Planning Frenzy: Forced Labour, Expulsion and Genocide as Elements of Population Economics in German South West Africa

Expansion is everything. [...] I would annex the planets if I could.[1]
(Cecil Rhodes)

Among the typical features that are used to characterise imperialism are inherent megalomania, conquest for conquest's sake and expansion as an end in itself. The same will to dominate and to rule was also manifest in the efforts to open up whole continents and to build railways from the Cape to Cairo or from Berlin to Baghdad. As the Earth was progressively 'explored', mapped and surveyed, the blank areas gradually vanished from the map, while people, animals and plants were organised into taxonomical systems.

After a long time in which debate was confined to the (foreign) policy and economic dimensions of imperialism, in recent years the influence of postcolonial theory has led to more serious consideration of the level of idealised constructs and imagined realities, and also of visions of the opening up of 'unknown' territories.[2] Despite this, postcolonial studies of the development of colonial discourse

1 Quoted according to Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, New York 1951, p. 124.

2 With regard to classic imperialism research, see e.g. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Imperialismustheorien. Ein Überblick über die neueren Imperialismustheorien*, Göttingen 1980. The literature on postcolonialism now fills whole libraries. For an introduction see e.g.: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, London 1998; Dane Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory", *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 24/3 (1996), pp. 345–363; Patrick Wolfe, "History and Imperialism. A Century of Theory, from Marx to Postcolonialism", *American Historical Review,* 102/2 (1997), pp. 388–420. The first steps in applying this research programme to Germany are being undertaken by Sebastian Conrad, Andreas Eckert and Albert Wirz: Sebastian Conrad, "Doppelte Marginalisierung. Plädoyer für eine transnationale Perspektive auf die deutsche Geschichte", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft,* 28 (2002), pp. 145–169; Andreas Eckert and Albert Wirz, "Wir nicht, die Anderen auch. Deutschland und der Kolonialismus", in Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, eds, *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt 2002, pp. 372–392. For examples of literature devoted to idealised worlds under the banner of colonialism, see Kundrus, *Phantasiereiche*; Alexander Honold and Oliver Simons, eds, *Kolonialismus als Kultur. Literatur, Medien, Wissenschaft in der deutschen Gründerzeit des Fremden*, Tübingen/Basel 2002. For general information on utopian visions of the opening up of unknown territories, see Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur. Deutsche Planungen für eine Erschließung Afrikas, 1880 bis 1960*, Paderborn 2004. On the relationship between geographers and colonialism, see Jürgen Zimmerer, "Wissenschaft und Kolonialismus. Das Geographische Institut der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität

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and the colonialist mentality continue to be confined first and foremost to metropolitan discourses and the fantasies and visions of intellectuals, colonial writers for example. Fantasies can, however, also be found elsewhere, in both senses of that term: on the one hand in the colonies themselves, and on the other hand among the 'practitioners' of colonialism, the settlers, military officers and colonial civil servants.[3] Taking such visions into account does not merely lend a global dimension to analyses of the colonial mentality; it also creates links between them and the periphery-orientated research of recent years by which the history and development of indigenous societies was brought centre stage. Colonial histories are "entangled histories"[4] and call for a detailed examination of both sides. And the history of German South West Africa represents a particularly interesting example with regard to colonial fantasies of power and rule during the high imperialist age.

What I have written so far is already sufficient to indicate that I will be concentrating on the mentality of the German colonisers and the ways in which they acted. This approach appears to me to be historiographically justified, because while research into Namibian history has made significant progress in recent years above all in reconstructing African history,[5] it seems necessary to return to the German colonisers in order to assemble a complete picture of the colony as a place of interaction and communication.

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vom Kaiserreich zum Dritten Reich", in Ulrich van der Heyden and Joachim Zeller, eds, *Kolonialmetropole Berlin. Eine Spurensuche*, Berlin 2002, pp. 125–130; Jürgen Zimmerer, "Im Dienste des Imperiums. Die Geographen der Berliner Universität zwischen Kolonialwissenschaften und Ostforschung", *Jahrbuch für Universitätsgeschichte,* 7 (2004), pp. 73–100 (English version: "In the Service of the Empire: Berlin University's Geographers from Colonial Sciences to Ostforschung", pp. 262–293 in this book).

3 I have attempted to pursue this in Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner. Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia*, Münster/Hamburg/London 2001 [English edition: *German Rule, African Subjects. State Aspirations and the Reality of Power in Colonial Namibia*, New York 2021].

4 On the concepts of "entangled histories" and "shared histories" see: Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, "Einleitung. Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt", in Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeira, eds, *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus*, pp. 9–49. I am deliberately applying these terms to the micropolitical situation in everyday colonial rule.

5 See e.g. Martti Eirola, *The Ovambogefahr. The Ovamboland Reservation in the Making – Political Responses of the Kingdom of Ondonga to the German Colonial Power 1884–1910*, Rovaniemi 1992; Jan-Bart Gewald, *Towards Redemption. A Socio-political History of the Herero of Namibia between 1890 and 1923*, Leiden 1996; Dag Henrichsen, *Herrschaft und Identifikation im vorkolonialen Zentralnamibia. Das Herero- und Damaraland im 19. Jahrhundert*, University of Hamburg 1997 (Ph.D. Thesis); Gesine Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewusstsein. Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des deutschen Kolonialkrieges in Namibia 1904–1907*, Göttingen 1999.

The objection has frequently been raised that any concentration on the 'White'/'German' side would evoke the image of passive Africans and their total domination, as was depicted in earlier historiography that sought to provide an apologia for colonialism. This seemed to be a particular danger with regard to German South West Africa, in the face of genocide and the rigid policies of control and subjugation.[6] However, this picture of German omnipotence is itself a result of inadequate research into the agents of colonial rule: a construction that is a peculiar mélange derived on the one hand from the colonial propaganda of the absolutely smooth manner in which German rule functioned and on the other from the attempt to destroy the idyllic and romantic vision of German colonialism by magnifying and so demonising the coloniser. For the image of omnipotence implies that the Germans were able to implement whatever policies they desired, and conversely, that whatever it was they implemented was also what they desired to implement. However, it is questionable whether this double equation is accurate.

