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Vol. 92, No. 2
September 2005

From Tuskegee to Togo: The Problem of Freedom in the Empire of Cotton

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It was a stormy November morning in 1900 when the *Graf Waldersee* steamed out of the port of New York for its journey across the Atlantic Ocean to the German city of Hamburg. Among the more than two thousand travelers who glanced one last time at the receding steeples of Trinity Church, the towering Manhattan Life Insurance Company building, and the Statue of Liberty, four passengers stood out: James N. Calloway, John Robinson, Allen Burks, and Shepherd Lincoln Harris. All were the sons of slaves from Alabama, and all were connected to Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. Calloway was a Tuskegee teacher, and Robinson, Burks, and Harris were students or recent graduates. Perhaps even more remarkable was their mission: They had boarded the *Graf Waldersee* that morning on a journey to new jobs in a faraway land—the German colony of Togo. On the western coast of Africa, they were to instruct the German colonialists and their subjects on how to grow cotton for export, "to determine the possibility of a rational cotton culture as a native culture, and ... to show the marketability of the product for German industry."[1] 1

Their journey from Tuskegee to Togo was the beginning of a volatile experiment that brought freedom, colonialism, and cotton together in novel ways. After changing steamers in Hamburg, Calloway, Burks, Robinson, and Harris arrived in 2

Lomé, Togo, on December 30. "After many hardships on the ocean we at last got to the long looked for place," wrote a relieved Shepherd Harris to Booker T. Washington, a place "where we saw and are still seeing strange things." In a gesture perhaps surprising to African Americans used to increasing segregation from white Alabamians, they were welcomed by no less than the German vice governor of Togo, Waldermeer Horn. He promised the full support of his small colonial administration to ensure the success of their mission. Just as surprising, there was virtually none of the basic infrastructure that usually went along with cotton production in the southern United States—indeed, the vice governor met the Americans on the beach, since no port had yet been built. Upon unloading the machines, wagons, provisions, and seeds, the Tuskegee experts found it exceedingly difficult to move them to the place where their cotton experiments were to start: "We had harnesses and waggons, but no horses. It was impossible to obtain the latter and ... we decided to get natives to draw our waggons. But what was our surprise, the natives feared to draw the wagons." Calloway, Robinson, Burks, and Harris left the carts behind and proceeded inland with the help of one hundred porters, interpreters, a cook, and a washer. While the three Tuskegee graduates walked the distance, Calloway, as the leader of the group, stayed in his hammock, "slung to a pole fastened to two boards borne upon the heads of four men." In the evening of the fourth day, this unusual procession reached Agome-Palimé, "the largest trading post of Misahöhe district." A few days later, John Robinson penciled a letter to Washington describing the strange world they had encountered: "we are getting on as well as can be expected being so far removed from civilization. There are only ten really civilized persons with in a radius of 50 miles or more, or for that matter, there are only 107 whites out of the 2 1/2 millions of inhabitants of Togoland and that 107 are found principally along the coast."[2]

Thus it was that in January 1901 the Tuskegee graduates began their advisory role to the German colonial administration. The experiment lasted eight years, until 1909, when the last of the African Americans, John Robinson, on a mission to spread cotton commerce into the Togolese hinterland, drowned in a "swift river." During all those years, as Shepherd Harris put it in May 1901, "we are all doing all that there is in our power to reflect credit upon our race in America, and above all, credit upon Tuskegee our dear old

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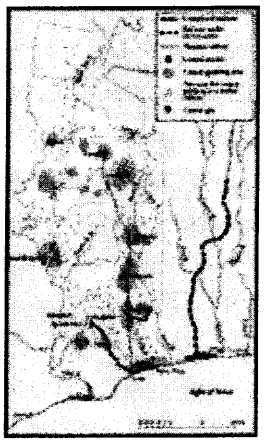
Al."[3]

4 The spectacle of the sons of American slaves and German colonialists raising cotton on the coast of Africa would have seemed fantastical, if not nightmarish, to the cotton kings who dominated the world market before the American Civil War. Yet such scenes—from Togo to the Sudan—were the unanticipated outcome of the explosive transformation of the worldwide web of cotton production in the postbellum decades.[4] By the time of the journey from Tuskegee to Togo, world cotton production was no longer dominated by the slave-driven plantations of the American South. That dominance had given way to a global empire of cotton structured by multiple and powerful states and their colonies and worked by nonslave labor. In this new world, American freedmen might indeed advise German colonialists and Ewe rural cultivators on how to grow cotton in Africa.



Togo as a German cotton-producing colony, c. 1909. This map is based on "Baumwollkarte von Togo" (Cotton map of Togo), 1909. *Courtesy Bundesarchiv Berlin, R1001/8223*.

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5 Historians have long understood that emancipation in the United States was only one episode in the global spread of

nonbonded labor in the nineteenth century. As Eric Foner and others have argued, the ending of slavery in the American South in 1865 was part of a global move toward freedom that stretched from Saint Domingue to the British West Indies, from Russia to Brazil. Less noticed yet just as important, emancipation in the United States was also an important stepping-stone in a global recasting of commodity production. For statesmen, industrialists, and cotton planters, the abolition of slavery sharply posed the question of how to reconcile freedom and commodity production. The first phase of industrialization in western Europe and the United States, after all, had relied heavily on such slave-grown commodities as sugar, indigo, and, especially, cotton, and many observers had held that bondage was essential to the continued production of those and other commodities and thus to prosperity. Despite such assumptions, by the last third of the nineteenth century new systems of labor—including new forms of compulsion—had emerged, spreading over ever-larger areas of the globe and supported by powerful imperial states. Those labor systems became fundamental to the production of agricultural commodities, including cotton, and of a new global political economy.[5]

6 Throughout the nineteenth century and all over the world, rural cultivators desiring to retain control over their land and labor ran up against pressure for increased production of export crops. The resulting struggles between industrialists, merchants, agricultural producers, and state bureaucrats can be told from many different perspectives. U.S. historians, for example, have documented the conflicts over freedom and cotton agriculture in works on the Reconstruction South, in which sharecropping and tenant farming emerged as a compromise between freed people's desire for land and landowners' desire for wage labor on plantations. Historians of South Asia, Latin America, and Africa have chronicled the tightly interwoven story of colonial domination and the production of cotton, coffee, tea, rubber, and other commodities by peasants, indentured workers, forced laborers, and slaves. But historians' works, focusing on specific regions, have generally steered clear of the international context. Reconciling the decline of slavery and the expansion of commodity production was, however, a global process. To understand it, we need to examine the connections among such diverse actors as freed people in the American South, Indian rural cultivators, Russian

industrialists, and German imperial statesmen.[6]

7 The journey of four African Americans from Tuskegee to Togo illuminates a small but telling part of the global nature of these struggles. The Alabamians could embark on the journey only because their parents had been set free by the convulsions of the American Civil War. Reflecting post-Reconstruction notions of race, they saw their African sojourn as part of a larger struggle for black emancipation and themselves as the vanguard of the "black race." As experts on both the "Negro" and cotton, the Tuskegee men seemed to their German hosts to promise extraordinary insights into how Africans could be turned into commodity producers. Their German employers had become interested in hiring them because the same Civil War—which historians have called the "industrial world's first raw materials crisis"—had made European statesmen and industrialists deeply concerned about their continued dependence on a single supplier for their most crucial raw material.[7] In expanding cotton production, the German colonialists learned from British cotton-growing efforts in India as well as Russian ventures in Central Asia, and they connected to a global discourse on the "Negro" that ascribed specific characteristics to people of African heritage. The Germans' African subjects, like their counterparts in the American South, northeastern Brazil, and western India, understood that a radical expansion of commodity production would threaten their cherished way of life, including control over how they worked, how they organized their reproduction, and how they defined their relationship to the rest of the world. Thus they resisted it.

8 For eight years, the Tuskegee experts, German colonialists, and African rural cultivators struggled to reconcile their divergent understandings of freedom and commodity production. They all wanted Togolese cotton to be exported, but they sharply disagreed about the conditions of its production. Maximizing cotton exports stood at the center of the German colonialists' agenda: They believed that Ewe cultivators, working their own land, could be persuaded and, if need be, coerced to produce more of the "white gold" using American agricultural methods. The Ewe responded by taking advantage of a rapidly expanding market for one of their cash crops, but they also diligently safeguarded the production of subsistence crops and thus limited their output of cotton. The Tuskegee experts were caught in the middle: They agreed with the German colonialists that cotton production should

increase, believing that production for world markets could help make Africans and people of African heritage central to a core Western industry and thus secure their freedom. But the Tuskegee experts, in contrast to the Germans, also held that recasting the social structure of the Togolese countryside should be a slow and evolutionary process, with as little coercion and violence as possible. In their disagreements, Tuskegee experts, the Ewe, and the German colonialists all drew on lessons learned from distant locales. And, perhaps surprisingly, the Africans managed to maintain significant control over their lives—including their own vibrant cotton industry—at least in the short term. At the same time, Calloway, Robinson, Burks, and Harris, from their ambivalent position between German employers on the one side and African rural producers on the other, navigated the treacherous shoals of a new and increasingly virulent discourse on race that stretched from Tuskegee to Berlin to Togo. The contradictions between their aspirations for recognition and African improvement, the German colonialists' aim of integrating commodity producers in the periphery with metropolitan economies, and the African cultivators' interest in retaining control over their land and labor were at the core of this novel project of bringing cotton, civilization, and colonialism together.

Members of the expedition that introduced Western cotton-growing methods into Togo, including technical

experts from Tuskegee Institute, celebrate their first harvest by posing with three bales of cotton, 1901. From left to right are the chief of Gyeasekang; unidentified; Akpanya von Boem, a chief; John Robinson (from Tuskegee); Lieutenant Smend; Waldermeer Horn, the vice governor of Togo; unidentified; James N. Calloway (from Tuskegee); and Allen Burks (from Tuskegee). *From* Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901 *(Cotton expedition to Togo, report 1901) (Berlin, 1901), 81.*

By 1900, when Calloway, Robinson, Burks, and Harris 9
embarked on their journey to Togo, the German cotton industry was the most significant on the European continent and the third largest in the world. About one in fifteen German workers labored in spinning and weaving mills; their output was among the most valuable products of domestic industry; and it constituted the nation's most important export. And no other German industry was so reliant on other countries for its crucial raw material. Because all raw cotton came from abroad, it was Germany's most costly import: One billion pounds of cotton were imported into Germany in 1902, and whole areas of Germany, such as Saxony and Alsace, came to depend for their survival on a regular supply of raw cotton. "King Cotton has become the most powerful ruler," observed Karl Supf, president of the Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee (colonial economic committee, KWK) and himself a cotton manufacturer. "He has deeply affected the social conditions, yes, even entirely rearranged them."[8]

Considering the size of the industry and the capital 10
invested in it, it was hardly surprising that cotton industrialists frequently expressed a desire for an ample, regular, and inexpensive supply of raw cotton. From the beginnings of a German mechanized cotton industry, that supply had come largely from the United States. But during the American Civil War, U.S. cotton had suddenly disappeared from markets, indelibly etching in the minds of cotton industrialists and statesmen the danger of depending on the United States for raw cotton. Indian and Egyptian cotton did gain market share,

but during the 1880s and 1890s the United States annually supplied between 50 and 90 percent of the white gold to German industry. Indeed, in those decades, the United States decisively recaptured its dominant position in world cotton markets, producing such fabulous quantities of cotton (three times as much in 1900 as in 1860) that, despite rapidly rising demand, especially in continental Europe and Asia, prices fell throughout the 1870s and 1880s and into the 1890s. The overwhelming market dominance of the United States worried cotton interests the world over.[9]

