

# **Spreading the European Model by Military Means? The Legitimization of Colonial Wars and Imperialist Interventions in Great Britain and Germany around 1900**

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## **RESÜMEE**

Dieser Artikel untersucht, welche Funktionen der Verweis auf Europa in den englischen und deutschen Debatten über Kolonialkriege und imperialistische Interventionen um 1900 hatte. Welche Europarepräsentationen dienten den Kriegsbefürwortern als Legitimationsressource, wie instrumentalisierten Kritiker Europabilder, um für ihre politischen Positionen zu werben? So wird etwa gezeigt, wie die Repräsentationen Russlands als mehr oder weniger europäisch dazu dienten, dieses Land als Rivalen oder Kooperationspartner in imperialen Kontexten darzustellen. Im Zentrum des Artikels steht jedoch die Frage, inwieweit Militäreinsätze in der außereuropäischen Welt damit legitimiert wurden, das europäische Modell zu verbreiten (die „Zivilisierungsmission“). Hier ist die zentrale These, dass eine solche Argumentation nur dann eine prominente Rolle spielte, wenn die entsprechenden Militäreinsätze ohnehin populär und erfolgreich waren.

In political terms, the European expansion in the age of empires was the work of single nation states – European imperialism was “merely the sum of individual imperialisms.”<sup>1</sup> Conversely, research on the history of European self-conceptions from a cultural and intellectual history perspective has been able to demonstrate that imperial and colonial contexts were crucial to European representations of the Self and the Other, and that the

1 J. Osterhammel, Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts, München 2009, 682.

imperialist expansion in extra-European world regions was also conceived of and legitimized as a European project.<sup>2</sup> Proceeding from this line of inquiry, this article seeks to examine how the concept of European imperialism influenced political communication in two nation states, namely Great Britain and Germany. Even though the politicians responsible reached decisions about imperial and colonial matters within a national (or international) context, they regularly used representations of the European and the non-European as a resource to justify their actions in public.

What follows is an analysis of the legitimizing function of representations of Europe in the debates surrounding colonial wars and imperialist interventions. It focuses on those military actions which, through the use or the threat of military force, ultimately made imperial rule possible.<sup>3</sup> The legitimacy of these military efforts was a commonly contested issue in public debates around 1900. Representations of Europe could have a variety of functions in these debates about legitimacy, the main types of which shall be enumerated below. In political practice, however, there were always several interwoven patterns of argumentation at play – whenever politicians justified, criticised or demanded a particular decision, consistency in content was not their main concern, as they resorted to any argument that supported their own position. The convolution of different patterns of argumentation will then be addressed in the second part of this essay, which will examine public debates on a number of British and German colonial wars as well as imperialist interventions in the period before and after the turn of the century. The central question is: To what extent did politicians and the pro-colonial press legitimize military actions with the purported aim of transforming non-European regions according to the European model? In this context, both politicians and the press often used “Europe” as a term that was interchangeable with other concepts such as “civilisation” or “culture”, and “Europeans” were synonymous with “whites”.<sup>4</sup> In order to adequately

2 Cf. H. Gollwitzer, *Europabild und Europagedanke. Beiträge zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2. ed., München 1964, 328-332; U. Frevert, *Eurovisionen. Ansichten guter Europäer im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 2003, 78-100; H. Kaelble, *Eine europäische Geschichte der Repräsentationen des Eigenen und des Anderen*, in: J. Baberowski/H. Kaelble/J. Schriewer (eds), *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder. Repräsentationen sozialer Ordnungen im Wandel*, Frankfurt a. M./New York 2008, 67-81, here 69-71.

3 Colonial wars here may refer to the use of military force as a means to maintain rule in a colony or its establishment in territories not yet under control. Imperialist interventions denote military actions in areas not formally part of a colonial empire, in some cases involving the mere threat of force (often with gunships). However it is not possible to always uphold a clear distinction between these phenomena, as military interventions may be a prelude to colonial wars and the expansion of the formally ruled territory. On the phenomenon of colonial war cf. also T. Klein/F. Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege. Militärische Gewalt im Zeichen des Imperialismus*, Hamburg 2006; on the history of informal imperialism cf. J. Gallagher/R. Robinson, *The Imperialism of Free Trade*, in: *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 6 (1953), 1-15; on the history of gunship diplomacy cf. D. R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, New York/Oxford 1981, 19-21.

4 Cf. C. Methfessel, *Europa als Zivilisationsmacht. Kolonialkriege und imperialistische Interventionen in der deutschen und britischen Öffentlichkeit um 1900*, in: F. Bösch/A. Brill/F. Greiner (eds), *Europabilder im 20. Jahrhundert. Entstehung an der Peripherie*, Göttingen 2012, 54-78, esp. 55-57, 63; on the synonymous use of “Europeans” and “whites” in the sciences: V. Lipphardt/K. K. Patel, *Auf der Suche nach dem Europäer. Wissenschaftliche Konstruktionen des Homo Europaeus*, in: *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2007), URL: <<http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2007/Article=204>> (30.09.2012).

analyse representations of Europe, this investigation will thus not merely confine itself to sources making specific mention of “Europe”, but also include those employing terms closely related to Europe.

## 1. Representations of Europe: Function and Form in Debates about Imperial Expansion

At the beginning of colonial wars and imperialist interventions, a clearly formulated imperial programme was usually not at the centre of the media’s attention, which initially focused on reports of endangered fellow countrymen.<sup>5</sup> Politicians and the press subsequently legitimized the ensuing military actions with the protection of compatriots in danger. The distinction between the European and the non-European played a significant role in this process; it was, after all, the threat emanating from what was perceived to be a “barbaric” enemy which made military intervention seem necessary. Hence there was often talk of “Europeans” or “whites” under threat, even in instances where only the members of a single nation were in danger. Uprisings in the colonies regularly began with such reports, but also when fellow nationals were under threat in seemingly uncivilized or semi-civilized states, the imperial powers made military action their prerogative.<sup>6</sup> Military interventions for the protection of Europeans in distress tended to find approval even among critics of colonial policy, which made it easier for governments to commence with the mobilization of troops and press ahead with imperial expansion.

Following the eruption of conflicts, however, the debates about their causes and the political aims of the military actions also ensued. The question arose whether current colonial policy and the conduct of those on the spot were to blame for the escalation, and whether further imperial expansion or a withdrawal from the area in question was the more desirable course of action.