Within the history of German South West Africa, the war against the Herero and Nama, the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of which fell in the year 2004, has doubtless received the most attention up until now.[7] The degrees of violence, brutality and ruthlessness with which the *Schutztruppe* waged this campaign, leading ultimately to the first genocide in German history, have resulted in this war being turned into a symbol for the failure of German colonialism as a whole. So for a long time research concentrated on the war and its causes. Consequently, the fact that the 'non-military' aspects of German colonial history were just as exemplary and paradigmatic for subsequent German history as the genocide itself was pushed into the background.

To the extent that the policies towards the African population pursued after the war were discussed at all, they were simply considered to be results of the war.[8] The postwar phase was thus separated off from the prewar period, and the history of South West Africa as a German colony was divided into three phases:

6 Cf. Brigitte Lau's remonstrances against the colonial war of 1904–1908 being labelled as genocide: Brigitte Lau, "Uncertain Certainties. The Herero-German War of 1904", in Brigitte Lau, *History and Historiography – 4 Essays in Reprint*, ed. Annemarie Heywood, Windhoek 1995, pp. 39–52.

7 For a recent summary of the extensive literature, see Jürgen Zimmerer and Joachim Zeller, eds, *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. Der Kolonialkrieg in Namibia (1904–1908) und seine Folgen*, Berlin 2003.

8 As an example, cf. Helmut Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894–1914*, Hamburg 1968, p. 193.

the establishment of German rule up to the outbreak of the colonial war of conquest (1884–1904), the genocidal war itself (1904–1908) and the postwar period (1908–1914). The last-mentioned was represented as a phase of pure destruction and stagnation, in which the "peace of the graveyard", as Horst Drechsler called it, prevailed.[9]

This, however, led to a fundamental continuity in German policy from the early years of the colony onwards being hidden from view: namely the attempt to create a model colonial state. This approach was supposed to avoid what were considered to be undesirable developments in modern society and so also to provide a suitable model for the motherland, the German Empire. This Wilhelminian colonial project was based on the idea that it was possible to plan every aspect of the economy of an extensive territory, including the measures of population economics required to make it as efficient as possible. Development and expansion, order and efficiency: these were the underlying principles. The key characteristic was a heavy emphasis on bureaucratic rule and the application of supposedly 'scientific' methods in Native Policy. The goal was to build an efficient economic system within a society of racial privilege, where the African population provided the workforce through which the colony's economic development could be pushed forward and raw materials extraction reliably pursued.[10] In this hubristic vision, the contradictions inherent in the system which led to the utopia of the society of racial privilege as a perfect model of order, with its planning frenzy and its delusion that everything could be planned, turning into a nightmare for the affected Africans were simply overlooked.

9 "Ruhe des Friedhofs", the title of a chapter in: Horst Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft. Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus 1884–1915*, 2nd edn, Berlin 1984, pp. 221–236. More recent research has sufficiently demonstrated that this picture of an African population broken by the war is inaccurate: there were both campaigns of direct resistance and also people who fled the colony or refused to submit to social or mental "re-education". What remained of Herero society reorganised itself and built up alternative self-help structures and support networks. See Gewald, *Towards Redemption*; Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewusstsein*; Philipp Prein, "Guns and Top Hats. African Resistance in German South West Africa 1907–1915", *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 20 (1994), pp. 99–121; Jürgen Zimmerer, "Der totale Überwachungsstaat? Recht und Verwaltung in Deutsch-Südwestafrika", in Rüdiger Voigt, ed., *Das deutsche Kolonialrecht als Vorstufe einer globalen 'Kolonialisierung' von Recht und Verwaltung* (Schriften zur Rechtspolitologie), Baden-Baden 2001, pp. 175–198 (English version: "Total Control? Law and Administration in German South West Africa", pp. 77–103 in this book).

10 For greater detail, see Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft* [English edition: *German Rule, African Subjects*].

This attempt – which the local colonial bureaucracy in the colony was the driving force behind – to completely reorder a territory covering an area approximately twice that of the German Empire is however of interest not only because it bears witness to the mentality of the Wilhelminian bourgeoisie and the alternation of its mindset between inferiority complex and megalomania, nor even only because it affords a particularly good example of the imperialistic credo that "everything is possible"; but also because it foreshadows future events. Almost half a century before the *Generalplan Ost* and similar concepts drawn up by German regional planners and experts were launched during the Second World War, in order to bring about a gigantic '*völkische Flurbereinigung*' – an 'ethnicity-based cleansing of the land' – which would have cleared the Slavic and Jewish populations out of areas of eastern Europe to make way for German/'Aryan' expansion – and before an economic system based on forced labour had been set up throughout Germany and its occupied territories, an attempt had been made in southern Africa to restructure populations in line with economic considerations and to set up a system of forced labour.[11] This is by no means intended to suggest complete identity between these events, and still less to relativise them. Rather, it is a matter of drawing attention to the structural similarities between German policies in South West Africa and Nazi rule in eastern Europe.[12] In both cases, the African population on the one hand and the Polish and Russian populations on the other

11 In view of the wealth of literature on the Third Reich, there is space here only to refer to a few fundamental works: Ulrich Herbert, ed., *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939–1945. Neue Forschungen und Kontroversen*, Frankfurt 1998; Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung*, Hamburg 1991; Götz Aly, *'Endlösung'. Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*, Frankfurt 1995; Mechthild Rössler and Sabine Schleiermacher, eds, *Der 'Generalplan Ost'*, Berlin 1993; Czeslaw Madajczyk, ed., *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan*, München 1994; Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz. Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939–1945*, Stuttgart/München 2001; Jan Erik Schulte, *Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung: Das Wirtschaftsimperium der SS. O. Pohl und das SS-Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt 1933–1945*, Paderborn 2001.