11 German manufacturers and statesmen could not do much about this situation before the creation of a colonial empire in the 1880s. Once Germany acquired colonies in Africa and the South Seas, however, new possibilities for solving the "cotton question" emerged. Following up on contemporary efforts by British, French, and Russian colonial powers, the idea of growing cotton on German-controlled soil spread like wildfire among textile industrialists and imperial statesmen. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, cotton industrialists voiced interest in African cotton, an interest that reached fever pitch at the turn of the century, when they began to speak of an unfolding *Baumwollkulturkampf* (literally, a cotton conflict of cultures). At first rather disorganized, these sentiments became focused after 1896, when cotton industrialists were among those advocating creation of the KWK, a private organization that sought to make colonies sources of raw materials for home industries. More than four hundred German cotton industrialists contributed funds to its operation.[10]

12 Cotton industrialists advocated greater raw cotton production in German colonies for three reasons. For one, they were gravely concerned about cotton prices, which began rising rapidly in the 1890s and early 1900s, more than doubling between 1898 and 1904. They believed that the ever-greater use of cotton by the two major growing countries, the United States and India, was the root cause of such increases, which they took to be permanent. Second, the cotton market remained volatile, with prices increasing by 12 percent in 1899, 37 percent in 1900, and 6 percent in 1901. Price fluctuations made it difficult to plan profitable production. Colonial cotton, in their eyes, would help ensure stable and low prices and, as an added benefit, could prevent a market disruption such as the cotton famine of the 1860s. Third, in a strategic attempt to broaden political support for

their agenda, cotton manufacturers also argued that a prosperous cotton industry was essential to combat working-class upheaval. For Karl Supf, invoking the terrible social effects of the American Civil War, "it [was] obvious that a crisis that would break out in the cotton industry would include a social danger whose results are unpredictable." This plan of co-optation came to fruition when the generally anticolonial Social Democrats expressed their hope that cotton from Togo would break the "cotton monopoly" of the United States.[11]

13 Such reasoning moved cotton industrialists into the public arena. There, they combined with powerful statesmen and bureaucrats who argued that securing colonial cotton was of great geostrategic importance. As the German scholar, engineer, and Africa expert Ernst K. Henrici observed in 1899, "in the great economic competition among peoples, mass production and mass consumption are becoming central. Our colonies, if they should be of real benefit to the mother country, need to aspire toward delivering great amounts of raw materials, so that they can in turn purchase great amounts of the industrial products of the motherland." Dependence on American and Indian cotton, his neomercantilist argument went, always had negative "political consequences"; indeed, the sums involved equaled half the German military budget. Supf asserted that Germany paid "tribute" to foreign countries to acquire raw cotton. Only colonial cotton production, argued the economist Karl Helfferich, could break the "economic rule of America over the European cotton industry." In short, in Supf's overheated rhetoric, colonial cotton was the only way to resist "American rape."[12]

14 In Togo dreams of cotton certainly drove German colonialists from the start. In 1888— only four years after its explorations had begun—Germany embarked on systematic trials of growing cotton for world markets there. These trials included the German planter Ludwig Wolf 's ill-fated attempt to grow cotton, cut short by his death from tropical disease. In May of 1890, a Samoan cotton planter, Ferdinand Goldberg, arrived in Togo to investigate the possibilities of cotton growing there, but he too failed. During the 1890s rubber and palm oil emerged as the most important export crops, drawing labor and capital into their orbit. Only after 1900 did cotton-growing efforts begin to pay off.[13]

15 Still, cotton and imperial expansion went hand in hand

from the beginning, not only for Germany but also for France, Russia, Great Britain, and even Portugal, Belgium, and Italy. Indeed, one observer of German colonial policy called "the desire for German sources of raw cotton ... the single dominant theme in German colonial policy."[14] Even Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, oversimplifying his own position, "mainly supported colonization because of the possibility of our own cotton cultivation." Colonial cotton from Togo and elsewhere in the fledgling empire symbolized for him and others the new symbiosis of a powerful nation-state with powerful national industries. That symbiosis, a kind of industrial mercantilism, characterized a new form of global capitalism centered on the strengthening of national capital in rival capitalist nations.[15]

16 It was in this political and economic environment that the KWK decided to bring African American cotton farmers to Togo. Once they set their minds to colonial cotton production, members of the KWK focused their efforts on hiring African Americans, as they considered "cotton culture since time immemorial the Negro's favorite culture" and African Americans the world's most experienced and significant cotton farmers, indeed, the world's most successful commodity producers of African heritage. Booker T. Washington, moreover, had widely advertised his belief in scientific agriculture, the "new Negro," and Western imperialism, promising a role model for Africans that combined political docility with eagerness to produce commodities for world markets, a combination that made him an ideal partner for the Germans. Because a member of the KWK, Beno von Herman auf Wain, was the agricultural attaché at the German embassy in Washington, D.C., he contacted Washington in the summer of 1900 and asked him for help in securing instructors for Togo.[16]

17 To discuss the plan, von Herman met Booker T. Washington on August 13, 1900, in Roslindale, Massachusetts. Things must have gone well. Just two weeks later, on September 3, von Herman confirmed that Washington had agreed to provide him with cotton planters and a mechanic "to teach the Negroes there [in Togo] how to plant and harvest cotton in a rational and scientific way." The German agricultural attaché confided to Washington that "some members of the company have certain misgivings whether your Negro-planters might find some difficulties in starting and developing their work in Togo, in finding the necessary

authority towards the native population, and in having at the same time the necessary respect towards the German government official." But the beginnings of the project were promising. By late September Washington confirmed that he had selected four men who were ready to go to Togo: James Calloway, forty years old, director of the cotton section of Tuskegee, was to direct the mission and supervise its younger members. He had been in charge of Tuskegee's eight hundred-acre farm and spoke some German. He was to be joined by John Winfrey Robinson, an 1897 Tuskegee graduate; Allen Burks, a 1900 Tuskegee graduate; and Shepherd Harris, who had entered Tuskegee in 1886 and learned the carpentry trade there. They were all the sons of slaves, and according to Washington, the ancestors of two of the experts "came from this part of Africa." He confidently expected his men to get along well with both the Togolese and the Germans: "I do not think in any case that there will be much if any difficulty in the men who go from here treating the German officials with proper respect. They are all kindly disposed, respectful gentlemen."[17]

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Booker T. Washington was proud that the Germans had chosen his students to expand cotton culture on colonial soil. But right from the beginning, differences between Washington and the KWK emerged. For Washington, encouraging African cultivators to grow cotton for world markets was a way to ensure their freedom by making them indispensable to the global economy. "No race," he believed, "that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized." Rationalized, modern cotton culture would protect the Togolese farmers from what he perceived as the backwardness and forced labor that haunted so many Africans. But Washington also advised von Herman, "I should very much hope that your Company will not make the same mistake that has been made in the South among our people, that is, teach them to raise nothing but cotton. I find that they make much better progress financially and otherwise where they are taught to raise something to eat at the same time they are raising cotton." The German colonialists' goal, however, was solely to increase commodity production. Although von Herman wrote Washington that "the Company is perfectly willing that your planters should try diversified farming," he also emphasized "that for the present cotton planting would be safest and most profitable.... The company wishes ... to have during the first year already as much cotton

planted as possible."[18]

19 A few weeks after von Herman and Washington had agreed on the outlines of the project, Calloway, Robinson, Burks, and Harris were on their way to New York to board the *Graf Waldersee*. They were the first of nine Alabamians who ventured to Togo, four of whom were eventually buried on Togolese soil.[19]

20 Freedom, according to Washington, rested on economic power. To remain free, people of African heritage had to become part of the global capitalist economy, of "civilization" in Washington's words, while retaining their ability to provide for themselves independently. Skills, ownership of land, and property accumulation, however modest, were to give people of African heritage the basis for securing their freedom and eventually their civil and political rights. The journey of the Tuskegee experts to Africa seemed to further such goals. According to Washington, Africa was backward and in need of the civilization that he thought colonial powers, foremost among them Germany, would dispense on their imperial missions. European states promised to uplift the "weaker races" by spreading capitalism and Christianity, and cotton would be important in this project. Perhaps because of the tight historical link between African Americans and cotton, it seemed to Washington, as it did to the abolitionist Martin R. Delany before him and the early twentieth-century journalist Walter F. Walker after him, that Africa could develop especially well by growing white gold for European manufacturers. By making themselves indispensable to a central metropolitan industry, and thus to global capitalism, people of African heritage could secure a modicum of well-being and power. Capitalism would promote the expansion of free-labor regimes, providing opportunities for moral and material uplift to Africans just as it had for African Americans as they moved out of slavery. Such a view, independent of any specific role that Tuskegee came to play in Togo, predisposed Washington toward the KWK's project. Booker T. Washington's ideas about the future of black people in the United States and elsewhere in effect made him receptive to the schemes of European colonial powers, not least because Germany's "manner of handling Negroes in Africa," he believed, "might be taken as a pattern for other nations."[20]

21 Africa had always played an important role in the imagination of African Americans, and its importance had

grown in the wake of the division of the continent among European powers during the 1880s and 1890s and the rise of a Pan-African movement. Washington himself had been involved with the 1893 Chicago Congress on Africa. He helped bring about the first Pan-African Congress in London in 1900, and he organized the 1912 International Conference on the Negro at Tuskegee. Though he never decried European colonialism as W. E. B. Du Bois, C. L. R. James, and Sylvester Williams did, he sought to build global solidarities among people of African origins. Over the years, Washington developed numerous ties to Africans, informing himself about Liberian, South African, and Congolese affairs. The ties were strengthened by the many students who came from Africa to Tuskegee, by the influence of his writings on Africans, by his frequent correspondence with Africans, and, eventually, by the journeys of Tuskegee graduates to Africa as advisers to colonial authorities—not only in Togo, but also in the Sudan, Nigeria, and Morocco. The experiences of his students in Togo and elsewhere in turn influenced his thinking about Africa: "My own knowledge of the needs of native African people is, I confess, not extensive," he observed in 1906. "It has largely been gathered from reports of missionaries and travelers, from the experiments of Tuskegee students in Togo and other parts of Africa in cotton culture, and their experience in teaching the natives American methods." Those reports strengthened his belief in constructing a global identity for people of African heritage that focused on political subordination to white elites and the accumulation of skills and property through farming.[21]

22 His message of accommodation and self-help fit the agenda of European colonialists, not least because it positioned cooperation with colonial authorities at its core. Africans, he suggested, would do best by turning themselves into the kind of "Negroes" that he hoped to train at Tuskegee. Washington, along with other African American intellectuals of the late nineteenth century and the Tuskegee graduates who traveled to Togo, in many ways accepted the European notion of the inferiority of Africans—though unlike many, if not most, white Europeans, they believed that civilization could be brought to Africa. Nothing held more promise to spread that "civilization" to the "weaker races" than "industrial education."[22] And no one was better prepared for that project than graduates of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute.

