

3 The Central Railway

3.1 From *Laissez Faire* to Obscure Regulations

3.1.1 Supervising a Colonial Railway

We hear only a fraction of what is going on in railway construction; but the little that is known is still so bad that we cannot and will not take responsibility for its continuation.

MP Gustav Noske – Social Democrats (SPD) – *Reichstag*: 10 March 1914.¹

Gustav Noske's pledge to reject the *Reich's* colonial budget in early March 1914 is certainly typical for the policies of the Social Democrats in imperial Germany. Although the SPD gradually abandoned their fundamental opposition towards any German colonial policies and imperialism, it was one of the very few parties in the *Reichstag* that criticised German colonial policies. Along with parts of the Catholic party, the *Zentrum*, the Social Democrats condemned excessive violence exerted against the colonised populations and attempted to resolve colonial scandals repeatedly. The primary means to this end was often to reject the colonial budget, which was decisive to finance any colonial projects overseas.² In this respect, Noske himself was the central figure of the Social Democrats and acted as the party's expert and spokesman regarding German colonial policies in the *Reichstag*. Although generally criticising German colonialism on behalf of his party, Noske was certainly part of the right wing of the SPD. In German history, this politician is primarily notorious as minister of defence in the early years of the Weimar Republic. Having bloodily put down uprisings of the labour movement in Berlin of 1919 and 1920 with the decisive aid of anti-democratic and right-wing paramilitaries, he went down in history as 'worker slaughterer' and 'bloodhound'. Regarding German colonialism, Noske counted as one

1 Noske, Gustav. '232. Sitzung. Dienstag, den 10. März 1914'. 7984–7993. *Verhandlungen des Reichstags. Bd. 294.1914*. Berlin: 1914. Web. http://www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt_k13_bsb00003390_00080.html (21 June 2018), p. 7991.

2 Cf. Melber, Henning. "... dass die Kultur der Neger gehoben werde!" – Kolonialdebatten im deutschen Reichstag'. *Kolonialmetropole Berlin. Eine Spurensuche*. 67–72. Eds. Ulrich van der Heyden and Joachim Zeller. Berlin: 2002, p. 71. Cf. Becker. 'Die Hottentotten-Wahlen (1907)', pp. 177–190. Cf. Bösch, Frank. 'Der Ankläger. Erzberger und die Kolonialpolitik im frühen 20. Jahrhundert'. *Matthias Erzberger. Ein Demokrat in Zeiten des Hasses*. 47–71. Eds. Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg in Verbindung mit der Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart. Karlsruhe: 2013, pp. 50–54. Cf. Guettel, Jens-Uwe. 'The Myth of a Pro Colonialist SPD: German Social Democracy and Imperialism before World War I'. 452–484. *Central European History*, vol. 45, no. 3. Cambridge: 2012. Web. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23270519?seq=1> (26 October 2020).

of the very few experts on the issue in his party. In general, he was uninterested in any theoretical debate on colonialism and took a very practical approach towards German colonial policies. Taking the existence of the *Reich's* overseas territories for granted, he rejected excesses of colonial violence but strongly advocated the idea of allegedly lifting the 'cultural level' of the colonised people by means of colonial domination. Above all, he advocated using the economic benefits from colonialism to uplift the working classes in Germany. To Noske, this was only possible by increased economic activity that would improve the standard of living of the local populations in Africa, but also especially the living conditions of the German people living in the *Reich*. Central to Noske's understanding of German colonialism was the construction of infrastructure, i.e. particularly railways, to 'develop' the colonial territories. As an advocate of imperial infrastructure, Noske had personally been in favour of passing the colonies budget to finance colonial railway construction since 1911. Only his party's resistance to supporting German colonial politics compelled Noske to speak against corresponding railway plans in the *Reichstag*, as he had repeated his support for colonial railway construction as late as February 1914.³

Hence, Gustav Noske's criticism against colonial railway construction in German East Africa has exactly to be seen in this light. With the completion of the *Central Railway's* construction only a few kilometres away, the MPs debated future railway projects for the colony in March 1914. Reminding the *Reichstag* of forced and convict labour at the *Central Railway* and insufficient sanitary conditions and medical treatment for the workers, Noske and his party spoke against any further railway construction in German East Africa such as the planned *Ruanda Railway* in 1914. Implicitly, Noske also criticised the inadequate information management prevalent regarding the construction sites, stating that the German public, parliament, and the governmental policy makers only knew "a fraction" about the living and working conditions along the railroad. While the working conditions will be investigated in the following sections, Noske's criticism about the poor information supply concerning the construction of the *Central Railway* directs attention to the question of which records about the *Central Railway's* construction were conveyed from the construction camps to the German *Reichstag* or rather the German public. Apart from general questions of historical source criticism discussed above, it is crucial to

3 Cf. Wette, Wolfgang. "Noske, Gustav". *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 19, 1998, pp. 347–384. Web. <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118588761.html> (1 July 2021). Cf. Schröder, Hans-Crhistoph. *Gustav Noske und die Kolonialpolitik des Deutschen Kaiserreiches*. Berlin and Bonn: 1979, pp. 7–41, 48–55. Cf. Noske, Gustav. *Kolonialpolitik und Sozialdemokratie*. Stuttgart: 1914, pp. 198–208. Cf. Noske, Gustav. 'Kolonialpolitik nach dem Kriege'. 481–488. *Die Neue Zeit. Wochenschrift der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie*. Vol. 1, no. 21. 22 February 1918. Cf. Noske, Gustav. *Wie ich wurde. Selbstbiographien volkstümlicher Persönlichkeiten*. Berlin: 1919, p. 27.

understand which information was available to whom and how it was conveyed (if ever) from the actual construction sites in German East Africa to the *Reichstag*, the German public and the *Reich's* administration. If information was not delivered from the German colony to the *Reich*, one must ask the questions of *why* and *how*.

Considering the patch-work character of the 'colonial state' in German East Africa, as also in other German colonies, it is not very surprising that the quality and amount of the information about the overseas territories were most of the time far from satisfying. This included any information available to *Reichstag* MPs in general,⁴ but also for railway construction in German East Africa in particular. Poor information supply was acute especially during the initial years of construction between 1905 and 1908. When the initial 200 km from coastal Dar es Salaam to Morogoro were being built, the question of why only very little reliable information about railway construction left the German colony is comparably easy to answer: hardly any documents were ever produced by the German authorities. Besides general questions of historical conveyance, the major reason for this absence of documents is the absence of any administrative bodies that supervised the construction process. Especially in this period, the *OAEG* and its direct construction organ, the company *Philipp Holzmann*, enjoyed a high degree of freedom devoid of any clear regulations and any supervising authorities. Neither the *Reich* in Berlin nor the *Gouvernement* in Dar es Salaam had issued any specific regulations that could have directed the companies to any specific labour policies. Consequently, there were no governmental bodies to supervise construction either.⁵ Instead, paragraph seven of the railway building contract between *Holzmann* and the governmental administrations delegated all aspects regarding labour to the construction company. Accordingly, the company had not only to recruit the necessary workforce, it also had to take care of the labourers' food and lodging, as well as the workers' healthcare. Of course, *Holzmann* was often supported by the colonial government in all of these aspects, but contractual arrangements made the building company accountable for almost all decisions related to the construction process and deprived the *Gouvernement* of any forms of supervision.⁶ This *laissez faire* policy followed by the German (colonial) authori-

4 Cf. Pesek. *Koloniale Herrschaft*, pp. 190–265. Cf. Habermas. *Skandal in Togo*, pp. 32–41, 99–102.

5 Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. *Wirtschaftsarchiv*. Philipp Holzmann. W1/2 – 278/1. Holzmann in Afrika. *Bau der Mittellandbahn Daressalam-Kigoma von Baurat Ferdinand Grages*. Frankfurt a.M.: 4 June 1948, pp. 7–8. Cf. Allmaras, Franz. 'Ich baue 2000 km Eisenbahnen'. *Heiß war der Tag. Das Kolonialbuch für das junge Deutschland*. 35–55. Ed. Hans Ernst Pfeiffer. Leipzig: 1938, pp. 41–42.

6 Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. *Wirtschaftsarchiv*. Philipp Holzmann. W1/2–517. Verträge Morogoro-Tabora, Tabora-Kigoma, Umbau Daressalaam-Morogoro, Ruandabahn, "Vertrag über den Eisenbahnbau von Morogoro nach Tabora (1908)", p. 6 and cf. "Vertrag über die Umbauten der Stamm-

ties regarding railway construction in general and regarding labour and the workforce in particular changed only gradually and incomprehensively in the course of the entire construction period until 1914. It is therefore not very surprising that without administrative bodies, there was and is only scarce documented information available especially for the first years of construction between 1905 and 1907. With little information ever produced in situ, even less information about railway construction in German East Africa was conveyed to any parts of the world, including the *Reich* and the public debates in the *Reichstag*, of course.

With the German authorities establishing some railway construction regulations and labour recruitment laws from 1909 onwards, the information situation about labour at the *Central Railway* improved, but still left a lot to be desired. In the course of Dernburg's introduction of general colonial labour protection rights – the *Arbeiterverordnungen* (workers' ordinances) from 1909 onwards – also many aspects regarding labour at the *Central Railway's* construction sites were subject to more legislation subsequently. Along with the introduction of labour commissioners, who were intended to check and control the colonial employers as well as to exert disciplining measures on the African workers, the colonial administration established a separate office to supervise railway construction work. The railway commissioner's office (*Eisenbahnkommissariat*) was established in early 1909 and its railway commissioner Meier, who lived in Dar es Salaam, was primarily responsible for anything related to land procurement for the railroad and railway police. Meier's staff comprised the construction supervision (*amtliche Bauaufsicht*), consisting of one senior civil servant (first Mr Popcke, then Mr Batzner) and staffed with five to seven German civil servants who observed construction works and labour conditions on the spot along the tracks of the *Central Railway*. This supervisory body was supported by the railway department (*Eisenbahnreferat*) run by Mr Rosien. In early August 1912, the railway commissioner's office was readjusted: two more railway commissioners were employed, and their tasks and duties were enlarged. After this reform, there were three railway commissioners (*Eisenbahnkommissare*) on duty in German East Africa. Like the very low number of four labour commissioners responsible for the observation of the labour legislation in the entire colony, the three railway commissioners oversaw a railway network that was almost 2,000 km long. After the reform of 1912, the railway commissioners had their offices in coastal Dar es Salaam, central Tabora and in northern Buiko. As the railway commissioner in Buiko was exclusively in charge of the northern *Usam-*

strecke Daressalam-Morogoro (1912)", p. 6. Cf. Eckhart G. Franz and Geissler, Peter (Eds.). *Das Deutsch-Ostafrika-Archiv. Inventar der Abteilung 'German Records' im Nationalarchiv der Vereinigten Republik Tansania, Dar es Salaam. Band I. Einleitung, Zentralverwaltung*. Marburg: 1973, pp. 27–28.

bara Railway (by 1914 ca. 400 km), there were de facto only two (!) railway commissioners for the entire *Central Railway*. The one in Dar es Salaam observed the modification of the home line Dar es Salaam – Morogoro (200 km), as the initially built track had proven to have several flaws and weaknesses and needed reconstruction. The other railway commissioner in Tabora observed anything related to construction works between Morogoro and Kigoma, which were more than 1,000 km away from each other. As usual in German colonial East Africa, the administration was certainly understaffed for its assigned task.⁷

All three railway commissioners were trained railway engineers who had been given the status of civil servants by the colonial administration. They were thus subordinate to the *Gouverneur* only, but superior to the construction supervisors (*Bauaufsicht*) and works supervisors (*Betriebsaufsicht*). All these three bodies (*Bauaufsicht*, *Betriebsaufsicht* and *Eisenbahnkommissare*) had the duty to supervise the privately owned and privately run railway construction companies as well as the operating companies. The major construction company *Philipp Holzmann* and the operating company, the *Ostafrikanische Eisenbahngesellschaft (OAE)*, were therefore officially under the supervision of the railway commissioners as the major institution of oversight. Under the railway commissioners served the construction supervision and the works supervision as minor departments responsible for the local levels of supervision.⁸ The general duties of the two superior railway commissioners

7 There were some modifications over time and some railway commissioners were moved from one location to another, depending on the construction process. The overall number of railway commissioners did not change, however. Cf. Eckhart and Geissler. *Das Deutsch-Ostafrika Archiv. Band I*, pp. 27–30. Cf. Tanzania National Archives (TNA). G17/63. Monatliche Berichte der örtlichen Baubeamten über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Morogoro-Tabora. Bd. 1. 1908–1910, “Dr. Ritter an den Herrn Eisenbahn-Commissar Dar es Salaam, Kidete 17. Januar 1909, VIII Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/64. Monatliche Berichte der örtlichen Baubeamten über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Morogoro-Tabora. Bd. 2. 1910–1911, “Bauaufsicht Zentralbahn no 1301. Kidete, 19. Juni 1910, an den Herrn Eisenbahn Kommissar Daressalaam, VIII Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/81. [Personal- und Verwaltungsangelegenheiten der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Morogoro-Tabora, vorwiegend allgem.] 1912–1914. For a general overview about labour legislation in German East Africa cf. Schröder. *Gesetzgebung und “Arbeiterfrage”*, pp. 380–383, 595–598. For more technical details but less focus on the conflicts between the colonial administration and *Holzmann* cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 112–126. For understaffing and lack of administration at the *Congo-Océan Railroad* cf. Daughton. *In the Forest of No Joy*, pp. 214–238, 305–306.

8 Cf. “Eisenbahnkommissar”. *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, 1920, Band I, p. 544. Web. University of Frankfurt o.M. <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/Standardframeseite.php?suche=Kommissar> (26 October 2020). Cf. “Eisenbahnbehörden”. *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, 1920, Band I, p. 529. Web. University of Frankfurt o.M. http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Eisenbahnbeh%F6rden (26 October

of the *Central Railway* were predominantly paperwork. They had to maintain constant correspondence with the colonial *Gouvernement*, the construction companies (esp. *Holzmann*), and the operating company (*OAEG*) informing about anything related to the track's construction. The regulations obliged the commissioners to send monthly reports about the construction works and labour conditions along the central railroad to the *Gouvernement*, *Holzmann* and the *OAEG* in written and tabular format. In contrast to this constant correspondence between these three bodies, the colonial legislation prohibited any direct correspondence between the railway commissioners and the Colonial Office in Berlin. Hence, any information gathered along the railroad by the commissioners had to pass the *Gouverneur's* office in Dar es Salaam first, before it was allowed to be forwarded to the *Reich's* Colonial State Secretary in Berlin.⁹ As major supervisory bodies, both the railway commissioners and the *Gouverneur* were able to act as decisive gatekeepers about any information conveyed about railway construction.

In 1909, the *Gouverneur* appointed governmental master builder (*Regierungsbaumeister*) Molfenter as the railway commissioner based in Dar es Salaam. From the colony's capital at the Indian Ocean, he had to supervise the reconstruction of the home line from coastal Dar es Salaam to Morogoro. Governmental master builder Batzner took office as second railway commissioner of the central line in Tabora in the same year. Located in Tabora at the mid-point of the railroad, Batzner supervised the construction works and labour conditions between Morogoro and the ca. 1,000 km distant ending point of the railway, Kigoma at Lake Tanganyika. According to their contract, besides their paperwork both Molfenter and Batzner had to "visit the construction sites as often as possible" to gather as much information as they could about the railway's progress and the workforce. To assist them in their tasks, both railway commissioners could employ some supervisory staff. This supervisory staff worked primarily at the local level and travelled along the railroad almost every day. The local supervisory staff (*Streckenaufsichtsbeamte*) were obliged to keep journals about their observations at any time. Based on their journals, the supervisory staff had to send standardised monthly reports to the railway commissioner in charge. The latter processed their findings

2020). Cf. "Eisenbahnaufsicht". *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, 1920, Band I, p. 525. Web. *University of Frankfurt o.M.* http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Eisenbahnaufsicht (26 October 2020). Cf. "Eisenbahnbeamte". *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, 1920, Band I, p. 528–529. Web. *University of Frankfurt o.M.* http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/php/suche_db.php?suchname=Eisenbahnbeamte (26 October 2020). For more technical details but less focus on the conflicts between the colonial administration and *Holzmann* cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 112–126.

9 Cf. TNA. G17/81, pp. 1–3 (J. No. 16401/XII.). Cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 112–126.

and fused them into his own reports, which were then sent to the *Gouvernement*, *Holzmann* and the *OAEG*. The standardised monthly reports of the supervisory staff had to report about ten major aspects of the construction process: earth works, bridge constructions and culverts, building constructions, sub- and super-structure, the general progress of construction, exceptional occurrences (e.g. train accidents), labour conditions (food and lodging of the workers and their (medical) treatment), inventory, the supervisory staff's individual cash department and forwarding correspondence about postal or cargo delivery. Finally, these reports explained which works had been carried out by the construction company itself (i.e. *Holzmann*) and which tasks had been delegated to the numerous sub-contractors who were indispensable for the construction of the *Central Railway*.¹⁰

As a result of the administrative reform of 1912, the number of documents produced by the railway administration multiplied significantly and many of these historical documents survive in the archives. Therefore, much more information is available about the labour conditions along the *Central Railway* from 1912 onwards compared to the preceding years. Yet, as comprehensive as these reports might appear at first glance, much information about the working conditions at the *Central Railway* was lost in the administrative processes and the forwarding of correspondence. Briefly, not all information gathered in German East Africa necessarily reached the *Reich's* government in Berlin, not to mention the MPs of the *Reichstag* nor the German public in general. Although the reports were generally sent regularly by the supervisory staff to the railway commissioners and subsequently forwarded to the *Gouvernement*, some information always got lost on its way. In general, this reflects the ambivalent character of modern bureaucracy established especially in the nineteenth century. This ambivalence finds its expression “in the simultaneity of a relatively narrow legal binding and a relatively large scope for interpretation of the law in the working on individual processes.”¹¹ Besides this ambivalent character of the interpretation of law, the reasons for the leaky information supply were rooted in the realities of colonial rule in German East Africa. A first reason was illness. In particular, the few men of the local supervisory staff often suffered from diseases such as malaria, blackwater fever, typhoid or heatstroke. Contracting such diseases could lay a member of the supervisory staff low for weeks. As substitutes for the men on duty would have had to be recruited in Germany, immediate replacement was

¹⁰ Cf. TNA. G17/81, “Dienstsanweisung für die Streckenaufsichtsbeamten bei Neubauten und Umbauten auf Schutzgebietsbahnen”, pp. 1–5. For more technical details but less focus on the conflicts between the colonial administration and *Holzmann* cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 112–126.

¹¹ Becker, Peter. ‘Bürokratie’. *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*. 30 August 2016. Web. http://docupedia.de/zg/Becker_buerokratie_v1_de_2016 (12 October 2021).

hardly ever possible. If the diseases turned out fatal, sending a new man to East Africa took at least a month. As a result of sickness, the information supply about individual route sections was often interrupted and neither the railway commissioner nor the Governor nor anybody in Germany received sufficient information about the individual supervisor's route section. At times only a minority of the supervisory staff was healthy enough to work, which further limited information supply. In January 1910, for instance, only two out of five men of the construction supervision could work: one had contracted malaria and two, typhoid – one case lethal. In July of the same year, four out of eight men of the supervision suffered from similar serious diseases again and another death occurred.¹² Thus, at times when large parts of the construction supervision were laid low, no accurate information about the railway's construction process was available. Noske's claim quoted above is therefore at least partly justified. Besides sickness, there were also other reasons why the information sent to Berlin proved at times unsatisfactory indeed.

Other reasons for insufficient reports were interruptions or failures in (postal¹³) delivery or delays of other supervisory bodies on whose information a member of the paramount supervisory staff relied. Sometimes, the actual number of workers employed at the *Central Railway* could not be provided and you can doubt whether an exact number was ever conveyed. Examining all surviving reports of the railway commissioners and the construction supervision, it is clear that the railway commissioners complained repeatedly about incomplete reports by the supervisory staff. According to the regulations, the latter's monthly standardised reports had to provide

12 Cf. TNA. G17/63, "Bericht über den Arbeitsfortschritt an der Zentralbahn im Monat März 1909, 8. Personal und Arbeiterverhältnisse", "Monatsbericht für Dezember [1909], [. . .] Kidete, 17. Januar 1909 [sic! 1910], VIII. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse". Cf. TNA. G17/158. Allgemeine [Angelegenheiten der] Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Morogoro-Tabora. Bd. 3. 1909–1911, "Hillenkamp an Eisenbahnkommissar 8. Februar 1910". Cf. TNA. G17/64, "J. No. 1621. Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten am Ende des Monats Juli [1910]. XI. Personal der Amtl. Bauaufsicht". Cf. TNA. G12/202. Bauberichte und -dispositionen der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma [sowie der projektierten Eisenbahn Tabora-Kagera-Fluß (Ruanda-Bahn)] 1911–1913. Bd. 1., "Bauarbeiten an der Ostförikanischen Mittellandbahn. Bahnbau Tabora-Kigoma. Monatsbereich April 1912, IX. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse", "Bahnbauten an der Ostaförikanischen Mittellandbahn. Bahnbau Tabora-Kigoma. Monatsbereich Mai 1912, IX. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse", "Bauarbeiten an der Ostaförikanischen Mittellandbahn. Bahnbau Tabora-Kigoma. Monatsbericht Juni 1912, X. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse". Cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 134–146.

13 For a general idea about the postal correspondence between (colonial) Africa and Europe and all its necessities, difficulties and flaws, especially before the advent of telegraphy cf. Prass, Reiner. 'Briefe aus Äthiopien und dem Sudan. Die Briefkommunikation zwischen europäischen Reisenden und dem Kartographen August Petermann in Gotha, 1854–1880'. *Verbindung halten. (Post)Kommunikation unter schwierigen Verhältnissen*. 87–109. Ed. René Smolarski et al. Göttingen: 2021, pp. 92–103.

information on ten major aspects of railway construction ranging from earth works to labour conditions, but recurrently failed to provide all the information as demanded. Throughout the entire construction period between 1905 and 1914, there are complaints in the sources that information on the workers' health was not noted down, or information about wages was missing, for example. Moreover, at times the construction company *Holzmann* themselves failed to report significant incidents such as work-related accidents or train derailings to the supervisory bodies.¹⁴ In general, quarrels about competencies and failures related to anything in the construction process of the *Central Railway* were frequent between the *OAEG*, *Holzmann*, the *Gouvernement*, the railway commissioners and their construction supervision. Occasionally, it even seems that the responsible parties deliberately held back information reporting shortcomings of anything related to railway construction.

3.1.2 From Conflicts to Concealment?

The *Gouvernement*, the *Schutztruppe*, the planters and, last but not least, the contractor constantly made great demands on the labour force of the natives, whose numbers and willingness to work were generally insufficient [. . .] When, in the course of the construction period, the *Gouvernement* appointed its own labour commissioners to protect the natives against exploitation by unscrupulous planters and [sub-]contractors, the labour question was hardly brought any closer to a solution; but the complaints about the difficulties that the labour commissioners put in the way of the [sub-]contractors increased.

Holzmann Engineer Ferdinand Grages. Frankfurt o.M., 4 June 1948.¹⁵

Building a railway is a complex long-term undertaking with manifold challenges and obligations. From planning to completion, numerous demanding tasks must be carried out adequately by a great variety of individuals and administrative bodies involved. Controversies about where and how to build a railway best are integral to such an endeavour. This holds true for the *Central Railway* in German East Africa too, of course. Such controversies were prevalent not only during the planning stage, but also during the construction process. Conflicts between the *Gouvernement*, the railway commissioners and their local supervisory staff, *Holzmann*

¹⁴ Cf. TNA. G17/63, "VII E. I no. 534 27. Febr. 1909, 8. Personal und Arbeiterverhältnisse", "VIII. 7 no. 541/09, 1. März 1909", "An die Firma Holzmann Hier. Drslm 22/3 10.", "Daressalam, den 26. März 1910. An den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar". Cf. TNA. G17/65. Monatliche Berichte der örtlichen Baubeamten über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Morogoro-Tabora. 1908–1912, "Eisenbahnkommissar no. 659 23. März 1909. An die amtliche Bauaufsicht der Zentralbahn", "Goweko. 6.5.12. An den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar Tabora".

¹⁵ Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Grages*, p. 4.

and the *OAEG* ranged from technical issues, such as the railway's general alignment, its gradients and the allotment of ditches and drains, to issues of competencies and responsibilities regarding all aspects of the construction process. Another example for conflicts occurred in the context of controlling the disease of 'sleeping sickness'. To erase potential breeding grounds of the sickness' host, the tsetse fly, between Tabora and Kigoma, the railway commissioner urged *Holzmann* to clear bushes and woods along the newly built track in the years 1912–1914. As *Holzmann* had carried out the clearing job, they wanted the *Gouvernement* to pay for the work accordingly. Governor Schnee rejected any payment, claiming that the building contract required *Holzmann* to pay for it. In the end, a compromise was reached, and the costs were split. But the dispute was only settled after two years when the rail-head had reached its destination Kigoma in 1914.¹⁶ Conflicts also arose in the context of exchanging information about labour conditions. Although the latest research on colonial railway construction suggests general harmonious and effective cooperation

16 Cf. TNA. G17/30. Berichte des Baubeamten Buchner [über den Fortgang der Arbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Morogoro-Tabora]. 1908–1910. Cf. TNA. G17/158, "Holzmann an den Herren Eisenbahnkommissar, 22.3.1910". Cf. TNA. G17/125. Schlafkrankheitsbekämpfung an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma. 1912–1914. For research on sleeping sickness cf. Ehlers, Sarah. *Europa und die Schlafkrankheit. Koloniale Seuchenbekämpfung, europäische Identitäten und moderne Medizin 1890–1950*. Göttingen: 2019. Cf. Webel, Mari K. *The Politics of Disease Control. Sleeping Sickness in Eastern Africa, 1890–1920*. Athens (Ohio): 2019. Cf. Ehlers, Sarah. 'Medical Missions – Racial Visions: Fighting Sleeping Sickness in Colonial Africa in the Early Twentieth Century'. *Health and Difference. Rendering Human Variation in Colonial Engagements*. 91–110. Eds. Alexandra Widmer Veronika and Lipphardt. New York: 2016. Cf. Isobe, Hiroyuki. 'Eine rationale Kolonialpolitik? Die Bekämpfung der Schlafkrankheit im deutschen Schutzgebiet Ostafrika vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg'. *Peripulus 2001. Jahrbuch für Ausereuropäische Geschichte*. 115–132. Ed. Christoph Marx. Berlin: 2011. Cf. Webel, Mari. 'Ziba Politics and the German Sleeping Sickness Camp at Kigarama, Tanzania, 1907–1914'. 399–423. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 47, no. 3. Boston: 2014. Web. *Jstor*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24393436> (1 June 2021). Cf. Eckart, Wolfgang U. 'The Colony as Laboratory: German Sleeping Sickness Campaigns in German East Africa and in Togo, 1900–1914'. *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, vol. 24, no. 1. Napoli: 2002. Web. *Jstor*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23332441> (1 June 2021). Cf. MacKenzie, John M. 'Experts and Amateurs: tsetse, nangana, and sleeping sickness in East and Central Africa'. *Imperialism and the Natural World*. 187–212. Ed. John M. MacKenzie. Manchester: 1990. Regarding railway construction, sleeping sickness features repeatedly in the sources. They deal overwhelmingly with construction regulations at railway stations, intended to prevent the spreading of the disease. When visiting the archives in Dar es Salaam, I did not focus on the connection between sleeping sickness and labour. Generally, only few references to the connections between labour and sleeping sickness were found and they appear insignificant compared to incidents of smallpox. Cf. G17/123. Arbeiterverhältnisse der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma. Bd. 1. 1912–1913. Cf. G12/164. Bauberichte und -dispositionen der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn. 1909–1915. Cf. TNA. G17/64.

between the various protagonists,¹⁷ numerous and profound conflicts were prevalent throughout the entire construction process.

Generally, *Holzmann* divided the entire railway into several construction ‘sections’ (*Bausektion*), each in charge of the building of some kilometres of railway. Generally, a construction section consisted of two major bodies. The first body was directly operated and administrated by *Holzmann* and the second body consisted of numerous European sub-contractors, as *Holzmann* outsourced many of their construction tasks. The route sections directly run by *Holzmann* proper employed ca. ten to twenty Europeans as engineers, foremen or overseers, some Indian or African craftsmen (ca. 100 maximum) for more complex tasks such as bridge building and a few hundred African workers for the simpler tasks like earth works (ca. 100–300). According to the regulations, each route section had to report monthly the numbers and types of workers employed by both *Holzmann* and the sub-contractors to the construction supervisor in charge. The construction supervisors then processed the information gathered and forwarded it to their superior railway commissioner. At times and for reasons unknown, *Holzmann*’s route sections refused to provide the data related to labour conditions, for example claiming in the final months of 1913 that they were no longer required to do so. Irritated by this behaviour, construction supervisor Fick complained to his superior railway commissioner in December 1913:

Precise information about the personnel employed by the company and the [sub-]contractors as well as about the work performed could not be given in the construction report, as Section 11 refused to provide information in this regard, advising to turn to the Tabora Construction Directorate. The reason for this practice is all the less explicable, as it is evident from the files here[.] [S]everal previous sections and, as hitherto, also Building Section 11 [have] readily answered such enquiries to their full extent[. . .].¹⁸

Other route sections also refused to provide the demanded information, causing the railway commissioner to intervene.¹⁹ On the commissioner’s request, *Holzmann* construction director Hoffmann confirmed the interrupted information flow and justified this new policy, stating:

We do not consider it permissible for our subordinate departments to provide your supervisors with information to the extent required by your supervisors, without any control on

¹⁷ Cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 120–126.

¹⁸ TNA. G17/121. Monatliche Berichte der örtlichen Baubeamten über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma. Bd. 2 1913–1914, “Kigoma[?], den 3. Dezember 1913. [. . .] Monatsbericht [. . .] Dezember 1913”.

¹⁹ TNA. G17/121, “Scheel an Eisenbahnkommissar Sima, den 6. XII.13”, “Forchmann an Eisenbahnkommissar Bericht über den Stand der Bauarbeiten am 30. November auf der Strecke von km 340–388 [. . .] Mikesse 30. November 1913”.

our part, which is then used by your supervisors and by you for official reports. The documents for your monthly reports can be obtained from us as far as we are able and obliged to give them to you.²⁰

Railway commissioner Molfenter accepted Hoffmann's new policy but insisted on his right to observe the construction process and the construction company. Probably suspecting concealment by *Holzmann*, the railway commissioner reminded all of his subordinate construction supervisors "to provide useful information for control purposes on the basis of [your] own investigations. [. . .] On this occasion, I would also like to point out that according to the construction contract, you are entitled to access the workplaces, workshops and infirmaries at any time for the purpose of supervision."²¹ This was neither the first, nor the only occasion when *Holzmann* behaved rather uncooperatively regarding information about labour conditions at the *Central Railway*. This made it difficult for the railway commissioners to complete their reports, of course. The complaint of the railway commissioner sent to *Holzmann* in June 1912 illustrates these difficulties:

I ask you repeatedly to send me the requested documents. The [. . .] Gouvernement has requested a detailed report. Furthermore, it seems necessary to deal with individual questions in more detail, especially with regard to the workers, the state of health and nutrition, in order to counter various attacks in the Reichstag (especially from the Social Democratic side). I therefore humbly request you to send me documents on the following points: State of health of the Europeans, deaths and their causes. Composition of the coloured people according to tribes. Suitability of the various tribes for work, duration of commitment, voluntary commitment, influence of work and regular diet on the health of the people. What were the people fed on and how was the food obtained? Illnesses, deaths, cause of death, care during illness. Who provided the sick service, where were the medical staff and hospital stationed? As I have to prepare the annual report soon, I would be grateful if you could send me the documents by 20 June [1912] at the latest.²²

Not only the fact that the railway commissioner stressed his repeated requests to *Holzmann*, but also the fact that he gave such a detailed list of the information required reveals that he had been far from satisfied with the information policies of the construction company thus far. More importantly, the railway commissioner even refers to the pressure exerted by the *Reichstag* or rather the Social Democrats (SPD) on the colonial administration to provide adequate information.

²⁰ TNA. G17/121, "Hoffmann an Eisenbahnkommissar I 249/35, Tabora, den 18. Dezember 1913".

²¹ TNA. G17/121, "Der Eisenbahnkommissar der Tanganjika-Bahn. No. 2298. Tabora, den 20. Dezember 1913. Herrn Aufsichtsbeamten [?]".

²² TNA. G17/118. Monatliche Berichte über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma. Bd. 1. 1912–1913, "Eisenbahnkommissar an die Fa. Philipp Holzmann J. no. 772, Tabora, 11. Juni 1912".

The railway commissioner thus implicitly confirmed Noske's criticism about lacking information on the labour conditions along the *Central Railway*; and if the railway commissioner himself, who was resident in German East Africa, felt not informed enough about the African workforce in the colony, then the *Gouverneur*, the Colonial Department in Berlin, the *Reich's* government and the *Reichstag* were certainly all deprived of sufficient information about the prevalent labour conditions. Furthermore, recalling the decisive gatekeeper positions of the railway commissioners and the Governor entails that information policies were prone to manipulations and omissions. Effectively, it seems that the railway commissioners of German East Africa themselves sometimes used this opportunity to make reports fit their own interests.

There is a varying degree of comprehensiveness between the monthly reports issued by the construction supervision that sent their reports to the railway commissioners and those monthly reports issued by the railway commissioners, sent to the Governor and to Berlin. Generally, those issued by the railway commissioners were less detailed than those issued by the construction supervision. This is not very surprising as the commissioners' reports were more or less a summary or rather condensed version of all the reports issued by the ca. five men working for each construction supervision.²³ Yet, in at least at one incident, it seems that some delicate information provided by the construction supervision was omitted in the report issued by Tabora's railway commissioner himself. In the beginning of August 1910, construction supervisor Rosien had not only reported that a considerable number of his subordinate staff were unable to work, because they were seriously sick (see above), but also that the afflicting smallpox had spread near Kigwe in the region of *Ugogo*. Both in the village of Kigwe proper, and in the nearby construction camp of the Greek railway sub-contractor Grammatikos, a considerable number of people had contracted the disease; three of them had already died. As the smallpox had spread along various labour camps at the *Central Railway*, Rosien's subordinate construction supervisor Böre had taken all actions necessary and had informed both the district office in Kilimatinde

²³ For reports issued by the railway commissioner and forwarded to the next higher levels of administration Cf. TNA. G17/63. Cf. TNA. G17/64. Cf. TNA. G12/164. Cf. TNA. G17/118. Cf. TNA. G17/119. *Monatliche Berichte über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma*. Bd. 3. 1914–1915. Compare them to the reports by the construction supervision cf. TNA. G17/65, TNA. G17/119, TNA. G17/120. *Monatliche Berichte der örtlichen Baubeamten über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma*. Bd. 1. 1912–1913, TNA. G17/121, TNA. G17/122. *Monatliche Berichte der örtlichen Baubeamten über den Fortgang der Bauarbeiten an der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma*. Bd. 3. 1914–1916. Compare them also to the typed reports issued by the railway commission and forwarded to the *Gouvernement* and the Colonial Office cf. TNA. G12/202.

and the medical officer in charge immediately. Shortly afterwards, the entire population of Kigwe proper and the railway construction camp were vaccinated to immunise the people against smallpox. Yet, in contrast to the construction company's obligations, Böre had complained about *Holzmann*, reporting that "it must be particularly emphasised that although the construction section was *well informed*, not the slightest step was taken to prevent the disease."²⁴ That means that despite their better knowledge, the construction company *Holzmann* had done nothing to combat a disease that could have killed a significant number of their workers. The company's construction section had therefore deliberately violated paragraph seven of the construction contract obliging them to take care of their workers' physical integrity. Even more intriguing is the fact that Dar es Salaam's railway commissioner Molfenter discarded any delicate information about the smallpox incident conveyed in Rosien's report. Against his better knowledge, Molfenter only forwarded the following sentence to Berlin: "In Kigwe, smallpox was detected among the people [. . .] on 10 July. [omitted complaint about the construction section quoted above]. The necessary measures were taken by the Kilimatinde district office."²⁵ Summing up, the handwritten report by the local construction supervision containing delicate information was issued 6 August, 1910 by Rosien and reached the railway commissioner's office in Dar es Salaam on 15 August. There, railway commissioner Molfenter processed or rather censored the report and forwarded the shortened and typed version to the *OAEG*'s office on 24 August. At the office of the *OAEG*, it was read three days later and probably forwarded to Berlin devoid of any information concerning *Holzmann*'s violation of paragraph seven as it lacked any delicate information about the smallpox incident. Moreover, Molfenter's typed and censored report lacked any information about the contraction of diseases and the resulting sick leave of the four men of the construction supervision. Molfenter had censored this information, too.²⁶

In the following month, Molfenter held back controversial information again. Throughout August 1910, at least nine train accidents occurred, and construction supervisor Rosien reported all of them to railway commissioner Molfenter. These accidents were either derailings or train collisions resulting from deficient wagons, or improperly built tracks. Sometimes they were also the result of carelessness in

²⁴ TNA. G17/64, "J. no. 1621. Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten am Ende des Monats Juli [1910]. X. Allgemeines".

²⁵ TNA. G17/64, "J. no. 1621. Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten am Ende des Monats Juli [1910]. X. Allgemeines".

²⁶ Cf. TNA. G17/64, "J. no. 1621. Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten am Ende des Monats Juli [1910]".

the daily construction business as one accident had occurred because rocks, which had fallen off a train, had not been removed from the tracks. At least three of these accidents left behind a total number of five people “seriously injured” and six “slightly injured”. About “two [. . .] accidents [. . .] more information [was] unavailable, because [. . .] as everywhere, the reporting of the supervisor Tönjes ha[d] completely failed. Not the slightest official information about any of the accidents was given to the official construction supervision by the construction company.”²⁷ As in the smallpox incident, railway commissioner Molfenter omitted this entire cited passage in his report. Thus, neither the Governor in Dar es Salaam, nor the Colonial Department in Berlin was ever able to receive any information about the sick supervisory staff or about the train accidents. One month later, when at least three other train accidents had occurred, nothing had changed for the better as construction supervisor Rosien noted: “Accidents are still not reported to the official construction supervision.”²⁸ Again, Molfenter dismissed this information from his own subordinate construction supervision. Some months later, in February 1911, Rosien reported to Molfenter that the European staff of Dodoma’s railway workshop had taken up a strike as they were unsatisfied with their working conditions and salaries. Once again, this information did not leave the railway commissioner’s office in Dar es Salaam, leaving his superiors uninformed.²⁹

As if not enough, in the summer of 1912, the local construction supervision generally criticised the lack of hygienic conditions in the workers’ housing and urged *Holzmann* and the sub-contractors to find a remedy for the grievances. On behalf of the construction supervision, the medical officer thus delivered a detailed handout to *Holzmann* giving precise instructions about the required workers’ houses’ allotment, the spatial distance in between and the erection of decent and sufficient lavatories in the construction camps to avoid general untidiness and the spread of diseases among the workers. However, railway commissioner Batzner merely stated in his report to the *OEAG*, the Governor and the Colonial Department in Berlin: “The construction company [i.e. *Holzmann*] has issued precise instructions to its [sub-]contractors regarding the construction and keeping

27 TNA. G17/64, “Rosien an Eisenbahnkommissar Daressalaam, No. 1575. Dodoma 6. September 1910, Bericht über den Stand der Arbeiten beim Bau der Zentralbahn gegen Ende des Monats August 1910, X. Allgemeines”.

28 TNA G17/64, “Rosien an Eisenbahnkommissar Daressalam, No. 1653. Dodoma 3 Oktober 1910, X. Allgemeines”.

29 Cf. TNA G17/64, “Rosien an Eisenbahnkommissar Daressalaam, no. 1864. Dodoma 3. Februry 1911, VIII. u. IX. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse”.

clean of the workers' camps."³⁰ It is telling of the inefficiency of the construction supervision that *Holzmann* followed the regulations half-heartedly at best. After his subsequent inspection tour to all construction camps from km 235 to the rail-head (ca. fifteen camps) in November 1912, construction supervisor Kanert assessed: "The order issued by the company [i.e. *Holzmann*] regarding the building of the construction camps is not in the hands of all the [sub-]contractors and is only considered as a formality."³¹ Whether this information about the lax implementations of workers' housing regulations was ever censored by the railway commissioner is hard to say. Similarly, it is difficult to assess why the documented censorship proven above and issued by the major railway supervisory bodies occurred at all. Two reasons appear plausible, however.

First of all, in the middle of August 1910, *Gouverneur* Rechenberg had an inspection tour along the newly built railway track between Dar es Salaam and central Dodoma³² (ca. 450 km). Railway commissioner Molfenter might thus have wanted to avoid any unpleasant further investigations on behalf of the Governor himself, which could have resulted in a negative image of all bodies of the railway commissioners. Moreover, it seems likely that the railway commissioner sought to prevent any negative information from reaching broader circles. Supposedly such broader circles must have been the German public and the *Reichstag*, i.e. the comparatively anti-colonial MPs of the Social Democrats, leading to the second probable reason. At this point in time, in summer 1910, plans for the extension of the *Central Railway* from Tabora to Kigoma were already being made, while the *Reichstag* only approved its funding more than one year later in late December 1911. Simultaneously, railway construction in German East Africa faced imperial competition from other colonial powers. By the time the funds were granted for the ultimate part of the German colonial railway in East Africa to reach Lake Tanganyika from the east, the Belgians had already been building their *Lukuga Railway* connecting Lake Tanganyika to the Congo basin for half a year. With the Belgian *Lukuga Railway* targeting the same waters from the west in the neighbouring Congo colony as the German *Central Railway* did from the east, this imperial race for the fastest completion of colonial railroads to Lake Tanganyika might have urged Molfenter not to deliver any information that might have fuelled heated *Reichstag* debates about the *Central Railway's* funding.

30 TNA. G12/202, "Bauarbeiten an der Ostafrikansichen mittellandbahn Bahnbau Tabora-Kigoma (Restarbeiten Morogoro-Tabora) Monatsbereich August 1912, X. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse".

31 TNA. G 17/120, "Bericht der Lagerbesichtigungen der Strecke km 235 + 00 – Bauspitze während der Zeit vom 14–16. Nov. 1912". Cf. TNA. G12/202, p. 103.

32 Cf. TNA G17/64, "Rosien an Eisenbahnkommissar Daressalaam, no. 1575. Dodoma 6. September 1910, Bericht über den Stand der Arbeiten [. . .] August 1910, X. Allgemeines".

Public outcries about badly treated African workers or other abuses, as had occurred in the debates about colonial warfare in German East Africa and German South West Africa between 1904 and 1908, certainly had the potential to harm rapid railway construction. As experience had shown, colonial scandals and colonial violence could indeed cause especially the Social Democrats and parts of the Catholic *Zentrum* to reject or suspend colonial budgets. Moreover, the general elections were only ca. one year ahead in summer 1910, and the previous elections of 1907 were largely characterised by fierce debates about the atrocities of German colonialism.³³ Hence, concealing colonial failures in the course of railway construction in the wake of renewed pro-funding campaigns in the *Reichstag* and simultaneously carrying out planning work in German East Africa for an extended track might have appeared opportune to the railway commissioners in August 1910. To prevent any delays in railway construction, they apparently obstructed delicate information.

There are of course also many other possible reasons why railway commissioner Molfenter concealed the smallpox incident, for example. But investigating this aspect even more thoroughly is rather pointless for the research question of this investigation. What remains from the analysis of the railway commissioner's censorship is twofold however: First, the construction supervision of the *Central Railway* was often not reliable, due to understaffing or because of conflicts with the construction company *Holzmann*, who in their own interests, repeatedly refused to provide comprehensive information about labour at the *Central Railway*. Secondly, even if there was significant information provided, the smallpox incident shows that failures regarding anything related to railway construction and labour might not be processed adequately by the supervising bodies. These shortcomings in railway supervision multiplied when a third party was added to the conflict-laden relationship between the governmental supervising bodies and the construction company *Holzmann*. As *Holzmann* outsourced the vast majority of railway construction to sub-contractors, information flows about working conditions from the building sites suffered even more. Analogically, responsibilities and accountabilities regarding labour and working conditions were generally spurned by all parties involved in the construction process.

³³ Cf. Baltzer. *Die Kolonialbahnen*, pp. 50–52, 243–245. Cf. TNA. G12/188. [Durchführung der politischen, wirtschaftlichen und technischen Erkundungen und] Vorbereitungen [für den Bau der] Eisenbahn Tabora-Tanganyika-See. Bd. 1. 1910–1911. Cf. “Das Deutsch-Belgische Wettrennen zum Tanganikasee”. *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 88. Daressalam: 2 November 1912. Cf. Methfessel. *Kontroverse Gewalt*, pp. 266–350. Cf. Becker. ‘Die Hottentotten-Wahlen’, pp. 177–190. Cf. Habermas. *Skandal in Togo*, pp. 77–109, 231–266.

3.2 Sub-contractors at the *Central Railway*

3.2.1 Outsourcing Responsibilities

In the meantime, I had learned that there was a lot of money to be made in the railway embankment construction work that was being carried out at the time. [. . .] [I was] assigned 60 people as a favour by an acquaintance who was employed by the railway construction company Holzmann & Co [. . .]. I had the task of building a stretch of railway embankment for myself without remuneration [. . .]. Of course, I was largely supported and advised in this activity by the engineers and technicians. [. . .] I negotiated with the construction director Grages.

