

**EMPIRES OF ENTERPRISE: GERMAN AND ENGLISH COMMERCIAL  
INTERESTS IN EAST NEW GUINEA 1884 TO 1914**

HANS J. OHFF  
BA (Hons) Adelaide

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History,  
The University of Adelaide, July 2008



# NEW GUINEA

Map showing the Territory annexed by Great Britain, Germany, and Holland, respectively.

On the basis of a Map compiled by Jas. F. Inray F.R.G.S., and published by James Inmy & Son London 1883



**HANUABADA TRIBESMAN**

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## **DECLARATION**

Candidate's declaration

I certify that this thesis does not contain without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Hans J. Ohff

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Researching and writing an academic thesis is, undoubtedly, lonely work. But it could not be accomplished without the help of many people and organisations along the way. With gratitude, I acknowledge those who have assisted me so much.

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## ABSTRACT

The colonies of German New Guinea (GNG) and British New Guinea (BNG; from 1906 the Territory of Papua) experienced different paths of development due to the virtually opposite decisions made regarding commercial activities. The establishment of these colonies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and all of the major events and decisions relating to them up to 1914, were based on solely commercial motivations. This thesis examines the circumstances leading to the founding of GNG and BNG. It analyses the impact of government decisions and the growth of capitalist enterprises in East New Guinea during its first 30 years (1884–1914).

This thesis argues that both the German and British governments were reluctant to become involved in colonisation. In the context of the political pressures prevailing in Berlin and London respectively, both governments succumbed but insisted that the cost of administering and developing the colonies was to be borne by others.

The establishment costs of GNG were accepted by the Neu Guinea Compagnie (NGC) until 1899. It was a haphazard and experimental undertaking which was expensive financially and in human life. When the German government assumed administrative and financial control in 1899 the development of GNG had generally progressed in line with Chancellor Bismarck's view that Germany's colonies should be treated as economic enterprises. This was despite the bureaucratic form of government NGC had established.

In contrast, there were claims that BNG was to be established on defence strategic requirements and to protect the indigenous Papuan population from non-British influences. This was fallacious posturing by the Australian colonies in order to attain control over the entire eastern sector of New Guinea and adjacent islands. The objective of the Queensland sugar planters was to procure cheap labour and for Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria to prevent the setting up of competitive agricultural industries. After Britain acquired southeast New Guinea, and the recruitment of Papuan and Melanesian labour into Australia had been outlawed, BNG was left to the gold prospectors, with no sustainable plantation industry taking place until Australia assumed administrative control over the Territory in 1907.

Neither colony had any military significance. Both colonies shared a common European morality in administration. By 1914 GNG had become a commercially viable enterprise; BNG, now Papua, had failed to take advantage of the 1902–1912 boom in tropical produce. Given their similar size and geography, the economic performance of the two colonies should also have been similar. That this did not occur is beyond dispute.

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## Glossary

### German terminology

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Assessor                     | German Judge with second State Examination in law            |
| Aufsichtsrath                | Chairman of the Board of Directors                           |
| Ausführungsverfügung         | Implementation Order   |
| Behörde                      | Bureaucracy, Government Administration                       |
| Bestimmungen                 | Regulation   |
| Bezirksgericht               | District Court in GNG  |
| Bundesrath                   | Federal Council of Parliament in Germany                     |
| Denkschrift                  | Promemoria, position paper, memorandum                       |
| Erlaß                        | Decree; enactment; declaration; ordinance; order; regulation |
| Etat                         | Government/NGC Budget  |
| Faktorei                     | Trading station, warehouse, factory                          |
| Fiskus                       | Government Treasury  |
| Geheimrat                    | Honorary title - member of a Privy Council in Germany        |
| Geheimer Kommerzienrat       | Honorary title – 'Privy Councillor of Commerce' in Germany   |
| Generalversammlung           | Annual general meeting                                       |
| Gesetz                       | Statute/law (Bürgerliches) Gesetzbuch, Civil Code            |
| Gouverneur                   | Governor   |
| Grundbuch                    | Land Register  |
| Kadeh                        | Chinese community store                                      |
| Kongsi                       | Chinese community building                                   |
| Kaiser                       | Emperor  |
| Kaiserlicher Gouverneur      | Imperial Governor  |
| Kaiserlicher Kommissar       | Imperial Commissioner  |
| Kaiserlicher Richter         | Imperial Judge   |
| Kolonie/Schutzgebiet         | Protectorate   |
| Landeshauptmann              | Chief Administrator  |
| Landeshoheit                 | Sovereignty  |
| Mandur                       | Javanese overseer  |
| Reich                        | German Empire  |
| Reichskanzler                | Chancellor of the Reich                                      |
| Reichsregierung              | Government of the Reich                                      |
| Reichstag                    | Parliament of the Reich                                      |
| Referendar                   | German Articled Clerk with first State Examination in law    |
| Schutzbrief                  | Charter  |
| Station                      | Station – plantation   |
| Stationsleiter               | Station manager  |
| Stellvertretender Gouverneur | Acting Governor  |
| Tandil                       | Chinese overseer   |
| Vertrag                      | Agreement, contract, treaty; pact, compact, indenture        |
| Vize Gouverneur              | Deputy Governor  |
| Vorsitzender                 | Chairman   |