Advocates of imperial expansion often legitimized colonial wars and imperialist interventions with the commitment to the “civilizing mission”<sup>7</sup> or the “cultural obligation” of the “more highly developed states”. The civilizing mission in this case can be understood as the aspiration to spreading the European model throughout the extra-European world.<sup>8</sup> Yet these aspirations had their limitations: at a time when the distinction between Eu-

5 See for example R. H. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880–1918*, Manchester/New York 1994, 129.

6 Cf. from a legal history perspective: J. Fisch, *Die europäische Expansion und das Völkerrecht. Die Auseinandersetzungen um den Status der überseeischen Gebiete vom 15. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart 1984, 307–308.

7 Cf. J. Osterhammel, „The Great Work of Uplifting Mankind“. *Zivilisierungsmission und Moderne*, in: B. Barth/J. Osterhammel (eds), *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Konstanz 2005, 363–425.

8 The representations of Europe as a model in the period under examination differ substantially from those of the European Union in the 1990s. For one they differ in terms of their content, and furthermore the latter mainly had an influence in non-military contexts and played significant role within the framework of EU enlargement in particular. Cf. the article by Andreas Weiß in this volume.

rope and the non-European was conceived of in hierarchical terms and belief in the superiority of European civilization dominated public discourse,<sup>9</sup> it was not to be expected – at least not in the foreseeable future – that the extra-European regions of the world could be placed on an equal footing with Europe by means of an orientation towards the European model (barring the United States and Japan). Indeed, colonial rule and waging wars to maintain it were also legitimized by arguing that it served to raise the “civilizational standards” of the colonized peoples. In the eyes of the colonial rulers, however, this elevation could only be a gradual one – the hierarchy between the European colonial masters and their colonial subjects was to remain in place.

The primary objective was the suppression of customs that were perceived to be uncivilized and running counter to European values. Widespread colonial stereotypes about cannibalism, slave-trade and human sacrifices in Africa were regularly employed as a means to justify imperial expansion.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, colonial rule was also meant to serve the spreading of Christianity, at least in the eyes of some of its supporters.<sup>11</sup> According to the usual line of argumentation, Christianity was not to be spread directly by military means; however the creation of a secure environment was supposed to allow the missionaries to peacefully promote their faith.

Expanding the outreach of European civilization seemed desirable to many at the time, even within the milieu of the German Social Democrats, otherwise fierce opponents of imperialism.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, colonial critics such as the Social Democrats argued that military means were ill-suited for this purpose – even counterproductive – and called for civilization to be spread by peaceful means. And whenever it was possible to point out past transgressions of the colonial administration which could not be reconciled with the idea of the civilizing mission, anti-war critics would invoke them to delegitimize the military effort.

Colonial policy and warfare served to enforce the creation of economic structures that were in tune with European conceptions and wishes. Coercive measures such as the imposition of taxes were often employed in an effort to raise the “working morale” among the colonial subjects or establish one in the first place. In pro-colonial circles, such aims were considered to be part and parcel of the civilizing mission. Supporters of colonial policy for instance claimed that economic reforms would also help improve the standard

9 Cf. H. Kaelble, *Europäer über Europa. Die Entstehung des europäischen Selbstverständnisses im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2001, 27-31; H. Kaelble, *Eine europäische Geschichte* (note 2), 69-71.

10 Cf. A. Porter, *Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery, and Humanitarianism*, in: A. Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 3: *The Nineteenth Century*, Oxford/New York 1999, 198-221.

11 On the connexion between imperial expansion, colonial rule and Christian mission cf. A. Porter, *Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire*, in: A. Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 3 (note 10), 222-246; H. Gründer, *Christliche Mission und deutscher Imperialismus. Eine politische Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen während der deutschen Kolonialzeit (1884–1914) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Afrikas und Chinas*, Paderborn 1982; U. v. d. Heyden/H. Stoecker (eds), *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*, Stuttgart 2000.

12 Cf. H.-C. Schröder, *Sozialismus und Imperialismus. Die Auseinandersetzung der deutschen Sozialdemokratie mit dem Imperialismusproblem und der „Weltpolitik“ vor 1914. Teil I*, Hannover 1968.

of living of the colonized population and contribute to their “civilization”, and the introduction of “legitimate trade” – as an alternative to slavery – in particular was considered to be the essential feature of this “civilization” and a contribution to the overall progress of humanity at large. Thus when it came to legitimizing the war, economic motives and humanitarian rhetoric went hand in hand. However, there were also cases where the pro-war press openly argued that spreading the European economic model in the extra-European world should, above all, serve European interests. This was particularly apparent in cases where some of the war’s proponents openly argued in social-Darwinist terms and would not even claim that colonial rule also served the interests of the colonized population. Rather, they invoked the right of the stronger and called for the suppression, displacement or even eradication of the non-European population. Arguments of this kind commonly surfaced whenever the debate concerned wars in settler colonies.<sup>13</sup>

However, the economic viability of single colonies and the benefits of colonialism as such were far from beyond dispute, and the burden which its costs placed on the taxpayer was among the most commonly raised arguments by opponents of military intervention. Critics would resort to representations of the European and the non-European to delegitimize colonial wars and imperialist interventions when they depicted the regions in question as unattractive and full of difficulties and dangers for the European military. Such depictions often drew on imageries of un-European landscapes<sup>14</sup> and were meant to make expansion into these regions seem undesirable.

Representations of internal European divisions gained currency whenever colonial wars were said to be based on strategic interests. In some cases, ruling over a particular area was less decisive than ensuring they would not be ruled by others. This raises the question of how the depiction of other states could influence public debates. This would not merely involve rivalries, but also the possible desirability of co-operation with other states in the name of imperial expansion as a common European project. These portrayals also dealt with the question of the extent to which these other nations were worthy representatives and spreaders of European civilization. If the actions of a particular state did not appear to meet the demands of civilization, co-operation was less desirable; states were occasionally even characterized as un-European as a means of emphasizing conflicts and rivalries.

Representations of “Europe” and “civilization” not only shaped the debates around the necessity and purpose of military actions but also the acceptability of particular forms of warfare. According to a widespread notion, other forms of warfare that differed from those employed in interstate warfare in Europe were both necessary and legitimate when

13 Cf. B. Barth, Die Grenzen der Zivilisierungsmission. Rassenvorstellungen in den europäischen Siedlungskolonien Virginia, den Burenrepubliken und Deutsch-Südwestafrika, in: B. Barth/J. Osterhammel (eds), *Zivilisierungsmissionen* (note 7), 201-228.