12 For a comparison of the colonial and National Socialist occupation policies, see Jürgen Zimmerer, "Die Geburt des 'Ostlandes' aus dem Geiste des Kolonialismus. Die nationalsozialistische Eroberungs- und Beherrschungspolitik in (post-)kolonialer Perspektive", *Sozial.Geschichte. Zeitschrift für historische Analyse des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, 19/1 (2004), pp. 10–43 (English version: "The Birth of the 'Ostland' out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination", pp. 230–261 in this book). On the relationship between colonialism and the Holocaust in general, see Jürgen Zimmerer "Colonialism and the Holocaust. Towards an Archeology of Genocide, in A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australia*, New York 2004, pp. 49–76 (a revised version appears in this book on pp. 125–153).

were viewed first and foremost as economic factors. Individual or collective self-determination was replaced by forcible external control, and it was the economic value of the individual to the occupiers that determined his or her right to live. In extreme cases, it also legitimised the neglect of these populations, even to the extent of their utter destitution or deliberate murder.

In German South West Africa, the experiment was undertaken of attempting to recreate an entire territory in accordance with the racial, economic and social ideas of a small group of civil servants. These had come to the territory, one of the most inhospitable areas of southern Africa, as representatives of a foreign power. And it did indeed require nothing less than the superabundant imagination of the nationalistic Wilhelminian bourgeoisie to turn this "sand strewer of a territory",[13] as Governor von Schuckmann once called it in a deliberate allusion to Prussia, into the pride of the German colonial movement. After all, this territory, only recently created in negotiations between the European colonial powers, covered an area of over 800,000 square kilometres, though it had a population of at most only 200,000 to 250,000 people.[14] This land was not of course empty of people, as colonial ideology liked to represent it; some areas of it, however, were not far from being so. Thanks to the climatic conditions, which appeared to be reasonably tolerable for White settlers, the phantasm of 'South West' as a settler colony was born.[15] However, even this expectation was disappointed; by 1915, the year of the South African conquest, only a meagre 15,000 Whites (mostly Germans) had settled in the colony.[16]

The Germans held political sway over the colony for only one generation before they were forced to hand South West Africa over to South Africa as a League of Nations Mandate.[17] Even so, under German colonial rule this southern African

13 *Deutsches Kolonialblatt 1908*, pp. 467f, quoted according to Oskar Hintrager, *Südwestafrika in der deutschen Zeit*, München 1956, p. 100.

14 Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, 3rd edn, Berlin 1908, p. 11. With regard to the numbers generally, it must be said that they are based on very inexact estimates made by missionaries in the 1870s.

15 For the discussions, conceptions and phantasms relating to German South West Africa, especially those prevalent in the Reich itself, see Birthe Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten. Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien*, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2003.

16 A detailed overview of the progress of European settlement is given by Udo Kaulich, *Die Geschichte der ehemaligen Kolonie Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1884–1914). Eine Gesamtdarstellung*, Frankfurt 2001, p. 353.

17 On this subject, see Jürgen Zimmerer, "Von der Bevormundung zur Selbstbestimmung. Die Pariser Friedenskonferenz und ihre Auswirkungen auf die britische Kolonialherrschaft im Südlichen Afrika", in Gerd Krumeich, ed., *Versailles 1919: Ziele – Wirkung – Wahrnehmung*, Essen 2001, pp. 145–158.

country underwent deeper and more rapid change than most other colonies, whether German ones or those of other colonial powers. The events that began in May 1885 with the arrival of Imperial Commissioner Heinrich Göring and just two other officials were to fundamentally transform the country. Thirty years later, the 'tribes' in the south and centre of the colony had been dissolved, the traditional economic and social structures of indigenous society largely destroyed and the greater part of the real property previously owned by Africans transferred into the possession of White farmers, mining companies or the colonial state. The African population had ceased to be free, economically independent inhabitants of their own land and had become dispossessed subjects of the German Empire, dependent on its representatives for the employment they needed in order to survive.[18]

These changes were the result of deliberate administrative action by the state in furtherance of the attempt described above to create a 'perfect' polity. The main cause, along with the genocidal war of 1904–1908, of the drastic consequences ensuing from the short period of German colonial rule was the *Herrschaftsutopie,* the utopian concept of the social order that the administration felt itself called upon to create and impose in South West Africa. This 'governmental and administrative utopia'[19] was essentially the work of the German colonial bureaucracy,[20] or rather, to be more exact, of a small group of top officials most of whom had already come to the colony with the first Governor, Theodor Leutwein, and had won their first colonial spurs building up and heading administrative districts before going on to climb the career ladder in Windhoek or Berlin. Of these, Friedrich von Lindequist, Angelo Golinelli and Hans Tecklenburg, with the later addition of Oskar Hintrager, were the most influential; and they were the people responsible for assuring that there was continuity in Native Policy.

18 On this subject, see Jürgen Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft* [English edition: *German Rule, African Subjects*]. In addition, an overview of the history of German South West Africa that concentrates heavily on the German side is that by Kaulich, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika*. He still follows the strict division of the history of German South West Africa into three phases that I reject. Not yet outdated on many issues are the classic works by Bley und Drechsler: Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*; Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft*.

19 The term *Herrschaftsutopie*, here translated as 'governmental and administrative utopia', is of enormous importance in this context. It is taken up from Trutz von Trotha and used to refer to the long-term regulation of the conditions of the indigenous population that the officials sought to achieve, as to them it represented an administrative ideal. On this subject, see Trutz von Trotha, *Koloniale Herrschaft. Zur soziologischen Theorie der Staatsentstehung am Beispiel des 'Schutzgebietes Togo'*, Tübingen 1994, p. 12.

20 Colonial civil servants are a professional group to whom far too little attention has been paid in research so far.

Their vision of how the state should function was derived from the model of the bureaucratic and centrally administered state that modern Germany represented, and its objective was to construct an efficient economic system on the basis of a society of racial privilege in which the institutions of government, the settlers and the African population each occupied its firmly assigned place. The indigenous population was to be comprehensively registered and kept under surveillance, integrated into the colony's economic system as cheap labour and re-educated to function as compliant workers through a process of social disciplining. In this way, it was assumed, the economic development of the colony could be pushed ahead with and the production of natural raw materials guaranteed, so that the *Schutzgebiet* would be able to develop into a settler colony in an orderly manner. The end result was intended to be a unified economic area in which the African people were distributed as workers in accordance with the needs of the colonial economy. The focus of the whole strategy was on planning and centralised direction.

