

Supporting German colonisation through transnational cooperation

A case study of Imperial Germany's *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* and its participation in a transnational network *for the protection of aborigines*

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Introduction

This bachelor's thesis asks for an explanation of the transnational activity of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* before and during the First World War (WWI). The *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* consisted of a group of individuals from the German *Kaiserreich* who banded together in several organisational forms and worked towards, what they called, *Eingeborenenschutz (protection of aborigines)*.¹ Many of the movements' members were personally involved in Germany's Imperialist conquests, e.g. as traders, publishers, politicians or missionaries. This illustrates their private interest in the flourishing of the German colonisation efforts. As colonial pressure group, the movement supported Germany's colonial venture. To give strength to German colonisation was one of the movement's express aims.

The members of the movement saw the main purpose of their activity in what they claimed to be "elevation" and "protection" of *aborigines* in Germany's and other countries' colonies. Their scope of action was not limited to the German colonial metropolis. Through personal contacts, transnational reviews of colonial literature, informal and formalised cooperation with foreign *protectors of aborigines*, the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* took part in a transnational network of people united by the common claim of *protecting aborigines*. In this network, inter alia German, Swiss, French and British societies and individuals collaborated.

This bachelor's thesis asks for an explanation of the German movement's participation in a transnational network *for the protection of aborigines*. How is it to be explained that a movement supportive of Germany's colonial endeavour cooperated with foreign societies? Should one not expect national(ist) rivalries in the time before WWI to render transnational cooperation impossible - or at least unlikely? After all, supporting one nation's colonial expansion is likely to coincide with disapproval of another nation's colonial activity. Even more so in a time interpreted in classical historiography on

¹The terms *protection of aborigines* and *aborigines* are used here, adopting the contemporary designation of native populations living in the colonies of the European countries. At the time in question, Europeans referred to them as *Aborigines*, *Eingeborene* or *Indigènes* (in English, German and French, respectively). These appellations shall be used in italics in this text. Likewise shall technical terms, foreign terms and, most importantly, contemporary terms be used in italics. This is done with the intention to stress the fact that those are historical concepts. In order to grasp a full understanding of those concepts, the context in which they are used has to be taken into account.

international relations as characterised by rising national antagonism and national rivalry in many areas.²

This paper argues that part of the explanation for the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* participation in the transnational network of *protectors of aborigines* can be deduced from the colonisers' self-perception vis-à-vis the colonised.³ The analysis of the ideological foundation of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, seen in connection with the overall importance of racism, demonstrates one important ideological feature: The members of the German movement perceived themselves as part of a *European race of Kulturmenschen*⁴. As such, they proclaimed the need for what they called "elevating" the supposedly inferior, allegedly primitive *Naturmenschen*⁵ populating the colonies. This racially underpinned ideological auto-perception of belonging to the same *race*, as they labelled it, associated with what was believed to be common challenges in the colonies, triggered the sentiment of unity amongst different European *protectors of aborigines*. This propelled cooperation between *protectors of aborigines*, regardless of their nationality. Furthermore, it is argued that, in the eyes of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, transnational cooperation in the field of *protection of aborigines* did not run contrary to its general support of German colonisation. *Protecting aborigines* was seen as beneficial to the prospering of Germany's colonies – mostly defined in economic terms. It meant supporting Germany's colonialism. Transnational cooperation in this field was seen as a potential source of benefit. By reviewing foreign colonial literature and by collecting, systematising and sharing the experience of foreign colonisers, the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* gathered practical knowledge about the colonial experience of all colonising powers. Transnational cooperation in the field of *protecting aborigines* was part of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* general support of Germany's national colonial interests. Transnational cooperation in colonial questions was seen to benefit the national interest. Also - and especially - in a field so closely

²One of the most prominent accounts of rising national antagonism is to be found in the classical work by Kennedy in which he studies the relations between Great Britain and the German Empire before WWI.

Cf.: Kennedy, P. M. (1980). *The rise of the Anglo-German antagonism, 1860-1914*.

³It has to be made clear here that the members of the movement are to be counted undoubtedly amongst the colonisers. Despite proclaiming their labour to be to the benefit of the colonised, the members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* worked in favour of German colonisation.

⁴*Kulturmenschen* would best translate into English as "people of culture" or as "civilised people".

⁵This term translates as "primitive people".

connected to national prestige such as colonialism. Therefore, this paper claims that the movement's national support for German colonisation in combination with its racially influenced ideology, on the one hand, and its transnational cooperation, on the other, were interconnected and reciprocally supportive phenomena and not, as one might expect *prima facie*, mutually exclusive.

In order to analytically examine its claim, this paper is structured in the following way. The classical historiography of colonialism arguing about international competition is presented in the first section. This section also contains an overview of the recent publishing about interconnected characteristics of the period in question to which this thesis relates. Furthermore, the first section provides background information about the historical context in which the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* activity has to be understood. The time before WWI was namely characterised by the simultaneousness of national competition and globalising tendencies propelling international organisation. In the second section, the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* is introduced. Its naissance, membership, its national activity and the nature and reasons of its participation in a transnational network *for the protection of aborigines* are presented. In the third section, the movement's ideology and activity are put into context with chief ideological currents of the period in question. This serves to demonstrate that its racially underpinned ideology and the movement's support of German colonisation triggered cooperation with foreign societies. The knowledge the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* collected through its transnational cooperation about the colonial experience of other colonial powers was regarded beneficial to German colonisation. The last section of this paper brings into focus the time after the outbreak of the First World War. This event illustrates that the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* and its transnational activity were paralysed by the "climax of national antagonism"⁶. This did not entail, however, that all transnational orientation was eradicated.

By taking this analytical perspective, this bachelor's thesis contributes to a current trend in historiography of Europe's colonial past. Historians have recently expressed the need for understanding *High Imperialism* as characterised by multi-dimensional colonial interconnectedness. Some scholars even argue that colonialism was a common

⁶Cf.: Kennedy (1980, pp. 441–462)

European project.⁷ In order to be able to examine whether this perception of the period is exact, historians have stressed the need to remove the narrative of Europe's colonial past from its classical analytical framework constituted hitherto of the nation state. One cannot detect supposed characteristics of colonial interconnectedness if one tells individual nations' colonial histories separately and uniquely brings into focus actors who acted on official behalf of the states involved. With its focus on transnational non-governmental cooperation, this bachelor's thesis adds to the on-going historiographical discussion. It largely aligns with the argumentation of recent historiographical publishing and empirically underscores U. Lindner's claim brought forward in her monograph *Koloniale Begegnungen*: "[High Imperialism] was a time [...] shaped by complex relations that cannot be reduced merely to European rivalries."⁸ This thesis illustrates that these relations did not only involve official state actors' interconnectedness but included non-governmental actors. One such non-governmental actor was the *German Eingeborenenschutz-movement* that, despite and because of its support for Germany's colonial efforts, took part in a European network *for the protection of aborigines*.

1. Historiographical trends and historical context

This section provides background information that helps to contextualise the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* and its activity. The first part describes the historiographical trends that have influenced the analytical perspective of this paper and to which it relates. The second part explains the historical context of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* activity. It was namely a period shaped by the parallelism of national competition and tendencies of global interconnectedness triggering inter- and transnational organisation.

1.1.Historiographical trends

Europe's nation states had a big influence on the narrative of history. Through the means of *national history*, they created a context in which history is commonly constructed from the perspective of nation states. This perspective serves nation states as a "form for reflexion and presentation" and uses *national history* as the logical form

⁷Cf.: Lindner, U. (2011a). *Koloniale Begegnungen: Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika 1880-1914* (1st ed.), p. 458.

⁸Lindner (2011a, p. 11) My translation.

of giving room to the “national idea”.⁹ The period before the outbreak of WWI has classically been interpreted using the nation state as analytical framework. Analyses have focussed mainly on areas of high politics when examining international relations. In this way, topics such as diplomatic relations, economic competition and military rivalries have deserved much research attention. Such *national history* has detected rising national antagonism between the German Empire and other countries - most prominently between Germany and Great Britain.¹⁰ Elements such as the importance of national prestige, naval armament or increasingly confronting alliance systems of European powers, according to this narrative of history, contributed to rising hostility between Europe’s nation states. Furthermore, nationalism in its various forms has been identified the chief ideology negatively affecting European international relations in the pre-WWI period. These ideologies concern the emphasis of one nation’s specificities vis-à-vis other nations and the consequences this emphasis entailed. The pursuit of diverging national interests was a source of national confrontation.

The history of colonialism, too, was largely told from the perspective of nation states throughout the 20th century. As such, it has mostly agreed with the perception of rising national rivalry. During *High Imperialism*, several - mostly European - colonial powers set out to subdue overseas territories and populations under their dominance. International confrontation related to single nations’ colonial endeavours had the potential to deteriorate the overall political and diplomatic relations between the European countries. Despite the official agreements reached at the *Berlin Conference of 1884-85* that were supposed to solve and prevent territorial disputes between the colonisers, the European powers confronted each other repeatedly in the pursuit of their national colonial interests. The most well-known event illustrating confrontation between European colonial powers is the *Fashoda-Incident* of 1898. It brought Great Britain and France on the verge of war. Another example is the Second Moroccan Crisis during which the German Empire confronted the other colonial powers. This confrontation almost sparked a war in 1911.

⁹Cf.: Conrad, S., & Osterhammel, J. (2004). *Das Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914.*, p. 11.

National history and national identity go hand in hand in the concept of the nation. Nations have adequately been described as “imagined communities”.

On this concept, cf.: Anderson, B. R. O. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.*

¹⁰Cf. the analysis of British-German antagonism before WWI in: Kennedy (1980)

Separate histories of different nation states' colonial activities have dominated the historiography of colonialism. Following the classical analytical paradigm of nation states, the histories of e.g. German colonialism or of British colonialism have been told. At the most one can find comparative studies of different European nations' colonial ventures. Interactions, encounters and interconnectedness in the field of colonial politics between the colonising powers were rarely brought into focus. It is no surprise that international relations between the colonisers, thus, have long been understood as additional and connected to the general rising antagonism between the states. *National colonial history* suggests that national colonial competition added to existing national antagonism arising due to rivalries in other fields.

A trend reversal can be observed in more recent historiography of colonialism. Historians have begun to search for phenomena of inter- and transnational interconnectedness during the time of *High Imperialism*. However, *national history* and its corresponding analytical framework of nation states have been found to be unsuited to detect potential interconnectedness in the history of colonialism.¹¹ New research approaches have been developed that try to “overcome the nation state as the organising principle of historical narratives.”¹² Such innovative research approaches make use of methods of *global history*, *entangles history* or *post-colonial theory*.¹³ These new approaches have been able to uncover several dimensions of colonial interconnectedness. The first of which is connected to the colonisers' relation vis-à-vis the colonised. The construction of colonisers' identity in response to their encounters with the colonised - and vice-versa - are at the focus of studies with research perspectives influenced by *post-colonial theories*.¹⁴ A second dimension of colonial

¹¹Cf.: Heé, N., & Schaper, U. (2009). Introduction: Approaching Different Colonial Settings. In M. Middel & H. Siegrist (Eds.), *19.2009,1. comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsordnung.*, p. 7.

¹²ibid.

The introduction to the volume contains a good and concise summary of recent trends in historiography of colonialism.

¹³Cf.: Lindner, U. (2011c). *Neuere Kolonialgeschichte und Postcolonial Studies.*; Cf. also: Heé and Schaper (2009, p. 7)

¹⁴Cf.: Lindner (2011c, p. 4)

This dimension of colonial interconnectedness is not the main interest of this thesis. However, since the unit of analysis of this thesis is a movement of colonisers whose activity forced them to take a stance relative to the colonised, this dimension of interconnectedness plays a role for this thesis' analysis. This becomes especially relevant with regard to the self-positioning of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* as *Kulturmenschen*.

interconnectedness concerns the interactions between the colonisers. Research in this dimension focusses on the encounters and cooperation between the colonising powers. Michael Fröhlich has already argued in his 1990 dissertation entitled “Von Konfrontation zur Koexistenz” (From Confrontation to Coexistence) that the German-British colonial relations in Africa before the outbreak of WWI had developed from confrontation to coexistence over the course of time.¹⁵ This interpretation was furthered in recent years by analyses that have focused more explicitly on the colonial encounters of different European countries. Ulrike Lindner, professor of History of Europe and of European colonialism at University of Cologne, for example, has published a monograph entitled “Koloniale Begegnungen” (Colonial Encounters) in 2011.¹⁶ In this book, she analyses the Anglo-German colonial relations in Africa in the time before WWI. She concludes that “colonialism [...] has to be perceived – to a much larger extent than hitherto – as a common project of European powers”¹⁷. According to Lindner, colonial interconnectedness and cooperation between Germany and Great Britain in this common project were commonplace.