Heinrich Langkopp. *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas*. Gnötzheim: 1929.³⁴

Outsourcing most of the construction work of the *Central Railway* to numerous sub-contractors was nothing new in German East Africa when ground breaking took place in Dar es Salaam in February 1905. The construction of the previously built *Usambara Railway* – initially planned to connect the Indian Ocean to the *Nyanza* ('Lake Victoria') in the northern part of the colony – followed a similar approach at times. With its first ca. forty km built under the umbrella of the *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft (DOAG)* between 1896 and 1899, the *Usambara Railway* had to be nationalised due to insufficient funding. Afterwards, "the idea of continuing the railway to Lake Victoria [. . .] receded into the background. First, the construction up to Korogwe [ca. eighty km] was awarded in different lottery tickets to individual [sub-]contractors and the preliminary work for the railway up to Mombo [ca. 130 km] was completed."³⁵ Further construction experienced several standstills. Finally, the Berlin company *Lenz & Co.* took over both the entire construction work and the railway's operation and extended the line as far as Moshi near Mount Kilimanjaro (ca. 400 km) by 1911.³⁶ As especially the operation of both the *Usambara Railway* and the *Central Railway* followed similar regulations from at least 1909 onwards,³⁷ it is not very surprising that the principle of outsourcing construction work as practised at the *Usambara Railway* was also applied to the *Central Railway*. In contrast to the *Usambara Railway*, which experienced only one phase of construction outsourced to sub-contractors, almost the entire construction

³⁴ Langkopp, Heinrich. *22 Jahre im Innern Afrikas. Was ich erstrebte, erlebte, erlitt*. Gnötzheim b. Würzburg: 1929, p. 43.

³⁵ Baltzer. *Die Kolonialbahnen*, p. 35.

³⁶ Cf. Baltzer. *Die Kolonialbahnen*, pp. 35–38.

³⁷ Cf. TNA. G12/167. Allgemeine [Angelegenheiten der] Tanganyika-Eisenbahn. 1908–1912, p. 91.

works of the much larger *Central Railway* was outsourced to sub-contractors from the ground breaking in Dar es Salaam in 1905 until the railroad's completion in 1914.

Only a fraction of the construction of the *Central Railway* was carried out by the construction company *Philipp Holzmann* themselves. Browsing through the tabular reports of the railway commissioners illustrates the disproportion between the work done by *Holzmann* proper and their numerous sub-contractors. As there were no governmental bodies observing railway construction between 1905 and 1907, and both the *Holzmann* company archives as well as the files held about colonial railway construction in the predecessor institution of the German *Bundesarchiv* were seriously destroyed during WWII, only administration documents between December 1908 and summer 1914 survive in the Tanzanian National Archives, providing information about labour at the *Central Railway*. Generally, the total number of railway workers fluctuated significantly. It ranged from a few hundred during the rainy season to over 15,000 in the dry season, when the workmen and -women were not busy cultivating their fields at their homes. Besides this general observation, the tabular reports reveal another interesting trend. From late December 1908 to ca. September 1910, the workers directly employed by *Holzmann* outnumbered those outsourced to railway sub-contractors. Especially during 1909, *Holzmann* employed twice as many workers as all sub-contractors taken together did. At one point, *Holzmann* even employed two-thirds of the entire workforce: for example, in July 1909 the entire workforce was 14,183 of whom *Holzmann* had hired 10,381, leaving only the much smaller share of 3,802 workers for the sub-contractors. In the course of the year 1910 the numbers gradually converged. From April 1910 onwards, the ratio of workers employed directly by *Holzmann* was only one-third higher compared to those working for the railway sub-contractors. During the second half of 1910, the numbers were almost equal, like in July 1910 when the count was 7,585 for *Holzmann* proper and 6,950 for the sub-contractors. In September of the same year, the number of workers hired by sub-contractors outnumbered those hired by *Holzmann* for the first time by ca. 100. This started a trend that remained intact until the very end of railway construction in 1914. Although some rare exceptions occurred, from April 1911 onwards the sub-contractors always employed at least twice as many workers as *Holzmann* proper did, while the ratio was two to one most of the time. In summer 1912, the discrepancy peaked, when all sub-contractors taken together employed ca. 10,000 workers while *Holzmann* proper had hired ca. 1,000 only. In 1914, the very last year of the actual construction works, the

numbers converged again, showing an almost equal share of workers between *Holzmann* proper and the sub-contractors working at the *Central Railway*.³⁸

Holzmann's own procedures for hiring sub-contractors seem to have been far from clearly regulated. This opened the floodgates to several forms of arbitrariness in the context of labour recruitment. Starting with the initial earthworks in 1905, the construction company divided the future railway into several route sections, which were each up to forty km long. Similar to the allocation practice of the *Usambara Railway* some years before, prospective sub-contractors of the *Central Railway* could apply for a lottery that would grant employment to the designated contractor for one route section, if luck was on his side.³⁹ Besides this, less regulated ways to seek employment were also possible, as revealed by Langkopp's example quoted above. When searching for a job at the construction site, the sub-contractor Heinrich Langkopp himself did not apply for any lottery but was accepted in a rather unorthodox way. According to his own accounts, one of his acquaintances at the time responsible for building an individual route section had a surplus of sixty workers and transferred them to Langkopp simply as a favour. Allegedly without any payment, Langkopp and his (probably African) workforce then built one section of railroad embankment. With the help of *Holzmann* engineers and technicians, he acquired enough skills to apply for another contract for a further route section only six weeks later – this time for payment, however. Now cocksure in his skill and ability, he subsequently went to *Philipp Holzmann's* headquarters, called upon *Holzmann's* top-ranking government building officer Ferdinand Grages, and asked for further employment. Grages declined, claiming that the soil conditions for the earthworks currently under construction were too burdensome: in his view, Langkopp would not make any profit in such circumstances. However, if soil conditions improved, Langkopp could reapply whenever he wished.⁴⁰ In the meantime, less profitable railway construction work was primarily being done by Greek sub-contractors. Only sometime later, Langkopp, who had come to the construction sites of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa after several employments as a mercenary in South Africa and as a retail employee and journalist in Dar es Salaam, became a self-reliant labour recruiter and cattle raiser based in the central *Iringa* region.⁴¹ Langkopp's autobiography about his work at the *Central Railway* is one of the very few remaining sources about sub-contractors and labour in the ini-

38 Cf. TNA. G17/63. Cf. TNA. G17/118. Cf. TNA. G17/119.

39 Cf. "Von Unserer Bahn". *DOAZ*, VII, no. 23. Daressalam: 10 June 1905. This route section lottery apparently existed throughout the construction process. Cf. TNA. G12/202, p. 163.

40 Cf. Langkopp. *22 Jahre*, pp. 43–47.

41 Cf. Röscher. 'Transimperiale Infrastruktur?'. Cf. Aas and Sippel. *Koloniale Konflikte*, pp. 21–29, 131–142.

tial years of railway construction between 1905 and 1907, because there are hardly any administrative files for this period. Langkopp's memories point to the arbitrariness by which *Holzmann* delegated their own accountabilities to the lower – or rather outsourced – levels of construction work.

As paragraphs five to seven of the construction contract between *Holzmann* and the colonial authorities delegated all accountabilities regarding labour to the construction company, soon the question arose whether *Holzmann* themselves or their numerous sub-contractors were specifically accountable for the many responsibilities connected to labour at the *Central Railway*. According to the construction contract, the duties of *Holzmann* ranged from the recruitment of the workforce to the provision of the workers' food, lodging and healthcare. Of course, *Holzmann* was often supported by the colonial government in all these aspects to facilitate quick railway construction, but the legal regulations made the building company accountable for almost everything related to the building process.⁴² Yet, throughout the entire construction process, *Holzmann* attempted repeatedly to pass any responsibility related to the workforce on to their sub-contractors – or rather – to outsource their own responsibilities. As demonstrated above, the supervisory powers of the railway commissioners and their subordinate construction supervisors were insufficient throughout the construction process. Given the fact that their power to observe the work of *Holzmann's* staff alone was limited, this suggests that their ability to keep an overview of the work of the numerous railway sub-contractors was even lower. Moreover, *Holzmann*, as the sub-contractor's superior construction body, generally refrained from exerting pressure on their sub-contractors if the railway commissioners criticised that the outsourced contractors did not obey the regulations of the construction contract and working conditions that it demanded. Rather, *Holzmann* either concealed many of the sub-contractors' deficiencies or claimed not to be responsible for the outsourced construction staff at all.

Generally, *Holzmann* enjoyed a great leap of faith on the part of the colonial government regarding the conclusion of contracts with their sub-contractors. All

42 Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2–517, "Vertrag über den Eisenbahnbau von Morogoro nach Tabora" (1908), p. 6 and "Vertrag über die Umbauten der Stammstrecke Daressalam-Morogoro" (1912), p. 6. Cf. TNA. G12/167, pp. 1–90. Cf. TNA G12/164, p. 4. HADB. S 1521. Konsortium Ostafrikanische Eisenbahn, "Bauvertrag Daressalaam-Morogoro". HADB. S 1522. Konsortium Ostafrikanische Eisenbahn, "Vertrag über den Bau der Eisenbahn von Morogoro nach Tabora". HADB. S 1525. Konsortium Ostafrikanische Eisenbahn. Tabora-Kigoma, "Vertrag über den Bau der Eisenbahn von Tabora nach Kigoma und der Hafen- und Zollanlagen in Kigoma". HADB. S 1523. Konsortium Ostafrikanische Eisenbahn. Stichbahn Ruanda, "Vertrag über den Bau der Eisenbahn von Tabora nach dem Kagera (Ruandabahn)".

parties involved were aware of this fact. When in summer 1912 a well-remunerated proposed contract between *Holzmann* and their sub-contractor, the Greek Scutari,⁴³ endowed with the extraordinary sum of six million marks (!), aroused the jealousy of especially German sub-contractors, *Gouverneur* Heinrich Schnee was very clear on the issue. Writing to the Colonial State Secretary in Berlin, he stated: "The wording of the colonial railway construction contracts is such that extensive reliance on the construction company is the prerequisite. With regard to the correct and appropriate use of funds [. . .] the construction company has almost unlimited freedom."⁴⁴ Generally, the sub-contractors paid less to their workers than did *Holzmann* proper for the same task of work. This was of course in line with the overall interest of *Holzmann* and the *Gouvernement* who both wanted railway construction to be as cheap as possible.⁴⁵ Regardless of the financial issues, the leap of faith towards *Holzmann* was not justified as far as ensuring the payment of (decent) wages to the railway workers was concerned. Neither did the sub-contractors care about decent food and lodging, as demanded by paragraphs five to seven of the construction contract. In either case, *Holzmann* took the view that they could not be held responsible for any violation of the construction contract on the part of their sub-contractors. For instance, at the end of 1913 a conflict emerged between *Holzmann* and a German resident of Pugu near Dar es Salaam, Walter Grund. Grund had worked as a sub-contractor at the reconstruction of the line between Dar es Salaam and Morogoro in 1913 when considerable disagreement about his achievements occurred. Grund himself claimed that *Holzmann* had not delivered any payment to him, leaving him unable to pay his workers. Regardless of which party, *Holzmann* or Grund, was in the right – Grund even opened a legal case – *Holzmann's* reaction towards the issue is remarkable.⁴⁶ When Grund petitioned to various colonial authorities about his problems with paying his workers, the railway commissioner in charge confronted *Holzmann* with Grund's accusation. In a corresponding letter, the colonial official urged the company to find a remedy, explicitly referring to paragraph seven, subsection six

43 Like some other sub-contractors, Scutari had been directly employed by *Holzmann* as an engineer before he worked as sub-contractor. Cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 114.

44 TNA. G12/202, p. 155.

45 Cf. TNA. G17/63, "Bericht über den Arbeitsfortschritt an der Zentralbahn im Monat März 1909. 8. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse".

46 Cf. Railway Museum Nairobi (RMN). German Tanganyika Files (GTF). Row 1. Shelf 10. Umbau Daressalaam-Morogoro. Akt. VIII. Bd.1. Gesundheits- und Arbeiterverhältnisse, "An das Kaiserliche Eisenbahnkommissariat, J. no. 3181 [?], Daressalam 20.01.14", "An Herrn Grund. Pugu. 3200. 23. Januar 14", "Grund An das Kaiserliche Gouvernement Daressalam. Pugu, den 23. Januar 1914.", "Reinconcept. 3283. Beschwerde Grund wegen Holzmann & Cie. 6. Mai 1914", "Rechtsanwalt Dr. Hoffmann an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar Daressalam. Daressalam, den 11. Febr. 1914".

of the construction contract,⁴⁷ which demanded that “the Contractor [i.e. *Holzmann*] shall pay particular attention to the welfare and proper payment and treatment of workers, taking into account the relevant provisions in force in the protected area at the time.”⁴⁸ Yet, on behalf of *Holzmann*, building official engineer Rehfeldt declined, claiming that *Holzmann* were not liable for any of their sub-contractors’ workers:

We note first of all that Mr Grund is an independent entrepreneur whose obligations towards his indigenous workers we cannot cover, if only for legal reasons. The workers can [. . .] if [. . .] the wages due to them are not paid, have the credit balance of the debtor seized by the authority authorised to represent their claims.⁴⁹

In other words, *Holzmann* held themselves not responsible for any acts of their sub-contractor and advised the damaged party of African workers to appeal to the colonial courts for their rights. As colonial legislation structurally disadvantaged anybody of African descent for racist reasons,⁵⁰ the construction company’s view was very convenient for themselves, indeed. In practice, African workers going to court to enforce payment of wages had little chance of winning their cases.

Holzmann confirmed this stark attitude on other occasions. Throughout the years 1912 and 1914, both the railway commissioner and the Governor admonished the company to provide for adequate medical treatment of the railway workers and to ensure decent housing in the construction camps. In the view of the governmental officials, *Holzmann* had additionally neglected their duties regarding the spread of smallpox in several construction camps. *Holzmann* denied any responsibility and claimed not to have the means necessary to completely isolate any construction camp having smallpox and argued that the *Gouvernement* was responsible for such affairs. Moreover, the company blamed the colonial administration for a lack of vaccines and protested a new bill, which obliged *Holzmann* to establish several medicine cabinets along the newly built track to ensure the availability of medical treatment for the railway workers. Acting Governor Methner could not help the impression “that these statements [were] dictated by

47 Cf. RMN. GTF. R1. S10, “Abschrift. J. no. 3184. Der Eisenbahnkommissar an die Fa. Philipp Holzmann & Cie. Daressalaam, den 21. Januar 1914”.

48 Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2-517, “Vertrag über den Umbau der Stammstrecke Daressalaam-Morogoro”, p. 6.

49 RMN. GTF. R1. S10, “Holzmann an den Eisenbahnkommissar, J. no. 3200 zu J. no. 3184, Daressalaam, den 21. Januar 1914”.

50 Cf. Schaper. *Koloniale Verhandlungen*, pp. 67–85. Cf. Nuzzo, Luigi. ‘Kolonialrecht’. *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*. Ed. Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mainz 2011-07-14. Web. <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/nuzzol-2011-de> URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-2011051270 (14 January 2020).

the company's desire to transfer to the administration part of the tasks that fall to the company's health service according to their contract".⁵¹ Moreover, once again, *Holzmann* argued that if any deficiencies had occurred that had violated the workers' well-being, these had occurred in the camps of the sub-contractors and not in the camps operated directly by the construction company. As *Holzmann* claimed not to be liable for their sub-contractors' failures, the construction company were allegedly not the ones to blame.⁵² In line with the railway commissioner and the governmental medical officer, *Gouverneur* Schnee dismissed these arguments, explicitly referring to the construction contract once again. Accordingly, he insisted on the introduction of medicine cabinets:

This decision does not in any way affect your obligation under § 7 number 6 of the construction contract to provide free medical treatment for all workers employed on the railway construction. It does not need to be explained that you cannot release yourself from this obligation by handing over part of the work to sub-contractors who employ their own workers. [. . .] Having said all this, even if the position that the workers of your self-employed contractors cannot be considered as your employees is maintained, there are several ways that you can fulfil the discussed fulfilment of the construction contract provision with regard to all workers employed in railway construction. The fulfilment of the obligation imposed on you by the final clause of §7 of the construction contract[, i.e., to vaccinate all workers,] must be adhered to under all circumstances.⁵³

This tension between *Holzmann* and the colonial administration, ongoing until the very end of railway construction in 1914, reveals that *Holzmann's* outsourcing of most of the *Central Railway's* route sections not only entailed conflicts; it also made the supervision of the labour camps time consuming, inefficient and unnecessarily complex. *Holzmann's* attempts to fend off any liabilities for the deeds of their sub-contractors certainly influenced the living and working conditions for the many thousands of men and women who constructed the railroad. Yet, to make things even more complex, many of *Holzmann's* sub-contractors themselves outsourced several tasks to their own sub-sub-contractors.

51 TNA. G17/123, "Kaiserlicher Gouverneur von Deutsch-Ostafrika. J. no. 20273/12. V. Daressalam, den 23. August 1912, no. 1392. An den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar in Tabora."

52 Cf. TNA. G17/123. Cf. TNA. G17/124. Arbeiterverhältnisse der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Tabora-Kigoma. Bd. 2. 1913–1915. Enthält vorwiegend: Gesundheitsdienst., "Holzmann an den Eisenbahnkommissar. I/247/33. Auf Ihr Schreiben [. . .] J. no. 1859. Tabora, den 24 Oktober 1913", "Holzmann an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. Malagarassi 12[?]X. 1913 [?]", "Revision der Arbeiterlager der Strecke Tabora-Kigoma", pp. 1–7.

53 TNA. G17/124, "Abschrift. 31394/13. II. J. Daressalam, den 13. Januar 1914". Cf. HADB. S 1525, "Vertrag über den Bau der Eisenbahn von Tabora nach Kigoma und der Hafen- und Zollanlagen in Kigoma", p. 7.

3.2.2 Sub-contractors, Sub-sub-contractors and Labour Recruiters

All contractors in the supervisory section are subcontractors of the company Mutopoulos & Co.

Construction Official Haken to Railway Commissioner. Kigoma, 1 October 1913.⁵⁴

There were at least three levels of contractors responsible for the construction of the *Central Railway*. At the top of the hierarchy was *Holzmann*, of course. They had won the official contract on behalf of the *Reich* and thus of the colonial administration and carried out their construction work under the umbrella of the *OAEG*. As the largest body responsible for construction, they disposed many of their construction tasks and responsibilities to sub-contractors. In turn, these sub-contractors outsourced several of their tasks to sub-sub-contractors themselves. Given the difficulties of railway construction supervision resulting from the very first level of outsourcing, it is only logical that the longer the chains of outsourcing, the more difficult the supervision became. In this respect, overseeing the work of *Holzmann* was the easiest job for the governmental supervising bodies, as the large German company with numerous projects around the world had not only headquarters in Germany's Frankfurt o.M; they also had branches in German East Africa's capital Dar es Salaam and around the midpoint of the *Central Railway* in the town of Tabora, from which they administered the sectional construction of the railway. Hence, the colonial administration, i.e. the railway commissioners and their supervisory staff, could easily reach a contact person of *Holzmann* if necessary. In major railway hubs like Tabora or Dar es Salaam, correspondence was even possible via telegram as installing the infrastructure necessary for telegraphy was integral to the construction of the railway.⁵⁵ Supervising the sub-contractors was more challenging. They erected their construction camps often only temporarily and moved to another construction site as soon as their task had been completed. At these rather remote places, there was neither telegraphy of course, nor could they be contacted as easily as the staff of *Holzmann's* proper. With *Holzmann* constantly denying any responsibilities for their

54 TNA. G17/121, "J. no. 1761. Monatsbericht für Bauaufsichtsstrecke der Tanganyikabahn von km 388 bis Kigoma für Monat September 1913, Kigoma, den 1. Oktober 1913".

55 Cf. Wenzlhuemer. *Connecting*, pp. 97–134, 211–261. Cf. TNA. G17/120, "7.8.1912. J. no. 1071. Bericht über den Stand der Bauarbeiten der Strecke Tabora-kigoma von km 0 + 000 – 46 + 000 am 31. Juli 1912. 9. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse", "Ussoke, am 31. August 1912. Baubericht der Sektion 2 für Monat August 1912. X. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse", "30.9.12. Baubericht für Monat September. Stand der Bauarbeiten in Sektion 3 (km 93–135). X. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse". Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Abschrift Bi III.155. Philipp Holzmann & Cie. Lit. D. no. 21/6. Frankfurt a/M, den 13. Januar 1913. An den Herrn Staatssekretär des Kolonialamtes Berlin", p. 2.

sub-contractors, enforcing labour policies along the construction sites of the *Central Railway* proved very demanding for the supervising bodies. As soon as sub-contractors themselves outsourced tasks or entire route sections to their own sub-sub-contractors, enforcing labour protection rights became almost impossible.

The sub-contractors' own outsourcing was widespread during the *Central Railway's* construction. The quote above from supervisor Haken refers to one of the financially strongest sub-contractors entrusted with constructing large sections of the railway: the Greek sub-contractor Mutopoulus. Haken supervised the railway section from km 388 to Kigoma, and he notes in his report to the commissioner that almost this entire section of fifty-kilometres-length was being built by Mutopoulus' sub-sub-contractors. Accordingly, Haken reported that fifteen Europeans were working as Mutopoulus' sub-sub-contractors, employing a total number of 785 railway workers. That was more than twice as many as *Holzmann* proper employed along the same route section. The latter amounted to only four Europeans with 290 workers. Interpreting these numbers, almost two-thirds of the supervised track was outsourced to sub-sub-contractors, all of whom had been hired by one single sub-contractor, the Greek Mutopoulus. This must have been a normal occurrence, as Haken did not characterise this fact as extraordinary in his report. In addition, other files too confirm that numerous sub-contractors of *Holzmann* outsourced their tasks to their own sub-sub-contractors.⁵⁶ The sources about the abovementioned *causa* Scutari in several passages clearly imply that sub-sub-contractors working for sub-contractors was nothing unusual during the *Central Railway's* construction. Sometimes, sub-contractors even attempted to outsource route sections to themselves. Apparently, Scutari, for example, seems to have planned to outsource his six million marks route section contract not only to other sub-sub-contractors, but also to himself in 1912.⁵⁷ Whether his attempt was successful is not clearly conveyed by the sources. Yet, the available sources and Scutari's attempt to outsource his own route section to himself illustrate how obscure and complicated the entire process of outsourcing at the *Central Railway* was – and so was its supervision.

Such entanglements of outsourcing were prone to entail the (re-)employment of dubious (sub-)sub-contractors who had actually been suspended from railway construction, because they had violated colonial labour protection rights and therefore clearly abused African workers. Especially when *Holzmann* had difficulties in

56 Cf. TNA. G17/121, "J. no. 1761. Monatsbericht für Bauaufsichtsstrecke der Tanganyikabahn von km 388 bis Kigoma für Monat September 1913, Kigoma, den 1. Oktober 1913, X. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse".

57 Cf. TNA. G12/202, pp. 147–174.

obtaining enough workers needed for rapid railway construction, the company was ready to ignore sanctions issued against (sub-)sub-contractors previously. In June and July 1913 at least sixteen of *Holzmann's* sub-contractors were accused by both the supervisory bodies (railway commissioner and construction supervision) and African workers themselves of several violations. According to the allegations made, the workers were either deprived of their wages, or compelled to remain at the work site after their actual contracts had ended. Many sub-contractors were thus accused of fraud, coercion, and unlawful detention. Among them was also the sub-contractor duo Sclavos & Patzimas, who were officially warned by the colonial authorities and *Holzmann* that they would be prosecuted if they kept on violating labour laws. Most seriously, Patzimas was accused of having threatened his workers with a firearm to assert his interests.⁵⁸ Besides the mentioned accusations, Patzimas did neither waste a thought on housing his workers well. In July 1913, when on inspection tour, the medical officer in charge reported to the *Gouvernement* about the living conditions in the construction camps and stressed Patzima's noncompliance:

The regulations for the construction of the camps have been followed everywhere, and it must be acknowledged that the current construction of the huts represents a significant progress compared to the earlier ones, with very few exceptions, insofar as the huts are built solidly and appropriately, offering protection from cold and rain. The camps of the contractor Xekalos at construction kilometre 281 and especially that of the contractor Patzimas at km. 304, who did not at all comply with the requests and instructions to the existing camp regulations, are a salient exception. The official of the track supervision in charge had informed him about the existing camp regulations and requested to comply with them repeatedly.⁵⁹

Yet, it seems that next to nothing would change Patzima's behaviour and the construction section finally decided not to deliver any more workers to the sub-contractor. Yet, once again illustrating the obstructive character of outsourcing at the railway, *Holzmann's* director Hoffmann reported to the railway commissioner some weeks later in September 1913:

⁵⁸ Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Abschirft. 226/1 Sima, den 8. Juli 1913 Bauabteilung II. Elias an die Herren Philipp Holzmann Tabora.", "937 I/240/30. II/226/1. Philipp Holzmann an den Eisenbahnkommissar. Tabora, den 19. Juli 1913", "783. Konzept. 10. Mai 1913. An die Firma Philipp Holzmann & Cie. Tabora. Betrifft übelbeleumundete Unternehmer im Anschluss an mein Schreiben J. no. 612 vom 18. April 1913", "Philipp Holzmann. J. no. I. 238/3. Tabora, den 8. Mai 1913. Den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar", "Mitteilung von dem Kaiserlichen Bezirksamt an Eisenbahnkommissariat der Mittellandbahn. Tabora. J. no. 444. z. Zt. Kurrukurru, den 29. Mai 1913 [angefügte Liste über derjenigen 16 Sub-Unternehmer die beschuldigt wurden; attached list of 16 accused sub-contractors]".

⁵⁹ TNA. G17/123, "Bahnarzt. J. no. 258. Tabora, d. 31. Juli 1913 an den kaiserlichen Gouverneur Daressalam".

To the [. . .] letter of the 4th of this month, no. 1498, we humbly reply that according to the notifications of the Construction Section II, no further workers have been transferred to the [sub-]contractors Sclavos & Patzimas after the termination of their current contracts. On the other hand, the aforementioned are employed as [sub-]sub-contractors by the construction company [sub-contractor] Scutari, which we do not wish to prohibit for the sake of the existing labour shortage. We have also repeatedly warned the [sub-]contractors and hope that the grievances that have occurred will not be repeated.⁶⁰

In other words: *Holzmann* regarded some scolding without real consequences as a proper and adequate response to challenge a great variety of violations against labour protection rights ranging from fraud to unlawful detention connected to the use of firearms. The case of Patzimas is particularly telling, as he had been accused of incompetence and overt violence as early as November 1906, i.e. already six years before these other complaints were made. In this very early period of railway construction, *Holzmann* had already dismissed Patzimas and his companion from the construction site on their very first engagement, as they had failed to finish their works at the track as demanded by their contract. Confronted with these allegations, Patzimas' companion accepted the dismissal, whereas Patzimas himself incited his workmen to fight with knives against this decision. Consequently, *Holzmann's* construction director Grages brought a case against Patzimas and complained against him at the Governor's office; yet it did not hinder *Holzmann* from reemploying him in 1912 and even keeping him employed – despite renewed and similar allegations – in 1913.⁶¹

Apart from the dubious character of outsourcing route sections to (sub-)sub-contractors, one significant aspect of railway construction has not been considered yet. This is the issue of labour recruitment: the procurement of the predominantly African workers necessary to make the infrastructure become a reality. Again, the autobiography of the German railway sub-contractor and labour recruiter Heinrich Langkopp gives an example of how labour recruitment worked especially in the first years of railway construction between 1905 and 1907. In these initial years, the ratio between outsourced route sections (sub-contractors) and those route sections built directly by *Holzmann* was exceptional. In contrast to the construction period after 1909, two-thirds of the number of workers were directly employed by the German construction company and only one-third of track was outsourced to sub-contractors. While this ratio reversed itself from ca.

⁶⁰ TNA. G17/124, "I. 245/23. II. 23/5. Philipp Holzmann an den Herrn Eisenbahn – Kommissar Tabora. Eingang 23.09.13, no. 1677. Tabora, den 22. September 1913".

⁶¹ Cf. TNA. G12/82. Bau der Eisenbahn Daressalaam-Morogoro Bd. 2. 1905, "Philipp Holzmann an Kaiserlichen Gouverneur. Daressalam, den 14. November 1906". Whether Patzimas was ever sued is not conveyed by the sources; the file TNA. G12/82 is severely damaged.



Figure 1: English: “H. Langkopp, Iringa G(erman) E(ast) A(frica). On-sale-return. Forwarding agent. Recruitment of plantation workers, porters. Purchase and sale of cattle, etc”.

Source: DOAZ XII, No. 97.

Daressalam: 07 December 1910.

1909 onwards, *Holzmann* generally did not often recruit workers themselves. First of all, throughout the entire process of railway construction between 1905 and 1916, *Holzmann* received great support from the colonial administration, which supplied the construction company with ‘tax workers’. These were men and women resident in the colony who were sent to the railway to work off their tax debt that had previously been imposed on them by the colonial administration. Secondly, as the initial years of railway construction coincided with the Maji Maji War (1905–1908), the *Gouvernement* even sent POWs as convict workers directly to *Holzmann* to facilitate railway construction. Thirdly, if the workers provided by the colonial administration were not enough, *Holzmann* turned to freelance labour recruiters, who roamed and often raided several regions of the colony to obtain the required workers.⁶² For this service, *Holzmann* paid the freelancers a monthly salary, their expenses and a fixed sum per delivered railway worker. About his wage bargaining with construction officer Ferdinand Grages (of *Holzmann*), Langkopp stated:

Since he [Grages] knew that I was good with the blacks, he suggested that I recruit black workers for the railway construction work at a salary of Mk. 400 and free lodging as well as a bonus of Mk. 2 per capita. [. . .] I first moved to Iringa and found extensive support for my recruitment from the head of station there, Captain Nigmann. [. . .] Nigmann [. . .] showed the greatest interest in a possible acceleration of the railway construction, as this would

⁶² Cf. Rösser. *Transimperiale Infrastruktur*, pp. 277–284. Cf. Sunseri. “Dispersing”, pp. 561–567. Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 396–415.

open up the country most quickly. I recruited many hundreds of workers there in a short time and moved on to Mahenge.⁶³

Symptomatic for the entire process of railway construction is the fact that labour recruiters often outsourced their work to quasi labour sub-recruiters. For labour recruiters, this was a strategy to not get their own hands dirty, but to comfortably pursue the profitable business of labour recruitment. Describing his outsourcing in labour recruitment Langkopp explained:

I bought [. . .] writing paper in large quantities, made small pieces of paper and wrote on them: [“]Recruited by Langkopp[“] [. . .]. Now I picked [. . .] a dozen smart blacks and sent them [. . .] into the district. They had to go to the black local chiefs [. . .] and tell them that the railway construction was to be promoted with the greatest speed at the request of the government and that workers were needed for this. This work was government work [. . .]. The thing worked out. [. . .] One day the first troop of 80 men appeared.⁶⁴

As revealed by Figure 1 – an advertisement published by the DOAZ – Langkopp not only recruited railway workers but also plantation labourers and porters. Moreover, he was certainly not the only labour recruiter who purported to give himself authority by distributing slips of papers to various sub-labour recruiters. There are also documented cases of labour recruiters equally faking official permissions to make their recruitment appear as sanctioned by the colonial administration.⁶⁵ In general, labour recruitment was as dubious as the railway sub-contractor business. Additionally, labour recruitment often entailed the raiding of villages for workers, fraud, physical force, as well as false promises about payment or working and living conditions at the work site. As the colonial administration had introduced at least some regulations by 1913 to regulate so-called ‘wild recruitment’ across the colony, some recruiters lost their permission to carry out their job, including the abovementioned Heinrich Langkopp.⁶⁶ Sometimes, colonial courts opened cases and even punished the most serious cases. In 1913, the colonial administration produced a list of thirty-six labour recruiters, who had officially been suspended from the recruitment business. Of those thirty-four men, thirteen were German, twelve were Greek, one was Austrian, and six East African. As the file is severely damaged, information on two labour recruiters is not conveyed. Nevertheless, besides revealing that labour re-

⁶³ Langkopp. 22 *Jahre*, p. 44.

⁶⁴ Langkopp. 22. *Jahre*, p. 45.

⁶⁵ Cf. TNA. G21/412. Ermittlungssache gegen den Arbeiteranwerber Michael Georgiades, Mkalama, Bez. Kondo-Irangi, wegen Betruges, Körperverletzung, Freiheitsberaubung und Nötigung. 1911–1912, pp. 2–7.

⁶⁶ Cf. Aas and Sippel. *Koloniale Konflikte*, pp. 65–78. For labour recruitment at the Congo-Océan Railroad cf. Daughton. *In the Forest of No Joy*, pp. 70–113.

cruiters were predominantly German or Greek, the list shows that men originating from East Africa were also involved in this business.⁶⁷

Although suspending these thirty-six men officially from labour recruitment, the colonial administration knew very well in advance that any regulations regarding labour protection would be ineffective in most cases of recruitment. Discussing several initiatives to regulate labour recruitment in a confidential letter to the Colonial Department issued in 1911, Governor Rechenberg was very clear in this respect. Once again, outsourcing was the major difficulty: "It is true that the approved recruiters then send coloured or black sub-recruiters into the country again, and that these people are not very monitorable, alone even the 'trustworthy European worker recruiters' of the northern planters cannot do without such sub-recruiters."⁶⁸ In other words: any legislation issued to hedge the excesses of outsourced labour recruitment would always prove unenforceable. If you wished sufficient labour supply, you could never do without labour sub-recruiters. Briefly, the colonial authorities conceded victory to the grievances of labour recruitment if insufficient labour supply would threaten significant flagship projects like railway construction.

Yet another important aspect of labour and railway construction has still to be considered. Labour recruitment and the work as railway sub-contractor were closely intertwined with each other. This was especially the case when railway sub-contractors built the majority of the route sections at the expense of *Holzmann* from ca. 1909 onwards. Of course, *Holzmann* proper still received workers from the colonial administration and hired freelance labour recruiters themselves if in need of workers for the route sections under their direct command.⁶⁹ But the longer the *Central Railway* was being built, the more labour recruitment became integral to the tasks of a potential railway sub-contractor. On top of the task of guiding the construction works of an individual route section of the *Central Railway*, any of *Holzmann's* sub-contractors had to recruit their workers before they could start track building. To be precise, the recruitment of a sufficient number of workers was the most fundamental pre-condition for being accepted as railway

67 Cf. TNA. G1/95. Verstöße gegen die Arbeiterwerbeverordnung (Personenverzeichnis) [1913]. Cf. Rösser. 'Transimperiale Infrastruktur?', pp. 277–284. Cf. Sunseri. "Dispersing", pp. 561–567.

68 RMN. GTF. R3. S48. Diverse Vertraulich, "Abschrift Rechenberg an das Reichs-Kolonialamt Berlin, Betr. Arbeiterverhältnisse, K no. 222, Daressalam 11, February 1911".

69 Cf. RMN. GTF. R1. S10, "An den Herrn Gouverneur in Daressalam, Drsl. 19. Oktober. 1912", "Gouverneur Schnee an Bezirksämter Daressalam, Bagamojo, Morogoro. Daressalam, den 12. November 1912", "Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft an Eisenbahnkommissar Molfenter. Tabora 19. February 1913", "Philipp Holzmann an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. Daressalam, den 21. September 1913", "Abschrift. Philipp Holzmann [Rehfeldt] an das Bezirksamt Bagamoyo. Auf [Telegram] des Bezirksamtes Bagamoyo an Holzmann vom 23. Juli", "Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Bagamoyo an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. J. Dr. 2273/13. Bagamoyo, den 4. Oktober 1913".

sub-contractor in the first place. Depending on the sub-contractor's financial capacities and his individual abilities to keep an already recruited workforce, the number of the so-called worker base (*Arbeiterstamm*) of each individual sub-contractor varied greatly. Based on the monthly reports of the construction supervision and the railway commissioners, each sub-contractor needed at least a group ca. twenty workers to be allotted with one task of a route section. As far as revealed by the files, the number of workmen and women could rise to an exceptional 1,000. But the numbers seldomly exceeded a worker base of 200–300 men and women. Interestingly, the type of construction work had very limited influence (if any) on the number of workers. The number of workers employed for earth works, e.g. varied from ca. thirty to over 500, just as did the number of workers employed for pre-extension works, gravel hammering or other tasks.⁷⁰ Self-evidently, those sub-contractors having the largest workforce generally obtained the largest, most lucrative and most responsible jobs and were also preferred by *Holzmann*.⁷¹ Summing up, anybody who planned to construct an outsourced section of *Holzmann's* railway business had to recruit the workforce necessary before they could even apply. In turn, this means that the occupation as a railway sub-contractor required a prior occupation as a labour recruiter. Indeed, most of the railway sub-contractors pursued labour recruitment, but also and/or simultaneously turned to freelance labour recruiters if they needed more workers.

Although the construction of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa took place in a German colony, was financed by a German bank and was carried out by a German construction company, only a fraction of those really constructing the *Central Railway* were German. Most Germans held only the top positions of the construction business, such as construction director or engineer. Apart from that, Germans were significantly outnumbered by many other people of different origins. Besides the largest group of the East African workforce, which numbered up to 20,000 men and women, there was also a large number of Indians employed as craftsmen. Besides the group of Germans, there were also many other different European nationalities working at the *Central Railway* in German East Africa as sub-contractors. They came from all directions of Europe and from the American

70 Cf. monthly reports about the progress of railway construction between 1912–1913. Esp. sub-sections 8 – 10 named “Personal und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/120. Cf. TNA. G17/118. Cf. TNA. G17/123, “Philipp Holzmann an Eisenbahnkommissar. Tabora, 11. April 1913. Tabelle II”.

71 Cf. TNA. G17/123, “Mittellandbahn 616 concept. Tabora, 16. April 1913. 792. 1107. 1.) Auf den Erlass no. 4837/XII vom 10. III. 1913. Betrifft deutsche und griechische Unternehmer”, p. 3. Cf. TNA. G12/176. [Verursachung von Betriebs-] Unregelmäßigkeiten beim Bau und Betrieb der Tanga-nyika-Eisenbahn [durch Unfälle und Betriebsstörungen sowie Beschwerde des Bauunternehmers C. Berger [. . .]. 1913–1916, pp. 10–16.

continent. Yet, by far the largest European group employed as railway sub-contractors was Greek.⁷² The following section deals with their migration to German East Africa in general and their role as railway sub-contractors and labour recruiters in the colony. Moreover, the chapter sheds light on their conflict-laden existence as white subalterns in the colonial society.

3.3 Entangling Employments: (South-East) European Railway Sub-contractors

3.3.1 The Greeks in (East) Africa

A large part of the modern history of Greece is a history of emigration. At the same time, South-East Europe experienced those phenomena typical of the era of imperialism from the 1870s onwards. With a globalising economy between 1870 and 1914, the rise of nationalism, and the increased competition between the imperial powers, the South-East European societies experienced profound upheavals. While industrialisation was slower in the South-East than in Central Europe, the imperial competition of the global superpowers of the time was even more prominent. In the context of the so-called ‘scramble for Africa’ and increased colonial expansion in Asia, South-East Europe also became a target for quasi-colonial aspirations. With the decline of the Ottoman Empire, especially Russia and Austria-Hungary sought to expand their influence in South-East Europe at the expense of the Ottomans. At the same time, after the Great Eastern Crisis (*Balkan-krise* or *Orientalische Krise*) of 1875–78 had ended, various South-East European nationalist movements pushed further for independence. Conflicts always smouldered and flared up repeatedly, culminating in the Balkan Wars (1912/1913) and the assassination of the Austrian successor to the throne, which triggered WWI in summer 1914. This context preceding WWI certainly had negative effects on the South-East European economy that had already been struggling to sustain the ongoing population growth of the ‘long nineteenth century’. Together with political instability, lacking opportunities in life was the major reason why especially young men left their homes and sought better working and living conditions overseas. This included a large number of Greeks, particularly from the 1880s onwards and reaching a peak between 1900 and 1914. While most of these Greek emigrants

72 Cf. Rösser. ‘Transimperiale Infrastruktur?’, 277–284. Cf. Rösser. “*Shenzi Ulaya*”. Cf. Sunseri. “Dispersing”, 561–575.

headed for the USA, some also went to various colonies in Africa, including German East Africa.⁷³

In the German colony at the Indian Ocean, the Greeks were the most important group of Southern European settlers, with a considerable number of Italians having the second rank. Most of the Greeks had migrated to German East Africa via Egypt, where there had been a large Greek diaspora since the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of those Greeks had come to Egypt to plant and manufacture cotton there. With the American Civil War (1861–65) inducing a global shortage in raw cotton production, the cultivation of cotton promised a lucrative business along the Nile for the Greeks. In addition, during German colonial rule in East Africa, many Greeks of the diaspora from Egypt migrated especially to the northern region at Mount Meru to plant coffee there from the 1890s onwards. Although the Greek settlers were generally more successful than their fellow German planters, German colonial discourse regarded them as second-rate whites or rather as ‘quasi-Orientals’ who would lower the white men’s prestige in the colony.⁷⁴ In fact, there is much more to say about the Greeks in German East Africa: they were not only a significant minority in the German colony as such. Their migration to and from German East Africa illustrates thus far neglected facets of the ‘colonial globality’ around East Africa of 1900 in which the diaspora of many peoples entered a new phase in many parts of the world.⁷⁵ Moreover, the Greeks resident in German East Africa often worked as labour recruiters and sub-contractors for the construction of the *Central*

73 Cf. Calic. *Südosteuropa*, pp. 344–423. Cf. Brunnbauer and Buchenau. *Geschichte Südosteuropas*, pp. 108–206. Cf. Kaloudis. *Modern Greece*, pp. 41–108. Cf. Gallant. *Modern Greece*, pp. 1–2, 16–24, 157. Cf. Frangos. *Greeks in Michigan*, pp. 7–19. Unavailable for German libraries and at the book market at the time of publishing cf. Chaldeos, Antonis. *The Greek Community in Tanzania*. Athens: 2019. Cf. Rösser. “*Shenzi Ulaya*”.

74 Cf. Söldenwagner. *Spaces*, pp. 58–60. Cf. Boonen, Sofie and Lagate, Johan. ‘A City Constructed by ‘*des gens d’ailleurs*’. Urban Development and Migration Policies in Colonial Lubumbashi, 1910–1930’. *From Railway Junction to Portal of Globalization: Making Globalization Work in African and South Asian Railway Towns*. 51–69. Ed. Geert Castrick. *Comparativ*, 25, Heft 3. Leipzig: 2015, pp. 51–64. For a short passage illustrating an individual case between a German military officer and a Greek merchant in German East Africa’s Ruanda cf. Wegmann, Heiko. *Vom Kolonialkrieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika zur Kolonialbewegung in Freiburg. Der Offizier und badische Veteranenführer Max Knecht (1874–1954)*. Freiburg i.Br.: 2019, pp. 223–225. Cf. Röser. “*Shenzi Ulaya*”. Cf. Papakyriacou, Marios. *Formulation and definitions of the Greek national ideology in colonial Egypt (1856–1919)*. Unpublished Dissertation. Freie Universität Berlin: 2014. Web. *Freie Universität Berlin*. https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/3114/Dissertation_Papakyriacou_Marios_12_2014.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (12 October 2021), pp. 51–73.

75 Cf. Cohen, Robin. *Global Diasporas. An Introduction*. London and New York: 2008, pp. 141–158, 159–177. Cf. Kokot, Waltraud. ‘Themen der Forschung’. *Peripulus. Jahrbuch für Außereuropäische Geschichte*. 1–10. Ed. Christoph Marx. 14. Jahrgang. Münster: 2004. Cf. Bertz. *Diaspora and the Na-*

Railway and were therefore decisive actors that shaped the labour relations at the railroad's construction sites and at many other endeavours like plantations.

There are two major reasons why it is actually very difficult to delineate the history of the Greek diaspora in (East) Africa, which still numbers approximately 100,000 people today over the whole African continent. First of all, there are only very few studies on Greek history that go decisively beyond the national history of Greece. Secondly, today's State of Greece is not identical with that of the nineteenth century. Only a minor part that comprises the country of Greece today was an independent country back then. Large parts of today's Greece were still part of the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman Empire as such hosted a large Greek minority in the 'long nineteenth century'. Although Ottoman Greeks were a visible and comparably homogenous group within the Ottoman Empire, it is difficult to trace Greek people in the colonial archives as they were often labelled as Ottomans, Ottoman citizens or Levantines despite their Greek descent.⁷⁶ In German East Africa, sometimes the German colonial administration themselves could not decide whether they regarded an individual as Greek or Turkish.

One example documented by German colonial courts in East Africa is telling in its recording of the personal data of Michael Georgiades. Georgiades, who was from the island of Rhodes, had migrated to German East Africa by 1906 and worked

tion. Cf. Korma, Lena. 'The Historiography of the Greek Diaspora and migration in the twentieth century'. 47–73. *Historien*, 16. Web. <http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/historein.8778>. (22 January 2021).