The nature of this *Herrschaftsutopie* is concisely documented in Friedrich von Lindequist's so-called Native Ordinances of 1907. Forming the normative core of German Native Law, these ordinances provided for the establishment of a rigid system of control and surveillance and imposed an obligation on the African population to take up employment. Although they were promulgated by Theodor Leutwein's successor as civil governor, Friedrich von Lindequist, after the military victory over the Herero and the Nama, the essential provisions of these regulations all dated back to the time before 1904 and had been more or less ready and waiting in the office pigeonholes.

The first steps towards exercising control over the Africans, restricting their freedom of movement and exercising surveillance over their conditions of work had already been taken before the turn of the century. Even then, the objectives of these policies had been to force the Africans into employment, to establish their identities unambiguously and to monitor and control their movements. In 1892, only seven years after the establishment of the colony, the Colonial Department of the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office) had made the first move towards implementing these ideas by accepting contracts of employment between government agencies and Africans only if they were made in written form.[21] Soon after, in 1894, von Lindequist issued an Ordinance for the district he administered, Otjimbingwe, concerning the general organisation of conditions of work for Afri-

21 Colonial Department to Imperial Commissioner, Windhoek, 5 May 1892, National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek (NAN), Central Office of the Colonial Governor (Zentralbureau des Gouvernements) (ZBU) W.III.N.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 1a f.

cans. This regulation not only included formal provisions for the regulation of working relationships between Africans and Whites, but also a passage that represented the first step towards the introduction of a compulsion to enter into employment. According to this passage, "persons who are not able to demonstrate that they are able to provide for themselves out of their own means or by undertaking work, and who roam around the country from place to place without working", were to be "assigned work by the police authorities against the provision of board, clothing or cash payment"; they could also be handed over to private employers.[22]

This measure introduced by von Lindequist immediately found Leutwein's approval: he saw in it a promising instrument to "relieve the very acute shortage of labour and to gradually accustom the unpropertied natives, in particular the Berg Damaras and the Hottentots, to working".[23] Leutwein himself was a proponent of forcing the Africans to enter into employment: in 1903, in a discussion on the issue of introducing a poll tax for Africans, he made the following statement:

> It would no doubt be a nice idea to compel the natives to work by means of this type of tax. But the nomadic lives led by our natives in this thinly populated territory stand in the way of this plan too. Only those few natives would be affected by the tax who have settled down either on the mission stations or where there are other white settlements. Instead of keeping them there, where it is to our advantage to have them, we would reawaken in them the longing to join up again with their fellow tribesmen who live more freely.[24]

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22 Bezirksamt Otjimbingwe, *Verordnung betr. das Verhältnis der Arbeitgeber zu den Arbeitern* (Otjimbingwe District Office: 'Ordinance concerning the Relationship between Employers and Workers') [transcript], 3 July 1894, NAN ZBU W.IV.A.3. Vol. 2, Sheet 5a-7a, printed in *Die Deutsche Kolonial-Gesetzgebung (DKG). Sammlung der auf die deutschen Schutzgebiete bezüglichen Gesetze, Verordnungen, Erlasse und internationalen Vereinbarungen mit Anmerkungen und Sachregister* [German Colonial Legislation. A Collection of the Statutes, Ordinances, Decrees and International Agreements relating to the German *Schutzgebiete*, with Notes and an Index] (DKG), ed. Riebow, Gerstmeyer and Köbner, 2 (1893–97), p. 104. A notable feature of von Lindequist's District Police Ordinance is that it speaks of "workers" in a neutral manner throughout. Only from the context is it apparent that it is intended to apply to Africans: in the DKG, for example, it appears under the heading "Legal relationships with natives". Two years later, the District Office of Gibeon followed: "Bezirksamt Gibeon, Verordnung betr. Regelung der Dienstboten-Verhältnisse" ('Gibeon District Office, Ordinance concerning the Regulation of Master and Servant Relationships') [transcript], 23.3.96, NAN ZBU W.IV.A.3. Vol. 2, Sheet 41ea-41fa.

23 Imperial Administrator to Imperial Chancellor, 26 July 1894, NAN ZBU W.IV.A.3. Vol. 2, Sheet 2a-3a. (Leutwein's title was changed from "Imperial Administrator" ("Landeshauptmann") to "Governor" in 1898.)

24 Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek to Colonial Department, 26 September 1903, NAN ZBU W.II.I.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 1da-1ea.

It was only Leutwein's appreciation that he lacked the power necessary to enforce such measures, and thus that it was impractical to introduce either the tax or the compulsion to enter into employment, that persuaded him to distance himself from such a policy for the time being. He did state that further attention would be given at a later date to the matter of designing "a system for imposing taxation on the natives";[25] but he was pragmatic enough to know that his power and the strength of his troops were not yet adequate to implement such a plan. So at first, he relied on gaining the cooperation of influential African leaders.[26]

It was also out of the debate concerning employment contracts that the first suggestions for more comprehensive social disciplining and control of the African population emerged. In 1896, the District Officer of the Southern District in Keetmanshoop, Angelo Golinelli, spoke out in favour of making it compulsory for all employment contracts to be registered with the police. This was intended above all to make it easier to keep the Africans under surveillance, since every African employed by Whites would be given a numbered "service token" when he entered into his contract of employment, which would also identify the "issuing police authority":

> Every police station shall keep a list of the tokens issued, in which the date of issue, the name of the recipient and the file number of the contract of employment are to be entered. In this way the station will be in a position to exercise surveillance over the natives concerned and furnish them with a means of legitimisation. The native shall wear the service token attached to his clothing or his loincloth.