23 Washington believed that people of African descent living

in the United States had not only the ability but also the duty to help Africans improve themselves. No "race," said Washington, "has ever made such a progress as is true of the ten millions of the Negro race who dwell in the United States." The United States had been a tremendous civilizing influence on African Americans, an influence yet lacking in Africa itself. African Americans, therefore, had a particular responsibility and ability to uplift the "Negro race" elsewhere. One of the Tuskegee experts most blatantly expressed this view, arguing that slavery had redeemed African Americans "from hell and degradation, and it may be that God has been preparing them to redeem the 'Dark Continent.'" The development of Africa would, in turn, be credited among the accomplishments of African Americans in the United States.[23] Robinson and Calloway understood their mission to Togo in exactly such terms—Robinson, for example, remarked on arrival in Togo that he was far removed from civilization because no white people lived in his proximity. James Calloway explicitly saw his role as easing the integration of Africans into the world economy as part of the "civilizing process," and Robinson observed proudly that "fifty per cent" of the people of Tove, who had gone naked before the arrival of the Tuskegee experts, were two years later "fairly well clothed and entirely in cotton goods." Influenced by nineteenth-century black nationalism and emerging Pan-African ideas, they, like Washington, believed that Africans benefited from European colonial domination and that African Americans had to take the lead in uplifting the whole race. Tuskegee, meanwhile, was unique among institutions worldwide in that it could meet "the constantly increasing demand for trained men and teachers of the negro race from colonial governments and from great private enterprises like the British Cotton Growing Association and others, which are seeking to fit the native peoples to meet the new demands of the world's industry and commerce."[24]

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"I cannot say the trip was very agreeable," reported John Robinson to Booker T. Washington only days after arriving in Togo. "With in a few degrees of the equator—beneath a parching sun, after such a prolonged ride from America ... all foot sore lame and weary we reached our destination.... After three days we went out to locate the place of action and on the fourteenth Jan. 1901, we made a desperate attack upon the mighty African forest."[25]

The KWK's operation unfolded in grand style right from its beginning. On land once owned by the king of Tove, Calloway, Robinson, Burks, and Harris ventured to build a cotton farm much like the ones they had left behind in the United States. With the help of two hundred local men they cleared the high grass and trees, while local women and children collected the remaining roots to burn them. By May they had planted about twenty-five of those acres in cotton and by July about one hundred. Starting systematically and virtually ignoring the accumulated experience of the people of Tove, Calloway and his colleagues planted various fields with various kinds of cotton at various times to investigate what cotton would grow best and when it should be sown. By April Calloway reported proudly to Booker T. Washington that "our work looks quite promising ... and we believe that we will make cotton."[26] 25

Togolese peasants pull wagons loaded with cotton to the coast, c. 1903. *Courtesy Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Deutsches Ausland-Institut Collection, image number 3030*.

Despite these energetic beginnings, the Tuskegee experts 26

soon encountered numerous difficulties. The African American planters, for example, could not imagine running a successful cotton farm without draft animals, but the rural cultivators around Tove, reported John Robinson in astonishment, "were as afraid of a horse or cow as a common American youth is of a 'mad dog.'" Not only were the farmers unfamiliar with draft animals, but the animals did not survive long in the local disease environment. Unknown patterns of rainfall also created problems: When the rains started in July, the cotton the Tuskegee experts had planted right after their arrival rotted.[27] They could have learned as much from local cultivators, but their firm belief in the superiority of their own methods and their inability to communicate in the local language precluded such lessons. While Robinson reported that "it was more difficult to train the boys than it was to train the horses," local cotton growers at first found it impossible to penetrate the beliefs of the Americans. The lack of infrastructure also created nearly insurmountable problems for the Tuskegee experts. To get their ginning equipment from the beach near Lomé, where they had left it when they arrived, to Tove, they had to widen the road to make it passable for their wagons. Then they needed to hire thirty people to draw the carts, and those they hired took more than two weeks to return with the equipment. Reliance on human muscle power also hindered the ginning: "twenty-four natives were required to operate the power [of the gin]; this number was necessary to take the place of two horses and nevertheless only one bale of cotton could be ginned in one day." The African Americans themselves felt isolated, lonely, and deprived of the most basic comforts. As Calloway reported to his wife in Alabama a few weeks after arriving, "You cannot imagine how we are short here, no beds, no houses, no horses, no cows, no water fit to drink, no vegetables for civilized man. No Dr. when you are sick."[28]

Revolutionizing production in Togo: African American experts on cotton growing promoted the use of plows and draft animals in Togolese farming. Here a Togolese peasant works a cotton field with the help of a horse-drawn plow. N.d. *Courtesy Bundesarchiv Koblenz, Deutsches Ausland-Institut Collection, image number 29 895.*

Despite the frustrations, Calloway, Robinson, Burks, and 27
Harris harvested on their experimental farm one bale of Egyptian cotton and four bales of American cotton in the early summer and five more bales of American cotton in November and December. Considering the enormous input of labor, land, and expertise, the harvest was meager, but both Calloway and the KWK considered it a success. The KWK concluded that the local climate was, as expected, favorable for growing high-quality cotton, that the indigenous population was willing to embrace the crop, and that plenty of land was available to grow cotton, perhaps as much as in Egypt. Calloway concurred, suggesting that production could be expanded further by creating markets where indigenous people could bring their cotton for sale and by educating rural producers in agricultural techniques, especially the use of plows and draft animals. If those reforms were embraced, Calloway expected that "in a few years we shall be able to export many thousands [of] bales of cotton from this colony. This will not have an effect on the market of the world; it will nevertheless

be of great advantage to Germany and especially to the 2 1/2 millions of natives of this colony."[29]

28 The amount of cotton grown by the Tuskegee experts during their first year in Togo may have been exceedingly small, but the goal of the KWK had never been to make Calloway and his colleagues into major cotton growers. What German industrialists had hoped was to learn from the experienced African American cotton farmers and to transfer that knowledge to local growers.[30] Their goal, from the beginning, was to make cotton production in Togo a *Volkskultur* (a people's culture) and not, as elsewhere in the German colonial empire, a *Plantagenkultur* (a plantation culture).

29 This choice was partly based on the tremendous problems German cotton interests had encountered in mobilizing labor for their plantations in German East Africa. Those plantations, many of them run by German textile industrialists, had had trouble securing enough African laborers. Though local German planters had tried to persuade the colonial administration to raise taxes to force rural producers to work for wages, the government had been reluctant to do so, fearing open rebellion.[31]

30 Moreover, German cotton policy was influenced by its encounter with the Ewe's old and thriving indigenous cotton industry. For centuries rural cultivators had interspersed cotton plants with other crops in their fields. Local women spun the fiber into yarn, and men wove the yarn into cloth. In the late eighteenth century, a Dutch merchant traveling in the lands of the Ewe, parts of which became the German colony of Togo, observed people "constantly busy spinning cotton on little sticks." Throughout the nineteenth century, some of this cotton had been traded across substantial distances. A German traveler who crisscrossed Togo in 1889 observed cotton fields and people dressed in "beautiful, colorful, hand-woven cloth."[32] As late as 1908, the German colonial government reported that manufactured European textiles had not yet destroyed the indigenous spinning and weaving industry. During the American Civil War, some of this raw cotton had even entered world markets, as local rulers had created cotton plantations that they worked with slave laborers, allegedly exporting twenty to forty bales of cotton a month to Liverpool.[33]

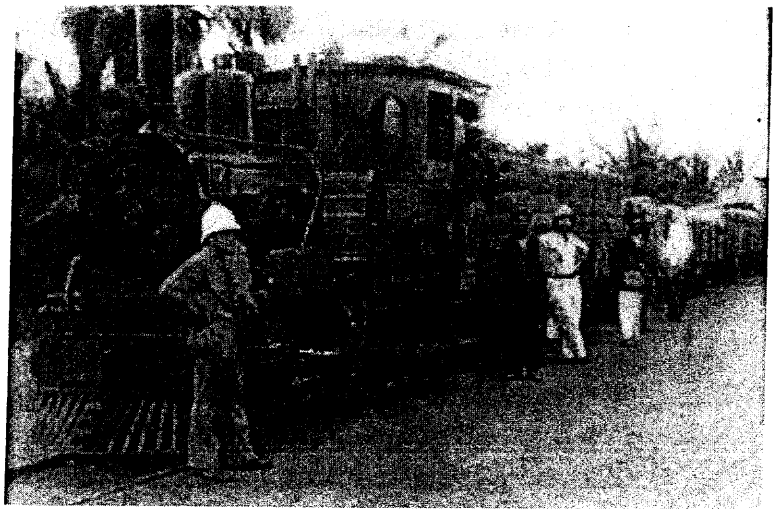
31 It was this thriving domestic industry that the German

colonialists had encountered when they expanded their influence into the Togolese hinterland during the 1890s. They hoped to recast this industry by changing it from an internal to an external orientation— just as the British had been able to do in India and the Russians in Central Asia. Thanks to the exposure to "scientific" agriculture, infrastructure improvements, and incentives provided by free markets, indigenous farmers were to grow more cotton of a uniform quality and sell it to German merchants—just as former slaves had done in the United States. This *Eingeborenenkultur* (native culture) was to solve the question of labor that had vexed the world cotton industry since the emancipation of slaves in the United States thirty-five years earlier. As John Robinson pointed out, "only few agricultural enterprises succeed if one doesn't secure cheap laborers."[34]

32 Unable to mobilize labor for colonial production on plantations and inspired by the expansion of "free-labor cotton" in the United States and the seemingly successful transmission of that model to Togo by the Tuskegee experts, German cotton interests hoped to set up a few model farms as examples to the Ewe. Calloway himself returned to Alabama in 1902 to help choose and bring to Togo four more Tuskegee graduates to start up cotton farming and to advise their neighbors on American agricultural techniques. The project failed spectacularly, however, as two of the prospective farmers, Hiram Dozier Simpson and William Drake, drowned on landing in Lomé. Three survivors of the trip—Walter Bryant, Horace Greeley Griffin, and Simpson's widow—settled midway between the cotton expedition's experimental farm at Tove and the coast, where they set up a farm and where Simpson's widow, who had married Griffin, taught crafts to her neighbors. Though they harvested some cotton, the experiment was declared a failure two years later. Calloway then tried to persuade Washington to send more Tuskegee graduates to Togo as settlers, but Washington could not find volunteers, not least because the potential settlers did not gain ownership of the land and mortality among them was high. "It seems to me," wrote Washington, "the only thing to do is to notify the Kolonial Komitee that we can get no one since the kind of men that ought to be sent cannot be secured."[35]

33 Even though it proved difficult to motivate more African Americans to travel to Togo, the KWK, the German colonial administration, and the Tuskegee experts developed policies

to promote their common goals of encouraging Ewe cotton growers to produce more well-ginned and -packed cotton and to move it speedily to market. First, to improve the quality of cotton, the KWK, along with private German investors such as the Deutsche Togogesellschaft, set up gins throughout the cotton-growing areas of Togo. Growers thus did not need to gin the cotton themselves nor to transport the much heavier raw cotton over long distances. Purchasers, meanwhile, gained control of the cotton much earlier in the production process. Second, the colonial government tried to make the cotton more uniform in appearance by distributing seeds to growers. Here, the studies of the Tuskegee experts mattered a great deal, as they had experimented with Egyptian, American, Peruvian, and Brazilian seeds and had also cataloged existing seeds in Togo. After 1911, an American variety, mixed with Togo strains, was marketed under the name Togo Sea-Island and was the only strain distributed by the German authorities. Third, to encourage rural cultivators to grow more cotton, the colonial government set minimum prices for the purchase of cotton, presumably making it less risky for growers to plant cotton. Fourth, to export this cotton, Tuskegee experts, colonial authorities, and the KWK concentrated on gaining control of the cotton market, at the beginning mainly by sending members of the cotton expedition, including Calloway and Robinson, to remote areas to purchase cotton from growers. Indeed, by 1902, the Tuskegeans had fanned out over a large area of Togo, running experimental farms and purchasing cotton whenever there was an opportunity to do so. They also had participated in building and supervising cotton-collecting stations in Klein Popo, Kpémé, Ho, Kete Kratchi, Kpandu, and Yendi.[36]



Enabling integration into the world market: Cotton is transported on a newly built railroad, Togo, 1905. *Courtesy Bundesarchiv Berlin, R 1001/8223*.