⁷⁶ Cf. Dalachanis, Angelos. *The Greek Exodus From Egypt. Diaspora Politics and Emigration, 1937–1962*. New York: 2017, pp. 1–7. Cf. Clogg, Richard. 'The Greek Diaspora: the Historical Context'. *The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century*. 1–24. Ed. Richard Clogg. Basingstoke: 2001. Cf. Tziouvas (Ed.). *Greek Diaspora*. Cf. Tziouvas, Dimitris (Ed.). *Greece and the Balkans. Identities, Perceptions and Cultural Encounters Since the Enlightenment*. Ashgate: 2003. Cf. Korma. 'The historiography of the Greek Diaspora', pp. 47–73. Cf. Bruneau, Michel. 'Hellénisme et diaspora grecque. De la Méditerranée orientale à la dimension mondiale.' 33–58. *CEMOTI*, no. 30, n.p.: 2000. Web. https://doi.org/10.3406/cemot.2000.1550https://www.persee.fr/doc/cemot_0764-9878_2000_num_30_1_1550 (28 March 2018), pp. 47–48. Cf. Tamis, Anastasis Myrodis. *Greeks in the far Orient*. Thessaloniki: 2011. Cf. Chaldeos. *The Greek Community*. A post WWI biography of the Greek Tsafendas and his family background gives fascinating insights into the Greek diaspora (in Africa). Cf. Woerden, Henk van. *Der Bastard. Die Geschichte des Mannes, der den südafrikanischen Premier ermordete*. Berlin: 2002, pp. 11–71. Cf. Adams, Zuleiga. *Demitrios Tsafendas: Race, Madness and the Archive. A dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History. University of the Western Cape, December 2011*. Web. https://etd.uwc.ac.za/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11394/2912/Adams_PHD_2011.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (9 December 2019). Cf. Dousemetzis, Dimitri. *The Man who killed Apartheid. The Life of Dimitri Tsafendas*. Johannesburg: 2019. Cf. Harlaftis, Gelina. 'Mapping the Greek Maritime Diaspora from the Early Eighteenth to the Late Twentieth Centuries'. *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*. 147–172. Eds. Ina Baghdiantz et al. Oxford and New York: 2005. Cf. Gallant. *Modern Greece*, pp. 55–82, 299–318. Cf. Kaloudis. *Modern Greece*, pp. 41–108, 175–204. Cf. Papakyriacou. *Formulation and definitions*, pp. 9–29, 51–73.

as a cattle trader and labour recruiter seeking railway workers first around the northern towns of Tanga and Singida, then near the colony's capital Dar es Salaam. Georgiades, who had been already sentenced twice by the colonial courts and had received one year in prison for manslaughter – he had shot dead an East African village elder, who had refused to sell cattle to him – and was indicted for fraud in September 1911. In this latter case, he had allegedly recruited workers without official permission. As one witness reported at court, Georgiades had also made false promises and not paid the recruited workers: neither their *posho* nor their recruitment rewards.⁷⁷ Apart from these incidents illustrating some of the realities of labour recruitment and the colonial judicial system, the court files of Georgiades reveal another important aspect of the society of German East Africa: namely the fact that German colonial authorities were not able to clearly judge Georgiades' nationality. In recording the nationality and background of Michael Georgiades, the court official noted: "State: Turkey or Greece [. . .] Native country: Turkey?"⁷⁸ The obvious confusion about Georgiades' motherland clearly demonstrates that the colonial archive is not necessarily able to give reliable information regarding the background of individual Southern Europeans. Hence, assessing any file featuring Greek or Turkish sounding names or statements of corresponding nationalities is therefore always a comparatively tricky affair. Not to mention that the colonial archives barely reveal the motivations of individual (South-East) Europeans, explaining why, when, and how these people exactly migrated to the German colony.⁷⁹ Keeping these difficulties in mind, there are also well documented cases revealing why many Greeks came to German East Africa after 1900. Indeed, a large number of them migrated to the German colony because they intended to find employment as sub-contractors at *Holzmann's Central Railway*.

77 *Posho* = daily food allowance. Cf. TNA. G21/412, pp. 1–29.

78 TNA. G21/412, p. 37. Cf. Minawi. *The Ottoman Scramble*, pp. 2, 82.

79 The 'Orient Büro' (Orient Office) of the *Deutsche Bank* having files of the personnel of the *Bagdadbahn* and its *Anatolische Eisenbahngesellschaft* (Anatolian Railway Company) has a list of contractors and employees. Many Greek names (among others) are labelled with Ottoman or Turkish citizenship. Cf. HADB. P8049. *Anatolische Eisenbahngesellschaft. Diverse Listen ihrer Angestellten*, pp. 2–11. Cf. also TNA. G21/373. *Ermittelungssache gegen den Aufseher Christo Antonio, Goweko, Bez. Tabora, wegen Vergehens gegen die Arbeiteranwerbeordnung. 1911–1912*, pp. 6–5. For assessing colonial archives cf. Stoler. *Along the archival grain* 2009. Cf. Stoler. 'Colonial Archives', pp. 83–109. Cf. Büschel. 'Das Schweigen'.

3.3.2 From *Bagdad* to Dar es Salaam: Engineers and Greek Sub-contractors

The rumour of a planned huge railway construction in East Africa had found its way to the Greeks living in the Near and Middle East [. . .]. Many entrepreneurs and those who wanted to become such [sub-]contractors one day were attracted by the country. As our company had just finished the first section of the Bagdadbahn by the end of 1904, many employees of this former railway construction site were enrolled for the new works in German East Africa.

*Holzmann's Construction Officer Ferdinand Grages, Frankfurt o.M.: 1948.*⁸⁰

In view of historian Philippa Söldenwagner's claim that most of the Southern Europeans arrived between 1908 and 1914 not directly from Greece, but via Egypt,⁸¹ particularly colonial railway construction in German East Africa seems to have facilitated Greek immigration via *Philipp Holzmann's* global company networks. With the company's various railway construction projects in Europe, in the Americas and in Asia (Minor), indeed the most significant connection between all these infrastructure projects was that between the construction of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa and the *Bagdadbahn* in the Middle East. In this respect, there are not only the memories of *Holzmann's* building officer Ferdinand Grages that document this fact; in addition, reports of the *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Zeitung (DOAZ)* and the files held at the archives of the *Deutsche Bank* confirm the connections of the East African railway to the *Bagdadbahn*. Examining these sources, numerous entanglements between the two prestigious infrastructure projects existed from planning stage to the execution of construction work at various levels.⁸² Already at the planning stage, the construction consortium around the *Deutsche Bank* stressed the importance of employing "experienced engineers with knowledge of the tropics, who also have general knowledge of overseas conditions."⁸³ As there were only few companies and engineers in Germany obtaining such skill and knowledge, *Holzmann* was one of the very few

⁸⁰ Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. Grages, p. 3.

⁸¹ Cf. Söldenwagner. *Spaces*, p. 58.

⁸² Cf. Richter, Otto. 'Holzmann in Asien. Die Anatolische und die Bagdadbahn'. *Philipp Holzmann Aktiengesellschaft im Wandel von Hundert Jahren. 1849–1949*. 249–273. Ed. Hans Meyer-Heinrich. Frankfurt o.M.: 1949, p. 249–264. Cf. Rösser. 'Transimperiale Infrastruktur?'. According to the Blog of the Greek Historian Antonis Chaldeos, some Greek sub-contractors working at the central railway in German East Africa came also from the Horn of Africa, where they had been busy in constructing railroads as well. Cf. Chaldeos, Antonis. 'Τρότη, 28 Μαΐου 2019. The Greek Constructors of the Railway in Tanzania'. *Greeks of Africa*. Web. <http://greeksofafrica.blogspot.com/2019/05/>. (11 September 2019). Cf. Gillman, Clement. 'A Short History of the Tanganyika Railways'. 14–56. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, no. 13. Dar es Salaam: 1942, pp. 24–29. Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way. Vol. II*, pp. 85–88.

⁸³ HADB. S 1518, "Arthur Koppel an Deutsche Bank, Berlin 15. April 1901, Anlage", p. 5.

companies to turn to. Having built the first sections of the most prestigious German imperial railway, the *Bagdadbahn*, *Holzmann* employed and knew many of those German engineers with ‘knowledge of overseas conditions’ and it is therefore no coincidence that engineers who had previously worked in Asia Minor went to German East Africa to construct another prestigious German imperial railway there and vice versa.

Exploring the track layout of the *Central Railway* from Dar es Salaam to Morogoro in 1903, all three senior engineers involved had worked at large scale infrastructure construction sites overseas before coming to the German colony. Mr Kröber had previously constructed a railway in southern Brazil for *Holzmann*’s competitor, the company *Arthur Koppel* from Berlin. His two other colleagues – the German engineer Riese, who would organise the expedition to German East Africa, and the Austrian engineer Auner – had both worked for *Holzmann* for some years already, either exploring the layout or leading the construction work for significant parts of the *Bagdadbahn*. As Auner had fallen ill soon after his arrival to German East Africa in summer 1903, he was replaced by *Holzmann* engineer Mavgorodato. As Mavgorodato was at the time working at a construction site of the *Bagdadbahn*, he arrived in December 1903 to reinforce the decimated team.⁸⁴ In the years to come, when the railway had moved from planning to the construction stage, Mavgorodato and his *Holzmann* colleague Petersen travelled between East Africa and the Ottoman Empire and vice versa, occupied with various tasks of railway construction either on behalf of the *Central Railway* or on behalf of the *Bagdadbahn* – but always on behalf of *Holzmann*, of course. The sources confirm the travelling of another senior engineer, Mr Deininger, between the *Central Railway* and the *Bagdadbahn*, further showing the significant links between the two prestigious infrastructure projects.⁸⁵

Yet, interrelationships between senior *Holzmann* engineers in German East Africa and Asia Minor are only one side of the coin. The most significant connection between the *Bagdadbahn* and the *Central Railway* arises from Greek sub-contractors: They had worked for *Holzmann*’s railway in Asia Minor first and then deliberately travelled for railway construction to German East Africa. Generally, Greek sub-contractors at the *Central Railway* by far outnumbered both German engineers and German sub-contractors. Moreover, Construction Officer Grages (quoted above) is accurate in stating that Greek sub-contractors migrated deliberately from railway construction employment in Asia Minor to railway construction in German East Africa.

⁸⁴ Cf. HADB. S 1515, “Arthur Gwinner [Deutsche Bank] an Gouverneur Graf von Götzen, Dar es Salaam, 02. Juli. 1903”, pp. 1–5.

⁸⁵ Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way*. Vol. II, p. 101. For an engineer preferring East Africa over Asia Minor cf. HA Krupp N 13/7, pp. 100–101. For engineering personnel in general cf. Beese. *Experten*.

On their part, the company of *Holzmann* also facilitated this movement. As the sources are relatively silent on the details of this Greek migration, various sources must be considered on the issue. First of all, there is the *DOAZ*. As the German settlers' organ of the colony, the newspaper attempted to reflect and promote the German emigrants' interests in the first place. As any non-German migration to German East Africa was generally regarded with suspicion by the newspaper, it closely observed Greek migration to the colony. Taking the published articles lamenting Greek migration to German East Africa as an indicator of peaks in actual Greek immigration to the German colony, it has to be stressed that the peaks in press coverage concurred with the onset of the construction of new route sections of the *Central Railway*. Whenever construction work at the *Central Railway* intensified, the number of articles published by the *DOAZ* about Greeks in the colony peaked as well.

With the start of the actual construction work in January 1905, the colony experienced a major influx of Greek people, who seem to have spent some time in Dar es Salaam just after their arrival.⁸⁶ When the home line from Dar es Salaam to Morogoro had been fulfilled in 1907, actual construction work resumed in late 1908. Once again, the *DOAZ* published numerous articles on the so-called 'Greek Question' (*Griechenfrage*) and its relationship to railway construction.⁸⁷ According to the *DOAZ*, there were only six German *Holzmann* employees responsible for the construction of individual route sections between 1907 and 1912.⁸⁸ By early 1912 the railhead had reached central Tabora, which became one of the most important railway hubs in the entire colony. With the *DOAZ* giving details about the European population in Tabora, it becomes clear that especially Greeks remained indispensable for *Holzmann* to fulfil the building task of the *Central Railway* throughout the entire construction period. According to the *DOAZ*, in January 1912, Tabora counted 433 European inhabitants (390 male). Of those, 202 were Greek. They were listed as (railway sub-) contractors (sixty), craftsmen (seventy), or traders (twenty-five). They were either employed as railway sub-contractors by *Holzmann* or profited indirectly as traders from the new railway as it generally stirred economic activity. Confirming that not every migrant was able to make a living off the construction of the *Cen-*

⁸⁶ Cf. "Eine Ernste Gefahr für unser Prestige". *DOAZ*, VII, no. 12. Daressalam: 25 March 1905. Cf. "Aus der Kolonie". *DOAZ*, VII, no. 13. Daressalam: 01 January 1905.

⁸⁷ Cf. Dr. H. Krauß. "Über die Gesundheitsverhältnisse in Deutsch-Ostafrika". *DOAZ*, X, no. 94. Daressalam: 05 December 1908. Cf. "Streifzüge in Ostafrika". *DOAZ*, XI, no. 19. Daressalam: 10 March 1909. Cf. "Zur Griechenfrage". *DOAZ*, XI, no. 42. Daressalam: 25 March 1905.

⁸⁸ Cf. "Deutsche Unternehmer für den Bahnbau Tabora-Tanganika". *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 8. Daressalam: 27 January 1912.

tral Railway, forty-one Greeks were also listed as unemployed.⁸⁹ This general impression provided by the colonial newspaper especially during the first half of the railway construction period is confirmed by the sources produced by the railway supervisory bodies from 1911 onwards.

Accordingly, railway construction was not only primarily carried out by sub-contractors at the expense of *Holzmann* proper: it was overwhelmingly carried out by Greek sub-contractors who had primarily migrated from the *Bagdadbahn* to the railway construction sites in German East Africa. Not only *Holzmann*, but also most of the colonial administration regarded Greek railway sub-constructors as the most reliable and most able men to fulfil the construction of the large-scale infrastructure in the German colony. They had been the first group who had taken up outsourced railway construction in German East Africa and remained the most numerous national group of sub-contractors until the completion of the *Central Railway* in 1914. Only very few of these Greek sub-contractors had been resident in German East Africa before the advent of the *Central Railway* and the vast majority had come to the German colony exactly for the purpose of railway construction. Generally, they planned to leave East Africa for their homeland as soon as they had earned enough money and/or completed their contracts with *Holzmann*. In August 1912, according to information provided by the company, *Holzmann* employed a total number of fifty-eight sub-contractors responsible for the construction of individual route sections between the central town Tabora and the 235-kms distant station of Malagarassi. Of those, forty-seven men (eighty-eight percent) were non-Germans and only eleven men (twelve percent) were German. According to the information provided by the German sub-contractor Berger, of those forty-seven non-German sub-contractors “45 were Greek and Turkish subjects”, along with only “7 citizens of the German *Reich* [*Reichsdeutsche*]”.⁹⁰ The other two non-Germans were the Italian sub-contractors Eredi and Natalicio. Whether the difference of four Germans comprises either ethnic Germans having previously lived overseas, e.g. in Latin America, or ethnic Germans of Austrian citizenship is not clear in this file. Other files confirm that there were some Austrians and some Germans who had lived overseas before, who were now employed as engineers at the *Central Railway* and who were regarded as ethnic German by *Holzmann* and the colonial authorities. It is therefore very likely that some of the listed Germans without residence in the *Reich* proper had also been hired as sub-contractors by *Holz-*

⁸⁹ Cf. “Aus unserer Kolonie”. *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 96. Daressalam: 30 November 1912. Cf. “Die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse des Bezirks Tabora im Jahre 1911”. *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 92. Daressalam: 16 November 1912. Cf. Rösler. ‘Transimperiale Infrastruktur’, pp. 277–84.

⁹⁰ TNA. G12/176, p. 3.

mann. Yet, neither the given ratio nor the numbers provided reflect the overall share of work adequately.⁹¹

As a matter of fact, the overall contribution of Greek sub-contractors to railway construction was much higher than the contribution of German sub-contractors. The major reasons are that Greek sub-contractors generally had more workers at their disposal, had better financial means, and were regarded as more competent than German sub-contractors by *Holzmann*. For all these reasons, Greek sub-contractors generally received route sections larger than those of the German sub-contractors.⁹² In fact, comparing German to non-German sub-contractors is too simple, as one sub-contractor responsible for one individual route section generally employed several European overseers or other auxiliary staff. These European men assisting in railway construction were not necessarily of the same nationality as the actual sub-contractors. The following section gives more details of the composition of these sub-contractor teams and of all the different European nationalities working at the construction sites of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa.

3.3.3 Blurring National Borders: Diverse European Sub-contractor Teams

Of the 147 contractually employed civil servants and craftsmen, 85% are Reich Germans and 15% are foreigners, whose nationality is distributed almost equally among England, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States of North America, Argentina and Chile. Most of these are engineers who received their technical education at German universities or civil servants who can look back on a long career in the company's service.

Holzmann to Deutsch Ostafrikanische Zeitung, 11 October 1910.⁹³

The construction of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa was to a great extent an international affair indeed. Besides the global pursuit for imperial railways and the strong connections between the German imperial *Bagdadbahn* in the Ottoman Empire and the *Central Railway* in German East Africa, there were also links to other various parts of the world. Regarding their own staff directly employed, i.e. not hired as sub-contractors, these are revealed first of all by the

⁹¹ Cf. TNA. G12/176, pp. 2–16. Cf. TNA. G17/64, “Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten beim Bau der Zentralbahn Ende September 1910. VIII und IX. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/158, “Philipp Holzmann an die DOAZ Daressalam, den 11 October 1910”.

⁹² Cf. TNA. G12/176, pp. 2–16. Cf. TNA. G17/64, “Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten beim Bau der Zentralbahn Ende September 1910. VIII und IX. Personal- und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/158, “Philipp Holzmann an die DOAZ Daressalam, den 11 October 1910”.

⁹³ TNA. G17/158, “Holzmann an Deutsch Ostafrikanische Zeitung. Daressalam, den 11 October 1910”.

nationalities of the engineers directly employed by *Holzmann* quoted above. Despite many Germans, at least six other European nationalities were mentioned alongside engineers from the Americas and Turkey.

Secondly, there were not only Greek sub-contractors at the *Central Railway's* construction sites, but also many other nationalities. Apart from the senior employees like engineers, *Holzmann* had, by their own account, another "55 civil servants, craftsmen and supervisors employed on a daily wage in German East Africa [of whom] 60% were *Reichsdeutsche* [citizens of the German *Reich*] and 40% foreigners".⁹⁴ Thirdly, the numerous sub-contractors working at the *Central Railway* themselves employed other Europeans for auxiliary tasks. The latter worked as overseers or foremen and came from a variety of European countries. Generally, each sub-contractor employed at least one European foreman who observed the manual work performed by the African staff. The number of European overseers per sub-contractor varied according to the number of African workers the sub-contractor employed as well as the sub-contractor's individual preference. Normally, the larger the workforce, the more overseers were employed by a sub-contractor. In general, it was not necessarily the case that German sub-contractors would exclusively employ German overseers. Neither would Greek sub-contractors exclusively hire Greek overseers. This is reflected by the list of sub-contractors and their overseers at the route sections between Tabora and Ki-goma in 1913. In this route section, there were thirty-eight European sub-contractors working at that time. Although there was a trend to nationally homogenous sub-contractor teams, there were more diverse sub-contractor teams at the same time. Of the thirty-eight teams, there were five teams of mixed nationalities. Of those, the Greek sub-contractor Grammatikos employed one German and two Greek overseers; the German sub-contractor Behrens employed one German, one Italian, and two Greek overseers; and the Greek large-scale sub-contractor Scutari employed four 'foreigners' whose nationalities we do not know. This observation is especially important as there were not only Greeks and Germans working as sub-contractors or overseers at the *Central Railway's* construction sites, but many other nationalities as well. Besides the Italians mentioned already, there were also Albanians, Romanians, French, Swiss, English and others. Needless to say, also Swahili or rather East Africans could become overseers or even sub-contractors.⁹⁵ Yet, single nationalities

⁹⁴ TNA. G17/158, "Holzmann an Deutsch Ostafrikanische Zeitung. Daressalam, den 11 October 1910".

⁹⁵ Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Philipp Holzmann. Entg. 534, 501, 472. An Eisenbahnkommissar Tabora. Tabora, 11. April 1913. Tabelle II". Cf. Oxford. Bodleian Library. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 1–3. Cf. TNA. G21/262. Ermittlungssache gegen Aufseher der Firma Philipp Holzmann & Cie., Frederic Sainsburg, Kondoa, Bez. Morogoro wegen fahrlässiger Tötung seines Dien-

were not only transcended by mixed railway construction teams; several individual engineers and sub-contractors too had backgrounds that transcended one nationality, or had lived in many different parts of the world. The biographies of *Holzmann* railway engineer Clement Gillman and the sub-contractor John Zavellas illustrate this fact.

3.3.4 Transcending Nationalities at the *Central Railway*: The Cases of John Zavellas and Clement Gillman

I was appointed associate judge of the imperial district court in Tabora in September 1911 and participated in my first session instantly. In this trial Zavellas, a Greek sub-contractor, was sentenced to two and a half months imprisonment because of unlawful detention. These responsibilities are very difficult for me.

Holzmann engineer Clement Gillman, November 1911.⁹⁶

Greek railway sub-contractors did not exclusively reach East Africa coming from the *Bagdadbahn* or Egypt. As the personal details of some court files reveal, there were cases of Greek sub-contractors and labour recruiters who had previously been in South Africa or the USA⁹⁷ before coming to the German colony. In the course of the 'long nineteenth century' many young – and especially male – Greeks emigrated to seek a better life overseas, because the South-Eastern European economy could hardly sustain the contemporary population growth of their motherland.⁹⁸ Besides trying to make a living as petty traders or tobacco planters and cigarette manufacturers, many Greeks migrating to South Africa sought employment as sub-contractors at the Cape Railways between 1905 and 1909, or the railroads in Transvaal between 1910 and 1913. Like the German railway sub-contractor Langkopp, many Greeks also fought in the Second South African War on either side: while

ers Amdallah [durch eine diesem zugänglich gemachten Pistole]. 1909, pp. 1–5. Cf. TNA. G21/361. Ermittlungssache gegen den Aufseher Henry Parsons, Itigi, Bez. Dodoma [wegen Verursachung einer Schlägerei zwischen seinen Arbeitern und denen der Beamten der OAEg Eredi und Kurbje-weit]. 1911, pp. 24–30.

⁹⁶ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2,2, no. 13, pp. 43–44.

⁹⁷ There is also a case of a Muslim Goanese who had migrated from Brazil to German East Africa cf. TNA. G23/40. Strafsache gegen den Goanesen Castro de Lobo, Muhesa, Bez. Tanga, wegen Unterschlagung [von Prämien zur Arbeiteranwerbung] 1914, pp. 1a, 19–20.

⁹⁸ Cf. Brunnbauer and Buchenau. *Geschichte Südosteuropas*, pp. 108–200. Cf. Calic. *Südosteuropa*, pp. 344–423.

Greeks from the southwestern part of the Cape colony tended to join the British, those living in Transvaal joined the forces of the Boers.⁹⁹ This reflected the tendency of the Greek diaspora in African colonies to support the ruling colonial power, which guaranteed their presence in the foreign territory.¹⁰⁰

Besides this general information about the Greek diaspora in African colonies, there are court files that document the biographies of two Greek men in particular who worked as sub-contractors at the *Central Railway* in German East Africa. Neither of them had been to Egypt, nor to the Ottoman Empire before coming to the German colony at the Indian Ocean. The first one is Georges Kayakos. Whether Kayakos had left South Africa because of the Boers' defeat after 1902, like Lankopp did, or whether he had finished working on the Transvaal Railroad before coming to German East Africa is not entirely clear. His court file of 1915 only reveals that he had previously lived in the Transvaal region, was ca. forty-two years of age, Christian orthodox and contemporarily recruited workers for the German military during WWI. In any case, the biography of his fellow Greek railway sub-contractor, John Zavellas, extends even beyond Asia Minor and the African continent. Before coming to German East Africa, Zavellas had initially emigrated to the State of New York in the USA. His court file does not reveal much about his life in the USA, unfortunately. It only says that he had left Greece around the age of fifteen with the surname 'Gerakos', and was taken care of by an older Greek immigrant living in the USA named Zavellas. As Gerakos was quasi adopted by the elder Zavellas, the teenage immigrant therefore also took his protector's surname and became John Zavellas. After having lived in North America for some years, John Zavellas left the USA around 1900 and migrated to German East Africa where he first worked at a rubber, and later at a sisal, plantation. By 1911 at the latest, Zavellas had finally become one of *Central Railway's* numerous Greek sub-contractors and produced gravel for the track bed at a quarry, alongside another Greek colleague. Accused of violating labour protection rights, Zavellas was brought before *Holzmann* engineer and associate judge Clement Gillman at court in September 1911.¹⁰¹

99 Cf. Mantzaris, E.A. 'The Greeks in South Africa'. *The Greek Diaspora in the Twentieth Century*. 120–136. Ed. Richard Clogg. Basingstoke: 2001, pp. 120–123. Cf. Mantzaris, E.A. 'Greek Workers in South Africa. The Case of the Railway Workers and Cigarette-makers. 1905–1914'. 49–63. *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, vol. XIV, no. 3 & 4. N.P.: Fall/Winter: 1987, pp. 49–53. Cf. TNA. G21/645. Ermittlungssache gegen den Unternehmer George Koyakos, Kilossa, Bez. Morogoro, wegen Vergehens gegen die Arbeiteranwerbeverordnung [vom 5.2.1913]. 1915, pp. 2–3.

100 Regarding Mozambique and South Africa cf. Dousemetzis. *The Man who killed Apartheid*, pp. 34–72, 140–173.

101 Cf. TNA. G27/27. Strafsache gegen den Unternehmer John Zavellas, Tabora, wegen Anstiftung [mehrerer Aufseher zur Freiheitsberaubung]. 1911, pp. 13–15. Cf. TNA. G27/73. Strafsache gegen den Unternehmer John Zavellas, Kilossa, Bez. Morogoro, wegen Vergehens gegen die Arbeiterver-

As far as Gillman is concerned, the case against Zavellas was not his only trial as an associate judge and the fact that senior *Holzmann* employees of Central-European origin were also incorporated in the judicial system of German East Africa clearly shows that the separation of power in the colony was insufficient. Yet, analogically to Zavellas background, Gillman's biography reveals how individual biographies of men working at the central railroad in German East Africa transcended mere nationalities. Clement Gillman was the son of an Anglo-Swiss father (Fritz) and a German mother (Margarethe von Petzholdt), who, as the daughter of a German Professor for agricultural technology at the Tsarist University of Dorpat (today's Tartu), grew up in Estonia, which belonged to the Russian Empire at that time. Educated as a geologist and engineer in Freiberg (Saxony), Fritz Gillman moved to Spain to work at his father's silver-mines in Granada from 1867 onwards. Only a few months before Fritz left for Southern Europe, the couple had first met in Dresden, where the well-educated cosmopolitan Margarethe completed her education. It would be another thirteen years until Fritz and Margarethe got married in Freiburg im Breisgau in 1881, where Margarethe's father had chosen to live after his retirement. Immediately afterwards, the newly married couple moved to Madrid, where their son Clement Gillman was born on 26 November 1882 into a 'patchwork family', as Margarethe had already had two children from a previous marriage.¹⁰²

Predominantly raised at his maternal grandparents' home in Freiburg from 1884 onwards, Clement entered a five-year engineering course of study at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (*ETH*) in Zurich in October 1900. While studying, Clement not only learned the art of engineering, but also extensively travelled Switzerland and Germany. In Zurich he became a close friend of Paul Rieppel, the son of Anton von Rieppel, who was then head of the *MAN* Company and it is noteworthy that *MAN*'s engineers would later construct railway bridges not only in German East Africa, but also in other German colonies.¹⁰³ It was Paul Rieppel, whose business relationships to German engineering companies were facilitated by his father who made Clement's post-study job-hunting successful; Paul knew one of the chief directors of Frankfurt's *Philipp Holzmann* company personally and brokered Clement a job there. After spending only a few months at *Holz-*

ordnung [vom 5.2.1912 – Nichtführung von Lohnlisten] und Führung eines unrichtigen Namens. 1914–1915, pp. 4–10, 39–42. Cf. Rösser. 'Transimperiale Infrastruktur?', pp. 277–284.

¹⁰² Cf. Hoyle, B.S. 'Clement Gillman, 1882–1946: Biographical Notes on a Pioneer East African Geographer'. 1–16. *East African Review*, no. 3, n.p.: April 1965, p. 1. Cf. Hoyle. *Gillman*, pp. 33–44.

¹⁰³ Cf. Historisches Archiv/Museum der MAN AG Augsburg. 42, 352/a/3-2. Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Erinnerungen an den ersten Bahnbau in Ostafrika von Baurat Wilhelm Imm*, p. 19.

mann's headquarters in Frankfurt, Clement Gillman left for German East Africa in September 1905 as an assistant engineer of the colony's *Central Railway*, on which construction had been started only seven months earlier by *Holzmann*.¹⁰⁴

Although having been decisively involved in German colonial railway construction in East Africa between 1905 and 1914, Gillman's 'cosmopolitan' background scarcely fitted the jingoistic atmosphere before, but especially during WWI. As an Anglo-German engineer, and since 1908 married to an ethnic German woman called Eva Kerber, who was actually born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia,¹⁰⁵ Gillman and his family were first put on leave between September 1914 and May 1916 by the German colonial authorities after WWI had started in August 1914. The reason was that, to the taste of the German administration, Clement was judged as 'too English' and his wife not 'German enough' to be completely trusted. As fierce fighting increased on East African soil between German, British and Belgian forces, Gillman was then also made a POW and consequently interned in a concentration camp in Tabora between May 1916 and September 1916 by the German colonial authorities. The allied forces slowly but surely gained the upper hand in German East Africa, and the Gillmans were released as soon as the allied forces had invaded Tabora. They were still regarded with suspicion, however. Now it was the other way around with the British authorities: as Clement had previously worked for a German company (i.e. *Holzmann*) and was practically raised in Germany, the British did not immediately regard him as a reliable British subject. Analogically, Eva was widely regarded as being predominantly 'German'. Hence, it took another year to overcome these nationalist hurdles until the British acknowledged Gillman's useful engineering experience gathered in East Africa, and he was first made railway officer of the British colonial military and shortly afterwards promoted to chief engineer during the last years of WWI. While his first tasks were to rebuild railway sections and bridges that had been destroyed by the German forces during their retreat, he later continued working for the British Mandate authorities in what was by then called 'Tanganyika Territory' after the Treaty of Versailles. He continued to work and live in East Africa until his death in October 1946.¹⁰⁶ During his entire professional life, Clement Gillman

104 Cf. Hoyle. 'Biographical Notes', pp. 1–3. Cf. Hoyle. *Gillman*, pp. 45–56.

105 A highly educated woman, who had also studied in Zurich, where they met. She also had a very cosmopolitan background, having been born and raised in Russia's St. Petersburg to a wealthy German family with high-ranking business relations; among others, Eva's father, Eduard Kerber, acted as representative of the *Krupp* consortium, which coincidentally also provided the iron bars of the German colonial central railway in East Africa. Vgl. Hoyle. *Gillman*, p. 53. Cf. Kilian, Dieter E. *Kai-Uwe von Hassel und seine Familie. Zwischen Ostsee und Ostafrika. Militär biographisches-Mosaik*. Norderstedt: 2013, p. 98.

106 Cf. Hoyle. 'Biographical Notes', pp. 3–9. Cf. Hoyle. *Gillman*, pp. 108–370.

kept his diary assiduously and published scientific articles on various subjects from engineering to geography. The result is an almost unmanageable number of documents ranging from diaries, scientific notes and correspondence to articles produced over forty years that also shed light on labour relationships in his own construction camp. Gillman, as a senior railway engineer, lived a comparatively luxurious life in the German colony. He received not only decent salaries, but compared to the numerous European sub-contractors, he was also privileged in the colonial society, as demonstrated by his involvement in the colonial judiciary system. In contrast, railway sub-contractors like John Zavellas often lived insecure itinerant lives, not only affecting their standard of living, but also their societal standing.

3.3.5 Struggling Along the Railroad: Making a Living as a Railway Sub-contractor

'We are all broke!' shouted the chairman. [. . .] 'Broke. That's what we are indeed!' echoed the second. [. . .] The third one, an older gentleman, nodded three times conformingly with a friendly smile. Then, he took a sip of whisky-soda silently.¹⁰⁷

Zimmermann, Adolf. *Mit Dernburg nach Ostafrika*. Berlin: 1908.

That is how the journalist Adolf Zimmermann, who accompanied State Secretary Bernhard Dernburg to German East Africa in 1907, recalls his meeting with "the united German Civil Population of Sadani"¹⁰⁸ in his travel report. As this scene of "German sociability in distant German-Wild-East"¹⁰⁹ illustrates, being a settler in the East African colony was very far from the *Herrenmenschentum*, which many European migrants had probably anticipated before leaving their country of origin. On the contrary, their life was often marked by scarcity and many even struggled to sustain their own subsistence farming. Hence, a large number of them kept wandering around the colony, seeking more profitable employments or an extra income besides their farming estate. Lacking success in any undertaking, some were even expelled, because the colonial administration would not tolerate white people in need of the benevolence of the African population to survive as this would challenge the racial hierarchy in the colony.¹¹⁰ Many of these individuals probably rejoiced when hearing that the building company *Philipp Holzmann* had started actual construction of the *Central Railway* in January 1905. The rail-

¹⁰⁷ Zimmermann, Adolf. *Mit Dernburg nach Ostafrika*. Berlin: 1908, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ Zimmermann. *Mit Dernburg*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁹ Zimmermann. *Mit Dernburg*, p. 118.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Söldenwagner. *Spaces*, p. 166–177.

road promised not only a spur to macro-economic activity, but also direct employment opportunities. Yet, recalling the population statistics of the railway hub Tabora published by the *DOAZ* in 1912, despite railway construction and its economic impulse, the unemployment rate among the European population of the town was high. Forty-one out of 433 Europeans were out of work: an unemployment rate of about ten percent. Even if someone found a job at the railway as a sub-contractor, the standard of living of many European sub-contractors seems to have remained low throughout the entire construction process.

When Edwin Hennig, one of the leading palaeontologists working for the Tendaguru Expedition in German East Africa's southeast, visited the *Central Railway* for geographical investigations close to the newly built track on 14 February 1910, he described the poor living conditions of railway sub-contractors in his diary:

I met the two Europeans [. . .] at the station of Kidugallo who are expanding the quarry here[.] They seem to struggle along quite miserably and their only wish is to be able to return [home] quite soon. They asked me to stay for lunch. Not to my delight, because their grass house [. . .] was overrun by cobwebs a[nd] [. . .] the dining room right next to the kitchen (from where a female voice was to be heard and which also seems to serve for sleeping), was miserably small and greasy. All around there was hardly any footpath to be found leading through the grass.¹¹¹

Although Hennig uses the word 'Europeans', his diary does not reveal the nationalities of the two men working for the railway. But having processed the palaeontologist's diary it must be stressed that his German acquaintances are generally remembered by name, while railway sub-contractors who were from Southern Europe remained usually anonymous. With Hennig only very reluctantly accepting the invitation of these two 'miserably struggling' sub-contractors for lunch in their shabby hut, the palaeontologist's statement reveals not only that it was hard for railway sub-contractors to make a living in German East Africa. Of course, there were also very successful large scale sub-contractors of South-East European descent, such as the already mentioned Greek Scutari. But Scutari had not only been in the service of *Holzmann* for many years, he seems to have also been of a wealthy family. This did not apply to all sub-contractors, as Hennig's diary entry shows. Moreover, it also reveals that class and standard of living were central to the status a European would acquire in the East African colonial society. But mate-

¹¹¹ Universitätsarchiv Tübingen (UAT). 407/80. Nachlass Hennig (1882–1977). Tagebuch, Teil 1, p. 131.

rial wealth was not the only indicator of class in the society of German East Africa. Standard of living intermingled with concepts of race and the *whiteness* of any European: especially when South-East Europeans or rather Greeks were concerned.

3.4 White Subaltern Railway Men and Precarious Whites

3.4.1 White Subalterns Versus Precarious Whites

[. . .] [A]nthropologists have taken the dichotomy of the colonizer and the colonized as a given, rather than as a historically shifting pair of social categories that needs to be explained. Certainly, this is not to suggest that anthropologists have not attended to the ambiguity and manipulation of racial categorization. [. . .] But this interest has rarely been coupled with a focus on European communities, or the powerful cultural idioms of domination in which they invest.

Laura Ann Stoler. 'Rethinking Colonial Categories'. Ann Arbor: 1992.¹¹²

Stoler's research on the colonial community in Sumatra is almost thirty years old. Nevertheless, she is certainly right, as racist colonial discourses could indeed target population groups that one might not have expected. Indeed, European peoples could also become subject to racist and prejudiced colonial discourses analogical to those faced by African workers, Indian craftsmen, and Chinese coolies in German East Africa.¹¹³ These discourses materialised especially when a people or an individual did not meet the characteristics of an ideal-typical coloniser at the turn of the nineteenth century, who was male, of upper or at least middle-class origin and most importantly from Central Europe. In this respect, Harald Fischer-Tiné, in particular, has examined for British colonial India how British lower-class colonists could lose their superior status when their material means and way of life, did not concord with the ideal image of a white (male) middle-upper-class European coloniser with an almost pious character. Especially when Europeans originated from the working class, lacked financial or other material means, showed deviant behaviour or had an affinity to drink, the superior status of the white men in the colony was severely challenged. The same mechanisms applied to European women, who would face even more severe discrimination if they were occupied as sex workers, or to so-called 'Eurasian' people of a mixed European-Indian background. Moreover, a European would lose his or her *white* prestige if he or she abandoned a

¹¹² Stoler, Laura Ann. 'Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule'. *Colonialism and Culture*. 319–352. Ed. Nicolas B. Dirks. Ann Arbor: 1992, p. 321.

¹¹³ Cf. Yekani. "Inder und Chinesen", pp. 209–225.

rather unspecified, but generally bourgeois European way of life and shared the habits or aspects of daily life with the colonised indigenous people. Despite their still superior legal status, British colonisers in India who did not fit the colonial discourse of white supremacy would be seen as 'low and licentious Europeans' who were ranked as 'second-rate whites' by the colonial discourse. This phenomenon, which Fischer-Tiné rather provocatively called 'white subalternity', does not mean that overarching mechanisms of colonial racism that ranked 'black' or 'coloured' people lower than 'whites' were no longer relevant. Borrowing approaches from American social sciences and gender studies, Fischer-Tiné is convinced that social inequality is not a fixed, one-dimensional phenomenon, but rather an ever-evolving

'multi-dimensional process that is constantly adapting to the different contexts in which it is embedded. This process is organised upon multiple intersecting hierarchies of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nativity and other hegemonic systems, which pervade the status, lived experiences, and collective dynamics of both marginalised and empowered groups.'¹¹⁴

While stressing that each case of 'white-subalternity' depended highly on the context and individual circumstances, Fischer-Tiné is convinced "there were arresting parallels in the discursive strategies of exclusion used for white subalterns on the one hand and the colonized population on the other".¹¹⁵ 'White subalternity' was such a pressing issue in British colonial India as it posed a serious threat to the ideology of colonialism and the practices of colonial rule: with destitute whites living on the breadline, sharing their daily lives with the indigenous population or taking up manual, unskilled and poorly paid jobs, the line between coloniser and the colonised blurred. From the perspective of any colonial administration, not only in India but also in other colonies, any phenomenon that posed a threat to the colonial ideology had to be avoided. That is why in almost all colonial empires, so-called mixed-race marriages between coloniser and the colonised were made increasingly difficult or even forbidden, and destitute or delinquent 'white subalterns' were hidden away from the public or even deported to their countries of origin.

Fischer-Tiné's research results regarding British colonial India are significant for the discursive mechanisms for 'white subaltern' Europeans in German East Africa as well. As 'white subalterns' challenged the ideal-typical colonial hierarchies of white European superiors and coloured-African inferiors, any Europeans who did not meet the standards of the colony were regarded with suspicion by the colonial authorities. In the case of the settler community in German East

114 Walter Allen and Angie Y. Chung, "Your Blues Ain't like my Blues": Race, Ethnicity and Social Inequality in America'. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29, no. 6. 2000, p. 799. Quotd. in Fischer-Tiné. 'Low and Licentious', p. 17.

115 Fischer-Tiné. 'Low and Licentious' p. 22, cf. pp. 1–23.

Africa, Philippa Söldenwagner observes that some white settlers were even pressured to leave the colony by the authorities as they were accused of undermining white prestige by becoming impoverished or by mixing too closely with the African population. While many (German) settlers in need were supported either by missions, the colonial government or the welfare lottery, especially European settlers who were not genuinely so-called *Reichsdeutsche* were regarded as ‘second rate whites’. This was particularly true for some Boer families who had come to German East Africa after the Second South African War (1899–1902) and some German Russian families who had been invited by the colonial authorities to leave Russia for the German colony in the course of a German missionary initiative around 1905. Initially welcomed by the government, which was contemporarily trying to attract more German settlers to the colony, the Boers soon realised that economic opportunities were low in the German colony, and they were subsequently increasingly concerned that they were not regarded as ‘white enough’ – either by the authorities or by their fellow European settlers. Similarly, attracting German Russians to the colony raised criticism from their fellow German settlers, as they were not regarded as proper *Reichsdeutsche*. Furthermore, they held a comparatively low socio-economic status and were accused of living a life on the breadline in the German colony. For example, when some German Russians were found wandering pennilessly around the northern town of Tanga, they were accused of being a threat to white prestige, and six families were even expelled from the colony and deported to Hamburg.¹¹⁶

Historian Minu Haschemi Yekani generally agrees with the findings of Söldenwagner and Fischer-Tiné, but avoids the terminology of ‘white subalternity’: Although the discriminatory mechanisms directed against ‘white subalterns’ and the colonised population were similar in the colonies, she highlights the fact that in contrast to the colonised subalterns, ‘white subalterns’ had the opportunity to restore their racial prestige and their blemished *whiteness*. As soon as ‘white subalterns’ would return to their motherland, they would again become part of a *white* society that dominated the Global South through their empires and colonies, claims Yekani. In contrast to the ‘white subalterns’, the colonised would always remain subaltern. First of all, because of their skin colour, which the colonial discourse rated as inferior. Secondly, because colonial law really treated or rather made them inferior, and thirdly because colonised subalterns were generally not able to return to a society that dominated the rest of the world and

¹¹⁶ Cf. Söldenwagner. *Spaces*, pp. 58–70, 166–170. Cf. Methner, Wilhelm. *Unter drei Gouverneuren. 16 Jahre Dienst in deutschen Tropen*. Breslau: 1938, pp. 180–185. Cf. Dernburg, Bernhard. *Südwestafrikanische Eindrücke. Industrielle Fortschritte in den Kolonien. Zwei Vorträge*. Berlin: 1909, p. 11.

could thus not re-establish their socio-economic rank by means of migrating back to their motherland. That is why Yekani rejects the term ‘white subalternity’ and opts for the term white precariousness instead. White precariousness therefore describes that the *whiteness* of a Central-European could on the one hand indeed be challenged in German East Africa when it did not fit the ideal of a middle-class European way of life. But white precariousness also meant on the other hand that *whiteness* could be restored as soon as social circumstances altered and/or the standard of living of a precarious white improved. While the first aspect of white precariousness is quasi-analogous to the experience of the colonised subaltern, the second way was barred to the colonised people who would always remain subaltern according to the racist discourse.¹¹⁷

Yekani’s criticism is certainly significant and contributes to a better understanding of racist discourses in a colony such as German East Africa. There are two limitations to Yekani’s observations, however. The first limitation arises from the fact that class and material means also mattered in all societies in Europe. Of course, someone who had lived as a precarious white in German East Africa could return to the German *Reich* and live his or her life in a society of a European colonial power again. It is however doubtful if the living conditions of any precarious white would automatically improve when he or she returned penniless from Africa to his or her home. Someone who had been deported from a German colony due to his or her low standard of living and his or her struggling to survive might not attain a higher socio-economic status than that of a pauper or factory worker back in Europe; and the living and working conditions of the working classes in Germany around 1900 were very low and precarious indeed. On an individual level, the restoration of an individual’s *whiteness* by returning to his or her motherland need not necessarily have paid off in a literal sense although he or she was structurally privileged as far as global standards apply, i.e. that a precarious white could then live a life in one of the imperial powers that dominated eighty percent of the world.¹¹⁸ Secondly, it has to be stressed that Yekani’s concept of white precariousness does not apply to all supposedly white Europeans, but exclusively to white Central Europeans. Yekani quite rightly observes that Southern Europeans, especially Greeks, did not fit into the concept of

¹¹⁷ Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 197–276.

¹¹⁸ For a comparison between the labour rights of colonised Africans and those of (factory) workers in the German *Reich* cf. Schröder. *Gesetzgebung und “Arbeiterfrage”*, pp. 102–105, 161–163, 374–382, 594–598, 606–614. Cf. Kocka, Jürgen. *Arbeitsverhältnisse und Arbeiterexistenzen. Grundlagen der Klassenbildung im 19. Jahrhundert*. Bonn: 1990, pp. 507–525. Cf. Schmidt, Jürgen. *Arbeiter in der Moderne. Arbeitsbedingungen, Lebenswelten, Organisationen*. Frankfurt o.M.: 2015, pp. 33–68, 79–103.

white precariousness, because only Central Europeans were able to restore their *whiteness* when returning to their countries of origin. In contrast, Southern Europeans were still ranked inferior according to the hegemonic colonial discourse that elevated a Central European, middle-class way of life, and judged Greeks and Southern Europeans as ‘half-Orientals’ and ‘semi-civilised’. As even the Greek officer Achmed Fahim Effendi and the Armenian Mihram Effendi of the German colonial military in German East Africa were subsumed in historical sources as ‘black’ *Askari* despite their European origin, this argument is fundamentally supported.¹¹⁹ In fact, Yekani treats this aspect only as a sideshow and does not investigate further on the issue.¹²⁰ Yet, the role of Southern Europeans and especially Greeks is of central importance as far as labour at the construction sites of the *Central Railway* in particular, and labour recruitment in German East Africa in general, are concerned.

3.4.2 Discourses Against South(-East) European Sub-contractors

The difference of climate is in any case the main cause [. . .], for it determines both the physical development of the individual and consequently his material labour power [. . .], as well as his general mental qualities, the national character. [. . .] This is especially true of the northerners, who as a rule remain able to work in the tropics for only a few years and then either leave the country or gradually perish. Southern Europeans do much better, they are more resistant and have fewer needs [. . .] and their adaptability to tropical customs and traditions is very significant.

Senior Railway Engineer of Rio de Janeiro Dr. R.A. Hehl. Berlin: 1902.¹²¹

There were only few experts of overseas railway construction in Germany and only three German companies capable of fulfilling such projects. Besides *Holzmann*, there were Berlin’s *Lenz & Co.* and *Arthur Koppel*. Consequently, those German experts who had been in countries outside Europe for railway construction had a strong voice among their colleagues. Apparently, Dr R.A. Hehl was one of these more experienced experts. Before publishing his book, senior engineer Hehl had built railways in “tropical and sub-tropical” Brazil for many years. Based on his experience, he felt entitled to provide guidance for railway engineers working not only in Latin America, but also in Africa as he viewed Brazil as having “great

¹¹⁹ Askari = African soldier/mercenary in service of the German colonial military. Cf. Michels, Stefanie. *Schwarze deutsche Kolonialsoldaten. Mehrdeutige Repräsentationsräume und früher Kosmopolitismus in Afrika*. Bielefeld: 2009, pp. 13–18.

