



## THE COLONIAL QUESTION

A German young men’s association, which trains young people for the trades and professions, recently sent out a circular letter which was appalling. It complained that it was no longer possible for the organization to find places for its young people; every branch of industry was over-full and nowhere was there an opportunity for these willing, industrious and morally well qualified youths. The organization asked: “Where shall the youth of Germany live, how can more places be found, in the coming years, for the hundreds of thousands of able and energetic young Germans who embody the same ideals of work and duty as did the past generations?” Give these German youths a chance to live if you want to keep the world happy and peaceful. That is a great demand which the world cannot neglect without itself suffering. And this problem cannot be confined to the youth of Germany alone. The outlook is already similar in Italy, and other countries may wake to find themselves in the same situation.

If there were no empty, undeveloped territory left in the world, the problem would have a different aspect and different consequences. But today there is no simpler remedy for the overpopulation of the older states than the development of new territories, and this will be true for a long time to come. In this question of colonial policy, as with other matters, we must free ourselves from our old prejudices. Hitherto colonial empires have grown out of dreams of heroic conquest; today it is bitter economic need which drives us to think of colonies.

The table below shows, for Europe and for the United States of America, how much space is at the disposal of each inhabitant, when the motherland and the colonies are reckoned together.

		Area, in millions of square kilometers	Population, in millions	Number of inhabitants per square kilometer
Europe:				
	Germany	0.47	63.18	134
	Austria	0.08	6.53	82
	Belgium	2.47	21.38	8.7
	Great Britain	39.67	461.05	8.7
	France	11.46	99.86	8.7
	Greece	0.13	6.18	48
	Italy	2.57	42.61	16
	Jugoslavia	0.25	11.98	48
	Netherlands	2.08	59.71	29
	Norway	0.39	2.80	7.2
	Poland	0.39	27.18	70
	Portugal	2.52	15.48	6.1
	Russia	21.34	143.13	6.7
	Sweden	0.45	5.90	13
	Switzerland	0.04	3.88	97
	Spain	0.85	23.29	27
	Czecho-Slovakia	0.14	13.61	97
America				
	United States (without colonies)	7.84	120	15

Even when one takes account of the fact that the differing character of land and soil makes a mere reckoning of total area unfair, the table still shows plainly that although the Germans are among the greatest and most highly civilized peoples in the world they have the least space to live in. If the victorious Powers, which had no need of them, had left Germany her old colonies, Germany's present extraordinary social and economic problems would have been considerably simplified and would have lost their aspect as a menace to the peace and welfare of the world.

In order to conceal the theft of the German colonies, the fathers of the Versailles treaty invented lies about Germany's colonial history. With shameless hypocrisy Germany was called morally unfit to undertake colonization and charged with having misused her colonies as military bases for her supposed imperial policies. And these charges were made by Powers which not long before had been exposed to the entire world as guilty of the atrocities of the Congo, by Powers which in this same World War led hundreds of thousands of colored soldiers from their African

and Asiatic colonies against the Germans, and today are still recruiting colored soldiers in Africa. One could fill pages with refutations of these lies, calling upon English, American and even French witnesses who have borne eloquent testimony in behalf of Germany's colonial regime.

Source of English translation: Hjalmar Schacht, *The End of Reparations*, translated by Lewis Gannett. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1931, pp. 231-34.

Source of original German text: Hjalmar Schacht, *Das Ende der Reparationen*. Oldenburg: Gerhard Stalling, 1931, pp. 229-32.