This was to allow the heads of the Districts "to get a picture of the work being performed by the natives belonging to their Districts and where necessary to intervene with a view to stimulating their desire to work". In order to promote "zeal in respect of work" state payments were to be granted to reward "long and faithful service with the same employer". Since it was in the government's interest "that the natives should be engaged in regular work and that their nomadic instincts should be subdued", employment contracts should have a term of at least one year.[27] In this way, elements that would come to form the foundations for the later monitoring and control system were outlined: namely service tokens and registers. Apparently it did not prove possible to establish uniform regulations governing the employment of African workers before the outbreak of war

25 Ibid.

26 This tactic, known under the name of "Leutwein's chiefs policy", is presented in detail in Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft*.

27 District Office Keetmanshoop to Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek, 28 August 1896, NAN ZBU W.IV.A.3. Vol. 2, Sheet 42aa-42ka.

in 1904; it was not until the promulgation of the Master and Servant Ordinance of 1907 that this area was regulated uniformly throughout the Territory.

As has been suggested above, it was not only the District Offices that were much preoccupied with the problem of exercising surveillance over the African population; so was the central colonial administration in Windhoek. There was a strong desire to be able to monitor and, ultimately, restrict the movements of every single 'Native'. Thus as early as August 1900, Leutwein had circulated for discussion – only within the Administration, of course – a draft Ordinance concerning a general pass and registration requirement for the African population. He intended to make it obligatory for every African "who crossed the boundaries of the area allotted to his tribe by the government", or who wanted to leave his place of residence if it was outside the 'tribal territory', to carry a pass. As well as details of the bearer, such as his or her place of residence and 'tribal affiliation', the pass would also give the reason for the journey, the name of the bearer's employer and the type of employment the bearer was engaged in. The police would be entitled to check the pass at any time, but above all, the issue of such a pass could be refused for were "reasons of security or other good cause".[28] Thus as well as providing for the surveillance of the indigenous population, this Ordinance would also have served to limit freedom of movement and thus to control the distribution of the available workforce: and in addition, anyone found away from his home without a pass could have been "taken into temporary police custody [...] and assigned work by the police authorities against the provision of board or cash payment".[29] As German rule became more established, suggestions were put forward (even though at first only in internal discussions) as to how direct measures against the Africans could be made more stringent. In 1900, during the debate on introducing the pass requirement, the District Office of Outjo suggested something that would, when implemented later, become the ultimate symbol of the German policy of subjugation and control: namely that in order to make it easier to control the Africans they should be issued with a "metal token to be worn visibly around the neck".[30]

28 Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek, "Verordnungsentwurf betr. die Pass- und Meldepflicht der Eingeborenen" ("Draft Ordinance concerning Pass and Registration Requirements for Natives"), August 1900, NAN ZBU W.III.K.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 7a-8a.

29 Ibid.

30 District Officer Outjo to Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek, 21 December 1900, NAN ZBU W.III.B.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 7af. At first, this regulation was only to apply to new arrivals in each District. However, the proposal apparently went too far for the Governor's Office, as is shown by a large question mark drawn in the margin.

Ultimately, the colonial authorities were not able to put the Pass Ordinance into effect before the outbreak of the war against the Herero and the Nama. Only in the new political situation after the outbreak of war did some District Offices promulgate local pass regulations.[31]

It is not possible to deal with the genocidal war of 1904–1908 in detail here.[32] What is important to emphasise, though, is that it was neither a logical nor a necessary consequence of the German governmental and administrative utopia; rather, indeed, it stood in blatant contradiction to it. Triggered by the provocations of subordinate German officers,[33] it threatened to destroy the non-military utopia of the German colonial administration: firstly through the successes of the Herero, and later through the genocidal way the war was waged by the colonial forces under General Lothar von Trotha. The war of extermination ordered by

31 Thus the District Office of Swakopmund promulgated an Ordinance introducing a general pass requirement on 18 May 1904, Keetmanshoop followed on 7 October 1904, Grootfontein on 9 February 1905, Windhoek on 8 November 1905, Karibib on 16 January 1906, and later Outjo as well. Bestimmungen, betr. die Passpflicht der Eingeborenen im Bezirk Swakopmund ("Provisions concerning the Pass Requirement for Natives in Swakopmund District"), 18 May 1904, NAN ZBU W.III.K.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 53a-55a. Bestimmungen, betr. die Passpflicht der Eingeborenen im Bezirk Keetmanshoop ("Provisions concerning the Pass Requirement for Natives in Keetmanshoop District"), 7 October 1904, ibid, Sheet 62a-63b. Bestimmungen, betr. Passzwang für Eingeborene des Bezirks Grootfontein ("Provisions concerning Compulsory Passes for Natives in Grootfontein District") [transcript], 9 February 1905, ibid., Sheet 92af. Bestimmungen, betr. die Passpflicht der Eingeborenen im Bezirk Windhuk ("Provisions concerning the Pass Requirement for Natives in Windhoek District") [transcript, undated], ibid, Sheet 97a-98a. Bestimmungen, betr. die Passpflicht der Eingeborenen im Bezirk Karibib ("Provisions concerning the Pass Requirement for Natives in Karibib District") [transcript], 16 January 1906, ibid., Sheet 101a-103a [effective date: 1 February 1906]. District Office Outjo to Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek, 27 May 1907, ibid., Sheet 21a-24a.

32 For an overview of the war, see Zimmerer and Zeller, *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*; Henrik Lundtofte, "'I believe that the nation as such must be annihilated …' – The Radicalization of the German Suppression of the Herero Rising in 1904", in Steven L.B. Jensen, ed., *Genocide: Cases, Comparisons and Contemporary Debates*, Copenhagen 2003, pp. 15–53; Jan-Bart Gewald, "Colonization, Genocide and Resurgence: The Herero of Namibia 1890–1933", in Jan-Bart Gewald and Michael Bollig, eds, *People, Cattle and Land: Transformations of a Pastoral Society in Southwestern Africa*, Köln 2001, pp. 187–225; Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung*; Tilman Dedering, "'A Certain Rigorous Treatment of All Parts of the Nation ': The Annihilation of the Herero in German South West Africa, 1904", in Mark Levene and Penny Roberts, eds, *The Massacre in History*, New York 1999, pp. 205–222. On the question of whether this was a case of genocide and its position in history, see Jürgen Zimmerer, "Das Deutsche Reich und der Genozid. Überlegungen zum historischen Ort des Völkermordes an den Herero und Nama", in Larissa Förster, Dag Henrichsen and Michael Bollig, eds, *100 Jahre geteilte namibisch-deutsche Geschichte. Kolonialkrieg – Genozid – Erinnerungskulturen*, Köln 2004, pp. 106–121.