¹²⁰ Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 212, 255, 267. Cf. Rösser. “*Shenzi Ulaya*”.

¹²¹ Hehl, R.A. *Eisenbahnen in den Tropen. Spurweiten, Bau und Betrieb*. Berlin: 1902, pp. 1–2.

similarities with the similarly situated countries in the African continent.”¹²² When exploring the future track layout for the *Central Railway* in German East Africa in 1903, it seems that the engineers sent on behalf of the consortium of the *Deutsche Bank* were indeed aware of Hehl’s ideas. His book *Eisenbahnen in den Tropen* (Railways in the Tropics) ranked first on the planning engineers’ list of resources to be consulted.¹²³ In this work, Hehl gave not only advice on the technical aspects of railway construction ‘in the tropics’ – such as track gauge, high rise structures or the calculation of operating costs – he also provided his thoughts on labour. In line with the zeitgeist, Hehl’s ideas about labour in the ‘tropics’ intermingled with contemporary discourses of race, class, climate and national identity that melded significantly with ideological or quasi-religious concepts of work. As revealed by the excerpt from his book cited at the beginning of this section, Hehl’s ideas further intermingled with discourses about South(-East) Europeans and their work at railway construction sites in places that Hehl perceived as ‘the tropics’. In essence, to Hehl, these tropical places were any railway construction sites in overseas or colonial territories.¹²⁴

Racist discourses analogising the culture of African peoples to Southern Europeans were widespread in Germany and other European Empires. They ranked ‘second-rate whites’ or rather white subalterns below Central Europeans. Writing the official report on his joint inspection tour to German East Africa in 1908 with Bernhard Dernburg, the Colonial State Secretary’s economic advisor Walther Rathenau, the Weimar Republic’s later Foreign Minister, held the following view on labour in the colonies:

Assuming [. . .] that the Negro is not used to work is simply wrong. If he, having lived under different climatic, historical, and racial conditions, shirks continuous work pursued day after day just like some Southern Europeans love to do; if he prefers one kind of work over

122 Hehl. *Eisenbahnen*, p. III.

123 Cf. HADB. S 1516, “Seydel’s Technische Buchhandlung”.

124 Cf. Hehl. *Eisenbahnen*, pp. III–V, 1–20, 229–241. Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 265–276. Cf. Yekani. “‘Inder und Chinesen’”. Cf. Axster, Felix and Lelle, Nikolas. ‘«Deutsche Arbeit». Kritische Perspektiven auf ein ideologisches Selbstbild. Zur Einführung’. *«Deutsche Arbeit». Kritische Perspektiven auf ein ideologisches Selbstbild*. 7–36. Eds. Felix Axster and Nikolas Lelle. Göttingen: 2018. Cf. Konitzer, Werner. “‘Rasse’ und ‘Arbeit’ als dichte Begriffe”. *«Deutsche Arbeit». Kritische Perspektiven auf ein ideologisches Selbstbild*. 76–87. Eds. Felix Axster and Nikolas Lelle. Göttingen: 2018. Cf. Axster, Felix. ‘Arbeit an der ‘Erziehung zu Arbeit’. Oder: die Figur des guten deutschen Kolonisators’. *«Deutsche Arbeit». Kritische Perspektiven auf ein ideologisches Selbstbild*. 226–251. Eds. Felix Axster and Nikolas Lelle. Göttingen: 2018. Cf. Conrad. *Globalisation*, pp. 275–379. Cf. Rösser. “‘Shenzi Ulaya’”. Details regarding discourses separating *white* from *black* but disregarding nuances in between colonisers and colonised, and also neglecting Hehl and Yekani cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 126–160.

the other, there is still no reason to bereave him of his right to self-determination under the label of 'education'. If the negro had the qualities of a European, we had actually no right to colonise his land.¹²⁵

Rejecting overt physical violence to force the African population to colonial labour, Rathenau's statement is in line with Dernburg's colonial policies after 1907. Although these colonial policies were termed 'reformed' after the devastating effects of the Maji Maji War, they nevertheless justified European colonial rule in Africa particularly based on the perception that the local population had to be 'educated' to work properly. More importantly, equating the presumed character of African people to that of Southern Europeans, Rathenau's statement implies the claim that Southern Europeans would not have the same capabilities of work as Central Europeans would. In turn, such claims suppose that Southern Europeans as white subalterns also had to be 'educated to work' and were racially inferior to Central Europeans.¹²⁶

Rathenau's view was not only shared by Colonial State Secretary Bernhard Dernburg himself, but also by the German senior engineers of *Philipp Holzmann*. Having this discriminatory opinion not only implied the feeling of Central European superiority, however. It also implied the view that Southern Europeans were particularly qualified for colonial railway construction. On the part of the German engineers such as Hehl and *Holzmann's* Ferdinand Grages, especially the image of Greek railway sub-contractors oscillated between white subalternity and Greek special suitability for railway construction in German East Africa. Grages was of the following opinion:

It must be stressed that numerous Greeks registered as petty-[sub-]contractors and fulfilled minor tasks. Some of them failed because of lacking knowledge or because of lacking [financial] means. Others however – primarily due to their self-interest and due to material matters – remained true to the company until the very end. They have proved themselves as formidable [sub-]contractors. Some have become rich men or very successful planters in the end. Their success is rooted also in their frugality, their adaptability, and their great skill to familiarize quickly with the natives' customs and practices.¹²⁷

125 Rathenau. 'Erwägungen', p. 163, my emphasis.

126 For similar discourses against Southern Europeans, esp. Italians, cf. Guglielmo, Thomas A. *White on Arrival. Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945*. Oxford: 2003, pp. 59–92, 146–176. Assessing similar anti-(southern) European discourse (among others) by means of Marxist and gender approaches in southern Rhodesia after WWI. Cf. Ginsburgh, Nicola. *Class, Work and Whiteness: Race and Settler Colonialism in Southern Rhodesia, 1919–1979*. Manchester: 2020, pp. 1–32, 133–224, 257–263. Cf. Rösser. "Shenzi Ulaya". Cf. Papakyriacou. *Formulation and definitions*, pp. 51–73. Daughton mentions such discourses but only treats them as a sideshow. Cf. Daughton. *In the Forest of No Joy*, pp. 156–161, 289–291.

127 Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. Grages, pp 3–4. Cf. Dernburg. *Südwestafrikanische Ein-drücke*, p. 58.

Although perceived as helpful deputy colonisers by the *Holzmann* engineer Grages, the alleged Greek ‘frugality and adaptability’ and their ‘familiarization with the natives’ customs and practices’ in German East Africa was also intermingled with overt racism and classism.¹²⁸ Particularly during times of Greek migration, the *DOAZ* published articles that lamented about the Southern Europeans’ coming to the colony.

With the start of the actual construction work in January 1905, the colony experienced a major influx of Greek people.¹²⁹ Drawing on classist and racist discourses, the *DOAZ* immediately coined them “Tramps” and “Bassermann’s figures of Oriental descent”, who “rush to [German East Africa to] try their luck at the railway construction site”.¹³⁰ The newspaper’s very next edition demanded the re-introduction of registration laws to enable the government to expel destitute people in general, but particularly the “international proletariat”, who had come to the German colony because of work opportunities in the railway.¹³¹ Only two weeks later, another article lamented another thirty work-seeking Greeks who had just arrived in the colonial capital, while a further 150 were waiting in Zanzibar for the next ship to ferry them over. This time however, not only the mere issue of migration was the perceived problem, but also especially the fact that the Greek migrants allegedly did not seek to settle permanently in German East Africa but planned to stay for one to two years only, and then return to Asia Minor as soon as their contracts with the railway had ended. As a result, they would extract economic means from the German colony when returning home with their earnings. Whenever the *Reich’s* government made decisions to grant additional funds necessary to continue railway construction towards Lake Tanganyika, the publication of articles featuring anti-Greek discourses peaked in the *DOAZ*. Most articles were published around 1909 and 1912, when the *Reichstag* had decided to build the track from Morogoro to Tabora first and then from Tabora to the railroad’s ultimate terminus at Kigoma in the west of the colony.¹³²

128 Cf. Papakyriacou. *Formulation and definitions*, pp. 51–73.

129 Cf. “Eine Ernste Gefahr”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 12.

130 “Eine Ernste Gefahr”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 12. “Bassermann’s Figure” = “Bassermansche Gestalten”: suspicious, questionable Individuals. Term coined by Friedrich Bassermann at the proceedings of the *Paulskirchenverfassung* 1848 in Frankfurt to describe Berlin’s population, which was apparently heavily affected by poverty. Cf. Angermann, Erich. “Bassermann, Friedrich Daniel”. *Deutsche Biographie*. 1, 1953, S. 624–625. Web. <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz35199.html#ndbcontent>. (22 December 2017).

131 “Aus der Kolonie”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 13.

132 Cf. “Gewissenlose Berichterstattung”. *DOAZ*, IX, no. 60. Daressalam: 19 October 1907. Cf. “Zur Griechenfrage”. *DOAZ*, XI, no. 42. Cf. “Aus unserer Kolonie. Die weiße Bevölkerung Deutsch- Ostafrikas”. *DOAZ*, XII, no. 28. Daressalam: 08 April 1911. Cf. “Deutsche Unternehmer für den Bahnbau

Anti-Greek discourses were also prominent in *Reichstag* debates. Generally, MPs of the SPD and some members of the Catholic *Zentrum* were the only ones mouthing criticism about German colonial policies and labour and the treatment of African workers.¹³³ This also applied to railway construction in German East Africa. Yet, although the SPD were generally critical about such matters, their MP Gustav Noske particularly blamed Greek sub-contractors for the majority of the grievances at the railroad. In the general debate on the colonies' budget in 1914 that also decided on the funding of the construction of the so-called *Ruandabahn* – another track to be built intending to connect the recently built *Central Railway* to the northern part of German East Africa Ruanda – Noske did not mince his words:

Attempting to lower the construction costs, the Holzmann Company [. . .] does not do the construction work itself; it rather employs a large number of sub-contractors. Of those, at least some are of dubious value. Some are Greeks of the very worst kind. They cheat the workers out of their wages, occasionally the entire amount. [. . .] It is certain that the Greeks do not care a damn about the labour laws [. . .] which have been enacted and those men in charge of supervision either don't notice everything or don't want to notice everything.¹³⁴

Certainly, Noske blamed *Holzmann* for cutting costs at the expense of decent treatment of the African workforce by outsourcing route sections to cheaper sub-contractors. In general, the Social Democrat held these cost savings primarily responsible for the mistreatment of the workmen and women along the *Central Railway*. Indeed, sub-contractors paid less than *Holzmann* for the same working tasks. Yet, Noske further criticised that the supervisory bodies turned a blind eye to the issue and did not interfere decidedly enough. However, Noske particularly blamed Greek sub-contractors and accused them especially of being worse than other Europeans responsible for outsourced route sections. He even went so far as to call one Greek sub-contractor a “beast of a Greek” and accused especially the South-East Europeans of disregarding the labour protection rights issued by the colonial administration.¹³⁵ Although Greek sub-contractors certainly abused African workers, blaming South-East Europeans for most of the labour grievances at the *Central Railway* rather reflects German discourses discriminating white subalterns in the colonies. Yet, examining unpublished archival sources reveals

Tabora-Tanganika”. *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 8. Cf. “Aus unserer Kolonie”. *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 96. Cf. “Die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse des Bezirks Tabora im Jahre 1911”. *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 92.

¹³³ Cf. Habermas. *Skandal in Togo*, pp. 29–54. Cf. Guettel. ‘The Myth’, pp. 452–484. Cf. Bösch. ‘Der Ankläger’, pp. 47–71. Cf. Schröder. *Gustav Noske*, pp. 40–55.

¹³⁴ Noske. ‘232. Sitzung’, p. 7991.

¹³⁵ Noske. ‘232. Sitzung’, p. 7992, cf. pp. 7991–7993.

that also German and other European sub-contractors were at least on a par with their Greek colleagues as far as the violation of labour legislation is concerned.

3.5 “All Treat the Workers Equally Bad”: (South-East) European Sub-contractors and the African Workforce

3.5.1 The Complaint of the German Sub-contractor Berger

The foreign contractors are preferred by the company Ph. Holzmann & Co, in every way when awarding construction contracts, without a German contractor first being asked to submit a bid [. . .]. So far, individual German contractors have had to be content with small objects [. . .]. Larger works have always been entrusted to Greeks. The undersigned do not wish to bring the firm of Ph. Holzmann & Co into disrepute with the Imperial High Colonial Office, nor do they wish to oust foreigners from the work, they only demand preferential treatment, but least of all equal treatment in the awarding of building contracts to foreigners.

German sub-contractor Berger to Colonial State Secretary Wilhelm Solf, 1 August 1912.¹³⁶

On 1 August 1912, the German sub-contractor C. Berger, who had formerly been directly employed by *Holzmann* as assisting constructor, took the opportunity of addressing colonial State Secretary Wilhelm Solf personally via letter. Solf had just started his tour of inspection to the German colonies in Africa and visited the *Central Railway* in German East Africa. Alongside five other German sub-contractors – Heinrich Herling, Hans Haugg, Kurt Pfau, I. Hering and Mr Behrens – Berger bitterly complained about the allocation of new route sections, claiming that the *Holzmann* company would not privilege German sub-contractors as promised, but preferably hired Greeks instead. Berger not only complained about the large number of Greeks working at the *Central Railway* as such; he particularly resented the fact that, because *Holzmann* preferred Greek sub-contractors, German entrepreneurs had no chance of obtaining similar contracts and consequently had to take up work as sub-sub-contractors under a Greek boss. Besides the fact that such procedures turned the dominant discursive colonial hierarchy upside down, Berger appears to have been angry at *Holzmann* because he had recently been rejected to build the upper construction as sub-contractor of a route section, although he claimed to be not only more qualified than his Greek competitor, but also significantly cheaper: with Berger being a “former technical official” of *Holzmann*’s he

136 Cf. TNA. G17/123, “Abschrift B. III. 3283. Berger an Staatssekretär Solf, Tabora 1. August 1912”.

had allegedly offered to build one kilometre of railway upper construction for 350 Rps. instead of 400 Rps. like the competing Greek "entrepreneur who calls himself a businessman".¹³⁷

Apparently, Berger and his German colleagues received considerate attention not only from the German colonial press, but also from senior colonial officials. Previous to Berger's letter to Solf, the *DOAZ* published an article titled "German entrepreneurs for the railway construction Tabora-Tanganyika" on 17 January 1912, which featured quite the same arguments as Berger did in his letter of complaint. As a reaction to this newspaper article, *Holzmann* felt the urge to have an official response published in the *DOAZ* only ten days later, on 27 January 1912. Rejecting all allegations made and justifying their staff management, *Holzmann* stated in this article that whenever a suitable German candidate was at hand he would "receive preference over any non-German".¹³⁸ More importantly, after this public debate, Berger's letter even reached colonial State Secretary Wilhelm Solf half a year later. Indeed, Solf must have taken the allegations against *Holzmann's* alleged Greek preference seriously. How else would you explain that Berger's letter found its way to the acting Governor Methner in Dar es Salaam by the end of 1912, who subsequently urged the local railway commissioner, who supervised any issue related to labour at the *Central Railway*, to investigate on the issue both immediately and confidentially? No sooner said than done, *Holzmann* was ordered to report to the colonial authority about the state of affairs and elaborate on how many Germans and foreigners were currently employed by the company, what kind of contracts they had, how much money they earned, and if there were any differences between the price levels of the German sub-contractors and their Greek colleagues.¹³⁹ Accordingly, *Holzmann* reported to State Secretary Solf directly and gave details about their European personnel then working at the route section between Tabora and Malagarassi: in total, fifty-eight European sub-contractors worked at this 235-km long part of the *Central Railway*. Of those, forty-seven were "foreigners", while only eleven were German citizens. Admitting the predominance of non-Germans, *Holzmann* justified their staff policies, stating that a sub-contractor's productivity and reliability were the primary criteria that decided whether a sub-contractor was hired or not. In this respect, the Greeks were simply superior competitors compared to their German counterparts. According to *Holzmann's* government building

¹³⁷ TNA. G17/123, "Abschrift B. III. 3283. Berger an Staatssekretär Solf, Tabora 1. August 1912". Cf. TNA. G12/176.

¹³⁸ Cf. "Deutsche Unternehmer für den Bahnbau Tabora-Tanganyika". *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 8.

¹³⁹ Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Abschrift B. III. 3410 und Abschrift Bi III.155 Philipp Holzmann & Co. L. Rse. Frankfurt a/M An den Herrn Staatssekretär des Reichs-Kolonialamts Exzellenz Berlin, Vertraulich 3 April 1913. An die Firma Pihlipp Holzmann & Cie. GmbH. Tabora". Cf. TNA. G12/176.

official Ferdinand Grages, the Greeks' productivity was higher because they had generally succeeded in creating a larger stock of African workers, who went along with the sub-contractor from one construction site to the next. As recruiting a sufficient number of workers was very challenging throughout the entire construction process of the *Central Railway* and also very costly, it was only natural for *Holzmann* to grant those sub-contractors with a larger workforce more labour-intensive and therefore generally bigger commissions, regardless of their nationality. Finally, Grages assured Solf that there were no pay gaps between German and non-German sub-contractors as payment was dependent on the type of work and its complexity.¹⁴⁰

Besides these aspects of productivity and reliability in general, what busied the colonial administration, adjunct and in combination with this investigation, was the question whether German or Greek sub-contractors would be better equipped for work in a tropical colony such as German East Africa. Another concern was the question of which group of sub-contractors would treat the African workers better. Apart from *Holzmann's* Ferdinand Grages and State Secretary Solf, this investigation would plague several government officials from the highest to the lowest levels of rank as well as the construction company *Holzmann* for many months to come: the Governor, the district officers, the railway commissioners, the government inspector and the construction supervisors of the local route sections produced, circulated and discussed reports on the conditions of the labour camps, and legal proceedings and court rulings against sub-contractors and labour recruiters of any nationality. The ultimate outcome of this large investigation was mixed, if not even contradictory.

3.5.2 Large-Scale Investigations and an (Un-)surprising Outcome

According to our observations, the German pieceworker is considerably inferior to the Greek pieceworker in his frugality, in his ability to get, treat and keep workers, in his sobriety, diligence, ability to adapt to the climate and business sense; the business successes of the Greeks can be attributed to these undoubted abilities.

Holzmann Construction Officer Grages to Colonial State Secretary Wilhelm Solf, 13 January 1913¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Abschrift Bi III.155 Philipp Holzmann & Cie. Frankfurt a/M, den 13. Januar 1913. An den Herrn Staatssekretär des Kolonialamtes Berlin". Cf. TNA. G12/176.

¹⁴¹ TNA. G17/123, "Abschrift Bi III. 155. An den Herrn Staatssekretär des Kolonialamtes Berlin. Frankfurt a.M., den 13. Januar 1913".

Personally, Ferdinand Grages believed there were a variety of reasons why the Greeks were more successful in the sub-contractor business at the *Central Railway* than their German counterparts. On the one hand, Grages confirmed the widespread discourses about Southern Europeans working in a colonial environment. In this respect, Grages attributed the Greek sub-contractors' success to their "frugality", their "ability to adapt to the climate" and their alleged cunning business acumen. On the other hand, Grages' statement also irritates and contradicts these contemporary discourses against the Greeks as white subalterns. Despite reproducing the image of the Greek *shenzi ulaya*,¹⁴² Grages highlights the South-Eastern European sub-contractors' rationality, soberness and especially their diligence, which enabled their success at the *Central Railway* in German East Africa. This is striking as such character traits were generally reserved to describe the essence of the German 'work ethos' that was very prominent in the 'long nineteenth century' and beyond.¹⁴³

Similar contradictions can be seen in the conclusions by colonial government officials and *Holzmann* in the course of investigating several law proceedings and court rulings against German and Greek (sub-)contractors who had violated labour protection rights. Juxtaposing those findings with reports about the sanitary conditions at the labour camps of German and Greek sub-contractors, as well as reports by the Moravian railway mission, reveals that the reality was often more complex than the discourse. While the Moravian missionaries generally praised *Holzmann* proper for treating their workers well, the Moravian missionary Löbner resented the Greek railway sub-contractors:

The workers here and generally everybody directly employed by Holzmann & Co. do not suffer. It is strictly observed that no overseer mistreats anybody and that everybody receives only work in accordance to his strength and ability. They [the workers] receive their Posho either as money, flour or rice, according to their preference. If somebody is sick, he is sent to

¹⁴² Even with a high level of prosperity and distinct cultural capital, Greeks were considered "half-Orientals" in the context of the German-colonial discourse of East Africa, as expressed by the Anglo-German railway engineer Clement Gillman. This term was not uncommon to vilify Greeks living in the German colony. The former Governor of German East Africa, Eduard von Liebert (1896–1901), explicitly called the Greeks *shenzi ulaya*. The term *shenzi ulaya* derives from Swahili, which is widely spoken in East Africa. *Ulaya* can be translated as "Europe". *Shenzi* was initially a discriminatory term used by the Muslim coastal population of East Africa to refer to the non-Muslim people in the East African hinterland. Thus, *shenzi ulaya* can be translated *mutatis mutandis* as 'uncivilised European', and so the concept of *shenzi ulaya* can be understood as the German colonial version of the 'white negro' for East Africa. Cf. Rösser. 'Shenzi Ulaya'.

¹⁴³ Cf. Axster and Lelle. 'Deutsche Arbeit', pp. 7–36. Cf. Thiel, Jens. "Menschenbassin Belgien". *Anwerbung, Deportation und Zwangsarbeit im Ersten Weltkrieg*. Essen: 2007, pp. 89–97. Cf. Papa-kyriacou. *Formulation and definitions*, pp. 51–73. Cf. Conrad. *Globalisation*, pp. 334–379.

the hospital immediately. The treatment on behalf of the Greek sub-contractors is different, of course. Superficially it seems to be alright, indeed. If you manage to look behind the scenes, you will change your opinion. Just one example to illustrate how these Greeks act in order to veil their iniquities. The district officer or a Gentlemen of the official construction supervision travels around the labour camps [. . .]. At once a messenger is sent from one Greek camp to another, reporting that somebody is expected. Just as fast as this message arrives, the alerted gathers his people and promises them a lot of pombe, if they will only say that they have a good life at his place. If they won't, he will threaten them with various punishments.¹⁴⁴

It is difficult to judge whether Löbner's observations are trustworthy. A closer view on the Moravians' mission in German East Africa and their connections to railway construction has revealed that the Moravians concurred with discourses against white subalterns and were therefore generally prejudiced against Greeks in the colony, too.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, the Moravians were also dependent on *Holzmann's* funding to finance their missionary work in German East Africa. Consequently, conflicts of interests between their own funding and their opinion about Greek sub-contractors are not unlikely. Interestingly, the local supervisors of the colonial railway commissioner held a different view. In stark contrast to the Moravian missionary Löbner, the construction supervisor reported to his superior railway commissioner when inspecting the construction of the route section between km 289 and km 381:

I take the view that the Greek contractors treat the workers better [and] do not demand the same amount of work [as the Germans do]. The construction of the houses in the labour camps of contractors like Mutopoulus, Lukas and Gerinimakis etc. is far better than that of the German contractors. [. . .] The labour camps of the German contractors are generally cleaner, built in a more symmetrical manner while they are also more spacious compared to those of the Greek contractors. Exceptions were the camps of contractors Mutopoulus and Lukas, which are [. . .] very good.¹⁴⁶

In other words: the investigations revealed a plethora of contradictions, and except for nuances and individual differences there were no decisive differences in how German or Greek railway sub-contractors treated and housed their African workers. It is therefore not surprising that Tabora's railway commissioner, who received and processed similar reports of several route construction supervisors monthly,¹⁴⁷ ultimately came to the obvious conclusion regarding the quality of

144 Unitätsarchiv Herrnhut (UAH). MD 1532. Missionsdirektion Unyamwezi. Briefwechsel mit dem Superintendenten u. Vorsteher 1909–1911, "Briefwechsel [. . .] J.N. 356. Löbner to Henning Sikonge, d. 29.3.11.", n.p.

145 Cf. Rösser. "*Shenzi Ulaya*".

146 TNA. G17/123, "Sia, den 27. März 1913. Auf Vefügung J. no. 472 vom 17. März 1913 [. . .] Eing. Eisenbahnkommissar. 29.III.13. J. no. 534".

147 E.g. cf. TNA. G17/124.

housing: "On average any labour camp was as bad as the other"¹⁴⁸ no matter if German or Greek; but further:

The treatment of the [Africans] by the German [sub-]contractors leaves a lot to be desired. The good Greek [sub-]contractors like Grammatikas, Mutopolos etc. treat their people definitely better. On the whole, it has to be noted further that the treatment of the workers on behalf of the [sub-]contractors is generally very bad. Mistreatments, wage evasions, Posho reductions and withholding wages after the end of an employment occur frequently. But such grievances are committed by both Germans and Greeks; at all times more often by Greeks than by Germans, however. There are several legal proceedings pending in this regard at the imperial district court in Tabora at the moment.¹⁴⁹

It is not clear whether the railway commissioner considered the overall ratio of German and Greek sub-contractors working at the *Central Railway* when claiming that Greeks were committing more grievances than the Germans. Recalling that the final 400 km of the entire railway between central Tabora and Kigoma at Lake Tanganyika was divided into thirty-eight route sections in April 1913 and that each route section was outsourced to at least one sub-contractor, it must be mentioned that of these thirty-eight sub-contractors, twenty-six were Greek, ten German and two Italian.¹⁵⁰ Given the fact that Greek sub-contractors by far outnumbered their German counterparts, it would not have been very surprising that there were more accusations made against the Southern Europeans as far as absolute numbers are concerned: just because there were simply more Greeks working at the *Central Railway* than Germans. Another list produced by *Holzmann* between May and June 1913 supports this argument. It lists sixteen European sub-contractors, sub-sub-contractors and overseers who had violated labour protection rights to such an extent that their employment had apparently become unbearable; all on the list had not paid their workers their wages and half of them were also accused of bodily harm and/or unlawful detention. Of those sixteen, four were German, while the others were Greek. The numerical composition of this list would quite fit the overall German-Greek ratio of sub-contractors at

¹⁴⁸ TNA. G17/123, "Mittellandbahn 616 concept. Tabora, 16. April 1913. 792, 1107 1.) Auf den Erlass no. 4837/XII vom 10. III. 1913. Betrifft deutsche und griechische Unternehmer. An den Herrn Kaiserlichen Gouverneur", p. 7.

¹⁴⁹ TNA. G17/123, "Mittellandbahn 616 concept. Tabora, 16. April 1913. 792, 1107", p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Philipp Holzmann. Entg. 534, 501, 472. An Eisenbahnkommissar Tabora. Tabora, 11. April 1913. Tabelle II".

the *Central Railway* and therefore relativise any allegations made against the Greeks solely based on absolute numbers.¹⁵¹

Despite these findings, it is quite remarkable that the railway commissioner stated in the very same report of April 1914, quoted immediately above, that the German sub-contractors were discriminated against in favour of their Southern European colleagues. Apparently, the railway commissioner and his subordinate route section supervisors turned at least one blind eye to grievances committed by the German sub-contractors. At the same time, they prosecuted Greek entrepreneurs more consequentially for comparable offences than German sub-contractors: "In case of poor labour performance or bad treatment of the workers, the sub-contractors are withdrawn from work. If Germans are concerned, we attempt to sit back and watch whenever possible, while we intervene immediately regarding ordinary [sic!] Greek entrepreneurs."¹⁵² In this respect, MP Gustav Noske (SPD) was quite right in saying that those in charge of supervision did indeed often knowingly ignore the violation of labour protection rights. In contrast to the predominant anti-Greek discourse that Noske also reproduced in the *Reichstag* however, it was not the Southern European sub-contractors that were privileged before colonial prosecution, but their German colleagues.

To make matters a bit more complicated, it must be stressed that the clear distinction between Greeks and Germans was actually not entirely applicable recalling the general process of outsourcing construction work at the *Central Railway*: a German sub-contractor could allocate (sometimes the files feature the word 'sell' for this process) his route section to a Greek sub-sub-contractor or the other way around. Thereby the line between Greek sub-contractors and Germans was decisively blurred. Moreover, each sub-contractor employed at least one European overseer who observed the manual work performed by the African staff. As the number of the European overseers per sub-contractor varied according to the number of African workers he employed as well as the sub-contractor's preferences, it was not necessarily the case that German sub-contractors would only employ German overseers. Neither would Greek sub-contractors exclusively hire Greek over-

151 Cf. One was probably Italian. The list, unfortunately, does not feature the nationality of the Europeans, but sometimes other documents in the same folder state the nationality of an individual. Moreover, the name enables to distinguish between a German and Greek sub-contractor, albeit someone with a Greek sounding name might exceptionally have had German citizenship. Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Mitteilung von dem Kaiserlichen Bezirksamt In Eisenbahnkommissariat der Mittellandbahn. Tabora. J. no. 444. z. zt. Kurrukuru, den 29. Mai 1913. Beiliegende Liste und Mitteilungen".

152 TNA. G17/123, "Mittellandbahn 616 concept. Tabora, 16. April 1913. 792, 1107", p. 8.

seers. Moreover, as there were not only Greeks and Germans working as sub-contractors or overseers at the *Central Railway's* construction sites, but many other (European) nationalities and East Africans like Swahili, the idea of clearly differentiating between 'Greek' and 'German' sub-contractors is generally absurd.¹⁵³

Regardless of the multinational reality of the construction sites, colonial discourses also devalued the work done by those other than Germans and simultaneously overestimated the work performance of German protagonists. As several studies on German global and colonial history have shown in recent years, the period around 1900 was decisive in shaping the trope and myth of buzzwords such as 'German work' or 'Made in Germany'. This myth of German work superiority can be regarded as the other side of the coin of anti-Greek colonial discourses as far as the context of labour and work at the *Central Railway* are concerned. Nineteenth century discourses about 'German work' revolved around a big variety of issues that included Social Darwinism, work and gender, religion, nationality, communism and the class struggle as well as globalisation and economic growth. What matters most for the analysis of labour at the *Central Railway* in German East Africa is first and foremost that the nineteenth century experienced a discourse that allocated each nationality a specific work ethic and way of work. In Germany, of central concern was not what kind of work a German performed, but how. Accordingly, Germans and work had a special relationship, and a German did not only work for profit, i.e. to make a living, but a German worked because he or she regarded it as an end in itself. Work even acquired a quasi-sacred character in these discourses in Germany and German work ethics were *per se* regarded as the primary commodity of export that should conquer the world. Whenever 'German work' was challenged, not only economic profit was at stake, but also quasi-religious feelings and the German claim to (colonial) power.¹⁵⁴ The predominance of Greek white subaltern labour at one of the most prestigious German colonial infrastructure projects thus challenged German colonial claims, no matter how successful or productive German labour really was.

¹⁵³ Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Philipp Holzmann. Entg. 534, 501, 472. An Eisenbahnkommissar Tabora. Tabora, 11. April 1913. Tabelle II". Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 1–3. Cf. TNA G21/262. Cf. TNA. G21/361.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Conrad. *Globalisation*, pp. 338–379. Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 265–276. Cf. Axster, Felix. 'Arbeit an der "Erziehung zur Arbeit"', pp. 226–251. Cf. Achinger, Christine. 'Deutsche Arbeit und die Poetisierung der Moderne'. «*Deutsche Arbeit*». *Kritische Perspektiven auf ein ideologisches Selbstbild*. 252–284. Eds. Felix Axster and Nicolas Lelle. Göttingen: 2018, pp. 252–284. Cf. Groß, Lothar. *Anmerkungen zu 'Made in Germany'. Deutschlands Wirtschaftsgeschichte von der Industrialisierung bis heute*. BoD (Books on Demand). N.P.: 2019. pp. 2–11. Cf. Campbell, Joan. *Joy in Work, German Work. The National Debate, 1800–1945*. Princeton: 1989, pp. 178–311, 376–385.

Remarkably, any report about the work performance of sub-contractors ranks German sub-contractor accomplishments below those of other (South) Europeans, the Greeks in particular: "It must unfortunately be expressed that the German contractors are generally not as productive as the Greek contractors."¹⁵⁵ The railway authorities were well aware of the reasons for that, apart from discourses that saw Greeks as 'white negroes' or allegedly closer to the African race. Accordingly, the Greeks had more financial means, and better knowledge of Swahili, which enabled them to communicate (more efficiently) with most of their workers and helped them establish and maintain contact with them. Their language skills also helped them recruit better-skilled workers, and maintain a larger workforce. With a better-qualified and larger staff, Greek sub-contractors were awarded larger building contracts. On top of that, the Greeks had been in the railway construction business since the very beginning of construction in 1905 and some had even already built parts of the *Bagdadbahn* before coming to East Africa. According to the railway commissioner, the majority of German sub-contractors had entered the business comparatively late, from the railway station of Saranda onwards – a place ca. 130 km west of Dodoma – and therefore roughly five years later (around 1909) than the Greeks had. Given *Holzmann's* own pursuit of profit and the administration's desire to keep the construction funds' budget in order, it is therefore not very surprising that the railway commissioner concluded that "business interests always matter most. The question of nationality ranks second."¹⁵⁶ Only if the first premise was not threatened, the second premise was observed: in which case, German sub-contractors were then given preference over their Greek colleagues, because *Holzmann* did indeed fear allegations of violating the discourse of 'German work' in East Africa.

There was another reason why *Holzmann* would only choose its German sub-contractors in anticipatory obedience so long as business interests were not threatened. The construction company had also had the experience that the Greek sub-contractors – apart from violating labour protection rights – had seldomly raised issues, which *Holzmann* had to explain or justify publicly. In contrast to this loyalty, the German sub-contractors were prone to complain about their employment. Indeed, it was the German sub-contractor Berger who had initiated the letter of complaint that preoccupied not only the German colonial public via the *DOAZ*; through State Secretary Wilhelm Solf, it had also reached the highest levels of the German colonial administration in Berlin, and maybe even Noske's anti-Greek statement in the *Reichstag* was inspired by Berger's letter of complaint as it was also debated in

155 TNA. G17/123, "Mittellandbahn 616, concept. Tabora, 16. April 1913. 792, 1107", p. 5.

156 TNA. G17/123, "Mittellandbahn 616 concept, Tabora, 16. April 1913. 792, 1107", p. 10.

the media. Be that as it may, according to the files under investigation, Berger had no reason to complain, but acted out of his own (business) interest and his general tendency to file petitions to the colonial administrations in German East Africa and Berlin. Of course, apart from his letter of complaint, the files do not directly reflect Berger's own accounts and both the railway commissioner's and *Holzmann's* assessments of Berger's work must be met with some reservations. But both of the latter's records agree about Berger's constant poor performance. For example, *Holzmann's* Government Building Official, Ferdinand Grages, had known Berger for many years. Before coming to East Africa, Berger had worked in Europe as a construction assistant for several of *Holzmann's* projects, but only achieved low results. Not only his general "skills" as an assistant, but also his work "performance had been in inversed ratio to his constant petitions for salary increase", complained Grages. Only Berger's "urgent pleading" and his not further specified "unfortunate family background" had been the reasons why he was hired as sub-contractor – not only at the very beginning of constructing the *Central Railway*, but also for a second time after his initial contract had ended in 1908. As Grages was very satisfied with the work of the four other German sub-contractors who had filed the petition, he was convinced that Berger had persuaded his colleagues to join his complaints in order to eke out better salaries and future contracts.¹⁵⁷ There are several telegrams and letters issued either by the local route section supervisors or the railway commissioner accusing Berger of various violations of labour protection rights typical for most sub-contractors. The offences ranged from cheating the workers of their wages and insufficient food supplies to poor housing. According to the reports, in Berger's labour camps – the "worst of all" – the workers had been living in small tents for months instead of adequate mud or grass houses, while simple sanitary facilities were either missing or inadequate. When criticised for the poor sanitary conditions by *Holzmann's* route section engineer Winkelmann, Berger had allegedly replied: "I am not here to build privies, but to make money!"¹⁵⁸ Whether Berger really made this statement is difficult to assess as the documents had circulated many administrative levels. In any case, thanks to Berger's complaints, both *Holzmann* and the colonial administration in German East Africa had to justify their policies before the public and the Colonial State Secretary in Berlin.

157 TNA. G17/123, "Abschrift Bi III.155 Philipp Holzmann & Cie. Lit. D. no. 21/6. Frankfurt a/M, den 13. Januar 1913. An den Herrn Staatssekretär des Kolonialamtes Berlin", p. 2.

158 TNA. G17/123, "Mittellandbahn 616 concept, Tabora, 16. April 1913. 792, 1107", p. 7, cf. pp. 8–9. Cf. TNA. G17/123, "Abschrift. Niederschrift über die Lagerbesichtigungen in der Zeit vom 26–29. März 1912". Cf. TNA. G17/123, "530. Concept. 5. April 1913. An den Aufsichtsbeamten Herrn ~~Baldamus~~ Kanert km 196 247". Cf. TNA. G17/123, 781, 788, 530, "Concept. 608, 706. 5. April 1913 S.h. Herrn Distriktkommissar Werner, Guruguru".

On the whole, the question of Berger's individual's character and work performance is only secondary. What matters most in regard to Berger's petition is that it illustrates the complexity of the *situation coloniale* at the construction sites of the *Central Railway*. This colonial complexity reveals that, at a large-scale place of work, not only the two well-known poles of coloniser versus the colonised were negotiated; there were also entanglements and disputes concerning discourses of 'German work' as well as discourses of 'white subalternity' and Southern European or rather Greek white subalterns. Moreover, Berger's case reveals that (personal) business interests mingled very well with such discourses, were used to seek individual advantage and could set entire administrations and the German (colonial) press in motion. Hence, the case of Berger's petition shows that discourses had real effects on labour relationships in German East Africa and were not simply existent in a vacuum.¹⁵⁹ On top of this, questions about class, *whiteness*, white subalternity, white-precariousness as well as railway construction skills were also relevant. Their importance will be further revealed in the following sections.

3.6 Economies of Skill? Craftsmen and Office Clerks at the *Central Railway*

3.6.1 From Chinese 'Coolies' to Indian (Indentured) Labour

Dernburg thought the German East African Central Railway in analogy to the Uganda Railway [. . .]. Like at any other colonial railway, the labour recruitment problem was the major difficulty. The Uganda Railway Company had solved the question by importing tens of thousands of Indian coolies. This comfortable way was barred to the construction company from Frankfurt. The labour force had to be recruited in [German East Africa].¹⁶⁰

Tetzlaff, Rainer. *Koloniale Entwicklung und Ausbeutung*. Berlin: 1970.

India and Indian people have had a significant impact on the history of the Indian Ocean Area and East Africa since the eighth century. Today, the Indian minority is

¹⁵⁹ It seems indeed that the ratio of German sub-contractors increased throughout the building progress. Clement Gillman, a *Holzmann* engineer working in German East Africa for the entire construction period and beyond, regretted that less-qualified Germans increasingly replaced foreign sub-contractors. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_2, no. 13, pp. 69–70.

¹⁶⁰ Tetzlaff. *Koloniale Entwicklung*, p. 88.

still an important population group in East Africa. Throughout the nineteenth century and within the networks of the British Empire in an increasingly globalising world, the exchange between India and East Africa intensified. Using the British imperial networks,¹⁶¹ Indian ‘imperial citizenship’ was also fundamentally characterised by long-distance migration particularly within the British domains.¹⁶² Also for major imperial infrastructural building projects of the nineteenth century, such as the *Uganda Railway* in British East Africa, Indian labour was of major importance. Indeed, over 30,000 Indian indentured labourers were recruited from India to work at the railway’s construction sites between 1895 and 1901.¹⁶³

As the *Uganda Railway* served as a role model for any railway construction in German East Africa in various ways,¹⁶⁴ it is very surprising that Indian (indentured) labour at the *Central Railway*’s construction sites has received little attention in German colonial historiography. This is even more so, given prominent contemporary German utterances about the importance of Indian labour by people who had visited both the British and the German East African colonies. The journalist Adolf Zimmermann, who accompanied Bernhard Dernburg to East Africa in 1907, regarded the appallingly high mortality rate of Indian workers (ca. thirty percent)¹⁶⁵ at the construction sites of the *Uganda Railway* as a necessary

161 For an example of how ‘white subalterns’ were able to use such British imperial networks cf. Crosbie, Barry. *Irish Imperial Networks. Migration, Social Communication and Exchange in Nineteenth-Century India*. Cambridge: 2012.

162 Metcalf, Thomas R. *Imperial Connections. India and the Indian Ocean Arena. 1860–1920*. Berkeley et al.: 2007, p. 3. Cf. 46–67.

163 Cf. Elkins, Caroline. *Imperial Reckoning. The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya*. New York: 2005, p. 2. Cf. Metcalf. *Imperial Connections*, pp. 165–203. Cf. research project by Aselmeyer, Norman. *The Shadow Line. Railway and Society in Colonial East Africa, ca. 1890–1914 (Provisional Title)*. Web. <https://www.uni-bremen.de/institut-fuer-geschichtswissenschaft/personen/a-z/aselmeyer-norman> (19 September 2021). Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way. Kenya and Uganda*, pp. 141–246. Cf. Mangat. *A History of the Asians*, pp. 27–62.

164 Cf. “Lernen wir von der Ugandabahn”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 1. Daressalam: 07 January 1905. Cf. Zimmermann. *Mit Dernburg*, p. 39–49. Cf. Allmaras, Franz. ‘Ich baue 2000 km’, p. 41. Cf. “Aus unserer Kolonie. Offizielle Eröffnung der Mittellandbahn bis Tabora”. *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 61. Daressalam: 31 July 1912. Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way. Vol. II*, pp. 70, 79–82. Cf. Gillman. ‘A Short History’, pp. 14–15.

165 Cf. Elkins. *Imperial Reckoning*, p. 2. High death tolls were integral to (almost) all colonial infrastructure projects. At the Congo-Ocean Railroad, at least between 15,000–23,000 workers died – one of the highest absolute numbers of deaths at an infrastructural construction site known in history. Cf. Daughton. *In the Forest of No Joy*. In 13 years of construction, Daughton gives the annual death rate of 15–20%, but considers it much higher, cf. pp. 8, 189, 275. According to Tetzlaff, the death rate of the workers at the central railway ranged from 25% for singular worker cohorts to 1.7%, on average, a year; he relies largely on published sources after WWI and newspaper articles. Cf. Tetzlaff. *Koloniale Entwicklung*, pp. 88–89. Conducting a random sample

by-product of 'cultural and technological progress': "As on the Suez Canal, so on the Uganda Railway [. . .] thousands and thousands of those who built it rest. [. . .] They had to die so that the great cultural work could be built. Would anyone want to miss the canal or the railway for the sake of the human lives they claimed?"¹⁶⁶ Also senior men of *Philipp Holzmann* like Riese and Ritter warned their local building director Grages, working in Dar es Salaam, that their construction company and German prestige could lose face if the construction progress of the German colonial railway in East Africa remained slower than that in neighbouring British East Africa:

Should our construction progress lag behind that achieved in the construction of the Uganda Railway, we would be exposed to derogatory criticism that would be detrimental not only to us but also to the reputation of German technology in general. Every possible means must therefore be sought to speed up construction progress. [. . .] 1) The procurement of numerous workers. [. . .]¹⁶⁷

While contemporaries like Zimmermann and even *Holzmann* drew a link between the enormous role of Indian labour in the *Uganda Railway* and any similar construction aspirations in German East Africa, established German historical studies on German East Africa either ignore or – like Tetzlaff – even deny any Indian involvement at the *Central Railway's* construction sites in the neighbouring German colony.¹⁶⁸ Others only treat Indian labour at the *Central Railway* as a sideshow.

Writing a history of the East African railways according to a British imperial self-image in the late 1950s, M.F. Hill mentions Indian labour briefly. His study published by the *East African Railways and Harbours* in Nairobi 1957 notes that Sikhs and Punjabis were involved in railway construction in German East Africa.¹⁶⁹ Yet, earlier publications about the history of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa too had confirmed the involvement of Indians indeed. The Anglo-German *Holzmann* engineer Clement Gillman, who had been employed as a railway engineer during German colonial times and after WWI also for the British authorities during

for the year of 1908, I used the tabular monthly reports of railway construction at the central railway. It lists the workers employed, the sick and the dead. For the year of 1908, the average mortality rate was below 1%; the average rate of reporting sick ca. 10%. There were however higher death rates for individual worker cohorts, e.g. in Ugogo. Cf. TNA. G17/63.

¹⁶⁶ Zimmermann. *Mit Dernburg*, pp. 51–52. Cf. Allmaras. 'Ich baue 2000 km', p. 51.

¹⁶⁷ TNA. G12/164, p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Tetzlaff. *Koloniale Entwicklung*, p. 88.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way. Vol. II*, p. 96. Cf. Gillman. 'A Short History', p. 27.

the British Mandate of Tanganyika Territory, stated in an article published in 1942 that “chiefly in the accountancy and clerical branches [. . .] 226 [. . .] Asiatics” were employed by the “railway company” in 1913, while 118 were European and 3,420 African.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Indian labour at German colonial railway construction sites seems not to have been a new occurrence in 1905 when the construction of the *Central Railway* started. Investigating Swahili poetry as a historical source, the Historian J.A.S. Casco states that some Indians were – amongst other forms of punishments – forced to perform punitive labour at the construction site of the *Usambara Railway*, because they had allegedly sponsored an anti-colonial war, led by the caravan trader Hassan bin Omari Makunganya, against German authorities between 1894 and 1895 in the southern region of *Kilwa*.¹⁷¹ Shortly before the advent of WWI, the traffic manager of the *Usambara Railway* reported to the Imperial German Government that at least twenty-five Indian artisans and officials were employed by the northern railway. Moreover, there had been plans by German colonial officials to recruit Indian ‘coolies’, who had come to British East Africa to construct the *Uganda Railway*, for the construction of the *Usambara Railway* around 1900. In fact, the plan never materialised.¹⁷² Whether *Holzmann* regarded Indian involvement at the *Usambara Railway* as a kind of ‘role model’ for its own *Central Railway* cannot be answered in detail here.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, there must have been some connections between Indian labour, the *Uganda Railway* in British East Africa and the larger infrastructural project in German East Africa – the *Central Railway*.