14 Cf. I. Schröder, *Das Wissen von der ganzen Welt. Globale Geographien und räumliche Ordnungen Afrikas und Europas 1790–1870*, Paderborn 2011, 241-260.

fighting non-European adversaries.<sup>15</sup> Critical voices on the other hand called for European values to be upheld even towards “barbarian” adversaries, which for instance included the demand for prisoners or the wounded to be kept alive.

## 2. Legitimization of Imperial Military Interventions in Great Britain and Germany before and after 1900

After having traced the typical patterns of argumentation during the period under examination, their employment in the press and parliamentary debates will now be analysed through individual case studies. These will be confined to British and German military actions from the mid-1890s into the first decade of the twentieth century. Both countries experienced an intensification of imperial expansion during this period. Numerous military actions were to maintain, expand or intensify their rule over the extra-European regions of the world. As will be shown, however, the assessment of the desirability and necessity of military force in the non-European world changed along with the ways in which both supporters and critics of military action employed representations of Europe to make their case.

Great Britain was under the impression of a spirit of imperialistic optimism in the late 1890s. This period in British history has often been portrayed as the high-point of “jingoism”, that particular blend of aggressive nationalism and imperialism which found its expression in popular culture. On the political level, the Unionist government elected in 1895 embodied the new course, personified by the new Colonial Minister Joseph Chamberlain. The numerous colonial wars of this period were popular events; the notion that the military advancement of imperial expansion would be a desirable course of action was widespread. An editorial published in the *Daily Mail* provided the following outlook for the coming year 1897: “There will be fighting in the New Year, of course, for the reconquest of the Sudan awaits us [...]. But a little blood-letting is good for a nation that tends to excess of luxury.”<sup>16</sup>

The abovementioned war in the Sudan (1896–1899) like few others was legitimized by its supporters as a crusade to spread civilization, considering that the adversaries were deemed to be “fanatics” and the regime in the Sudan represented the despotic counter-image of European civilization. Following the public announcement of Anglo-Egyptian military operations, Arthur Balfour addressed the House of Commons to defend this course of action on the government’s behalf, arguing it would be “a gain to civilization that Egyptian influence should be extended southwards.”<sup>17</sup> The *Times* also considered

15 Cf. D. Wünsche, *Feldpostbriefe aus China. Wahrnehmungs- und Deutungsmuster deutscher Soldaten zur Zeit des Boxeraufstandes 1900/1901*, Berlin 2008, 231.

16 A Happy New Year, in: *Daily Mail*, no. 209, 1 Jan. 1897, 4.

17 Hansard Commons, Deb 16 March 1896 vol 38, col 1052.

the planned conquest of the Sudan to be “to the profit of Egypt, of England, and of all civilization.”<sup>18</sup>

However, the war involved actions that were deemed a violation of the values of civilization by parts of the British public. Aside from the killing of enemy wounded, the desecration of the mortal remains of the Mahdi, the Empire’s arch enemy in the Sudan in the 1880s, and the destruction of his tomb caused particular offence and raised serious concerns.<sup>19</sup> To illustrate this controversy, one may consider the press coverage of a parliamentary debate in June 1899 which discussed awarding the sum of 30,000 pounds to the military commander Lord Kitchener in honour of his achievements in the Sudan. The issue of the mistreatment of the Mahdi’s remains was also raised, upon which Arthur Balfour explicitly defended Kitchener on the government’s behalf. The jingoist *Daily Mail* deemed Balfour’s speech to be so compelling that any reasonable person would have to recognize that Kitchener’s course of action was “wise policy”. Indeed, “repulsive to all ideas of our present civilization,”<sup>20</sup> but necessary nonetheless, for otherwise the burial site of the Mahdi would have become the focus of future rebellions. The *Times*, which tended to feature a pro-imperialist and pro-government outlook, also justified the grant, though it argued more cautiously that the destruction of the tomb – whether right or wrong – was “high policy” in any case and stood in no relation to Kitchener’s merits anyhow. It welcomed the grant from the outset, in light of his “services to the Empire and to civilization.”<sup>21</sup>

Both the radical *Reynolds’s Newspaper* and the left-liberal *Manchester Guardian* were of a different view. While each honoured Kitchener’s military achievements despite having opposed the campaign, they wanted the assessment of the tomb’s destruction and the desecration of the Mahdi to be weighted differently. The *Manchester Guardian* for instance stressed the basic principle that wars against “savages” would have to be fought like wars against civilized adversaries, and noted critically the differing perspective of Kitchener’s supporters in parliament: “Because he was a Soudanese fanatic it is assumed that we may treat his tomb as if we too were Soudanese fanatics.”<sup>22</sup>

On the whole however, opponents of the war argued from a defensive position, while its proponents confidently presented the argument that this was a war being waged in the name of civilization. Strategic arguments also played a role, and the pro-colonial press repeatedly pointed out that spreading civilization in the Sudan would simultaneously bring a region with promising economic potential under Anglo-Egyptian rule. This not-

18 The Advance on the Nile, in: *The Times*, no. 34840, 17 Mar. 1896, 9.

19 Cf. H. Cecil, *British Correspondents and the Sudan Campaign of 1896-98*, in: E. M. Spiers (ed.), *Sudan: The Reconquest Reappraised*, London/Portland 1998, 102-127, here 119-123.

20 A Satisfactory Explanation, in: *Daily Mail*, no. 974, 6 Jun. 1899, 4.

21 A Grant to Lord Kitchener, in: *The Times*, no. 35848, 6 Jun. 1899, 11.

22 *The Manchester Guardian*, no. 16481, 6 Jun. 1899, 6-7; *Parliament and the Mahdi’s Head*, in: *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, no. 2548, 11 Jun. 1899, 4.

withstanding, legitimizations of the war mainly focused on the overthrow of “tyranny” or “despotism” in the Sudan and the establishment of a “civilized” government.<sup>23</sup>

This also applies to a number of other wars involving the British Empire during this period, such as the expedition to Benin in 1897 or the colonial war in Sierra Leone in 1898. In both cases it was initially a matter of protecting Europeans or retribution for killed compatriots which played no small part in making the subsequent military reaction appear justified. The expedition to Benin was preceded by a massacre on an unarmed legion that had embarked to meet the ruler of Benin for negotiations. Following the first reports of this incident, the *Daily Mail* demanded revenge, calling for it to be served “coolly, but promptly, and with such severity that these savages shall never dare lay finger on an Englishman again.”<sup>24</sup> The colonial war in Sierra Leone began in a similar fashion, with reports of murdered merchants and missionaries.