This has stimulated a discussion in German-speaking historiography of colonialism about the appropriateness of perceiving colonialism as a common European project. Reviewing her work, critics of Lindner have pointed out that her analytical focus is too limited in terms of actors and in terms of geographical areas as to be able to sufficiently support her claim about a common European project.¹⁸ This illustrates that the perception of Europe’s colonial past as a common project is, as of yet, controversial. Currently, Florian Wagner of Freiburg University works on his dissertation project named “Zwischen Koexistenz, Kooperation und Konfrontation. Nationalismus und Transnationalismus der Kolonialverbände in Europa” (Between Coexistence, Cooperation and Confrontation. Nationalism and Transnationalism of the colonial

¹⁵Cf.: Fröhlich, M. (1990). *Von Konfrontation zur Koexistenz: die deutsch- englischen Kolonialbeziehungen in Afrika zwischen 1884 und 1914*.

¹⁶Lindner (2011a)

¹⁷Lindner (2011a, p. 458) My translation.

¹⁸Cf.: Ralph Erbar. (2012). *Rezension zu: Lindner, Ulrike: Koloniale Begegnungen. Deutschland und Grossbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika 1880-1914*. Frankfurt am Main 2011. Retrieved from <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/id=17273>

societies in Europe)¹⁹. With this project, the author sets out to analyse and compare the colonial associations of five European countries. Hereby, he introduces non-governmental actors' cooperation to the discussion about colonialism as a common European project. This type of actors has deserved little explicit research attention so far.²⁰

New research perspectives analysing colonial interconnectedness cannot - and explicitly do not intend to - replace the traditional perceptions of national rivalries in the period before WWI.²¹ However, they can complement these views in order to develop a more complete understanding of the mechanisms, features and actors of Europe's colonial past. The two aforementioned trends in historiography of Europe's colonial history combined illustrate that colonial interconnectedness and national rivalry coexisted and that these two hereby constitute an analytical field of tension. The parallelism of national competition and colonial cooperation has to be taken into consideration when analysing the period in question.

1.2. Historical context

A similar insight arises when taking into account other developments that influenced the period before the outbreak of WWI. The importance of nationalism, national rivalry and *High Imperialism* for the period of late the 19th and early 20th century notwithstanding, one has to be careful not to ascribe it exclusivity in influencing the period in question. Other features also had a large influence on the early 20th century. The period in question was namely shaped by globalising tendencies producing manifestations of international organisation.

Madeleine Herren has adequately formulated in the introduction to her monograph on the history of international organisation: "The 19th century – next to its character as an epoch marked by the nation and nationalism – receives the characteristic of a global age

¹⁹Cf.: Universität Freiburg. (2013). *Promotionsprojekt*. Retrieved from <http://romanisches-westeuropa.geschichte.uni-freiburg.de/personal/personen-doktoranden/florianwagner>;

Cf. also: Florian Wagner. (2013). *Kolonialvereine in Europa zwischen nationaler Konfrontation und transnationaler Kooperation (1870-1914)*. Retrieved from <http://19jhdhip.hypotheses.org/1216>

²⁰This bachelor's thesis and Wagner's dissertation both analyse non-governmental actors to contribute to the on-going historiographical discussion. Whilst Wagner analyses the biggest colonial interest groups of five different European countries, the present research focusses on a comparatively small interest group of Germany's colonial endeavour.

²¹Cf.: Conrad and Osterhammel (2004, p. 13)

[if one is prepared to understand globalism as a phenomenon contingent upon and changing with time.]”²² Technological developments in infrastructure, means of communication and intensified migration characterised the years before the outbreak of WWI. Following this, historians of globalisation, such as the prominent German historian Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Petersson have argued that it was not only with the invention of the internet but already in the years before WWI that the world turned into a “room for experience and sphere of action for an increasing part of the world population”.²³ Some label the period in question a “first wave of globalisation”²⁴.

The changes globalising tendencies entailed are more important for the purpose of this paper, than the label they were given. They namely had an influence on daily life. Many people began perceiving the world in terms that exceeded the borders of one nation state. *Welt-Begriffe*²⁵, such as *Weltpolitik* or *Weltwirtschaft*, had their first boom in the German Empire. This exemplifies that awareness of the *Kaiserreich*'s citizens began acquiring a globalised dimension.²⁶ Something that has been given the name “global consciousness”²⁷ had developed around the turn of the 19th century. This perception of global interconnectedness also seems to have propelled the belief that its increase demanded for increasingly global organisation. Hence, the later 19th and early 20th century saw a boom in the creation of international institutions and transnational organisations of various shapes. On a governmental level, the first international organisations were created in the 1870's. This shows that parallel to the development of

²²Herren, M. (2009). *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung. Geschichte Kompakt.*, p. 3. My translation.

²³Cf.: Osterhammel, J., & Petersson, N. P. (2007). *Geschichte der Globalisierung.*, pp. 63–70.

²⁴Cf.: Baldwin, R. E., & Martin, P. (1999). Two Waves of Globalisation: Superficial Similarities, Fundamental Differences. *NBER Working Paper, January 1999*(No. 6904). Retrieved from http://www.nber.org/papers/w6904.pdf?new_window=1

This work looks mainly at economic developments during the period in the pre-WWI period. Perceiving the whole period as a predecessor of today's globalisation is controversial.

²⁵*Weltbegriffe* are terms that include the word “Welt”(world-terms).

²⁶Cf.: Conrad, S. (2009). Globalisierungseffekte: Mobilität und Nation im Kaiserreich. In S. Müller & C. Torp (Eds.), *Das deutsche Kaiserreich in der Kontroverse* (pp. 406–421)., pp. 418–420.

²⁷Cf.: Akira Iriye: *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World*. Quoted in: Davies, T. R. (2008). *The Rise and Fall of Transnational Civil Society: The Evolution of International Non-Governmental Organisations since 1839: Report No. CUTP/003*. Retrieved from [http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/1287/.](http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/1287/), p. 7.

nation states stood the manifestation of international cooperation.²⁸ On a non-governmental level, the foundation of the “International Committee of the Red Cross” as a transnational network to provide immediate relief for wounded soldiers can be seen as one of the most successful exemplifications of non-governmental organisations. From then on, initiatives for the creation of non-governmental organisations became more and more frequent.

Transnational non-governmental cooperation would occur in cases either where their initiators found that the nation states did not offer adequate or satisfying solutions for specific problems, or where it was estimated that solutions had a higher chance of success if sought on a transnational basis.²⁹ Insights about this stemming from political science’s International Relations theory agree with this historical observation. Margaret Keck, and Kathryn Sikkink, both professors of political science, have published a book on transnational advocacy networks.³⁰ Networks, according to the authors, are

“forms of organization characterised by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange. [...] Policy networks form around issues where information plays a key role.” The concept of a network is applicable to the international sphere since “it stresses the fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in specialized issue areas.” They are called advocacy networks “because advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition; they are stand-ins for persons or ideas.”³¹

In terms of actors, transnational networks may involve national non-governmental organisations whose activity has a dimension that transcends national borders and international organisations, as well as a range of other actors alike.³² This suggests that the concept of an advocacy network can serve as a heuristic principle helping to understand developments and phenomena of interconnectedness in the field of *protection of aborigines* in the period before WWI.³³ Such conceptualisation of a

²⁸Early cases of international governmental co-operation are the Universal Postal Union and the International Telecommunication Union.

Cf.: Herren (2009, p. 22)

²⁹Cf.: Herren (2009, p. 34)

³⁰Keck, M., & Sikkink, K. (1998). *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*.

³¹Keck, M., & Sikkink, K. (1999). Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics. *ISSJ*, 159/1999, 89–100. Retrieved from http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic446176.files/Week_7/Keck_and_Sikkink_Transnational_Advocacy.pdf, p. 91.

³²Cf.: Keck and Sikkink (1999, pp. 91–92)

³³On the significance of the concept of networks as a heuristic principle allowing to explain the historically contingent interest in trans-border cooperation cf.: Herren (2009, p. 9)

network allows employing the term *transnational advocacy network* to give a name to the type of cooperation between the different European *protectors of aborigines*. Despite the observation by Keck and Sikkink “that only recently can we speak of *transnational* advocacy networks” (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 92), the designation of transnational is used here to describe the nature of interconnectedness of the European *protectors of aborigines*. The term transnational, for the purpose of this paper, is defined in a broad sense. While interactions between governments in international affairs are given the classification as international, interactions between citizens of different nation states that transcended the respective nation state’s borders are referred to as transnational.

A perception of the period before the outbreak of WWI as a period of global consciousness and global interconnectedness illustrates the historical context for the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement’s* activity. Nation states, nationalism, national rivalries and colonial competition were important in many ways during this period. However, the period was also shaped by increasing global organisation, the emergence of transnational networks and first international organisations. Different people had identified that challenges arising from increasing interconnectedness demanded for increasingly interconnected answers.

2. Introducing the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*³⁴ and the transnational network for the protection of aborigines

Before the motivation of the transnational involvement of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* can be analysed, one needs to know how they acted, both in a national scope and as far as their transnational activity is concerned. Therefore, this

³⁴In the framework of a history course with Prof. L.L. Roberts of University of Twente, I have written an essay in which I examine whether the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement’s* work was to serve predominantly the German colonial interest or the alleged interest of the colonised. This paper argues that the movement’s ideologically influenced lobbying served the colonies and the colonised at the same time.

Cf.: Jeldrik T.B. Grups. (2013). *For the colonies or for the colonised?: The Eingeborenenschutz-movement in Imperial Germany*. Unpublished work. Enschede/Münster.

Since it has not been published and since much of its findings are helpful and necessary for this bachelor’s thesis’ research, I will draw upon this paper, whenever necessary. Furthermore, my earlier paper is to be found in the appendix.

Furthermore, the following sections make use of foreign language source materials. Wherever necessary, I will use my translation in the text and provide the original sources in the footnotes.

section introduces the German *Eingeborenenschutz-* movement. In a first step, its naissance upon foreign models, its membership and its development is presented. In a next step, their activities in a national context and the nature and aims of participation in what is called a transnational network *for the protection of aborigines* are described.

2.1. Naissance, development and foreign influence

The term *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* designates a political advocacy movement constituted by a group of individuals interested in Germany's colonial enterprise. They banded together because they perceived the need for what they called *protection* and *elevation*³⁵ of the people who lived in the territories of the European states' colonies. This movement is classified here as an advocacy movement because it was in the alleged interest of the indigenous population of the Europeans' colonies, that they claimed to work for.

The first time the members came together in an institutionalised manner was when they founded the *Deutsche Kongoliga (KL)*. This society was created in 1910 to fight the murderous system of exploitation of the workforce of Congolese ordered by King Leopold II of Belgium in his Congo-Colony.³⁶ In 1913, the members of the *KL* judged the conditions in the Congo had improved and dissolved the *KL*. It was immediately replaced by the newly founded *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz (DGE)*. The *DGE* was created in Berlin on the 5th of December 1913. Most of the people affiliated with the *KL* also became members of the *DGE*.³⁷ While the *KL* had as its focus the Belgian Congo colony, the *DGE* was concerned with all geographical areas in which the indigenous population of the colonies encountered European and specifically German colonisation. An important product of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was the journal *Koloniale Rundschau (KR)*. The *KR* carried the by-name "monthly periodical for the interests of our protectorates and their inhabitants"³⁸. Its first issue was published in January 1909 by Ernst Vohsen in the "Dietrich Reimer [Ernst

³⁵ **German Original:** "Schutz" and "Hebung"

³⁶ This system is nowadays referred to as *Congo atrocities*.

The book that has created broad public awareness for the atrocities committed in Leopold's Congo and the campaign against the latter was the book by Hochschild published in 1998.

Cf.: Hochschild, A. (1998). *King Leopold's ghost: A story of greed, terror, and heroism in colonial Africa*.

³⁷ Cf.: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz. (1920). In Heinrich Schnee (Ed.), *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon* (p. 300). Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer. Retrieved from http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Deutsche_Gesellschaft_f%FCr_Eingebo renenschutz

³⁸ **German Original:** "Monatsschrift für die Interessen unserer Schutzgebiete und ihrer Bewohner"

Vohsen]” publishing house of Berlin. It was edited by Diedrich Westermann. The journal’s aim was to form a forum of discussion and “argumentation of colonial questions” and to “examine and deepen pending questions”³⁹ in view of its ideological principles. When the *DGE* was founded, the *KR* was made its official publishing organ. Almost all issues of the *KR* contain Leading articles by the publishers, editors or other members of the movement.