On 28 November 1910, the administrative board of the *OAEG* met in a conference room of the *Deutsche Bank* and discussed the report of the governmental building master Mr. Habich, who had visited East Africa in the summer of 1910. Habich had travelled to both British East Africa and German East Africa to gather information about the British *Uganda Railway* in general and to inspect the home

170 Cf. Gillman. ‘A Short History’, pp. 31–32.

171 Cf. Casco, José Arturo Saavedra. *Utenzi, War Poems, and the German Colonial Conquest of East Africa. Swahili Poetry as a Historical Source*. Trenton and Asmara: 2007, pp. 220–226. There is one application letter, maybe issued by an Indian, as he describes himself as “British-Subject”. His name “Wazirali” does not indicate an Indian background clearly. Cf. TNA. G51/1. [Angelegenheiten der] Usambara-Eisenbahn. Bd., 2. 1899–1902, p. 92.

172 Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way*. Vol. II, pp. 66, 69–70, 77.

173 According to Sunseri, many Wanyamwezi had already worked at the *Usambara Railway* and the *Uganda Railway* before working at the central railway. If their number was considerable is another question as there were up to 10–15 years between the construction of the individual railways. Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, p. 168. Apparently, there were very few engineers who had first constructed the *Usambara Railway* and then worked at the central railway. Hill gives the singular example of the Dutch engineer Leon Kooyker who had walked to German East Africa from South Africa by 1908. Cf. Hill. *Permanent Way*. Vol. II, p. 74.

line of the *Central Railway* between Dar es Salaam and Morogoro as well as to examine the progress of harbour construction in Dar es Salaam. Regarding labour, Habich stated: "There is a shortage of coloured foremen; an attempt to attract Indian foremen from British East Africa or India has failed because of the Indian government's measures."¹⁷⁴ Yet, roughly one year later, the situation appears to have changed, as the *Indian Voice of British East Africa, Uganda and Zanzibar* reported in September 1911. This Indian community newspaper published in Nairobi mentioned labour migration from the *Uganda Railway* in British East Africa to the *Central Railway* in German East Africa that had started in September 1911 at the latest. Indian railway employees apparently moved from British East Africa to the neighbouring German colony deliberately to work at the *Central Railway's* construction sites: It "is said that some railway employees [sic] at the coast [of British East Africa] have left for German East Africa being induced by good offers from the German railways".¹⁷⁵ Hence, recruitment of Indian (indentured) labour might not have been exclusively an overseas business. Instead, Indian labour migration regarding the construction of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa – whether indentured or not – was probably also an intercolonial phenomenon taking place between British and German colonies in East Africa, at the least. Moreover, as patchy as the available information might be, it proves that Indians were involved in the construction of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa from the very beginning in 1905 until the very end in 1914.

In this respect, it seems that Indians were primarily employed as skilled workers, either as craftsmen for *Holzmann* right at the construction sites or as clerks for the *OAEG's* offices. As far as the recruitment of skilled craftsmen is concerned, hiring indentured labourers from abroad seems to have been a significant option to obtain the workforce necessary throughout the entire construction process. As there was a serious labour shortage during the construction process on various occasions, the colonial administration and the construction companies tried to obtain indentured labourers from farther distant places of the Indian Ocean Area, either from Southeast Asia, China, or indeed India. With many of the 'labour exporting' countries under British domination having had very negative

¹⁷⁴ TNA. G12/167, p. 129.

¹⁷⁵ "Notes of the Week". *The Indian Voice of British East Africa, Uganda and Zanzibar*. Nairobi: 6 September 1911, p. 8. Web. *African Newspapers*. http://public.maximus.newsbank.com/images/L00000005/cache/pdf/bitonal_tiff_g4/13D0F5BDA3FEA150_13D0F21E098FF7B0.pdf (24 January 2018).

experiences with the German colony in East Africa during the 1890s, due to the mistreatment of Southeast Asian workers on German plantations there, the corresponding authorities shunned any further agreements with the Germans, however.¹⁷⁶ Thus, especially the skilled labour of craftsmen was in high demand. To ease this shortage at the railway construction sites around 1906, *Holzmann* sought 500–2,000 Chinese ‘coolies’, who would work for them particularly as craftsmen.¹⁷⁷ In the end no Chinese workers came to German East Africa, however. With the few existing sources giving conflicting reasons for this, it is not clear whether contemporary racially biased anti-Chinese sentiments about the ‘Yellow Peril’, prominent in Germany and throughout the world at the turn of the century, were responsible for the ultimate failure of Chinese labour migration to German East Africa, or whether there were specific reasons to be found in the colony.¹⁷⁸ While the

176 Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 338–339. Recently cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 41–114. Cf. TNA. G8/58. [Klärung allgemeiner Fragen hinsichtlich der] Anwerbung von Indern [als Handwerker und Gärtner für das Gouvernement von Deutsch-Ostafrika mit Hilfe des deutschen Generalkonsulates in Kalkutta]. Cf. TNA. G8/59. Anwerbung und Ansiedlung von Indern [Singhalesen und Eingeborenen]. Bd. 1. Cf. TNA. G8/60. Anwerbung und Ansiedlung von Indern [Singhalesen und Eingeborenen]. Bd. 2. Cf. TNA. G8/61. Anwerbung und Ansiedlung von Indern [Singhalesen und Eingeborenen]. Bd. 3. Cf. TNA. G1/16. [Beziehungen zu den] deutschen konsularischen Vertretungen in Arabien und Ostindien [Aden, Bombay, Calcutta, Batavia, Mahé].

177 Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 338–339. Cf. “Aus der Kolonie. Einfuhr von Chinesen”. *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 7. Daressalam: 17 February 1906. Cf. “Aus der Kolonie. Chinesen-Einfuhr”. *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 19. Daressalam: 12 March 1906. The *DOAZ* was lukewarm on the issue of Chinese workers, because of the experiences of 1890. The ‘coolies’ were allegedly very expensive, demanding and not effective. Also, racist stereotypes warned of the immigration of the ‘yellow peril’. Drastic measures of control were proposed cf. “Chinesische Arbeiter”. *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 20. Daressalam: 19 May 1906. Cf. “Aus der Kolonie. 500 Chinesen kommen”. *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 33. Daressalam: 18 August 1906. Cf. Bundesarchiv (BArch). R1001/116. Einsatz fremder Arbeiter, v.a. von Chinesen, p. 92, “Nation und Welt – Beilage der Deutschen Nationalzeitung. Berlin 28. März 1906”. Cf. BArch. R1001/116, p. 122, “Wandres an das kaiserliche Deutsche Konsulat Swatau, 30. September 1906”. Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, p. 71. Yekani also quotes BArch R1001/116, p. 122. She is wrong in stating that the ‘coolies’ were wanted for the *Usambara Railway*. In contrast to *Holzmann*’s central railway, the northern *Usambara Railway* was not built by *Holzmann*, but by Berlin’s company, *Lenz & Co*. In 1906, there was no further construction work in Usambara at all. Cf. “Eisenbahnen”. *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, 1920, Band II, p. 529. Web. *University of Frankfurt o.M.* <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/Standardframeseite.php?suche=eisenbahn> (26 November 2019). Yekani further states that the contract between *Holzmann*’s Wandres and a Chinese, Smith Siu Wu, would have been signed by both parties. During my research, I could only find the draft of a contract between Wandres and the Chinese smith Lai ah Sing, which was not signed. Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 72 Fn. Cf. BArch. R1001/116, p. 125.

178 Cf. Conrad. *Globalisation*, pp. 25, 203–274. Cf. Yekani. “Inder und Chinesen”. Rather a history of technology. Cf. Diogo, Maria Paula and Laak, Dirk van. *Europeans Globalizing. Mapping, Exploiting, Exchanging*. New York: 2016, pp.171–200. For the issue of indentured labour and colonial

DOAZ blamed the Chinese government for having cancelled the agreement at the last instant,¹⁷⁹ *Holzmann* engineer Grages had a different view:

There was such a need for workers in the first year of construction that the construction site management was urged to seek for foreign aid. As soon as the Gouvernement had hesitatingly agreed to import several thousand Chinese coolies, the Deutsche Bank contacted a middleman living in China. The negotiations were not followed through however, because the construction site management shunned the huge responsibility of importing the coolies. That was primarily because they feared [. . .] the unwelcoming impact of Chinese customs and practices on the [African population].¹⁸⁰

Given the patchy source material, one can only speculate why no Chinese workers eventually came to German East Africa. If *Holzmann* refrained from the deal with China themselves, the top managers might have feared a colonial scandal abroad in the event that the Chinese workers were treated improperly by *Holzmann* or by one of their many sub-contractors. It is also possible that *Holzmann's* or the *Gouvernement's* decision stemmed from the prominent anti-Chinese discourse that was widespread around the globe in the 'long nineteenth century' and which had increased in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. As Chinese labour had, inter alia, been central to the construction of the transcontinental railways in the USA from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and corresponding immigration from China remained subject to xenophobic and racist attitudes targeting especially migrants from China, US-anti-Chinese discourses might have played a role as well. After all, the first legislation to restrict immigration to the United States – the Chinese Exclusion Act of the 1882 – had just been renewed in 1902 and was now made permanent. Hence, these events in the USA might have had an influence on German colonial discourses about migration policies as well.¹⁸¹ Grages himself does not explicitly mention the corresponding highly topical issue of the 'Yellow Peril' or the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War, but it is important to note that the so-

racial hierarchy in German South West Africa and beyond cf. Lindner, Ulrike. 'Indentured Labour in Sub-Saharan Africa (1880–1918): Circulation of Concepts between Imperial Powers'. 59–82. Eds. Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf et al. Bielefeld: 2016. For the British East and South African case cf. "We Hear". *The Indian Voice of British East Africa*. Nairobi: 10/05/1911. Web. *African Newspapers*. http://public.maximus.newsbank.com/images/L00000007/cache/pdf/bitonal_tiff_g4/13D0F59812493A88_13CF57D782C56578.pdf (24 January 2018).

179 Cf. "Aus der Kolonie. Vorläufig keine Chinesen". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 35. Daressalam: 01 September 1906.

180 Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Grages*, pp. 4.

181 Cf. Chin, Gabriel J. and Yoon, Diana. "Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882". *Encyclopedia.com*, 29 May 2018. Web. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/us-history/chinese-exclusion-act> (1 June 2023). Cf. Chang, Gordon H. et al. (Eds.). *The Chinese and the Iron Road. Building the Transcontinental Railroad*. Stanford: 2019.

called ‘Yellow Peril’ was not exclusively linked to China, but also mingled with Japan. With Japan as the first Asian country to force a military stalemate against the significant European power Russia in 1905, “the unwelcoming impact of Chinese practices” could mean that potential ‘coolies’ from the Far East should not import ideas of non-European sovereignty or human equality to a German colony or challenge the colonial racial order.¹⁸² With large Russian battleships anchoring in the harbour of Dar es Salaam in 1905 when on their way to Asia, the Russo-Japanese War was indeed a topical issue in German East Africa and still remembered decades later.¹⁸³ Furthermore, as the *Deutsche Bank* was also an important player within the syndicate financing the 400 km long German colonial *Shantung Railway* in China between 1899 and 1904, negative experiences from this East Asian infrastructural project might have played an important role as well. The planned *Shantung Railway* had provoked militant resistance among the local Chinese population, who feared the loss of their land crossed through by the railway and resented the intrusion of any western imperial power in general. As the rural Chinese population not only killed five Germans working for the railway company and even allied with the *Yihétuán* movement (the so-called ‘Boxer War’ from 1899 to 1901), the alleged “unwelcoming impact of Chinese customs” cited by the construction site management might trace back to this background in the Far East.¹⁸⁴

182 Cf. Diogo and Laak. *Europeans*, pp. 181–200. Cf. Akira Iriye. ‘Japan’s drive to great-power status’. *The Cambridge History of Japan. Volume 5. The Nineteenth Century*. 721–782. Ed. Marius B. Jansen. Cambridge: 1989, pp. 770–782. Cf. Nish, Ian. *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, London: 1985, pp. 15–17, 238–257. Cf. Jones, David. ‘Military Observers, Eurocentrism and World War Zero’. *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective. World War Zero. Volume II*. 135–179. Eds. David Wolf et al. Leiden: 2007, pp. 135–175. Cf. Sachiko, Hirakawa. ‘Portsmouth Denied: The Chinese Attempt to Attend’. *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective. World War Zero. Volume II*. 531–550. Eds. David Wolf et al. Leiden: 2007, pp. 531–550. Cf. Jacob, Frank. *The Russo-Japanese War and its Shaping of the Twentieth Century*. London: 2018, pp. 1–73, 145–148.

183 Cf. Gillman, Clement. ‘Dar es Salaam 1860–1940: A Story of Growth and Change’. 1–23. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, no. 20. Dar es Salaam: 1945, p. 6.

184 Cf. Wendels, Claudia. *Die Schantung-Eisenbahn. Das Interesse der Finanzwelt an der deutschen Bahnlinie in Ostchina*. Siegburg: 2012, pp. 26–80. Cf. “Shantung-Eisenbahn”. *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon, 1920, Band III*, p. 259. Web. University of Frankfurt o.M. Web. <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/Standardframeseite.php?suche=shantung> (22 October 2020). Cf. Laiqing, Yang. ‘Die Ereignisse von Gaomi und der Widerstand der Bevölkerung gegen den deutschen Eisenbahnbau’. *Kolonialkrieg in China. Die Niederschlagung der Boxerbewegung 1900–01*. 49–58. Eds. Mechthild Leutner and Klaus Mühlhahn. Berlin: 2007. Cf. Rösser. ‘Den “Seegedanken zu pflegen”’, pp. 34–49. For a general introduction to indentured labour and corresponding anti-Chinese sentiments, cf. Hoeft, Roesemarijn. ‘Indentured Labour’. *Handbook The Global History of Work*. 363–376. Eds. Karin Hofmeester and Marcel van der Linden. Berlin and Boston: 2018, pp. 371–373. For Chinese indentured labour in French colonial railway building in Africa after WWI cf. Daughton. *In the Forest of No Joy*, pp. 174–180.

Sharing the generally negative sentiment towards China, the *DOAZ* linked the issue of Chinese coolies to African convict workers during the Maji Maji War. It seems that the *DOAZ* believed Chinese skilled workers were not needed, because the Maji Maji convict workers would substitute the need for coolies:

We would congratulate the railway company if it succeeded to manage railway construction without the import of Chinese workers. At the beginning of this week, another 413 convict workers from Kilwa have arrived in Dar es Salaam on board of the steamer 'König'. They are supposed to find employment at the railway here.¹⁸⁵

Previous and succeeding volumes of the colonial newspaper issue further reports about Maji Maji convicts forced to work at the *Central Railway*, but do not clarify to what extent convict workers could really make up for the lack of skilled labour, which was so desperately needed by *Holzmann*. It appears that the newspaper tended not to differentiate between skilled and unskilled labour and subsumed the need for skilled labour under the omnipresent 'labour question' and therefore preferred simple answers for rather complicated questions.¹⁸⁶ Be this as it may, the lack of craftsmen must have been solved by other means. In fact, senior *Holzmann* engineers do report of a significant number of Indian workers – especially craftsmen – who indeed worked at the German railway. *Holzmann's* Ferdinand Grages stated:

The rumour of a planned huge railway construction in East Africa had found its way to the Greeks, Indians, and other peoples from the Near and the Middle East. [. . .] Indians were initially employed as craftsmen. [. . .] They were primarily employed as carpenters, cabinet makers, metalworkers, and smiths.¹⁸⁷

Senior engineer Walter Rehfeldt, who came to German East Africa in 1908, also confirms Grages' claim about the employment of Indians and stresses Indian migration to East Africa throughout the entire construction process of the *Central*

¹⁸⁵ "Strafarbeiter aus Kilwa für die Bahn". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 37. Daressalam: 15 September 1906.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. "Strafarbeiter für den Bahnbau". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 40. Daressalam: 6 October 1906. Cf. "Thätigkeit des Arbeiterkommissariats" and "500 Chinesen kommen". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 33. Cf. "Einfuhrzölle und Arbeiterfrage" and "Über den Fortgang der Arbeiten an der Eisenbahn Dar es Salaam – Morogoro". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 27. Daressalam: 07 July 1906. Cf. "Aus der Kolonie. Bedingungen des Gouvernements für die Gestellung von Zwangsarbeitern" and "Verschiffung von Arbeitern für die Nordbezirke". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 23. Daressalam: 6 October 1906. Cf. "Wie wir von gut unterrichteter Seite erfahren". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 4. Daressalam: 27 January 1906. Reichart also quotes some of the *DOAZ's* articles. At least one reference is wrong, however. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, p. 49.

¹⁸⁷ Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. Grages, p. 3 and 7.

Railway: “During the initial years, the skilled engineering workers available were exclusively Indians, who constantly poured into the land leaving their overpopulated home country behind. Their increase in number was far from being a pleasant growth to the East African population.”¹⁸⁸ In any case, it is very likely that *Holzmann* finally turned to Indians, because no Chinese skilled workers arrived in German East Africa in the end. Other – more practical – reasons might have played a role as well. Not only had Indians had long-established links to East Africa also in terms of indentured labour, but they seem to have regarded (German) East Africa as a potential country of immigration themselves.¹⁸⁹ Examining British archives, J.S. Mangat confirms the patchy research results taken from the German archives. He stressed that although no official schemes of indentured labour were allowed to be established in German East Africa, this did not apply to voluntary migration of Indians. He is thus convinced that especially skilled Indian (petty) traders, craftsmen, and clerks left India for German East Africa. While the (petty) traders established business at ports such as Dar es Salaam and later along the *Central Railway*, Indian craftsmen and office clerks mostly sought work at the *Central Railway* up until WWI.¹⁹⁰

In any case, Rehfeldt’s disrespectful comment about his Indian craftsmen allegedly having negative effects on the local African population points to one major discourse prominent in colonial German East Africa. Analysing this discourse might prove helpful in explaining the role of Indian labour there. Generally, the Indian population of East Africa experienced various prejudices. They were often regarded as cunning businessmen who cheated the ‘African wards’ and who also destroyed the businesses of hard-working German settlers by lowering the wage levels and engaging in unfair money lending. Indeed, the so-called ‘Indian Question’ flared up repeatedly in colonial publications. Regarding the articles in the *DOAZ*, it is important to notice that the publication of anti-Indian propaganda by the colonial newspaper always peaked shortly after the *Reichstag* had voted in favour of financing a new route section of the *Central Railway*. Whenever *Philipp Holzmann* prepared for new construction work, the colonial

188 Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Von unserem Leben und von unserer Arbeit in Ost-Afrika* von Dipl. Ing. Walter Rehfeldt, p. 13. Cf. Müllendorf, Prosper. *Ost-Afrika im Aufstieg*. Essen: 1910, p. 109.

189 Reasons for Indian migration in the Indian Ocean Area were manifold, and indentured labour was just one aspect of that. For the British East African/Kenyan case cf. Aiyar, Sana. *Indians in Kenya. The Politics of Diaspora*. Cambridge: 2015, pp. 2–9, 22–69. Also dealing with the British East African context cf. Herzig, Pascale. *South Asians in Kenya: Gender, Generation and Changing Identities in Diaspora*. Münster: 2006, pp. 7–20. Cf. Gillman. ‘Dar es Salaam’, pp. 1–4, 12.

190 Cf. Mangat. *A History of the Asians*, pp. 30–33, 38, 45, 46–51, 58, 67–69, 72–77, 83–84, 93–95.

newspaper lamented the high influx of Indian people to the colony just as it did regarding Greek immigration.¹⁹¹ In contrast to Greek migration, the involvement of Indian labour in the construction process of the *Central Railway* is hardly ever made explicit, however. The articles call Indian migration a “cancer”¹⁹² to the German colony or complain about an Indian monopoly in petty trading and money lending.¹⁹³ While the Southern Europeans were undoubtedly involved in the construction works, this holds also true for their Asian counterparts, albeit scattered and often inconclusive evidence.

All in all, the sources about Indian labour in German East Africa consulted so far do not provide a clear picture. This applies especially for questioning *when* Indians were employed. Whereas both senior *Holzmann* engineers Grages and Rehfeldt claim that Indian craftsmen, who had initially been involved in constructing the *Central Railway*, were slowly but surely replaced by recently educated

191 Regarding the beginning of the construction work in 1905 cf. “Der wirtschaftliche Aufschwung im Bezirk Muansa und die Inder-Einwanderung”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 1. Daressalam: 07 January 1905. Cf. “Sind die Europäer in den Tropen in wirtschaftlicher Beziehung dauernd den Indern überlegen?”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 17. Daressalam: 29 May 1905. Cf. “Die Inder-Überschwemmung Deutsch-Ostafrikas”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 18. Daressalam: 29 April 1905. Cf. “Zur Abwehr der Indergefahr”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 22. Daressalam: 03 June 1905. Another article laments Indian migration and calls the Indians ‘coolies’, but does not refer directly to any involvement in railway construction cf. “Was ich auf meiner Reise von Dar es Salaam nach Kilossa sah”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 28. Daressalam: 15 July 1905. Cf. “Indische Völkerwanderung nach Deutsch-Ostafrika”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 43. Daressalam: 28 October 1905. For the route section that followed from 1908/09 onwards, recurring increased Indian migration is noted. One author even complains about Indian migration to central German East Africa, because the new railway would make it easier for the Indian people to spread their petty-trading and money lending businesses. No connections are however made to Indian craftsmen working at the central railway. Cf. “Zur Inderfrage”. *DOAZ*, X, no. 36. Daressalam: 16 May 1908. Other articles blame Governor Rechenberg and his good relationships with Indians for the new influx. Cf. “Eine indische Kraftprobe”. *DOAZ*, X, no. 99. Daressalam: 24 December 1908. Cf. “Samassa über die Inderfrage”. *DOAZ*, XI, no. 61. Daressalam: 04 August 1909. Cf. “Ein Deutscher Kaufmann über die Inderfrage”. *DOAZ*, XI, no. 62. Daressalam: 07 August 1909. For the last route section from Tabora to Kigoma from 1911/12 onwards cf. “Aus unserer Kolonie. Die Inder in Deutsch-Ostafrika”. *DOAZ*, XIII, no. 22. Daressalam: 18 March 1911. Allegedly, there were very few African craftsmen, and almost only Indian craftsmen were available cf. “Morogoro. Ungesunde Lohnverhältnisse”. *DOAZ*, XIII, no. 65. Daressalam: 16 August 1911. For a report claiming Indian migration resulted in famines in India as the newly arrived Indians would control all petty-trade along the central railway. Cf. “Die Zunahme der Einwanderung unbemittelter Inder”. *DOAZ*, XIII, no. 72. Daressalam: 09 September 1911. Cf. Gillman. ‘Dar es Salaam’, p. 2.

192 “Soll Deutsch-Ostafrika eine deutsche Kolonie werden oder eine Hamburg-indische Domäne bleiben? 5. Die Inderfrage und die Behandlung der Farbigen”. *DOAZ*, VII, no. 31. Daressalam: 05 August 1905.

193 Cf. “Samassa über die Inderfrage”. *DOAZ*, XI, no. 61.

African skilled workers – primarily people like the Swahili, Wasaramu, Waluguru and later also the Wanjamwezi¹⁹⁴ – an article by colonial geographer and secretary of the district office in Dar es Salaam, Dr Franz Oskar Karstedt, as well as the article by *Holzmann* engineer Clement Gillman cited above contradict *Holzmann's* sources. Both Karstedt and Gillman confirm the involvement of Indian craftsmen at the construction site of the *Central Railway* as late as 1913. Karstedt even highlights the outstanding role of Indian craftsmen for the entire colonial economy in general. He explicitly characterises the employer-employee relationship between the railway construction company and the Indian craftsmen as “contract workers in indentured labour”.¹⁹⁵ Such an employment relationship might then have implied systematic recruitment by *Holzmann* and corresponding proceedings in India. Apart from the question whether there was systematic recruitment of Indian indentured labour despite its official ban, other sources confirm that Indian labour was involved in the building until the very end of the construction process of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa, including forms of indentured labour.¹⁹⁶

With the colonial administration of railway construction especially expanding after ca. 1908, the railway supervisors and commissioners report about Indian (skilled) labour at the construction sites of the *Central Railway* repeatedly. Yet, there is no evidence answering the question whether these Indians were recruited by schemes of indentured labour or whether they had come to German East Africa for work at the railway differently. The regular administrative reports note Indians, Banians and Goanese working at the construction sites. They were particularly employed at the railway's workshop, as locksmiths, as station masters, as train drivers, as typists or even as sub-contractors responsible for the erection of the workforce's housing or pre-extension works. Especially as craftsmen, they earned decent wages of up to 100 Rupees a month. The monthly report

194 Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Rehfeldt*, p. 13. Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Grages*, p. 3 and 7. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, p. 67.

195 In contrast to the Indians, the African craftsmen would not work independently and would need constant supervision. Cf. Karstedt, F.O. Dr. “Beiträge zur Inderfrage in Deutsch-Ostafrika IV. (Schluß)”. *DOAZ*, XV, no. 79. Daressalam: 01 October 1913. For Indians as indentured labourers cf. Karstedt, F.O. Dr. “Beiträge zur Inderfrage in Deutsch-Ostafrika I”. *DOAZ*, XV, no. 76. Daressalam: 20 September 1913.

196 Cf. Karstedt, F.O., Dr. “Beiträge zur Inderfrage in Deutsch-Ostafrika I”. *DOAZ*, XV, no. 76. Cf. Gillman, Clement. ‘Vom Bau der ostafrikanischen Mittellandbahn’. 160–166. *Schweizerische Bauzeitung*, 61/62, no. 12. Zürich: 1913. Web. *ETH-Bibliothek*. <http://doi.org/10.5169/seals-30784> (08 February 2018.), p. 163. Cf. Gillman, Clement. ‘Vom Bau der ostafrikanischen Mittellandbahn’. 176–179. *Schweizerische Bauzeitung*, 61/62, no. 13. Zürich: 1913. Web. *ETH-Bibliothek*. <http://doi.org/10.5169/seals-30786> (08 February 2018.), p. 178.

of November 1912, for example, contains information about pay gaps between Indians and Banians compared to Goanese. Whereas Indians and Banians earned 2.5 to 4.0 Rupees a day, Goanese made 3.25 to 4.5 Rupees in the same period.¹⁹⁷

Regarding the year of 1913 – and to a lesser extent also the year 1914 – evidence taken from the Railway Museum in Nairobi proves a significant presence of Indians working for the *OAEG* either at the railway itself or at the flotilla based in Dar es Salaam. The railway and the previously governmental flotilla stood under the administration of the *OAEG* from 1913 onwards, which received payroll records listing Indian employees from this year onwards.¹⁹⁸ Other rather patchy sources were issued by local medical services (*Sanitätsdienststellen*) along the railroad, located e.g. in Tabora or Morogoro, which either reported of Indian or “coloured” (*Farbige*) employees who had received medical treatment, or reported about the health of Indian employees working as station masters for the *OAEG*.¹⁹⁹ In addition, several bills issued by the *Sewa Hadji Hospital* and sent to the *OAEG* survive in the archives for the entire year of 1913 and the first half of 1914. The *Sewa Hadji Hospital*, built in 1897 and extended in 1899, was named after the Muslim Indian merchant and philanthropist, who was born in East Africa’s Bagamoyo in 1851 and died in 1897 in Zanzibar. Sewa Hadji had traded several goods on behalf of the Sultan of Zanzibar and equipped numerous (European) caravans until the end of the 1890s. Having become a rich man, he had supported sick men and women for several years and donated the stately sum of almost 13,000 Rupees to the German colonial administration to enable the construction of a hospital, which would treat any person regardless of their origin or race. During the German

197 Cf. TNA. G17/120, “Baubericht der Bausektion 2,3 und 4 der Neubaustrecke Tabora-Kigoma für den Monat Januar 1913, X. Personal und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G12/167, “Ostafrikanische Eisenbahngesellschaft Berlin. Betriebsleitung Daressalam. J. no. 849 P. Daressalam, den 19. April 1911”. Cf. TNA. G12/164, pp. 121, 232, cf. “Monatsbericht August 1911”. Cf. TNA. G17/63, “Monatsbericht über den Stand der Vorarbeiten an der Zentralbahn Ende August 1909”. Cf. TNA. G17/122, “J. no. 485. Bericht über den Stand der Arbeiten im Hafen Kigoma Endpunkt der Tanganjikabahn für den Monat Juni 1915, X. Personal & Arbeiter”. Cf. TNA. G17/120, “Lulanguru, den 30. IV. 12, J. no. 861. Monatsbericht [. . .] Juni 1912, 8. Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/118, “Bauarbeiten an der Ostafrikanischen Mittellandbahn. Bahnbau Tabora-Kigoma, Restarbeiten Morogoro-Tabora, Monatsbereich November 1912, XI. Lohn- und Verpflegungsverhältnisse”.

198 Cf. Eckhart and Geissler. *Das Deutsch-Ostafrika Archiv*, pp. 27–28.

199 Cf. RMN. GTF. R3. S8. 157. Lohnauszahlungen, “Betr. Werkmeisterei Dodoma”, “Direktor der DOAEG an Herrn Betriebswerkmeister Horn, Dodoma. Daressalam, den 20. Januar 1914”. Cf. RMN. GTF. R1. S9. Sanitätsdienststellen, “Rechnung der Sanitätsdienststelle Dodoma, 27. Dezember 1915”, “Rechnung der Sanitätsdienststelle Tabora, 1. Dez. 1915”, “Rechnung der Sanitätsdienststelle Dodoma, 3. Juli 1915”. Cf. RMN. GTF. R3. S5. 1.1.13. [no title], “An die Deutsch Ostafrikanische Eisenbahngesellschaft bezüglich des Gesundheitszustandes des Stationsvorstehers von Kilossa, Inders Hassan Ali, Morogoro, den 9. März. 1913”.

colonial period, the *Sewa Hadji Hospital* was known as *Eingeborenenkrankenhaus* (hospital for the indigenous) in Dar es Salaam and thus primarily treated those who counted as ‘indigenous’ or rather as non-European in German East Africa.²⁰⁰

The hospital bills held in the archives of the Railway Museum Nairobi list the names and origin of the people treated and therefore provide details of individual illnesses as well as the costs of treatment. All of those listed in the *Sewa Hadji Hospital*’s monthly bills were employed by the *OAEG* either working at the railway or at the company’s flotilla. The majority of those treated in the hospital were of East African origin, but Indians ranked second. Although many of those listed in the monthly bills were treated repeatedly, i.e. were listed not only in one month but reappeared in others, the surviving sources, as patchy as they may be, indicate a decisive number of Indians employed by the *OEAG*. Interestingly, it seems that the number of Indians employed by the *OAEG*’s flotilla surpasses the number of Indians employed for the railway. According to the *Sewa Hadji* bills featuring those men employed by the flotilla, between thirty percent and fifty percent were of Indian descent. Of those bills issued by the *Sewa Hadji Hospital* which featured men employed at the railway only five percent to ten percent were of Indian descent; also a few Banians, one Turk, two Goans, a few Arabs, a Sudanese, a Swahili, one person from Madagascar and one Chinese person are mentioned.²⁰¹ Of course, these files have only very limited validity in several ways. First of all, you cannot deduce the overall ratio of nationalities employed by the *OAEG* from the bills issued by the *Sewa Hadji Hospital*. People of Indian descent might have suffered from tropical diseases to a greater extent than their East African colleagues because they might not have adapted well to the East African climate. Secondly, many names are mentioned more than once and chronically, and thus seriously ill men in need of long-term treatment may distort the overall statistical value. Thirdly, given the realities of the racist colonial rule, Indians, who were ranked above Africans in German colonial discourses, might have had easier access to medical treatment in a hospital run by the colonial administration. Finally, only the bills for the entire year of 1913 and a few months of 1914 are given and there are no sources at all listing the backgrounds of all the

200 Cf. Eckart, Wolfgang U. *Medizin und Kolonialimperialismus. Deutschland 1884–1945*. Paderborn et. al: 1997, pp. 316–317, 336. Cf. “Krankenhäuser”. *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, 1920, Band II, S. 372. Web. *University of Frankfurt o.M.* <http://www.ub.bildarchiv-dkg.uni-frankfurt.de/Bildprojekt/Lexikon/Standardframeseite.php?suche=Sewa> (14 October 2020). Cf. Hasse, Rolf. ‘Das Testament des Sewa Hadji’. Ed. *Mitteilungsblatt des Traditionsverbandes ehemaliger Schutz- und Überseetruppen*, no. 90, 1/2004, pp. 43–53.

201 Cf. RMN. GTF. R2. S10. I_6, 1913/14. *Sewa Hadji Hospital*, Rechnung. Cf. RMN. GTF. R3. S10. 2. *Sewa Hadji Hospital*. Rechnung.

workers employed at the *Central Railway*. Hence, nothing can be said about the overall ratio of nationalities employed by the *OAEG* in general. Yet, as patchy as these sources might be, the medical bills prove the presence of numerous Indians employed by the *OAEG* at both the flotilla and the *Central Railway*, at the least.

Although nothing reliable can be said about the overall exact numbers of Indians employed by the *OAEG*, their role must have been significant as the *OAEG* even planned to erect over ten houses in Dar es Salaam to accommodate their Indian employees. In May 1914, *OAEG*'s manager Hillenkamp argued that his company would always need several regular members of staff either for the operation of the colonial railway service as such, or for always recurring repair works along the railroad. As company housing was built whenever there was no suitable accommodation available by comparable railway operating companies back home in Germany, the *OAEG* was likewise required to provide suitable housing in German East Africa. In accordance with colonial housing policies that allotted each 'race' to a specific residential area, the Indian employees of the *OAEG* were required to live exclusively in an Indian quarter, and married and single Indians were separated from one another.²⁰² As WWI interrupted any plans of the *OAEG*, this building scheme never materialised, however. Yet, these documents about the *OAEG* company housing policies and plans, combined with the *Sewa Hadji Hospital* bills and other documents, at least prove that Indians were involved in railway construction and maintenance from the very beginnings of the construction of the *Central Railway* until the eve of WWI.

As also revealed by Figure 2, Indian labour appears to have been skilled labour most of the time. The probably staged photography depicts a group of men fixing a railway bridge using apparently modern technology. The headgear, such as turban or fez distinguishes three non-European men from three other European men who wear sun-helmets. The latter, who are probably German railway engineers, apparently supervise the riveting work of supposedly Indian craftsmen who wear turbans and another skilled worker who – according to the headgear – may originate also from India or the Middle East (Ottoman Empire or even Greece).

Other evidence further supports this argument. It seems that the colonial government tried to issue immigration legislation attempting to reduce Indian migration to German East Africa, starting from the end of 1912.²⁰³ It apparently lacked effectiveness. Whether bypassing the immigration legislation was rooted merely in Indian agency, or if the colonial administration maybe even tolerated the circumvention of

²⁰² Cf. TNA. G8/146. [Angelegenheiten der] Ostafrikanische Eisenbahngesellschaft (1913-)1916. Bd. 3., pp. 6–8.

²⁰³ Cf. "Anwendung der Einwanderungsverordnung auf Farbige". *DOAZ*, XIV, no. 90. Daressalam: 09 November 1912. Cf. Karstedt, O.F. Dr. "Beiträge zur Inderfrage in Deutsch-Ostafrika II. (Fortsetzung)". *DOAZ*, XV, no. 77. Daressalam: 24 September 1913.



Figure 2: Indian craftsmen riveting bridge parts using modern machinery at the Malagarassi-Bridge 1912–13.

Source: BBWA. U5/03/17, Nr. 177. Bildarchiv der Philipp Holzmann AG / Hauptverband der Deutschen Bauindustrie e.V. im Berlin-Brandenburgischen Wirtschaftsarchiv.

the laws – because rapid railway construction required further Indian craftsmen – must remain mere speculation for now.²⁰⁴ In any case, Indian labour at the construction of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa was indeed an important aspect throughout the entire construction process. As far as the files can tell, the involvement of Indian labour in the construction of the *Central Railway* was manifold. It ranged from indentured labour to apparently voluntary labour migration from neighbouring British East Africa and India to German East Africa. Moreover, Indians primarily worked as skilled craftsmen at the construction sites or as office clerks for *Holzmann* or the *OEAG*. These employments were of high rank compared to the tasks of an ordinary railway worker, whose tasks were shovelling and carrying most of the time. Consequently, skilled (Indian) workers received higher wages than ordi-

²⁰⁴ Cf. “Lokales. Personenschmuggel”. *DOAZ*, XV, no. 94. Daressalam: 22 November 1913.

nary workers. This comparatively high standing of skilled Indian labour also found its way into colonial discourses on Indian labour in German East Africa and was also reflected in publications of the Indian community newspaper *The Indian Voice of British East Africa, Uganda and Zanzibar*.

3.6.2 Discourses About Indian Labour and Indian Labour Protest

Regarding the overall issue of labour in the (German) colonial context, much has been written about the colonial ideology of ‘educating the Negro to work’ or about forced labour practices in German colonies in general. African resistance against (forced) labour was often labelled as mere laziness and ‘educating’ the local population to work was seen as the ‘white man’s burden’ in the colonial context. Accordingly, the colonial discourse also regarded the enduring African (passive) resistance against corporal punishment as part of their ‘indolent character traits’ that also legitimised racially discriminatory laws, which disadvantaged Africans and advantaged Europeans.²⁰⁵ With respect to the involvement of Indian labour at the railway construction site, it must be stressed that so-called ‘coloured’ people were subject to ‘indigenous’ legislation in German East Africa. They were however exempt from corporal punishments such as strokes and enchained imprisonment for violations of labour legislation.²⁰⁶ Although Indians were not regarded as equals by the European colonisers, they were also not entirely subsumed under the same colonial discourse as the population of African descent. While the so-called ‘labour question’ and the necessity of forced labour practices to deal with African resistance against labour were constantly debated in the *DOAZ*,²⁰⁷ the same newspaper reported about Indian means of labour resistance and collective action differently. As reported by the *DOAZ* as early as 1906, Indian craftsmen employed by the flotilla’s workshop run by the *OAEG* went collectively on “strike”, because a European employee had committed a physical assault on

²⁰⁵ Cf. Conrad, *Globalisation*, pp. 77–143. Cf. Sippel, “Wie erzieht man”, pp. 311–333.

²⁰⁶ Cf. Schröder, Martin. *Prügelstrafe und Züchtigungsrecht in den deutschen Schutzgebieten Schwarzafrikas*. Münster: 1997, pp. 25–34.

²⁰⁷ E.g. Cf. “Arbeitserziehung und Arbeitszwang”. *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 22. Daressalam: 02 June 1906. Cf. “Aus unserer Kolonie. Von den Arbeitskarten im Bezirk Wilhelmstal”. *DOAZ*, XII, no. 79. Daressalam: 05 October 1910. Cf. “Berliner Telegramme. Ein Wechsel in der Haltung der kaiserlichen Regierung zur Frage der staatlichen Arbeiteranwerbung?”. *DOAZ*, XV, no. 72. Daressalam: 09 September 1913. Cf. “Gouvernementsrat (4. Verhandlungstag)”. *DOAZ*, XVI, no. 55. Daressalam: 6 October 1906.

one of their Indian colleagues. In protest, the workers originating from the sub-continent refused to work and urged the *Gouvernement* and the flotilla to punish the European employee. Their petition apparently met with success, probably because the colonial authorities were dependent on the skilled Indian workers.²⁰⁸ Another incident occurred in October 1909, when craftsmen employed by *Philipp Holzmann* went on strike because they were neither satisfied with their salaries, nor with their working hours.²⁰⁹ Although it is in this case not clear whether the strike was initiated by employees of African or Indian descent, another comparable incident occurred in August 1913. This time the population groups involved were identified as Indian and Goan. Roughly sixty-six craftsmen demanded their daily coffee-break in the morning, which had been reduced by the *OAEG* to only fifteen min. Feelings ran so high that the antagonists even instigated a physical fight. As the Indian craftsmen, and their alleged Goanese ringleaders, were subject to 'indigenous law', the result was thirty Rupees fine for breach of contract.²¹⁰ It remains however remarkable that publications such as the *DOAZ*, which usually endorsed colonial discourses, labelled the labour dispute of the Indian workers as a *strike* instead of calling it 'idleness', 'indolence' or 'laziness' as the colonial discourse would normally have it regarding African workers. Generally, the term 'strike' was exclusively used to describe the resistance of workers employed by major industrial factories in Europe, and hardly ever in the colonial context. As skilled workers remained scarce throughout the entire German colonial period and especially at the railway construction sites, the use of this terminology may illustrate the railway companies' strong dependency on Indian employees and the relatively high prestige of their skilled labour.

As Indian involvement in railway construction in East Africa was important regarding skilled labour, and decisive in the British case (*Uganda Railway*), one must also consider sources illustrating the Indian perspectives on the issue. Although there was certainly some forced and indentured labour involved, Indian labour migration in the Indian Ocean Area was at times also the result of genuine Indian initiative. This reflects the fact that such Indian labour migration was not necessarily a one-way street from India to East Africa. It also entailed the opportunity to leave East Africa again for India and to come back again another time. Of course, such migratory practice was often impossible regarding 'coolie' la-

208 "Aus Dar es Salaam und Umgebung. Ein Streikversuch der indischen Flotillen Handwerker". *DOAZ*, VIII, no. 2. Daressalam: 13 January 1906.

209 Cf. "Aus unserer Kolonie. Morogoro. Streik". *DOAZ*, XI, no. 85. Daressalam: 27 October 1909.

210 Cf. "Lokales. Streik bei der Ostafrikanischen Eisenbahngesellschaft". *DOAG*, XV, no. 70. Daressalam: 30 August 1913.

bour,²¹¹ but it is worth noting that Indians of a relatively high social status at the railways, such as craftsmen or office clerks, apparently had the opportunity to leave their country for East Africa, work for a railway employer and return to the subcontinent as soon as their contract had been fulfilled. The reasons for returning to India might have been profoundly individual, as a poem by an Indian railway clerk published by the *Indian Voice* in April 1911 illustrates:

To Africa.

By a disgusted Indian Clerk on retiring from the Service of the Railway.

- Satan's own Pandemonium thou art,
 Africa! Thy barren wastes, nature's worst part,
 Thy scorching fields and thy waterless tracts,
 Can never be improved by Human arts;
- [5] Fittest thou art for the arch Demon's home,
 And thy trackless wilds for wild brutes to roam,
 Heaven never made thee for pure human seat,
 Attempts for that thy climate must defeat;
 Let England pour on thee her boundless gold,
- [10] Let Germany exert her powers untold,
 Let France attempt to help thee with her light,
 Let Italy serve thee with her fallen might.
 Nothing, sure, can make thee a country good,
 Thy poisonous soil can produce no human food,
- [15] Say what avails thee of thy central lakes,
 What avails thee what course old Nilus takes;
 Their joint actions cannot a vast region feed,
 Nor thy clime fit to rear a manly breed,
 As thou art, thou must always be, a waste
- [20] A home for monkey, Darwin's human beast;
 Nature, to show, how bad a place could be,
 Heaved thee up from the bottom of the sea,
 She has placed thee beneath the burning line,
 A death dealing torrid sun is always thine;
- [25] Thy sea-board, hot and moist, thy centre hot,
 Fever or sunstroke is thy children's lot,
 By chance at times, escape them both, one may
 To be, to lion, or dysentery a prey;
 Jigars and cancers, thy peculiar trait,
- [30] Maladies which all must dread, low or great,
 Heroes and Kings from old Amon's son,

211 Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 44–71. Cf. Tappe, Oliver and Lindner, Ulrike. 'Introduction: Global Variants of Bonded Labour'. *Bonded Labour. Global and Comparative Perspectives (18th – 21st Century)*. 9–34. Eds. Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf et al. Bielefeld: 2016.

- Down to the modern and great Correi[?]an;
 Who sought to conquer countries for their fame,
 And to leave behind them, a lasting name,
 [35] All rightly considered thee unfit to yield,
 To human exertion a worthy field,
 All ages shunned thee for thy infernal mould,
 And shunned shalt then be but where Pharaoh's
 Ruled,
 [40] Now for thy arid sands let Germans fight,
 And the English exert their latent might;
 But I must surely leave and see thee no more,
 As soon as my three years penance is o'er,
 In my native home I should rather be,
 [45] A beggar, than get here a Monarchy.²¹²

Apart from exemplifying the fact that Indians employed by East African railway companies in high ranks had opinions of their own about their work and their reasons for migrating within the Indian Ocean, the poem of 'a disgusted Indian clerk' illustrates various other aspects of research interest. Although *The Indian Voice's* general editorial policy followed a rather cosmopolitan approach intended to be "the hope of all who suffer", it nevertheless also (re)produced ideologies of colonial racial hierarchies.²¹³ "Africa [. . .] acted as a boundary from which Indians measured their status [. . .] and Indians were deemed more developed and [. . .] more civilized than the 'African native'."²¹⁴ Accordingly, the poem's author compared Africa to John Milton's Capital of Satan and his Peers characterised by the corresponding barren environment (cf. 1–7).²¹⁵ In addition, the people of African descent were described as animal-like "beasts" or "monkeys" (20), which implied Indian superiority in turn. Thereby, the author confirmed the contemporary colonial hierarchy, which attempted to assign the lowest ranks to people of African descent. In fact, the author then foiled this very colonial hierarchy, which ranked European people first, by doubting the ability of the colonising powers to 'develop' the African continent (cf. 10–20, 40–41). As all European efforts in Africa were in vain, the author preferred a superior way and chose to return to his mother country of

212 "To Africa. By a Disgusted Indian Clerk on Retiring from the Service of the Railway". *The Indian Voice of British East Africa, Uganda and Zanzibar*. Nairobi: 19 April 1911. Web. *African Newspapers*. http://public.maximus.newsbank.com/images/L00000007/cache/pdf/bitonal_tiff_g4/13D0F5904120B628_13CF496663BB9D10.pdf (24 January 2018), p. 6.