Price guarantees, ginning facilities, seed selection, and 34
control over markets were critical measures to make more cotton available to German merchants, but even more crucial was the rapid development of an infrastructure to move cotton to the coast. When Calloway and his colleagues first arrived in Togo, it took fifteen days to go to Lomé and return —in wagons pulled by local workers. By 1907, when a railroad connected the most important cotton areas to the coast, transportation time was a few hours.[37]

In all these measures, the colonial state played a central 35
role. Indeed, prices, markets, and infrastructure were creations of the colonial administration. And the colonial state's role went further: By taxing rural cultivators and making the taxes payable in labor, the state coerced them, among other things, to carry cotton from Tove to the coast, to build railroads, and even to clear land for cotton.[38] *Volkskultur* (people's culture) in the end had little to do with the choices of the Ewe cultivators but everything to do with an effort by German colonialists to redirect labor toward the production of commodities for world markets.

The Tuskegee experts were as invested as the colonial 36
state in the success of the project, but they were driven by a

different motivation. They genuinely believed that their efforts to spread modern agricultural knowledge would improve Africans' well-being and secure their freedom. Moreover, by making themselves as well as African cultivators indispensable to the world economy, they believed they could secure the "advancement of the race." As a result, they—especially Calloway and Robinson—took great pride in their work. They dedicated themselves so wholly to the undertaking that Calloway, for instance, resisted early pleas from his wife to come home and postponed his return several times to prolong his project of "bringing civilization to Africa," as he put it. As late as August 1909, shortly before his death, Robinson explained that though "I am conscious of growing weaker ... I see no other way but to spend and be spent. My whole desire is to accomplish something."[39]

37 Taken together, the efforts of the Tuskegee experts and the colonial government were spectacularly effective. Cotton exports from Togo rose from virtually nothing in 1900 to 14,453 kilograms in 1902, 108,169 in 1904, and 510,742 in 1909, most of which was comparable in quality to "good American middling." Togolese cotton formed only a minuscule part of German cotton imports (indeed, Germany never got more than half a percent of its cotton supply from its colonies), but the rate of expansion (increasing by a factor of thirty-five in seven years) suggested that colonial cotton would have a bright future.[40]

38 Despite such a spectacular beginning, after 1909, further increase in cotton exports eluded the Tuskegee experts, the cotton commission, and the German colonial administration. In 1913, the last year of German colonial rule in Togo, cotton exports were slightly lower than they had been in 1909.

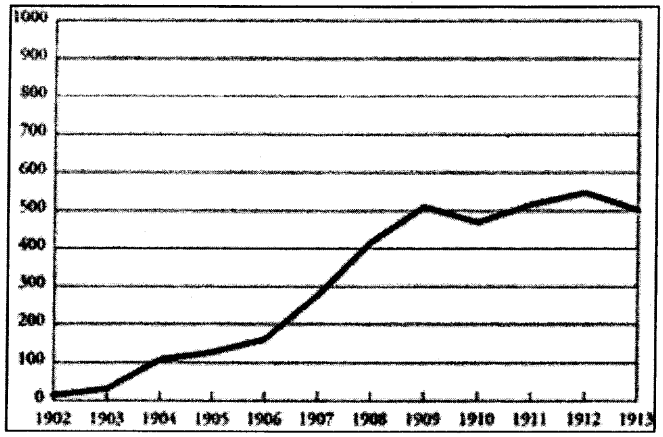


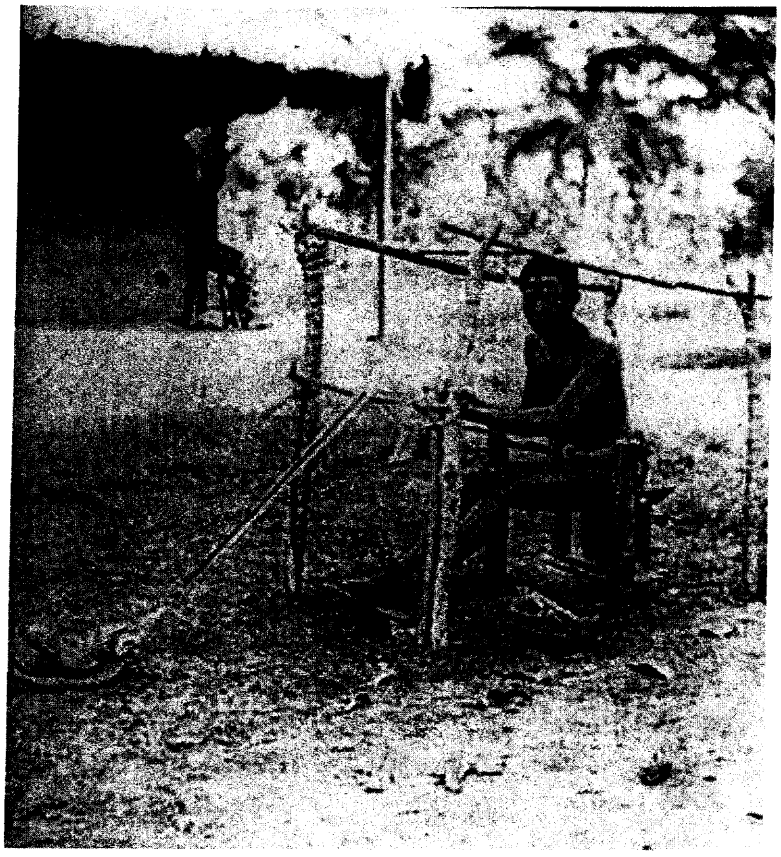
Figure 1
Cotton exports from Togo, 1902–1913, in thousands of kilograms

SOURCE: Calculated by Sven Beckert from O. F. Metzger, *Unsere Alte Kolonie Togo* (Our old colony Togo) (Neudamm, 1941), 245, 252.

What were the reasons for such stagnation? While the sudden availability of vastly expanded markets did encourage rural cultivators to increase their cotton production significantly, there were limits to such an expansion. Those limits were largely rooted in the way cotton fitted into the agricultural schemes of local producers. Ewe cultivators had their own ideas about the relationship between freedom and commodity production, ideas that did not necessarily correspond with those of the Tuskegee experts or the German colonialists. 39

At the core of cultivators' resistance was their desire to maintain older economic and social patterns that gave them control over their work, subsistence, and lives. Traditionally, women had interspersed cotton plants with the corn and yams in their fields. The practice provided them with an additional crop that did not require much additional labor, as the land had to be hoed and weeded in any case. At first, the production and export of cotton did not necessarily disrupt such agricultural patterns. But the fact that cotton occupied such a definite place in traditional work patterns and in a long-standing gendered division of labor placed severe limits on how much cotton culture could be extended. To the 40

chagrin of German colonial authorities, Togolese peasants rejected the monocultural production of cotton because it was much more labor intensive and not necessarily more profitable. Corn and yams, moreover, provided cultivators with food, no matter how low the price of cotton. The prices German colonial administrators and merchants offered for raw cotton were too low to persuade peasants to risk abandoning their subsistence crops for the backbreaking work of cotton monoculture. One important reason for peasants' resistance to expanding cotton agriculture was, thus, their powerful preference for growousands of kilogramsing food crops, a preference shared by cotton growers the world over—from Demerara to the United States, from Brazil to India.[41]



Producing cloth: A Togolese man weaves cotton in the traditional manner, 1873. Photograph by A. Vogt. *Courtesy Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, Photo Archive, Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, image 101, 3-3501-18.*

41 Moreover, cotton exports were limited by keen competition for the white gold from indigenous spinners. Two hundred years earlier, a Dutch merchant reported that his efforts to buy locally grown cotton had failed, as the sellers "just laughed at" the price he offered. In the early years of the twentieth century, the German colonial authorities still noted with concern "that natives, who purchase raw cotton on markets to spin it themselves, pay significantly higher prices, than the purchasers of cotton export companies." The head of the Misahöhe Station, Hans Gruner, reported in December 1901: "As in other things the native artisans spoil the price of the raw material, as they receive for the products of their skill unusually high prices." These spinners and weavers, said Gruner, though few in numbers, were willing to pay 50 pfennige for a pound of clean cotton— significantly more than the 25 to 30 pfennige the German colonialists offered. Such price discrepancies show that a free market in cotton never developed; indeed, German merchants who wanted to purchase cotton in Togo had to guarantee that they would not pay more than the price stipulated by the colonial administration.[42]

42 Last but not least, the very fact that most native cultivators remained far removed from world markets and experienced little commercialization of their lives meant that they felt little economic pressure to produce cash crops, unlike, for example, upcountry farmers in the United States. Thus the Ewe could back their preference for mixed farming with their ability to maintain it. In precolonial Togo the Ewe had bought and sold some goods in markets and engaged in long-distance trade. But even after the arrival of the Germans, capitalist social relations only very partially penetrated Togo; rural cultivators resisted the logic of long-distance markets in favor of perpetuating long-established local exchanges and safeguarding their own subsistence production. German colonial officials bemoaned that "unlike [in] America, the peasant here is not dependent on cotton growing for his subsistence. The latter always has access to other crops, and his needs are so low, that he can live without any cash income for extended periods of time." The "dread of starving" that British abolitionists had hoped would replace the "dread of being flogged" as a motivation for

colonial people to produce crops for world markets failed in Togo in the face of plentiful alternatives.[43] Such lamentable but exceedingly rational resistance to the logic of the global marketplace had astonishing staying power because exploitative credit relations, which coerced farmers the world over to grow cotton, had not taken root in Togo in the early twentieth century.

