but also to eat in her kitchen, signifying to her the intrusion of the role reversal into the domestic sphere and also that the indigenous inhabitants of the colonies had lost all respect for German whites.⁶ The upsetting of racial hierarchies was the key to how German prisoners and the German government viewed the loss of the German colonies.

Through the continuing repatriations during the war and the final set of repatriations in 1920/21 Germans from the colonies were sent back to a Germany they were unfamiliar with, and sometimes were encouraged to go elsewhere.⁷ The abdication of the Kaiser and ensuing revolutionary turmoil did not correspond with the Empire building project of which they had been an integral part. Some of the former colonial settlers joined extreme groups.⁸ While the links between German colonialism and the rise of the Nazi party and its racial policies have

⁶ In Bubeck-Rodatz's words this was 'ein Beweiss, dass die Nigger [she used the English term] jeden Respekt von uns Weissen verloren hatten'. (A signal that the 'Nigger' had lost all respect for us whites.) BA, R1001/3943, Magda Bubeck-Rodatz responses, 24th March 1915.

⁷ ICRC, C G1 A 15-28, Telegram to Maurer via the Red Cross, 25th October 1919.

⁸ The most prominent example was that of Ritter von Epp who had taken part in suppressing the Boxer and Herero uprisings. He became involved in the Freikorps in the 1920s and was later made head of the Nazi Party's Colonial policy office in the 1930s. However, he fought in the European battlefields of the First World War and not in the colonies. Perhaps the most prominent former colonial prisoner from the extra-European theatre was Viktor Böttcher, former deputy Governor of Cameroon, who actually managed to escape from captivity in Britain. In 1939 Böttcher became *Regierungspräsident* of Poznan in the Warthegau, German occupied Poland. Conrad, *German Colonialism*, p. 163.

been examined in other works, the more common reaction of colonial settlers to their sense of disorientation at the loss of Germany's colonies was to attempt to leave Germany again rather than become involved in radical politics. The formation of a new *Auslandsdeutschtum* that was separate from Germany was one of the consequences of the loss of the colonies and repatriation of Germans overseas to Europe. It found its strongest manifestation in the Mandate of South-West Africa, in which there remained a strong German community that was joined by others. Paradoxically, this German identity was allowed to develop by the South African government, even though it had conferred British citizenship on all German inhabitants of the Mandate in 1924 and by 1935 the Mandate constituted a fifth province of the Union.⁹

Capitan Erich Schulte,¹⁰ reflecting on the war in the colonies and his internment in South Africa, noted: 'And so with the defeat of our homeland we got our freedom [...] Now in Africa we have lost of all hope, I will not say forever, but we will have to wait a long time before we can realise our needs. We always desire to move to the tropics to work and earn money, that is our strength but we will have to do so now under a foreign flag and in the pay of others who will pocket the greater part of our pay!'¹¹ The prisoners had gained their freedom through the defeat of Germany and the loss of the colonies. The work that men, such as Schulte, had undertaken to create a German colonial empire was undone, and the spoils of war had gone to the other European colonial powers.

Extra-European internment is also highly revealing of the wartime relationship between mobility and Empire. The British Empire made use of the globalised networks developed in the nineteenth century in the developments of steam ships and communications. Internment in the extra-European theatre was linked by global shipping routes. Britain's naval strength coupled with its vast commercial reach allowed it to create a huge statistical base of world

⁹ Edho A. Ekoko, 'The British Attitude towards Germany's Colonial Irredentism in Africa in the Inter-War Years', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14, 2 (April, 1979), pp. 287-307, p. 288.

¹⁰ Not to be confused with the former Governor of Samoa, Erich Schultz.

