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A Holy Alliance of Colonizing Powers: The Interwar Period

In what place and time did Eurafrica emerge? Let us begin our account at the end of World War I and in the border area along the Western front where millions died in the worst armed conflict in human history to that point. Thousands of acres of graveyards along the old frontline today testify to this near-total collapse of European civilization. Most of the buried were British, French and German. But hundreds of thousands of conscripted soldiers and servicemen from the empires of France and Britain, men of all colours and from all continents, were also recruited to the trenches that diagonally divided European soil from Oostende to Strasbourg. World War I is usually interpreted as a European conflict that expanded into global war. But it was also an event that brought the conflicts of global imperialism back to Europe.

Encapsulated in this situation were some of the key issues that, over the next few decades, would blend into the creation of Eurafrica as a historical entity and political project. Before exploring how these issues developed in their historical and political circumstances, it is useful to lift them out of context and identify them, since they will appear frequently in the following pages.

A first theme to extract is Europe's sense of racial superiority over Africans. Roughly one million soldiers born in the colonies fought on the French and British sides in World War I.¹ European politicians and diplomats of the time negotiated on how to minimize the visibility of black and Arab troops, both during the war itself and in the French

¹ Keith L. Nelson, 'The "Black Horror on the Rhine": Race as a factor in post-World War I diplomacy', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 42, No. 4, 1970, pp. 609–12.

postwar occupation of the Rhineland and the Ruhr region. Even if no formal agreement was reached, a gentlemen's understanding prevailed to the extent that all involved found the idea of African presence in Europe repulsive.²

A second theme consists of the concrete plans for European integration that emerged in the war's aftermath. The political errors committed by all sides, in addition to the horrendous human sacrifices that ensued, apparently spelled 'the decline of the West', as Oswald Spengler put it. This sense of impotency, destruction and doom, or the uneasy sense that Europe, as Robert Musil quipped in 1922, was 'helpless', gave rise to a utopian wish of unification as a way of rejuvenating the European 'spirit' and regaining its economic and cultural vitality.³ One of the staunchest defenders of unification was Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, founder of the Pan-European movement. 'Out of the terrifying crisis in which Germany and France are locked today, they will either emerge as united Europeans – or they will, biting at each others' throats, bleed to death from their mutually inflicted wounds', he stated in 1923.⁴ For the initiator of *Paneuropa* – which was at once a book, a journal, a movement and an idea – the need to overcome the French–German conflict and peacefully share the benefits of the resource-rich border area was the first of two key reasons that would make the continent's leaders realize the necessity of European integration, the second one being, as we shall see, the benefits of a joint exploitation of Africa.

Indeed, the war's end also provoked renewed interest in geopolitical scale. Whereas the overhaul of the international system after the war propelled the United States and, soon too, the Soviet Union to global might, the Treaty of Versailles divested Germany of its colonial

² Christian Koller, 'Von Wilden aller Rassen niedergemetzelt': Die Diskussion um die Verwendung von Kolonialtruppen in Europa zwischen Rassismus, Kolonial- und Militärpolitik, 1914–1930 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001), pp. 53–63, 82–3.

³ Robert Musil, 'Helpless Europe: A digressive journey', in Musil, *Precision and Soul: Essays and Addresses*, in Burton Pike and David S. Luft (eds and trans.) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 116–33.

⁴ Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Paneuropa* (1923, 2nd edn, Vienna and Leipzig: Paneuropa-Verlag, 1926), pp. 107–22.

possessions, which by international mandate were now placed under French, British, South African and Belgian administration. These mutations of the global order fuelled a geopolitical discourse about the political and economic sustainability of Germany and Europe in the new global competition, and many of the continent's politicians and thinkers issued demands for returning to Germany its colonial hinterland. Not surprisingly, geopolitics flourished especially in Germany, as it came to address the predicament of a nation deprived of its imperial scale, or *Lebensraum*. To make things worse, the homeland itself had been amputated from some of its regions and was partly occupied. The outrage against black and Arab troops on German soil attains an additional dimension against this background. From having been a nation that colonized Africa, Germany perceived itself as being colonized by Africans.⁵

As a fourth major theme, the postwar situation exposed the contradiction between the ideals of national autonomy and the realities of colonial dominance. In fulfilment of Woodrow Wilson's fourteen-point plan, a number of European peoples and nations formerly under the imperial rule of Wilhelmine Germany and Habsburg Austria were rewarded with independence by the victors. The peace treaty also safeguarded Belgium and France's territorial sovereignty. Independence stopped short outside Europe, however. Wilson's principles of national autonomy remained unrealized in Europe's overseas colonies. As the colonial troops of the British and French empires returned, they could not understand and much less accept why they should be denied the very freedoms they had struggled to secure for Belgians, French, Serbs, Poles and other European nations. These seeds of anti-colonialism were soon to sprout and grow.

Thus, the aftermath of World War I saw Europeans making more anxious assertions of racial superiority against Africans and other non-Europeans, a number of European plans for economic integration

⁵ Dirk van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt: Deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2005), p. 118.

and political unification, a geopolitical discourse that sought to redress the lack of territorial scale felt by many European nations (Germany in particular), and a deepening contradiction between national autonomy and colonial dominance. These four themes were preconditions of the Eurafrican idea, which promised to resolve in one stroke many of the problems facing Europe in its prolonged period of imperial decline. From the peak of colonial imperialism around 1914 to the demise of the system around 1960, references to Eurafrica multiplied in European politics and culture. In the final years of colonialism Eurafrica was politically realized precisely because it provided an advantageous rearrangement not only of Europe's struggling economy but also of its relation to colonized Africa and of its geopolitical situation in an emerging Cold War context. At the same time Eurafrica provided an apparent and attractive resolution of the contradiction between national autonomy and colonial dominance: Eurafrica was presented as a way of moving beyond both colonialism and national independence in Africa while at the same time securing Europe's grip on the continent's assets and resources.

The black horror

Let us now turn to discussing how these issues were played out in the historical and political process and how they have been virtually erased from scholarship on European integration and European colonialism. In standard histories of European integration, Eurafrica is scarcely mentioned, in spite of the fact that the European integration that came into being in the 1950s was purveyed and perceived as an integration of Europe and its colonies into a Eurafrican entity. This disregard of historical facticity justifies, in our view, comparing much of canonical EU history to mythology.

Here is one myth to start out with. Scholarship on the history of European integration often points to the experience of and fight against the 'Nazi horror' as key catalysts for amplifying a sense of European

solidarity and identity that in turn helped to pave the way for the movement towards European integration. ‘The more plainly the totalitarian character, contempt for legality, and racial arrogance of Nazism were shown in action’, the late Nestor of European integration history Walter Lipgens writes, ‘the more people came to their senses and returned to the true European tradition.’⁶ What has gone unnoticed in this extensive scholarship, though, is the fact that a few decades prior to the Nazi collapse another ‘true European tradition’, namely ‘racial arrogance’ itself, helped to galvanize European solidarity in the fight against another ‘horror’.

The perceived horror consisted of the colonial troops, between 20,000 and 45,000 soldiers from Madagascar, West Africa, Morocco and Algeria, which were deployed by France for the occupation of the German Rhineland following Germany’s defeat in World War I.⁷ The presence of non-white soldiers in the occupying forces bred strong emotions among the Germans as well as a wider European and American public and intelligentsia. African soldiers were generally perceived as unreliable savages who posed great danger especially for the German female and juvenile population. Talk about ‘the black horror’, ‘the black disgrace’, ‘the black shame’ and ‘the black peril’ was in everybody’s mouth.⁸ In *Mein Kampf*, published in 1925, Hitler spoke of the colonial troops in terms of ‘the contamination by Negro blood on the Rhine in the heart of Europe [...] bastardizing the European continent at its core.’⁹

⁶ Walter Lipgens, *A History of European Integration*, Vol. 1: 1945–7: The Formation of the European Unity Movement (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 46.

⁷ For the numbers, see Clarence Lusane, *Hitler’s Black Victims* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 72; Koller, ‘*Von Wilden aller Rassen niedergemetzelt*’, pp. 87–102, 202.

⁸ See Lusane, *Hitler’s Black Victims*; Koller, ‘*Von Wilden aller Rassen*’; Iris Wigger, “Black Shame” – The campaign against “racial degeneration” and female degradation in interwar Europe, *Race & Class*, Vol. 51, No. 3, 2010, pp. 33–46; Jean-Yves Le Naour, *La honte noire: L’Allemagne et les troupes coloniales françaises, 1914–1945* (Paris: Hachette, 2003); and Wolfgang Schmale, ‘Before self-reflexivity: Imperialism and colonialism in the early discourses of European integration’, in Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle (eds), *European Identity and the Second World War* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 188–9.

⁹ Quoted in Lusane, *Hitler’s Black Victims*, p. 80.

Hitler was certainly in good company, similar opinions reaching well into Western Europe's liberal and social democratic establishments, as well as into prominent women's organizations, most notably the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). As Elisabeth Röhl ('Frau Röhl') of the Social Democrats pleaded in the German Parliament in May 1920: 'We appeal to all the women of the world that they support us in protesting against the use, completely contrary to nature, of coloureds in the German Rhine districts.'¹⁰ Such calls were answered by women's organization across Europe; the condemnation issued by the Swedish national branch of the WILPF, for instance, managed to collect some 50,000 signatures.¹¹ When Germany's Social Democratic chancellor Hermann Müller addressed the Parliament in April 1920 he reported that 'French militarism has marched across the Main as into enemy country', and he went on to add: 'Senegal negroes are camping in the Frankfurt University, guarding the Goethe House.'¹² This was the scandal: Goethe, the very monument of the European spirit and proof of German superiority, was now soiled and disgraced by black hands. In a parliamentary address a month later, Müller received strong backing from his foreign minister, Adolf Köster, who fulminated that 'the introduction of nearly 50,000 coloured troops in the centre of white Europe is a crime against the whole of Europe'. As Köster stated:

[T]hese troops are a terrible danger hygienically not only for Germany, but for all of Europe. The ceaseless brutalities, the murder of harmless citizens, the violation of women, girls and boys, the gigantic increase in prostitution, the opening of numerous brothels, as well as the rapid spread of sexual disease, all this represents a policy which can only be continuation of war with the most ruthless weapons.¹³

¹⁰ Nationalversammlung, Stenographische Berichte, 177 Sitzung, 20 May 1920, p. 5692. Verhandlungen des deutschen Reichstags, www.reichstagsprotokolle.de/Blatt2_wv_bsb00000017_00656.html

¹¹ E. D. Morel, *The Horror on the Rhine*, Pamphlet No. 44a, 7th edn, February 1921 (London: Union of Democratic Control), p. 7; Nelson, 'The "Black Horror on the Rhine"', p. 616.

¹² Quoted in Koller, 'Von Wilden aller Rassen', p. 213.