213 Cf. Nasar, Saima. 'The Indian Voice: Connecting Self-Representation and Identity Formulation in Diaspora'. 99–124. *History in Africa*, Volume 40. Cambridge: 2013. Web. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms.https://doi.org/10.1017/hia.2013.10> (26 January 2018), pp. 119–122.

214 Nasar. 'The Indian Voice', p. 121.

215 Cf. Milton, John. *Das Verlorene Paradies*. Altenmünster: 2016, pp. 20–22.

India (cf. 43–45), which he regarded as the best country in the world. Moreover, the author regarded his employment as a clerk at an East African railway as “penance” (43) and could not wait for his three-year-long obligation to come to an end. “Disgusted” by his job, he left East Africa never to be seen again (cf. 44–45), illustrating most importantly that skilled labour such as being a railway clerk opened up a degree of freedom when employed in colonial businesses.²¹⁶ Whatever hardships the author might have experienced while on duty in (probably British) East Africa, nevertheless, he held a rather privileged position compared to other employees who were charged with the physically very demanding construction work on the building site. Apparently, expertise was an important means to eke out advantages when working at the *Central Railway* in German East Africa. This applies not only for skilled Indian craftsmen and office clerks, but also for East Africans who obtained an expertise urgently wanted at the *Central Railway*’s construction sites.

3.7 (Un-)wanted Workers: Contesting Skilled African Labour at the *Central Railway*

3.7.1 Moravians Fighting Railway Modernity? Between Colonial Cooperation and Competition

We rejoice with you at the tremendous cultural work of the railway’s completion until Tabora for the time being. It is a proud work of German energy and efficiency which will extraordinarily facilitate our colonial tasks in German East Africa. Our very remote and hardly accessible missionary stations will also enjoy the blessings of the railway’s construction.

Moravian Missionary Director Henning to *Philipp Holzmann*, 15 August 1910.²¹⁷

As far as the files of the Moravian Mission to East Africa can tell, the idea for a railway mission to the *Central Railway* in German East Africa developed out of connections within the ‘colonial globality’ taking place around the year 1900. In early 1905, members of the Moravian Mission Board travelled to German East Africa for an inspection tour of their missionary stations in the colony. While on board the steamer that took them to East Africa, the Moravians met an ethnic German who was born in Transylvania (today’s Romania). It turned out that the Transylvanian was an engineer, who had recently been transferred from a railway construction site in Asia Minor to Ger-

²¹⁶ Cf. Gunn. *Outsourcing*, pp. 10–15.

²¹⁷ UAH. MD 1560. Verschiedenes. 3. Briefwechsel mit Verschiedenen 1909–1915, “Henning Missionsdirektion der evangelischen Brüder Unität Herrnhut an die Herren Philipp Holzmann & Cie. GmbH. 15. August 1912”, p. 2.

man East Africa by his employer *Philipp Holzmann*. Apparently, an invigorating conversation between the Moravian Mission Board and the railway engineer developed and thus contributed to the Board's idea to set up a railway mission in German East Africa targeting the African men and women working and living in the construction camps along the track. As there was no other railway construction work in Asia Minor by *Holzmann* except for the *Bagdadbahn* at that time, it is obvious that the *Bagdadbahn* was not only significant for providing experienced Southern European sub-contractors for the East African *Central Railway*. Indeed, the construction of the *Bagdadbahn* appears to have further stimulated thoughts about a railway mission to German East Africa on the part of the Moravians. In addition to this Middle Eastern dimension, other Moravian missions to Africa were influential for the railway mission in German East Africa, too. With the Moravians having had a positive experience with railway missions to South African railways, the prospect of founding a railway mission to the *Central Railway* in German East Africa appeared equally promising.²¹⁸

Rebekka Habermas and Richard Hölzl argue that missions and missionaries were decisive actors in globalising processes just like other comparatively well-researched actors of globalisation of the nineteenth century. Despite the widespread disregard of missions and missionaries in the field of global history, the two historians stress that, when analysed as “new mission history”, not only European missionaries, but also their locally recruited translators, catechumen, porters, employees and teachers employed at mission schools made up for an “entangled mission history” and a “global history of the religious”.²¹⁹ Given Habermas and Hölzl's characterisation of nineteenth-century missionaries as central protagonists of global history, the Moravian Mission is no exception, of course. This is particularly valid considering the fact that the history of the Moravian Mission from the 1720s until the 1850s has already been researched thoroughly and that the Moravians have been characterised as a “global community”²²⁰ accordingly. Having had mission communities particularly in many European countries and across the Atlantic since the early modern period, the global character of the Moravian Mission holds true also for the nineteenth century.²²¹ It is therefore not very surprising that the personnel manage-

218 Cf. UAH. MD 1560, “Missionsdirektion der evangelischen Brüder Unität Herrnhut an die Herren Philipp Holzmann & Cie. GmbH. 03. Dec. 1909”, pp. 1–3.

219 Habermas, Rebekka and Hölzl, Richard. ‘Mission global – Religiöse Akteure und globale Verflechtung seit dem 19. Jahrhundert’. *Mission Global. Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*. 10–28. Eds. Rebekka Habermas and Richard Hölzl. Cologne et al.: 2014, p. 27.

220 Mettele, Gisela. *Weltbürgertum oder Gottesreich. Die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinschaft als globale Gemeinschaft 1727–1854*. Göttingen: 2009.

221 Cf. Mettele. *Weltbürgertum*, pp. 9–32. The Moravians were, of course, not acting in vacuum. Particularly, their relationship with the evolving modern nation states and nationalism of the

ment of the Moravian railway mission to the *Central Railway* in German East Africa also illustrates its embeddedness in the ‘colonial globality’ that transcended the boundaries of the German *Reich* and German colonies. With Nis Gaarde and Mads Löbner becoming the most important figures of the Moravian railway mission in German East Africa, two (ethnic) Danes reported regularly to the Moravian Mission Board in Herrnhut (Germany) about their work along the railroad being built in East Africa by Philipp Holzmann.²²²

In fact, besides the overseas connections between the Moravian railway mission and Asia Minor and South Africa, it seems that the mission also had roots in Central Europe. The new technological means of transport and communication of the nineteenth century fundamentally transformed European societies and labour markets. Central to this development was the expanding railway network that enabled and accelerated the connections between political and economic centres and the hinterlands. The construction of railways entailed not only new forms of labour migration and labour recruitment in German colonies, but it had also repercussions in the German *Reich* proper. The transformation of German society, economy and the labour market not only meant new forms of employment and a booming economy, it entailed also social disruptions and opened up new forms of exploitation and abuse in the labour market. Transient and migrant workers arriving in economic centres via train seeking jobs in factories or as servants particularly were targeted by untrustworthy middlemen right upon their arrival at a town’s railway station. Especially young single women became victims of economic exploitation or were even coerced into sex work. Tackling such social evils, female activists founded associations to support young single women as soon as they arrived at railway stations. The first German associations emerged in 1882 following the example set by the Swiss female middle-class Protestant movement called *Freundinnen junger Mädchen* (‘Friends of Young Girls’), which had been founded in 1872. The major area of activity of such associations was to provide affordable housing for the young female workers and help them establish contact with trustworthy employers. Before Protestant and Catholic associations started joint ecumenical

19th century also influenced the Moravians. A closer investigation on this issue is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.

²²² Especially for Gaarde, the question of citizenship and nationality is comparatively complex: he was born in Northern-Schleswig, which was annexed by Prussia in the 1860s. Gaarde was, however, born into the Danish Protestant community of Hjartbro. Cf. UAH. MD 767. Personallakten Mission. Gaarde, Nis Hansen. Cf. UAH. MD 893. Personallakten Mission. Löbner, Mads Hansen. Cf. UAH. MD 1530. Missionsdirektion Unyamwezi. Jahresberichte der Provinz 1906–1940, “Bericht für die Missionsdirektion London, J.N. 3/9, 3. Dezember 1920”. Cf. UAH. MD 1532, “Löbner an Hoffmann, 10. Februar 1910”.

work in the field in 1910, several Christian associations of both denominations alongside Jewish movements offered their assistance independently. By 1912 there were ca. ninety *Bahnhofsmissionen* (railway (station) missions) all around the German *Reich*, which slowly but surely expanded their field of activity and offered help to any kind of traveller in need, no matter if male or female. In 2021, the German *Bahnhofsmission* celebrated its 125th anniversary and is still present at many major railway stations in Germany.²²³

Almost simultaneously to the joint ecumenical action in the *Reich* in 1910, the Moravian Protestant Mission in German East Africa initiated their railway mission, which targeted the local African population living nearby the *Central Railway* in general, but especially the migrant workers who had recently arrived at the construction camps in the German colony. With the workers migrating to the construction sites often without their families and subsequently living in a strange environment, the Moravian railway mission regarded the migrant workers as particularly prone to becoming victims of the temptations of modernity, which the newly built railroad allegedly entailed. Consequently, and in addition to their longer-established ordinary missions, the central board of the Moravian Mission decided to set up a special railway mission to counter, by the strength of Christianity, the perceived vices of alcohol, sex work and the religion of Islam. Unfortunately, the sources do not reveal whether there was any direct connection between the establishment of the *Bahnhofsmissionen* in the German *Reich* and the Moravian Mission to the *Central Railway* in German East Africa. But the fact that the joint ecumenical work in Germany was started almost at the very same moment as the Moravian railway mission in German East Africa suggests that the mission's board may have been inspired by the developments in Europe and thought it wise to fight the dark sides of 'modernity' also in the German colony in East Africa. According to the correspondence between the Moravian Mission Board and *Philipp Holzmann*, the idea to set up a railway mission in East Africa had been a long-held wish of the Moravians in 1909 and was part of the contemporary zeitgeist anyways. At home in Germany, but also in other European countries, especially Protestant missions targeted 'lost souls' particularly among the

223 Cf. Reusch, Wolfgang. *Bahnhofsmission in Deutschland 1897–1987. Sozialwissenschaftliche Analyse einer diakonisch-charitativen Einrichtung im sozialen Wandel*. Frankfurt o.M. et al: 1988, pp. 17–65. Cf. Nikles, Bruno W. *Soziale Hilfe am Bahnhof. Zur Geschichte der Bahnhofsmission in Deutschland (1894.1960)*. Freiburg i. Br.: 1994, pp. 11–14, 17–227. Cf. Schröder, Iris. *Arbeiten für eine bessere Welt. Frauenbewegung und Sozialreform 1890–1914*. Frankfurt o.M. and New York: 2001, pp. 185–221. Cf. Hürlimann, Esther et al. *Das Fräulein vom Bahnhof. Der Verein Freundinnen junger Mädchen in der Schweiz*. Zürich: 2021. Cf. Bahnhofsmission Deutschland e.V. '125 Jahre Bahnhofsmission'. www.bahnhofsmission.de. Web. <https://www.bahnhofsmission.de/index.php?id=15> (05 August 2021).

working classes in the slums of European metropolises, while they simultaneously attempted to baptise and thereby allegedly ‘civilise’ as many peoples as possible in various colonies around the globe. In any event, quite often at least a mental or rather rhetorical link was established between ‘darkest Africa’ and the ‘godless populations’ in Europe.²²⁴ Hence, a link between railway missions to stations in European towns and cities and the railway mission to the *Central Railway* in German East Africa appears very plausible.

While the *Bahnmissionsmissionen* in the German *Reich* sought interdenominational cooperation, things were different in colonial East Africa. The Moravians did not unite their efforts with the Catholic missions in German East Africa. Quite the contrary, Catholic missionaries were seen as competitors for ‘heathen souls’.²²⁵ Marking out the mission territories was therefore central to both denominations throughout German colonial rule but also required a certain amount of cooperation and agreement. All the Christian missions to German East Africa resented Islam – the most widespread monotheistic religion in East Africa for centuries – which was simultaneously gaining ground along the *Central Railway*. Christian missionaries complained that the policies pursued by the colonial administration would even foster Islam in East Africa at the expense of their efforts in the German colony instead of facilitating the European ‘civilising mission’. The missions had thus always been critical about the colonial administration’s preference of literate Muslims and/or Swahili – who had valued and produced poetry and literature as a means to praise Islam and to transmit their history of East Africa long before the dominance of the European powers²²⁶ – as *Akida*, *Jumbe*, *Liwali*, *Askari*,²²⁷ or as teachers at governmental schools as well as interpreters or clerks for the colonial administration. By hiring predomi-

224 Cf. UAH. MD 1560. “Missionsdirektion der evangelischen Brüder Unität Herrnhut an die Herren Philipp Holzmann & Cie. GmbH. 03. Dec. 1909”, pp. 1–3. For a link between the Bethel Mission in Germany and East Africa cf. Conrad. *Globalisation*, pp. 77–143. For a link between the slums of London and the Empire by means of the Salvation Army cf. Fischer-Tiné. ‘*Low and Licentious*’, pp. 324–369. For an analysis between religious and middle class thought in terms of the religious civilising missions, cf. Dejung. ‘From Global Civilizing Missions’, pp. 251–272.

225 Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 24–41. For a general overview of Christian missions of all confessions and their perspective on East Africa as a promising field for mission work esp. regarding Islam cf. BArch R1001/846. Evangelische Brüder-Unität Herrnhut, pp. 129–134. For the Catholic Benedictines in (German) East Africa cf. Hölzl, Richard. *Gläubige Imperialisten. Katholische Mission in Deutschland und Ostafrika (1830–1960)*. Frankfurt o.M.: 2021.

226 Cf. Casco. *Utenzi*, pp. 1–142.

227 *Akida* (Swahili) = indigenous administrator in service of the Germans on the local level, *Jumbe* (Swahili) = village elder/representative, *Liwali* (Swahili) = indigenous administrator in service of the Germans on a regional level, *Askari* (Swahili) = African mercenary/soldier in service of the German colonial forces.

nantly literate and educated Muslims for the high-ranking occupations in German East Africa, African Christian converts and mission pupils, as well as the prestige of Christianity would fall behind, complained the Christian missions. The missionaries' reservations towards Islam even increased with the construction of the *Central Railway*. Their major fear was the following: As the rails followed the pre-colonial caravan routes, which had been dominated by Muslim traders for decades, the new means of transportation along these old routes would accelerate the spread of Islam and therefore make the mission's work even more difficult. Consequently, not only the Moravian Mission, but also the Catholics and other Protestant missions, like the Berlin Mission, targeted the hotspots along the railway: while the Moravians focussed on the region of central *Unyamwezi*, the Berlin Mission operated between Dar es Salaam and Kilossa. Between Mpapwa and Kilossa the Church Missionary Society attempted to missionise the railway workers.²²⁸

With Tabora experiencing a revival as a traffic hub in the course the advent of the railway, this central town of German East Africa became one of the Missions' bones of contention. The major reason why the Moravians ultimately focussed on hot spots such as Tabora was the fact that they could not sustain a long-lived railway mission in German East Africa. The actual Moravian Mission to the railway indeed ended as early as 1912 after only two years, because of ongoing difficulties regarding funding, but particularly due to a lack of suitable missionaries skilled to do the job. On top of this, several agreements with *Holzmann* limited the missionaries' activities to Sundays or the few hours in the evening after the

228 Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 150–196. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 58–76, 102–105. Cf. Sippel, Harald. 'Mission und Gewalt in Deutsch-Ostafrika. Das Verhältnis zwischen Mission und Kolonialverwaltung'. *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Mission mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*. 525–538. Eds. Ulrich van der Heyden and Jürgen Becher. Stuttgart: 2000. pp. 525–536. Cf. Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera. 'Crescent or Cross? Islam and Christian Missions in Nineteenth-Century East and Central Africa'. *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Mission mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*. 79–96. Eds. Ulrich van der Heyden and Jürgen Becher. Stuttgart: 2000, pp. 79–95. Cf. Pesek, Michael. 'Kreuz oder Halbmond. Die deutsche Kolonialpolitik zwischen Pragmatismus und Paranoia in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1908–1914'. *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Mission mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*. 97–111. Eds. Ulrich van der Heyden and Jürgen Becher. Stuttgart: 2000, pp. 97–110. Cf. UAH. "Bericht des Missions Departments an die Generalsynode 1899", pp. 10–13. Cf. UAH. "Bericht der Missionsdirektion an die Generalsynode 1909", pp. 64–69. Cf. UAH. FI. A2. 35. "Bericht der Missionsdirektion an die Generalsynode 1914", pp. 66–75. Cf. UAH. MD 1542. Missionsdirektion Unyamwesi. Stationsberichte Usoke 1906–1914, "Jahresbericht der Station Usoke 1913".

railway workers had returned home from the construction sites to their camps. These limited time slots for actual missionary work made the missionary's activities rather sporadic, largely unsuccessful and therefore very frustrating. Another problem was that the railhead itself kept moving further west in the course of construction and workers who had listened to the Moravians' preaching at one place, then moved on with the railhead.²²⁹ Moreover, the missionaries faced staunch competition from Muslim teachers along the railroad, who often challenged the Christian religion successfully. Some Africans who had visited the Moravians once were – according to the files of the mission – socially excluded and returned to their non-Christian fellows. As a local report described: "We Christians are simply half *shenzi*, who worship several Gods and who believe in a crucified saviour (what a folly – upuuzi!) and who do not know God's commandments or do at least not adhere to them",²³⁰ wrote missionary Löbner to the Mission Board in 1913. Although this was written after the actual abandonment of the railway mission by Löbner in 1913, the railway missionary Gaarde reported regularly about similar events during his duty along the railway between 1910 and 1912, illustrating the comparatively low prestige of the Christian religion in central German East Africa.²³¹ Moreover, the strict views of the Protestant missionaries that condemned polygamy, alcohol consumption and the itinerant lifestyle of seasonal workers either made the Christian converts or Africans living in the missionary environment ultimately abandon the Moravians – or the Moravians themselves excluded the 'sinners'.²³² As a consequence, the Mission board finally felt that they could hardly ever reach a steady flock to missionise and stopped the

229 Cf. UAH. MD 1532. "J. N. 87, Löbner an Henning, 4. November 1911". Cf. UAH. MD 1543. Prov.: Missionsdirektion Pert.: Unyamwesi/Tansania Stationsberichte. Bahnmission (Berichte u. Briefwechsel). 1910–1912., "Bericht über den Anfang der Bahnmission (von Oktober bis Ende Dezember 1910)", p. 1.

230 UAH. MD 1544. Berichte der Missionsstation Tabora, "Bericht der Missionsstation Tabora 01. April – 30. Juni 1913", p. 2.

231 Cf. UAH. MD 1543, "Bericht über den Anfang der Bahnmission (Oktober – Ende 1910)", pp. 2–4, "Bericht über die Bahnmission 1. Januar – 31. März 1911", pp. 7–8, "Bericht über die Bahnmission. 1. April – 30. Juni 1911", "Bericht über die Bahnmission (1. Jan. – 31. März 1912)".

232 Cf. UAH. MD 1537. Prov. Missionsdirektion. Stationsberichte. Ipole 1909–1916, "Jahresbericht Ipole 1914", p. 3. Cf. UAH. MD 1539. Missionsdirektion Pert. Unyamwesi. Stationsberichte Kitunda 1909–1918, "Jahresbericht der Station Kitunda 1912", pp. 1–6. Cf. UAH. MD 1541. Missionsdirektion. Unyamwesi. Stationsberichte Urambo 1909–1916, "Bericht der Station Kilimani Urambo vom Jahre 1909", "Vierteljahresbericht aus Urambo vom 1.IV. – 30.VI.1912", "Vierteljahresbericht von Urambo 1. Juli – 30. September 1912", "Jahresbericht der Station Usoke 1913.", "Erster Vierteljahresbericht 1914 der Station Usoke".

railway mission in favour of traditional forms of missionary work in German East Africa.

Facing these obstacles, the Moravians thus decided to concentrate on Tabora and established a constant mission centre in this central town. From this revived transport hub, the Moravians sought to tackle their most important goals: challenge Islam, consolidate their shortcomings in personnel, missionise the railway workers part-time and become more influential than their Catholic competitors. While the Moravians could comparably easily reach an agreement with other Protestant missions and consolidated their individual sphere of missionary influence,²³³ the most important aspect was marking out the spheres of influence against the Catholic mission. Corresponding conflicts were often symbolised by real-estate ownership and the question which denomination would be allotted which area in town. Initially in fear of conflict with the Catholic White Fathers in Tabora, the Moravians shunned any closer discussions. But with the Moravians finally realising that the railway mission could not be sustained and Tabora as such had to be targeted instead, they established closer contacts to the Catholic mission in German East Africa and to the *Gouvernement* to settle the issue by marking out clear-cut spheres of influence. Although not enthusiastic about the Moravian plan to settle permanently in Tabora, the Catholics were aware that they “could not hinder”²³⁴ the Protestants from purchasing real estate in Tabora. As soon as the district commissioner and the *Gouvernement* approved of the Moravians’ plan to purchase a plot in Tabora, missionary Löbner was able to move into a stone house in the heart of the railway hub. From there, Löbner himself, alongside former railway missionary Gaarde, attempted to continue their mission to the African railway men and women part-time only, because the construction company *Holzmann* would not allow them to preach to the railway workers while at work. Gaarde and Löbner thus dedicated most of their time to the Moravian mission schools in Tabora, health work, the study of African languages or the erection of churches. As well, they hoped to challenge Islam, of course.²³⁵

Yet, reaching an agreement with the colonial administration and the Catholic mission were not the only preconditions for the Moravian Mission to the *Central Railway* in German East Africa. What mattered most for the Moravians to genuinely initiate their railway mission was to be on good terms with the railway construction company *Philipp Holzmann*. Generally, the Moravians needed the company’s permission to preach to the railway (wo)men working and living along the railroad’s con-

²³³ Cf. UAH MD 1543, “Bericht über den Anfang der Bahmission. Okt-Dez 1910”, n.p.

²³⁴ UAH. MD 1532, “J.N. 82 Löbner an Henning 10.11.1911”.

²³⁵ Cf. UAH. MD 1532, “J. N. 87 Löbner an Henning 4. November 1911”, “J.N. 82 Löbner an Henning 10.11.1911”. Cf. BArch R1001/846, p. 172a, pp. 52–53.

struction sites. Moreover, establishing a mission along the railway also required the construction company's financial assistance to become a reality. As the Moravian Mission financed its endeavours in large part through private donations,²³⁶ constant fundraising was an existential problem for the Moravian board. Hence, as soon as the plan to start a railway mission along the *Central Railway* in German East Africa materialised, Moravian missionary Director Henning turned to the financially strongest company of German East Africa, *Philipp Holzmann*, to fund the railway mission. The monthly wages of the railway missionaries were especially needed, but housing and transportation too required financial means. Having received the Moravian request, *Holzmann's* government building official Riese responded positively and promised 1,000 Marks annually as initial financial assistance for the first two years to help establish the mission. On top, *Holzmann* agreed to assist the missionaries with building their accommodations along the *Central Railway* and granted travel and freight transportation free of charge to any member of the Moravian Mission. Although these financial means granted by *Holzmann's* Riese did not entirely meet the request of the Moravian Henning – who conducted the negotiations on behalf of the Mission's board – and who had asked for 3,000 Marks annually for missionary salaries alone – the railway mission to the new track in German East Africa was only enabled with *Holzmann's* support indeed. Yet, in return for their financial aid, *Holzmann* applied several terms and conditions the Moravians had to observe. First and foremost, the railway mission was strictly not allowed to interfere with the labour supply of the construction company. Indeed, Riese could not be misunderstood in this regard as he wrote to the mission board:

Complying with your request, we must ask you for your best support regarding our efforts to win and maintain a steady and competent number of good and skilled workers for our endeavour. The extraordinarily high costs for labour recruitment that we now have to pay for each worker obliges us to this request. The loss of any worker, which might be the result of your own efforts, would mean a not unsubstantial financial sacrifice for us.²³⁷

In other words, *Holzmann's* representative Riese feared increased competition for workers once the railway mission was established. As any mission also required workers, Riese's reservations about competition for African labour were not unjustified. Yet, it appears that *Holzmann* supported the railway mission not

236 Donations by church members or wealthy donors. On top, each mission station was also an economic undertaking and had to produce goods that would co-finance the local mission stations. Cf. Arnold. *Steuer und Lohnarbeit*, pp. 23, 231–232. Cf. Hüsken, Jan. 'Die Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde als globales Unternehmen'. 13–27. *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte*, Jahrgang 14, Heft 1. Berlin: 2013.

237 UAH. MD 1560, "Philipp Holzmann to Moravian Missionary Board (C.O. Henning). J. no. 1045. Frankfurt o.M. 15 December 1909".

for nothing. Rather, the construction company wanted the Moravians to actively support rapid railway construction in return for their (financial) services, as a letter by *Holzmann's* construction officer Hoffman to Moravian missionary Löbner shows. In that letter, Hoffman generally consented with the idea of supporting the railway mission to *Unyamwezi* financially and immaterially, provided that the Moravians would urge the local population to take up railway construction work and treat the matter “discreetly” in general, and further: “We assume that you will not prevent the Vanyamwezi [sic!] people, who have been our best workers so far, to join us for work. We rather hope that you will draw their attention to the benefits of working at the railway.”²³⁸ Hence, by investing financial means in the railway mission, the representatives of *Holzmann* sought to turn the tables and to transform the Moravian missionaries from potential competitors for labour into labour recruiters providing the railway constructing company with a skilled and reliable workforce.

In fact, the Moravians had their own agenda regarding the railway mission in German East Africa and did not want to be pocketed in the sense of legwork for *Holzmann*. While the Moravians pledged to generally support railway construction, they shunned fully flung cooperation regarding labour recruitment:

As I had already ensured you in my letter dating from the 14th of June last year, we will never interfere in labour, but will only urge the people to duty and loyalty; I would like to repeat that for you and I hope, that you will have the experience that those people under our influence will not be of the lowest kind of workers; in this respect you can surely count on our indirect cooperation. I suspect that you will also understand that we will not be able to agree with direct cooperation, e.g., as labour recruiter etc. [sic!], because we must still prefer sedentism and quiet family life for our people. I only mention that to avoid any possible misunderstandings and I am sure that you will not misunderstand my remarks. You can always count on us as an indirect employee [. . .] and we trust in you, as you can always trust in us.²³⁹

In this respect, the Moravians went along with general policies of ‘educating’ the African population to work but protected their own missionary agenda at the same time. Of course, this was not entirely to the taste of the construction company and cooled down the mutual relationship between the mission and *Holzmann*. Overall, the Moravian’s standpoint did not prevent cooperation with *Holzmann*, but examining the sources of the Moravians, you can notice *Holzmann's* diminishing support. Generally, *Holzmann* kept their principal promises, such as building a house for the railway missionary and transporting him along the railway. But regarding

²³⁸ Löbner quotes *Holzmann's* Hoffmann in a letter to Henning. UAH. MD 1532, “J.N.982. Löbner to Henning 01.Nov. 1909”. Cf. UAH. MD 1532, “J.N. 622”.

²³⁹ UAH. MD 1532, “J.N. 334, Abschrift. Löbner an Hoffman. Usoko, den 10. February 1910”.

less clearly regulated agreements, the construction company revealed its increasing reservations towards the Moravian railway mission. When railway missionary Gaarde met Building official Ferdinand Grages in Dar es Salaam in autumn 1910 right after his arrival in German East Africa, Grages showed himself very “amiable”, but simultaneously explained that he was “sceptical towards the whole affair” of the railway mission. On behalf of *Holzmann*, Grages only paid 375 Rupees of the entire promised missionary’s salary (1,000 Rps.) while promising to deliver the rest a few months later “as long as [*Holzmann*] would be still willing to do so”.²⁴⁰ In contrast to Löbner’s hopes, the relationship between the Moravians and *Holzmann* was not entirely characterised by mutual trust or support and Gaarde only received transportation free of charge between Dodoma and the railhead (ca. fifty km) but not between Dar es Salaam and Dodoma (ca. 450 km). On top, Gaarde only received transportation free of charge for himself and still had to pay high tariffs for his cargo along the entire track. Moreover, Gaarde’s simple housing was still not finished by 3 January 1911, showing that *Holzmann*’s support for the Moravians was far from overambitious.²⁴¹ Rather, it seems that *Holzmann* put the Moravians under scrutiny for the time being and had no premature praises for the railway mission. The construction company appears to have only supported the railway mission as long as the Moravians would not interfere with their top priority of rapid railway construction and was ready to pull back their support if they felt it necessary.

While both the Moravians and *Holzmann* tried primarily to foster their own major objectives and often held differing views, they also cooperated in many ways. Engineers and other railway personnel regularly visited not only several Moravian missionary stations, but they finally also paid for and erected the missionaries’ simple housing along the railway and a mission stone house in Tabora after 1912. When the missionaries approached labour camps of *Holzmann* engineers or any sub-contractors, they were generally welcomed and supported in their mission work. In turn, railway missionary Gaarde limited his devotion to the labour force to the few evening hours after the end of work or to Sundays when there was generally no railway construction work going on. Essentially, the Moravians kept their promise and did indeed not interfere with *Holzmann*’s top priorities regarding labour supply.²⁴² Remarkably, *Holzmann*’s engineers also sent their *boys* or other East African personnel to the Moravian railway mission or the mission school in

²⁴⁰ UAH. MD 1532, “J.N. 19”, p. 5.

²⁴¹ Cf. UAH. MD. 1532, “J.N. 30”, p. 5, “J. N. 356”.

²⁴² Cf. UAH. MD 1543, “Bericht über den Anfang der Bahnmission. Oktober bis Ende Dezember 1910.”, pp. 2–3. Cf. UAH. MD 1543, “J.N. 338. Bericht über die Bahnmission 1. Januar – 31. März 1911”, pp. 5–6. Cf. UAH. MD 1543. “Bericht über die Bahnmission z.Z. Tabora 1. Juli – 30. Sept. 1911”,

Tabora for training in a European form of education. Even Clement Gillman, the Anglo-German engineer working for *Holzmann* at the *Central Railway*, who stated in his diary that “one does not notice any effect of the Christian mission to the railway workers”, judged Gaarde as an unexpectedly “very nice and humble man”. Just as Gaarde proved to be a “welcomed and amiable companion” to Gillman, likewise “Superintendent Löbner” was regarded by the Anglo-German as “very peaceful”.²⁴³ It seems that Gaarde too valued Gillman as a person and, although the latter was generally sceptical towards the railway mission, Gillman even sent his personal water carrier, named *Songaleli*, to the mission schools of the Moravians, for training. In this regard, the name of Gillman’s water carrier – *Songaleli* – is tell-tale. In actual fact, not only Gillman employed somebody named *Songaleli*, but the Moravians mention numerous *wasongaleli* (‘wa’ = plural) employed by *Holzmann* to construct the *Central Railway* in the sources under investigation. In fact, the Swahili word *wasongaleli*²⁴⁴ means ‘those who are installing the rails’, and this points to a very important dimension regarding the interrelationship among labour, the Moravian Mission, *Holzmann* and the African agency.²⁴⁵ Despite contrary contemporary statements stipulated by so-called ‘colonial experts’ in numerous publications in Germany, former (railway) mission pupils were in high demand as educated workforce at the railway constructing company. Potentially skilled East African workers were significantly sought after by *Philipp Holzmann* not only for the manual task of railway construction, but also for maintaining and operating the newly built railroad. In turn, these skilled East African workers knew very well how to exploit their comparatively strong position in the labour market to find relatively privileged positions in the colonial society. Like Gillman’s *Songaleli* – who had probably managed to rise from being a low skilled manual railway worker who literally ‘installed the rails’ to being the personal servant of one of *Holzmann*’s engineers – it appears that many Moravian Christian converts or mission pupils used their newly acquired skills in mission schools wisely, within the disadvantaging colonial labour market.

p. 1. Cf. UAH. MD 1542, “Vierteljahresbericht der Station Usoke II. Quartal 1912”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1542, “Jahresbericht der Station Usoke 1913”, n.p.

243 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2,2, no. 13, p. 40.

244 Swahili Kusonga = (here) install; Swahili leli = reli i.e., rail.

245 Cf. UAH. MD 1543, “Bericht über die Bahnmission (1. Jan. – 31. März 1912)”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1543, “Bericht über die Bahnmission. 1. April – 30. Juni 1911”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1544, “Bericht der Missionsstation Tabora vom 9. Mai bis 30. Sept. 1912”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1544, “Jahresbericht der Missionsstation Tabora für 1912”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1544, “Bericht der Missionsstation Tabora 1. April – 30. Juni 1913”, p. 2.

3.7.2 (Un-)wanted Workers at the Central Railway

Especially young people who know how to read and write are wanted and in demand as writer, telephone boy etc. At the moment, there are four young Christians from the Usoke community at the railway, and one catechumen as the youngest. Among the first mentioned is even the leper Petelo [. . .]. Who knows, if he will come back one day. Stefan, Musanizi and Jakob are employed as scribe and telephonboy respectively. You can only rejoice that their industriousness and their school education pays-off for them now. Let us hope that they will also have the inner strength to withstand the many dangers and temptations. They need many intercessions.

Report of the Moravian missionary Station Usoke. July-September 1913.²⁴⁶

As a Protestant mission to Africa, the Moravian railway mission was of course not an economic endeavour as such. Economic issues only ranked second. What mattered most to any mission was the number of ‘heathen souls’ they could convert. Any other efforts such as in education, labour or science were only a means to this end. ‘Educating’ the local population to work was only properly accomplished if the Christian convert would ultimately take up work and pursue a lifestyle that was agreeable to God and therefore devoid of vices such as alcohol consumption or pursuing worldly things such as money, fame or lust.²⁴⁷ Yet, as particularly historians of Africa have pointed out, especially the offsprings of the African elite went to (mission) schools in order to equip themselves with the whole arsenal of western education. Realising that the European colonisers had become a power factor that had to be reckoned with, their major goal was to improve their position of power within the political economy of (East) Africa.²⁴⁸ Moreover, as far as (the Moravian) files can tell, in the context of labour, a great number of the East

²⁴⁶ UAH. MD 1542, “Bericht der Station Usoke vom Juli bis Sept. 1913”, n.p.

²⁴⁷ For the trope of ‘educating the colonised to work’ cf. Conrad. *Globalisation*, pp. 77–143. Cf. Yekani. *Koloniale Arbeit*, pp. 121–135. Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 355–359.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Lawrence, Benjamin, N. et al. ‘Introduction: African Intermediaries and the “Bargain” of Collaboration’. *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks. African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*. 3–36. Eds. Benjamin N. Lawrence et al. Wisconsin: 2006, pp. 3–36. Cf. Klein, Martin. ‘African Participation in Colonial Rule: The Role of Clerks, Interpreters and other Intermediaries’. *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks. African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*. 273–288. Eds. Benjamin N. Lawrence et al. Wisconsin: 2006, pp. 273–277. Cf. Jézéquel, Jean-Hervé. “Collecting Customary Law”: Educated Africans, Ethnographic Writings, and Colonial Justice in French West Africa’. *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks. African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*. 139–158. Eds. Benjamin N. Lawrence et al. Wisconsin: 2006, pp. 150–155. For an East African example cf. Iliffe, John. ‘The Spokesman. Martin Kayamba’. *Modern Tanzanians. A Volume of Biographies*. 66–94. Ed. John Iliffe. Dar es Salaam: 1973, pp. 66–75.

African people that the mission had regarded as future devout Christians would also individually use the newly acquired skills often learned at the mission schools for their own purposes and often contrarily to the missionaries' intentions. In this respect, people like Dr Karl Oetker, who had worked as head of the *Central Railway's* medical service between 1905 and 1907, were certainly wrong in claiming that "nobody [wants] to employ the mission pupils, because they are generally lazier, more unreliable, more dishonest and more insubordinate than the other negroes".²⁴⁹ Taking the perspective of a skilled East African railway worker, they were well aware of their skills or rather their 'human capital'. Consequently, skilled literate men preferred those jobs fitting their profile and rejected manual labour, as railway missionary Gaarde reports:

Elia from Sikonge [arrived] here to look for work, I was able to get him a job in the local section office. His work mostly consisted of carrying letters to the officials and [sub-]contractors in the section. This occupation suited him very much. However, when he had to push trollies a few times, he was less pleased and urgently wanted to be relieved of this work because it was too heavy for him. I was supposed to help him. But as he was big and strong and also well paid, his request did not seem justified to me. Brother Löbner [. . .] also rebuked him and admonished him not to bring shame upon himself and us. On the second day we learned that he had nevertheless left secretly. [. . .] A few days later, Joshua Maganga came from Sikonge to look for work here as well. Because of the experience I had just had, I had little pleasure in recommending him. He has now taken the place from which Elia left.²⁵⁰

Even Oetker's former employer *Philipp Holzmann* had proven to seek the Moravians' assistance to recruit the workforce necessary for railway construction and had attempted to turn the Moravians from missionaries into labour recruiters (see above). In contrast to Oetker's claim, it seems that *Holzmann* and their senior engineers like Clement Gillman happily employed former missionary pupils, not least because of their missionary school education. Ironically, although any Christian convert or former mission pupil migrating for work to the *Central Railway* was a potential 'lost soul' to the Moravians, the missionaries themselves wanted their converts to do their best when working at the construction sites: "The Lord provide for counterevidence challenging the common phrase widespread among numerous Europeans that 'all Christians are slackers and scoundrels'."²⁵¹ This wish might have arisen out of the pressure exerted by colonial players like *Holzmann*, who insisted on the priority of railway construction over missionary work.

²⁴⁹ Oetker, Karl früher Leiter des Gesundheitsdienstes beim Bahnbau Daressalam-Morogoro (Ostafrika). *Die Neger-Seele und die Deutschen in Afrika. Ein Kampf gegen Missionen, Sittlichkeits-Fanatismus und Bürokratie vom Standpunkt moderner Psychologie*. Munich: 1907, p. 24.

²⁵⁰ UAH. MD 1543, "Bericht über die Bahnmission (1. Jan. – 31. März 1912)", n.p.

²⁵¹ UAH. MD 1543, "Bericht über die Bahnmission (1. Jan. – 31. März 1912)", n.p.

But one may also assume that the Moravians attempted to do their best to become ‘proper colonisers’ themselves. Nevertheless, numerous Moravian missionaries lamented regularly about their mission school pupils leaving the catchment area of a missionary station in order to take up work at the *Central Railway*.

In fact, not all of the people leaving the catchment area of various Moravian missionary stations left for skilled work or because of their school education took better positions at the *Central Railway*. Many of them were simply *wasongaleli* – those who install the rail – and performed simpler, but physically very demanding tasks like shovelling soil at the construction sites. In any case, anybody leaving for work at the *Central Railway* was perceived as a loss for the Moravians. Just like the religion of Islam threatened to allegedly take away their flock, railway work and the life at the construction camps offered many temptations that contradicted Moravian ideals. Just as in the case regarding the *Bahnhofsmisionen* in Europe, the Moravians attempted to save people from modernity and ‘modern’ licentious vices such as drink, an itinerant lifestyle and a promiscuous sex life. On top of this, worldly strivings, such as earning money only for its own sake, were also regarded as dangerous. This was especially the case when earning money was combined with an itinerant lifestyle like labour migration to the *Central Railway*. Such a mobile lifestyle contradicted the Moravian ideal of sedentary families living and working together close to their homes. In contrast, labour migration had long been common in *Unyamwezi* where many men regularly left their homes for seasonal work as porters or plantation workers at the coast or to sell their products at trading hubs like Tabora. In this respect, taking up railway work or seeking the newly establishing sales markets along the railway line appears to have merely been an adaptation of the (pre-colonial) Wanyamwezi tradition of labour migration.²⁵² It is therefore not surprising that every missionary station reported about numerous, generally rather young, predominantly men but also women leaving the corresponding Moravian mission region for work at the railway. The official annual report of the Moravian Mission stated in 1912 for the region of *Unyamwezi*.²⁵³

252 Cf. UAH. MD 1541, “Vierteljahresbericht aus Urambo vom 1. IV. – 30.IV.1912”, “Vierteljahresbericht von Urambo. 1. Juli – 30. September 1912”. Cf. Gottberg. *Unyamwezi*, pp. 51–92. Cf. Koponen. *People and Production*, pp. 81–125, 360–391. Cf. Rockel, Stephen. *Carriers of Culture. Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century East Africa*. Portsmouth: 2006, pp. 229–236. Cf. Greiner, Andreas. ‘Permanente Krisen. Opposition, Kooperation und Konkurrenz ostafrikanischer Träger in europäischen Expeditionen’. *Der Träger. Zu einer ‘tragenden’ Figur der Kolonialgeschichte*. 181–204. Eds. Sonja Malzner and Anne D. Peiter. Bielefeld: 2018, pp. 181–187. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 58–72, 89–93.

253 Cf. UAH. MD 1537, “Jahresbericht Ipole des Jahres 1914”, pp. 4–5, “Vierteljahresbericht von Ipole [?] – 30. September 1915 (Abschrift)”, p. 2.

The year of 1912 means the beginning of a new era for the Mission's area. The Central Railway's construction sites had reached Tabora by February 26th. [. . .] Labour, i.e., the opportunity to earn more money than ever before, and to enjoy this money more than ever before, was the idea that captured a world which had been suddenly touched by civilisation. At once, everything was different than before. The quiet missionary stations were also touched by these waves of the new era. [. . .] The people appeared to have been captured by the only thought of making money. Many left the station secretly.²⁵⁴

In general, many reports of local missionary stations confirmed the statement of this official report published in 1912.²⁵⁵ Particularly skilled workers, who had studied at mission schools and/or knew how to read and write, were happily employed by *Holzmann* or the *OAEG*. In June 1913, Neu Langenburg's District Officer Stier informed the *OAEG* that "people who can read and write often come here and ask for proof of work opportunities as *Kerani* [here: office clerk] and the like" and enquired "whether there is any use for such applicants in the establishment there and to where they may be sent".²⁵⁶ In the course of the *Central Railway*'s construction, *Holzmann* increasingly replaced skilled Indians with educated East Africans – in the roles of "acolyte, telephone operator, office boy, track mail carrier, stoker, brakeman, track worker and assistant for the European craftsmen",²⁵⁷ as remembered by *Holzmann*'s building officer Ferdinand Grages. Thus, the *OAEG* Operation Director's answer to District Officer Stier in summer 1913 does not come as a surprise: although "Indians, Arabs and Baluchis [. . .]"²⁵⁸ also remained potential employees for the railways, the company was "ready to hire any native who can write. Above all, [they] lack[ed] natives who can read, write and speak German." Therefore, the *OAEG* asked "to send these people equipped with an identity card to our centre in Tabora"²⁵⁹ where they would receive employment immediately.

In this respect, it is striking that skilled workers were in such high demand that *Holzmann* even employed a seriously ill man like the abovementioned leper Petelo to meet their labour needs. Former mission school pupils of other denominations were quickly employed as skilled workers at the *Central Railway* as well.

²⁵⁴ BArch R1001/846, pp. 172a, p. 150.

²⁵⁵ Cf. UAH. MD 1530, "Jahresbericht 1908", n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1539, "Bericht von der Station Kitudunda 1. Juni-30. Sept. 1912", p. 7. Cf. UAH. MD 1539, "Jahresbericht der Station Kitunda 1912", pp. 1, 6.

²⁵⁶ RMN. GTF. R3. S8. Direktion. Behörden. Betriebsdirektion, "J. no. 2004/1913. Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Neu Langenburg".

²⁵⁷ Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. Grages, p. 7.

²⁵⁸ RMN. GTF. R3. S8, "an das Kaiserliche Gouvernement, 7.2.14, 2690/14 II.B.".

²⁵⁹ RMN. GTF. R3. S8, "An das Kaiserliche Bezirksamt Neu-Langenburg von Betriebs Direktor DOAEG, 14. v. Mts. 2004/13".

This applies not only to the Moravians' Catholic competitors in German East Africa, but to many other former mission pupils not only from within the German colony, but also from the neighbouring colonies. While many skilled workers employed at the *Central Railway* had been educated by the Benedictines in coastal Dar es Salaam or near to central Iringa (probably the missionary station in Tosa-maganga), many Moravian missions report about East African Catholic and Protestant converts who had come to the railway in the German colony as craftsmen from Uganda or as far as Livingstone in British Rhodesia.²⁶⁰ In this respect, the statement of *Holzmann's* building official Ferdinand Grages about the gradual replacement of Indian craftsmen working at the *Central Railway* by African employees has to be modified to a certain extent: not only German colonial (missionary) school education provided the skilled African workers needed at the *Central Railway*, but also skilled workers from the neighbouring colonies came to work at the railroad's construction sites in German East Africa. Moreover, the migration of (skilled) East African Christian converts and mission pupils was not limited to the German colony. Quite the contrary: some files report that Moravian mission pupils also left the Moravian missions in German East Africa for the Congo, Rhodesia or British Nyassaland.²⁶¹

Sometimes the Moravians were even themselves the beneficiaries of the African skilled workers' expertise despite their fear of 'railway modernity'. Having received European training, e.g. as craftsmen at the Moravian schools, the former mission pupils had not only enhanced their local knowledge by western school education, but they also broadened their skills in various kinds of construction at the labour camps of the *Central Railway*. To the surprise of the European Moravian missionaries, if coming back to the missionary stations, some former railway workers also applied their recently acquired expertise in the catchment areas of the mission:

The helpers of the outposts have built a dead straight road from the school to the missionary station through their pupils without any impulse on our behalf. [. . .] Our helpers of the outposts also proposed road construction. That is also why a straight road has emerged from here to Ipembe. People who had been acolytes at the railway pegged them.²⁶²

Unfortunately, the files do not provide the actual reasons why the Moravian helpers took the initiative themselves to construct roads in close cooperation with retur-

²⁶⁰ Cf. UAH. MD 1543, "Bericht über den Anfang der Bahnmission (Oktober bis Ende Dezember 1910)", p. 4, "Jahresbericht über die Bahnmission 1. Jan – 31. Dez. 1911", n.p. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, p. 48.

²⁶¹ Cf. UAH. MD 1544, "Bericht der Missionsstation Tabora 1. April – 30. Juni 1912", pp. 1–2.