¹¹ 'So erhielten wir unsere Freiheit erst mit der Niederlage der Heimat. [...] Aber in Afrika, wo für Deutschland die einzige Möglichkeit bestand, ein geschlossenes deutsches Kolonialreich aufzurichten, haben wir leider auf lange Zeit, - ich will nicht sagen für immer, - die Hoffnung auf Realisierung unserer Notwendigkeiten eingebüßt. Unsere Kraft wird man immer begehren, wir werden wie früher in die Tropen gehen und berühmte Arbeit leisten, auch Geld verdienen, - aber wir werden es im Solde anderer tun, die den größeren Teil unseres Arbeitsertrages in die Tasche gleiten lassen, - und nicht bald wieder unter der Fahne unseres Vaterlandes!' Erich Schulte, 'Die Internierten und Kriegsgefangenen in der Südafrikanischen Union', in *In Feindeshand*, p. 113.

trade information from which Germans and German businesses could not hide.¹² With the exception of the Boer War (on a smaller scale), never had so many Europeans been forcibly moved around the globe in such a manner. Sea lanes linked the camps together: apart from forced marches into French West Africa, prisoners were usually taken from camp to camp by ship. Attitudes to nationality had also changed by the end of the First World War. While the Boer prisoners from the South African War were still regarded as British subjects who were expected to become part of a self-governing white-minority ruled Dominion,¹³ in the First World War, with the exception of German South-West Africa, this was not the case for the former German colonial settlers. The British Empire enacted immigration restrictions and 'enemy alien' legislation to prevent the settlers returning. Even in German South-West Africa, however, measures were taken to remove Germans who did not conform to the image envisioned for an enlarged Dominion and who, as Botha noted, were 'infected with the spirit of republicanism [...] the sooner we get rid of this element the better for the future of the Union.'¹⁴ Even once they were allowed back into their now British-controlled former colonies in the 1920s, the German settlers remained 'colonialists without colonies'.¹⁵

A key innovation during the First World War was the development of propaganda. The colonial context of the camps provided the German government with a propaganda basis in the form of the 'colonial archive' to counter-balance accusations of German atrocities in Belgium. In addition to accusations of 'barbaric' practices by French and British colonial troops on the Western Front, the German government sought stories of colonial brutality from returning prisoners to add to its propaganda on the planned destruction of European civilisation by its enemies and their attempt to embark on a 'second partition of Africa'.¹⁶ In reports on the camps it was easy to conjure up pre-existing negative images of the colonial world to colour impressions of internment in the colonies. The extreme example of the British Foreign Office having to investigate accusations of Germans in North Borneo being surrounded by head

¹² Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 181.

¹³ Smith, Stucki, 'Colonial Development of Concentration Camps', p. 427.

¹⁴ TNA, FO383/538, 1160, Botha to Mr Long, 10th January 1919.

¹⁵ Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, p. 165.

¹⁶ David Killingray, 'The War in Africa', in Horne (ed), *A Companion to World War I*, p. 124. This propaganda conveniently ignored Germany's own plans for a 'Mittelafrika' (a German colony that would extend from the Atlantic to the Indian oceans, joining Cameroon to German East Africa), outlined by Admiral von Holtzendorff and approved by the Kaiser in 1917. Holger Herwig, 'Admirals versus Generals: The War Aims of the Imperial German Navy, 1914-1918', in *Central European History* 5, 3 (September 1972), pp. 208-233, p. 217.

hunters and cannibals highlighted this, as did the seriousness with which the British took such accusations. The imagined world of colonial violence that the extra-European camp system inhabited was mentally interwoven with the experience of colonial internment, even though the reality was somewhat different. This propaganda carried on into the post-war years as the rhetoric tapped into political anxieties, fears of social degradation and the view of Germany as the last defender of European racial purity.¹⁷

The extra-European camp network was inter-linked with its European counterpart. In terms of internment the war in the colonies was not a side-show but an integral part of the whole. Violence, or perhaps more correctly, the perception of violence, against prisoners in the colonies had the potential to affect the conditions of prisoners in Europe. While the idea and initial use of concentration camps originated in the colonial world, internment during the First World War became radicalised more broadly, allowing for its own situational peculiarities and cultural distinctiveness.¹⁸ Germany's colonies, being the only British-occupied German territory during the war, provided a counter-foil, in terms of reprisals, for German actions against British prisoners of war and civilian internees in occupied France and Belgium.