43 Even before Togo's cotton cultivation stagnated, German colonial authorities understood those forces well. They began to look to experiences elsewhere to learn how to pressure local farmers to increase their production of cotton. The KWK member Karl Supf, clearly comprehending the tensions between subsistence and world market production, suggested that the goal of colonial policy should be "to bring the Natives into economic dependence upon us." One way to do so, he suggested, was to increase local taxes and make them payable in cotton. Alternatively, the governor of Togo suggested in December 1903 that small sums of money, secured by future cotton harvests, be advanced to peasants to enable them to focus on cotton, as "an emphatic influence of the governmental agencies on the natives at least for a number of years is essential." He thought the government should look for ways to "pressure those natives, who took on responsibilities by voluntarily accepting seeds, credit or advances or other support for cotton growing." Free-labor cotton, such policies showed, depended on turning labor into a marketable commodity and divorcing growers from their control of land and labor, a process that rested on coercion. Yet despite their willingness to force cultivators, the Germans found old habits difficult to break, especially because the relatively weak presence of the German colonial state left the resilient social structure of rural producers, predicated on the continued access to plentiful land, largely untouched. Railroads, markets, and price guarantees could not persuade growers to abandon subsistence agriculture.[44]

44 With efforts to involve rural cultivators in debt schemes faltering and outright expropriation of land beyond the power of the colonial administration, other forms of coercion moved to the center of the German colonialists' project to grow cotton. While the cotton expert Karl Supf recommended "slight pressure," the local colonial administrator Geo A. Schmidt suggested "strong pressure" as the best way to increase cotton production. Colonialists systematically undermined markets by fixing prices, compelling cultivators to bring their

cotton to market in particular ways, eliminating middlemen, forcing certain cotton strains on producers, and, last but not least, extracting labor from peasants by force. Extraeconomic coercion was thus central to the colonial free-labor cotton project throughout—but, in the end, not sufficient to persuade rural growers to reconsider the allocation of their labor and their crop choices. Not only were roads, railways, and cotton gins built by forced labor, colonial authorities also asserted ever-tighter control over cotton production and marketing. Local government officials supervised the planting of cotton, tried to make sure that fields were regularly weeded, and secured a timely harvest. By 1911, for example, the German administration had created forty-seven authorized buying stations throughout the cotton-growing areas to make sure the sale of cotton occurred only under the watchful eyes of the government. Indeed, at times soldiers took on the task of purchasing cotton. In January 1912, colonial officials further ordered that every ginning or mercantile company send only government-licensed purchasers to markets. They also stipulated that sellers had to separate good- and poor-quality cotton at all times. By 1914 rules on how to treat cotton included corporal punishment for indigenous growers who violated them. Force, violence, and coercion became ever more central to German policy. In Togo, as elsewhere in Africa, compulsion accompanied the spread of colonial cotton growing, whereas in most of the world's other cotton-growing areas such violence had been replaced by other, and ultimately more successful, forms of coercion. Africans, colonial powers came to believe, needed to be forced into accepting the "natural laws" of the market, and as a result the people of Togo experienced unprecedented violence at the hands of a deeply racist regime.[45]

45 Lacking the capacity (but not the will) to break the resistance of cultivators, the colonial administration, pressured by the Berlin Cotton Commission, attempted to speed up the transition to cash-crop production by opening an agricultural school in Nuatjä in 1904. John Robinson had suggested the plan a few months earlier, when he outlined to the German governor of Togo "a kind of a farm school."[46]

46 Under the watchful eyes of Robinson, who was supported by the 1902 arrivals Walter Bryant and Horace Griffin, the plan was to train young sons of rural cultivators in scientific cotton growing. (By 1904, Calloway and Burks had returned to Tuskegee, while Harris had died in Togo in August 1902 of

a "fever.") Modeled by its director on his own alma mater, Tuskegee, the *Baumwollschule* (cotton school) counted 53 students from all over Togo in August 1904; by 1907 the number had increased to 88, most of them forced to attend by local colonial authorities. In two to three years of training, they learned to grow cotton according to modern American methods, to select appropriate seeds, and to work with draft animals. They also took German lessons. As of 1904, the trainees had planted 165 acres, most of it jointly, but each student also planted a small plot for personal gain. The school, like Tuskegee, focused on practical matters. Students built their own houses and grew their own food. On completion of the program, the trainees were forced to return to the areas they came from, to grow cotton employing the new methods, especially by using plows, under the tight supervision of the colonial administration. At one point, a proposal circulated that soldiers should watch the trained cotton farmers to make sure they employed the methods taught at Nuatjä.[47]

47 Yet all those efforts did not increase cotton production after the peak year of 1909, mirroring the maddeningly difficult experiences of other colonial powers in Africa.[48] Meanwhile, the German colonial authorities watched with envy the great expansion of cotton production in Central Asia and western India, where Russian and British colonialists had recast local social structures to make them conducive to cash-crop production. One of the lessons from those regions was that world market integration and commercialization of agriculture went hand in hand with growing cotton for export. To reorient an internal economy to an external one without clear-cut economic incentives, social relations in the countryside had to be drastically recast—a process that usually took several decades or severe violence. Africans could rapidly adapt to a new set of incentives as the pioneering efforts of Gold Coast peasants to produce cocoa for world markets in the 1890s and 1900s show.[49] But in the absence of such incentives, the Germans in Togo could not wait long enough, nor did they have the administrative, economic, or military capacity to hasten the process.

48 Not only did the German colonial administration, after its first spectacular successes, fail in expanding cotton production for German markets, but its experiment of working with the Tuskegee experts was also a disappointment. The relationship

grew increasingly tense as the Germans and African Americans diverged in their understanding of how to reconcile freedom and commodity production. The agricultural school at Nuatjä was a particular source of disagreement. The German colonialists were not interested in John Robinson's creating what amounted to a Togolese branch of Tuskegee, and Robinson resisted the idea of encouraging Togolese rural producers to abandon their subsistence agriculture for cash-crop production.

Not that the Tuskegee experts and the German colonialists disagreed on everything. Robinson believed that Togolese cultivators in general and his students in particular should use modern agricultural methods to increase cotton production—the plow instead of the hoe, animal instead of human power. They would thereby improve their economic well-being and show that Africans were capable of embracing superior agricultural techniques. German cotton interests agreed with these goals and lauded the Tuskegee experts for their work. According to the German governor, Count Johann Nepomuk von Zech, "Robinson ... has worked extraordinarily assiduously. He has an interest not only in spreading and supporting cotton growing in Togo that is very much appreciated, but he also is interested in introducing rational economic methods among the natives. He treats the natives well, is calm and goal-oriented. His knowledge of the native language helps him in his work significantly and strengthens the trust of the natives." The KWK similarly emphasized the "good understanding between the American experts and the Europeans and the people of Togo."[50]

Togolese farmers grow cotton and yams in the same field in Pessi, Togo, c. 1918, following local practices from the precolonial era. *Courtesy Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, Photo Archive, Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, image 101, 3-35-02-03.*

Admiration stopped there, however. Unlike the German colonialists, Robinson strongly supported the growing of subsistence crops along with cotton. He advocated the joint development of cotton and food crops in "harmonious ways," and his teachings reflected Washington's concern that rural African Americans focused too much on growing cotton and too little on providing their own subsistence. When Robinson outlined his plans for the cotton school in Nuatjä in early 1904 he specifically emphasized that "I stand for more than Cotton, and am sure that the government will not assume to take a stand so narrow and biased." In an exceptionally wide-ranging letter to the German governor of Togo, Robinson opined: 50

> The source and life of all governments are its people, and the first duty of the government is to maintain this life and source. Consequently, the people are its first and Chief Concern. For that same reason we wish to teach the people cotton culture, because it is good for *them*, they will gain wealth thereby and the Colony grow richer.... But the people cannot live by Cotton alone. Therefore we should begin now to teach them, Where they grow only maize we will teach them to grow more maize and better maize, and also Cotton. Where they grow now Yams

> and Cotton they must be shown how to grow larger Yams and finer Cotton.

To effect such a slow transition, Robinson believed, it was important not to coerce peasants and instead to involve them with "as little excitement and inconvenience" as possible.[51]

51 Not surprisingly, disagreements over the school moved conflicts between the Tuskegee experts and the colonial administrators into the open. In 1907 Count von Zech, who three years earlier had lauded Robinson, argued that the government would not be able to retain Robinson as the director of the school and replaced him with a European. By 1908 the German colonial administration, and not the KWK, was running the school, now directed by a white German American cotton farmer. The school as a result focused more than ever on the growing of cotton. Robinson was increasingly marginalized, being reassigned to regions of Togo further removed from the coast, where he was charged with building a new experimental farm. It was on one of those inland trips that Robinson drowned.[52]

52 Beyond conflicts about the school, the position of the African American experts was always threatened by German racism. The German colonial administration feared from the beginning that the Tuskegee experts' primary loyalty would be to the people of Togo. They remained ambivalent about being dependent on African Americans, particularly because Calloway and Robinson had a knowledge of cotton planting unrivalled among German experts.[53] The dependence on Tuskegee expertise secured the position of Calloway, Robinson, Harris, Burks, Bryant, Griffin, and Simpson's widow in Togo. But it also created fears among German colonialists that the seven would unduly fraternize with the local population. Count von Zech, for example, worried in 1904 that "the colored Americans will not exert good influence on the native population of Togo." In a retrospective report probably written in 1910, one unnamed observer similarly implied that the African Americans lacked "far-reaching authority." The German colonial administration, the report asserted, would have to become active, as only it could exert "the necessary educational influence on the people."[54]

53 For the German colonial administration, the tensions between their dependence on black expertise and their need to see people of African heritage as inferior to themselves—along with a concern that visible dependence on black people

might not be an image to project to the Africans they dominated—led them to move away from the experiment. But colonial cotton growing remained central to the agenda of colonial domination and industrial policy.

54 For Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee experts who ventured to Togo in the early years of the twentieth century, the self-improvement of their race was at the core of the project. They were pleased that the German colonial administration had sought out their expertise. Colonization of Africa was the spirit of the age, and Tuskegee proudly played its role within it. As James N. Calloway observed in June 1901 to Booker T. Washington: "If you could see this land and know these people you would have even a greater zeal for your work. If Africa is ever reclaimed it will be through such missionary work as is done in school, shops, and farms at Tuskegee."[55]

55 For years to come, Washington and Tuskegeans proudly made this episode an important part of their public image. A song was even composed. "Tuskegee's First Martyrs" celebrated Hiram Simpson and William Drake, "who gave up school and native land, for their race and country's sake" and whose "monument stands unveiled ... in every Tuskegee heart." The work in Togo, so they believed, not only shed glory on Tuskegee but also uplifted the black race. Calloway, Burks, Harris, Robinson, Bryant, Griffin, and Simpson's widow brought modern agriculture, indeed, modernity itself, to a part of the world they perceived as in desperate need of such uplift. Just like the German colonizers, though with a very different agenda, they saw their excursion as a "civilizing mission." They refused to understand why the Ewe might resist such a seemingly benevolent project, because they failed to see that the Ewe—unlike most former slaves in the southern United States—enjoyed access to land, the tools of subsistence, and power and therefore did not perceive a reallocation of their labor to commodity production as emancipatory. Repressing such fundamental differences, Calloway proclaimed, "if I did not know I am in Africa I could easily believe myself in Alabama."[56]

56 Whereas German colonialists resorted to coercion—corvée, taxation, and other devices—to force Africans to make cotton, the Tuskegee experts believed that growing cotton would awaken the Togolese to a whole world of modern products they would willingly work hard to acquire. "The natives," argued Calloway in 1903, "learn from the Americans

about the wants, namely in clothing and tools, that have eluded them so far. They are becoming thereby, on the one hand, better consumers than before and must at the same time, work more to supply themselves with these objects." Not only was Tuskegee now at the forefront of the uplift of the black race in the United States, it was now also a beacon of light in the proverbial African darkness.[57]