Reading the list of persons who had joined the *DGE* at the time of its foundation⁴⁰, it becomes evident that, as the authors of the *Koloniale Rundschau* described it, “representatives of the various political and religious leanings”⁴¹ were part of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*. Ernst Vohsen and Diedrich Westermann are to be seen as initiators and leaders of the movement. Ernst Vohsen was founder member of the *Kongo Liga*. Later he was founder member of the *DGE*, its treasurer, financial contributor and person responsible for the first issues of the *Koloniale Rundschau*. The journal was published under his supervision in the publishing house he owned. His biography was closely connected to German colonialism and he was able to draw personal profit from his economic, political and publishing activity. He appears to have been a valued, experienced and relatively influential colonial practitioner and was appointed member of the German Colonial Council in 1891, which he remained until 1907.⁴² Other names of affiliates to the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* include people from a “variety of circles of colonial practitioners and theoreticians, civil servants, traders, as well as all denominations”⁴³. These included members of parliament⁴⁴, Christian missionary director A.W. Schreiber of *Norddeutsche Mission* and *Reichskolonialamt-secretary*⁴⁵ Bernhard Dernburg. Furthermore, the German movement

³⁹Leading article. (1909). Unser Programm. *Koloniale Rundschau - Monatschrift für die Interessen unserer Schutzgebiete und ihrer Bewohner*, 1909(1), 1–8., p. 1.

⁴⁰Cf.: Leading article (1914a, p. 5)

⁴¹**German Original:** “die Vertreter der verschiedensten poli-tischen und religiösen Richtungen“

Cf.: Leading article (1909, p. 6)

⁴²Cf.: Pogge Strandmann, H. von. (2009). *Imperialismus vom Grünen Tisch: Deutsche Kolonialpolitik zwischen wirtschaftlicher Ausbeutung und "zivilisatorischen" Bemühungen* (1st ed.), p. 510.

For more information on Vohsen cf.: Jeldrik T.B. Grups (2013, pp. 3–5)

⁴³**German Original:** “verschiedensten Kreisen bei Kolonialpraktikern und –Theoretikern, bei Beamten und Kauf-leuten, sowie bei allen Konfessionen“

Schreiber, D. (1920). Die Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Eingeborenenschutz. *Koloniale Rundschau - Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik und Weltwirtschaft*, 1920(1), 24–32., p. 26.

⁴⁴Erzberger [Zentrum], Lic. Mumm [Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung], Dr. Waldstein [Freisinnige Volkspartei]

⁴⁵**German Original:** “Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamt“

was proud to count foreigners amongst the ranks of their supporters. The lists of contributors to the *Koloniale Rundschau*, published in the early issues of the journal, feature e.g. the names of Fox-Bourne from London, publisher of *The Aborigines' Friend*, and Edward Dene Morel, publisher of *The African Mail* from Liverpool. The selection of members illustrates that the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* and its members were personally involved in Germany's colonial enterprise. Their personal involvement explained their interest for colonisation. The fact that they were closely connected to German colonisation also illustrates that they had a personal interest in its success. This is highlighted by what the editors of the *Koloniale Rundschau* proclaimed in their manifesto "Unser Programm" published in 1909. The *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was namely in favour of Germany's colonisation effort and did not want to set itself "in competition with other colonial journals". It sought to be "a complement", believing that "there is enough room for all who wish to help the support of the colonial cause in Germany"⁴⁶. The members of the movement expressed their support for German colonisation e.g. when they wrote that colonisation entailed "national challenges the lucky solution of which is of far-reaching importance for all of the German people"⁴⁷.

For an understanding of the transnational dimension of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, it is important to point out that *protection of aborigines* was not a German invention. The different subsequent German societies were created explicitly on foreign models. Particularly the British model of the *Congo Reform Association* served the German movement as role model.⁴⁸ The British association's lobbying against the atrocities committed by the rule of King Leopold II of Belgium in the Congo Free State has been judged in historical literature as the first successful international human rights

⁴⁶**German Original:** "[...] sondern eine Ergänzung zu ihnen sein will ; wir sind überzeugt, daß Raum genug da ist für alle, die mithelfen wollen an der Förderung der koloialen Sache in Deutschland"

Leading article (1909, p. 5)

⁴⁷**German Original:** "es sind nationale Auf-gaben, deren glückliche Lösung für das ganze deutsche Volk von weittragender Bedeutung ist"

Leading article (1909, p. 1)

⁴⁸Cf.: Deutsche Kongo-Liga. (1920). In Heinrich Schnee (Ed.), *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon* (p. 310). Leipzig:

Quelle & Meyer. Retrieved from

[http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-](http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Deutsche_Kongo-Liga)

[frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Deutsche_Kongo-Liga;](http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Deutsche_Kongo-Liga)

Cf. also: Lindner (2011a, p. 313)

and media campaign in history.⁴⁹ The members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, too, saw the fact that King Leopold II surrendered control over his colonies to the state of Belgium as an improvement of conditions in the Congo.⁵⁰

The perhaps most renowned activist in the British *Congo Reform Association* was the British journalist E.D. Morel, who, through his publishing in the *KR*, also contributed to the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* right from the start. Other well-known figures in the fight against the atrocities committed against the indigenous people in the Congo were Arthur Conan Doyle and Robert Casement. The German version of Doyle's book "The Crime of the Congo" was published in Ernst Vohsen's publishing house in 1909.⁵¹ This illustrates that the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, from the outset, was connected with foreign societies and individuals. Upon their models they formed their own societies. The members of the movement copied ideas and technologies of organisation from antecedent foreign movements that were judged successful.

2.2. Reforms in the *Era Dernburg* with impact on the *native question*

The German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* is to be understood taking into account the context of colonial politics in which it was active. The period following 1906, i.e. approximately the period the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* began its activity, has been described as a period of "reform and political climate-change"⁵² in German colonial politics. Due to its close connection with Bernhard Dernburg, this period has been surnamed *Era Dernburg*. The aim of the reformation of colonial politics was to render the colonial enterprise economically more profitable. After the colonial crises of

⁴⁹Cf.: Herren (2009, pp. 31–32)

For a critical evaluation of the *Congo Reform Association's* activism regarding the Congo, cf.: Naeem Inayatullah, & David L. Blaney. (2012). The Dark Heart of Kindness: The Social Construction of Deflection. *International Studies Perspectives*, 13, 164–175.

This essay highlights explicitly the blind spots of the movement's activism. While they were critical of the system in the Belgian Congo, they mostly failed to acknowledge and criticise their own participation in Great Britain's colonial endeavour.

⁵⁰This is illustrated by what writes Schreiber in his 1920 review of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* activities.

Cf.: Schreiber (1920, p. 24)

⁵¹Cf.: Leading article. (1915). Der Weltkrieg. *Koloniale Rundschau - Monatsschrift für die Interessen unserer Schutzgebiete und ihrer Bewohner*, 1, 1–10., p. 5.

⁵²**German Original:** "Reformansätze und der politische Klimawandel"

Pogge Strandmann (2009, p. 428)

the early years of the 20th century⁵³, pressure rose⁵⁴ and it was demanded that colonial politics be reformed. Bernhard Dernburg, an ex-banker with experience of reforming unprofitable enterprises – and a future member of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz* – was appointed *Staatssekretär* in the re-structured *Reichskolonialamt*. “Historians mostly agree that his appointment meant a change in German colonial politics”⁵⁵ and under Dernburg, systematic investments in colonial infrastructure were undertaken, big businesses and bank-investments were favoured. Dernburg proclaimed that colonisation from then on was to be undertaken no longer by “means of destruction” but by “means of preservation, to which belong the missionary and the doctor, the railway just as well as the machine, hence the advanced theoretical and applied science in all fields.”⁵⁶ In practice, this meant e.g. the establishment of the *Kolonialinstitut* in Hamburg that should answer the newly increasing demand for practical colonial knowledge.⁵⁷

This reformed approach to colonial politics also had an impact on the *native question*, i.e. the way in which the indigenous populations of the colonies were to be treated and how they were viewed. For rationalist minds like the colonial reformer Dernburg, the indigenous population was seen as a part of the colonies’ infrastructure, namely as its

⁵³These crises concerned, inter alia, the uprisings in the colonies and the genocide by the German colonial army that had almost caused the entire destruction of some native populations. To “pacify” these uprisings had consumed large amounts of the Imperial budget and had cost the life of many German soldiers.

⁵⁴The rising pressure is illustrated through the polemics around the Reichstag elections of 1907 that were, due to their main topical focus, surnamed *Hottentottenwahl* (English: Hottentot election). Cf.: Deutsches Historisches Museum (2004-2005) Deutsches Historisches Museum. (2004-2005). *Der Reichstag und die "Hottentottenwahl" von 1907: Ausstellung: Namibia-Deutschland*. Retrieved from http://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/namibia/stadtspaziergang/pdf/10_reichstag.pdf

⁵⁵Cf.: Pogge Strandmann (2009, p. 438)

⁵⁶**German Original:** "Hat man früher mit Zerstörungsmitteln kolonisiert, so kann man heute mit Erhaltungs-mitteln kolonisieren, und dazu gehören ebenso der Missionar, wie der Arzt, die Eisenbahn, wie die Maschine, also die fortgeschrittene theoretische und angewandte Wissenschaft auf allen Gebieten."

Bernhard Dernburg quoted in: Westphal, W. (1984). *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien.*, p. 252)

⁵⁷Historical literature on German colonisation in the *Era Dernburg* agrees that the German colonial enterprise actually was rationalised and put on scientific grounds during this period.

Cf.: Westphal (1984, pp. 254–261);

Cf.: Pogge Strandmann (2009, pp. 428–439);

Cf.: Stoecker, H. (1986). *German imperialism in Africa: From the beginnings until the Second World War.*, pp. 197–203.;

Cf.; Schubert, M. (2003). *Der schwarze Fremde: Das Bild des Schwarzafrikaners in der parlamentarischen und publizistischen Kolonialdiskussion in Deutschland von den 1870er bis in die 1930er Jahre.*, Chapter 8.

“largest assets”⁵⁸. This entailed that knowledge about the colonised and their treatment in order to reach the goal of making the colonies more profitable in economic terms, became more and more important. In a colonial political environment that had become increasingly “rationalised” and “made scientific”, the *Koloniale Rundschau* can be seen as an attempt by its initiators to build a forum of scientific discussion of the *native question*. The *Koloniale Rundschau* created room for new branches of science. Publishing in the *Koloniale Rundschau* came from a variety of branches of science such as ethnology and tropical medicine that could in turn be of help for colonialism’s economic rationalities.

2.3. The Eingeborenenschutz-movement’s national activity

The colonial crises of the mid-1910 years brought the disastrous way in which the German coloniser treated the colonised to fight their uprisings to a broader attention. Likewise, other problems concerning the situation of the aborigines of Germany’s colonies gained the attention of more and more people in the *Kaiserreich*. At their forefront were the members of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*. The *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*⁵⁹, a German encyclopaedia of colonialism written before WWI and published without changes in 1920, states in its entry on the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*:

“[the society’s aims are] to eradicate the damages that the excesses of modern culture have entailed for our primitive and little resistant - in physical and mental terms - twelve million coloured, and to fight diseases that rage amongst them. Although the aborigines owe a lot to European culture, intervening on the behalf of the coloured, for their protection and support, is necessary. There are tribes in German East Africa whose number decrease so alarmingly that their persistence seems threatened.”⁶⁰

This threatening decrease in population was called *Entvölkerung* (de-population) by contemporaries. However, as the article about this phenomenon in the same

⁵⁸**German Original:** “die Eingeborenen sind das größte Aktivum unserer Kolonien“

B. Dernburg quoted in: Schreiber (1920, p. 26)

⁵⁹Heinrich Schnee (Ed.). (1920). *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*.

⁶⁰**German Original:** “[...] die Schäden, welche die Auswüchse der modernen Kultur unseren primitiven, körperlich und geistig wenig widerstandsfähigen 12 Millionen Farbigen zugefügt haben, zu beseitigen und Krankheiten, die in ihrer Mitte wüten, zu bekämpfen. Haben auch die Eingeborenen der europäischen Kultur viel zu danken, so erweist sich doch ein Eintreten für Schutz und Förderung der Farbigen als notwendig. Es gibt Stämme in Deutsch-Ostafrika, die an Zahl so bedenklich abnehmen, daß ihr Fortbestand fast gefährdet erscheint.”

(“Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz,” 1920)

encyclopaedia illustrates, *Entvölkerung* was not acknowledged or seen as a danger by all those active within Germany's colonial enterprise.⁶¹ The members of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, however, were convinced of its existence and they were convinced that it posed a big threat to the *aborigines* and to the success of German colonisation as a whole.⁶² The members of the movement tried to bring evidence about this topic to broader awareness. To counter the *Entvölkerung* was one of the aims of the movement. Therefore, it tried to raise public awareness, e.g. by publishing reports about this phenomenon in German newspapers and by trying to influence governmental colonial politics.⁶³ For this purpose, the movement submitted petitions to the *Reichstag*.⁶⁴

Assessing the degree of influence the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* had within the colonial environment is not without problems. Grupp (2007) argues that "particular societies such as [...] the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz only lived within the shadows"⁶⁵. In relation to other, larger colonial interest groups within the *Kaiserreich* such as the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft*, the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was rather small and comparatively little influential.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* had only little time for

⁶¹Cf.: Entvölkerung. (1920). In Heinrich Schnee (Ed.), *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon* (p. 565). Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer. Retrieved from <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/Standardframeseite.php?suche=entv%F6lkerung>

⁶²Success in the eyes of the movement was defined in economic terms.