¹³ Quoted in Morel, *The Horror on the Rhine*, p. 17.

In the words of Germany's president Friedrich Ebert, also a social democrat, 'the deployment of coloured troops of the most inferior culture as overseers of a population of such high spiritual and economic importance as the Rhinelanders [was] an intolerable violation of the law of European civilization.'¹⁴

Visual images illustrate that Germany regarded the presence of black and coloured troops as a humiliation so shameful that it rocked the very foundation of national identity. One poster from 1920 shows a happy-looking black man, completely naked except for the helmet usually worn by French troops, standing like a huge colossus with his legs spread wide and his giant feet crushing the cross-framed houses of a German town, at the same time rubbing against his waist and sexual organ ivory-white female bodies that he has caught in his hands.¹⁵ Yet another illustration is a commemorative coin, minted and sold to promote resistance against the French occupation. On one side of the coin is the facial profile of a black soldier, caricatured to look like a monkey, next to which are stamped the words 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité' and 'Die Wacht am Rhein' (Guard on the Rhine). On the other side of the coin we see a woman tied to a tree, the trunk of which, on closer scrutiny, turns out to be an enormous erect penis.

The alleged threat that the coloured troops posed to German women was also a preferred theme in the extensive propaganda disseminated by the leader of the British Union of Democratic Control, E. D. Morel, who operated as one of the foremost champions of the cause to have the colonial troops eliminated from Germany. In his voluminous and widely endorsed newsletter, or pamphlet, Morel – subsequently a Labour MP, in 1922, and nearly appointed foreign secretary before his sudden death in 1924¹⁶ – did his utmost

¹⁴ Ebert (1926), quoted in Koller, 'Von Wilden aller Rassen', p. 324. Ebert's opinion was indeed shared by all political parties in Germany of the period, with the exception of the communist party (KPD) and the Independent Social Democrats (USPD).

¹⁵ Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, Vol. 1: Frauen, Fluten, Körper, Geschichte, 2nd edn (Munich and Zürich: Piper Verlag, 2000), p. 101.

¹⁶ A contradictory character indeed, Morel also made a name for himself as a relentless critic of European colonial policy in Africa, most notably being instrumental in bringing Belgium's atrocities in Congo to public attention in Europe.

to persuade politicians and militaries alike about the urgency of a swift removal of *The Horror on the Rhine* (also the title of Morel's newsletter), often citing as a chief reason the purported rape epidemic that the coloured troops had inflicted on Germany. The latter was namely the 'supreme' horror, the one that would soon be forever irreversible. Putting himself in the shoes of German fathers speaking to German boys, Morel summarized the injustices dealt to Germany since the war's end:

They stole our territory. They seized our colonies. They filched our coal and iron. They laid hands upon the property of our citizens abroad. They piled humiliation upon humiliation on us. All this they did. These things we can forget, though hardly. But that was not enough. They inflicted upon us the supreme outrage. From the plains and forests, from the valleys and the swamps of Africa they brought tens of thousands of savage men, and thrust them upon us. Boys, *these men raped your mothers and sisters!* This, neither you, nor we, nor they, must ever be allowed to forget.¹⁷

Such was the image of Africa and of the African at a time when they were transported into Europe's fatigued and war-torn heart. In one sense, these statements and images are just a continuation of a long history of Europe's racial stereotyping of non-European peoples. Our reason for returning to them now, however, is that they are also repressed parts of the origin and beginning of a new history: the history of European integration. For it is in this area and in this period that the story of what is today known as the European Union (EU) can be said to have begun.

This is for many reasons. The first of these is that Konrad Adenauer, the West German chancellor who was instrumental for European integration after World War II, resided as vice-mayor and mayor in Cologne during the whole Weimar period from 1919 to 1933. Adenauer's political worldview was largely shaped by the conflicts in the Rhineland during and after World War I and by Coudenhove-Kalergi's

¹⁷ Morel, *The Horror on the Rhine*, p. 22, emphasis in original.

Pan-Europeanism, as well as by what Adenauer took to be the very regrettable loss of Germany's African empire.¹⁸

A second reason is that the emergence of the European integration project, as we shall see, is far more intimately connected to Africa and to the question of Europe's dominance over Africa than we have been led to believe by standard works on the history of modern Europe. Third, for those who first asserted the necessity of a European Union, it was precisely this geographic area, the Rhineland and the Ruhr region – or the border zone between France and Germany and between Germany and the Benelux countries – that showed both the crux and the proof of their argument. It was the attempts to resolve the centuries-long strife and conflict over this region, blessed by stunning natural resources and a highly developed industrial infrastructure, that in 1951 led to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community, the precursor of the EEC and the EU.

Europe's plantation: Pan-European beginnings

We have already mentioned that France's decision to march across the Ruhr and the Rhine with colonial troops turned Germany's political emotions to boiling. However, smaller and soon larger groups of intellectuals reached the opposite conclusion. In their view, France's occupation of the Ruhr only demonstrated that the age-old animosity between France and Germany had led both states into a dead end. 'Europe's Beginning' ('Anfänge Europas') was the title of an article published in May 1923 by German writer Heinrich Mann. He wrote: 'Shall Europe ever become one: then the two of us first. We form the root. Out of us, the united continent – the others could not but follow us. We carry the responsibility for ourselves and for the rest. Through

¹⁸ Hans-Peter Schwartz, *Konrad Adenauer: A German Politician and Statesman in a Period of War, Revolution and Reconstruction*, Vol. 1: From the German Empire to the Federal Republic, 1876–1952 (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), pp. 95–6.

us there will be a state above states and that state will last. Or else, no future will be valid for us, nor for Europe.¹⁹

In the same year, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi published his pamphlet *Paneuropa*, which launched his Pan-European Union movement that was to gather both sizeable and influential intellectual and political support from the best and the brightest of his generation, Heinrich Mann being one of them, and also including Nobel laureates Albert Einstein, Gerhart Hauptmann, Selma Lagerlöf, Thomas Mann, Nathan Söderblom, as well as statesmen such as Winston Churchill, Konrad Adenauer, Ignaz Seipel, Karl Renner, Joseph Caillaux and Aristide Briand – the latter serving as chairman of the Pan-European Union. According to Walter Lipgens, *Paneuropa* was by far the most important among the many proposals for European collaboration of the 1920s, and largely mirrored the worldview of internationalists and liberal progressives of the era.²⁰

According to the Pan-European movement, a united Europe was paramount for political reasons, or simply to prevent a repetition of World War I. This was the argument for peace. Or, as Coudenhove-Kalergi proclaimed: ‘The alternatives today are clear: Pan-Europe or war!’²¹ A united Europe was desirable also for cultural reasons, as history seemed to indicate that Europe made up some sort of civilizational unity. ‘Pan-Europe should be the political expression of the European cultural community,’ Coudenhove-Kalergi explained. All the ‘linguistic nations’ of Europe would be gathered into ‘one single racial nation,’ just as the Pan-Hellenic movement in ancient times brought together the city-based polities of Greece ‘into one great nation for

¹⁹ Heinrich Mann, ‘Anfänge Europas’, in Peter-Paul Schneider (ed.), *Sieben Jahre Chronik der Gedanken und Vorgänge: Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), p. 114.

²⁰ ‘After 1923 whole staffs of periodicals, associated pressure groups in many countries, and at least two dozen books published every year pursued this aim.’ According to Lipgens, five works were more influential than others: those by Demangeon, Delaisi (both French), Alfred Weber (Germany), Ortega y Gasset (Spain) and Coudenhove-Kalergi (Austria), the last one being most important of all. Lipgens, *A History of European Integration*, Vol. 1, p. 38.

²¹ Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, ‘Alarm’, *Paneuropa*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1927, p. 1.

all Hellenics'. Pan-Europe's self-proclaimed 'cultural aim' was thus 'the self-knowledge of the European race as an occidental nation'.²²

Perhaps most important, the Pan-European movement launched a third, economic, argument for continental integration. The organization's economic programme, authored by economist Otto Deutsch, listed three imminent threats to the European economy: 'the danger of a collapse of all industries' without close access to raw materials; 'the danger of a complete impoverishment of the European population because of increasing unemployment, decreasing production, capital export and indebtedness'; and 'the danger that the European economy in general will become completely dependent on North-American capital'.²³ As a remedy, Deutsch outlined an economic programme that would abolish trade barriers and economic imbalances such as those caused by the retribution payments forced on Germany by the Versailles Treaty. The programme also proposed a planned economy as well as a thorough 'Taylorization of the European industrial totality'. However, this would not suffice to catch up with the rapidly growing economies of the United States and the Soviet Union. They enjoyed the advantage of being able to organize their economies on a continental scale, making them self-sufficient for most raw materials and providing greater markets for the sale of their products. Accordingly, the Pan-European economic zone suggested by Deutsch also presupposed, as 'an indispensable supplement', 'the communal exploitation of the Pan-European colonies from an economic viewpoint'.²⁴

Gradually, then, the economic perspective expanded into a geopolitical one, which touched the sensitive issue as to whether Europe would ever again attain its global influence. In this context we encounter the African continent, seen as a necessary condition for economic recovery and also as a sufficient reason for European

²² Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, 'Die europäische Nationalbewegung', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1928, p. 8.

²³ Otto Deutsch, 'Paneuropäisches Wirtschaftsprogram', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1927, p. 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

unification. Coudenhove-Kalergi and Deutsch argued for European unity by way of a united colonial effort in Africa. In their view, Africa was seen as a natural and necessary part of Europe's geopolitical sphere, a part that needed to be more strongly connected to Europe, and to be exploited by united European forces in order to turn its resources to full advantage. Indeed, just as African soldiers stationed on European territory was perceived as a shared nuisance that made Europeans close ranks, Africa returned as a common concern in the early plans for European unification, but in this case as a promise and possibility.

The Pan-European strategy designated Africa as 'Europe's plantation', a reservoir of agricultural produce, subsoil mineral resources and hydroelectric power. Moreover, it was promoted as the solution to Europe's demographic problems. It was widely agreed that Europe was overpopulated, an imbalance that could be resolved by the emigration and resettlement of surplus population in the 'empty' territory south of the Mediterranean. Coudenhove-Kalergi certainly spoke for the majority of Europe's political and intellectual elite as, in 1929, he pushed for a Pan-European colonial management of Africa and recounted what Africa offered: 'Africa could provide Europe with raw materials for its industry, nutrition for its population, land for its overpopulation, labour for its unemployed, and markets for its products'²⁵ (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). A few months later, *Paneuropa* published an essay by Alfred Zintgraf investigating the possibilities for white settlement in Africa and arguing for a first sending to suitable areas of 650,000 European colonizers skilled in farming and forestry.²⁶

Coudenhove-Kalergi's arguments for assimilating Africa converged into one big argument for the unification of Europe. The common or synergetic exploitation of Africa was so unquestionably attractive and

²⁵ Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, 'Afrika', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1929, p. 3.