In the case of Benin, however, additional older reports detailing the culture of cruelty at the court of the King of Benin and the human sacrifices there lent legitimacy to the actions that were taken against this African ruler.<sup>25</sup> When it came to the war in Sierra Leone, sceptical voices criticized that the misguided policy of introducing the hut tax was responsible for the uprising. Conversely, supporters of colonial policy in Sierra Leone argued that this revolt had been the inevitable outcome of civilization, law and order making inroads into “barbarian” areas. As the further advancement of civilization remained an imperative, however, they called for an intensification of colonial rule in the hinterland – a policy that eventually became prevalent.<sup>26</sup>

The prominent role of the civilizational argument in the British wars before the turn of the century can in part be explained by the fact that these wars were an overall success when viewed from the British Empire’s perspective. Furthermore, they took place at a point in time when imperial expansion and the military actions associated with it enjoyed a considerable degree of popularity among the British public. The Boer War (1899–1902) marked both the high point and turning point of this popularity. Prior to its outbreak, the *Daily Mail* commenced to beat the drums of war with particular vigour, portraying a war between the British Empire, as a representative of civilization, and the Boer republics, which were described as uncivilized, as increasingly unavoidable in order to introduce the rules of civilization across South Africa. Wartime propaganda centred on the disadvantaged position of the British (and other foreigners) in the Boer republics as well as incidents of Boer police violence against fellow nationals.<sup>27</sup> Occurrences of

23 Cf. for example *Smashed*, in: *The Pall Mall Gazette*, no. 10434, 5 Sep. 1898, 1; *The Fall of Omdurman*, in: *The Times*, no. 35613, 5 Sep. 1898, 7; *Lord Kitchener in the Sudan*, in: *The Times*, no. 36921, 10 Nov. 1902, 9.

24 *Daily Mail*, no. 218, 12 Jan. 1897, 4.

25 Cf. A. E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, New Haven/London 1994, 11–28; *An African Monarch and His “Customs”: Superstition and Cruelty*, in: *The Manchester Guardian*, no. 15733, 13 Jan. 1897, 7.

26 Cf. J. D. Hargreaves, *The Establishment of the Sierra Leone Protectorate and the Insurrection of 1898*, in: *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 12 (1956), 56–80.

27 Cf. for example *Daily Mail*, no. 236, 2 Feb. 1897, 4: “Two Englishmen expelled, robbed and starved by Transvaal black police already”. This report was to be denied at a later date.

this kind played no small part in the British media's depiction of the Boers as uncivilized (though European) and perceptions of the war's legitimacy. Yet the war became increasingly less popular as the military effort wore on and grew ever more costly and thus contributed to an overall decline in the degree of approval for imperial expansion.<sup>28</sup> Germany too was in the midst of a new phase of imperial expansion during this period. Both past commentators and current research view the late 1890s as the beginning of the new "Weltpolitik" (world politics). Voices demanding a more active policy "overseas" began to multiply from 1895 onwards;<sup>29</sup> in 1896 Kaiser Wilhelm II announced his empire's new claim to becoming a world power;<sup>30</sup> in 1897 the new agenda eventuated a change in personnel when Bernhard von Bülow was appointed Foreign Secretary and Alfred von Tirpitz became Secretary of State of the German Imperial Naval Office. While the early beginnings of "Weltpolitik" certainly struck a chord among parts of the public, they neither aroused overwhelming enthusiasm nor unanimous exaltation. This had less to do with the concrete, rather small-scale military actions with a successful outcome in the second half of the 1890s than with the costly build-up of the naval fleet. Long and tedious negotiations were necessary before the government could finally drum up a majority in the Reichstag and pass the First Navy Bill in 1898, and the National Liberals, the only party to offensively campaign on the back of its support for Weltpolitik sustained an electoral defeat in the 1898 Reichstag elections.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the government was able to secure the support of both the majority of the Reichstag and the press for the German Reich's military interventions in Haiti and China in 1897. It was of particular significance that the government deployed gunships for the protection of fellow countrymen in both cases and simultaneously seized upon these interventions to underscore its own claim to becoming a world power with national pathos. Following the intervention in China, which was sparked off by the killings of two missionaries, the territory that came to be known as the colony of "Kiao-chau" was annexed in 1898. The German government was able to act as the protector of the missionaries, which ensured the approval of the Catholic Centre Party, while the hopes invested in the future of the Chinese market allowed it to mobilize supporters from various political camps, even among left-wing liberals who were generally critical of colonial policy.<sup>32</sup>

28 Cf. I. Sharpe, *The Liberal Party and the South African War 1899–1902*, in: *Journal of Liberal Democrat History*, 29 (2000), 3–8; K. O. Morgan, *The Boer War and the Media (1899–1902)*, in: *20th Century British History*, 13 (2002), 1–16, esp. 9–12.

29 Cf. K. Canis, *Von Bismarck zur Weltpolitik. Deutsche Außenpolitik 1890 bis 1902*, Berlin 1997, 225.

30 *Rede Wilhelms II. über Deutschland als Weltreich (1896)*, in: R. vom Bruch/B. Hofmeister (eds), *Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellung*, vol. 8: *Kaiserreich und Erster Weltkrieg 1871–1918*, Stuttgart 2000, no. 65, 266–267.

31 Cf. B. Fairbairn, *Democracy in the Undemocratic State: The German Reichstag Elections of 1898 and 1903*, Toronto 1997, 166.

32 Cf. *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. IX. Legislaturperiode. V. Session 1897/98*, vol. 159, 6 Dec. 1897, Berlin 1898, 60; *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. IX. Legislaturperiode. V. Session 1897/98*, vol. 160, Berlin 1898, 892–937; A. Vagts, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten in der Weltpolitik*, Vol. 2, London 1935, 1708–1724; K. Canis, *Von Bismarck zur Weltpolitik* (note 29), 268–271.