Cf.: Section 3 of this bachelor's thesis on the way the German movement ideologically combined their support of the colonial endeavour with their work *for the protection of aborigines*.

⁶³As examples for publishing in newspaper,

Cf.: Diedrich Westermann (1914, February 24). Die Entvölkerung in den Kolonien: I. *Berliner Tageblatt*, pp. Title.;

Cf.: Diedrich Westermann (1914, February 25). Die Entvölkerung in den Kolonien: II. *Berliner Tageblatt*, pp. Title.;

Cf.: Diedrich Westermann (1914, March 3). Die Entvölkerung in den Kolonien: III. *Berliner Tageblatt*, pp. Title.

⁶⁴Concerning the movement's lobbying,

Cf.: Jeldrik T.B. Grups (2013, pp. 3–5)

⁶⁵**German Original:** "Spezialgesellschaften wie die Marokko-Gesellschaft oder die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz haben nur ein Schattendasein geführt"

Grupp (2007) Grupp, P. (2007). *Parti colonial français und deutsche Kolonialbewegung*. Retrieved from <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/article=242>

⁶⁶It is for this reason that the results of Florian Wagner's dissertation project in which he analyses the transnational cooperation of *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* will be interesting to read. They are likely to provide additional and more in-depth insights in non-governmental transnational cooperation during *High Imperialism*.

activity. The *DGE* was founded only a few months before the outbreak of WWI and the First World War meant a halt for the movement's practical activism. Nonetheless, Ernst Vohsen was able to continue the publishing of the *Koloniale Rundschau* throughout WWI. Unfortunately, no records about the circulation of the journal are preserved, its reach can only be guessed.⁶⁷ The presentation of the membership to the movement, has demonstrated that it recruited from a diversity of people from all over colonial society, mostly its elite. Missionaries, plantation-owners, professors, doctors, as well as German colonial administrators and politicians (including people in as influential posts as B. Dernburg) - across all denominational and party-political borderlines - were part of the movement. The fact that the movement undertook political lobbying in Germany also illustrates, that they did take steps to come "out of the shadows". Its most important dimension of activity, however, was connected to the increasing demand in practical colonial knowledge.

2.4. A transnational network for the protection of aborigines

Without doubt, the activity of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* mainly took place within Germany's colonial endeavour. It were mostly Germans who were addressed in the *KR* and it was before Germany's parliament and authorities that the society's political lobbying was exercised. Furthermore, most of the movement's members were Germans living either in Germany or in the German colonies. However, the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* activity also had a dimension that transcended the borders of the German Empire and went farther than the colonies of the *Kaiserreich*. It namely took part in what is called here a transnational network for the protection of aborigines. This network has to be seen against the background of recent results of historical research. Lindner (2011a) points out that the creation of networks in many issue areas was a characteristic of what she calls the "European project of colonialism".⁶⁸ The definition of an *advocacy network* by Sikkink and Keck, introduced in section 1.2, adequately fits the characteristics of cooperation between the various national *protectors of aborigines*. Their cooperation formed around the knowledge about the situation of the colonised and the methods of colonisation, i.e. how different countries governed their colonies and treated their population.

⁶⁷Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin. (2013, January 24). Question regarding the circulation of *Koloniale Rundschau* (telephone-call).

⁶⁸Cf.: Lindner (2011a, p. 18)

In his review of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* development, published in the *Koloniale Rundschau* in 1920, D. A. W. Schreiber describes the features of the movement's activity. According to the author, the movement's activity also included "collaborating with societies of similar type in other countries."⁶⁹ This probably had to do with its foreign influences during the naissance of the movement. What is more, the list of members, also featured foreigners. With these foreign contributors, some of them very well-known figures, the movement could take into consideration and review the activity of other colonial powers. Reviewing and publishing foreign colonial literature was one of the principle activities of the authors publishing in the *Koloniale Rundschau*. Hereby, the *KR* was able to put into effect the proclaimed desire to "report on the methods of colonisation of other colonial powers in order to learn from them".⁷⁰ The issue of creating and gathering knowledge "about the living conditions of aborigines [and] the measures affecting them taken by the colonial administration"⁷¹, hence, is once more to be identified an important part of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement's* raison d'être.

The members of the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* upheld personal contacts with people from other countries. At first, transnational cooperation was of a rather informal nature characterised by, inter alia, German, British, Swiss and French self-proclaimed *protectors of aborigines* meeting, corresponding and organising conferences. Members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* e.g. took part in international conferences of colonial practitioners.⁷² Eventually, the movement's transnational activity acquired an institutionalised shape when the *Bureau International*

⁶⁹**German Original:** "Als Mittel zur Erreichung ihrer Zwecke sollte der Gesellschaft dienen eine regelmäßige Berichterstattung in ihrem Organ, der "Kolonialen Rundschau", über die Lebensverhältnisse und Fortschritte der Eingeborenen; durch die Besprechung aller die Eingeborenen betreffenden Maßnahmen der kolonialen Verwaltung, Handelsunternehmungen und sonstiger Vereinigungen, namentlich der Missionen; durch Beeinflussung der öffentlichen Meinung durch die Tagespresse zugunsten einer gerechten Eingeborenenpolitik; durch Eingaben an die zuständigen Behörden und Parlamente; durch Verbindung mit gleichartigen Verbänden in anderen Ländern. Alle diese Mittel sollten zur Anbahnung eines guten Verständnisses und eines Interessenausgleiches zwischen der herrschenden weißen Rasse und den Eingeborenen dienen."

Schreiber (1920, p. 25)

⁷⁰Cf.: Leading article (1909, p. 5)

⁷¹Schreiber (1920, p. 25)

⁷²Ernst Vohsen and Bernhard Dernburg, for example, took part in the 15th session of the *Institut Colonial international* that was held in London on May 5th, 1913. Dernburg was even vice president of this session.

Cf.: Union des Associations Internationales. (1919). *La vie internationale*, 1919, 266–267.

des Ligues de défense des Indigènes (B.I.) was founded on the 24th of February 1913 in Geneva.⁷³ This International Bureau can be seen as an umbrella organisation, regrouping different national societies for the *protection of aborigines*. Its membership comprised a selection of national societies that involved mostly European societies.⁷⁴ The *B.I.* was meant to serve the national movements as a means to “strengthen, organise and regularise their relations and to assure strong cooperation and correspondence between the various national sections”⁷⁵. The persons responsible of the *B.I.* were aware that the context in which they were active was characterised by increasing interconnectedness that “demanded for unity”.⁷⁶ This is illustrated by a debate that was conducted when the *B.I.* was founded. Some members of the *B.I.* proposed to give the organisation the name “Black Cross” to express a “parallelism with the Red Cross”.⁷⁷ This proves that the members of the *B.I.* saw the organisation and their endeavour in one line of development with other non-governmental activist groups. They, too, seem to have identified the epoch they lived in as characterised by increased global interconnectedness.

A specific activity that the *B.I.* is known to have undertaken is the collecting of publications of the various national societies in their Geneva headquarters. A “bibliothèque circulante”⁷⁸ was thus created which could provide the various national societies with access to the publications of the others. This can be seen as a step towards a centralisation of relevant information that contributed practically to a unification of

⁷³There exists little easily accessible information and hardly any secondary literature on this organisation. Therefore, most of the information given in this essay about the *B.I.* comes from the primary sources that the German *Eingeborenen-schutz-movement* have left behind. Another source of information is the document written by Claparède and Mercier-Glardon, the head of the Swiss *Ligue pour la défense des Indigènes* and the secretary of the *B.I.*. In this text, published in 1917, they review the ideological foundations and the activity of the *B.I.*.

Cf.: Claparède, R., & Mercier-Glardon, E. (1917). *Un Bureau International pour la Défense des Indigènes*.

⁷⁴The British Anti-Slavery and Aborigine’s protection society, the French “Société antiesclavagiste de France”, the “Ligue Française pour la défense des indigènes”, the “Comité de défense et de protection des indigènes”, the Swiss “Ligue Suisse pour la défense des indigènes”, the “Società Antischivista d’Italia”, the “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenen-schutz”, “Association pro Indigena” represented the Peruvian movement. Furthermore, there were also Australian, American, Portuguese and Bolivian societies member to the movement.

Cf.: Claparède and Mercier-Glardon (1917, pp. 18–19)

⁷⁵Claparède and Mercier-Glardon (1917, pp. 15–16)

⁷⁶Claparède and Mercier-Glardon (1917, p. 1)

⁷⁷ibid.

⁷⁸Claparède and Mercier-Glardon (1917, p. 15)

the movements and highlights the importance of colonial knowledge for the development of the network. Using the concept of a transnational network, instead of the term organisation, to describe the nature of transnational cooperation between the *protectors of aborigines* implies that their cooperation was rather non-hierarchical and little institutionalised. Even though the founding of the *B.I.* created an organisational body, its character remained little formalised.⁷⁹

3. The *Eingeborenschutz*-movement's ideology between *protecting aborigines* and supporting Germany's colonial endeavour

The presentation of the *Eingeborenschutz*-movement has illustrated that the members of the movement were active from within German colonial society advocating *protection of aborigines*. Their personal involvement with the colonial endeavour and their express statements wishing to support German colonisation and not to be in competition with others exemplifies their support for German colonisation. On the other hand, their participation in a transnational network *for the protection of aborigines* shows that they cooperated with *protectors of aborigines* from other countries. These other countries, such as Great Britain and France, were simultaneously other colonial powers and, hereby, potential rivals of the German Empire and its colonisation. Bearing in mind what has been written about the importance of national competition for *High Imperialism*, these two facts appear to be mutually exclusive. How can a movement that supports one nation's colonial endeavour cooperate with national movements from other colonial powers which potentially also have the interest to support their own nations' colonialism? Against the background of the hence emerging field of tension between cooperation in the field of *protection of aborigines*, on the one hand, and the importance of nation states and nationalism, on the other, this section explains what motivated the German movement's participation in the transnational network *for the protection of aborigines*.

⁷⁹This can be seen in the *B.I.*'s organisational structure. The *B.I.* was given a "Secrétariat permanent" and was not structured as a "Comité international". This means that a central coordinating body was created, which was in practice connected to the leaders of the Swiss movement. The *B.I.* hence did not have a permanent representative body. This was because it was judged the members had too much of a difficulty to come together more regularly.

Cf.: Claparède and Mercier-Glardon (1917, p. 14)

3.1. *Naturmenschen vs. Kulturmenschen*

Colonisation implied a confrontation of the European colonisers with the colonised. One central motivation behind the Europeans' colonial endeavour in general was the perceived and proclaimed racially motivated desire of the colonisers to bring what they called "civilisation" to the allegedly uncivilised *aborigines* in the colonies. *Racism* dominated the mind-sets of many Europeans - not only of those who were active in the colonial endeavour. The belief in the existence of natural differences between different *races* and in a hierarchy between the different *races* as a consequence, was widespread in the late 19th, early 20th century. *Racism* was not a fixed and universal concept. Many different forms emphasising specific characteristics existed within this ideology. Nonetheless, *racism* in its different forms was extremely important for the justification of and the reasoning behind the European powers' colonial enterprises.⁸⁰

There must be no doubt that the members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, too, were greatly influenced by racist ideologies. They regarded themselves as *Kulturmenschen*. As such, they thought to be part of what they called *the European race* blessed with culture.⁸¹ This *European race* confronted the *Naturmenschen* in the colonies.⁸² According to this belief, the *Kulturmenschen* had developed a level of culture, perceived as "modern". The *Naturmenschen*, on the other hand, had not developed such forms of culture. What characterised *Kulturmenschen* and their "modern culture" was to a large part seen in connection with the properties of the economic system they had developed. The *Kulturmenschen* had allegedly developed industrialised and allegedly "modern" forms of economy. They namely produced manufactured goods that they sold on the global market. The *Naturmenschen*, on the other hand, were withheld from developing such forms of economy.⁸³ However, according to the ideology of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, it was important that the

⁸⁰On the different forms of racism and their importance for colonisation

Cf.: Lindner (2011a, Chapter 4).

Lindner also highlights differences in the racist ideologies between German and British colonisers.

⁸¹**German original:** "an den Segnungen unserer Kultur"

Leading article (1909, pp. 4–5)

⁸²Cf.: Leading article (1909, pp. 4–5)

⁸³This was, according to the belief of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, because the *Naturmenschen* had only "recently awoken from a night, lasting for thousands of years, that had cut them off from vivid interchange with foreign peoples. And experience shows that precisely this exchange with foreign peoples has always led to the material and spiritual rise of a community of people."