## German Geographical Names

### Islands:

|                     |                                  |                           |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Admiralitäts-Inseln | Admiralty Islands (Manus Island) | 2° 10' south 146°55' east |
| Bougainville Insel  | Bougainville Island              | 6° 10' south 155°18' east |
| Hermit Inseln       | Hermit Islands                   | 1° 34' south 145°11' east |
| KWL                 | mainland (German) New Guinea     |                           |
| Kretin Insel        | Cretin Island                    | 6° 46' south 147°56' east |
| Neu-Pommern         | New Britain                      | 4° 45' south 150°30' east |
| Neu-Mecklenburg     | New Ireland                      | 3° 30' south 151°30' east |
| Neu-Lauenburg       | Duke of York Islands             | 4° 10' south 152°28' east |
| Neu-Hannover        | New Hanover                      | 2° 29' south 150°13' east |
| Ost-Karolinen       | East Caroline Islands (Ponape)   | 6° 57' south 158°13' east |
| Purdy Inseln        | Purdy Islands                    | 2° 53' south 146°24' east |
| Ritter Insel        | Ritter Island                    | 5° 36' south 147°56' east |
| Witu Inseln         | French Islands                   | 4° 45' south 149°18' east |
| Woodlark Insel      | Woodlark Island                  | 9° 02' south 152°53' east |

### Stations:

|                         |                              |                                 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Adolfhafen              | Morobe                       | 7° 45'32" south 147°35'38" east |
| Alexishafen             | North of Madang              | 2° 40' south 141°15' east       |
| Angoram                 | Angoram                      | 4° 03'55" south 144°04'00" east |
| Angriffshafen           | Vanimo                       | 2° 41'24" south 141°18'15" east |
| Constantinhafen         | Bibi – Enke Harbour          | 5° 30' south 145°56' east       |
| Dallmannhafen           | Wewak                        | 3° 33'26" south 143°36'48" east |
| Dregerhafen             | Dreger Harbour (Cape Cretin) | 6° 25' south 145°44' east       |
| Eitape/Berlinhafen      | Aitape                       | 3° 08'31" south 142°20'46" east |
| Erima                   | Erima                        | 5° 25' south 145°44' east       |
| Finschhafen             | Finschhafen                  | 6° 35'54" south 147°51'10" east |
| Friedrich Wilhelmshafen | Madang                       | 5° 13'58" south 145°47'18" east |
| Herbertshöhe            | Herbertshöhe/Kokopo          | 4° 21'06" south 152°16'23" east |
| Hatzfeldthafen          | Hatzfeldthafen               | 4° 23'57" south 145°12'39" east |
| Kap König Wilhelm       | Cape King William            | 5° 55' south 147°20' east       |
| Kävieng                 | Kavieng                      | 2° 33'72" south 150°47'38" east |
| Kieta                   | Kieta                        | 6° 12'51" south 155°37'23" east |
| Kronprinzhafen          | Kronprinz Harbour            | 4° 27' south 145°21' east       |
| Lae                     | Burgberg                     | 6° 43'24" south 146°59'36" east |
| Petershafen -Witu       | Garove/Deslacs Island        | 4° 54' south 149°09' east       |
| Postsdamhafen           | Awaro – Hansa Bay            | 4° 12' south 144°52' east       |
| Prinz Albrechthafen     | Bogia                        | 4° 24' south 145°13' east       |
| Rabaul                  | Rabaul                       | 4°11'45" south 152°10'21" east  |
| Ralum                   | Ralum                        | 4° 21' south 152°16' east       |
| Ramumünde               | Station mouth of Ramu River  | 4° 02' south 144°42' east       |
| Ramu Zwischenstation    | Central Ramu Valley          | 4° 38' south 144°40' east       |
| Samoahafen              | Salamaua Station             | 7° 17'28" south 146°59'35" east |
| Simpsonhafen            | Simpson/Rabaul Harbour       | 4° 16' south 151°58' east       |
| Stephansort             | Bogadjim                     | 5° 26' south 145°45' east       |
| Weberhafen              | Weber Harbour                | 4° 15' south 145°13' east       |

### Rivers:

|                       |               |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Gogol Fluß            | Gogol River   | 5° 13' south 145°48' east |
| Herkules Fluß         | Waria River   | 7 °48' south 147°35' east |
| Kaiserin-Augusta Fluß | Sepik River   | 4° 11' south 143°31' east |
| Lehmfluß              | Clay River    | 4° 43' south 144°08' east |
| Markham Fluß          | Markham River | 6° 44' south 146°58' east |
| Ottillie/Ramu Fluß    | Ramu River    | 4° 02' south 144°41' east |
| Töperfluß             | Keram River   | 4° 27' south 144°13' east |