²⁶ Alfred Zintgraf, 'Die Besiedlungsfähigkeit Afrikas', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 5, No. 10, 1929, pp. 24–36. In subsequent issues, *Paneuropa* also maintained that parts of Africa should be turned into an asylum territory for Europe's unwanted Jewish population; see Spero [pseudonym], 'Notland für Juden in Afrika', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1935, pp. 78–80.

Figure 2.1 Official world map of the Pan-European movement, with Pan-Europe (black) consisting of continental Europe and its colonial possessions. Source: Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Paneuropa*, Swedish edition (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1930). National Library of Sweden.

Figure 2.2 Cover of *Paneuropa*, February 1929, featuring Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's essay on Africa. Source: *Paneuropa*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1929.

beneficial that it constituted in itself a reason for European states to make common cause. A geopolitical calculation based on two symbiotic benefits emerged: the new geopolitical sphere of a united Europe would be sustainable and prosperous thanks to its incorporation of Africa; and correspondingly, the bonds between once-antagonistic European states would be consolidated by the shared goal of developing Africa. The unification of Europe and a unified European effort to colonize Africa were two processes that presupposed one another. Africa could be developed only by Europe, and Europe could develop its fullest potential only through Africa. As Coudenhove-Kalergi proclaimed: 'The African problem thus brings us back to Europe. Africa cannot be made available, if Europe does not unite.'²⁷ In short, Europe's unification would start in Africa.

Contrary to a common understanding of the roots of today's European Union – in which Coudenhove-Kalergi sometimes is seen as a father figure of the founding fathers – Pan-Europe was a project not limited to Europe alone but included Africa except for its British possessions, although there were competing plans that included that region as well. The African possibility was repeatedly discussed in Coudenhove-Kalergi's journal and data about Africa's population and resources were included in the statistical overviews published in each issue. The joint European colonization of Africa was also highlighted in Article 13 of the draft for a Pan-European Pact of 1930, as one of the organization's defining priorities: 'All European citizens shall enjoy equal economic rights in the tropical colonies of Africa.'²⁸

²⁷ Coudenhove-Kalergi, 'Afrika', p. 18.

²⁸ Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, 'Entwurf für einen Paneuropäischen Pakt', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 6, No. 5, 1930, p. 152. In comments to this paragraph, Coudenhove-Kalergi repeats an argument put forth also in his essay 'Krieg oder Frieden?', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1927, p. 3.

Empty space in the dark continent: Racial arguments

The strength of the Pan-European movement and idea was due to its resonance with dominant ideological and political tenets of interwar Europe, which also lay behind many related proposals for European integration and rejuvenation through a common colonial project. As we shall see, the general idea of an internationalization and supranationalization of colonialism in Africa was one of the least controversial and most popular foreign policy ideas of the interwar period, and proposals for its practical execution were developed by a wide range of European writers, academics, social planners, politicians and institutions.²⁹ What allows us to identify them as parts of a single discourse is, first, the fact that most stakeholders involved seemed to agree that *Eurafrica* was the proper name and concept that would put the European star back in the ascendant.³⁰

Second, all these initiatives regarded Eurafrica as a project of both inter-continental and intra-continental integration, and it was the latter by virtue of being the former, building bonds of collaboration between European states precisely by fusing Europe and Africa into

²⁹ A full inventory of these writings has not yet been made and will have to wait for another occasion. Important steps were taken by Charles-Robert Ageron, 'L'Idée d'Eurafrrique et le débat colonial franco-allemand de l'entre-deux-guerres', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, Vol. 22, July–September 1975, pp. 446–75; and Étienne Deschamps, 'Quelle Afrique pour une Europe unie? L'Idée d'Eurafrrique à l'aube des années trente', in *Penser l'Europe à l'aube des années trente: Quelques contributions belges*, Michel Dumoulin (ed.), Université de Louvain, Recueil de travaux d'histoire et philologie, (Brussels: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1995), pp. 95–150.

³⁰ The notion of Eurafrica was so prevalent at the time that it is difficult to find out who first introduced it in discourses on politics and international relations. According to Charles-Robert Ageron's seminal essay on the topic, Coudenhove-Kalergi was 'the incontestable inventor of the idea of Eurafrica' (Ageron, 'L'Idée d'Eurafrrique et le débat colonial franco-allemand de l'entre-deux-guerres', p. 450). However, the concept was derived from anthropology and ethnology, especially the works of Italian anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi. Basing his theory on physical anthropology, Sergi rejected the idea that the peoples of Europe were of Aryan or Caucasian descent, but argued that Europe's population originated in Africa. There was thus one single 'Eurafrican species' with similar cranial features, which was then subdivided into three 'races': the Nordic, the Mediterranean and the African, all of them part of a Eurafrican totality. See Giuseppe Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race: A Study of the Origin of European Peoples* (London: Walter Scott, 1901), pp. 247–65.

a single and cohesive geopolitical entity, to the presumed benefit of both. This is also to say that the Eurafrican project was promoted as a new and higher form of colonialism. All adherents agreed that this would be a colonialism not governed by nationalistic greed, but by the true ideals of European civilization. One of Eurafrica's main advocates in France, Eugène Guernier, asserted in his book *L'Afrique: Champ d'expansion de l'Europe* (1933; *Africa: Field for European Expansion*), that '[t]oday's colonization is the synthesis of a moral and highly civilizing endeavour: the gradual elevation of the standing of life of the non-developed races, and the no less human endeavour to continuously maintain, or even improve the conditions of life of an industrious Europe.'³¹

In this view, old imperialism had been characterized by nationalist competition for overseas possessions. In Africa, this had been set off in the late 1870s by the attempt of King Leopold of Belgium to lay hold of the waterways into the Congo region. Leopold's quest for the riches of Africa's interior, which he rather successfully secured by relying on the ruthless methods of Henry Morton Stanley, started a European race for African riches that, at the beginning of the 1880s, became a major threat to international peace and stability. It was at this point that German chancellor Otto von Bismarck organized the so-called Congo Conference, at the urgent call of Portugal, which saw many of its long-established trading posts along Africa's coastline threatened by the scramble. What has gone down in history as the Berlin Conference of 1884–5 established the principles for European activities in Africa. As Obadiah Mailafia puts it, the conference in Bismarck's Berlin palace, attended by envoys of fourteen signatory European states, was 'the first true act of European cooperation in Africa.'³²

The Berlin Conference did not actually carve up the African

³¹ Eugène L. Guernier, *L'Afrique: Champ d'expansion de l'Europe* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1933), p. vii. Guernier observed that this new Eurafrican colonialism was already in the making, for instance, in the International Colonial Exposition in Paris in 1931 and the development of North Africa by French colonial administrator Hubert Lyautey.

³² Obadiah Mailafia, *Europe and Economic Reform in Africa: Structural Adjustment and Economic Diplomacy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 37.

continent into a number of European colonies, as is commonly believed.³³ Apart from granting the Congo Free State to Leopold, and ascertaining the right of free trade on the Congo and Niger Rivers and in territory stretching from the Congo State to Lake Niassa and south of the 5th latitude, the Berlin Conference's most crucial result was the so-called 'Principle of Effective Occupation'. As stipulated by this principle, colonies could be claimed only by those who effectively possessed them, meaning there had to be in place treaties with local chieftains, active administrative presence and economic activities. The principle of effective occupation only worked to accelerate the scramble, however, as European powers now rushed to occupy land and subdue native populations, forcing their leaders to accept treaties that delegated power and control to the Europeans. Within a few years, the whole of Africa – with the exception of Ethiopia, South Africa and Liberia – was in colonial European hands.

The scramble was carried out under the pretext of abolishing slavery and introducing civilization in Africa – what in France was called 'the civilizing mission' (*la mission civilisatrice*) and in Britain, after Rudyard Kipling's famous poem, 'The White Man's Burden'. In this context, Africa was, on the one hand, construed as an empty continent, a *terra nullius*, or as the still-white areas on the map that so irresistibly attracts the main character in Joseph Conrad's canonical novel about the scramble, *Heart of Darkness*. Already in 1879, French writer Victor Hugo, in a famous address, exhorted his compatriots to capture the empty spaces. 'To remake a new Africa, to make the old Africa accessible to civilization, that is the problem. Europe will solve it. Go, you peoples! Grab for yourselves that land! Take it! To whom? To nobody. God gives land to men, God offers Africa to Europe. Take it!'³⁴

However, on the other hand, Europeans described Africa not as empty but as submerged in pre-historical darkness. It was construed as

³³ See further Wm. Roger Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 75–126.

³⁴ Victor Hugo, 'Discours sur l'Afrique du 18 mai 1879', *Actes et paroles. Depuis l'exil*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Nelson, without date), p. 133.

‘the dark continent’ – a figure of speech and a mode of thinking that remained pervasive throughout the following decades, as European nations would seek a new compact to cooperate with one another in developing, civilizing, or, in one word, *enlightening* the African continent and the African soul. A commonplace idea, so obviously true that it merited neither reflection nor scrutiny, the myth of the dark continent has been one of the most robust components of what may be called the *colonial archive* – that is, a set of ideas, narratives and regimes of truth that, for a long time, have sustained Europe’s hegemonic position in the world and over Africa in particular.³⁵

The myth of the dark continent was thus a basic precondition of the discourse that was evoked as soon as Eurafrican integration was at stake. Based on scientific racism and social Darwinism, it situated Africa and Europe at the opposite ends of an evolutionary axis from primitivism to modernity in a way that made it self-evident to everybody that one part was superior to the other. Hence also the unquestioned idea that the inferior part was helped, if placed under the superior’s colonial tutelage. Although the Eurafrican project presented itself as a ‘new’ form of colonialism, its mode of political dominance and doctrine of evolutionism were thus unreformed. According to Guernier, Coudenhove-Kalergi and other Eurafricanists, Europe offered to Africa morality, culture and civilization. Africa offered Europe raw materials, territory, resources and opportunities for geopolitical expansion. Precisely because of this complementarity, both continents stood to gain from a thorough unification. However, while Guernier asserted that Europe and Africa are two halves, helpless on their own but in combination forming a viable whole, he was also careful to point out that there was no symmetry between them, much less any equality. ‘Africa is the only continent without history’, he stated,

³⁵ On the origins and transformations of this myth, see Patrick Brantlinger, ‘Victorians and Africans: The genealogy of the myth of the dark continent’, in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (ed.), *Race, Writing, and Difference* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 185–222; on the colonial archive and its relation to evolutionist thinking in Western culture and scholarship, see V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 1–37.

Figure 2.3 Cartographic representation of the three main geopolitical spheres, with Eurafrica at the centre. Source: Eugène Guernier, *L'Afrique et l'Europe: Atlas* (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, 1942).

after which he went on to suggest how Europeans could bring Africa out of its primitive and desolate state and help it enter the circle of human culture³⁶ (see Figure 2.3).