When the Boxer War began in summer 1900 and Beijing's diplomatic quarter came under siege, politicians and the media in England and Germany justified their military actions as a "punitive crusade in the name of civilization".<sup>33</sup> Rescuing Europeans in danger and taking revenge for murdered Europeans stood at the centre of the war's legitimization. Beyond this, the military actions of the imperialist states were meant to ensure that China's future development would also proceed according to European designs. Writing in the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, the German novelist Dagobert von Gerhardt-Amyntor stipulated that the "bloody seeds" of the uprising would bear the "harvest" of an advanced stage in development, "not only for the civilized nations, but also for the yellow men themselves."<sup>34</sup>

Faced with a common enemy, English and German newspapers called for co-operation between the states which were actively engaged on Chinese soil, and appeals of this kind were often addressed to "Europe"<sup>35</sup> whenever the press demanded unity among the enemies of China – even though the military coalition included not only six European states but also Japan and the United States. At the same time, calls for European co-operation were often coupled with criticism of individual states. English media pundits tended to be particularly adamant in their criticism of the traditional rival Russia, and occasionally went as far as to call for its exclusion from the European community. According to one racist pattern of argumentation that came to be employed in this context, the Russian Tsars had Mongolian blood pumping through their veins and therefore did not belong to Europe but stood in closer relation to the Chinese race instead.<sup>36</sup>

Generally speaking, the necessity of the war against China was rarely in dispute. Indeed, as in the previously mentioned controversies surrounding the British campaign in the Sudan, reports of lootings and massacres led critics to question whether the conduct of European troops did justice to the demands of their own civilization. Essentially, however, only a small minority called the necessity of the war into doubt. In Germany's

33 T. Klein, *Straffeldzug im Namen der Zivilisation: Der „Boxerkrieg“ in China (1900–1901)*, in: T. Klein/F. Schumacher (eds), *Kolonialkriege* (note 3), 145–181. On the Boxer War in the media and parliamentary debates cf. also U. Wieland/M. Kaschner, *Die Reichstagsdebatten über den deutschen Kriegseinsatz in China: August Bebel und die „Hunnenbriefe“*, in: S. Kuß/B. Martin (eds), *Das Deutsche Reich und der Boxeraufstand*, München 2002, 183–201; T. Trampedach, „Yellow Peril“? German Public Opinion and the Chinese Boxer Movement, in: *Berliner China Hefte*, 23 (2002), 71–81; T. Klein, *Propaganda und Kritik. Die Rolle der Medien*, in: M. Leutner/K. Mühlhahn (eds), *Kolonialkrieg in China. Die Niederschlagung der Boxerbewegung 1900–1901*, Berlin 2007, 173–180; Lu Yixu, *Germany's War in China: Media Coverage and Political Myth*, in: *German Life and Letters*, 61 (2008), 202–214; C. Methfessel, „Oxident gegen Orient“. *Europabilder in der Berliner Morgenpost während des Boxerkriegs*, in: *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2009), URL: <<http://www.europa.clio-online.de/2009/Article=425>> (30.09.2012).

34 D. von Gerhardt-Amyntor, *Wer ist schuld am chinesischen Aufstand?*, in: *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, no. 328, 17 Jul. 1900.

35 On Europe as a term and authority for appeal cf. P. R. Blum, *Europa – ein Appellbegriff*, in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 43 (2001), 149–171; J. Requate/M. Schulze Wessel, *Europäische Öffentlichkeit: Realität und Imagination einer Appellationsinstanz*, in: J. Requate/M. Schulze Wessel (eds), *Europäische Öffentlichkeit. Transnationale Kommunikation seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2002, 11–42.

36 Cf. *Are Russians Akin to Chinese? Why the Czar may Become the Chief Power in China*, in: *Daily Express*, no. 68, 11 Jul. 1900, 6; Alberti, *Conrad, Pariser Chronik [Ein welthistorischer Reifall. – Leder und Lieder]*, in: *Berliner Morgenpost*, no. 147, 27 Jun. 1900.

case, the costly deployment of a large contingent of troops was among the main reasons for the dwindling popularity of the military effort. Although the German government initially enjoyed considerable support for its war strategy, the German troops did not arrive in China until after the high point of the war and the siege of Beijing was already over. Hence the deployment of large numbers of soldiers aroused little excitement and the “China mood” (“Chinastimmung”) subsided.<sup>37</sup>

Thus attitudes towards colonial wars and imperialist interventions in Great Britain and Germany became subject to change around the turn of the century. Military interventions in the non-European world grew increasingly unpopular – one may even speak of an intermittent crisis of colonial and imperial policy in both states. In Great Britain’s case, the Boer War from 1899 to 1902 led to uncertainties with regard to its imperial self-image. Particularly the “War Stories Scandal” over corruption during the war tarnished the reputation of the Unionist government.<sup>38</sup>

Debates surrounding other imperial issues also came to undermine the government’s popularity: The employment of Chinese contract labourers in South Africa caused public outrage in England and led to a long-lasting debate that contributed to the Unionist government’s subsequent electoral defeat. This also holds true for the actions of Chamberlain, who publicly campaigned for an imperial policy of protectionism. Protective tariffs were unpopular in England, and the differences in opinion on this imperial issue within the Conservative Party weakened it further.<sup>39</sup> Against this backdrop, it was a widespread notion within government circles that the public could not be expected to overwhelmingly approve of additional colonial wars.<sup>40</sup> When it came to military actions in the extra-European world nonetheless, government officials and the pro-colonial press tended to argue from a much more defensive position in their justifications than before 1900. As for the Liberal government, which came to replace the Unionist cabinet in 1905, imperial events and developments may not have contributed to a kind of permanent crisis as it had been experienced by their predecessors, however it too sought to avoid military actions outside of Europe or keep them contained – an aggressive form of imperialism remained unpopular.

Henceforth the argument of the civilizing mission lost its former pull when it came to British colonial wars. During the expeditions in Somalia from 1901 to 1904 against an enemy referred to as the “Mullah”, this kind of argumentation did not even feature in the pro-imperial press, even though the Mullah was compared to the former adversary in

37 According to the assessment of the German officer and doctor Georg Hillebrecht, who was deployed in China, on 6 December 1900 during his perusal of newspapers from home, cf. A. E. Eckl (ed.), „Man wird wohl später sich schämen müssen, in China gewesen zu sein.“ Tagebuchaufzeichnungen des Assistenzarztes Dr. Georg Hillebrecht aus dem Boxerkrieg 1900–1902, Essen 2006, 168.

38 Cf. F. Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse. Skandale, Politik und Medien in Deutschland und Großbritannien 1880–1914*, München 2009, 256–262.

39 Cf. J. D. Startt, *Journalists for Empire: The Imperial Debate in the Edwardian Stately Press, 1903–1913*, New York/London 1991, 31–105.

