GERMANY AND THE MODERN WORLD, 1880–1914

The German Empire before 1914 had the fastest-growing economy in Europe and was the strongest military power in the world. Yet it appeared, from a reading of many contemporaries' accounts, to be lagging behind other nation-states and to be losing the race to divide up the rest of the globe. This book is an ambitious reassessment of how Wilhelmine Germans conceived of themselves and the German Empire's place in the world in the lead-up to the First World War. Mark Hewitson re-examines the varying forms of national identification, allegiance and politics following the creation and consolidation of a German nation-state in light of contemporary debates about modernity, race, industrialization, colonialism and military power. Despite the new claims being made for the importance of empire to Germany's development, he reveals that the majority of transnational networks and contemporaries' interactions and horizons remained intra-European or transatlantic rather than truly global.

MARK HEWITSON is Professor of German History and Politics and Director of European Social and Political Studies at University College London. His publications include *Absolute War: Violence and Mass Warfare in the German Lands, 1792–1820* (2017) and *The People's Wars: Histories of Violence in the German Lands, 1820–1888* (2017).

GERMANY AND THE MODERN WORLD, 1880–1914

MARK HEWITSON
University College London

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107039155
DOI: 10.1017/9781139856515

First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd. Padstow, Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hewitson, Mark, author.
Title: Germany and the modern world, 1880-1914 / Mark Hewitson, University College London.
Description: First edition. | Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, [2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018009341 | ISBN 9781107039155 (hardback : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781107611993 (pbk. : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Germany—History—1871-1918. | Germany—Foreign relations—1871-1918. | Germany—Politics and government—1871-1918.
Classification: LCC DD221 .H556 2018 | DDC 327.43009/034—dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018009341

ISBN 978-1-107-03915-5 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-107-61199-3 Paperback

To Cécile, Anna and Camille

CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

MAPS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a pleasure, in writing this book, to return to the German Empire. As a doctoral student, I spent long and enjoyable days – indeed, months – meandering through the remaining traces of a world that seems outwardly familiar but inwardly distant. The decorum and religious or moral self-discipline of different groups are difficult to recover and recreate. They were, of course, already subject to extensive and varied challenges at the time, not least because of the communicative and commercial shifts that were occurring at the turn of the century, some of which were associated with 'globalization' and movement across borders. The ruptures and dissonances caused by such changes are what first drew me to the subject. Once there, other questions and topics quickly hove into view. Movement and invention, cultural conflict and material transformation, all remain alluring aspects of the pre-war era.

The revolution in means of communication which began with the introduction of increasingly life-like lithographs, and then photographs, in the mass press brought about a shift from a literary (and oral) culture to a largely visual one, characterized amongst other things by advertisements and consumption. Such a visual culture maintained its grip, in the industrial economies of Europe and elsewhere, for much of the twentieth century, as images began to move (film) and entered the living room (TV). The extent to which this communicative context, which always co-existed and overlapped with the written and spoken word, is being altered fundamentally in the early twenty-first century remains uncertain. In some respects, investigations of the spatial, temporal, psychological, and social effects of the last revolution help us to understand the current one (if it is one).

Mobility – whether in an aeroplane or in the mind – creates perspective. The world 'here' looks different from over there. The study of national belonging, transnational movement and globalization is closely connected to the radical sense of precariousness and curiosity that travel has instilled in us. Displacement, flight and dizziness uproot us or make us lose our bearings, but they also allow us to discover others and 'lose' or 'find' ourselves. Travel is, to adapt Simmel, not just a lust but also a mania. This study lies towards the more mundane centre of that particular spectrum.

As I have moved around, I have accumulated many scholarly and other debts along the way. Since it stretches from the 1990s to the present, my research for this book has involved too many debts – favours, advice, shelter – to mention. I have benefited greatly over the years from discussions of the topic – and, thankfully, others – with Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, who helped to awaken my interest in the era, Hagen Schulze, John Breuilly, Mary Fulbrook, Jim Retallack, Michael John, Rainer Liedtke, Stephanie Bird, Egbert Klautke, Matthew Jefferies, Jan Vermeiren, Eckard Michels, Judith Beniston, Bernhard Rieger, Matthew D'Auria and Jeff Bowersox. I have also had the good fortune – even if it didn't always feel like it at the time – to teach and hear the views of a large number of undergraduate and graduate students on courses about nationalism (and post-nationalism) in Germany and Austria. To all of them, together with colleagues at conferences – especially contributors to a conference on nineteenth-century nationalism, hosted by the German Historical Institute in 2004 – I am very grateful. In addition, I would like to thank the *Journal of Modern History* for allowing the inclusion of material, in reworked form, which first appeared in M. Hewitson, 'The *Kaiserreich* in Question: Constitutional Crisis in Germany before the First World War', *JMH*, 73 (2001), 725–80.

My unredeemable debt of gratitude, as in the past, is to my (transnational) family: to Cécile, whose mobile life I still feel incredibly lucky to share; to Anna, whose tentative existence I first heard of in Berlin (probably researching this book, though I don't remember); and to Camille, whose first long-haul flight and perplexed reaction to jetlag (as a one-year old) I shall always remember. Nationality is all around us, but we rarely discuss it because it doesn't seem very important. Recent events in the United Kingdom and elsewhere have, therefore, come as something of a shock, proving that early twentieth-century atavism – along with a welter of more important grievances and aspirations – is still half-relevant. I look forward to its future – and brutishly short – history.