Italy's foremost Eurafricanist, Paolo Orsini di Camerota, presented an interesting variant of the same argument: 'Eurafrica is a figurative synthesis of the two fraternal continents, whose geographical umbilical cord are the Pillars of Hercules; it is a transfusion of blood from a sick continent to a healthy one'³⁷ (see Figure 2.4). It is an odd sentence, not just because of the strange metaphor that turns the Gibraltar Straits into an umbilical cord or the nonsensical logic (why a blood transfusion from a sick body to a healthy one?), but mainly because it describes Africa as young and strong while Europe is fatigued or even dying and in need of fresh blood. Apparently, the passage goes against the racial logic that underpins all other aspects of di Camerota's book. On the rhetorical level, then, Eurafrica could appear as a synthesis and even be presented as a blood relationship. In reality, however, a mixing of blood was out of the question. In his chapter on migration, di Camerota stressed that African immigration and habitation in Europe would be deleterious to Europe's 'hygiene and morality' (taking the alleged actions of black French troops in Europe as an example).³⁸ Africa, on the other hand, was described as depopulated and in need of new settlers. Orsini di Camerota was not a fascist but part of Italy's nationalist elite and, as such, a fellow traveller of Benito Mussolini's movement. He became a mouthpiece for what Italy's fascist leaders promoted as 'demographic imperialism': the resettlement of large numbers of unemployed lower-class Italians to Libya and other parts of North Africa, as well as Ethiopia and Eritrea³⁹ (see Figure 2.5). From 1939 to 1942 the programme was promoted and developed in the scholarly review *Geopolitica*, which counted Orsini di Camerota among its contributors.⁴⁰ Many of the same arguments were also expressed

³⁶ Guernier, *L'Afrique*, p. 55.

³⁷ Paolo d'Agostini Orsini di Camerota, *Eurafrica: L'Africa per l'Europa, l'Europa per l'Africa* (Rome: Paolo Cremonese, 1934), p. 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 87–132, esp. p. 94.

⁴⁰ See Marco Antonisich, 'Geopolitica: The "Geographical and Imperial Consciousness" of

Figure 2.4 Cartographic representation of the three main geopolitical axes, with the Eurafrican axis at the centre. Source: Paolo d'Agostini Orsini di Camerota, *Eurafrica: L'Africa per l'Europa, l'Europa per l'Africa* (Rome: Paolo Cremonese, 1934).

by Coudenhove-Kalergi, justifiably known as pacifist, internationalist and anti-Nazi in European matters. However, on the topic of Africa he comes across as a fully fledged biological racist, firmly believing in the inherent difference between the black and white races: 'Europe's mission in Africa is to bring light to this the darkest of continents. As long as the black race is unable to develop and civilize its part of the earth, the white race must do it.' Coudenhove-Kalergi added: 'Europe is Eurafrica's head, Africa its body.'⁴¹

Interestingly, while Coudenhove-Kalergi urged Europeans to settle in Africa and develop its resources, he also warned, like di Camerota, that Europe must at all costs prevent 'that great numbers of black workers and soldiers immigrate to Europe'.⁴² Speaking of soldiers, he was plausibly referring to France's disputed use of black troops

Fascist Italy', *Geopolitics*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2009, pp. 256–77.

⁴¹ Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, 'Afrika', *PanEuropa* Vol. 5, No. 2, 1929, pp. 3, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Figure 2.5 Map of Africa with marked areas designated for European settlers. Source: Paolo d'Agostini Orsini di Camerota, *Eurafrica: L'Africa per l'Europa, l'Europa per l'Africa* (Rome: Paolo Cremonese, 1934).

in its occupations of the Rhineland and the Ruhr region. For just as unthinkable as it was to have black soldiers operate as law-keepers in German towns ('Senegal Negroes' in the Goethe House), so it was self-evident to have European physicians and engineers developing Africa. And just as natural as it was to fear these African troops for introducing disease, criminality and vice, and for raping women and children, so it was natural to thank Europeans for bringing health and reason to Africa. What would become of Africa if Europe pulled out from it? Coudenhove-Kalergi asked. 'The answer is: chaos, anarchy, misery, war of all tribes against one another.'⁴³

This is where we may locate the deep structure of the interwar discourse on *Eurafrica*. Illustrating the idea of colonial modernity in pure form, this discourse placed Europe and Africa at opposite ends of an evolutionary axis. *Eurafrica* then became the epitome of modernization, demonstrating the superiority of European culture by civilizing the dark races, and through this process also establishing at once the unity of Europe and the inferiority of Africa. Like the myth of the dark continent or racism itself, the idea of *Eurafrica* thus remained locked into the modern and colonial paradigm constituted by all the cases, accumulated in the colonial archive, of Europe's way of establishing its identity through its encounters with otherness. This explains why European politicians and writers could reject African presence in Europe as an absurdity with the same ease as they could affirm European presence in Africa as a necessity, without having to consider the possibility that their position may have been self-contradictory.

Africa as a necessity: Geopolitical arguments

What, then, was *new* in the *Eurafrican* project? Not the ideas of African inferiority and European superiority, and not the schemes of dominance and salvation evolving from this hierarchy. But what was

⁴³ Ibid., p. 6.

new, and what we attend to in this book, was the fact that colonialism after World War I emerged as an argument for European integration and, indeed, as a way of salvaging – not Africa, but Europe. Put differently, the colonial idea now attained geopolitical urgency as a path toward the unification of Europe and the establishment of a third geopolitical sphere able to balance a global system that had lost its centre and equilibrium. European expansion in Africa was no longer a matter of political and military dominance, economic wealth and missionary activities alone, but a way of reenergizing Europe and safeguarding its future existence as a social, economic, geopolitical, historical and racial formation.

Paolo Orsini di Camerota was thus onto something when asserting that Europe had become old and in desperate need of injections of fresh energy and blood. Apparently, Eurafrica could be conceived only after the spiritual shock, economic collapse and political destruction inflicted by the Great War, which is also to say that Eurafrica, like the connected idea of European integration itself, first emerged in a post-catastrophic atmosphere of anxiety and pessimism, when nationalist hubris was defeated and Europe was perceived as being in decline. ‘Europe no longer rules in the world,’ wrote Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset in 1929.⁴⁴ As demographer Lothrop Stoddard stated in an influential work of 1922, and again in 1935, World War I and the ensuing reorganization of world politics amounted to a collapse of the political universe, which ‘in one cataclysmic event’ had lost the sun around which the planets moved in cosmic harmony. That sun was the ‘European comity of nations,’ which was now being replaced by terrifying geopolitical processes that Stoddard in the title of his book summed up as *The Rising Tide of Colour against White World-Supremacy*.⁴⁵ Similar views were expounded by a range of European thinkers of the interwar

⁴⁴ José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930; New York: W. W. Norton, 1957), p. 129. Published in original as *La rebelión de las masas*, 1929.

⁴⁵ Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Colour against White World-Supremacy* (1922, reprint, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2003), pp. 198–221; and Stoddard, *The Clashing Tides of Colour* (New York and London: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1935), pp. 31–174.

period – from Oswald Spengler and Martin Heidegger to Edmund Husserl and Paul Valéry – and they were reflected in policy proposals and political initiatives that aimed to save the position of Europe and the white race by reigniting its dynamism and bolstering its growth through a more thorough integration of the resources under its control. If this did not happen, there would be disintegration and destruction.

In this vein, Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén had, as early as 1914, anticipated the situation that would be loudly professed after World War I:

The European federation has not yet been fully appreciated on the agenda, but it carries an old legacy; and what used to be a vague idea is now emerging as a necessity in the interest of Europe's self-preservation. Only through union [or amalgamation] can the present European states preserve their stamina towards rapidly growing adversaries, which already count their territories in double and their populations in triple digit million ranges while they at the same time are self-sufficient in food production. We can already witness the shadows of the American, Russian and Yellow perils being cast over our continent. Thus has Europe come under a pressure which in due time will win out over the mighty facts and traditions which still split Europe into several sovereign small parts.⁴⁶

Kjellén was one of the founders of geopolitical analysis and the inventor of geopolitics as a concept. Early twentieth-century geopolitics underpinned the discourse on European integration in the interwar period, and it constituted, along with the evolutionist paradigm, one of the conditions of possibility for the Eurafrican idea. Reflecting both the aggressive lust for imperial expansion and the nervous obsession with Europe's uncertain fate in a new global situation, geopolitics was a theory that envisioned the world order as a struggle between various polities.⁴⁷ It saw states as dynamic and transmutable, owning specific

⁴⁶ Rudolf Kjellén, *Samtidens stormakter* (Contemporary Great Powers), Vol. 1 of *Politiska handböcker*, p. 194. Translated into German as *Die Großmächte der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914).

⁴⁷ On the ambiguities of European geopolitics, see Michael Heffernan, *Fin de siècle, fin du*

quantities of energy and vitality that were often counted in population and production figures, which were subsequently translated into territorial reach. The 'vital force' of a certain polity would thus also determine what 'space' or 'scale' it needed in order to adequately develop its capacities. Political boundaries were unfixed and turned into elastic demarcations, shrinking or expanding depending on the force of a certain state and on the counter-force exerted by its neighbours and enemies. Unsurprisingly, the outcome of World War I, with the imperial expansion of Europe's nation states stumped by the emergence of what Kjellén called 'the American, Russian and Yellow perils', made European debate and politics ripe for geopolitical speculations and calculations as to the future of the comparatively small European states, which now had to look for new ways of ensuring the development and progress of their populations and economies. In this perspective, integration of Europe's productive capacities was an obvious alternative, as was a concerted effort to exploit the latent wealth of Africa. Indeed, this exploitation was in itself a reason for European states to coordinate and integrate their military, economic and administrative capacities.

Eurafrica was a full-blooded breed of this geopolitical paradigm. Precisely because Africa had been construed as a dark continent locked in prehistory – primitive, static and in geopolitical terms devoid of inherent expansive energies – it could now also be construed as Europe's future, as the means by which Europe would assert itself geopolitically in the form of Eurafrika, the term itself designating the far greater scale through which a set of tiny and fragmented polities would mutate into a viable imperial bloc.

This vision was embraced with particular warmth in Germany. As early as 1901, Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellén's teacher, had invented the term *Lebensraum* (living space) to capture the spatial aspect through which the vital force of a particular people or nation manifested itself.

monde: On the origins of European geopolitics', in Klaus Dodds and David Atkinson (eds), *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 27–51.