57 The venture of a small group of Tuskegee cotton experts in Togo speaks also to a much larger story. The encounter between African Americans one generation removed from slavery, German colonial authorities, and Togolese rural cultivators illuminates a vast recasting of the global empire of cotton—and, with it, global capitalism—in the last decades of the nineteenth century. States had now taken on unprecedented importance in structuring global cotton markets: Colonial cotton growing was only one facet of a policy that included import duties, imperial preferences, and powerful national indus trial policies. But perhaps even more important in the long run, the empire of cotton had survived a dramatic transformation of its dominant system of labor. Not long before the Germans began thinking about colonial cotton in Togo, African slaves who had worked the cotton plantations of the American South for more than half a century finally won their freedom. Now, throughout the world, from the United States to India and Egypt, nominally free and often highly indebted cultivators grew cotton for world markets under new systems of social relations. Colonial powers such as Germany tried to spread this system, with mixed success, as the Togo experience shows. Peasants' resistance to a radical recasting of their economies proved a powerful, if temporary, barrier to complete world market integration. Just as in the American South, people with little access to economic, social, and political power helped shape the social relations in which cotton for world markets was produced, retaining at least temporary control over their own lives.[58]

58 The significance of the cotton experiment in Togo comes into even sharper relief when compared to the efforts of French, British, Russian, Belgian, and Portuguese colonial authorities to grow cotton. After 1861 French, Russian, and British manufacturers started pressuring their governments to draw more cotton out of their colonial possessions in North Africa, Central Asia, and India. In the early twentieth century, they embarked on a new and concerted effort to grow more

colonial cotton. British cotton manufacturers founded the British Cotton Growing Association in 1902 in the cotton metropolis of Manchester; the association eventually hired five Tuskegee graduates to support a cotton-growing endeavor in the Sudan. Less than a year later, French textile entrepreneurs founded the Association Cotonnière Coloniale to encourage colonial cotton production and promote "the independence of our national cotton industry." By 1906 Russian cotton entrepreneurs had followed suit. The activities in Togo inspired those early twentieth-century efforts at colonial cotton growing. The French and British associations sent representatives to meet with John Robinson at Nuatjä. The 1904 International Cotton Congress in Vienna featured a special session examining German cotton-growing efforts in Togo, and the 1907 congress underlined once more the importance of colonial cotton for the future health of the industry. Though all those efforts were fundamentally about isolating national industries from the vagaries of the world market, they formed part of a new cotton international. People from all over the empire of cotton engaged with the institutions and tried to learn from each other's experiences.[59]

59

It was a volatile encounter between Booker T. Washington's Pan-Africanism and zeal for self-improvement and the desire of German colonial authorities to recast Togo into a major source of raw cotton for German industry that brought together African American farmers, German textile industrialists and bureaucrats, and Togolese cultivators in the early twentieth century. It was an encounter possible only because of the vast restructuring of the global empire of cotton in the wake of the American Civil War. The global political economy of cotton had changed significantly, with states and nonbonded labor moving to center stage where once markets and slavery had stood. Around the world, peoples' desire to control their own land and labor clashed with the industrialists' and statesmen's desire for increased commodity production. These struggles inaugurated a new and different phase of capitalist globalization. Although, as in Togo, rural cultivators tried to protect their subsistence agriculture and resist the monocultural production of cash crops for world markets, in the long term they could not defy the two-pronged assault on their traditional economy by powerful capitalists and imperial states. As a result, nonbonded cultivators, in Togo as elsewhere, came to produce

huge quantities of cotton for world markets: By 1938, Togo exported 8.5 times as much cotton as it had in 1913, and in 2002–2003 Togo's cotton exports stood at 80 million kilograms or 160 times as much as during the last year of German rule. As this article has demonstrated, and as we know from investigations into the history of the postbellum American South, nineteenth-century India and Egypt, and twentieth-century Africa, the process of divorcing rural producers from control over their own labor and land often involved tremendous violence: Free-labor production of commodities for world markets, in effect, frequently rested on the prior destruction of subsistence economies and older patterns of trade by powerful colonizing states—and thus on coercion.

60

Although Booker T. Washington and his disciples had witnessed the tremendous legal and extralegal coercion that descended upon freed slaves in the American South, they worked to secure freedom for Africans and African Americans by accommodating themselves to powerful capitalists and statesmen within the United States and beyond. By becoming indispensable and remaining independent, Washington believed, people of African heritage could secure their freedom as small but indispensable wheels in the machinery of global capitalism. Half a century later, the civil rights movement and movements for national independence in Africa followed a different path—a path that eventually led to political emancipation. Economic emancipation, however, which had been so crucial to Washington's agenda, remains to this day an elusive goal, as Africans and African Americans remain on the margins of the capitalist world economy.

Notes

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I want to thank Erin Sprague, Luise Tremel, and Carsten Vogelpohl for their terrific research assistance, Cynthia Wilson at Tuskegee University for her help in locating records on the Tuskegee students who went to Togo, and Freiherr von Herman auf Wain for providing me with copies from his grandfather's papers. Thanks also to Emmanuel Akyeampong, Caroline Elkins, Deborah Gesensway, Lisa McGirr, Julia Rosenbaum, Manisha Sinha, Cyrus Veeser, Penny von Eschen, the members of the seminar on the political economy of North America at the Charles Warren Center at Harvard University, and the anonymous readers for the *Journal of American History* for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this essay. Many thanks also to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Kittredge Fund, and the Weatherhead

Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, whose generous support made the research possible.

[1] *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901* (Cotton expedition to Togo, report 1901) (Berlin, 1901), 4. All translations from German are by Sven Beckert. On the journey, see James N. Calloway to Booker T. Washington, Nov. 20, 1900, Booker T. Washington Papers, Manuscript Division (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.); Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee to Washington, Oct. 10, Dec. 11, 1900, *ibid.* On the plans for the *Baumwoll-Expedition*, see also Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, Antrag des Kolonialwirtschaftlichen Komitees auf Bewilligung eines Betrages von M 10,000.-zur Ausführung einer Baumwollexpedition nach Togo, Berlin, May 14, 1900, Okt. 1898–Okt. 1900, Band 2, Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, file 594/K81, record group R 8023, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (Bundesarchiv Berlin, Berlin, Germany). On the episode, see also Booker T. Washington, *Workings with the Hands* (New York, 1904), 226–30; Louis R. Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden," *American Historical Review*, 71 (Jan. 1966), 441–67; Edward Berman, "Tuskegee-in-Africa," *Journal of Negro Education*, 41 (Spring 1972), 99–112; W. Manning Marable, "Booker T. Washington and African Nationalism," *Phylon*, 35 (Dec. 1974), 398–406; Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901–1915* (New York, 1983), 266–95; Michael O. West, "The Tuskegee Model of Development in Africa: Another Dimension of the African/African-American Connection," *Diplomatic History*, 16 (Summer 1992), 371–87; Milfred C. Fierce, *The Pan-African Idea in the United States, 1900–1919: African-American Interest in Africa and Interaction with West Africa* (New York, 1993), 171–97; Donna J. E. Maier, "Persistence of Precolonial Patterns of Production: Cotton in German Togoland, 1800–1914," in *Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Allen Isaacman and Richard Roberts (Portsmouth, 1995), 71–95; and Kendahl L. Radcliffe, "The Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme, 1900–1909" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1998).

[2] Shepherd Lincoln Harris to Washington, May 15, 1901, Washington Papers; *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901*, 13; James Calloway, "Tuskegee Cotton-Planters in Africa," *Outlook*, Jan. 4, 1902, p. 772; *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901*, 10–12; Hans Gruner, *Vormarsch zum Niger: Die Memoiren des Leiters der Togo-Hinterlandexpedition 1894–95* (Advance to the Niger: The memoirs of the leader of the Togo backcountry expedition 1894–95), ed. Peter Sebald (Berlin, 1997); John Robinson to Washington, May 26, 1901, Washington Papers.

[3] Okon Edet Uya, ed., *Black Brotherhood: Afro-Americans and Africa* (Lexington, Mass., 1971), 134; Harris to Washington, May 15, 1901, Washington Papers.

[4] On the change, see Sven Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War," *American Historical Review*, 109 (Dec. 2004), 1405–38.

[5] Robert Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 2001); Eric Foner, *Nothing but Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Baton Rouge, 1983); Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, American Congo: *The*

African American Freedom Struggle in the Delta (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

6 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, 1988); Jonathan M. Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860–1885* (Baton Rouge, 1978); Barbara Jeanne Fields, "The Advent of Capitalist Agriculture: The New South in a Bourgeois World," in *Essays on the Postbellum Southern Economy*, ed. Thavolia Glymph (Arlington, 1985); Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War* (New York, 1986); Sugata Bose, *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal since 1770* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993); Sugata Bose ed., *South Asia and World Capitalism* (Delhi, 1990); Laxman D. Satya, *Cotton and Famine in Berar, 1850–1900* (New Delhi, 1997); Isaacman and Roberts, eds., *Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*; Richard L. Roberts, *Two Worlds of Cotton: Colonialism and the Regional Economy in the French Soudan, 1800–1946* (Stanford, 1996). Other works emphasizing the global context, though not realizing its full potential, are Woodruff, *American Congo;* and Frederick Cooper et al., *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill, 2000).

7 Allen Isaacman and Richard Roberts, "Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa: Introduction," in *Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Isaacman and Roberts, 7.

8 Karl Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage" (On the cotton question), in *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo* (Cotton expedition to Togo) by Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee (Berlin, [c. 1900]), 4–6, file 332, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo (L'Administration du Protectorat Allemand du Togo) (Archives Nationales du Togo, Lomé, Togo, microfilm copy in Bundesarchiv Berlin, Germany); *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Berlin), 23 (1902), 24. For a report that in 1903 1 million workers in Germany were dependent on the cotton industry, see Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Unternehmungen 1902, 1903* (Cotton ventures 1902, 1903) (Berlin, 1903), 5. By 1913 the cotton industry's production was worth 2.2 billion marks. See Andor Kertész, *Die Textilindustrie Deutschlands im Welthandel* (The German textile industry in world trade) (Braunschweig, 1915), 13. See also *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Berlin), 22 (1901), 135. Thaddeus Sunseri, "The Baumwollfrage: Cotton Colonialism in German East Africa," *Central European History*, 34 (March 2001), 35. For import statistics, see Reichs-Enquete für die Baumwollen- und Leinen-Industrie, *Statistische Ermittelungen* (Statistical enquiries) (5 vols., Berlin, 1878), I, Heft 1, 56–58; *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Berlin), 1 (1880), 87; and *ibid.*, 20 (1899), 91.

9 See Ernst Henrici, "Die wirtschaftliche Nutzbarmachung des Togogebietes" (The economic utilization of the Togo Territory), *Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 3 (July 1899), 320. On the global impact of the U.S. Civil War, see Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire"; and C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, 2004), 161–65. *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich* (Berlin), 15 (1894), 45; *ibid.*, 20 (1899), 91; U.S. Department of Commerce, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (2 parts, Washington, 1975), I, 518.