Leading article (1909, p. 2)

Naturmenschen in the colonies be brought in a position which would enable them to take part in the “modern” system of economy. In the eyes of the colonisers, this meant that the *aborigines* had to be “elevated” to such an extent that they would be able to buy the colonisers’ manufactured goods and, in return, pay it with their production of raw materials.⁸⁴ It was thus the own interest of the *Kulturmenschen* and their economic profit seeking, that could benefit from an “elevation” of the *aborigines*.

This rational reasoning behind the argumentation *for the protection of aborigines* was a force triggering the unification of the European *Kulturmenschen*. In light of the question about the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement’s* motivation for transnational activity, it is revealing that there was talk about a common *European race* faced with the *primitive aborigines*. Apparently, the perceived challenges that the confrontation of the *Kulturmenschen* with the *Naturmenschen* entailed were strong enough to overshadow national differences between the European *Kulturmenschen*. German *protectors of aborigines* saw themselves on a same level with British. As such, they were united in the common endeavour of colonising the allegedly uncivilised *Naturmenschen*. Colonisation, in this regard, meant to “elevate” the *aborigines* in order to enable them to produce raw materials and buy manufactured goods. For colonisation to be successful, a dominant position of the *Kulturmenschen* vis-à-vis the *Naturmenschen* in the colonies was necessary. Ulrike Lindner (2011a) has demonstrated that it was one of the coloniser’s main concerns to consolidate the dominance of the European colonisers vis-à-vis the colonised. On occasions in which the stability of one European coloniser’s dominant position in the colonies was thought to be endangered, the colonisers cooperated to secure their position.⁸⁵

Antagonisms linked to different European nationalities were apparently not deemed as fundamental as those linked to belonging to different *races*. This explains why the German movement proclaimed that the target areas of their activity were Germany’s and the colonies of other colonial powers, simultaneously. Moreover, it explains why it was proclaimed that the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* had the hope that “the colonial possessions of the European powers would not so much be the cause of unfruitful

⁸⁴Cf.: Leading article (1909, p. 2)

⁸⁵Lindner argues this on the example of B. Dernburg, who was member of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*.

Cf.: Lindner (2011a, p. 90)

jealousy but the source for the mutual solution of mutual challenges”.⁸⁶ The national antagonism between the European nations was displaced by the belief in the uniting cultural and economic superiority of the *European race* in relation to the colonised. The alleged superiority of the European *Kulturmenschen* vis-à-vis the *Naturmenschen* propelled the belief that, as *Kulturmenschen*, their own interest demanded that the members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* “elevate” the *primitive people*. For them, national differences were less important than the differences in *race*.

3.2.Supporting Germany’s colonisation through the participation in the transnational network for the protection of aborigines

First, it has been argued that the *German Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, had an interest in the success of German colonisation and in the economic well-being of the colonies. Secondly, it has been shown that the approaches to colonisation especially in the German Empire’s colonial politics in the *Era Dernburg* were to be rationalised and put on scientific grounds. This entailed an increasing demand for practical knowledge about colonisation. At the same time, one dimension of activity of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was the gathering, publishing and collecting of knowledge about colonialism and especially about the inhabitants of the colonies. The *Koloniale Rundschau*, for example created room for various branches of science and their discussion and communication. Likewise, the transnational network for the protection of aborigines and especially the *B.I.* in Geneva was formed around the issue of gathering, systematising and making available the knowledge gained by the various colonial powers throughout their colonial experiences.

Its publishing activities and the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*’s participation in the transnational network for the protection of aborigines combined can be seen as a means to gather useful knowledge about colonisation and especially about the treatment of *aborigines*. These points fit together perfectly. The movement was able to meet an increasing demand in useful knowledge about different colonial powers’ colonial experience with the non-governmental creation, gathering and publishing of knowledge in the transnational network for the protection of aborigines. Knowledge, in the *Era Dernburg* was seen as a necessary source of force in the re-structuring of the approach

⁸⁶**German Original:** “sondern wir hoffen sogar der Überzeugung Bahn brechen zu, dass der Kolonialbesitz der europäischen Mächte nicht sowohl Grund zu unfruchtbarer Eifersucht bietet, als vielmehr zu gemeinsamer Lösung gemeinsamer Aufgaben auffordert.” Leading article (1909, p. 7)

to colonial politics. And transnational cooperation, in the eyes of *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, was a source of force in the creation of knowledge. Thus, the German movement was able to support German colonisation through its transnational cooperation. This shows that the two points, transnational cooperation in the field of *protecting aborigines* and the support for Germany's colonial effort were not mutually exclusive. Rather could the first be used to the benefit of the second.

3.3. Interim conclusion

The members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* supported Germany's colonial endeavour and were simultaneously active in a transnational network *for the protection of aborigines*. For them, support for German colonisation and their transnational activity were not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the analysis of the movement's ideological foundations has uncovered reasons for the German movement's transnational activity. It has been shown that the transnational activity of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was driven by the ideological self-perception of the movement's members as part of a *European race of Kulturmenschen*. They believed that an improvement in the field of *protecting aborigines* could be obtained through transnational cooperation. Since they were convinced that *protecting aborigines* benefited the reformed German colonial endeavour of the *Era Dernburg* just as much as they thought it helped the *protection of aborigines*, transnational cooperation in this field was perfectly in line with the support of Germany's colonisation. More than that, the knowledge gained through transnational cooperation was seen to fit Germany's colonial aims.

4. The outbreak of WWI

The First World War, if seen as the climax of national antagonism, where rivalries had translated into violent conflict,⁸⁷ “[tore] apart existing cultural, economic and interpersonal relations and [drew] manifest borders between friends and foe”⁸⁸. If this is true, it must also have had an influence on the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* and the transnational network *for the protection of aborigines*. In 1920, Schreiber writes about the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* during WWI and claims that its

⁸⁷Cf.: Kennedy (1980, pp. 441–462)

⁸⁸Osterhammel and Petersson (2007, pp. 75–76) My translation.

practical activity was paralysed.⁸⁹ The same has been said about the activity of the *B.I.* in Geneva, whose activity was “held down by the global cataclysm”.⁹⁰

Despite its paralysis, the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was able to continue publishing the *KR* during the First World War. In its publishing during the war, the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* laid increased emphasis on reviewing the conditions in the colonies of all foreign European powers. Such review was said to be useful for what was expected to be the *Kaiserreich's* future colonial activity. Furthermore, the scope of reporting was enlarged and the authors of the *KR* reported increasingly on the events of the World War and on its expected global economic consequences for the German Empire. When examining this writing, there can be no doubt about the political opinion of the members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* regarding the war. The authors of the *Koloniale Rundschau* made their loyalties during the World War very explicit. They proclaimed their conviction that it was the British - now labelled the chief enemy of the German Empire - who had long worked to drag the German Empire into the war.⁹¹ The newly identified chief enemy of the German Empire, Great Britain, was criticised. Especially the British deployment of *aborigine soldiers* from her colonies during the war was harshly criticised by the *Koloniale Rundschau*. No leading article published before the war ever labelled Great Britain Germany's enemy. This illustrates that the members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, were influenced by the war. They, too, “drew borders between friend and foe”⁹². However, not all of British colonial involvement was condemned. Contrary to what has been observed as far as the influence of the outbreak of WWI on the perception of colonial politics of other European colonial powers is concerned in other cases⁹³, the German *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* did not succumb to undifferentiated generalisation. More than that, it seems to have been a special concern of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* to repeat, translate and publish those foreign voices that, in their judgement, upheld “differentiated and reasoned reporting about Germany and

⁸⁹Cf.: Schreiber (1920, p. 30)

⁹⁰**French Original:** “Si l'œuvre naissante du B.I. s'est trouvée enrayée dès ses débuts par la conflagration mondiale, nous ne doutons pas qu'en présence des questions importantes qui se poseront plus urgentes que jamais, elle ne prenne, après la guerre, un nouveau développement qui réponde à la nécessité toujours plus évidente de l'entente mutuelle et de la coordination du travail des Ligues.” Claparède and Mercier-Glardon (1917, p. 20)

⁹¹Cf.: Leading article (1914b, p. 450)

⁹²Osterhammel and Petersson (2007, pp. 75–76)

⁹³Cf.: Fröhlich (1990, pp. 329–330)

her colonial endeavour”.⁹⁴ The most frequently cited and most often reported-on voice was that of the prominent British publisher and *protector of aborigines* E.D. Morel. He and his writings deserved express reviewing in the issues of the *KR* during the War. Voices that criticised Germany, her war effort and especially the way the *Kaiserreich* had treated the *aborigines* in her colonies were harshly criticised as “English defamations”⁹⁵.

In 1916, the *KR*'s authors argued that they “ha[d] not lost faith in humanity” and were convinced that after the war “the peoples will remain dependent upon each other, just like before the war”.⁹⁶ This illustrates that they continued to see the necessity of future European cooperation in the field of *protection of aborigines*. The same was argued by the people responsible in the *B.I.* in Geneva, who also proclaimed their hope that, “after the war, a new development may answer the still and ever more evidently existing necessity of mutual understanding and coordinated work between the societies [for the protection of aborigines]”⁹⁷.

This shows that indeed, the war revealed national tensions between the different European societies *for the protection of aborigines*. However, it did not end all cooperation and did not eradicate transnational orientations. The shared conviction in what was perceived to be common challenges prevailed and was not destroyed by the extreme national confrontations during the First World War.

⁹⁴Cf.: Schreiber (1920, p. 32)

⁹⁵Leading article. (1916b). Englische Verleumdungen. *Koloniale Rundschau - Monatsschrift für die Interessen unserer Schutzgebiete und ihrer Bewohner*, 1.

⁹⁶Leading article. (1916a). An unsere Leser! *Koloniale Rundschau - Monatsschrift für die Interessen unserer Schutzgebiete und ihrer Bewohner*, 1, 1–2., pp. 1–2.

⁹⁷Claparède and Mercier-Glardon (1917, p. 20)

Conclusion

The *Eingeboreenschutz-movement* of the German *Kaiserreich* was active in a transnational network *for the protection of aborigines*. Its belief in the racial and cultural superiority of the European *Kulturmenschen* vis-à-vis the colonised *Naturmenschen* triggered the movement's national activity as well as its transnational cooperation. The members of the *Eingeboreenschutz-movement* supported Germany's colonial endeavour. Nonetheless, they were part of a transnational network. These two parallel facts, contradictory at first glance, were not mutually exclusive in the eyes of the *Eingeboreenschutz-movement*. This was because *protection of aborigines* was believed to benefit German colonisation. Since transnational cooperation in this field was seen as a potential source of strength, its participation in the transnational network *for the protection of aborigines* was a means for the German *Eingeboreenschutz-movement* to support Germany's colonial effort. The movement wanted to support Germany's colonial effort through transnational cooperation in the field of *protection of aborigines*.

With this research result, this bachelor's thesis adds to the on-going historiographical debate about the existence of a *European colonialism*. Some historians have recently argued that colonialism was a common project of European colonial powers. Interactions between the colonisers in this common project were said to have been much more commonplace than hitherto perceived. This bachelor's thesis, through its focus on non-governmental transnational cooperation in the field of *protection of aborigines*, has highlighted one field of Europe's colonial past. It has been shown that this field had characteristics of interconnectedness. Of course, these results alone do not definitely answer the question about the existence of a European colonialism. However, they contribute to the on-going discussion and underscore that the period of *High Imperialism* must not be reduced to national rivalries. Developments in a field such as the *protection of aborigines* highlight that non-governmental interconnectedness and transnational cooperation were characteristics of a common colonial project of European nation states.

Although having analysed non-governmental cooperation in the time before WWI, this research is of course not representative of developments in other fields of non-governmental activity. The on-going research by Florian Wagner about European colonial societies is likely to demonstrate the interactions of the comparatively large and

influential main colonial societies of different European colonial powers. It remains to be seen whether the results of Wagner's research will be in line with the findings of this bachelor's thesis: Interconnectedness and cooperation in non-governmental realms of Europe's colonial past were commonplace, despite the importance of support for national colonial enterprises.

Discussion

Perceptions of the past – perceptions of the present

As far as the history of colonialism is concerned, newer research perspectives, just like this bachelor's thesis, point to tendencies of transnational interconnectedness. These seek to complement the national narratives of history. Colonialism, if perceived as a European project, is no longer to be seen solely as the colonial history of a specific nation but must be understood as *European Colonialism*. If one takes this seriously, one has to question whether it is still adequate to keep telling its history from purely national perspectives. Maybe, it should be publicised more openly, e.g. in schools and media coverage, that there existed something like an all-European dimension in the history of European colonialism.