33 Gewald, *Towards Redemption*, pp. 178–191.

him threatened to annihilate the entire Herero nation, and later the Nama as well, although both peoples were – from the German point of view – key elements in the essential labour force. Theodor Leutwein, having been Governor for many years, knew what he was talking about when, in 1904, in the inflamed atmosphere of the first weeks of the war, he warned against those "ill-considered voices [...] that now want to see the Herero completely annihilated." For apart from the fact that in Leutwein's opinion a nation of 60,000 to 70,000 people "could not be exterminated just like that", he knew that the Herero would still be needed as "small-scale cattle breeders and particularly as labourers". Thus Leutwein was not primarily moved by philanthropic motives either: he too considered rendering the Herero "politically dead", destroying their political and social organisation and concentrating them in reservations that would be "only just sufficient for their needs" to be legitimate and reasonable war aims.[34]

This stance, which seems a curious one for Leutwein to have adopted, of seeking to 'protect' the African population for reasons of political or, in this case, economic pragmatism, and his call for the war to be conducted in such a way that the "the Herero nation be preserved", were not likely to persuade von Trotha. Indeed, von Trotha rejected the appeal with the comment that the Governor would have to allow him "to conduct the campaign as he saw fit".[35] He was deaf to economic arguments, because in his opinion German South West Africa should be a colony "in which a European can himself work to provide for his family".[36] Blinded by his idea of a "race war", he believed that Africans would "only yield to force"; and so he sought to annihilate "the rebellious tribes with rivers of blood".[37]

The outcome of this attitude was the genocide, which reached its initial climax when the Herero were forced to flee into the waterless *sandveld* of the Omaheke desert. The concentration camps were a further element in it; established throughout the territory to collect the surviving Herero, but also taking up thousands of deported Nama, they were intended to deprive the guerrilla fighters of support from the civilian population. Where the prisoners were not exterminated

34 Leutwein to Colonial Department, 23 February 1904, quoted according to Drechsler, *Südwestafrika*, pp. 149f.

35 According to a later report by a son of Leutwein's, quoted according to Drechsler, *Südwestafrika*, p. 155.

36 Entry in von Trotha's diary, quoted according to Gerhard Pool, *Samuel Maharero*, Windhoek 1991, p. 265.

37 Von Trotha to Leutwein, 5 November 1904, quoted according to Drechsler, *Südwestafrika*, p. 156.

by neglect, as was the case at least in the camp on Shark Island off Lüderitzbucht, both men and women were forced to work as forced labour.[38]

The concentration camp system also offered points of departure for the incorporation of all the surviving Herero and Nama into the surveillance and control system officially set up in 1907. To this extent, the war also accelerated the realisation of the non-military governmental and administrative utopia. The time seemed favourable, as a large proportion of the Herero and later of the Nama too had lost their lives, while others were refugees or captives, so that the opportunity presented itself to confiscate all the land that had been occupied by the defeated enemies and also any livestock they still had. Already at an earlier date, under Leutwein, available areas of land had been designated for White settlers, and these had been expanded more and more through treaties with Samuel Maharero and other chiefs. This process was accompanied by discussions between settlers, the Rhenish Mission and the government on how much land should be used for White settlement.[39] The target it was sought to achieve was that 75 per cent of the land should be declared to be government land, while the remaining 25 per cent should be left to the Africans.[40] However, such 'consideration' for the interests of the Africans proved to be no longer necessary. On the basis of the "Imperial Ordinance concerning the Sequestration of Native Assets in the Colony of South West Africa",[41] the entire land of the Herero and the Nama was brought into German ownership in two stages in 1906 and 1907.[42]

Expropriating the land and making it available for organised settlement were, however, only the first step. Farmers and entrepreneurs alike needed cheap African labour, a problem that – not least as a result of the war – was a factor inhibiting economic development right down to the end of German colonial

38 Presented in greater detail in Jürgen Zimmerer, "Kriegsgefangene im Kolonialkrieg. Der Krieg gegen die Herero und Nama in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1904–1907", in Rüdiger Overmans, ed., *In der Hand des Feindes. Kriegsgefangenschaft von der Antike bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Köln 1999, pp. 277–294.

39 Drechsler, *Südwestafrika*, pp. 120–127.

40 Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, Paderborn 1995, p. 118.

41 Kaiserliche Verordnung, betr. Einziehung des Stammesvermögens der Eingeborenen ("Imperial Ordinance concerning the Sequestration of Native Assets in the Colony of South West Africa"), 26 December 1905, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde R 1001/1220, Sheet 65a-66b. This Ordinance is printed in DKG 9 (1905), pp. 284–286.

42 Only the land of the Berseba Nama and the Bondelswarts was exempted from this. In addition, Ovaboland, the Caprivi Strip and the possessions of the Rehoboth Basters remained untouched. Compare also: Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, p. 122.

rule in 1915. Consequently, the need to settle the 'labour question' was a prominent issue in Native Policy after the war.[43]

Native Law was codified in von Lindequist's Ordinances of 1907, known collectively as the Native Ordinances. These regulations, consisting of the Pass, Control and Master and Servant Ordinances,[44] were the new straitjacket by which African society was to be reshaped, provided for the progressive imposition of social disciplining on the Africans, and laid the basis for a 'semi-free labour market', one which reduced the Africans to a pool of labour freely available to the colonial 'masters' as a result of a compulsion to enter into employment, but nevertheless – at least in theory – still allowed them a degree of freedom to choose their employers and to negotiate their wages.[45]

The basic prerequisite both for economic exploitation and for the protection of the *Schutzgebiet* against further 'Native uprisings' – another factor that ranked highly on the scale of priorities after the recent experiences of the war – was the registration and surveillance of the African population through the establishment of a seamless system of control that encompassed all aspects of life. The Administration was to be put in the position of being able to determine how many Africans were present in a particular District at any particular time, who they were, where they lived and whether and where they were employed. To achieve this, all Africans had to ensure that they were entered in Native Registers at their respective District Offices. In order to ensure that they could be unambiguously

43 For instance, the number of additional workers required was estimated to stand at 15,000 in 1911, which was approximately 75 per cent of the working male African population of 23,227. See also Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft* [English edition: *German Rule, African Subjects*] p. 177.