Mediated mainly by the writings of Karl Ernst Haushofer, for whom Eurafrica formed a constitutive part of his blueprint for a new global geopolitics, the notions of living space and panregions became factors in German foreign policy in the 1920s, and, after the Nazi takeover in 1933, part and parcel of its main motivations.⁴⁸ Interestingly, Haushofer figured in Pan-European circles and his theory drew much inspiration from Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas of panregions.⁴⁹ Although in this German discourse there was always a conflict between *Ostpolitik* and *Kolonialpolitik*, between taking space in Eastern Europe and regaining African colonies, all agreed that new 'space' must be obtained in order to ensure the survival of the German race. The reasons behind this perception are obvious enough, given Germany's considerable losses in territory and resources after World War I. The Versailles Treaty stripped it of 13 per cent of its territory, one-tenth of its population, 25 per cent of its coal deposits, 75 per cent of its iron and all of its colonies. This created among many Germans a sense that they had become what Hans Grimm, in a bestselling novel of 1926, called a 'people without space' (*Volk ohne Raum*); their needs, then, could be fulfilled only by a 'space without people' – that is, by Africa, as portrayed in Grimm's novel.⁵⁰

For greater moral and material profit: Eurafrica in foreign policy

Bismarck had initiated the Berlin Conference that set out the principles for European action in Africa. What Germany had won in that contest, it had lost in World War I. Civil administrators and military contingents now lowered the German flag and evacuated their African

⁴⁸ For an outline of Haushofer's conception of Eurafrica, see Holger H. Herwig, 'Geopolitik: Haushofer, Hitler and Lebensraum', in Colin S. Gray and Geoffrey Sloan (eds), *Geopolitics, Geography and Strategy* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

⁴⁹ John O'Loughlin and Herman van der Wusten, 'Political geography of panregions', *The Geographical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 1, 1990, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Hans Grimm, *Volk ohne Raum*, 2 vols (Munich: Langen-Müller, 1926).

dominions. However, this did not entail that German interests in Africa would diminish. On the contrary, in March 1919 the democratically elected parliament of the new Weimar republic demanded, 414 votes against 7, 'the restitution of Germany's colonial rights.' In the same year, Germany transformed its colonial administration into a fully fledged colonial ministry charged with the dual task of dismantling German sovereignty in its former colonies while also securing continuing German presence through other means.⁵¹

Throughout the 1920s, colonial lobbyists and interest groups multiplied, the most important being the German Colonial Society (Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft), chaired by former colonial governors Theodor Seitz and Heinrich Schnee, with Konrad Adenauer as one of its vice-presidents. These influential circles regarded the arrangement that had deprived Germany of its overseas outlets and resources as a historical parenthesis during which 'our people's love of colonial possessions must be kept alive', as stated in the preface to *Das deutsche Kolonialbuch* (1926; The German Colonial Book), a luxurious album that celebrated Germany's colonial achievements and requested a continuation of its imperial story.⁵² Economist Arthur Dix, for his part, turned to geopolitical analysis and propaganda to advocate a similar message, arguing that Germany's – and Europe's – future depended entirely on Africa: 'Germany needs, for vital reasons, a part of Africa – Africa needs Germany to take part in its world-economic and demographic construction and expansion'⁵³ (see Figures 2.6 and 2.7).

⁵¹ This was not without success. Had there been 15,000 Germans living in German South-West Africa in 1914, they had grown to 30,000 by the 1930s, although the colony had passed into South African hands; and if there had been 73 companies entertaining business in Germany's African colonies in 1914, they were 85 by 1933, when Germany had lost them. See van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt*, p. 112.

⁵² Hans Zache (ed.), *Das deutsche Kolonialbuch* (Berlin and Leipzig: Verlags Wilhelm Andermann, 1926), reprinted as *Die deutschen Kolonien in Wort und Bild* (Wiesbaden: Marix Verlag, 2004), pp. 5, 7.

⁵³ Arthur Dix, *Was geht uns Afrika an? Das heutige Afrika in Weltwirtschaft, Weltverkehr, Weltpolitik* (Berlin: Stilke, 1931), p. 107. See also Dix's *Weltkrise und Kolonialpolitik: Die Zukunft zweier Erdteile* (Berlin: Neff, 1932). On Dix's work and geopolitical arguments for colonialism in interwar Germany in general, see David Thomas Murphy, *The Heroic Earth: Geopolitical Thought in Weimar Germany, 1918–1933* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1997), pp. 91–8, 191–214.

Figure 2.6 Map of Pan-Europe according to the German geopolitical theorist Arthur Dix. Source: Arthur Dix, *Was geht uns Afrika an? Das heutige Afrika in Weltwirtschaft, Weltverkehr, Weltpolitik* (Berlin: Stilke, 1931).

The colonial programme was aggressively pursued in the domestic arena, drumming home a message of geopolitical injustice afflicting Germans who – unlike the British, the French and the Belgians – had no acres of tropical land or legions of coloured people at their feet. The

Figure 2.7 Map of Africa with projected highways and routes of transportation. Source: Arthur Dix, *Was geht uns Afrika an? Das heutige Afrika in Weltwirtschaft, Weltverkehr, Weltpolitik* (Berlin: Stilke, 1931).

German Colonial Society chose as its slogan 'Africa for Europe' (*Afrika für Europa*), which was also the title of a pamphlet written by Heinrich Schnee. Not only did the slogan endorse a joint European exploitation of Africa, but also it turned an edge against French placement of

African troops on European soil, which in the German view amounted to the opposite programme, an aggressive arousing of 'Africa against Europe'.⁵⁴ In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had warned against the same scenario of Europe being swallowed by the French empire: 'an African state arising on European soil. [...] An immense self-contained area from the Rhine to the Congo, filled with a lower race gradually produced from continuous bastardization'.⁵⁵

In the same spirit, Coudenhove-Kalergi argued that Germany, in return for its reparations payments, should be granted access to its former colonies, whereas Italy on similar terms should be entitled to 'Abyssinia'.⁵⁶ The German Social Democrats generally shared these opinions, while also favouring a more far-reaching internationalization of colonial rule. In his 1926 book *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa* socialist statistician Wladimir Woytinski argued that a 'United States of Europe' was necessary in order to save world peace and preserve Europe's global hegemony, and that the only agent capable of achieving this was the rising European proletariat. That Woytinski's geopolitical vision was premised on a Marxist analysis did not prevent it from being compatible with conservative and liberal programmes on the colonial issue. Woytinski proposed a complete internationalization of the colonial system. This would, to be sure, enable a regulation of colonial rule that would improve political rights and working conditions for the 'coloured workers'. Yet the main reason for an internationalization of colonialism was economic. 'A European economy without a colonial base is an impossibility', he asserted. Therefore, 'the colonies of the separate members of the Union must become the colonies of the Union as a whole'. Woytinski also shared the view that the colonial problem was not an obstacle to European unification but rather an argument in its favour.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Heinrich Schnee, *Afrika für Europa: die kolonial Schuldfrage* (Berlin: Kolonialverlag Sachers and Kuschel, 1924).

⁵⁵ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1943), p. 644.

⁵⁶ Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, 'Reparationen und Kolonien', *Panuropa*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1932, p. 11.

⁵⁷ Wladimir Woytinski, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa* (Berlin: J. H. W. Dietz Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926), pp. 157–8.

Redeemed access to colonial territories also remained a priority of German foreign politics throughout the Weimar period. Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, reported to have said that the colonial possessions were part of the German soul, stated in 1925 that regained colonial possessions was the main aim – along with adjustments of Germany's eastern frontier – of German foreign policy.⁵⁸ He took repeated actions at the League of Nations to argue for Germany's re-entry into the club of colonial powers, and at the Locarno negotiations in 1925 he gained a principled assent of French foreign minister Aristide Briand, who stated that 'there was nobody who in any way wanted to deny this moral right of Germany [to own colonies]'.⁵⁹ Apart from fixing Germany's western border with Belgium and France, the Locarno negotiations opened the doors for Germany to the League of Nations and its Mandates Commission, although this was of little practical consequence since it did not entail any redistribution of the mandates as such. However, the talks at Locarno issued in a general atmosphere of appeasement that stimulated French–German collaboration of various kinds. An important initiative was the 'French–German committee for information and documentation', founded by Émile Mayrisch, owner of much of Luxembourg's steel industry, for the purpose of furthering French and German friendship and industrial capacity. This committee is an important part of the genealogy of European integration, as it prepared for many of the ideas that later went into the Schuman declaration, the European Coal and Steel Community and the EU itself.

This increasingly close collaboration between French and German capital automatically raised the matter of inter-European collaboration in Africa. In these discussions, German access to Africa was envisioned

⁵⁸ Gustav Stresemann, *Vermächtnis: der Nachlass in drei Bänden*, Vol. 2. (ed.) Henry Bernhard (Berlin: Ullstein, 1932), pp. 172, 296, 334–5.

⁵⁹ Stresemann, *Vermächtnis*, Vol. 2, pp. 196, 213. For Stresemann, this recognition meant that the allies officially gave up the colonial-guilt lie ('*die koloniale Schuldflüge*'), which in 1919 had justified depriving Germany of its colonies. See also Wolfe W. Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 83.

either by way of a straight return to Germany of the territories placed under the tutelage of the League of Nations, which in Germany was the favoured option, or through establishing a supranational or Pan-European colonial authority to which the League of Nations would transfer the mandate territories and ultimately all African colonies, which was the programme of the Pan-European organization. Included was also a third option whereby mandate and colonial territories, through negotiated concessions, would be transferred to co-European charter companies (with strong German components), the latter being proposed in 1926 by Hjalmar Schacht, president of the German *Reichsbank* and a tireless advocate of German colonialism in Europe's financial and political circles.⁶⁰ All three options made reference to the idea of Eurafrica, which in the late 1920s and early 1930s became a major geopolitical image and ideology, capturing the political imagination throughout the continent, as Eurafrica seemed to provide a remedy to the European crisis, the decline of the West or the destruction of white supremacy.