10 R. Hennings, "Der Baumwollkulturkampf" (The cotton conflict of culture), *Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik, Kolonialrecht, und Kolonialwirtschaft* (Berlin), 7 (Dec. 1905), 906–14; Sunseri, "Baumwollfrage," 32, 49; "Die Arbeit des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees, 1896–1914" (The work of the colonial economic committee, 1896–1914), file 579, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo. On German demand for colonial cotton, see also Verband Deutscher Baumwollgarn-Verbraucher to von Lindequist, Reichskolonialamt, Oct. 22, 1910, file 8224, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. Beginning in 1901, the committee also organized "cotton conferences" in Germany, with colonial cotton a dominant theme. Committee members specifically linked their desire for colonial cotton to their experience of a cotton famine during the American Civil War. See Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Unternehmungen 1902, 1903*, 5.

11 Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 8; *Vorwärts*, Oct. 16, 1903, p. 3; Verband Deutscher Baumwollgarn-Verbraucher to von Lindequist, Reichskolonialamt, Oct. 22, 1910, file 8224, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. See also Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 4–6. For the importance of colonial cotton to German social policy, see also Karl Supf, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, Bericht IX* (German colonial cotton ventures, report IX) (Berlin, 1907), 299. The price refers to American middling in Liverpool. John A. Todd, *The World's Cotton Crops* (London, 1915), Section F—Prices, 429–32.

12 Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 4–6; E. Henrici, "Der Baumwollbau in den deutschen Kolonien" (Cotton farming in German colonies), *Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 3 (Nov. 1899), 535, 536. On Henrici, see Herrmann A. L. Degener, *Unsere Zeitgenossen, Wer Ist's?: Biographien nebst Bibliographien* (Our contemporaries: Who is who? Biographies along with bibliographies) (Leipzig, 1911). Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 4–6. Such calls for economic autarky are also reflected in "Einleitung" (Introduction), in *Beihefte Zum Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 16 (Feb. 1916), 1–3, 71–73, 175–77. Karl Helfferich, "Die Baumwollfrage: Ein Weltwirtschaftliches Problem" (The cotton question: A problem of the world economy), *Marine-Rundschau* (Berlin), 15 (June 1904), 652; Karl Supf, "Bericht IV, Deutsch-koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, 1903–1904" (Report IV, German colonial cotton ventures, 1903–1904), *Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 8 (Dec. 1904), 615. See also "Die Arbeit des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees, 1896–1914."

13 Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 16. On Ferdinand Goldberg, see "Baumwollen- und sonstige Kulturen im Togo-Gebiet" (Cotton and other cultures in the Togo Territory), *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* (Berlin), Aug. 1, 1891, 320–21. On German interests in colonial cotton, see Maier, "Persistence of Precolonial Patterns of Production," 81. Peter Sebald, *Togo, 1884–1914: Eine Geschichte der deutschen "Musterkolonie" auf der Grundlage amtlicher Quellen* (Togo, 1884–1914: A history of the German "model" colony based on official sources) (Berlin, 1988), 433.

14 Sunseri, "Baumwollfrage," 33. See also O. F. Metzger, *Unsere Alte Kolonie Togo* (Our old colony Togo) (Neudamm, 1941), 242; "Bericht über den Baumwollbau in Togo" (Report on cotton farming in Togo), enclosure in

Kaiserliches Gouvernement Togo, Gouverneur Johann Nepomuk von Zech to Reichskolonialamt Berlin, Nov. 23, 1909, p. 1, file 8223, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; "Der Baumwollbau in Togo, Seine Bisherige Entwicklung, und sein jetziger Stand" (Cotton cultivation in Togo: Its past development and its current state), draft of an article, n.d., file 8224, *ibid.*; and [illegible] to Otto von Bismarck, March 26, 1890, file 8220, *ibid.*

15 Otto von Bismarck quoted in *Zeitfragen: Wochenschrift für deutsches Leben*, May 1, 1911, p. 1. See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (New York, 1987), 34–55; and Isaacman and Roberts, "Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa," 8–9.

16 Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 10; *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901*, 3; Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 37.

17 Beno von Herman auf Wain to Washington, Sept. 3, 1900, Washington Papers; M. B. K. Darkoh, "Togoland under the Germans: Thirty Years of Economic Development, 1884 to 1914, Part 1," *Nigerian Geographical Journal* (Ibadan), 10 (no. 2, 1987), 112. Allen Burks stayed two years in Africa, before returning to Tuskegee; Shepherd Harris died in Togo in 1902. See Washington to Anderson Bryant, Nov. 4, 1886, Washington Papers; Booker T. Washington, "*Up from Slavery:* An Autobiography," photo caption, *Outlook*, Jan. 5, 1901, p. 23; and Washington to von Herman, Sept. 20, 1900, Washington Papers.

18 Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Exposition Address," Sept. 18, 1895, in *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Louis R. Harlan (14 vols., Urbana, 1989), III, 586; Washington to von Herman, Sept. 20, 1900, Washington Papers; von Herman to Washington, Nov. 3, 1900, *ibid.* On Washington's long-term commitment to crop diversification, see Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 10.

19 By 1904 two more African Americans were working with John Robinson at the cotton school, Horace Greeley Griffin and Walter Bryant. See Karl Supf, "Bericht III: Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, 1903– 1904" (Report III: German colonial cotton ventures, 1903–1904), April 28, 1904, file 8222, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft.

20 Peter Coclanis, "What Made Booker Wash(ington)?: The Wizard of Tuskegee in Economic Context," in *Booker T. Washington and Black Progress:* Up from Slavery *100 Years Later*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Gainesville, 2003), 84, 88; Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850–1925* (New York, 1978), 227. A whole generation of black intellectuals acquiesced in the colonization of Africa. See *ibid.*, 207; David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919* (New York, 1993), 248; Tunde Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans: Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalists and the Civilizing Mission* (Lexington, Ky., 1998), 114; and Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden," 441. "Draft of a speech that Booker T. Washington had planned to give in Berlin on September 30, 1900," in "Eine Ungehaltene Rede von Booker Washington in Berlin" (An undelivered speech by Booker Washington in Berlin), by Moritz Schanz, *Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 14 (1910), 643.

21 Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, 1997), 8–11; Owen Charles Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan-African Movement, 1869–1911* (Westport, 1976), 46; Booker T. Washington, "Industrial Education in Africa," *Independent*, March 15, 1906, pp. 617–18. On the history of Pan-Africanism and Booker T. Washington's involvement in Chicago and London, see Olisanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776–1963* (Washington, 1982), 45, 48; Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans*, 135; Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*, 275, 267; Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden," 448–59; and Hunt Davis, "*Up from Slavery* for South Africans: Booker T. Washington's Classic Autobiography Abridged," in *Booker T. Washington and Black Progress, ed. Brundage*, 193–220.

22 Washington, "Industrial Education in Africa," 618; Sylvia M. Jacobs, *The African Nexus: Black American Perspectives on the European Partitioning of Africa, 1880–1920* (Westport, 1981), 20, 22, 45, 49, 53, 271.

23 Booker T. Washington, "A Sunday Evening Talk," Jan. 13, 1907, in *Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Harlan, IX, 185. For the statement of the Tuskegee expert, Horace Griffin, see *Albany Knickerbocker*, April 29, 1905. Imanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe, and Africa*, trans. Ann Keep (New York, 1974), 172.

24 On Calloway, see Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 117; on Robinson, see *Tuskegee Student*, April 28, 1906, p. 25. Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans*, 112; Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 38; Washington, "Industrial Education in Africa," 618.

25 Robinson to Washington, May 26, 1901, Washington Papers.

26 Calloway to Washington, April 30, 1901, *ibid.* See also Calloway to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, March 12, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; Darkoh, "Togoland under the Germans," 112; Calloway to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, Feb. 3, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; Calloway to Washington, Feb. 3, 1901, Washington Papers; Calloway to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, May 14, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. On Westerners' indifference to the local knowledge and experience of Africans, see Melissa Leach and James Fairhead, *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and Ecology in a Forest-Savanna Mosaic* (Cambridge, Eng., 1996); and Kojo Sebastian Amanor, *The New Frontier: Farmer Responses to Land Degradation; A West African Study* (Geneva, 1994).

27 Robinson to Washington, May 26, 1901, Washington Papers; Calloway to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, June 13, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; Calloway to Geo A. Schmidt, Nov. 11, 1901, file 1008, record group R 150 F, Fonds Allemand 3, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo; Calloway to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, Sept. 2, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft.

[28] Robinson to Washington, May 26, 1901, Washington Papers; Calloway to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, March 12, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. One source reports that 105 men were involved in moving the wagons to the plantations. See *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901*, 24. On the use of human power to run the gin, see *ibid.* Calloway to his wife, March 17, 1901, quoted in Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 74.

[29] *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Berlcht 1901*, 26. F. Wohltmann, "Neujahrsgedanken 1905" (Thought for the New Year, 1905), *Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 9 (Jan. 1905), 5; *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901*, 4–5; Karl Supf, Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, to Kolonial-Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin, Aug. 15, 1902, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. For Calloway's statement, see *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901*, 28–36, esp. 36.

[30] "Zum Neue Jahr" (For the New Year), *Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 7 (Jan. 1903), 9.

[31] Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, Bericht XI* (German colonial cotton ventures, report XI) (Berlin 1909), 28; Sunseri, "Baumwollfrage," 46, 48. See also, for different examples, Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Verhandlungen der Baumwoll-Kommission des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees vom 25. April 1912* (Negotiations of the Cotton Commission of the Colonial Economic Committee, April 25, 1912) (Berlin, 1912), 169. On peasant resistance to colonial cotton projects, see Allen Isaacman et al., "'Cotton Is the Mother of Poverty': Peasant Resistance to Forced Cotton Production in Mozambique, 1938–1961," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 13 (no. 4, 1980), 581–615.

[32] Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Verhandlungen der Baumwoll-Kommission des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees vom 25. April 1912*, 169; Agbenyega Adedze, "Cotton in Eweland: Historical Perspectives," in *Wrapped in Pride: Ghanaian Kente and African American Identity*, ed. Doran Ross (Los Angeles, 1998), 126–49, esp. 132; Maier, "Persistence of Precolonial Patterns of Production," 73–76; Freiherr von Danckelman, *Mittheilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten* (Communications from the explorers and scholars from the German protectorates), vol. III (Berlin, 1890), 140–41.

[33] "Bericht über den Baumwollbau in Togo," 1. The numbers are from Maier, "Persistence of Precolonial Patterns of Production," 75. See also Sebald, *Togo*, 30; Metzger, *Unsere Alte Kolonie Togo*, 242; and "Der Baumwollbau in Togo, Seine Bisherige Entwicklung, und sein jetziger Stand."

[34] John Robinson, in Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Unternehmungen 1902, 1903*, 18; *Zeitfragen: Wochenschrift für deutsches Leben*, May 1, 1911, p. 1.

[35] Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 93; Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Unternehmungen 1902, 1903*, 34–35; Calloway to Washington, May 8, 1902, Washington Papers; G. H. Pape, "Eine Berichtigung

zu dem von Prof. Dr. A. Oppel verfassten Aufsatz 'Der Baumwollanbau in den deutschen Kolonien und seine Aussichten," (A correction to Prof. A. Oppel's essay 'Cotton cultivation in the German colonies and its prospects'), file 3092, record group R 150F, FA 3, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo; Washington to Emmett Jay Scott, June 24, 1902, Washington Papers.