44 Verordnung, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Windhuk, betr. Maßregeln zur Kontrolle der Eingeborenen (Imperial Governor's Office, Windhoek: "Ordinance concerning Regulations for the Control and Surveillance of Natives"), 18 August 1907, NAN ZBU W.III.A.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 61a-62b; Verordnung, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Windhuk, betr. die Passpflicht der Eingeborenen (Imperial Governor's Office, Windhoek: "Ordinance concerning the Pass Requirement for Natives"), 18 August 1907, NAN ZBU W.III.A.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 63a-65b; Verordnung, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Windhuk, betr. Dienst- und Arbeitsverträge mit Eingeborenen (Imperial Governor's Office, Windhoek: "Ordinance concerning Employment and Service Contracts with Natives"), 18 August 1907, NAN ZBU W.III.A.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 66a-68a; Runderlass, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Windhuk, zu den Verordnungen, betr. die Kontrolle und Passpflicht der Eingeborenen sowie die Dienst- und Arbeitsverträge mit diesen (Imperial Governor's Office, Windhoek: "Circulated Decree accompanying the Ordinances concerning the Control of and Pass Requirement for Natives and Employment and Service Contracts with them"), 18 August 1907. All printed in: *DKG 11* (1907), p. 352–357.

45 I have shown in greater detail in Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft* [English edition: *German Rule, African Subjects*] that the requirements laid down as norms in the Native Ordinances are by no means identical with the social and economic realities of everyday colonial life. I also explain the concept of the 'semi-free' labour market in more detail there.

identified, all individuals over seven years of age needed a pass, consisting of a metal token bearing the imperial crown and a registration number which had to be worn visibly around the neck and presented on demand to the police and to "any white person". As a pass was valid only in one District and bore a series of numbers that showed which District this was, it was possible to determine at any time if an African had left his home District. Anyone who wished to do this legally – for a limited period of time – had to obtain a travel pass from the responsible police station.[46] At his destination he then had to obtain confirmation of his arrival, specifying the time. Thus the Africans were under comprehensive surveillance, and were not to be allowed any freedom of movement.

By contrast to the forced labour practised during the war both in the concentration camps of the colonial forces and in labour camps set up by private companies,[47] in the period after the war the elements of direct compulsion were replaced by measures of a structural nature. Imprisonment, fetters and whips were (officially and in theory) no longer to be used to force the 'Natives' to work, but rather a sophisticated system in which rewards were balanced by direct or indirect compulsion. For this reason, the African population was prohibited from owning large livestock or riding animals.[48] Additionally, as the land of the Herero and the Nama had already been expropriated, the Africans essentially only had the option of hiring themselves out on farms, to the engineering companies building the railways, or in the diamond mines. Anyone who did not take up such work would in all probability be punished as a vagrant, a fate that threatened anyone found "roaming around [...] without any demonstrable means of support".[49]

In addition to the compulsion to take up employment, a further measure applied in the field of population economics was the control of the distribution of the population. By refusing to issue travel passes, the colonial administration could regulate the distribution of the African workforce, as people were simply prevented from moving away from any District where labour was in short supply. But an unbalanced concentration of Africans, for example on farms near to the graves of

46 The only exemption from the travel pass obligation was if the African was travelling on behalf of or accompanied by his White employer: in this case, however, he required a letter of authority *(Begleitschreiben)* whose form and content corresponded to those of the travel pass.

47 On this, see for example Gewald, *Towards Redemption*, pp. 220–224; Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung*, pp. 126–135.

48 Anyone who nevertheless wanted to possess animals needed explicit governmental approval; so the government could control the degree of economic independence of the African population, either limiting or promoting it as it saw fit.

49 Verordnung, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Windhuk, betr. Maßregeln zur Kontrolle der Eingeborenen (Imperial Governor's Office, Windhoek: "Ordinance concerning Regulations for the Control and Surveillance of Natives"), 18 August 1907, NAN ZBU W.III.A.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 61a-62b.

their ancestors or other culturally important places, or else simply with particular employers, was not in tune with the concept of an economic utopia either. So in order to secure as even a distribution as possible of the African population across the country and thus on individual farms and in individual businesses, African settlements of more than ten families were prohibited.[50]

As practically all adult Africans had to work for Whites, a legal codification of employment relationships was necessary. At the same time, the Administration could use this to supplement the system of surveillance and control. One instrument to this end was the *Dienstbuch*, the Employment Logbook, which was prescribed for all employment contracts with a term of more than one month and was issued to the individual by the police, who also entered the conclusion of such contracts in the Native Register. The Employment Logbook had to contain the name, tribal affiliation and pass token number of the employee, but also the name of the employer, the date on which employment commenced, the term of the contract, the period of notice, and the "amount and type of remuneration to be granted to the native". The Logbook was therefore supposed to provide an unbroken sequence of information about the Africans' employment relationships and their availability for work, the 'willingness to work' so often invoked in colonial discourse. When the police issued the Employment Logbook they were supposed to ascertain "that the content of the contract had been made adequately comprehensible to the employee, and agreed to by him". To the displeasure of the farmers, this included instructing the Africans not only in respect of their duties, but of their rights as well.[51]

This provision, designed to protect the Africans, again indicates the ambivalent structure of the German governmental and administrative utopia, in which the 'semi-free' labour market combined rigorous control and the compulsion to take up employment with employees' rights intended to protect the 'Natives'. This was a very important matter for many officials; for such ostensibly protective elements in the system enabled them, subjectively, to feel reassured that they were neither the henchmen of commerce nor the executors of a ruthless policy of suppression, but to believe that they were in fact engaged in working to establish a balancing out of interests as between Europeans and Africans:

50 Employers who required more workers needed special permission from the Administration. Otherwise, larger settlements were legal only in the vicinity of the larger towns or cities.