²⁶² UAH. MD 1539, "Jahresbericht der Station Kitunda 1912", pp. 6–7.

nees from the railway. It is however certain that many East Africans in touch with the Moravians used their skill and contacts wisely to eke out advantages in the racist colonial environment and often led lives that did not necessarily fit the ideals of the Moravians.²⁶³ With the Moravians disapproving anybody who pursued worldly things such as striving for money as such, an excessive lifestyle that included feasts, alcohol consumption and extramarital sexuality, the labour camps at the *Central Railway* – sometimes peopled by several hundred men and women – were seen as a threat to the missionary work of the Moravians. In contrast to the Christian ideals, all these so-called immoral things were common parts of daily life in any larger labour camp in German East Africa not only at the *Central Railway*, but also at large scale plantations, for example. Needless to say, also most of the Moravian mission school pupils spent their wages earned at the railway construction sites according to their own wishes – and as a matter of fact these preferences often contradicted the commandments of the Moravians.²⁶⁴

In any case, working at the *Central Railway* was not necessarily a merely ‘voluntary’ affair for most of the Moravian missionary pupils or those people who lived in the catchment areas of a missionary station. Among other reasons, paying colonial taxes was a decisive incentive for many East Africans to prefer railway work over many other forms of employment.²⁶⁵ Attempting to meet the demanded amount of taxes as quickly as possible, East African ‘taxpayers’ tended to

263 For African strategies to cope with German colonial agitation and the introduction of the railways in general cf. Sunseri. “Dispersing”.

264 Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 136–164. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 42–72. Cf. UAH. MD 1544, “Jahresbericht der Missionsstation Tabora für 1912”, n.p. UAH. MD 1537, “Jahresbericht Ipole des Jahres 1914 (Abschrift)”, p. 3, “Vierteljahresbericht Ipole, 17. 6.[?] – 30. September 1915 (Abschrift)”, p. 2. Cf. UAH. MD 1539, “Bericht der Station Kidunda 1. Juni – 30. Sept. 1912”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1541, “Vierteljahresbericht aus Urambo vom 1.IV. – 30. VI.1912”, n.p., “Vierteljahresbericht von Urambo. 1. Juli – 30. September 1912”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1542, “Jahresbericht der Station Usoke 1913”, n.p., “Erster Vierteljahresbericht 1914 der Station Usoke”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1530. Jahresbericht der Provinz Sikonge 1906–1940, “Jahresbericht 1908”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1547–1533. Stationsbriefwechsel versch. Stationen. 3. Kitunda, “Bruder Jonathan and Bruder Hartmann. Mpapua Mai 30 1908”, n.p.

265 For a general assessment of why East Africans – especially Wanyamwezi – preferred railway work over other colonial employments like plantation work cf. Iliffe. *A Modern History*, pp. 137, 157–158, 161. Koponen denies the voluntary character of railway work, claiming that tax work was, in effect, also a form of forced labour cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 410–413. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 47–57. Also cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 165–193. Cf. Sunseri. “Dispersing”, pp. 558–583. An assessment of the issue by District Commissioner Sperling of Mpapua cf. BArch. R155F 81413 Pos., “Jahresbericht für das Bezirksamt Mpapua für das Berichtsjahr 1908/1909”, pp. 15–18. Cf. Rösser, Michael. *Forced Labour in ‘German East Africa’. Between ‘Colonial Amnesia’ and Structural Similarities to WWI in Europe*. Regensburg: 2015. (unpublished *Zulassungsarbeit* (thesis)), p. 41.

prefer those employers paying the highest salaries, of course. Consequently, the Moravian Mission as an employer often found itself in wage competition with *Holzmann* and repeatedly lost out in this race in various regions,²⁶⁶ but particularly in *Unyamwezi*, as an annual report of the mission post Urambo illustrates:

It is painful; it is discouraging! [. . .] [I thought] it was perhaps possible to keep the people if we were able to offer them work. As the rainy season had been so bad and as famine was to be feared, we provided for work. But what happened? Many went to the coast or to the railway all the same.²⁶⁷

Yet, sometimes also *Holzmann* themselves could not compete with better wages offered elsewhere for skilled labour. Records show that some left railway work for employment at an Indian's construction site, as the Indian employer paid the high wages of "1 Rp. a day".²⁶⁸ But the East African 'taxpayers' in the catchment area of the Moravian missionary stations did not limit their strategies to obtain higher wages to voting by foot. When employed at the missionary stations they also sought to meet their demands by withdrawing their labour, as an internal letter correspondence between the mission posts reveal: "They [the East African mission pupils] refused to come back to work after yesterday's wage payment. They held the view that they had received too little."²⁶⁹ Despite such disagreements, many East Africans living and working in the catchment area of the Moravian missionary stations also used the Protestant missions as strongholds to protect themselves against raids by the colonial administration and labour recruiters who quasi-kidnapped workers for various construction tasks at the *Central Railway*.

3.7.3 Moravian Missionary Stations and Labour Recruiters: Refuge or Training Ground?

[. . .] There is no legal limit to what the government can or cannot demand. Direct taxes don't mean much. But no black person [. . .] can be sure that he will not be called upon to

²⁶⁶ Cf. Arnold. *Steuer und Lohnarbeit*, pp. 181–210.

²⁶⁷ UAH. MD 1541, "A. Seibt Kilimani-Urambo, 14 January 1910. Annual Report of the mission station Urambo of the year 1909". Cf. UAH. MD 1541, "Vierteljahresbericht von Urambo 1. Juli – 30. September 1912", n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1557. Missionsdirektion Unyamwesi. Schriftwechsel mit dem Kaiserlichen Gouverneur und dem Kaiserlichen Bezirksamt in Tabora 1900–1927, "Löhnner an das Kaiserliche Bezirksamt Tabora, Sikonge, den 20. Juni 1910, J.N. 745", n.p., "Antwort des Bezirksamtes. V. Gross an Löbner. Tabora, den 22. Juni 1910", n.p.

²⁶⁸ UAH. MD 1532, "J.N. 79 Empf. 23. Nov. Bent. 14. Dez Z.z. Usoke, d. 14 Oktober 1911."

²⁶⁹ UAH. MD 1547–1533, "J.N.: 563. 27. Konferenz. 10. Dezember 1909", n.p.

do some drudgery for which he receives nothing, and this indirect tax makes everything insecure for them. Maybe they have to cut wood for the boma or build or carry loads. The boma sends to some king: Get us some 100 men [. . .]. The king then sends his men out and at night they surround some villages and lead the men away bound to their work. They don't go voluntarily as there is no pay for them, and when the king's men come during the day, they hide. But what should the king do, he has to deliver the people. Can one be surprised then if the men emigrate, no! [. . .] The government has protected the blacks against labour recruiters and planters, but has forgotten to protect [the people from] the government itself. [. . .] [W]hen the men are gone, they take the women. [. . .] We lack a law that gives a certain limit to what can be demanded by the government. [. . .] And in the same way, the government would have to pay its workers. [. . .]

Moravian Missionary Löbner to Mission Board. Usoke, 3 January 1910.²⁷⁰

Löbner characterises tax work by highlighting coercion, corporal punishments, (absent) colonial wages, the process of labour recruitment, colonial governance and the role of the chiefs. Further, he also illustrates African workers' agency, their means to resistance and their demands for better working conditions. All these aspects are highly relevant for the relationship between the Moravian missionary stations and the people living in their catchment areas. Like many other regions, the Moravian missionary stations and their surrounding areas were targets for both governmental *Askari* searching for tax workers and also for labour recruiters seeking future railway or plantation workers.²⁷¹ Despite the fact that especially skilled mission pupils appear to have actively sought employment at the railway construction sites, e.g. as craftsmen or office workers, a large number of people living in the surroundings of the Moravians sought and found refuge at the missionary posts when threatened by coercion to work. Whether those seeking refuge at the missions were predominantly unskilled and comparatively poor men and women, as Captain Styx for the military station of Iringa, suggests is not entirely clear, but plausible.²⁷² In any case, East African men and women used the Moravian mission posts to escape either coerced governmental or railway work.

Regarding unpaid and coerced work for the colonial government, the local population not only resisted by fleeing to hidden or distant places, but they also made use of the special status of the missions in the colonial society. Having ar-

270 UAH. MD 1532, "Löbner to Henning, Usoke d. 3 Januar 1910". *Boma* (Swahili) = lit. fortress/here: German colonial stronghold and/or centre of administration.

271 e.g. district reports and files of the region of Unyamwezi, Uhehe, Ungoni. BArch. R155F/81406 Neg. Jahresberichte 1908. Ssongea, Tabora, Mahenge. Cf. BArch. R155F/81414 Pos. Jahresberichte 1908. Mpapua, Morogoro, Muansa u. Shirati.

272 Cf. BArch. R155F/81414 Pos. Jahresberichte Iringa, p. 42.

rived decades before the colonial state, the missions originally obtained executive and judiciary functions on their estates. The German colonial administration only gradually assumed these legal competencies, declaring the East African territory as ‘*Schutzgebiet*’ in 1885 and taking further steps in the aftermath of the 1890 Anglo-German Agreement. However, the missions openly challenged the administration’s competencies at least until 1911, and if disagreements occurred, influential lobbies often backed the Protestant missions in the colonial metropole. If a Protestant mission originated from another country, Berlin often feared international conflicts with other European powers; if Catholic, the *Reich* feared the Vatican might intervene.²⁷³ As a result, the colonial administration had to respect a certain amount of missionary autonomy and the local East African populations understood how to use this missionary autonomy to their own advantage. As Löbner points out in his statement about labour recruitment, local African authorities acting on behalf of the German colonial administration – such as Chiefs, *Jumbes* or Sultans – were often pressured to deliver up their villagers to work for the colonial government. With the *Gouvernement* having declared services such as *boma* building or road construction to be ‘public works’ as early as 1896, it demanded this work without any pay.²⁷⁴ Naturally, the local population tended to evade any forced labour measures. According to the legislation of German East Africa, people residing on Moravian real estate – and that of other missions – were exempt from ‘public works’. It is therefore not surprising that many people targeted for governmental forced labour resisted and sought refuge at Moravian missionary stations:

It is a pleasing sign [. . .] that many people have recently requested to settle on our station ground. Once, the influx was so high that I had to cancel. The Sultan had great difficulty to keep his people for road construction, indeed; many had fled him. Many of those runaways asked for accommodation on our land. It was instantly clear what they wanted. According to all legislations, once on our land, they would be exempt from any work for the Sultan. When called to work, one was even so eager that he straight away demolished the house

273 Cf. Sippel. ‘Mission und Gewalt’, pp. 528–534.

274 For the Mwanza region cf. Itandala, Buludu. ‘African Response to German Colonialism in East Africa: The Case of Ussukuma, 1890–1918’. 3–29. *Ufahamu. A Journal of African Studies*, no. 20, 1. UCLA: 1 January 1992. Web. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7nh0x2p1> (21 November 2019), pp. 8–24. Cf. Oxford. Bodleian Library. Micr. Afr. 446. Service in German East Africa & Germany Foreign Office 1902–1933. Extracts Gunzert, pp. 41–45. Cf. Rösser, Michael. ‘Juristisches Seminar. Theodor von Gunzert’. *Koloniale-spuren-heidelberg.de*. Web. <http://www.koloniale-spuren-heidelberg.de/juristisches-seminar-theodor-gunzert/#1478787905103-829876ab-548d761b-259b8d7e-2b64> (5 December 2017). Regarding the Moravians cf. UAH. MD 1557, “Löbner an das Kaiserliche Bezirksamt Tabora. Sikonge, den 20. Juni 1910. J.N. 745”. Cf. BArch. R155F/81414 Pos., “Jahresbericht Iringa”, pp. 4–5.

which he had just built the year before and asked me to erect another on the mission ground. (By the way, this road construction was ordered by the Gouvernement; the Sultans had the order to provide for the people and to supervise the work.)²⁷⁵

But the local populations surrounding the Moravian missionary posts could not only avoid coerced governmental work by using the relative autonomy of the missions; occasionally, the mission also offered a place of retreat when labour recruiters targeting potential workers for the *Central Railway* raided the areas.²⁷⁶ Sometimes even the protection of the Moravians did not deter unscrupulous labour recruiters, as the Moravian Hartmann in Kitunda stated: “Once a Greek even took the people [. . .] by force out of their villages on the mission ground at night. We resisted and mostly set the people free. Back then, mistreatments occurred every day.”²⁷⁷ As it was difficult for labour recruiters to exert violence on potential workers in the Moravian sphere of influence, they increasingly replaced the stick by the carrot. Instead of physical coercion, they thus attempted to win the potential workers’ hearts by extravagant promises, extra payments, *pombe* evenings and feasts including the provision of concubines on the eve of departure to the railway construction sites.²⁷⁸ In fact, although many East African men and women fled to Moravian missionary stations to evade any form of coerced labour, it is far too simple to regard the Moravian missionary posts as merely places of refuge for the local African population. Moreover, the missionaries themselves may not only be regarded as the advocates or protectors of the local population against (violent) labour recruiters *per se*. As with most aspects regarding the global history of labour, the case of the Moravians and their relationship to labour recruiters and potential workers was much more complex.

275 UAH. MD 1541, “Vierteljahresbericht von Urambo vom 1. Juli – 30. September 1912”, n.p. For a governmental confirmation of the legislations cf. UAH. MD 1557, “Kaiserliches Bezirksamt und Löbner. J. No. 1264. Tabora, den 9. Juli 1908”.

276 Occasionally, the Moravians also sued violent labour recruiters. Cf. UAH. MD 1542, “Vierteljahresbericht von Usoke Januar – März 1910”, n.p. Cf. UAH MD 1532, “Löbner an Henning. J.N. 533. Usoke, 16. März 1910”, pp. 3–4. Cf. UAH. MD 1557, “Kaiserliches Bezirksamt an Löbner. J. no. 1264. Tabora, den 9. Juli 1908”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1530. Jahresberichte der Provinz Sikonge 1906–1940, “Jahresbereicht 1908”, n.p.

277 UAH. MD 1547–1533, “Hartmann an Löbner. J.N. 650. Kitunda-Kiwere, d. 21.IV.10.”, n.p. There were even incidents when missionaries threatened labour recruiters or chiefs by the use of firearms. Cf. UAH. MD 1532, “J.N. 658 Empf. 24.VI.10 Beant. 27.VII.10. Sikonge, 5. Mai 1910”.

278 Cf. UAH. MD 1547–1533, “Hartmann an Löbner. J.n. 650. Kitunda-Kiwere, d. 21.IV.10.”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1540. Missionsdirektion Unyamwesi/Tansania. Stationsberichte 4. Sikonge. 1909–1917, “Jahresbericht von Sikonge-Ngulu 1913”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1547–1533, “Hartmann an Henning. J. N. 650. Kitunda-Kiwere, d. 21.IV.10”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1542, “Bericht der Station Usoke vom Juli bis Sept. 1913”, n.p.

Although generally regarded as a nuisance by the missionaries, at times the Moravians tolerated the presence of labour recruiters on their grounds and sometimes also cooperated with them when they visited their posts, like in the case of Usoke in 1912: “We had a lot of guests recently. They were mostly engineers, who are working at the railway. [. . .] A Greek, I have forgotten his name, was also [?] welcomed [?].”²⁷⁹ One Moravian missionary, like a certain Brother Richter, was even employed directly by *Holzmann* and once used his position to support the Moravians by delivering porters needed for the railway mission.²⁸⁰ Moreover, the sources report about former East African mission school pupils who became labour recruiters themselves and even resided on the territory of the Moravians in Urambo: “Labour recruiters have plied their dreadful trade here again, unfortunately. Two had been trained here or rather in Kitunda, a certain Makweja and a certain Julemo. And the first type resides on our property. Again, many have fallen victim to their pretentions [and left for work at the *Central Railway*].”²⁸¹ Whether ‘victims of their pretentions’ or of overt physical violence, or even in the case of voluntary labour migration to the *Central Railway*, Africans still decisively shaped their workplaces in the colonial environment – always trying to accomplish their own preferences.

3.8 Labour and Everyday Life at the *Central Railway’s* Construction Sites

3.8.1 The Colonial Order of a Construction Camp

Taking a closer look on the construction of the *Central Railway*, it must be stressed that there was no such thing as one single construction site. In fact, there were several construction sites. As up to 200 km of track were at times simultaneously under construction, many construction camps were scattered along the line. Their populations varied from a few hundred to 5,000. Except for the camps of the senior engineers and civil servants – who lived in the central building or traffic hubs like Tabora and therefore had their own casino, hospital and other leisure facilities – ordinary engineers like the abovementioned Clement Gillman

²⁷⁹ Cf. UAH. MD 1547–1533, “Hartmann and Henning. J.N. 650. Kitunda-Kiwere, d. 21.IV.10”, n.p. UAH. MD 1542, “Vierteljahresbericht der Sation Usoke II. Quartal 1912”, n.p.

²⁸⁰ Cf. UAH. MD 1543, “Bericht über den Anfang der Bahnmission (Oktober bis Ende Dezember 1910)”, p. 2.

²⁸¹ UAH. MD 1541, “Vierteljahresbericht von Urambo vom 1. Januar – 31. März 1910.”, n.p. Cf. UAH. MD 1544, “Bericht der Missionsstation Tabora vom 9. Mai bis 30. Sept. 1912”, n.p.

or sub-contractors ranking below lived a rather lonely camp life as far as interaction with other Europeans was concerned. They established themselves close to their workers, living in temporary accommodation like tents or mud houses and were responsible for the construction of an individual railroad section, the latter being ca. ten km long.²⁸² Despite the comparatively small size of each construction camp, their topography appears to have resembled that of larger colonial settlements: at least as long as Clement Gillman's sketches and descriptions of his construction camp can be regarded as representative examples. According to the ideal image of all European colonial powers, any colonial settlement should reflect the prevailing racial hierarchy in the colony: the *white* European colonisers would not only occupy the most privileged spots, but they would also move into the most prestigious houses made of the most prestigious construction materials, ideally stone. The second rank areas and housing were reserved for Arabs, Indians or Eurasians whereas the local African population were allotted the outskirts of any colonial settlement and intended to live in simple mud or grass houses.²⁸³ Although a railway engineer's life away on a job lacked the luxuries of major colonial cities, the detailed sketches and descriptions in Clement Gillman's diary about his first construction camps, at railway km thirty-nine and km forty-five, illustrate that the Anglo-German engineer did indeed attempt to reflect the colonial hierarchy in his small temporary settlements too. Whether Gillman did this consciously or unconsciously is not clear as the engineer gives no explicit information about this in his diary. Remarkably, the racial allotment of his construction camp erected in 1905 coincides with his research on Dar es Salaam's racial topography during the British colonial period in 1945.²⁸⁴ Moreover, Gillman's construction camp architecture contributes to a better understanding of everyday life at a construction camp of the *Central Railway*.

Having received an order by his *Holzmann* superiors to move from km thirty-nine forward to km forty-five early in the morning on 9 November 1905, Gillman spotted a suitable place for his new camp immediately. While six of his workmen were left at this very spot to erect the first storage sheds needed, Gillman himself went the few kilometres back to the railhead in order to fetch construction material for the railway, and his future camp, of course. Finally arriving at km forty-

282 Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 42–43. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 4–6, 8–10.

283 Cf. Müllendorff. *Ost-Afrika*, pp. 77–88. Cf. Gillman Diaries, Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1 no. II, pp. 76–79. Cf. Seifert, Annika and Moon, Karen (Eds.). *Dar es Salaam. A History of Urban Space and Architecture*. DARCH, Dar Centre for Architectural Heritage. Dar es Salaam: 2017, pp. 27–74. Cf. Boonen and Lagate. 'A City', pp. 51–69. Cf. Stoyke. 'Suche'. For segregation when on train or travel cf. Beese. *Experten*, pp. 207–222.

284 Cf. Gillman. 'Dar es Salaam', pp. 15–19.

five, with 200 men who had physically carried all this material, the first task for his African workmen was to clear the place from bush to have an open space of twenty-five metre around what would be the engineer's hut in the very middle of the camp. This privileged position in the middle of the camp was further enhanced by a mango tree right next to Gillman's hut, protecting him from the tropical sun. In his direct neighbourhood were settled his personal servants, who would make his camp life agreeable: the *boys'* hut and the kitchen as well as provisions like a henhouse or a mule stable were only a few metres away from the engineer's domicile and arranged parallelly to his building. Shortly after the initial erection of the camp, the European sphere was enhanced by an extra bathing hut and a W.C. for the engineer. Moreover, an *Askari* who served primarily for Gillman's personal protection resided close to the engineer whenever the latter felt his authority threatened. In addition, the *Askari* executed corporal punishments imposed on workers and further functioned as deterrence for the entire workforce against slackening the reins of work discipline. If no *Askari* was present, Gillman dealt out corporal punishments himself. A small path led away from

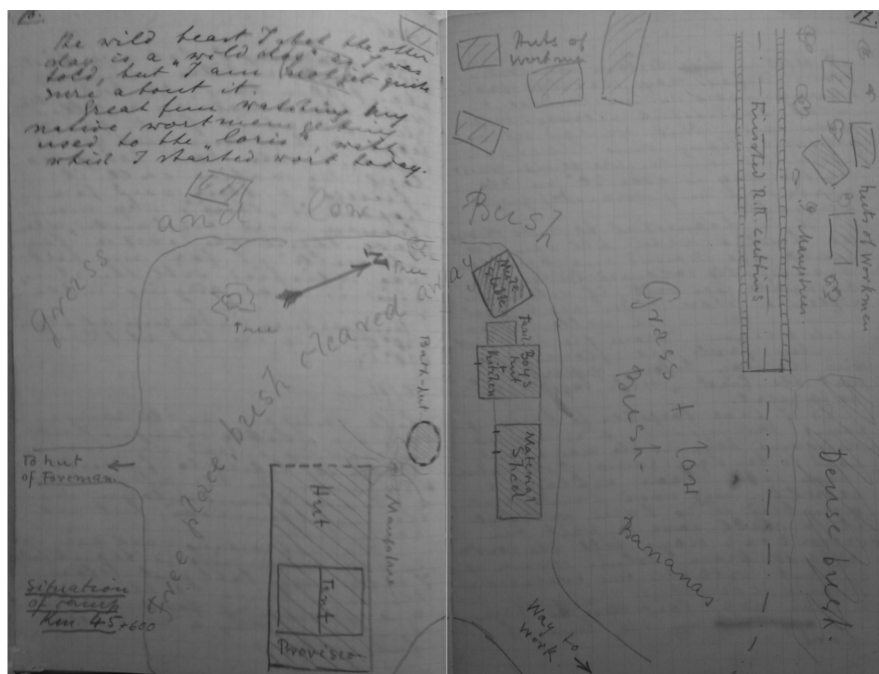


Figure 3: Gillman's sketch of his construction camp at km 45, Nov. 1905.

Source: Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Gillman Diaries, MSS. Afr. S. 1175/ 1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 16–17.



Figure 4: English: “Grass huts of railway workers, no. 458”.

Source: BBWA U5/03/17, Nr. 181, Bildarchiv der Philipp Holzmann AG / Hauptverband der Deutschen Bauindustrie e.V. im Berlin-Brandenburgischen Wirtschaftsarchiv.

Gillman’s dwelling and went southwards to “the hut of [the] foreman”, an Italian, who appears to have had a colleague from Montenegro living nearby.²⁸⁵ This is where the sphere for Europeans-only ended, and another began.

The cleared rectangular enclave of symmetrically arranged simple buildings was surrounded by banana plants and “grass and low bush”, which separated the European area from the accommodations for the ca. 200 African workers. Erected rather haphazardly compared to the European camp area, the latter lived in simple grass huts right next to the current construction works of “finished R[ail] R[oad] cuttings”, “mango trees” as well as “dense bush”. Finally, Gillman’s sketch only reports of African “workmen” (my italics), not mentioning the presence of any (African) women.²⁸⁶ In analogy to the ‘double geography’ of Gillman’s diary writing and the research results about the topography of colonial towns, the arrangement of Gillman’s construction camp at the *Central Railway* reflected the colonisers’ needs to structure a colonial territory according to racial hierarchies intended for

²⁸⁵ Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 6–17, 24–25, 52–53, 62–64, 70.

²⁸⁶ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 14–17, cf. pp. 6–17, 52–53, 62–64, 70.

the entire society of German East Africa. *White*, middle-class and Middle Europeans held the privileged position centring the entire construction camp. In their direct environment were private servants doing the care work necessary for the Europeans' daily needs and well-being and therefore the sustenance of their engineering work. Southern Europeans, like Gillman's Italian foreman, occupied the next best position in the camp, but still apart from *white* colonial elites characterising them as white subalterns. Separated from this symmetrically ordered European sphere by the extensions of wild nature and close to the 'wild and uncivilised' "dense bush" lived the African workers. In this respect, the position of their housing in the construction camp reflected the colonisers' view of Africans as being an 'uncivilised' and 'wild' people. Moreover, with the African workmen living right next to the actual construction site of the railway, their housing position further reflects which role the colonisers intended to assign the colonised African population. The Africans were merely regarded and valued as workers whose major purpose was to make the colonial endeavour profitable for the German colonisers.²⁸⁷

Working at the *Central Railway* was similarly intended to follow the ideal typical image of 'modern' work, which followed the principles of an industrialised and efficient work ethos. Germans writing and publishing about these construction sites generally emphasised their 'proper' organisation and regulation, of both housing and labour. When engineers like Gillman had completed the necessary paper and survey work, the track was subsequently pegged and ready for the preparatory works preceding actual construction. Ferdinand Grages describes works like those underway at the time when Gillman sketched the scene of his construction camp: "I remember clearly [. . .] how [. . .] the future track was driven in its entire width through steppe, bushes, and forests and how grass, bushes and forests were burnt down, trunks cut down and how the trunks' roots were removed through cauterisation." Afterwards, a big variety of construction work had to be done. As soon as the work train had reached the railhead, the workers had to carry the construction material to its destination first before other tasks followed:

I [remember], how the work trains unloaded at the railhead, how the sleepers were laid on the planum and how the rails were fixed and adjusted there. I [remember] how the workers undid the soil with their pickaxes, shovelled it into raffia baskets, carried it to the installation location on their shoulders, dumped it on the dams and hammered it on them if necessary. [. . .] At rocky sections, I [remember] how the workers crush stone, how they carry it to the planum later in order to plug the track. [. . .] Further, I [remember] how [they] erected [. . .] scaffolds for bridges and passages and how the workers dragged over stones, concrete,

287 Cf. Methner. *Unter drei*, pp. 338–339.

sand and water; I [remember] how the masonry grew steadily and how iron beams were installed and set in concrete.²⁸⁸

As detailed as Grages' picture-book description of one of the *Central Railway's* construction sites might appear at first glance, it not only excludes numerous details of the construction work, but also the genuine perspective of the African workers and the overall circumstances of living and working at the *Central Railway's* construction sites in German East Africa. These are examined in the following section.

3.8.2 Labour and Coercion at the Construction Sites

[My father] said, he worked with them [the Germans] when they were laying the central train coming to Mwanza here. He worked with them, but it was only two weeks. [. . .] He carried all these things [. . .]. He carried the iron bars. He said it was a very strong work. [. . .] The German did not want to have some time to smoke. There was no things like that. [. . .] He was working for little payment. You know how they were doing, they were coming and they were taking people without asking them. The very young and strong people. They were taken to work. [. . .] When it was work, it was time for work. [. . .]. They were forced. The chief can gather some strong persons [. . .]. During those time the Chief was like a God. If you were caught by the Chief you cannot resist. No. You go. So, the German came to take them from the Chief. [. . .] So, they were going without knowing where they are going to. [. . .] There were other people who tried to escape and run away. When they were caught, they were given strokes. This was the punishment. Twenty strokes and then you do not escape again and go away.²⁸⁹

Reverend John*. Mwanza, 8 September 2016.

In 2016, John*, an Anglican Reverend and Tanzanian resident born in 1944, recalled the memories of his father, who worked at the *Central Railway's* extension to Ruanda at the end of the German colonial period. Although oral history sources have various shortcomings and John*'s utterances are 'second-hand' information only, they touch upon significant aspects of labour at the *Central Railway's* construction site. John* not only mentions the various types of colonial labour and their duration, but also illustrates coercion, corporal punishments, (low) colonial wages, the process of labour recruitment, colonial governance and the role of the chiefs. Further, he also illustrates African workers' agency, their means of resis-

²⁸⁸ Grages, Ferdinand. 'Holzmann in Afrika'. *Philipp Holzmann Aktiengesellschaft im Wandel von Hundert Jahren. 1849–1949*. 285–298. Ed. Hans Meyer-Heinrich. Frankfurt o.M.: 1949, p. 296.

²⁸⁹ Interview with Reverend John*. Mwanza: 08/09/16, 1:14:20 – 1:20:41. * = name changed due to privacy reasons.

tance and their demands for better working conditions. Of course, labour was the most important aspect which structured the daily experience of the workers. Although Clement Gillman's sketch of a labour camp and Ferdinand Grages' memories quoted in the previous section give an initial idea about how a construction camp might have looked, and which types of work were performed there, they are nevertheless only the genuine perspectives of two individual colonisers and reflect their ideal typical image of what daily life at a *Central Railway's* construction camp should look like. Investigating further on the issue, it becomes clear that these perspectives veil as many aspects as they initially reveal.

Although Grages mentions many tasks of skilled construction work, for instance, the special issue of skilled labour and the important role of Indian and African craftsmen do not appear clearly in his documents. Gillman's sketch does similarly neither feature craftsmen nor their presence at the construction camp. Recalling the many difficulties of obtaining enough craftsmen through either 'coolie recruitment' from China, indentured labour and labour migration of Indian craftsmen and the employment of skilled East African Moravian mission pupils helps elucidate the diversified and many facets of labour at the *Central Railway's* construction camp. Although Gillman does not include Indian craftsmen in his construction camp sketch, he recorded their presence and importance as skilled workers already in the first months of his work in East Africa:

I have now got several Indian carpenters, who work on daily wages + I am very satisfied with them. They are intelligent + diligent + know their trade + are altogether different from those lazy fellows I had before + still have who have got their contract with monthly wages, last certainly made a very big mistake. These daily workmen get also 3 Rps. per day but their work is worth that money.²⁹⁰

These wage levels for skilled Indian labour reported by Gillman correspond to the wage levels generally of craftsmen at the *Central Railway*. They fluctuated between 1.5 and 2.5 rupees per day for East African *fundis* (masters) and 2.5 to 4.5 Rupees a day for Indian, Banian and Goanese craftsmen.²⁹¹

Apart from skilled labour, simpler forms of manual labour such as shovelling soil, carrying and fixing iron bars or sleepers as well as cutting and carrying rocks were the most common types of work. As already illustrated in the chapter

²⁹⁰ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. II., p. 66. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 41.

²⁹¹ Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 66.

about the Moravian Mission's connection to railway construction, despite voluntary migration to the railway construction site of predominantly skilled workers, many East Africans rejected working at the railway and sought refuge at the Moravian missionary stations to escape labour recruiters, for example. As far as the Moravian files could tell, those rejecting labour at the railway were generally those who had to perform the simple, unskilled, repetitive, and physically demanding construction tasks. The question in-how-far these comparatively unskilled railway workers were subject to coercion is as old as the historiography investigating on the issue and remains significant today.²⁹²

Whereas studies mostly originating from the 1970s had already stressed African preference for railway work over plantation labour due to higher wages, better living conditions and less supervision,²⁹³ especially Thaddeus Sunseri and Reichart-Burikukiye confirmed these early findings decades later, when investigating the Moravian files and therefore also especially for the region of *Unyamwezi* where the railway was constructed between 1908 and 1912. As seasonal male absence from home had been integral to the economy of the Wanyamwezi since pre-colonial times because they used to work as caravan porters, railway labour was regarded as an extension of their former caravan wage labour occupation. Moreover, Sunseri and Reichart-Burikukuye are convinced that coercion to take up labour at the railway construction was an almost negligible aspect as labour conditions would have improved significantly from 1908 onwards.²⁹⁴ In stark contrast, Koponen denies the voluntary character of railway work. He is convinced of a certain amount of force being prevalent throughout the entire building process. The only difference from other cases was that colonial officials and the construction companies in German East Africa refrained from any measures that would result in another anti-colonial war, such as the Maji Maji War, after 1908.²⁹⁵ Taking a closer look at the source material used by the most important historians – John Iliffe, Rainer Tetzlaff, Thaddeus Sunseri, and Juhani Koponen – reveals an ambiguous picture. Whereas the studies of the 1970s primarily examine documents produced between 1908 and 1910, Koponen quotes sources originating between 1911 and 1914. Hence, a sufficient labour supply in the immediate years after the Maji Maji War might have been the

292 Cf. Cooper. 'The Labour Question', pp. 624–625. Cf. Fall, Babacar and Roberts, Richard L. 'Forced Labour'. *General Labour History of Africa. Workers, Employers and Governments, 20th–21st Centuries*. 77–118. Eds. Stefano Bellucci and Andreas Eckert. Exeter: 2019, pp. 77–118.

293 Cf. Iliffe. *A Modern History*, pp. 157–185, p. 161. Cf. Tetzlaff. *Koloniale Entwicklung*, pp. 88–89.

294 Cf. Sunseri. 'Labour Migration', pp. 581–586, 597–598. Cf. Sunseri. "Dispersing", pp. 558–565. Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 167–171. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 48–61. Cf. Rockel. *Carriers of Culture*.

295 Cf. Koponen. *Development*, pp. 410–413.

result of the widespread famine, induced by colonial ‘scorched-earth’ policies during and after battles.²⁹⁶ People deprived of food might have readily taken up colonial employment just for the sake of survival. Moreover, with every kilometre, the *Central Railway* stirred colonial economic activity, which had experienced a significant slump in the beginning of formal colonial rule, and therefore also increased the labour demand for all working places in the colony (cf. Sections 5.2 and 5.3).²⁹⁷ Hence, it might be the case that forced labour policies were more intense between 1911 and 1914 than between 1908 and 1910, because of increased competition for African labour when the economy experienced an upturn. This interpretation runs counter to Sunseri’s and Reichart-Burikukiye’s argument that coercion to work was negligible in the later years of railway construction. But Sunseri might be too optimistic in stating that after 1908 working conditions had improved so much that forcible measures appear to have been an insignificant aspect.²⁹⁸ Files held in both the Tanzanian National Archives and the Railway Museum Nairobi, which were not consulted in the aforementioned studies, confirm this suggestion. For example, in February 1909, *Holzmann’s* construction director Grages pressured the Governor:

According to a telegraphic report from our preparatory work department in Mpapua, the work of the study brigades is being hampered by a severe shortage of workers, as the Wagogo have so far only been able to work with difficulty and in very insufficient numbers. The intervention of the district office would probably be able to remedy this situation without difficulty. We therefore take the liberty of suggesting to Your Excellency that the Mpapua district office should intervene in a suitable manner with the Wagogos in order to induce them to accept work in sufficient numbers.²⁹⁹

Governor Rechenberg complied with *Holzmann’s* request, issuing a telegram to the district office only shortly after the request of the construction company recommending to use especially defaulting taxpayers for the task and simultaneously exert pressure on the local Wagogo population, but to refrain from any

²⁹⁶ Cf. Wimmelbücker, Ludger. ‘Verbrannte Erde. Zu den Bevölkerungsverlusten als Folge des Maji-Maji Krieges’. *Der Maji-Maji Krieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika. 1905–1907*. 87–99. Eds. Felicitas Becker and Jigal Beez. Berlin: 2005, pp. 87–97. Cf. Becker, Felicitas. ‘Sudden Disaster and Slow Change: Maji-Maji and the Long-Term History of Southeast Tanzania’. *Maji Maji. Lifting the Fog of War*. 295–322. Eds. James Giblin and Jamie Monson. Leiden: 2010, pp. 295–305.

²⁹⁷ Cf. Tetzlaff. *Koloniale Entwicklung*, pp. 84–92, 93–100, 176, 191, 293.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 167–171. I have presented the gist of this argument already in my *Zulassungsarbeit* (thesis). Cf. Rösser. *Forced Labour*, pp. 41–44.

²⁹⁹ TNA. G17/66. Arbeiterverhältnisse der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn Morogoro-Tabora. 1909–1911, ‘Abschrift! Phlipp Holzmann & Co. Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung Bahnbau Morogoro-Tabora Daressalam, den 9. February 1909”. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 50–52.

measures that could result in an militant uprising.³⁰⁰ The local track supervisor in Kikombo confirmed the content of this correspondence, explaining to his superior railway commissioner only a few days later: "It is self-evident that the authorities must continue to support the extensive construction works of the railway by all means except direct coercion. But it must be said that this has always been done by the local [district office] as a proactive measure [. . .]."³⁰¹ This support comprised not only verbal pressure on the local population in general, and on defaulting taxpayers who had to work around one month at the railway in particular, but it also meant that the district office equipped *Holzmann* engineers like Mr Lodes with a number of armed *Askaris*. With military support, representatives of the construction company went to several villages and demanded workers. The construction supervisor also commented that this was not a singular event as it was obvious that this procedure necessitated a certain degree of force. Between 1909 and 1910, representatives of the construction company attempted to coerce the local population living near the newly built track to construction work. First and foremost, they targeted the Wagogo, whose homeland the railroad had started to cross. Looking for a workforce that lived in the direct neighbourhood of the construction sites saved *Holzmann* a good deal of money because they could avoid the per capita fee for workers recruited from more distant places. Although some of the *Holzmann* engineers tended to lack any moderation when making use of their military support provided by the district office, the track supervisors initially refrained from active intervention and decided to remain "neutral on the issue", only giving "off duty" reports of violence. One supervisor "confidentially" took the view that the "matter shall therefore only be dealt with here in a reporting manner in order to keep the railway commissioner informed of all events [. . .]."³⁰² In other words, all official bodies were well aware that coercion and physical violence occurred to lower construction costs when constructing the railway in the central region of *Ugogo*. Additionally, all governmental bodies tolerated these measures as long as no new war against German colonial rule was provoked. Several reports by construction supervisors and the railway commissioner complained that, especially, the Wagogo resented railway work and often deserted. Even though there was famine in March 1910, "nevertheless, the Wagogo [were]

³⁰⁰ Cf. TNA. G17/66, "Gouverneur Rechenberg an Bezirksamt Mpapua 9/7 via telegram".

³⁰¹ TNA. G17/66, "Bauaufsicht an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. Kikombo, 16.02.09", p. 74.

³⁰² TNA. G17/66, "Bauaufsicht an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. Kikombo, 16.02.09", p. 75, cf. pp. 69–75. Regarding the duration of tax labour cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 50–52.

hardly to be persuaded to do wage labour” and they kept on running away from the workplace, at least until 1912.³⁰³

Yet, coercion did not only target the Wagogo and these practices did not occur only in 1909 but endured at least until 1913. When reconstructing the default home line between Dar es Salaam and Morogoro between 1912 and 1913, the terminology regarding forced labour practices used by *Holzmann*, the *Gouverneur* and the railway commissioner was strikingly similar. Again, equipped with armed *Askari* to enforce labour recruitment, Governor Schnee urged the District Officers of Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo and Morogoro:

The railway commissioner of the Central Railway and the chief engineer of the Dar es Salaam-Morogoro railway line have made appearances here to support the recruitment of workers as far as possible. As the early completion of the reconstruction is in the interest of the administration, I request the district office to occasionally draw the attention of the people there to this work.³⁰⁴

Despite the resulting efforts of the district offices, labour scarcity prevailed for several more months and *Holzmann* complained accordingly. When the district office of Bagamoyo finally sent a total number of 900 men, 600 for railway construction work proper, and 300 more for tree cutting, the construction company remained unsatisfied. Many workers had fled the workforce immediately, leaving *Holzmann* with only 350 workers, whereas at least 700 were needed. Denying any responsibility for the escape of the men and women, and blaming the supplying district office for insufficient labour supply, *Holzmann* warned that now, devoid of sufficient workers, railway construction would become slower. They further stressed that as the construction company now had to seek for workers themselves, the overall costs for construction would increase. Bagamoyo's district office rejected the allegations and blamed *Holzmann* for the workers' escape. The men and women had fled the workplace as on-site conditions had been unbearable: of the 600 men, forty-four had died and seventy-six had returned home seriously ill. No wonder the workers fled: inadequate food as well as poor working

303 TNA. G17/63, “J. no. 436. Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten an der Zentralbahn für März 1910. VI. Verpflegung und Lohnverhältnisse”, cf. “VIII Personal und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/64, “Monatsbericht über den Stand der Arbeiten an der Zentralbahn Ende April 1910. XIII. Personal und Arbeiterverhältnisse”. Cf. TNA. G17/118, “Eisenbahn-Bautätigkeit Mittellandbahn”, p. 4. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 50–52.

304 RMN. GTF. R1. S10, “Abschrift J. no. 25526. Schnee an Bez. Amt Daressalam, Bagamoyo, Morogoro. Daressalam, 12. Nov. 1912”, cf. “J. no. 20461. X. Auf J. no. 2281. I. E. vom 21.11.10.”, “Telegram Buchner an Eisenbahnkommissar. Eisenbahnkommissar Eing. 25.1.11. J. no. 127.”, “J. no. 309. Konzept. Drslm, 19. Oktober 12. An den Herrn Gouverneur in Daressalam.”, “DOAEG an Eisenbahnkommissar Molfenter. Tabora, 19. February 1913”.

and housing conditions were causing the spread of lethal diseases. Moreover, the employer would have treated the workers ruthlessly, in general, and in case of illness, even worse. In addition, pieceworkers were urged to work eleven hours a day and *Holzmann's* sub-contractors, Giese and Haase, had withheld the workers' wages. Of course, both the *OAEG* and *Holzmann* denied the allegations. In the end, all parties involved were left unsatisfied and *Holzmann* finally claimed to have recruited enough workers themselves by November 1913, cancelling their request for workers provided by the colonial administration.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, complaints about improper treatment of the workers persisted beyond the construction of the *Central Railway* proper. When the initial works of the *Ruanda Railway*, intended to connect *Central Railway's* Tabora with the most northern part of the colony, were started by *Holzmann* in 1914, reports about unruly sub-contractors and abuses of the workers continued. Once again, Governor Schnee insisted on paragraph seven of the construction contract that demanded decent food and lodging for the workers and a closer supervision of the sub-contractors to meet the colonial labour laws. Such incidents finally only ceased with the combat operations of WWI in German East Africa; by 1916, all railway construction work on behalf of German colonialism ended in East Africa.³⁰⁶

Having reassessed the files of the Moravians in the previous section, and examining sources not consulted by other historians, a multifaceted picture emerges. First of all, whether work was skilled or not had significant influence on the degree of violence and coercion exerted on the workers. Moravian missionary pupils, equipped with education and skills, tended to work rather voluntarily as craftsmen or employees at the *Central Railway* and some former mission pupils even became labour recruiters themselves. At the same time, many of those targeted as simple manual workers for the railway or similar governmental building tasks, rejected

³⁰⁵ Cf. RMN. GTF. R1. S10., "J. no. 957. Haase an Eisenbahnkommissar. Mbaruku, 13. April 13", "An den Herrn Gouverneur in Daressalam. Arbeiterverhältnisse beim Umbau der Stammstrecke. 19. Juni 1913.", "Holzmann an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar der Tanganyikabahn. Daressalam, den 21. September 1913", "Abschrift. Philipp Holzmann & Cie. Das Bezirksamt drahtete uns am 23. Juli auf Anfrage", "Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Bagamoyo an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar der Tanganyikabahn. Bagamoyo, den 4. Oktober 1913", "Ostafrikanische Eisenbahngesellschaft an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. 15. Oktober 1913.", "Philipp Holzmann an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. Zu J. no. 1797. Daressalam, 17. Oktober 1913", "Kaiserlicher Bezirksamtmann gez. Eggebrecht An die Firma Philipp Holzmann. Daressalam, den 16. Oktober", "Holzmann an den Herrn Eisenbahnkommissar. Daressalam, den 15. November 1913". Cf. RMN. R3. S5. 154. [no title], "Arbeitermangel bei Umbau von Stammstrecke". Cf. RMN. GTF. R4. S3. 98. Gouvernementskrankenhaus, Institut für Seuchenbekämpfung, Sewa Haji Hospital, Sanitätsdienststellen, Behörden, "Abschrift. J. no. 5594. Daressalam, den 28. September 1913".

³⁰⁶ Cf. TNA. G17/153. Arbeiterverhältnisse der Ruanda-Eisenbahn. 1914.

any governmental work and sought refuge at Moravian missionary stations. The large-scale investigations by the colonial authorities about living and working conditions at the camps of the Greek and other European sub-contractors show that living and working conditions indeed left a lot to be desired, even until the very end of construction work.

Summing up, neither any source material nor various secondary literature on the issue provide for an unambiguous picture of forced and coerced labour at the railway's construction sites, especially regarding *when* coercion was most prevalent. As generally the case for any colonial labour relationship, it seems that the degree of coercion oscillated between the two poles of overt physical violence and more indirect forms of coercion such as food scarcity or the imposition of taxes, or 'reminders' and 'urgings' by the district offices. In any case, the issue seems to be best addressed differently. The question is not whether coercion was imposed on the African workforce. Coercion and physical violence were certainly integral to any labour relationship at the *Central Railway's* construction sites. But much more important than this fact is the question whether each type of worker was subjected to the same degree of violence. Skilled workers who had been Moravian missionary pupils, for example appear to have been less subject to coercion and physical violence, and even voluntarily took up work with *Holzmann*. The same holds true for some unskilled workers of *Unyamwesi* who left the catchment areas of the Moravian Mission somewhat voluntarily for either better wages or new experience. On the other hand, many people especially in *Ugogo*, *Bagamoyo* and in *Unyamwesi*, rejected work at the railway and, therefore, sought either refuge at the missionary stations, or fled to more distant places or deserted the worksite itself. Hence, it appears that in very general terms, the less skilled the workers were, the more they were subjected to coercion. In turn, the more skilled a worker was, the less force he or she faced. Whether skilled or unskilled, recruited voluntarily or by force, the African workers' agency to influence daily living and working conditions in the construction camps endured. This holds true also for female workers, who are addressed in the section following the next.