36 German cotton merchants, helped by the Tuskegee experts, were active in creating ginning and pressing operations, and by 1902 the Deutsche Togogesellschaft, a private enterprise that was to build gins and cotton-buying agencies in Togo, established itself in Berlin. See "Prospekt der Deutschen Togogesellschaft" (Prospectus of the German Togo Society), April 1902 (private archive, Freiherr von Herman auf Wain, Schloss Wain, Wain, Germany; copy in Sven Beckert's possession); Supf, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen Bericht IX*, 304. See also G. H. Pape to Bezirksamt Atakpame, April 5, 1909, file 1009, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 3, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo. During the 1908–1909 season, for example, the colonial government set the minimum price for ginned cotton, delivered at the coast, at 30 pfennige per pound. See "Verhandlungen des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees und der Baumwoll-Komission" (Negotiations of the Colonial Economic Committee and the Cotton Commission), Nov. 11, 1908, file 8223, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Unternehmungen 1902, 1903*, 17; and Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 103.

37 Calloway to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, June 13, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; Supf, Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, May 10, 1902, *ibid.*; C. Ladewig, "Bericht ueber meine Reise nach Togo in der Zeit vom 23. Januar bis 19. Februar 1907" (Report on my journey to Togo from January 23 to February 19, 1907) (private archive, Freiherr von Herman auf Wain, copy in Beckert's possession). In 1903 Robinson reported that transporting cotton from Tove to Lomé would take ten to twelve days. See Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Unternehmungen 1902, 1903*, 21.

38 German cotton interests asked the Kolonial-Abteilung of the Auswärtiges Amt that *Steuerträger*, in effect, forced laborers, be required to carry cotton from Tove to the coast without pay. See Supf, Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, to Auswärtiges Amt, Kolonial-Abteilung, Nov. 15, 1901, file 8221, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. For evidence of such use of unpaid coerced labor, see note "Station Mangu No. 170/11," May 8, 1911, file 4047, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 3, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo; Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 12.

39 Calloway to his wife, Nov. 2, 1902, quoted in Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 118. On Calloway's reluctance to return to the United States, see *ibid.*, 81. John W. Robinson, "At Work in West Africa," *Southern Letter*, 25 (Aug. 1909), 3.

40 Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 107; "Verhandlungen des

Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees und der Baumwoll-Komission"; Metzger, *Unsere Alte Kolonie Togo*, 245, 252. For statistics on the export of cotton from Togo after World War I, see "Togo: La production du coton" (Togo: The production of cotton), *Agence Extérieure et Coloniale*, Oct. 29, 1925. The expansion of cotton production continued throughout the twentieth century, and in 2002–2003, Togo produced 80 million kilograms of cotton, about 19 times as much as in 1938 and 160 times as much as in 1913. See Paul Reinhart AG, "Cotton Market Report," 44, Jan. 23, 2004, formerly at <www.reinhart.ch/pdf_files/marketreportch.pdf> (in Beckert's possession).

41 Maier, "Persistence of Precolonial Patterns of Production," 77. Large areas of Togo were also sparsely settled, lacking surplus labor for cotton production. See Pape, "Eine Berichtigung zu dem von Prof. Dr. A. Oppel verfassten Aufsatz 'Der Baumwollanbau in den deutschen Kolonien und seine Aussichten.'" On intercropping, see also Thomas J. Bassett, *The Peasant Cotton Revolution in West Africa: Côte d'Ivoire, 1880–1995* (New York, 2001), 57; "Bericht über den Baumwollbau in Togo"; and Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire."

42 Adedze, "Cotton in Eweland," 132; "Der Baumwollbau in Togo, Seine Bisherige Entwicklung, und sein jetziger Stand"; Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901* (Cotton expedition to Togo, report 1901) (Berlin, 1901), 44; signed agreement between Graf Zech and Freese (for the Vietor company), March 1, 1904, file 332, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo.

43 Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, Bericht XI;* James Stephen quoted in David Brion Davis, *Slavery and Human Progress* (New York, 1984), 218.>

44 Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 9, 12. For the governor's statement, see Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Unternehmungen 1902*, 1903, 57–59, esp. 57. See also Gouverneur of Togo to Herrn Bezirksamtsleiter von Atakpame, Dec. 9 (no year), file 1008, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 3, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo; "Massnahmen zur Hebung der Baumwollkultur im Bezirk Atakpame unter Mitwirkung des Kolonialwirtschaftlichen Komitees" (Schemes to increase cotton culture in the department of Atakpame, with the support of the Colonial Economic Committee), Verwaltung des deutschen Schutzgebietes Togo, *ibid.* "Baumwollinspektion für Togo" (Cotton inspection for Togo), file 1008, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 3, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo. John Robinson remarked in 1904 that the "habits [of the people of Togo] cannot be changed in a day." See "Baumwollanbau im Schutzgebiet Togo, Darlegungen des Pflanzers John W. Robinson vom 26. 4. 1904 betr. die Vorausetzungen, Boden- und Klimaverhältnisse, Methoden und Arbeitsverbesserung, Bewässerung" (Cotton culture in the Togo Protectorate: Presentations by the planter John W. Robinson, on April 26, 1904, on the preconditions, soil and climate conditions, methods and improvements of labor, irrigation), fragment, file 89, *ibid.*

45 Supf, "Zur Baumwollfrage," 12; Geo A. Schmidt, quoted in Sebald, *Togo*, 436. On officials' supervision of farming, see *ibid.*, 439. On soldiers' buying

cotton, see *ibid.*, 441. *Amtsblatt für das Schutzgebiet Togo*, "Sonderausgabe" (special edition), Jan. 11, 1911. Paul Friebel, Togo Baumwollgesellschaft, to Togo Baumwollgesellschaft Bremen, April 7, 1911, box 1, record group 7,2016, Papers of the Togo Baumwollgesellschaft (Staatsarchiv Bremen, Bremen, Germany); Maier, "Persistence of Precolonial Patterns of Production," 92; Frederick Cooper, "Conditions Analogous to Slavery: Imperialism and Free Labor Ideology in Africa," in *Beyond Slavery*, by Cooper et al., 113.

46 Robinson to Graf Zech, Jan. 11, 1904, file 332, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo.

47 Supf, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, Bericht IX*, 307; "Bericht über den Baumwollbau in Togo," 9; Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 139; Supf, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, Bericht X*, 1908 (German colonial cotton ventures, report X, 1908) (Berlin, 1908), 146; Kaiserliches Gouvernement von Togo to Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Atakpame, April 3, 1911, file 1009, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 3, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo.

48 For an excellent survey, see Isaacman and Roberts, eds., *Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Yet German cotton experts envied British successes in Africa. See O. Warburg, "Zum Neuen Jahr 1914" (For the New Year 1914), *Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 18 (Jan. 1914), 9.

49 See Polly Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana: A Study in Rural Capitalism* (Cambridge, Eng., 1963).

50 Graf Zech, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Togo, to Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, Aug. 22, 1904, file 8673, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Baumwoll-Expedition nach Togo, Bericht 1901*, 6.

51 See "Baumwollanbau im Schutzgebiet Togo, Darlegungen des Pflanzers John W. Robinson vom 26. 4. 1904 betr. die Voraussetzungen, Boden- und Klimaverhältnisse, Methoden und Arbeitsverbesserung, Bewässerung," 49; Anson Phelps Stokes, *A Brief Biography of Booker Washington* (Hampton, 1936), 13; Robinson to Graf Zech, Jan. 12, 1904, file 332, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo. See "Baumwollanbau im Schutzgebiet Togo, Darlegungen des Pflanzers John W. Robinson vom 26. 4. 1904 betr. die Voraussetzungen, Boden- und Klimaverhältnisse, Methoden und Arbeitsverbesserung, Bewässerung," 13.

52 Zech, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Togo, to Kolonial Wirtschaftliches Komitee, Aug. 23, 1907, file 8673, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; Kaiserliches Gouvernement von Togo to Reichskolonialamt Berlin, Oct. 4, 1907, file 8223, *ibid.*; "Der Baumwollbau in Togo" (Cotton culture in Togo), Sonderabdruck aus dem *Deutschen Kolonialblatt* (nos., 6 and 7, 1911), 5, file 384, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo. In 1903 the Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee wrote to the German consulate in New Orleans for help in finding white German American cotton farmers. Supf to Kaiserliches

Deutsches Konsulat New Orleans, June 24, 1903, file 8222, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft. See also Supf, *Bericht III: Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, 1903– 1904; Der Tropenpflanzer* (Berlin), 8 (Jan. 1904), 10–11; and Pape to Julius Runge, May 3, 1904 (copy), file 303, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo; Vertrag zwischen dem Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitee, Berlin, und Herrn G. H. Pape, June 9, 1904, *ibid.*; Karl Supf, "Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen" (German colonial cotton ventures), 16 (1912); Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Verhandlungen der Baumwoll-Kommission des Kolonial-Wirtschaftlichen Komitees vom 25. April 1912*, 157; Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden," 445.

53 See the letters in "Massnahmen zur Hebung der Baumwollkultur im Bezirk Atakpame unter Mitwirkung des Kolonialwirtschaftlichen Komitees."

54 Graf Zech, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Togo, to Kolonialwirtschaftliches Komitee, Feb. 7, 1904, file 8222, record group R 1001, Papers of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft; "Der Baumwollbau in Togo, Seine Bisherige Entwicklung, und sein jetziger Stand."

55 Calloway to Washington, June 2, 1901, Washington Papers; Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 267.

56 Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the White Man's Burden," 444–45; *Tuskegee Student*, Aug. 24, 1901, p. 1.

57 James Calloway, "Inspection der Baumwollfarmen und Baumwollmärkte in Togo" (Inspection of cotton farms and cotton markets in Togo), in Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komittee, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, 1902–1903* (German colonial cotton ventures, 1902–1903) (Berlin, 1903), 42.

58 For the general argument, see Foner, *Reconstruction;* and Fields, "Advent of Capitalist Agriculture."

59 Isaacman and Roberts, eds., *Cotton, Colonialism, and Social History in Sub-Saharan Africa*; Bassett, *Peasant Cotton Revolution in West Africa;* Cyril Ehrlich, "The Marketing of Cotton in Uganda" (Ph.D. diss., London University, 1958), 28–33. On the Association Cotonnière Coloniale, see Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, 1902–1903*, 66–68. On Tuskegee efforts in the Sudan, see Washington to Gladwin Bouton, May 6, 1915, Washington Papers; and Leigh Hart to Washington, Feb. 3, 1904, *ibid.* See also Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, 1902–1903, 69–71. Supf, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, Bericht IX, 297*, 295; and Radcliffe, "Tuskegee-Togo Cotton Scheme," 133, 135. German colonial cotton activists often referred to the experiences of the French, British, and Russians. See, for example, Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee, *Deutsch-Koloniale Baumwoll-Unternehmungen, 1902–1903*, 66–71; Anlage zum Bericht des Kaiserlichen Generalkonsulats in St. Petersburg" (Enclosures to the report of the imperial embassy/consulate in St. Petersburg), Dec. 26, 1913, file 360, record group R 150F, Fonds Allemand 1, Papers of the Administration of the German Protectorate of Togo; R. B. D. Morier to the Secretary of State, the Marquis of Salisbury, "Establishment by

the Russian Government of a Model Cotton Plantation in the Merva Oasis," Oct. 12, 1889, compilation no. 476, vol. 51, 1890, Revenue Department Compilations (Maharashtra State Archive, Mumbai, India).

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