51 For example, see the report of Gobabis District Office, where employers were rarely willing to make contracts of employment lasting longer than one month, as they feared the explanations that the Africans would be given by the police. District Office Gobabis to Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek, 31 October 1908, NAN ZBU W.III.A.3. Vol. 1, Sheet 42a.

> The Ordinance relating to Employment Contracts with natives is to be welcomed as a great step forward, in the interests both of the whites and of the natives themselves. [...] The native will lose the feeling of being practically a slave and deprived of all rights in respect of his employer, and if he is well treated and paid in accordance with his performance will do everything he can to keep his employer satisfied.[52]

This balancing out of interests was a central feature of the society of racial privilege, a socially hierarchical society in which the most important distinguishing feature was 'race'. According to the fictional narrative propagated by the Germans, it was supposed to give rise to a degree of stability in the relationship between Africans and Whites that could not be achieved through pure force. For this reason, White employers were also to be monitored: for the Administration had its doubts as to whether some of the settlers were really suited to pursuing the task of colonisation:

> It is absolutely essential that those whites who are responsible for supervising private werfs [Herero settlements] should themselves be subject to monitoring, since some of our settler material, coming mainly from very modest backgrounds at home, are easily inclined to exploit improperly any position of power granted to them.[53]

However inaccurate this analysis was – for in the *Prügelkultur*, the 'culture of fisticuffs' or 'culture of physical violence', that was emerging in South West Africa it was not only the socially marginalised who beat, whipped and boxed ears; it was rich and poor, aristocrats and commoners alike – statements such as "The introduction of the Employment Logbook and of contracts of employment serves the interests of both the employer and the employee in equal measure. This is the only way to prevent workers from running away and to protect them from abuse and exploitation"[54] should not merely be written off as colonialist propaganda. These comments stem from internal correspondence that was not meant to be disclosed to public scrutiny and that allows a profound insight into the self-image and the self-legitimisation strategies of the colonial officials. They saw themselves as bringers of 'civilisation' and as non-partisan judges over Africans and Europeans alike, agents of the social and economic transformation into a 'modern' society and an efficiently functioning economy who were committed to the general, i.e. White, public welfare. They saw Africans as culturally inferior, at a stage of development equivalent to that of a child and incapable of leading an indepen-

52 District Office Swakopmund to Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek, 8 June 1907, NAN ZBU W.III.A.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 26b-27a.

53 District Office Outjo to Imperial Governor's Office Windhoek, 27 May 1907, NAN ZBU W.III.A.1. Vol. 1, Sheet 21a-24a.

54 Ibid.

dent life without a guardian, the colonial 'master'. He first had to be given an upbringing or education, and this could best be done in the service of the 'Whites', either as a domestic servant or houseboy, or else as a cheap labourer on farms, in the construction of the railways or in the mines. The ideology of the inferiority of the colonised peoples led to the officials failing to perceive any contradiction between their supposed task of 'raising up' the Africans and the economic benefits they gained from colonial rule. In particular, the protective provisions in the Native Ordinances served them as proof that they were fulfilling their duty of care with regard to the Africans. At the same time, however, it was their conviction of the superiority of their own culture, of their own tradition of administration, and their belief that in building up a 'modern' state they were acting in accordance with the laws of history, that led them to extend this administration to take in the indigenous population, without any regard for the consequences this gave rise to for the latter.[55]

It would of course be wrong to confuse the German governmental and administrative utopia, the utopia of absolute control over the African population and the total, all-round planning of their use as labour as envisaged by the colonial bureaucrats, with what came about as a result of how it was actually implemented in practice. The system failed for many reasons, which included refractoriness on the part of the Africans just as much as the refusal of the settlers to cooperate with the colonial authorities and the 'racial solidarity' of officials, judges and settlers when it was a matter of investigating crimes and offences against Africans. Thus the hopes of the German colonial administration that its sophisticated system of regulation would secure peace and order and also allow the Africans to enjoy at least a minimal degree of protection while they were gradually acclimatising to their new lives as dependent workers, were not fulfilled. Many officials turned a blind eye to the pronounced culture of physical violence that prevailed on the farms, on the railway construction sites and on the diamond fields. Those who wanted to take action against it were thwarted by the system. There was scarcely any judge who was willing to sentence a White person for mistreating Africans. White prosecution witnesses were hardly to be found, while testimony given by Black witnesses was simply not believed. In a colonial system that was rooted in the 'racial' hierarchy as between the colonisers and the colonised, there was no way in which the Africans' credibility deficit could be eliminated.

Even if the governmental and administrative utopia was unrealisable, it nevertheless has a significance going far beyond that for German South West Africa.

55 With regard to this and to the failure of this utopia, see: Zimmerer, *Deutsche Herrschaft* [English edition: *German Rule, African Subjects*].

There were many colonial fantasies and dreams of a perfect world, but rarely was there such a systematic attempt to turn them into reality. In the service of a utopia deemed to be both rational and progressive, colonial administrators attempted to methodically reorder a whole country on a racial basis without any regard for the original inhabitants. It is the destructive potential that was released in the service of a form of development considered to be ideal and of an obsessive delusion that whatever it was one sought to achieve in this world, it was merely a matter of adequate planning, and that it was possible for thousands of people to be comprehensively monitored and controlled with their individual rights subordinated to the attainment of this utopia, which make the colonial experiment in German South West Africa an important episode in the history of population economics. Its shadow looms over the second German attempt to build a colonial empire in the years 1939–1945. And as in eastern Europe during the Second World War, those who played their part as servants of the occupying power were neither monsters nor psychopaths, but rather 'ordinary men', or better, 'ordinary bureaucrats'.