Schacht's approaches intensified in the depression era and throughout the 1930s, when he also became Minister of Finance in the Nazi government. Large parts of the colonial and business establishment in France reciprocated. Economic powerhouses such as the Mayrisch Committee, the Chamber of Commerce of Paris and the International Chamber of Commerce launched a range of innovative initiatives in order to get German companies involved in the exploitation of the African colonies. In all areas of extraction, production and trade, French capital saw the industrial and banking circles in Germany as attractive or even indispensable partners. As a consequence, from the late 1920s to the late 1930s, a number of French–German economic initiatives and agreements came into being with the explicit purpose of facilitating German access to African resources and of lobbying the governments in Paris, Brussels and London for a political settlement

⁶⁰ On Schacht's proposal, see Chantal Metzger, 'L'Allemagne et l'Eurafrrique', in Marie-Thérèse Bitsch and Gérard Bossuat (eds), *L'Europe unie et l'Afrique: De l'idée d'Eurafrrique à la convention de Lomé I* (Brussels: Bruylant, 2005), pp. 60–1.

that would compensate for the colonial losses suffered by Germany through the Treaty of Versailles.⁶¹

In France, Belgium and Britain, left-wing political leaders such as E. D. Morel (as mentioned above) and Jules Destrée had since the end of the war argued for an internationalization of the colonial system, which they saw as being in the interest of the colonized peoples and in line with US President Wilson's programme.⁶² The League of Nations' mandates system was in part a realization of this demand, to the extent that it officially aimed to assist the colonized populations, although it mostly just served to shuffle colonial authority from Germany to Belgium, Britain and France. As the weaknesses of the mandates system became apparent and the economic situation in Europe grew worse, efforts to institutionalize inter-European collaboration in colonial Africa intensified. Insisting, throughout the interwar period, on the necessity of a United States of Europe, Destrée argued in 1929 that a joint exploitation of Africa would create the basis for a European federation and bring peace and prosperity. Destrée strongly supported the Pan-European organization and claimed that he had come up with the idea of a federal European administration of Africa already during World War I.⁶³

A key figure on the French side was Albert Sarraut, member of the Pan-European organization, former governor of Indochina and switching between positions as minister of the colonies and minister of

⁶¹ See Annie Lacroix-Riz, 'Les relations patronales franco-allemandes à propos de l'empire colonial dans les années 1930', in Hubert Bonin, Catherine Hodeir and Jean François Klein (eds), *L'esprit économique impérial (1830–1970): Groupes de pression et réseaux du patronat colonial en France et dans l'empire* (Paris: Publications de la SFHOM, 2008), pp. 527–46.

⁶² See E. D. Morel's 1920 book *The Black Man's Burden: The White Man in Africa from the Fifteenth Century to World War I* (reprint, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), which argued for the establishment of an international zone in tropical Africa, governed directly by the League of Nations, protecting the African populations from European militarism and capitalism and thus also preempting one of the causes of conflict between Europe's imperial nations. Morel began developing the same argument already in a book published in 1917: *Africa and the Peace of Europe* (London: National Labour Press, 1917).

⁶³ Jules Destrée, 'L'Afrique, colonie européenne', in *Pour en finir avec la guerre* (Brussels: Eglantine, 1931), pp. 49–52.

the navy between 1920 and 1934, after which he became prime minister. He was France's most influential and ardent colonial ideologue, arguing that Europe and the white man were destined to conquer and colonize in the name of human values and solidarity. In 1921, Sarraut proposed to his parliament a plan for long-term investments in infrastructure in the African colonies. More farsighted than others, he argued that such investments would prepare for the decolonization of the overseas territories while at the same time ensuring that they would be kept under French and European influence; history would catch up with Sarraut only in the late 1950s, as the European Economic Community would make colonial arrangements similar to what he proposed. At the time, however, the French Parliament found Sarraut's plan too costly. Sarraut then started to press for what he called 'Eurafrican cooperation', envisioning a thorough Europeanization of colonial Africa, managed by a secretary general who would be reporting to a board of trustees assigned by the governments of interested European states. In his book *Grandeur et servitude coloniales* (1931) Sarraut, explicitly referring to Lothrop Stoddard, wrote that a Eurafrican arrangement was necessary in order to save Europe from 'the rising tide of coloured races' that posed a threefold threat to Europe's world supremacy: loss of economic markets, armed insurrections and ethnic degeneration due to racial mixing.⁶⁴ For this purpose, Germany should be given colonial concessions and the noble *mission civilisatrice* be reformed so as to withstand narrow national self-interests.⁶⁵

A stronger proposal along the same lines, albeit with less political leverage, was in the same year put forward by Georges Valois, who drafted a Eurafrican ten-year plan which, as the title made clear, would turn Africa into a 'European construction site' (*Afrique, chantier de l'Europe*), just as Eugène Guernier, as mentioned, wanted to turn Africa into a 'field for European expansion'.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Albert Sarraut, *Grandeur et servitudes coloniales* (1931; new edn, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011), pp. 143–89.

⁶⁵ See Yves Montarsolo, 'Albert Sarraut et l'idée d'Eurafrrique', in *L'Europe unie et Afrique*, pp. 77–95.

⁶⁶ Georges Valois, *L'Afrique, chantier de l'Europe*, Cahiers bleues, No. 111 (Paris: Librairie

These ideas were transformed into political initiatives through French actions within the League of Nations, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and related channels. In 1931 the ILO was charged with the task of examining possible solutions to unemployment in Europe. Its director Albert Thomas, French socialist and devoted Pan-Europeanist, visited Berlin to discuss the matter with chancellor Heinrich Brüning, among others, after which he stated in an interview that 'Europe could be created only by attaching to it a common project for which all would work and from which all would benefit. This project could consist of a general improvement [*équipement général*] of Europe and in a certain manner also of an improvement of Africa,' and he suggested that 'Germany could be linked to the development [*mise en valeur*] of North-Africa.'⁶⁷ Later in 1931, the assembly of the League of Nations assigned a committee to investigate possibilities for large infrastructural projects in 'European or extra-European territories'. For similar purposes, French leaders Aristide Briand and Pierre Laval met with Brüning and formed a 'Committee for French-German collaboration', the agenda of which included 'collaboration to further the development [*mise en valeur*] of France's African colonies'. At the congress of the French radical-socialist party in November 1931, Sarraut offered Italy and Germany participation in 'the development of the immense Africa, where Europe would find both a large source of prosperity and a partial solution to the problem of migration posed by its increasing population'.⁶⁸

Sarraut was seconded by former premier Joseph Caillaux who issued a set of quasi-official articles and notes, arguing for a Eurafrican solution to the economic crisis. 'The dark continent is called upon to extend and economically support the ancient continent', Caillaux stated in 1931, partly repeating a succinct formula he had coined the year before: 'Europe supported by Africa; Europe reconciled by Africa'.⁶⁹

Valois, 1931); *Note sur L'Afrique, chantier de l'Europe* (Brussels: Institut d'économie européenne, 1931).

⁶⁷ Quoted in Ageron, 'L'Idée d'Eurafrrique', p. 460.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

⁶⁹ Joseph Caillaux, *D'Agadir à la grande pénitance* (Paris: Flammarion, 1933), p. 125.

For a brief period, then, Eurafrica became an official foreign policy doctrine. A major force behind promoting the Eurafrican idea to a political proposal was the 1931 Great Colonial Exposition in Paris, at which all colonial powers were invited to display their colonial possessions, including native inhabitants (Britain declined the invitation, and Spain and Japan were also absent). The enormously successful exposition in the Vincennes forest offered millions of visitors a Sunday walk through a miniature of a harmonious world order ruled by the European for the benefit of all. The exposition also generated streams of conferences, publications and debates on the future of the colonial system, all of which amounted to, in the words of Catherine Hodeir and Michel Pierre, a temporary 'University of Colonialism'.⁷⁰ Top-ranking French politicians argued that European collaboration at the exposition must now be followed by a European collaboration in the world. Paul Reynaud, Sarraut's successor as minister of colonies, explained that 'the colonial reality calls for a European collaboration for which France stands prepared'.⁷¹ Investigating the personal and institutional networks branching out from the exposition, Étienne Deschamps concludes that the event constituted a beacon of colonial optimism in a time when European economy and culture were under severe stress.⁷²

At the node of these networks, which to some extent replicated those of the Pan-European organization, was the charismatic presence of marshal Hubert Lyautey, former governor of Morocco and general commissioner of the exposition. Lyautey was regarded as France's colonial master planner, having already transformed the greater cities of Morocco into bi-continental enclaves and in many ways incarnating the Eurafrican idea. At the closing session of the exposition Lyautey argued for a 'Holy Alliance of the colonizing peoples' and for a 'union

⁷⁰ Catherine Hodeir and Michel Pierre, *L'Exposition coloniale de 1931* (Brussels: André Versaille, 2011), pp. 150–1.

⁷¹ Quoted in Ageron, 'L'Idée d'Eurafrrique', p. 457.

⁷² Deschamps, 'Quelle Afrique', p. 118.

of all the colonizing nations in a policy of association for the greater moral and material profit of all'.⁷³

Another important manifestation of European unity in colonial matters was the 1932 Volta Congress in Rome organized by Italy's Royal Academy. Opened by Mussolini himself, the congress devoted a full day of discussions to Central Africa and the mandates system, with lectures by German diplomat Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy (another Pan-European) and Italian senator Camillo Manfroni, both asserting that Europeans urgently needed to collaborate with one another to make the most of their African colonies.⁷⁴

The same year, Sarraut launched his project in the formal setting of the League of Nations conference on disarmament: 'The French delegation looks toward a future when it is possible that certain European nations which have no colonies may collaborate with colonial nations for the realization of a great work: the development of immense continents like Africa, which are spacious enough to attract the collaborative labour of all European peoples.'⁷⁵ In the subsequent negotiations that led to the Four-Power Pact between France, Britain, Germany and Italy, Édouard Daladier, who was prime minister, and Sarraut, having returned as minister of colonies, flaunted their Eurafrican card as a possible path toward future co-European initiatives. As Daladier stated at the time of the negotiations: 'Our country generously offers an opening for others to cooperate in the projects that it is carrying out in Africa.'⁷⁶ As we shall see in the next chapter, such initiatives to launch colonial cooperation schemes in Africa, including 'offers' to have also the non-colonial states in Western Europe participate, were to recur after World War II.

By this time, however, the Eurafrican plan of the French government was stuck in a dilemma. Sarraut and Daladier were on the one hand

⁷³ Quoted in Patricia Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), p. 314.

⁷⁴ Deschamps, 'Quelle Afrique', p. 105. Orsini di Camerota stressed the importance of the Volta Congress for establishing Eurafrican ideas in Italy (*Eurafrica*, pp. 13–17). A sequel to this congress was held in 1938, at that time entirely devoted to Africa but less interested in European collaboration than in promoting Italian imperialism.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Ageron, 'L'Idée d'Eurafrrique', p. 465.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Montarsolo, 'Albert Sarraut', p. 83.

held back by a domestic colonial *patronat* that rejected the idea of sharing colonial lands with other nations. On the other hand, they were pressed by Italian and German leaders, who greeted such initiatives as an invitation to step up their demands for African space – Italy wanted Ethiopia, Germany its former colonies or at least a substantial piece of Central Africa. Sarraut apparently resolved the situation by proposing what Ageron describes as an ‘impossible conference’. He suggested, in the summer of 1933, that European states sit down together with independent African nations such as Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa, to draft a general plan for Africa’s development. According to Sarraut’s agenda, European states should be invited to contribute labour, skills, knowledge and capital to African development, while the rights of sovereignty should remain unchanged. The offer was of course unacceptable to Hitler and Mussolini, who could not stomach the idea of serving as labourers, investors or tradesmen in French, Portuguese or Belgian colonies, and this on the same terms as Egyptians or Ethiopians, the latter already designated as Italy’s prey.