40 Cf. P. Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa: The First Full Account of the British Invasion of Tibet in 1904*, London 1961, 96.

the Sudan. Strategic considerations (i.e. the proximity to Aden) were at the forefront of the military action, and those defending this unpopular expedition in public placed particular emphasis on the promise of protecting allied tribes. Even the pro-colonial press did not call for an expansion into inner Somalia to spread “European civilization” there. While the Daily Mail demanded reinforcements as a reaction to a defeat in Somalia in October 1902, it also came to describe Somalia as “one of the least desirable countries on the face of the earth.”<sup>41</sup> Opponents of the military effort seized upon this representation of Somalia as an unattractive region for European to call for a termination of the expeditions. Even the Conservative Prime Minister Arthur Balfour served to reinforce these representations when he declared in a speech in November 1902: “Waterless wastes and nomad fanatics have always been difficult problems to deal with since the very dawn of civilized communities.” At the same time, he described the intervention as less important. The Manchester Guardian promptly followed up on his statements:

*As Mr. Balfour attaches no importance to the ‘nomad fanatics’ in his ‘waterless wastes’, he surely ought to put a stop to the expenditure of British money on further attempts to catch this fanatic.*<sup>42</sup>

While the war against Tibet in 1903/4<sup>43</sup> was also meant to force the Tibetans into upholding a trade agreement signed in 1890 and thereby incorporate Tibet into the global world economy under European domination, this argument was never the decisive one for its proponents – it proved itself ineffective and even met with public ridicule. A cartoon appearing in Punch depicted Britain as a lion, proclaiming “I’ve come to bring you the blessings of Free Trade,” upon which Tibet, represented by a llama, replies: “I’m a protectionist. Don’t want ‘em.”<sup>44</sup> Punch effectively equated Tibet’s position with the political position of Chamberlain; hence Tibet’s refusal to embrace free trade hardly appeared as a legitimate reason for war. Indeed, this satirical equation should not be overrated, however even in the political debate opponents of the war came to describe the Tibetans as a people who had a right to be left in peace. The government and the pro-war press thus placed less emphasis on spreading free trade and highlighted the threat emanating from Russian activities in Tibet to make the case for war. A commentary published in The Times on 16 January 1904 read:

*We have the treaty rights beyond all question, but it is more than likely that the urgency of enforcing them has been brought home to us by our knowledge that as a fact Russian intrigue has been busy in Tibet for some years past.*<sup>45</sup>

41 The Somaliland Reverse, in: Daily Mail, no. 2029, 20 Oct. 1902, 4.

42 International Politics. Speech of Mr. Balfour. A Possible Future Menace of Peace. The Continent and Great Britain. Plea for a Better Understanding. The Preservation of the Concert of Europe, in: The Manchester Guardian, no. 17552, 11 Nov. 1902, 7. For the editorial comment on this speech: The Manchester Guardian, no. 17553, 12 Nov. 1902, 4.

43 On the depiction of this war in the media cf. G. R. Wilkinson, ‘There is No More Stirring Story’: The Press Depiction and Images of War during the Tibet Expedition 1903–1904, in: War & Society, 9 (1991), 1–16.

44 Printed in P. Fleming, Bayonets to Lhasa (note 40), 96.

45 The Advance into Tibet, in: The Times, no. 37292, 16 Jan. 1904, 11; cf. also The Tibetan Debate, in: The Times, no. 37368, 14 Apr. 1904, 7.

Once again, Russia appeared as a partly Asian power. This time however it was not the Tsar's family which came to embody this Asian element: Dorzhiev, a man from Central Asia who was active in Tibet and considered a Russian spy was cast in this role, although his significance was extremely overrated by both the English political establishment and the public. While the actual insignificance of Russian activities was revealed upon the conclusion of the Tibet War, the expedition's success served to legitimize the British course of action.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, supporters of the action were cautious in their argumentation when it came to the question of further expanding the outreach of European civilization – the *Times* for instance wrote that it was up to the Tibetan rulers to decide whether Tibet opened itself up to European tourists.<sup>47</sup>

The fact that, unlike British military actions before 1900, exporting the European model by force played no role in either of these two wars certainly also had something to do with their particular political and geographical contexts. Indeed, during the war against the Sultanate of Sokoto, which ended in 1903 and was more comparable to the wars before 1900, the *Times* justified the intervention with the spreading of civilization and the overthrow of a ruler whom it described as a tyrant. At the same time, however, it pointed out that this war had barely cost anything and that a direct form of British rule in this region had not been planned.<sup>48</sup> The *Times* thus pursued a more cautious line of argumentation than in previous pledges for imperial expansion and an intensification of colonial rule in the name of the civilizing mission before 1900.

This defensive stance of British imperial policy in the first decade of the twentieth century also manifested itself in the public portrayal of British and Russian interventions in the Persian Civil War in 1909. Moreover, the Tsarist Empire no longer appeared as the rival of the British Empire as it had been the case during the wars in China and Tibet. Two years earlier, both states had negotiated a settlement concerning imperial points of contention in Asia. Great Britain, which had previously sympathised with the reform-oriented opposition, and Russia, whose traditional policy had been to support the reactionary Shah, agreed upon a common course of action.<sup>49</sup> This co-operation was by no means beyond dispute; there were critics in Great Britain who alleged that the government was merely supporting Russian ambitions by co-operating with the Tsarist Empire, keeping the Shah in office as a puppet and suppressing the opposition. The *Times* on the other hand did its utmost to back the pro-Russian course of Foreign Secretary Edward Grey. The fact that Russia was actually beginning to reconsider its previous support for the Shah at the time – albeit hesitantly – worked out in its favour.

Generally speaking, the *Times* upheld the principle of non-intervention and argued that Great Britain and Russia were only militarily involved in Persia to protect the lives of foreign nationals who were in harm's way. Nevertheless, it welcomed the pressure from

46 Cf. P. Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa* (note 40), 78-86, 234, 239.

47 *The Tibetan Mission*, in: *The Times*, no. 37484, 27 Aug. 1904, 7.

