

## PREFACE

“Germany renounces in favor of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers all her rights and titles to her overseas possessions.”<sup>1</sup>

The Great War brought to an abrupt conclusion the colonial history of modern Germany. It is a history whose facts are now complete, but whose story is as yet untold.

The present study is an effort to write the first chapter of the story, to trace the beginnings of modern German colonialism. It is designed to embrace only the first fifteen years of the empire and to include nothing in the history of Prussia, except in so far as Prussian influence affected imperial action.

To be sure, the years from 1871 to 1885 antedate the adoption of official colonization; for it was not until April 24, 1884, that Bismarck proclaimed imperial protection over the settlements of the merchant Lüderitz in Southwest Africa; yet these earlier years are important in two respects. Abroad, they marked the first steps of expansion which generally introduce in any country a colonial policy, such as the establishment of trading stations, factories, plantations, naval bases and favorable commercial treaties. At home, in Germany, the first fifteen years of the empire contained beneath their surface the motives and forces, the tendencies and currents which actuated colonial expansion. Any history of the movement would be far from complete without a study of its primary causes, its dominating influences, since they imparted to it distinctive characteristics which persisted throughout the life of imperial Germany.

<sup>1</sup> *The Treaty of Peace with Germany*, 1919, article 119.