Currently, it is often regretted that the de jure creation of European citizenship in the framework of the European Union is not complemented by the de facto development of European identity. Currently, the European Union is said to lack legitimacy. This may partly be because EU-citizens do not identify themselves as Europeans. Potentially, the insights about a common *European history* might be of help for the construction of European identity. Why should the EU not be able to learn from the example of the European nation states and develop for itself a “useable” European historiography to serve her own interest?⁹⁸ On the other hand, such a project is likely to entail problems of its own. The project of constructing a European identity through recurrence to the means of a “useable” *European history* is comparable to the project of the 19th or 20th centuries' nation states' – only would the scope be enlarged. *European history* offers the potential to contribute to the creation of a European identity. However, this might

⁹⁸This reflexion connects to what Conrad and Osterhammel (2004) have argued about the 19th century nation states having created for themselves a “usable past”. (**German original:** “brauchbare Vergangenheit”)

Cf.: Conrad and Osterhammel (2004, p. 11)

come at the cost of excluding elements that are deemed non-European. It is a question of its own whether this is desirable or would not eventually lead to new conflicts. Nonetheless, these considerations exemplify that perceptions of the past may influence perceptions of the present. Therefore, it is fruitful, as this thesis has done, to search for elements of interconnectedness in the history of the European nation states.

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[For the Colonies or for the Colonised?]

The *Eingeborenenschutz*-movement in Imperial
Germany 1909-1914

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Introduction

The turning from the 19th to the 20th century can be described as the high times of imperialism. Many 'western' powers had made it their foreign-policy paradigm to subdue other parts of the world under their control, in other words, to colonise them. As a consequence of the long run of their colonial endeavours and due to the deep influence they had (and arguably still have) on the parts of the world they had put under their control, France and Great Britain remain the most prominent and most researched-on imperialist powers. But there were others:

One of the other colonial powers was the German Empire: a nation that had not been united in one nation-state before the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. At the beginning of her existence, Germany - finally nationally united - appeared divided over the 'colonial question'.⁹⁹

It did not take long, however, until a German colonial Empire had become reality. By 1905, Germany had gained political and administrative control over many overseas territories. The most important of which being German Togoland (today's Togo and parts of today's Ghana), German South-West Africa (today's Namibia), German East Africa (today's Tanzania, Burundi, Ruanda and parts of Mozambique), territories in the Pacific Ocean, as well as in Tsingtao. Seizing control over these territories naturally also meant for the colonisers to be faced with the question of how to treat the indigenous populations that had lived in these territories long before the German colonisation. Taking into account that it was the goal of the colonial enterprise to make economic profit from the colonies and since racism in various forms dominated the mind-sets of most contemporary Germans, including Scientifics, educated and other societal elite-classes, the colonisers' reflex to submit the indigenous peoples to the German colonial rule was logical (cf. Lindner, 2011: pp.297-316).

The early years of the 20th century have also been described as a period shaped by colonial crises during which uprisings of the indigenous populations opposing the German rule in the colonies were violently countered by the German colonial army. This led to the death of large parts of the indigenous populations. The most prominent example of these crises was the genocide committed against the Hereo and Namaqua populations in German South-West Africa (cf. von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: pp. 428-429).

The problematic developments in the overseas parts of the German Empire echoed in the German public. Pressure rose and a reformation of German Colonialism was demanded. In 1907, B.

⁹⁹ Reich-chancellor Otto v. Bismarck was a strong opponent of German colonial involvement claiming Germany was finally "saturated". Others voiced their advocacy of German imperialism.

Dernburg, who had been a successful banker, was appointed *Imperial Council secretary*¹⁰⁰. An important reform of the German approach to colonisation with express focus on a systematised economic policy is connected with this time and the period has hence been surnamed “Era Dernburg” (cf. Westphal, 1984: pp.254-261; von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: pp.428-439; Stoecker, 1986: pp.197-203).

At this time, a movement “For the Protection of Aborigines” (*Eingeborenenschutz-movement*) saw the light of day. This is a movement within the German colonial enterprise that is said to have voiced “humanist concerns” (Lindner, 2011: p.313)¹⁰¹ or “liberal” attitudes (Knoll & Hiery, 2010: p. 443) when debating the approaches to colonial politics. This movement, which has received very little attention in historical literature, is found “within the surroundings of the editors of the journal ‘Koloniale Rundschau’” (Lindner, 2011: p.313), namely within the surroundings of Ernst Vohsen and Diedrich Westermann.

This paper seeks to trace back the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* that expressed the need for the protection of the indigenous people. It studies the life of E. Vohsen; it examines the ideological background and the goals of the journal “*Koloniale Rundschau*” (*KR*) and provides insight into the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz* (*DGE*). Next, the movement’s external activity in the form of political lobbying before the *Reichstag* and its echo in the press is illustrated. All of which serves to contextualise the ideology of the proponents of a good treatment of indigenous people. The question is asked whether the movement saw the protection of indigenous people as an end in itself: was it selfless philanthropy that motivated it? Or was it rather seen as a rational necessity in order to achieve the overall aim of the colonial empire, mainly its strive in economic terms?

In other words, this paper asks the question whether the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was in favour of the colonised or in favour of the German imperialist cause, i.e. in favour of the colonies. It is argued that both is true. The ideology of the movement had a stress on the indigenous peoples that were forcefully put under German dominance and the consequences that arose from this focus. However, it is impossible to see the self-proclaimed ‘protectors’ of the indigenous people disconnected from the colonialist environment in which they lived and to which they contributed, an environment that had become increasingly dominated by economic demands for rationalisation of the German colonial enterprise. In short, the movement was for the colonies **and** for the colonised at the same time.

¹⁰⁰ In the following, the author will use, wherever possible, his own English translation of German original sources in the main text, while providing the German original version in the footnotes where necessary.

Orig.: “Reichskolonialstaatssekretär“

¹⁰¹Orig.: “humanistische Überlegungen“

1. Tracing the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*

On December 5th 1913, the “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz” (*DGE*) was founded in Berlin by a number of “educated and dedicated individuals” (cf. Knoll & Hiery, 2010: p. 443; Leading article, 1914b: p.1). The foundation of the society followed almost five years after a circle of persons around Ernst Vohsen had begun publishing a journal named *Koloniale Rundschau*. Both, the journal and the society attracted approximately the same group of active people and both proclaimed the goal of working in favour of the indigenous people in the German overseas protectorates.

1.1. Ernst Vohsen

Ernst Vohsen can be said to be most closely connected to the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*. He was founder member of the *DGE*, its treasurer, main financial contributor and person responsible for the first issues of the *Koloniale Rundschau*. The journal was published under his supervision in the publishing house he owned. His life is shaped by an express interest in and close personal involvement with German colonialism.

Ernst Vohsen was born in 1853 in the German city of Mainz. His life¹⁰² is closely connected to European - mainly German - colonialism. He had worked for a French colonial society in Senegal before being employed by Deutsche Bank from 1876 until 1881. From 1881 until 1888 he was German Consul in Sierra Leone and then worked for the *Deutsche Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DOAG) in the office as plenipotentiary on the spot. He was responsible for negotiating a treaty with Sultan Said Bargasch which became the foundation of the German Empire’s assumption of Zanzibar as a colony (“Vohsen, Ernst”, 1920: p. 630). In 1890, Vohsen left the DOAG. He later organised various expeditions in Africa and was appointed member of a commission to negotiate the borders of German Togoland in 1897. He appears to have been a valued, experienced and relatively influential colonial practitioner and was appointed member of the *German Colonial Council*¹⁰³ in 1891 which he remained until 1907. In this function, he participated in 72 sessions (cf. von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: p. 510).

¹⁰² E. Vohsen did not leave an auto-biography behind, therefore, easily accessible accounts on his life are not easy to find. In general, Vohsen seems not to have been dedicated much research attention. The biographical information on Vohsen are taken from the following sources:

- a German Empire’s colonial dictionary (1920)
- the special edition of *Koloniale Rundschau* on his life on the occasion of his demise in 1919,
- a monograph on the history on the house of publishing Dietrich Reimer (Wolzogen, 1986)
- the mentioning of him in (von Pogge Strandmann, 2009)

¹⁰³ Orig.: “Kolonialrat“

Simultaneously, he was member of the German navy league and a “leading member of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft”¹⁰⁴ (cf. von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: p. 510; Wolzogen, 1986: p. 54) as well as a member of the German national liberal party. He co-founded the *German Congo-League*¹⁰⁵, the predecessor of the *GES* and was knight in the French legion d’honneur. In 1914, he had a yearly income of 250,000 Marks, owning an estimated fortune of 2 mio Marks in 1908. He lived in “Villa Übsensee” near Potsdam (cf. von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: p. 510).

In 1890, he began his activity in the Dietrich Reimer publishing house in Berlin that he purchased in 1895 (cf. Wolzogen, 1986: p.52). Under Vohsen’s lead, the publishing house Dietrich Reimer, which was later re-named “Dietrich Reimer [Ernst Vohsen]”, published scientific works with geographical, especially cartographic, linguistic and anthropologic focus. It was also Vohsen’s house that published the *Koloniale Rundschau*.

The information on Vohsen’s stages of life paint the picture of a man who was, throughout his life, actively involved and relatively influential within colonialism. In the beginning, Vohsen had diplomatic functions as Consul, later semi-administrative functions on behalf of the DOAG and was then, when he came to Berlin, given advisory consultative functions within the German *Colonial Council*. He apparently had great economic and technical success as the owner of the publishing house. When he died in 1919, the German Empire’s minister for the colonies wrote an obituary, published in the April/June 1919 issue of *KR*, in which Ernst Vohsen’s life and works were praised. Especially Vohsen’s contribution in the field of colonial cartography received mentioning (cf. Reichskolonialminister, 1919: p.66).

It is interesting to read how Vohsen’s style of leading the publishing house is portrayed in the special edition of *Koloniale Rundschau* that was published on the occasion of his death in 1919. In this issue, Estelle du Bois-Reymond, one of his employees and author in the publishing house, tells the story of a philanthropic boss who always left his office door open and established social support systems for his employees which in case of hardship (e.g. during World War One) helped his employees survive. She writes how Vohsen, “not insisting he had a right to their work, [...] saw and valued [his employees’] performances as collaboration” (Du Bois-Reymon, 1919: p. 83)¹⁰⁶. Vohsen took pride in and assumed responsibility for employing 150 people, whereby he was able to support them and their families (cf. *ibid.*).

This account of his philanthropic publisher’s activity fits well with the description of his view on indigenous people in the German colonies. Vohsen wrote repeatedly how “working together with

¹⁰⁴ Orig.: “führendes Mitglied der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft“

¹⁰⁵ Orig.: “Deutsche Kongo-Liga“

¹⁰⁶ Orig.: “In dem Verkehr mit seinen Angestellten machte er nie geltend, daß er ein Recht auf ihre Arbeit habe - er betrachtete und bewertete ihre Leistungen als Mitarbeit“

the negro while acknowledging his equality” was essential for “making our African colonies accessible”¹⁰⁷ (E. Vohsen, quoted in: Schreiber, Prof. Meinhof, & Prof. Richter, 1919: p. 106). The rationale expressed in this quotation is, as shown below, symbolic of the argumentation of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* when it comes to debating the question of the treatment of indigenous people.

1.2. Koloniale Rundschau

An important product of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* was their journal *Koloniale Rundschau*. The *KR*, by-named “monthly periodical for the interests of our protectorates and their inhabitants”¹⁰⁸, was first published in January 1909 by E. Vohsen in the “Dietrich Reimer [Ernst Vohsen]” publishing house and was edited by D. Westermann. The journal’s aim was to form a forum of discussion and “argumentation of colonial questions”¹⁰⁹ and to “examine and deepen pending questions”¹¹⁰ (Leading article, 1909a: p. 5) in view of its ideological principles. It saw colonial political questions as questions that were a “national task, the lucky solution of which are of far-reaching significance for the whole German people and that demand the vivid participation of all educated”¹¹¹ (Leading article, 1909a: p.1). The journal, therefore, was not meant to be in “competition with other colonial journals” but sought to “be a complement” to them (Leading article, 1909a: p. 5).

The ideology of the *Koloniale Rundschau* can best be understood when the environment of colonial politics and chief contemporary ideological currents of argumentation are taken into consideration. The time following 1906 has been described as a “re-start”¹¹² (Westphal, 1984: p.254) or at least as a period of “reform and political climate-change”¹¹³ (von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: p. 428) in German colonial politics and due to its close connection to B. Dernburg has been surnamed “Era Dernburg”. The aim of the reformation of colonial politics was to make the colonial enterprise profitable. After the colonial crises of the early years of the 20th century¹¹⁴,

¹⁰⁷ Orig.: “Nur gemeinsam mit dem Neger und unter Anerkennung seiner Gleichberechtigung können wir unsere afrikanischen Kolonien erschließen.“

¹⁰⁸ Orig.: “Monatsschrift für die Interessen unserer Schutzgebiete und ihrer Bewohner“

¹⁰⁹ Orig.: “Für die Besprechung kolonialer Fragen in diesem Sinn einen Mittelpunkt zu bilden, ist das Ziel der *Kolonialen Rundschau*.“

¹¹⁰ Orig.: “schwebende Fragen nach der oben angegebenen Richtung in möglichst umfassender Weise zu beleuchten und zu vertiefen“.