48 Cf. *Nigeria*, in: *The Times*, no. 37332, 3 Mar. 1904, 9.

49 Cf. F. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914: A Study in Imperialism*, New Haven/London 1968, 448-580.

both imperial powers, which led the Shah to declare in May 1909 that he would be prepared to hold elections. The opposition continued its struggle nonetheless, and the Times followed these developments with scepticism. While it supported the constitutional development in Persia, it insisted on the inclusion of the Shah (and Russia) in this process and expressed concerns that the demands made by the opposition were too radical. According to the Times, parliamentary institutions needed time to develop:

*That has been illustrated in a remarkable fashion by the very real authority, and yet wider influence, which have been acquired by the remodelled Russian Duma. The great point is to have such institutions firmly established in some shape. Once the plant has taken root, it will grow with healthy vigour, provided that it be given time. Attempts to force it, as the history of the first and second Dumas and that of the first Mejliss again show, are seldom judicious. [...] They sought to apply in practice the extreme consequences of the democratic theories they had imbibed from their Western teachers, and they sought to do this amongst populations, to whose ideas and traditions those theories were altogether foreign.<sup>50</sup>*

Such a comparison between Persia and Russia, in which the Tsarist Empire appeared as merely one step ahead on the path of the Western model, proved to be an exception in the commentaries published by the Times during the Persian crisis in 1909. However, when a month later Russian parliamentarians visited England, the reforms in Russia were the main argument the Times used to promote sympathies for Russia. Prior to the meeting between the King of England and the Tsar, the latter was lauded by the Times for having introduced a constitution. At the same time, these comments also reveal the difference between the images of Russia and Persia as they appeared in the Times. A commentary published on 24 June viewed the Russian development as a shift towards (re-)Europeanization:

*It means a new Russia in place of the old – or rather it means a Russia returning to those old principles of tempered liberty which the greatest of Russian communities shared with their brethren in the West of Europe, before the long night of the Tartar invasion overshadowed their land. The Emperor, who has voluntarily opened the way to that happy restoration, has deserved well of his people, and his people and his people's representatives know that it is so.<sup>51</sup>*

When it came to Persia on the other hand, the Times deemed the electoral law that was announced by the cabinet of the Shah “a daring provision in an Oriental country where representative government is still in its infancy” just one month earlier.<sup>52</sup>

50 The Shah and his Counsellors, in: The Times, no. 38963, 19 May 1909, 11. On the reforms in Russia cf. Benjamin Beuerle's article in this volume.

51 Our Russian Guests, in: The Times, no. 38994, 24 Jun. 1909, 11.

52 The Shah and his Counsellors, in: The Times, no. 38963, 19 May 1909, 11.

Within the context of its coverage of events in Persia, however, the Times tended to portray Russia as the imperial protector of foreign nationals in Persia. As the oppositional forces continued their advance and were closing in on Tehran, Russia also redeployed troops in proximity of the capital, though it affirmed that this was merely a precautionary measure to protect the lives and property of foreign nationals if necessary. Contrary to mistrustful voices in parliament, the Times sided with Foreign Secretary Grey and affirmed its confidence in the intentions of the Russians. A commentary from 7 July mentioned the “Europeans” on four occasions, claiming they were now being protected by Russia just as Great Britain had previously done in the south of Persia.<sup>53</sup>

As was the case in Great Britain, the German military actions that followed after the turn of the century were also less popular there than the two imperial interventions that ushered in the beginning of Weltpolitik in 1897. The joint German-British intervention in Venezuela (1902/3) was unpopular in both countries, albeit for different reasons. The English media were particularly concerned about the reaction of the United States, while the co-operation with Germany was met with harsh criticism. When Germany proceeded to bombard Venezuelan forts in January 1903, the English press was indignant at the aggressive behaviour of the Germans.<sup>54</sup> In Germany on the other hand, criticism mainly centred on the lack of success. Nationalist circles in particular criticized Germany’s decision to yield to American pressure and accept a US-backed solution to the conflict by referring it to arbitration.<sup>55</sup>

Following the outbreak of an uprising in South-West Africa in 1904, colonial wars became a fiercely debated issue in Germany over the next few years.<sup>56</sup> Yet another uprising had occurred in East Africa that following year, still the debate mainly centred on the war in South-West Africa. Initially the government could count on the Reichstag’s approval of the military interventions – after all, their primary purpose was to provide protection for the Europeans living there. As the wars turned out to be both lengthy and costly, however, they became increasingly unpopular over time and came to represent a failure of German colonial policy. Moreover, numerous colonial scandals involving abuses of authority and violent excesses were exposed at the time and tarnished the reputation of German colonial policy even further.<sup>57</sup> Beyond this, the genocidal character of warfare practised by German troops also drew criticism. As in the aforementioned cases, colonial-

53 The Troubles in Persia, in: *The Times*, no. 39005, 7 Jul. 1909, 9.

54 Cf. *The „Admiral of the Atlantic“ at Work*, in: *Daily Mail*, no. 2112, 24 Jan. 1903, 4; cf. also D. Geppert, *Pressekriege. Öffentlichkeit und Diplomatie in den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen (1896–1912)*, München 2007, 183–189.

55 Cf. M. Czaja, *Die USA und ihr Aufstieg zur Weltmacht um die Jahrhundertwende. Die Amerikaperzeption der Parteien im Kaiserreich*, Berlin 2006, 303–324.

56 On the public debates over the war in German South-West Africa cf. H. W. Smith, *The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation: Notes on Debates in the German Reichstag Concerning Southwest Africa, 1904–14*, in: S. Friedrichsmeyer/S. Lennox/S. Zantop (eds), *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, Ann Arbor 1998, 107–123; S. Kuß, *Deutsches Militär auf kolonialen Kriegsschauplätzen. Eskalation von Gewalt zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 2010, 348–351.

57 Cf. Bösch, *Öffentliche Geheimnisse* (note 38), 288–310.

sceptic voices alleged that this signified a violation of their own culture.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, the scandals and the rising cost of these military endeavours were of greater importance when it came to the dwindling popularity of German colonial policy.

Whenever proponents of German colonial policy called for perseverance, arguments alluding to a civilizing mission did not feature prominently. References to the civilizing role of Germany would likely have been inopportune, considering that German colonial policy regularly faced allegations of officials and settlers on the spot acting contrary to all principles of European civilization in the aftermath of the colonial scandals. In the Reichstag debate of 30 January 1905, the left-liberal delegate Schrader spoke of “particular actions of the civilized populations” towards the African population with “did not always have a civilizing, but sometimes rather uncivilizing effect.”<sup>59</sup> In cases where proponents of the war commended the “cultural work” of the settlers, they were not referring to their civilization of the native peoples but their work on the land instead. Colonial supporters denied the insurgent Herero the capability of contributing to the economic development in South-West Africa themselves and thus derived the right of the Germans to dispossess the land of the Africans.<sup>60</sup>

While the Christianization of Africa continued to play a central role for the Centre Party, this made it an outsider among the war’s proponents. In light of the increasing conflicts between missionaries on one side and the colonial administration and settlers on the other, the Christian mission was no longer considered to be the precursor to colonial expansion – as during the intervention in China in 1897 – but an obstacle instead. When the director of the colonial department Stuebel came to address the conflict of interest between settlers and missionaries, he made it clear that this mainly concerned “an area where Germans can live and attain wealth. This is surely the main purpose of colonization.”<sup>61</sup> Some newspapers went even further, alleging that the mission in South-West Africa had failed, as Africans who had converted to Christianity had also participated in the uprising against German rule.<sup>62</sup>

Proponents of the war thus tended to focus on arguments of an economic nature and emphasized the potential for development of the German colonies. In response to criticism from the Social Democratic camp, the conservative delegate Arendt contended that “South-West Africa is not a worthless field of sand”.<sup>63</sup> Justifications invoking the civilizing mission could only appear at the margins in this frame of argumentation, for instance when the conservative delegate Liebermann v. Sonneberg described the aim of German colonial policy in the Reichstag on 31 January 1905 in the following manner:

58 Cf. “Ich, der große General!” Trotha gegen Bülow, in: Berliner Morgenpost, no. 191, 16 Aug. 1905.

59 Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. XI. Legislaturperiode. I. Session 1904/05, vol. 202, 30 Jan. 1905, Berlin 1905, 4121.