The aim of this project was to build on the historiography of internment in Europe during the Great War and also aspects of colonial internment in the twentieth century, and apply its tools of analysis to a colonial war that involved European troops. Situational and cultural factors played a role in how 'enemy aliens' were treated and how they perceived themselves.¹⁹ This thesis started with a question of where to place the story of the internment of German civilians and prisoners of war from the German colonies. Do they belong to the narrative of European internment or that of colonial internment in the twentieth century? From the discussions over the previous chapters the narrative fits more firmly in the former category; this thesis argued that through the use of the threat of reprisals and the need to maintain imperial prestige we can see that the British authorities exported a European system to the colonies and strove to place all the European norms of captivity in terms of barracks, barbed wire and even European-style rations at the disposal of their enemy captives. In the case of white German colonialists the constant links to Europe through International law, the British

¹⁷ Conrad, *German Colonialism*, p. 191.

¹⁸ Stibbe, 'Civilian Internees in Europe', in Stibbe (ed), *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration*, p. 54.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

need to protect imperial prestige and the use of reprisals links internment in the extra-European world to that in the European.

One can hazard to say that the global legacy of the war is currently well recognised, as the Great War upset assumptions about European civilisation and under the influence of the Russian revolution and 'Wilsonian' self-determination proclamations sparked demands for the reform of colonial rule.²⁰ The First World War had a massive impact upon its participants and bequeathed long-term consequences for international politics in the extra-European sphere. Adam Tooze has even gone as far as to reframe the First World War as an essential part of the worldwide struggle between East and West (the United States and Japan). For the United States, as Tooze presents it, the war was fought in Europe to tame Germany in order to allow Britain to focus its forces in Asia.²¹ Certainly Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck or Karl Ebermaier did not see their contributions to Germany's war effort as being ineffectual, and the Japanese land grab in China and the Pacific sparked by the Great War had its repercussions in the 1920s and 1930s with Japan's expansion into what the Americans and Australians considered their spheres of influence. On the other hand, Jürgen Zimmerer's ideas about the colonial theatre laying the groundwork for Nazi extremism and extermination policies and the links between colonial internment in the First World War and internment in Europe during the Second are debatable and this study did not ultimately find evidence to support them. Rather, it was the mass incarceration of military combatants and civilians and their harsh treatment in Europe during the First World War that provided clearer 'signposts' on the road towards the concentration camps systems of later communist and fascist regimes.²² German colonial settlers were only a minor part of this overall development, although their internment was relatively peaceful and more liberal than that experienced by captives on the European fronts.

The camp system established in the extra-European theatre of the First World War, while certainly not as repressive as its European counter-parts, highlights the Great War as a truly modern and global conflict. The establishment of a global camp system run from the British imperial metropole involved the coordination of the military, the Admiralty, the Dominion governments, and the Colonial and Foreign Offices. The general principles of international law were followed but often overridden through the use of reprisals, and the notion of trying

²⁰ Mulligan, *Great War for Peace*, p. 4.

²¹ Tooze, *The Deluge*, p. 60.

²² Kramer, 'Prisoners in the First World War', in Scheipers (ed), *Prisoners in War*, p. 86.

Germans for 'war crimes' had an impact into the twentieth century and up to the present.²³ The First World War and the internment of German civilians and military prisoners in the extra-European theatre ended the notion of a common European civilising mission in the colonial world. It upset the established colonial racial hierarchies, and through 'enemy alien' legislation helped establish European hierarchies of race as defined by nationality, disrupting the pre-war world order of cultural globalisation.²⁴

²³ The First World War directly produced the following developments in international law: trials for war criminals, the condemnation of aggressive war, the strengthened prohibition on the use of poison and the elaboration of humane treatment for prisoners of war. Although the Second World War, as Hull argues, 'muddied the analytical waters' thus making it difficult to ascertain which post-1945 modifications in international law are owed to the First World War and which to the Second. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper*, p. 329.

²⁴ Conrad, *Globalisation*, p. 55.

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