3.8.3 Labour and Everyday Life at the Construction Camps

Labour and work expectations as well as regulations were certainly integral to everyday life at any construction camp of the *Central Railway*. Yet, what regulated any labour at the *Central Railway* most was nature. First of all, during the rainy season, hardly any work was done in any construction camp. Most of the

construction works were thus done during the dry season.³⁰⁷ Secondly, given the natural light conditions of East Africa and the absence of electricity at the construction sites, an ordinary day of work could theoretically last from sunrise to sunset, that is from ca. six a.m. to six p.m. On average, each worker was occupied with one specific task for ten hours a day. In fact, there was generally no obligation to fulfil a fixed amount of ten hours work daily. At least after 1908, there was rather a system of flexitime imposed that demanded a certain amount of piecework to be met by an individual worker:

Regarding the earth works the employer expected the daily piecework performance of a normally hard-working and ordinary skilled worker working for ca. 10 h; depending on the qualities of the soil that was ca. 1 cubic metre of earth movement. You were able to observe that out of fifty workers, ca. 6 fulfilled their workload at around 11 a.m., ca. 20 at around 2 p.m., 16 around 3 p.m. and the rest at around 4 p.m. A worker only seldomly met the workload of two days on one single day; but you could regularly meet people, who, after they had started one task in the late afternoon and had finished this task in the morning to follow at 8 a.m., would start a new task only at the third day. They then rather preferred to rest the whole day. Given this freedom, to come to and leave from work as it pleased them, many workers preferred such piecework to temporary employment.³⁰⁸

With this mode of work, railway workers could earn eight to twenty-one Rupees a month according to their work-performance, *posho* and the daily food allowance included. According to Reichart-Burikukiye, who processed the *Deutsche Kolonialblatt* issued by the colonial administration, not only the workers, but also the construction company and the colonial administration preferred piecework. For the latter, piecework saved a lot of money because it required fewer expensive (European) overseers. Furthermore, piecework led to higher and more regular work performance, having a self-disciplining effect on the workforce. Hence, it was believed that such freedom at the workplace would be the right tool to 'educate' the Africans at the railway to work. But given the absence of clear rules, especially in the beginning of railway construction when there was practically no labour legislation at all, it was also open to abuse. This occurred especially when time was pressured or during colonial warfare like the Maji Maji War. The *OAEG* openly reported about their cooperation with the colonial authorities regarding the Maji Maji convict workers in 1906 and reaffirmed their demand for labour supply simultaneously:

The uprising in German East Africa [. . .] prevented us from keeping a sufficient stock of permanent workers. With the people recruited in Muansa and Tabora, we had about 5500

³⁰⁷ Cf. Section 3.2. For a personal account provided by Gillman's self-narratives about the difficulties of railway construction during *masika* cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9_1, pp. 70–80.

³⁰⁸ *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* 1911, p. 709. Qutd. in Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 61–62.

workers available at the beginning of the year under review. New influxes would have been necessary for our needs. Instead, however, [. . .] a reduction soon occurred again. [. . .] The question of workers was a constant concern for our construction management [. . .]. Thankfully, the governorate provided us with support by transferring 800 punishment workers in October, when some of the others left the workplaces to cultivate their fields.³⁰⁹

For the same year of railway construction, the Anglo-German engineer, Gillman, gives more information about the convict workers' (health) conditions when arriving at the railway. He noted in his diary on 18 August 1906:

My endless shortage of labour is momentarily solved by 150 convict workers. They participated in the rising behind Morogoro and expiate their six months long punishment at the railway construction. Naturally, the work requires to let them live devoid of their chains. They are keeping themselves well. They are horribly stupid and weak and not used to any work at all, however. 1/3 [cubic meter] m³ is the maximum daily workload in ten hours. Many are afflicted with scabies. Now, in the for the natives cold season, also a lot of pneumonia. One of the workers has recently died, causing the escape of 120 and leaving me embarrassed. Let's see how it is going to be with the convicts. The superstructure must not be stopped and will not be stopped. I have to insert some night shifts for the provisional bridges' insertion every now and then.³¹⁰

Whereas, it is not entirely clear in this statement whether the nightshifts applied to Gillman only or also included his workforce, nightshifts did indeed occur if the light conditions permitted doing so and if leading engineers like Gillman thought it necessary:

2.XII. [1906]

This morning, after my people had been occupied from yesterday morning 6 a.m. until today's morning 6. a.m. with tracklaying, i.e., working with heavy iron materials with only three hours of rest, they walked the 1 ½ kms back to the camp dancing and singing. Even though they had complained a lot about tiredness between 1 and 3 o'clock in the morning and were very listless. – As far as I am concerned, I enjoyed the full moon night and especially the European-fresh morning (between 4 and 6); it helped me to overcome all the stresses and strains.³¹¹

Besides showing that nightshifts did occur despite the workers' protests, reassessing this statement also reveals that an entire workday lasted longer than the actual time of work. It often also included at least a thirty-minute walk from the camp to the construction site and work had to be done despite the workers' complaints of exhaustion. Of course, workers also influenced their working and living conditions. For instance, Gillman himself noted in his diary that his workers were

³⁰⁹ "Die Ostafrikanische Eisenbahngesellschaft". *DOAZ*, IX, no. 28. Daressalam, 29 July 1907.

³¹⁰ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 10, p. 12.

³¹¹ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 10, p. 24.

“very peculiar about doing no work on Sundays”, and it was indeed the rule that there was at least one day of rest per week.³¹² As far as Gillman’s accounts are concerned, he nevertheless urged his workers sometimes to work on Sunday as well, but was generally able to “persuade [. . .] only a few”.³¹³ Yet, *Holzmann* engineers like Gillman, assisted by European foremen as overseers, were not always able to impose their will when facing a workforce of up to 300 people, despite their self-image as “mwana mkuba” or the “great master”.³¹⁴ Generally, Sundays remained free of work and if the weather was cool or exceptionally rainy, the work(wo)men generally succeeded in staying at home in the camp or even deserted from the workplace.³¹⁵ Moreover, ‘blue Mondays’ also occurred frequently: after a *pombe* evening or similar feasts; the workers were often reluctant to work after the night of partying and succeeded in their demand to rest.³¹⁶ Gillman notes as well:

Last night [Sunday], the [Africans] had received two poshos, for yesterday + today. But however, they [ate] them both + about 150 of them therefore were unable to work or do anything today, lying about half dead + holding their stomachs. When we tried to make them move out in the morning to Daressalam to bring up some railway material, some of them left the camp [and] have not returned yet. It is very difficult to manage these men [. . .].³¹⁷

When confronted with European methods and tools of manual labour like capstans, shovels or wheelbarrows, the African workers insisted upon their own methods to do the work, often to the bewilderment of the European spectators. As already mentioned above, singing was integral to these workers, not only to keep the work rhythm, but also to establish and maintain a particular identity and community spirit among those who had come to the *Central Railway's* construction sites or other workplaces such as plantations from all over East Africa. It was further not uncommon that a song text included open criticism against colonialism or colonial labour conditions.³¹⁸ When Gillman arrived in East Africa in autumn 1905, he was immediately confronted with gangs of enchained convict (female) workers in the streets of Tanga and Dar es Salaam escorted by an *Askari*.

³¹² Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 22, cf. p. 12. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 58–67, cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 167–171.

³¹³ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 12.

³¹⁴ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 10.

³¹⁵ Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 57, 84.

³¹⁶ Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 58–67. Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 165–171.

³¹⁷ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 12.

³¹⁸ Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, p. 152. Cf. Gunderson, Frank. *Sukuma Labor Songs. 'We never Sleep, we dream of Farming'*. Leiden: 2010, pp. 112–225, 453–455. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 8, p. 73.

As he watched “[n]atives on a gangspill [sic] pulling up a lighter on the shores [of Dar es Salaam] [. . .] they kept singing a monotonous tune always repeating itself:] ‘Kuwa nina njaa, njaa, njaa’ (‘I am hungry, hungry, hungry)’”.³¹⁹ But also, when introduced to tasks involving shovels or wheelbarrows, the workers asserted their own *Eigen-Sinn*³²⁰ [self-will] and stubbornly imposed their own methods. Gillman used to complain regularly in his diary:

A [sub-]contractor imports wheelbarrows. The people then fill them and want to carry them on their heads. Working with wheelbarrows had to be abandoned. Infinite difficulties to teach those people, who have come to work recently, the use of shovels + pickaxes. [. . .] The earthworks are done most quickly if you allow the people to keep working according to their own traditional way. That means, they fill the loosened soil in the unavoidable Hickapots (baskets) and carry them, even if only for a few steps and at a very slow pace. – Watching this requires the highest amount of patience. Of course, I am talking here about the hinterland peoples, who are not used to earthworks. – The peoples from the coast a[nd] the Wanyamwesi a[nd] similar peoples who have been working for years, can, if they want, do the earthwork fairly well.³²¹

Other *Holzmann* engineers like Walter Rehfeldt confirmed the insistence of African workers to carry baskets instead of using wheelbarrows throughout the entire construction process.³²² Apart from the fact that Gillman’s perspective on the way of African labour performance was well rooted in his own perception to regard Africa as ‘backwards’ or ‘uncivilised’, the tone of the engineer’s statement clearly illustrates his annoyance and reluctant resignation about his ultimate defeat against his workers. Like it or not, Gillman had to accept that European methods of railway construction would be adapted to local realities by his African work(wo)men.

But the pace and style of manual labour were not the only things the African workers could exact from European engineers like Gillman. From the very beginning of their employment, the workers sought individual and collective advantages. Both Reichart-Burikukiye and Sunseri have shown that many workers who came to work at the construction sites of the railway, rather voluntarily, followed the old established rhythms of being employed as seasonal porters or plantation workers. Those coming voluntarily for work to the railway would usually stay only half a year and return afterwards to their homes. Of course, they could face despotism and coercion,

³¹⁹ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 8, p. 71, cf. pp. 56, 68–70.

³²⁰ Cf. Lüdtkke, Alf. *Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus*. Hamburg: 1993, pp. 120–160, 351–442. Cf. Auslander. ‘Accommodation, Resistance, and *Eigensinn*’, pp. 205–217.

³²¹ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 29–30. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 8, p. 74.

³²² Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Rehfeldt* p. 10.

but potential workers learned from their experiences. If they had experienced mistreatment by an individual labour recruiter, sub-contractor or railway engineer, or if the latter had bad reputations, they would shun further employment accordingly and tell their fellow African workers to follow only those men who would treat them comparatively well. Thus, before leaving for the construction site, the type of work was agreed upon, preventing bad surprises. If mistreated *en route* to the construction site, workers would simply run away or move to a different employer. As a sufficient number of workers was constantly in demand and many labour recruiters competed with each other in one region, workers could choose another employer if offered better pay or other provisions. Moreover, experienced workers often went to a workplace on their own and checked the environment and the labour conditions there, refraining from taking up work with a cruel or poorly organised sub-contractor or engineer.³²³ Yet, the workers' bargaining power did not stop at the construction site. Besides what was already shown regarding work pace, working hours and food provisions by examining Gillman's diary entries, there were further means to enhance one's wages apart from railway construction work.

Certainly, *ngomas*³²⁴ were integral to the life at the construction camp and they were celebrated by the workmen/women for their own sake. They often included the consumption of *pombe*³²⁵ and took place frequently at the railway construction sites. *Pombe* was sanctioned by the colonial authorities and the construction firm, as both shared the view that the availability of alcohol would make the workforce accept longer working contracts. In addition, the joint consumption of alcohol enabled the workmen/women to establish a distinct railway subculture that merged the different backgrounds of the ethnically diverse workforce and that often also circumvented the control of the colonial elites.³²⁶ From performances of *ngoma* at *pombe* evenings or similar feasts, the workforce also succeeded in making some extra money in their quasi 'free-time':

Tonight a big 'goma' (dance) of the Wanamesi [sic!] people. About 100 of them in front of my tent dancing + howling + making their noise on a big drum + a kind of bow, with an empty coconut attached to it to serve as resonances. Dances of the women very elegant [. . .]. Huge fires light up the night + it was a fine picture to see these [. . .] mostly tall men + women dancing. It was nearly 11 pm. When I stopped them + gave them their backshish [Arabic:

³²³ Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 51–58.

³²⁴ Ngoma (Swahili) = drum, here: feast/party including dance and song performance.

³²⁵ Pombe (Swahili) = locally produced alcohol.

³²⁶ Cf. Sunseri. "Dispersing", pp. 568–569. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 44–46. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 28, 65–67.

tip] – a few handfuls of coppercoins – they cheered me + went to sleep, [and] [. . .] seemed quite happy + content.³²⁷

Similarly, when Gillman watched a blood brotherhood ceremony of two of his female labour camp dwellers, the engineer had to pay “copious amounts of ‘backshish’ [. . .] of course” to both the “participants a[nd] [other] spectators”.³²⁸ Moreover, having the self-image of an ‘educated man’, Gillman was not content with only being an engineer in East Africa. Instead, he took up a variety of intellectual free-time occupations, such as geography, botany, philosophy, and ethnography.³²⁹ In turn, it seems that the African workers were not ignorant of the passions of the Anglo-German engineer and used the emerging market at the construction camps to sell supposedly ‘authentic ethnographic objects’ to enhance their wages:

1st December 05. This morning in the [sub-]contractors camp. One of the [. . .] workmen showed me 3 figures he had cut out of ebony wood of which I purchased two paying 1 Rp. for each. [. . .] However rough the carving is done it speaks of a good deal of artistic feeling + more of a good deal of observing power of the man who has made them + who as far as I could make out, comes from somewhere near Victoria-Nyanza lake. [. . .] These little ‘bits of art’ [. . .] gave me much pleasure.³³⁰

On another occasion, Gillman purchased two “turtles carved of wood [and] a walking stick with two carved figures on the top made by one of the wanawesi [sic!] men[.] For the last [Gillman] paid 1.50 Rp.”³³¹ This is a fairly high price, as an unskilled worker received between five and twenty-one Rps. a month, depending on his individual piecework performance. Given the demanded hut tax of three Rps a year, one woodcarver was able to earn the entire colonial tax by selling ca. two pieces of art – clearly illustrating the fact that the *Central Railway*’s workers in German East Africa were also able to use the colonial arts market for their own benefit.³³²

327 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 43.

328 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 4.

329 Cf. Hoyle. *Gillman*, pp. 374–401.

330 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 31.

331 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 43.

332 Thanks to Annika Dörner (University of Erfurt) for providing me with this literature dealing with the art market in Africa, in general. Cf. Schildkrout, Enid and Keim, Curtis A. ‘Objects and Agendas: re-collecting the Congo’. *The Scramble for Art in Africa*. 1–36. Ed. Enid Schildkrout and Curtis A. Keim. Cambridge: 1998. Cf. Fabian, Johannes. ‘Appendix: On the Ethnography and Economies of Collecting from Leo Frobenius’ *Nochmals zu den Bakubavölkern*. *The Scramble for Art in Africa*. 101–108. Ed. Enid Schildkrout and Curtis A. Keim. Cambridge: 1998. Talking about wages, skilled workers like carpenters could earn between 3 and 5 Rps. a day, that is, many times the wages of an unskilled worker. It has already been stressed that in the beginning of railway

Besides these examples of African agency and opportunity to influence the labour process and the working and living conditions at the railway, desertion has already been mentioned as one strategy to deal with conditions that were not satisfactory. The individual factors that could make labour at the *Central Railway* unbearable varied from unsatisfactory housing, food, mal-treatment, weather, poor health conditions, lacking motivation or fear of warfare. Gillman reports of several occasions when hundreds of his workers left him, never to be seen again: in December 1905, the reason was too rainy weather; on another occasion in January 1906 “they did not like to stay”.³³³ In fact, desertion was not the only form of labour protest. It also occurred that workers challenged the racist hierarchy of Gillman’s construction camp. In November 1905, three workmen “in a rebellious mood went for one of my 2 white *Aufseher* [overseer] [. . .], as these two *Aufseher* don’t know how to treat the black [and] therefore the authority of us white was in danger to go lost.”³³⁴ In January 1906, after a *pombe* night with heavy drinking, a gang of Wanyamwezi workers challenged the racist order of the construction camp and transgressed the boundary to the European zone. Without Gillman’s noticing, because he was asleep, they even “unlocked the outer door of [his] hut, [. . .] open[ed] the tent” and stole one “sack of rize [sic] [. . .], lots of fruit, 2 towels [and] [Gillman’s] strap for sharpening razors.” This incident caused him to call the construction company *Holzmann* and ask for protection, with the result that an “*Askari* arrived [and Gillman] now slep[t] under military protection”. This *Askari* further had the right to corporally punish those workers not willing to comply with the amount of work to be done or to sentence those who transgressed the construction camp’s order.³³⁵ If no *Askari* was present, like in the incident in November 1905, Gillman wielded the *kiboko*³³⁶ himself: “[. . .] I fetched the 3 niggers in front of all the rest [and] whipped them with the effect that they [and] all the others went to work with great ambition [and] that at least my authority was

construction, skilled work was often done by Indians. In addition, Reichart stresses that a lot of Arabs and Swahili were also employed as craftsmen at the railway construction site. Yet, as already mentioned above, particularly, Indian skilled labour was increasingly replaced by African skilled labour during railway construction, but it seems that Africans were already employed in higher positions during the initial years of construction. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 66–68. Confirming Reichart’s finding that these Africans originated often from the coast, Gillman reports about one of his foremen being a “Msaram”. Msaram = *Mzaramu* people, originating from the East African coast esp. from Bagamoyo, Rufiji and Dar es Salaam. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 19.

333 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 62, cf. p. 57.

334 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 25.

335 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 67–68.

336 Kiboko (Swahili) = lit. hippo, here: whip made from Hippo skin (leather).

well safet [sic].” Although Gillman regarded this “as a very nasty experience [. . .] for an educated man [. . .]”³³⁷ he continued this practice at least until 1913, if his authority or the ambitious work performance seemed to be threatened and no *Askari* was at his disposal for dealing out corporal punishments.³³⁸ Hence, coercion and physical violence were certainly integral in any labour relationship at the *Central Railway*, but the degree varied. Not only was the question whether the work was skilled or unskilled important. The circumstances of the actual setting were significant. All workers were able to exert some agency to enhance their wages or living and working conditions, and some even transgressed racist hierarchies to protest mistreatment and colonial command. The same holds also true for female workers, whose role is somewhat more difficult to assess, because they are often not explicitly addressed in the sources. Clement Gillman’s diaries feature a lot of passages where women are mentioned at the railway construction camps and therefore shed light on the issue.

3.9 Female Labour and Sex Work

3.9.1 Female Labour

The special role of women at the *Central Railway*’s construction site has its origins in conditions already existing before the actual construction work and before being recruited for working at the railroad. It is rooted in the overall agricultural economy prevalent in East Africa in the German colonial period. Criticising how the historiography of labour migration and plantation labour in East Africa had been shaped predominantly by South African scholars until the mid-1990s, Thaddeus Sunseri urged a focus on East African economic parameters, which were decisively different from those of its South African counterpart. He concentrates on the agency of the African workers and their mostly successful means of influencing their living and working conditions at various places of work. He argues that the South African model of the ‘kraal economy’ is not applicable to East Africa under German colonial rule, due to the latter’s preservation of a migratory agricultural economy and the absence of a large mining industry.³³⁹ Sunseri generates his findings by analysing the impact and the process of railway construction in the central region of *Unyamwezi* where the railway line was being built between ca. 1907–1912. In Sunseri’s

³³⁷ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 25–26.

³³⁸ Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_2, no. 14, p. 77.

³³⁹ Cf. Sunseri. ‘Labour Migration’, pp. 581–586, 597–598.

view, the African agency in the context of labour is best illustrated by the failure of German colonial policies in the region applied after the Maji Maji War (ca. 1905–1908). Accordingly, colonial economic policies after ca. 1907 shifted from the ‘plantation imperative’ to small-scale indigenous cash crop production. Instead of large-scale plantations run by European companies, export products would now be produced independently by African households. The colonisers’ task was then to facilitate means of production and transportation, particularly by providing the necessary infrastructure, that is, especially railways. Judged as a well-peopled area and therefore promising for economic cash crop production based on African small-scale planting, *Unyamwezi* was considered crucial to make the *Central Railway* an (economic) success. The African reaction towards these colonial ‘development schemes’ proved the policies false, however. Sunseri argues that both men and women preferred working at the construction site of the *Central Railway* to plantation labour due to higher wages, better working conditions and less supervision, which led to increased African migration to the railroad. The production of cash crops at home was thus neglected and reduced the amount of potential cash crops that could be transported and/or exported via railway. Consequently, one major income source to the future railway failed and thwarted the colonisers’ vision of a very profitable railway.³⁴⁰

Sunseri’s general critique holds true for the socio-economic-historical gender analysis, first developed in South Africa and later applied to East Africa. The role of women was distinct in German East Africa and not comparable to South Africa, due to the nature of capital penetration, the participation of peasants shaping the colonial economy and the comparative weakness of the white settler community.³⁴¹ In German East Africa, seasonal male absence from home had been integral to the economy of the Wanyamwezi since pre-colonial times, as they used to work as caravan porters. Whereas, male railway labour was soon integrated into this tradition of seasonal migratory labour, migratory female labour was a rather new phenomenon, although a certain amount of women were certainly also present in pre-colonial caravans for various forms of occupations. Nevertheless, there was a significant shift in male migratory labour regarding their occupations in pre-colonial caravans, for example, and railway labour. While men had previously brought the majority of their wages received from portage back home, many male railway workers spent a fair share of their wages at the *Central Railway*’s labour camps. As these labour camps were often inhabited by thousands of workers, the camps offered several opportunities to consume their wages. Moreover, many men re-

340 Cf. Sunseri. “Dispersing”, pp. 558–565.

341 Cf. Sunseri. ‘Labour Migration’, pp. 581–586, 597–598.

mained remarkably longer at the construction sites and a significant number would never return to their homes. Compensating for these income losses, and simply taking advantage of new income opportunities, many women, although to a lesser extent than men, also left for the construction sites of the railway for performing (lighter) construction work, beer brewing, or as sex workers. As both genders left their homes, the few remaining (mainly elderly and female) people in the villages could not sustain the former Wanyamwezi economy anymore, which relied on the seasonal return of men. Hence, especially, women retreated to more sparsely populated areas, off the central routes in less-accessible regions, where they were able to pursue a subsistence economy that could be run with less labour, that is, without the presence of their men. The result was not only a vastly depopulated region of *Unyamwezi* that promised fewer economic opportunities and would not sustain the economic fantasies of colonial policy makers. It also meant that sub-contractors or labour recruiters had more difficulties to find female workers, who had fled to areas that were less known and less accessible to European intruders.³⁴² Yet, there were certainly also women who came (for work) to the construction camps of the *Central Railway* on their own initiative.

As Rockel pointed out “[c]aravan women [. . .] were the first female migrant laborers in East Africa”.³⁴³ Thus, female labour at the *Central Railway* may also be regarded as an extension of the tradition of migratory caravan labour, especially as far as the Wanyamwezi are concerned. Like in pre-colonial labour relations in caravans, the reasons why women came to work at the construction sites were as manifold as their occupations therein. It oscillated between the poles of free and unfree labour, reproductive, wage and self-employed labour. In the first place, wives often accompanied their husbands migrating to the *Central Railway*. Many of these women were then responsible for the household’s reproductive work. But many women arrived independently. They not only performed construction work, but also sold locally produced alcohol or worked as *vakapela*.³⁴⁴ While the issue of sex work is dealt with in the following section, the sources produced by the colonial administration seldomly refer to female workers explicitly. Although Reichart-Burikukiye is convinced that manual railroad construction by women was “very likely”, especially in the first years

342 Cf. Rockel. *Carriers of Culture*, pp. 117–130. Cf. Sunseri. “Dispersing”, pp. 566–578. Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 51–71.

343 Rockel. *Carriers of Culture*, p. 117, cf. 117–130.

344 Term used especially in region of *Unyamwezi* meaning “prostitute” or “sex worker” cf. Reichart. *Gari*, p. 71.

of construction, she admits that there is “hardly any evidence for it”.³⁴⁵ Once again, Gillman’s diary proves as a precious substitute on the issue, as (African) women feature regularly in his personal documents, especially before Gillman’s wife Eva and their young children joined him in East Africa after 1909.³⁴⁶ Having arrived in Dar es Salaam in Autumn 1905, Gillman already observed that women not only did lighter construction work, but were “employed frequently for carrying stones or sand at house-building [and] harbor work [in Dar es Salaam]. They carr[ie]d [. . .] fairly sized stone[s] or a basket with 2 shovels full of sand on their heads [. . .].”³⁴⁷ As *Holzmann* not only built the *Central Railway* but also Dar es Salaam’s harbour, the railway station, its custom house, a hotel and many other buildings in the capital, it is very likely that the construction company also employed women for heavy manual work for the *Central Railway*’s construction.³⁴⁸ This is even more likely, as other European colonial powers did indeed employ women for the construction of infrastructure.³⁴⁹

Regarding the overall ratio of female workers at the *Central Railway*’s construction sites, it seems to be the case that between one-third and one-half of the overall labour camp population must have been female. This is not only the case because many wives accompanied their working husbands to the construction sites, being then responsible for the so-called ‘reproductive work’ that greatly facilitated if not enabled their husbands to take up work at the railway. Female labour migration to the railway was also mentioned by many Moravian missionaries, and Gillman’s diary provides a specific gender ratio for one gang of newly arriving workers in December 1905: “The arrival of 120 fresh workmen with about 50 females of the [. . .] Wanamesi [sic] brought some change. They are busy putting up their camp quite close to mine.”³⁵⁰ Of course, Gillman’s note reports only about one singular event, but it nevertheless proves that a significant part of the labour camp population and the workforce at the *Central Railway* were female indeed. In terms of wages, over the course of the construction period, the gender pay gap seems to have increased. Whereas, Reichart-Burikukiye indicates that women even earned more

345 Reichart. *Gari*, p. 68.

346 Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 8, pp. 56, 70, 72, 79. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, pp. 29, 34–35, 43, 45, 60, 65–67. Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 10, pp. 4–5, 10, 17, 32–33.

347 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 8, p. 72.

348 Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 8, p. 72. Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Grages*, pp. 6–8. Cf. Stadtarchiv Frankfurt. W1/2 – 278/1. *Imm*, p. 19. Cf. Gillman. ‘Dar es Salaam’, pp. 1–23.

349 Cf. Akurang-Parry. ‘Colonial Forced Labor’. For a general assessment of female labour in (colonial) Africa cf. Dennis. ‘Women in African Labour History’, pp. 125–140. Cf. Coquery-Vidrovitch, Catherine. *African Women. A Modern History*. New York: 1997.

350 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 37.

(!) money than men in the initial years of construction, this trend reversed in the years to follow. By 1907, women received only eighty per cent of the men's wages and by 1911, the pay gap had increased to fifty per cent. The reasons for this reversal are not entirely clear. Reichart-Burikukiye suggests that with an increasing availability of workers in the course of the construction process, the wages of women working at the railway decreased because *Holzmann* preferred male work. With decreasing wages, women sought other sources of income at the railway. Besides petty trade and sex work, the most profitable business was apparently beer brewing: it provided the workforce with beverages at *ngomas* and *pombe* evenings and was therefore crucial for maintaining a constant number of (male) workers. For the employer *Holzmann*, the availability of alcohol was central for rapid railway construction: with the presence of wives and other women as well as the availability of alcohol and other goods of consumption like cotton, cloth and tobacco, the male workers would accept longer working contracts and were more likely to sign up for a succeeding contract.³⁵¹ Besides these (wage labour) occupations at the labour camp, women could also receive *backshish* for their dance performances alongside their fellow male dancers from engineers like Gillman (cf. above).

Apart from railway construction and reproductive work, other aspects of female presence at the construction camp were significant. For railway engineers like Gillman, who valued education very much, learning Swahili appeared to be an important tool for doing their job properly. That of course does not mean that all Europeans coming to German East Africa would learn the local language, rather the contrary. But for Gillman it was "the first thing [. . .] to learn the language as soon as possible [. . .]"³⁵² and especially his *boys'* wives appear to have played a significant role in Gillman's learning. The engineer met with his *boys'* wives, particularly after railway construction work had ended in the evenings and when everybody was back in the camp. Then, especially, Gillman practiced Swahili: he once comments in his diary that he "spent half [an] hour joking away with [his] boy[']s wife, a real beauty" and realised that his "Suaheli is getting on quite well [and] [. . .] [he] underst[oo]d most [of what] they sa[id]." ³⁵³ Although this is not the only passage of Gillman's diary revealing affection and a certain degree of sexual desire for Indian or African women, there is no passage reporting explicitly that Gillman had any sexual relationship with any (African) women

351 Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 58–72. Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 165–178.

352 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 8, p. 10.

353 Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1, no. 9, p. 34, cf. pp. 29, 45.

living in the construction camp or another place. Nevertheless, sex and sex work played a crucial role regarding railway construction. Just as in the case of alcohol, the availability of sex encouraged the male workers to stay longer at the railway construction sites. Hence, apart from wives doing the so-called ‘reproductive work’ or working as beer brewers, sex work at the *Central Railway* was not only sanctioned by the construction company, but generally significant for rapid railway construction.

3.9.2 Sex(,) Work and Sexualised Violence

Those Puellae who came from Dar es Salaam to the track were sick for the large part. They had mostly known that themselves and fled the hospital treatment, they would have faced in Dar es Salaam. That is why many of those employed at the track became sick, mostly because of gonorrhoea and soft chancre. Taking the hygienic view, it was therefore not to be condemned if the individual kept one black girl during his stay in Africa.³⁵⁴

Dr Krauß. Railway Doctor of the *Holzmann* Company. *DOAZ*, 24 October 1908.

In general, the *vakapela* living and working at the railway’s construction sites were sanctioned most of the time. They were welcomed by the colonial authorities and the representatives of the construction company, as the presence of women was regarded as necessary to attract sufficient male migratory workers to the construction sites. Only a minority of the workmen were accompanied by their wives and families, and many workers had indeed sex with prostitutes (but also with ‘non-professionals’ who were not married to them) – one aspect that inclined male workers to stay longer at the railway construction site. Hence, sex work and sex workers were integral to the overall construction progress of the *Central Railway* in German East Africa.³⁵⁵ Of course, also European men working as engineers or sub-contractors at the railway had a demand for sex work. Generally, discourses about colonial Africa claimed that living in the colonies affected the sexuality of both European sexes. Yet, male Europeans outnumbered female Europeans in German East Africa by seven to one and, therefore, charged the colonial society with a male-dominated demand for sex. In any case, contemporary beliefs about male sexuality in the colonies were not absolutely clear-cut. On the one hand, it was argued that the colony’s climate and the ‘lax’ sexual morals of

354 Krauß, Dr. Ehemals Bahnbauarzt der Firma Holzmann & Cie. “Der Gesundheitsdienst beim Bahnbau Daressalaam – Morogoro”. *DOAZ*, X, no. 82. Daressalam: 24 October 1908, p. 5.

355 Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 171–185. Cf. Reichart. *Gari*, pp. 66–72. Cf. Sunseri. “Dispersing”, pp. 567–569.

the African population heightened European male sexuality. Following this view, European men were not to suppress their drives, as that could seriously harm their nervous systems or make them turn to homosexual relationships or masturbation instead. According to the zeitgeist, both had to be avoided. On the other hand, the discourse warned that European men living in the colonial environment could lose their ability to resist the attractiveness of indigenous women, thereby contributing to the colonies' alleged degenerative effect on the European race when it came to inter-racial sexual relationships.³⁵⁶

In general, sexual access of European men to African women occurred in three ways. Although sexualised violence must not be confused with consensual sexual intercourse, it has to be mentioned in the context of sex work that rape of African women by European men was common in the colonies. Rape was considered part of the 'colonial frontier', as it bolstered the image of hegemonic colonial masculinity, and was thus certainly also present at the *Central Railway's* construction sites, although there are only few sources documenting this fact. Secondly, concubinage, and to a lesser extent also marriage, occurred frequently in the colonies. But colonial legislation in Africa tended to forbid these forms of relationships, especially with increasing numbers of European settlers. This holds particularly true for Afro-European marriages. As German citizenship law made the child of a German father automatically a German citizen, the colonial authorities feared any offspring with a potential German African ancestry as such lineage challenged the ideal typical order of any colonial society that generally sought to separate African from European. With legislation making Afro-European marriages increasingly difficult and complicating legal forms of concubinage, prostitution was thus the most widespread form of African-European sexual interaction. Generally speaking, prostitution was neither legally nor socially disdained among the European population in the colonies. The reason for this was predominantly that, at least – to the colonial view – the relationship did not become formal, thus preventing any legal, financial or other demands of potential German-African children. Moreover, African prostitutes could be legally and socially marginalised, analogically to the situation in the European countries, providing the colonial administration with several (legal) means to have control over sex work and sexual intercourse between European men and African women.³⁵⁷

356 Cf. Walther, Daniel J. *Sex and Control. Venereal Disease, Colonial Physicians, and Indigenous Agency in German Colonialism, 1884–1914*. New York: 2015, pp. 24–30.

357 Cf. Walther. *Sex and Control*, pp. 35–46. For a contemporary view on European male sexuality in German East Africa by a railway doctor employed by *Holzmann* between 1905–1907 cf. Oetker. *Die Negerseele*, pp. 29–36. Cf. Daughton. *In the Forest of No Joy*, pp. 129–130, 151–152, 169–170, 281.

Given the statement of the former *Holzmann* railway doctor quoted above, Europeans employed at the *Central Railway* did indeed buy sex offered by the *vakapela* resident at the construction camps. Quoting missionary files, Reichart-Burikukiye confirms this finding. Accordingly, the railway missionary of the Moravians, Gaarde, reported about his first visits to the *Central Railway*: “It has occurred on several occasions that some have asked me, if I had come to search for a ‘Bibi’ (woman). They unfortunately know from experience that it is a profitable business to supply the white Bwana (Sir) with one of their beauties.”³⁵⁸ Besides Gillman confirming by one diary entry that Gaarde visited the *Central Railway* some months later in September 1911,³⁵⁹ the diaries of the Anglo-German do not provide any details whether Gillman himself bought sex while working as an engineer at the *Central Railway* or whether his colleagues did. In any case, Gillman’s sexual desire does occasionally shine through his diary entries. Although no information is given about him having sex with (African) women in the construction camp or anywhere else in German East Africa, it appears that he bought sex when he was still in Europe. When on his first passage from Europe to East Africa in autumn 1905, he visited the archaeological excavations of the Roman city of Pompeii near Naples, which had been destroyed by a volcanic eruption in the first century. In Pompeii, Gillman had also the chance to visit the ruins of an antique brothel and reported in his diary on the same evening:

By kindness of the managers and by aid of several tips managed to get into the little collection of paintings found in the Pompeii-whore-houses. Very interesting, though very dirty. Saw a series of utensils [. . .] in the shape of male genitalien [sic!]. Remarkable that only the male genitals are used for this purpose and no female. Before going on board visited a dark Italian girl, at 6 o’clock. 7 went on board.³⁶⁰

Although maybe premeditatively focused on sexual issues by his visit to the Pompeii ‘whore-houses’, the ‘dark Italian girl’ was very likely a sex worker – an assumption perhaps confirmed by the rather short duration of the visit. Similar entries about Gillman as a sex worker’s client do not exist in the diaries, but the general issue of sex is mentioned on other occasions. As soon as Gillman sets foot on East African soil, he exoticises and sexualises the physical appearance of African and Indian women on several occasions. More telling, perhaps, is when Gillman notes down the price levels of several items needed for the construction of the *Central Railway*, as well as food and medicine: also the wages of workmen,

³⁵⁸ UAH. MD 1543, Bericht über die Bahnmission z.Z. Manyoini bei Kilimatinde, 1. Januar–31. März 1911. Qtd. in: Reichart. *Gari*, p. 46.

³⁵⁹ Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_2, no. 13, pp. 40–42.

³⁶⁰ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1_no. 8, p. 7.

personal servants ('boy') and a *bibi* (concubine) are recorded. With fifteen Rupees per month, a *bibi* would receive at least the same salary as a *boy* or cook (ten to fifteen Rupees per month).³⁶¹ Hence, one cannot say without doubt if the *bibi* meant by Gillman would be employed only as cook, for example, or as a personal servant in charge of the engineer's household or as a concubine. In addition, in modern Swahili, *bibi* translates also simply into 'lady', 'madam' or 'grandmother', without any distinct sexual meaning. Nevertheless, *bibi* generally described a female concubine or a sex worker (during the colonial period) as well. The statements of the railway missionary, Gaarde, and other sources suggest this too.³⁶²

Whereas it is not clear whether Gillman had a concubine at the construction camp and whether he bought sex there must remain in speculation, his diary shows that the wife of one of his *boys* must have caught Gillman's fancy. When at his first construction camp in December 1905, it seems that he attempted at least to flirt with her – an offer that was distinctly rejected, however.

I spent an other [sic!] half hour joking away with my boy's wife, a real beauty [. . .]. I notice here that these muhammedan wives are very faithful + that nothing can make them be unfaithful to her husbands, at least as long as he treats them well. I also noticed that these "ladies" think very little of their "fallen sisters" in D[ar es Salaam]. + won't have anything to do with them.³⁶³

Here, the wife of Gillman's *boy* not only illustrates her own sexual self-determination as a woman, but she also underlines her societal status. Describing sex workers as 'fallen sisters', her statement, as noted down by Gillman, also illustrates the societal marginalisation of the *vakapela* in German East Africa, which gradually increased towards the end of formal German colonial rule.³⁶⁴ As far as the sources are concerned, there is not – and cannot be – an unfiltered female voice to be found in Gillman's diary. Generally, remarks about his relationship to African and Indian women become less frequent and almost nonexistent from ca. 1907 onwards. The reason is probably Gillman's marriage to Eva Kerber in 1908 during his first holiday in Europe. Shortly after the wedding, Eva joined Gillman in the colony and a few months later, their first son was born. With their son still being a toddler, the entire family lived together in German East Africa, partly in construction camps but also in proper buildings in colonial towns such as Tabora.³⁶⁵

³⁶¹ Cf. Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1_no. 8, pp. 54–57, 61, 74.

³⁶² Cf. Walther. *Sex and Control*, p. 27. Cf. TNA. G 21/403. Ermittlungssache gegen Unbekannt [wegen angeblicher Freiheitsberaubung, begangen an einer eingeborenen Prostituierten]. 1912.

³⁶³ Gillman Diaries. Mss. Afr. S. 1175/1,2_1_no. 8, pp. 34–35. Cf. pp. 29–30.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Sunseri. *Vilimani*, pp. 178–186.

³⁶⁵ Eva's role is decisive in terms of (domestic care) work. For the wedding and married life until the 1920s Cf. Holye. *Gillman*, pp. 84–170.

The disappearance of references to sex in Gillman's diaries does of course not mean that also sex work vanished from the *Central Railway's* construction sites. Assessing other sources and studies, it must be stressed that sex work remained integral until the very end of formal German colonial rule in East Africa and was one central aspect of the global history of labour in East Africa, too. Dr Karl Oetker, who was employed by *Holzmann* between 1905–07 as railway doctor, almost boasted retrospectively that he had “treated at least 46 fresh cases of Europeans having venereal diseases” during his “relatively short stay” in Africa and thus put forward the opinion by his colleague Dr Krauß, quoted above, that concubinage should be preferred to sex work, as this form of ‘coloniser-monogamy’ would prevent the spread of venereal diseases.³⁶⁶ Yet, the favouring of concubinage at the expense of sex work does not mean that concubinage between a European man and an African woman was necessarily free of coercion. Generally, the line between concubinage, sex work and rape at the *Central Railway's* construction sites was very thin indeed. Often, Europeans in German colonies targeted especially underage females because they held the view that having intercourse with sexually inexperienced girls would reduce the probability of contracting venereal diseases.³⁶⁷ In this respect, one individual court proceeding against a Greek sub-contractor, illustrates the many facets and entanglements of labour, (sex) work and sexualised violence at the *Central Railway's* construction sites.

Between December 1911 and March 1912, the district court of Tabora handled a case against a twenty-four-year-old Cretan Greek Orthodox Christian railway sub-contractor, Emmanuel Jeronimakis, who was working for the German engineer Giese at km 592 of the *Central Railway*. The Greek was accused of having had sex with a minor East African female, called Adaa. Adaa had accompanied her older brother Degera from Ussandawa near Dodoma to the construction camps of the *Central Railway*. It seems that Degera was unmarried because it was Adaa's task to do the housework for her brother when he was occupied constructing the railway during the daytime. With Adaa accompanying her brother to the construction camp, she genuinely enabled his employment at the construction site, as she sustained his working capabilities with her devotion to domestic work. Although the defendant Jeronimakis had already had an older East African concubine, named Tinde, for some time, the Greek wanted Adaa to become his second *bibi*. Trying to convince Adaa to become his concubine, Jeronimakis offered her consumption goods such as soap and cloth as well as forty Rps. In fact, Adaa firmly rejected the sub-contractor's approach and literally threw the objects offered to her in Jeronimakis' face. Furious, the Greek sub-contractor did not refrain from his plan, carried out

³⁶⁶ Oetker. *Die Negerseele*, p. 33, cf. pp. 29–36.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Walther. *Sex and Control*, pp. 24–52.

similar assaults and ultimately kidnapped Adaa's brother Degera and threatened to whip both Degera and Adaa with his *kiboko*. Threatened by violence and facing her brother in custody, Adaa finally joined Jeronimakis and became his second *bibi* involuntarily. Those witnesses heard in court, who were not directly employed by Jeronimakis, like his cook or *boy* and who were not of European descent, reported that Adaa had been much too young for any sexual relationship and had suffered throughout her entire forced concubinage with Jeronimakis. These witnesses further reported that after one preceding unsuccessful attempt, Adaa committed suicide as she had probably not seen any other way to escape her bondage with the Greek sub-contractor. Even though almost all witnesses at court testified that Jeronimakis had coerced Adaa into concubinage, Adaa's death as such was not part of the prosecution against the Greek sub-contractor. The only thing pending before the court was the question whether Jeronimakis had had sex with a minor female person and not the question whether he had driven her into suicide. The investigation found that it could not unambiguously ascertain whether Adaa was underaged or not, even when questioning nine witnesses. All the European witnesses and those employed by Jeronimakis judged Adaa to have been fifteen or sixteen years of age and therefore physically mature enough for sexual intercourse. In contrast, the non-European witnesses and those not employed by Jeronimakis claimed predominantly the opposite, saying that Adaa had still been a child and therefore judged any sexual relationship of Adaa as illegitimate. Attempting to clarify the issue, the court sought to exhume the dead body and question Adaa's parents about her date of birth. Whereas the German physician assistant Schreier concluded after the examination of the dead body that Adaa must have been seven or eight years of age only, the questioning of Adaa's father found that she had been sixteen years of age. Given such conflicting views, the court found that it was not able to judge Adaa's age unequivocally and ultimately ruled that Jeronimakis had to pay 100 Rps. indemnity to Adaa's father for his loss.³⁶⁸

Thus, it seems that Europeans working at the *Central Railway* could rather easily get away with serious sexual offences and assaults without any significant consequence. In this respect, Adaa's individual case is probably only the tip of the iceberg, as a 'sexual frontier' was part of the mindset of colonial conquest and only a minority of incidents was ever heard at court.³⁶⁹ At the least, Adaa's case shows that rape, concubinage and sex work are difficult to differentiate in the

³⁶⁸ Cf. TNA. G27/53. Strafsache gegen den Unternehmer Emanuel Jeronimakis, km 592 der Tanga-nyika-Eisenbahn, wegen Verführung [der angeblich minderjährigen Adaa und Verschuldung ihres Selbstmordes]. 1911–1912, pp. 1–14, 20–50.

³⁶⁹ For several legal proceedings due to sexual offences cf. TNA. G21/403. Cf. TNA. G21/680. Strafsache gegen den Landwirt Leopold Hierl, Dabaga bei Iringa [aufgrund einer Strafanzeige des Haupt-

colonial context. As far as the global history of labour is concerned, Adaa's case demonstrates the multifaceted entanglements of labour at the *Central Railway's* construction sites. Adaa came to the railway site to enable and support her brother's work there, just as many other women accompanied men to the railway for this reason. Her experience of sexualised violence and coerced concubinage – by a European who already had another concubine – proves that such practices were widespread at the *Central Railway*, and illustrates the thin line between colonial sex work and rape as part of the 'colonial frontier'. In Adaa's case, it seems her only means of resisting that frontier was the extreme of suicide.

manns Tom v. Prince] wegen Unzucht [mit der minderjährigen Eingeborenen Mdene]. 1899–1900. Cf. TNA. G21/210. Strafsache gegen den ehemaligen Kanzleigehilfen, Heinrich Klemp, Morogoro, wegen Sittlichkeitsverbrechen [an der Tochter des gefangenen Sultans Masudi aus Tabora]. 1908–1911. Cf. G21/271. Ermittlungssache gegen den Zollhilfsbeamten Kurt Robscheit, Daressalaam, wegen Notzucht an der Binti Nasoro. 1909–1910. Cf. TNA. G21/686. Strafsache gegen den italienischen Unternehmer Marras Salvatore, km 412 der Tanganyika-Eisenbahn, wegen versuchter Notzucht und Mißhandlung [der Fatuma]. 1910–1911. Cf. TNA. G21/347. Ermittlungssache gegen den Polizeiwachtmeister Lindner, Daressalaam, wegen Vergewaltigung [der Mwatonya binti Hanyange] 1911. Cf. TNA. G21/428. Ermittlungssache gegen den Gouvernements-Büroassistenten Thurmann Bezirksnebenstelle Kibata, Bez. Kilwa, wegen Notzucht [an der Frau seines Kochs Thumi sowie der Frau des Polizeiwachtmeisters Littmann, Kilwa]. 1912. Cf. TNA. G21/592. Strafsache gegen den Unternehmer Max Miersen, Daressalaam, wegen Versuchter Notzucht [an der Geliebten eines Askaris der 18. Feldkompanie, Habiba binti Mkondo]. 1915–1916. Cf. TNA. G21/644. Ermittlungssache gegen den Stadtkassenbeamten Fernandes Persi, Daressalaam, wegen versuchter Notzucht [an der Andikalo binti Baruti]. 1915.