¹¹¹ Orig.: “es sind nationale Aufgaben, deren glückliche Lösung für das ganze deutsche Volk von weittragender Bedeutung sind und die deshalb auch die lebendige Anteilnahme aller Gebildeten beanspruchen dürfen.“

¹¹² Orig.: “Neuer Anfang“

¹¹³ Orig.: “Reformansätze und der politische Klimawandel“

¹¹⁴ These crises were, inter alia, the uprisings in the colonies and the genocide by the German colonial army that had almost caused the entire destruction of some native populations. To “pacify” these uprisings had consumed large amounts of the Imperial budget and had cost the life of German soldiers.

pressure rose¹¹⁵ and it was demanded that colonial politics be reformed in this light. Bernhard Dernburg, an ex-banker with experience of reforming unprofitable enterprises – and a future member of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenenschutz* – was appointed secretary of state in the re-structured *Reichskolonialamt*. “Historians mostly agree that his appointment meant a change in German colonial politics” (von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: p. 438) and under Dernburg, systematic investments in colonial infrastructure were undertaken, big businesses and bank-investments were favoured. Dernburg proclaimed that colonisation from then on was to be undertaken no longer by “means of destruction” but by “means of preservation, to which belong the missionary and the doctor, the railway just as well as the machine, hence the advanced theoretical and applied science in all fields”¹¹⁶ (Dernburg, B, quoted in: Westphal, 1984: p. 252). In sum, the German colonial enterprise was rationalised and put on scientific grounds (cf. Westphal, 1984: pp.254-261; von Pogge Strandmann, 2009: pp.428-439; Stoecker, 1986: pp.197-203; Schubert, 2003: Chapter 8). This is also illustrated by the fact that Dernburg initiated the foundation of the *Kolonialinstitut* in Hamburg.

In a colonial political environment that had become increasingly ‘rationalised’ and ‘made scientific’, the *Koloniale Rundschau* can be seen as an attempt by its initiators to build up a forum of scientific discussion of the ‘native question’¹¹⁷ and create room for new branches of science like African science, ethnology and tropical medicine that could in turn be of help for colonialism’s economic rationalities.

The reformed approach to colonial politics also meant a change in the rhetoric concerning the ‘native question’. The indigenous people became part of rational economic considerations and came to be seen as the “biggest asset of our colonies”¹¹⁸ (B. Dernburg, quoted in: Schreiber, 1920: p.26). It was precisely this line of argumentation that the *Koloniale Rundschau* pursued when laying down its ideology in “Unser Programm” in the first issue published in 1909 (Leading article, 1909a: p. 1):

“First and foremost, [...] the colonies deliver us raw materials, without which big parts of our domestic industry, and with it wide circles of our population, could not exist at all. [...] It is just as necessary to create new and safe marketing areas for our industrial products.”

¹¹⁵ As illustrated through the polemics around the Reichstag elections of 1907 that were, due to their main topical focus surnamed „Hottentottenwahl“(cf. Deutsches Historisches Museum, 04/05: pp.1-3).

¹¹⁶ Orig.: “Hat man früher mit Zerstörungsmitteln kolonisiert, so kann man heute mit Erhaltungs-mitteln kolonisieren, und dazu gehören ebenso der Missionar, wie der Arzt, die Eisenbahn, wie die Maschine, also die fortgeschrittene theoretische und angewandte Wissenschaft auf allen Gebieten.”

¹¹⁷ Orig.: “Eingeborenenfrage“

¹¹⁸ Orig.: “die Eingeborenen sind das größte Aktivum unserer Kolonien“.

This is an expression used by B. Dernburg and frequently quoted henceforth, also by members of the *Eingeborenenenschutz-movement* (cf. Schreiber, 1920: p.26).

The aim can only be reached through a cultural elevation of the aboriginal population because it is them who are the primary supplier and purchaser of our commodities. **Only where a** spiritually and physically healthy, intellectually **elevated breed of people populates our colonies, can a true thrive and flourishing, a vivid production of commodities and consumption of European goods be assuredly be hoped-for.** Our own interest, hence, instructs us to lay all emphasis on the education and development of the aboriginal people.¹¹⁹ (marking by author)

This reasoning reveals the *KR*'s basic ideology which had found a way to combine the argumentation for an education of the indigenous populations on the one hand with the economic necessity of developing the colonies on the other. More precisely, the first was viewed as a necessary condition for the second. This also shows that it was not unselfish considerations that shaped the argumentations of the *Koloniale Rundschau* but the influence of well understood economic rationales. The *KR*'s ideology fit perfectly with the changed colonial political environment of the time of the journal's foundation.

The extent to which the *KR*'s ideology favoured the "elevation and education" of the indigenous people is questionable. The goals of colonisation were said only to be achievable "if we make the negro, in a sense, our collaborator"¹²⁰ (Leading article, 1909a: p. 3). Ernst Vohsen had spoken of his employees in the publishing house as doing "collaboration"¹²¹. It is, however, more than probable that the same words, due to the different contexts in which they were used, conveyed utterly different concepts. For the "collaboration" of the indigenous people, the context was a perceived and proclaimed confrontation of the Europeans, said to be "blessed with culture"¹²², with the "Naturmenschen" or "primitive Völker" (primitive peoples) (cf. Leading article, 1909a: pp. 4-5). Perceiving the context in this way suggests that "elevation and education" of the

¹¹⁹ Orig.: "Es ist in erster Linie unsere Volkswirtschaft, die aufs lebhafteste beeinflußt wird von den Erzeugnissen überseeischer Länder; die Kolonien liefern uns Rohprodukte, ohne die große Teile unserer heimischen Industrie und mit ihr weite Bevölkerungskreise überhaupt nicht existieren könnten. [...] Ebenso notwendig ist es, für unsere Industrie-erzeugnisse in den Kolonien neue, sichere Absatzgebiete zu schaffen. [...] Das Ziel kann nur erreicht werden durch kulturelle Hebung der eingeborenen Bevölkerung, denn eben sie ist in erster Linie unsere Lieferantin und die Abnehmerin unserer Handelsgüter. Nur dort, wo in geistig und physisch gesunder, intellektuell gehobener, tüchtiger Menschenschlag unsere Kolonien bevölkert, kann ein wirkliches Gedeihen und Blühen, eine lebhaftige Erzeugung von Handelsgütern und ein starker Verbrauch europäischer Waren mit Sicherheit erhofft werden. Unser eigenes Interesse weist uns also an, auf die Erziehung und Weiterentwicklung der Eingeborenen allen Nachdruck zu legen."

¹²⁰ Orig.: "wenn der Neger in gewissem Sinne unser Mitarbeiter wird"

¹²¹ Orig.: "Mitarbeit"; see above.

¹²² Orig.: "... an den Segnungen unserer Kultur"

indigenous population was necessary only as far as it empowered them “to labour with our tools, according to our instructions, under our protection – and to our and their profit”¹²³ (Leading article, 1909a: p. 3). Instruction and protection logically meant a treatment that was of practical use. It was aimed to enable the “son of the tropics”¹²⁴ who was said to “lack farsightedness [...] and the power of will of Europeans” but had the “strong body adapt to the struggles under the African sun”¹²⁵ (ibid) to do the hard physical work on the orders of the European colonisers.

An increasingly ‘systematised’ and ‘made scientific’ approach to colonial politics also led to the fact that the view on the indigenous people “reached a state of previously unknown differentiation, which stems from the concepts of ‘scientific aboriginal policies’”¹²⁶ (Schubert, 2003: p. 297). This differentiation of argumentation in the case of the *KR* went as far as debating the possibility of an “autonomous production of the aborigines”¹²⁷ (cf. Leading article, 1909c; Leading article, 1909b). Argumentation in this direction potentially signified an opposition to the usual modes of colonial production, namely that of big business and European-led plantations. This meant possible friction with other colonial interest groups.

However, it must be stressed that the *KR* and their sympathisers did not find themselves in opposition to the colonial enterprise in general. It was much rather a special perspective that shaped their ideological look-out, a perspective that, from inside the colonial enterprise and due to economic logics, led to a focalisation on the native populations in the German colonies.

1.3. The “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz”

On December 5th 1913, the “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz” was founded in Berlin by a group of people amongst whom were Chr. v. Bornhaupt, A.W. Schreiber, E. Vohsen and Prof. D. Westermann who were the first members of the society’s managing council (cf. Leading article, 1914b: p.1) The *DGE*’s foundation can be seen in analogy to the British “Aborigines Protection Society” (cf. “Deutsche Kongo-Liga”, 1920; Lindner, 2011: p. 313). The decision of founding a society can be interpreted as the determination of enlarging the movement’s scope and formalising the movement’s external activity as far as agenda-setting, influencing decision-making and the formation of public opinion is concerned. Seen in this light,

¹²³ Orig.: “er arbeitet so mit unsern Werkzeugen, nach unserer Anleitung, unter unserem Schutz – zu unserm und seinem Nutzen“

¹²⁴ Orig.: “den Sohn der Tropen“

¹²⁵ Orig.: “Dem Sohn der Tropen fehlt die weitschauende Überlegung, die kühne Initiative und die zähe Willenskraft des Europäers. Der Neger da-gegen hat die starken Arme, den kräftigen Körper, der den Anstren-gungen unter afrikanischer Sonne gewachsen ist.“

¹²⁶ Orig.: “zu vorher nie gekannten Differenzierungen der Betrachtung gekommen, die auf den Vorstellungen der ‘wissenschaftlichen Eingeborenenpolitik’ beruhten“

¹²⁷ Orig.: “Selbstständige Produktion der Eingeborenen“

it is not surprising that it was only some months after the *DGE*'s official foundation that they issued their first petitions to the *Reichstag* and *Imperial Colonial Office*.¹²⁸

The window of opportunity for activity was narrow for the *DGE*, taking into account that it was founded only some months before the outbreak of World War One. The society's involvement during the war can be described as non-existent since their lobbying was over-shadowed by the events of the war, and the absence of important members (cf. Schreiber, 1920: p.30). Nonetheless, it is interesting that the publishing of the journal was upheld during war time (ibid). The first issues of the *Koloniale Rundschau* after the war contained articles discussing the outcomes of the war and their influence on the (former) German colonies.¹²⁹

The *DGE*'s ideological constitution at the time of its foundation can be read in the "Aufruf" which was made publicly available and reprinted in Leading article (1914b: pp.2-5). It was proclaimed to follow the same lines of argumentation as that of the journal (cf. Leading article, 1914b: p.1). The KR, consequently, was made the movement's official publication organ and was added the suffix "Zugleich Organ der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz" (Simultaneously Organ of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz).

It was logical for those who had been active in the writing and publishing of the journal to join the *DGE* and the members of the *Kongo-Liga*, the predecessor of *DGE*¹³⁰, also became members of the new society. Other than that, the society had welcomed to join "men and women as well as all German corporate bodies interested in the well-fare of the primitive peoples who proclaimed their readiness of supporting the society's goals"¹³¹ (Schreiber, 1920: p.26).

When reading the list of persons who had joined the *DGE* at the time of its foundation (cf. Leading article, 1914b: p. 5) it becomes evident that "representatives of the various political and religious leanings"¹³² (Leading article, 1909a: p.6) became part of the society. Ernst Vohsen and Diedrich Westermann are to be seen as initiators and leaders of the movement. Other names include people from a "variety of circles of colonial practitioners and theoreticians, civil servants,

¹²⁸ cf. Chapter 2.

¹²⁹ It is interesting to know that the death of E. Vohsen and the decision to strip Germany off her overseas territories timely coincided. This was perceived as a symbol amongst those writing on the occasion of the demise of E. Vohsen (cf. Westermann, 1919: p. 198).

¹³⁰ The Kongo-Liga, "facing the improvements of conditions in Belgian Congo" (Schreiber, 1920: p. 24) had proclaimed its dissolution the day of the foundation of the *DGE*.

Orig.: "die angesichts der sich bessernden Zustände in Belgisch-Kongo ihre Auflösung beschlossen hatte"

¹³¹ Orig.: "Als Mitglieder hatte die Gesellschaft Männer und Frauen sowie alle an der Wohlfahrt der Naturvölker interessierten deutschen Körperschaften, die zur Unterstützung der Zwecke der Gesellschaft sich bereit erklärten, willkommen geheißen."