Sarraut’s ‘trial balloon’, as *The New York Times* put it in April 1934, was thus deflated, and for some time Eurafrica disappeared from the political and diplomatic agenda. In public debate and discourse, however, Eurafrica prevailed – which is of course why *The New York Times* devoted a full-page article to the phenomenon: ‘Europe Casts covetous eyes on Africa.’ According to its author, Ferdinand Tuohy, Mussolini’s Italy was eager to vie with France and Britain for a portion of the continent, and the Four-Power Pact, it is said, may well result in some realization of Sarraut’s idea, ‘operating side by side with a fresh sharing out of mandates. If so, pecuniary advantages might be held out to Spain and Portugal in return for the making over of their African possessions, especially Portuguese Angola, with which much could be done.’⁷⁷

Although this forecast was wrong, work on Eurafrica continued in offices and formal or informal committees around Europe. Indeed, up

⁷⁷ ‘Europe casts covetous eyes on Africa’, *The New York Times*, 8 April 1934.

until 1937, as Anthony Adamthwaite shows, 'Euroafrica' or 'Colonial condominium schemes in Africa were the staple of Franco-German discussions'.⁷⁸ Yet, much of this was to result in proposals that were often too utopian to attract serious attention from politicians. From a historical point of view, however, these blueprints merit serious study because they illustrate the Eurafrican project and its underpinnings in its boldest version, and partly also because they are precursors of what was to come after Europeans had suffered yet another world war. Let us therefore briefly outline some of these utopian figurations of Eurafrica in the 1930s.

Damming the Mediterranean: Eurafrica as utopia

At the fourth congress of the Pan-European Union, held in Vienna in May 1935, Max Grünewald, philosopher and rabbi of Mannheim, presented a commissioned report entitled 'Africa and the Problem of Emigration'. The report addressed the most pressing concern in Europe of that period, the twelve-million-strong 'surplus population' for which no employment could be imagined within the foreseeable future. Grünewald's solution was straightforward. A million or so Europeans should, annually, be offered the possibility to settle in Africa.⁷⁹ As a modification of and supplement to Grünewald's plan, Pan-European delegate and engineer Artur Biber showed statistics in favour of the establishment of a 'New Europe' in Africa, to be placed under the authority of the League of Nations, populated by three million unemployed Europeans – out of the twelve-million total – and furnished by an investment fund amounting to 1.8 billion Swiss francs, to be provided on loan by all European states interested in supporting the colony by moving part of its surplus population

⁷⁸ Anthony Adamthwaite, *Grandeur and Misery: France's bid for power in Europe 1914–1940* (London: Arnold, 1995), p. 148.

⁷⁹ Max Grünewald, 'Afrika und das Emigrantenproblem', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 11, Nos. 6–8, 1935, pp. 230–2.

southward.⁸⁰ Grünewald ended his report by quoting Coudenhove-Kalergi: 'To save Africa for Europe, is to save Europe by way of Africa.'

In 1935, *Paneuropa* also translated and published sections of Guernier's *Afrique: Champ d'expansion de l'Europe*, which began with a fifty-page survey of world migration over the past century. For each European country, Guernier introduced an abundance of demographic data – nativity and mortality rates, unemployment, social stratification, internal and external migration, among others; and for each country he reached the same apparently irrefutable conclusion. Italy, for example, 'will again find itself before the necessity to imagine a way of securing the livelihood of its annual nativity surplus amounting to 455,000 people, a great part whom, no longer able to cross either the Atlantic, or the Alps, or to live on native territory where the human density has become too high, should start looking toward Africa.'⁸¹

The problem, as Guernier saw it, was that no single European state owned the resources to organize and finance the required settlements. Therefore, European cooperation was necessary. Guernier suggested a three-step strategy. First, the European states should select the best and brightest of its elite and send them to Africa to draw up concrete plans and projects of development. These elites would then prepare the way for the '*troupes de choc*: engineers, constructors, entrepreneurs and builders, who, in providing Africa with its material necessities, will allow the already evolved parts of the indigenous races to improve their standard of life, while at the same time the colonizers arriving from the four corners of Europe will start developing the African land, in order to constitute a complete economic cycle marked by harmony of production and consumption.'⁸² Once this new Eurafrican order was set in place, mass-migration of Europeans at an annual rate of

⁸⁰ Artur Biber, 'Die Bekämpfung der technologischen Arbeitslosigkeit durch Kolonisation', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 11, Nos. 6–8, 1935, pp. 232–3. Cf. Antoine Fleury, 'Paneurope et l'Afrique', in *L'Europe unie et l'Afrique*, p. 51.

⁸¹ See E. L. Guernier, 'Afrika als Kolonisationsland', *Paneuropa*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1935, pp. 7–11.

⁸² Guernier, *L'Afrique*, p. 266.

Figure 2.8 Map of territories in Africa favourable for European immigration. Source: Eugène Guernier, *L'Afrique et l'Europe: Atlas* (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, 1942).

500,000 would follow, totalling, in thirty to fifty years, twenty million individuals.⁸³

In later works, Guernier made detailed maps displaying which areas of Africa were most favourable for European settlers (see Figure 2.8). He also delved deep into political economy, showing how a 'responsible' exploitation of African raw materials along with the increased productivity enabled by key infrastructural investments would cover the start-up costs for relocating such huge numbers of Europeans. In Guernier's work, then, the three main motivations for *Eurafrica* were seamlessly combined. *Eurafrica* entailed extraction of raw materials, large-scale settlement of white Europeans in Africa and the ascendance of a third economic, political, cultural and, ultimately, imperial entity – *Eurafrica* – balancing the Americas (the United States) and Eurasia (the Soviet Union).

This was also the utopian scenario of Orsini di Camerota's *Eurafrica*, in spirit and content closely related to Guernier's manifesto. As mentioned already, these utopian blueprints were far too visionary to be translated into political actions. Still, they serve as testimonials of the cultural atmosphere in a period that understood itself as standing in the twilight of both colonialism and European civilization, and which therefore fantasized about a new dawn, southward geographical expansion, tropical riches and technological leaps.

The most outrageous of such representations of *Eurafrica* was no doubt German architect Herman Sörgel's blueprint for what he called *Atlantropa*, which he considered as superior to Coudenhove-Kalergi's *Pan-Europe* (see Figure 2.9). Sörgel's *Atlantropa* exhibited in enhanced forms all the characteristics of the European idea of *Eurafrica*, while at the same time exaggerating all arguments made in its favour. Sörgel's basic idea was to dam up and contain the net inflow of water into the Mediterranean Sea. A great dam was to be built across the Gibraltar sound and a network of huge hydroelectric plants at the outlets of all the great rivers flowing into the Mediterranean, the Nile, the Rhône,

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 270–1.

Figure 2.9 Cartographic representations of Atlantropa, as envisioned by Herman Sörgel. Left: the industrial riches of Europe are depicted as complementary to Africa's natural resources. Right: Europe must either construct a Eurafican unity or face disintegration. Source: Herman Sörgel, *Atlantropa* (Munich: Piloty and Loehle, 1932).

the Po, the Tiber, the Ebro, as well as the rivers going into the Black Sea, the Danube, the Dnepr and others. These immense technical works – on the same scale as, or greater than, Stalin's plan to turn Russia's major rivers towards the south – would then lower the sea level of the Mediterranean and also create a territorial bridge between Africa and Europe. Sörgel's idea was to have the sea level decrease by 0.8 metres per year for more than one hundred years, until it would be 200 metres lower than today in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, and 100 metres lower in the western part, the two parts being separated by yet another dam – the Messina dam – stretching from Sicily to Tripoli.

Sörgel was among the first to propose large-scale technological projects that would enable the extraction of Africa's natural wealth while at the same time facilitate communication – railways, roads, telephony and electricity – between the continents. Such infrastructural designs would remain a vital concern for Eurafrican planning up until the early 1960s and beyond. Glancing ahead, we may thus discern an echo of Sörgel's plan in a prestigious engineering venture, under the supervision of French EURATOM president Louis Armand, that proposed, in 1958, constructing a channel tunnel between Britain and continental Europe, which 'also eventually would link up with a tunnel under the Strait of Gibraltar and form the great Eurafrica route connecting Europe with Africa [...] for the development of the African continent'.⁸⁴

Returning to Sörgel, he argued that Atlantropa promised enormous benefits. The project would create large areas of new agricultural land. For instance, to the west of Palestine a stretch of land would rise out of the waters and would be made available to Jewish settlers, thus creating a new Israel without swallowing Palestinian territory. The project would provide Europe with more energy than it could use, and the surplus energy would be used to pump water from the Congo river, led by way of a system of channels through Lake Tchad, in order to irrigate the Sahara, which would thus become agricultural land. Across the new territorial connection between the continents, Africa's natural resources would flow into Europe, while Europe's surplus population would move into and colonize the African continent. The crowning infrastructural accomplishment would be a railroad connecting Berlin and Cape Town and a new capital city of Atlantropa built on new land rising out of the Mediterranean.

But the decisive advantage for Sörgel was that Atlantropa would also create a new European citizen, a superior human being, who would evolve through the consecutive generations' concerted toil and effort to construct their new world. Recall that the realization of

⁸⁴ 'English Channel Tunnel spurred', *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 March 1958.

Atlantropa would take hundreds of years, during which all European thought and culture would be profoundly transformed by the great common project, much as the building of communism in Russia would, according to Lenin and Stalin, create a new Soviet human being. Of course, the African people also figured in the equation, as a vast supply of labour for Europe's industry and agriculture. That the sovereignty over the newly created continent was on the side of Europe was signalled by its name. The unified territories of Africa and Europe would be called 'Atlantropa'. Sörgel's technological vision was in his own view the only possible solution to the problems facing Europe: unemployment, overpopulation, lack of energy and natural resources. At one stroke, these difficulties would be resolved. Indeed, the future of the West depended on the project, Sörgel maintained: 'Either: the fall of the West (*Untergang des Abendlandes*), or: Atlantropa as a turning point and new goal.'⁸⁵

Eurafrican appeasement

In the 1930s, Herman Sörgel promoted his project by copying the strategy of Coudenhove-Kalergi, starting an organization of supporters and even launching a political party. Under the subsequent Nazi dictatorship, he sought to convince the leaders of Germany and Italy of the necessity and practicability of his project. However, Mussolini was not enthusiastic about the idea of having Italy's ports dried up. His regime rather relied on geopolitical schemes developed by political geographers collaborating in the journal *Geopolitica*, where Central and Eastern North Africa was claimed as Italy's 'spazio vitale' and the Mediterranean as its 'mare nostrum'. Interestingly, despite the fascist taint of the Italian discourse on Eurafrica, the

⁸⁵ Herman Sörgel, *Atlantropa* (Munich: Piloty und Loehle; Zürich: Fretz und Wasmuth, 1932), p. 106. For an analysis of Sörgel's project, see Alexander Gall, *Das Atlantropa-Projekt: Die Geschichte einer gescheiterten Vision. Herman Sörgel und die Absenkung des Mittelmeers* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1998).

conception itself would remain in place in the post-fascist 1950s and 1960s.⁸⁶ (As we shall see, it was easily reactivated in the postwar European integration process.)