60 Die Ursachen des Aufstandes der Herero. I., in: Kölnische Zeitung, no. 488, 13.05.1904, Morgen-Ausgabe.

61 Stenographische Berichte, vol. 202 (note 59), 30 Jan. 1905, 4108.

62 Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. XI. Legislaturperiode. I. Session 1904, vol. 199, 17 Mar. 1904, Berlin 1904, 1892; Aus dem Hererolande IV., in: Kölnische Zeitung, no. 330, 1 Apr. 1904, Beilage zur Morgen-Ausgabe.

63 Stenographische Berichte, vol. 202 (note 59), 30 Jan. 1905, 4106.

*When we obtain and conquer a colony with German blood, then we do not want to turn it into a nursery for the natives but further the interests of our fellow nationals there first and foremost while slowly raising the moral standards of the native peoples by accustoming them to regular work on the farms.<sup>64</sup>*

Indeed, in his first speech following his appointment as State Secretary for the Colonies on 28 November 1906, Bernhard Dernburg professed his support for the missionaries, describing them as one of the “bases from which European culture can advance.”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, he argued that Germany was securing the preservation of European rule over the extra-European world through its wars:

*All colonizing nations of Europe are solidly united with regard to their policy towards natives. They all base their power on the same means or the same lack of means and replace them with authority. Now, if a power such as Germany – which is considered to be a military power, and justifiably so – panders to the Hottentotten, then it is a matter of course that this would shatter the position of every colonizing nation in Africa.<sup>66</sup>*

The main part of his speech however was devoted to the promise of preventing abuses of authority in the future and bringing the colonies onto a more successful course in economic terms. Indeed, this particular pledge for reform played no small part in securing an electoral success for the pro-colonial parties in the 1907 Reichstag elections.<sup>67</sup>

### 3. Concluding Remarks

The aim of this investigation was to determine the functions of representations of Europe when it came to the legitimization of colonial wars and imperialist interventions. As it has been shown, both proponents and opponents of colonialism came to invoke Europe or civilization time and again in the political debates over military actions. For instance, in both Great Britain and Germany the argument that military action served to protect the lives of Europeans in harm's way was virtually uncontested. Colonial critics on the other hand could repeatedly point out that the conduct of the troops stood in contradiction to European values and civilization. Nevertheless, while news reports detailing massacres and other misdeeds of the military could be cause for public outrage in the short-term, they barely affected the general approval for the military actions. Despite the controversies surrounding the methods and conduct of the Commander-in-Chief Lord Kitchener, the campaign in the Sudan ranked among the most popular British colonial wars. In the German debate concerning the suppression of the uprising in South-West

64 Ibid., 31 Jan. 1905, 4160.

65 Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags. XI. Legislaturperiode. II. Session 1905/1906, vol. 218, 28 Nov. 1906, Berlin 1906, 3962.

66 Ibid., 3967.

67 Cf. F. Bösch, Öffentliche Geheimnisse (note 38), 306.

Africa, the cost of the war and the economic future of the colony were the main points of contention, not the means of warfare.

Even when the English press reported on co-operation and conflicts with other imperialist states, representations of the European and the non-European came to be employed. During the Boxer War in 1900/01 and the military operation against Tibet in 1903/04, English newspapers would occasionally portray Russia as a partly Asian power, while the *Times* described the Tsarist Empire as the protector of Europeans abroad in its commentaries on the interventions in the Persian Civil War in 1909. This line of argumentation was bolstered by the fact that Russia itself was pursuing a course of political reform that followed the West-European example.<sup>68</sup>

While representations of Europe came to be employed for the aforementioned political purposes throughout the period in question, the role of the civilizing mission and the exportation of the European model when it came to the legitimization of colonial wars and imperialist interventions was subject to change. This was neither the result of a changing European self-conception nor a critical re-examination of European civilization as a model example, but of altering patterns of perception regarding imperial and colonial policy in Great Britain and Germany. Under the banner of an imperial spirit of optimism, politicians and the media in Great Britain uniformly legitimized the use of military force with the professed aim of spreading civilization up until 1900 (regardless of the real political motives and the impact of the policies in the colonies). Once imperial military actions and the associated costs in particular became increasingly unpopular in the first decade of the twentieth century, arguments invoking the civilizing mission ceased to play a significant role. Instead, both politicians and the pro-war press emphasized the necessity of these actions and the defensive alignment of British imperial policy.

At a time when voices calling for a more active “*Weltpolitik*” grew louder in Germany, the government not only legitimized the military intervention in China in 1897 and the subsequent annexation of the colony Kiao-chau with arguments of an economic nature but also with the protection of the Christian mission. However, once military actions in the extra-European world came to be discussed more controversially since the autumn of 1900 and during the wars in Africa from 1904 to 1907 in particular, the civilizing mission no longer played a significant role as a basis for legitimization, just as in Great Britain. In contrast to the British case however, supporters of colonial policy in Germany were not as defensive in their argumentation and stressed the limited aims of the wars. Instead they called for an intensification of the military effort and colonial policy and primarily justified this aim with the economic interests of Germany.

In summary, the legitimization of colonial wars and imperialist interventions with arguments in accordance with a civilizing mission tended to be made in cases where the military efforts proved successful and the associated policy was popular anyhow. However, when wars lasted longer than expected and support dwindled, the exportation of the Eu-

68 On the reforms in Russia cf. Benjamin Beuerle's article in this volume.

European model hardly played a role in their legitimization anymore. Instead, proponents of military action in Great Britain pointed out the strategic or political necessity of these interventions, while their German counterparts appealed to the population's economic self-interest.