¹³² Orig.: "die Vertreter der verschiedensten poli-tischen und religiösen Richtungen"

traders, as well as all denominations”¹³³ (Schreiber, 1920: p. 26). These included members of parliament¹³⁴, Christian missionary director A.W. Schreiber of *Norddeutsche Mission* and former *Reichskolonialamt-secretary* B. Dernburg.

Assessing the degree of influence the *DGE* had within the colonial environment is not without problems. Grupp (2007) argues that “particular societies such as [...] the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz only lived within the shadows”¹³⁵. The author compares the German case with the French who had a much more diverse colonial political landscape. His claim must, however, be taken *cum grano salis*.

Examining the membership in the society has demonstrated how the *DGE* recruited from a diversity of ranks all over colonial society, mostly its elite. Missionaries, plantation-owners, professors, doctors, as well as German colonial administrators and politicians (including people in as influential posts as B. Dernburg) - across all denominational and party-political borderlines - were part of the movement. This suggests a wider scope of the movement. To support this assumption, it would be of help to know exact figures of the circulation of the *Koloniale Rundschau*. However, these do not exist (Dietrich Reimer Verlag, personal communication, 2013)¹³⁶. Nonetheless, it is remarkable that the journal continued to be published during and after World War One, which reveals the publishers’ faith in the cause for which they fought and at the same time hints to the fact that there existed an interested public for their journal.¹³⁷ Hence, it must be noted that the movement did indeed undertake successful measures to step “out of the shadows”. One such was publishing the *KR*. Others are examined in the next chapter.

2. Stepping “out of the shadows” – The *DGE*’s political lobbying

In order to develop a more complete understanding of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement*, it is necessary to shed some light on the steps it undertook, to “come out of the shadows”. Such steps can be found in the political lobbying of the *DGE*. Two petitions have been submitted in 1914 and were debated inside and outside the parliament. Through these, the movement successfully managed to influence public debate.

¹³³ Orig.: “verschiedensten Kreisen bei Kolonialpraktikern und –Theoretikern, bei Beamten und Kaufleuten, sowie bei allen Konfessionen“

¹³⁴ Erzberger [Zentrum], Lic. Mumm [Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung], Dr. Waldstein [Freisinnige Volkspartei]

¹³⁵ Orig.: “Spezialgesellschaften wie die Marokko-Gesellschaft oder die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz haben nur ein Schattendasein geführt“

¹³⁶ The archives that would give exact numbers on the circulation were destroyed in the Second World War (Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2013).

¹³⁷ Taking into consideration that almost all issues of *Koloniale Rundschau* contained colonial-economic advertisement, there must have existed at least a specialised audience for the journal.

In February 1914, the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz* addressed two petitions to *Reichstag* and *Imperial Colonial Office*, hereby making the society's voice publicly heard for one of the first times outside the usual publications in the society's own press organ *Koloniale Rundschau*. The first petition, dated 6th February 1914, was to serve the interests of economic enterprises in the colonies that were dependent on an indigenous population that was sufficient in number and healthy (cf. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*, 1914a: pp.155-157). Its reasoning saw "one of the main damage [the problematic situation of the indigenous population] in the excessive and in parts inexpedient utilisation of the population through European plantation-enterprises" (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*, 1914a: p.156)¹³⁸. To counter this, the *DGE* petitioned to:

1. Abolish, or at least limit the practiced system of workers' recruitment surnamed "Sachsendängerei";
2. Bring the scale of European enterprises in line with the number of workers' populations available in a specific area;
3. Make the establishment of new plantations dependent on their proximity to a sufficient population suited for working-purposes;
4. Take into account the dangers that re-locating workers to a new climate might bear;
5. If necessary at all, populate workers from foreign areas, together with their families, in proximity to the plantations in proper villages, if possible continuously, and to equip them with sufficient land ownership;
6. Make sure that the utilisation of the aborigines for working purposes must not reach the extents that the self-sufficient economy is stunted or made impossible;
7. Support by all means the peoples' cultivation, where the quality of the soil and the conditions of production, would advise peoples' cultivation rather than European-led plantations;
8. Take enterprises in charge of healthcare for workers and make the colonial administration survey its application and to report on the health-conditions and mortality of the workers.

(cf. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*, 1914a: p. 157)

The reasoning for and the argumentation within the petition reflect what has been analysed in Chapter 1 as far as the ideological orientation of the *Koloniale Rundschau* is concerned. It were economic rationales that determined the reasoning of the *DGE* for their argumentation in favour of policies and practices deemed to protect the native populations.

During the Reichstag budgetary committee session held on February 18th and 19th 1914, this petition was subject of debate.¹³⁹ This was made possible through the fact that three of the

¹³⁸ Orig.: "Es kann nicht bezweifelt werden, daß ein Hauptschaden in der zu starken und teilweise zu unzweckmäßigen Inanspruchnahme der Bevölkerung durch die europäischen Pflanzungsunternehmen liegt."

¹³⁹ The second petition, dated 20th February 1914, concerned the questions of healthcare, especially for pregnant mothers and young babies in the German colonies and asked the addressees to support the instauration of healthcare facilities and nursery care in the colonies as well as the education and employment of indigenous women in the healthcare

members of the budgetary commission were simultaneously members of the *DGE*. Erzberger, Mumm and Waldstein took the role of defending the petition. A report on the sessions (published in *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*, 1914b) describes how the debate on this question developed during the session. According to this source, Erzberger threatened to object to granting further financial means, in case the petition was not accepted (cf. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*, 1914b: p. 160). Members of the social democratic party proclaimed that, in their opinion, the petition did not reach far enough. They demanded a complete stop for the authorisation of new plantations. This was not acceptable for the *DGE* as they “opposed only the excessive amount of plantation-firms, not the plantations themselves, on the contrary, seeing those as valuable, even indispensable for our colonial economics”¹⁴⁰ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*, 1914b: p.162). *Reichskolonialamt secretary* Dr. Solf¹⁴¹ proclaimed that “the content of the petition as well as the aims of the newly founded *Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz* were absolutely likeable to him”¹⁴² (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*, 1914b: p. 161) and he therefore favoured the acceptance of the petition.

This shows how the *DGE*'s political positions were acceptable for wide and influential parts of the German colonial enterprise. By no means was the *DGE* a forum for fundamental opposition to colonialism, it only had a focus on the need for protection of the indigenous population. This acceptance is logical since the ideology fit well with the dominant reasoning behind colonialism. The General Assembly of the *Reichstag* later accepted the petition in the session of Wednesday 20th March 1914 (cf. *Reichstag*, 1914: p. 9150D) and forwarded it to the chancellor for consideration.

Next to that, the petitions served as a means for the *DGE* to influence debate - within and outside the parliament. The petitions stimulated “vivid debate in the German press”¹⁴³ (Schreiber, 1920: p. 28; cf. *Tägliche Rundschau*, 1914). Professor Diedrich Westermann published an essay which appeared in the “*Berliner Tageblatt*”. In this essay he voiced his concerns connected to the

sector. This was supposed to serve the goal of fighting child mortality and hereby contribute to a healthy development of the local populations. Furthermore, the petition addressed cultural habits such as the amount of dowry and the practices of polygamy that were supposed to be abolished or at least reduced as the *DGE* saw them as posing a “serious danger for the future of our colonial aborigines’ population” (cf. *Leading article*, 1914a). Due to the date of submission being the 20th February, it could not be debated in the aforementioned session.

¹⁴⁰ Orig.: “Daß wir uns nur gegen ein Über-maß von Pflanzungsbetrieben, nicht gegen die Pflanzungen selber wenden, sie vielmehr für die Förderung unserer Kolonial-wirtschaft für wertvoll, ja unentbehrlich halten, ...“

¹⁴¹ Dr. Solf was one of the successors of B. Dernburg as *Reichskolonialamt secretary*.

¹⁴² Orig.: “Der Inhalt der gestellten Resolutionen sei ihm daher durchaus sympathisch, ebenso die Ziele der neuge-bildeten *Gesellschaft für Eingeborenenschutz*“.

¹⁴³ Orig.: “... und führten im Parlament wie in der Presse zu lebhaften Auseinandersetzungen“

“depopulation”¹⁴⁴ in the German colonies. Here again, the line of argumentation stressed the need for the protection of the indigenous populations and an establishment of healthcare as a necessary condition for the economic development of the German colonies (cf. Diedrich Westermann, 1914c; Diedrich Westermann, 1914b; Diedrich Westermann, 1914a).

Through their political lobbying and publishing outside the *Koloniale Rundschau*, the *DGE* had successfully undertaken their first steps ‘out of the shadows’. They entered the realms of public debate, in which the society positioned itself within the German colonial enterprise favouring a systematised development of the overseas territories through stressing the need for protection of the indigenous populations. The economic considerations behind this were the basis for the movement’s ideological focus on the need for the protection of the indigenous populations that had been submitted under German control. As such, they saw the need for European plantations while at the same time petitioning for worker-friendly regulations.

In summer 1914, the outbreak of World War One set an end to Germany’s role as an official colonial power. During the war, the activity of the *DGE* was overshadowed by the events and after the war Germany gave away her colonial ‘possessions’ to other colonial powers. The *DGE* continued to exist for some time but their field of action had completely changed.¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

In the early years of the 20th century, a group of people in the German Empire found together, published a journal and created a society proclaiming the aim of protecting the indigenous populations in the German colonies. This *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* managed to get a variety of more or less influential persons on their side and tried to influence public and parliamentary debate to assert influence on colonial politics.

Exploring the life of Ernst Vohsen, investigating the colonial environment the movement found itself confronted with and examining the ideology of the movement has proved fruitful for evaluating the activities of the movement. At the time of the movement’s activity, the colonial political approach in Germany had developed an express focus on ‘systematised’ and ‘scientific’ colonial politics grounded in economic profit orientation. Making profit from the colonies was the determining factor behind colonial activity.

¹⁴⁴ Orig.: “Entvölkerung“

¹⁴⁵ It can only be speculated on how the *DGE* would have developed if events had taken a different path. In the first issues of *KR* published after the war, it was stated that the members of the society were determined to continue defending their cause.

It has been shown that the movement that claimed to defend the indigenous population was integral part of this colonialist environment. The ideology of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* fit perfectly with the colonial political environment's rationalist logic. When the protection of the indigenous population was advocated, it was the belief that this protection was necessary to reach the aim of making the colonies profitable. The population in the colonies was viewed an integral part of the colonial infrastructure, namely its "largest asset".

When it comes to deciding whether the movement for the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* worked in favour of the colonised or in favour of the colonies, both is true. Indeed, the movement's ideology claimed certain rights for the indigenous people. However, the reasoning behind these claims was inseparably connected with the economic rationales of the colonial enterprise. More than that, the movement saw the protection of the indigenous populations as a necessary condition for the economic development of the colonies.

Excursus

The present paper was written in the context of a history course at Twente University. The overall theme of this course was 'the rise of modernity'. The course has exemplified how "modernity" can be considered a concept that, in function of the respective historical contexts can mean all too different things. "Modernity" as such can be considered a normative construct that in itself does not have any meaning. It comes to mean something through the fact that people mean to make it mean something. It is interesting to examine from this perspective how what has been found out about the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* of Imperial Germany can be brought into relation with the overall the considerations about modernity.

When reflecting about 'modernity' the way it is commonly understood, it can be said that the concept mostly relates to historical contexts that have to do with the development of science and technology, a secularisation of the political sphere and the perception of an overall "improvement". This conceptualisation has to do with the prerogative of interpretation. It is people who, from a today's perspective, look at history and label certain events, inventions, developments or ideas. What is appreciated, more often than not, receives the label of being "modern", whereas all other things are rejected and labelled old(-fashioned) or pre-modern.

What has been shown for the ideological reasoning of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* can easily be interpreted in this light. From a today's perspective, the ideological argumentation seems old-fashioned¹⁴⁶. Its defenders, however, perceived themselves as being 'modern'. It was their hierarchized evaluation of the developments in history that left them to believe they were the

¹⁴⁶ Just the way this paper will probably seem old-fashioned to future audiences.

representatives of modernity. Their perception of themselves as the ‘Kulturvolk’ (whatever that meant) confronted with the “Naturvolk” illustrates this. It were Europeans and their technologies that had come to colonise foreign territories, for example in Africa. Due to their ‘technological superiority’, they thought to have the right (and obligation) to tell the indigenous population how to live life ‘correctly’.

It is remarkable that, even for the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* that had lobbied for the protection of the indigenous people, it was considered a non-scrutinised fundament of their ideology to perceive themselves in a superior position towards the indigenous people. The perception of the indigenous peoples’ inferiority grounded in the fact that their cultural traditions differed so fundamentally from the concepts the colonisers associated with their own modernity. By no means did the members of the *Eingeborenenschutz-movement* reject the conceptualisation of ‘their modernity’.

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