Hitler, for his part, had little interest in the all-European collaboration that Sörgel suggested. He devised his own imperial master plan, which presupposed German dominance. Instead of choosing between *Ostpolitik* and *Kolonialpolitik*, Hitler's regime went for both. East Europe would provide *Lebensraum* in the proper sense – that is, areas for German settlement; Africa would serve as a source of natural resources. In a 1936 address, Hitler officially demanded for the first time the restitution of all German colonies, while Schacht, his finance minister, shuttled between Berlin and Paris to negotiate the same programme.

Although many leaders in France and Britain regarded this as an attractive alternative from an economic point of view, they found it geopolitically and strategically dangerous to allow Hitler sovereignty on African territory. Instead, France continued to seek political appeasement through economic concessions, the assumption being that this would strengthen the Nazi regime's moderate arm, such as Schacht and the economic elite, who wanted to cap rearmament and bring Germany into a Western comity of nations. The measures culminated in 1937 when France (under the left-wing Popular Front) and Germany (under the Nazis) signed the 'July 10 Commercial Accords', in which they reciprocally granted one another Most-Favoured Nation Principle, and which also made Germany most-favoured nation in all French colonies as well as in France's mandate areas, Togo and Cameroon. Right up to the start of the war, this economic small-scale Eurafrican arrangement boosted German industry, now with cheaper access to colonial resources, as well as France's colonial economy, which found greater markets.⁸⁷ During the Vichy government, this integration of the French Empire and the German *Reich* would be taken

⁸⁶ Antonsich, 'Geopolitica', pp. 267–77.

⁸⁷ Gordon Dutter, 'Doing business with the Nazis: French economic relations with Germany under the Popular Front', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 63, No. 2, 1991, pp. 296–326.

further and evolve into what many French conservatives envisioned as a Eurafrican entity.⁸⁸

The last political effort to revive the Eurafrican idea before World War II was apparently the British prime minister Neville Chamberlain's plan to involve Germany in a grand joint scheme centred on Central Africa, which was introduced to Hitler by Britain's ambassador Nevile Henderson in the spring of 1938. 'As before the First World War,' Wm. Roger Louis has summarized this intervention, 'British statesmen attempted to resolve Europe's troubles by an African settlement.'⁸⁹ In return for limiting its aggressive claims on Czechoslovakia and Austria, Germany was offered access to a large part of Central Africa, which was to be placed under an international administration with a strong German component. For Chamberlain, the plan intended to open 'an entirely new chapter in the history of African colonial development to be introduced and accepted by the general agreement of the Powers in Africa.'⁹⁰ The allied powers thus hoped to barter African territories for the sake of peace in Europe, without concern, of course, for the African populations that would be thrown under Hitler's dictatorship.⁹¹ Rumours of colonial appeasement abounded and as late as 29 October 1938 *The New York Times* reported:

As a result of reports abroad – particularly Great Britain – that former German colonies soon will be returned to the Reich as part of the general European appeasement sought by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Premier Edouard Daladier, stocks of German shipping concerns and enterprises in the former colonies staged today a sensational boom on the Boerse. Both the gains and the turnover exceeded anything known in the market in recent years.⁹²

⁸⁸ See Chantal Metzger, *L'empire colonial français dans la stratégie du Troisième Reich (1936–1945)* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2002).

⁸⁹ Wm. Roger Louis, 'Colonial appeasement, 1936–1938', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 1971, p. 1175.

⁹⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 1186, from the Minutes of the Committee on Foreign Policy.

⁹¹ Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, pp. 116–21, 183–4.

⁹² 'Stocks in Berlin, London and Paris: Reich shipping and colonial industries boom on reports of regaining possessions', *The New York Times*, 29 October 1938.

In the end though, Hitler rejected the offer. But 1938 also saw a rapid decline in France's appetite for colonial cooperation with Germany; by December opinion polls that just months prior had indicated a solid public support for colonial appeasement of Germany now gave at hand an even more solid rebuttal of this policy.⁹³

But this did not mean that all had turned quiet on the Eurafrican appeasement front. Right up until the war broke out, the British labour politician, postwar foreign secretary and – as we shall see in the next chapter – strong Eurafrican advocate Ernest Bevin was hard at work arguing for a 'World Order' (as he termed it) that, through a grand collaborative project for the development of colonial Africa, would advance world peace, economies and living standards across the globe. As one of Bevin's biographers, Francis Williams, recalls, shortly before the war, Bevin made it clear that he:

envisaged a great United Africa Authority to which all the Colonial Powers in Africa together with the United States should be invited to belong and membership in which should also be offered to Germany and Italy if they would alter their politics of international aggression. British, French and Belgian knowledge of Colonial administration, allied to American capital and the American genius for large scale development plus the technical and research skill of the Germans and the emigrants Italy desperately needed to send abroad could, he argued, turn the underdeveloped areas of Africa into one of the great treasure houses of the world with immense advantage to the status and standard of life of the native people.⁹⁴

During the war itself, Eurafrica, colonial cooperation and appeasement would resume their importance and play an emblematic role in the various plans to integrate Vichy France's African territories into the Third Reich. Of course, these plans did not contain any prospect of a European integration on equal terms. The Nazi conception of Eurafrica usually entailed a redistribution of Britain's African

⁹³ Adamthwaite, *Grandeur and Misery*, p. 148.

⁹⁴ Francis Williams, *Ernest Bevin: Portrait of a Great Englishman* (London: Hutchinson, 1952), p. 209.

territories among the Axis powers after an expected victory.⁹⁵ For this reason, it diverges from the lineage that we are tracing in this book. Yet it is worth to recall the numerous press reports of the period, especially during the German–Italian campaigns in North Africa, which discussed Eurafrica as a guiding geopolitical vision of the Axis powers. According to *The New York Times* in October 1941, for instance, the German view of ‘the future of Europe’ included Africa since ‘the two continents themselves [were seen as] inseparable, as indicated by the joint designation now in vogue: “Eurafrica”’.⁹⁶ Germany’s Eurafrican scheme was to be built in close collaboration with fascist Italy and the French Vichy Republic. It was thus also, as we discuss further in the following chapter, a crucial ingredient in the Vichy administration’s colonial outlook.

Africa was of course equally important for de Gaulle’s Free France and its exiled representatives, many of whom found refuge in Africa with those few colonial administrations that remained loyal to the republic. As the war wore on and an allied victory drew near, the French Congo, Cameroon and Algeria were then turned into launching pads for the postwar French and European order. Indeed, as François Duchêne has it, ‘Algiers in the second half of 1943 was a thriving seedbed of ideas for postwar policy’.⁹⁷ It was in Algiers, in 1943, that Etienne Hirsch – subsequently one of the negotiators of the European Coal and Steel Community and then President of EURATOM – found his colleague Jean Monnet ‘deep in thought in front of a map of Europe laid out on his desk and striped with pencil lines’. As Duchêne quotes Hirsch’s recollection, Monnet pointed to the Ruhr and Lorraine regions, noting ‘that all the trouble came from that part of the world. It was from their coal and steel that Germany and France forged the instruments of war.’ To nip future wars in the bud, therefore, Monnet went on to affirm the necessity

⁹⁵ Schmokel, *Dream of Empire*, pp. 129–36.

⁹⁶ ‘Vichy is affected by Soviet losses,’ *The New York Times*, 16 October 1941.

⁹⁷ François Duchêne, *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), p. 126.

to somehow 'extract this region from the two countries'.⁹⁸ It was also in Algiers in 1943 that René Mayer, at the time heading Free France's commercial fleet and later to become prime minister, successor to Monnet at the head of the ECSC and one of the most influential French officials in European affairs, pondered whether a postwar order in Europe might not have to be centred around an industrial 'Rhenish State' ('Etat Rhénan'), which, however, would have to 'be balanced by the agricultural production of France and the colonies of the federation'. Mayer predicted that this would also bring about 'a solution to the problems posed by the insufficient resourcing of the French colonies'.⁹⁹

Among the fascist governments as well as among the allied states, Eurafrica thus remained a salient representation, and a guiding geopolitical concept, even during World War II. The future of Europe and the idea of European integration could at this point in time not be separated from the notion of some Eurafrican complementarity, upon which the future world order appeared to hinge.

Emerging counter-movements: Concluding remarks

Yet, to bring this into proper perspective, we must return to a topic raised at the beginning of this chapter, namely the colonial presence in the form of black and coloured troops fighting on European territory. If World War I's aftermath constituted the beginnings of Eurafrica, it was also the birth of the anticolonial struggle, in the sense that the 'Wilsonian moment' disappointed the colonized peoples that had been bold enough to expect that Wilson and his allies would make sure that national independence and sovereignty should also apply outside

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 126.

⁹⁹ René Mayer, 'Un ensemble fédéral occidental: Note de René Mayer', in Gérard Bossuat (ed.), *D'Alger à Rome: Choix des documents* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Ciaco, 1989), pp. 48–9. The proposed 'Rhenish State', would, according to Mayer, consist of France, Germany, the Benelux and possibly also Spain and Italy.

continental Europe.¹⁰⁰ As Mark Mazower puts it, the Vietnamese, Indian and others' attempt to use this moment to bring an end to colonialism met with utter failure, thus leaving intact a perception among Europeans 'that took the durability of empire for granted; few, if any, African or Asian nationalist claims to independence seriously registered'.¹⁰¹ Hence, for Eurafricanists, it was the USA and USSR that were projected as the chief rivals to Europe's global recovery during the interwar period. The anti-colonial movement would be relaunched in tandem with the formation of the UN in the immediate postwar era. This time, though, and despite many of the UN architects' designs to the contrary – that is, designs to have the UN serve imperial interests and so work in defence of the colonial world order – anti-colonialism proved more resilient and partly successful as India and other Asian colonies' rapid liberations were to prove.¹⁰²

This was thus one competitor that the postwar era's relaunch of Eurafrica was up against. The other was, of course, the emerging Cold War order, an order that initially seemed to work in support of colonial liberation. The immediate postwar years would thus witness three currents that had all, in some rudimentary or ideational form, been present in the interwar years. Eventually, Eurafrica would be the first one of these currents to run out of steam. But for some fifteen years, between 1945 and the early 1960s, Eurafrica was a viable and successful project, one that provided postwar European integration with a purpose and role in the global geopolitical struggle that was set off at the end of World War II. Let us now turn our attention to these crucial years.

¹⁰⁰ Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹⁰¹ Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 23.

¹⁰² For a full account of this suppressed history, see *ibid.*