### Mountains and Ranges

|                  |                  |                           |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Bismarck Kette   | Bismarck Range   |                           |
| Finisterre Kette | Mount Sarawaket  | 6° 17' south 147°05' east |
| Hansemannberg    | Mount Hansemann  | 5° 10' south 145°45' east |
| Hunstein Kette   | Hunstein Range   | 4° 24' south 142°52' east |
| Oertzen Berge    | Oertzen Range    | 5° 28' south 145°34' east |
| Sattelberg       | Sattelberg       | 6° 28' south 147°44' east |
| Schraderberg     | Schrader Range   | 4° 53' south 144°13' east |
| Torricelli Kette | Torricelli Range | 3° 30' south 142°00' east |
| Wilhelmsberg     | Mount Wilhelm    | 5° 47' south 145°01' east |

### ABBREVIATIONS

|      |   |
|------|---|
| AA   | Auswärtige Amt (Foreign Office)                       |
| AAAS | Australian Association for the Advancement of Science |
| AAZ  | Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung                         |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| AB       | <i>Amtsblatt</i> (official gazette for GNG published in Rabaul)             |
| AA       | Auswärtige Amt (Foreign Office)   |
| AA-KA    | Kolonialabteilung AA (Colonial Department of Foreign Office to 17 May 1907) |
| A-C      | Astrolabe Compagnie   |
| AG       | Aktiengesellschaft (limited shareholder company)                            |
| AGM      | Annual general meeting  |
| AN&MEF   | Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force                           |
| AJPH     | <i>Australian Journal of Politics and History</i>                           |
| ANU      | Australian National University  |
| AR-BNG   | Annual Report British New Guinea  |
| A.R.M.   | Assitant Resident Magistrate  |
| AR-Papua | Annual Report Papua   |
| ASN      | Australian Steam Navigation Company   |
| ATP      | Australian Territory of Papua-New Guinea                                    |
| AUSN     | Australian United Steam Navigation Company                                  |
| BA       | Bismarck Archipel (Bismarck Archipelago)                                    |
| BAK/B    | Bundesarchiv (German National Archives, Koblenz/Berlin)                     |
| BA/MA    | Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv (German National Archives – Military, Freiburg)  |
| BAG      | Bismarck-Archipel-Gesellschaft (Company)                                    |
| BBC      | <i>Berliner Börsen Courier</i>  |
| BNG      | British New Guinea  |
| BNGD     | British New Guinea Development Company Limited                              |
| BP       | Burns Philp Company Limited   |
| BPP      | British Parliamentary Papers  |
| BT       | <i>Berliner Tageblatt</i>   |
| CPL      | Choiseul Plantation Limited   |
| CO       | Colonial Office record (Public Records Office, London)                      |
| CPP      | Commonwealth Parliamentary Paper (Australia)                                |
| CNA      | Commissioner of Native Affairs and Control                                  |
| CPD      | Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (Australia)                              |
| CSR      | Colonial Sugar Refining Company   |
| DB       | Deutsche Bank Aktien Gesellschaft   |
| D-G      | Disconto Gesellschaft   |
| DHPG     | Deutsche Handels und Plantagen-Gesellschaft der Südsee-Inseln               |
| DKG      | Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (Society for the German Colonies)             |
| DKG      | Deutsche Kolonialgesetzgebung (German colonial legislation)                 |
| DKZ      | <i>Deutsche Kolonial Zeitung</i>  |
| DKBI     | <i>Deutsche Kolonialblatt</i>   |
| DKL      | Deutsches Kolonial Lexikon  |
| DM       | Deutschmark   |
| DOAG     | Deutsch-Ostafrikanische-Gesellschaft  |
| DR       | <i>Deutsche Rundschau</i>   |
| DSG      | Deutsche Seehandels-Gesellschaft  |
| DSP-AG   | Deutsche Südseephosphat–Aktiengesellschaft                                  |
| DZA      | Deutsches Zentral Archiv (formerly Reichs Archive Potsdam & Merseburg)      |
| EBIT     | Earning before Interest and Tax   |
| EHR      | <i>Economic History Review</i>  |
| EGM      | Extraordinary general meeting   |
| EJ       | <i>Economic Journal</i>   |
| FO       | Foreign Office (Britain)  |
| FWH      | Friedrich-Wilhelmshafen (Madang)  |
| GmbH     | Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (Propriety Limited Company)           |
| GNG      | German New Guinea   |
| GNG-IT   | German New Guinea – Island Territory  |
| HAPAG    | Hamburg-Amerika Linie Aktien Gesellschaft                                   |
| HASAG    | Hamburgische Südsee-Aktiengesellschaft                                      |
| HJ       | <i>Historical Journal</i>   |
| JPH      | <i>Journal of Pacific History</i>   |
| HMS      | Her/His Majesty Ship  |
| HWWA     | Hamburgisches Welt-Wirtschafts-Archiv                                       |
| HZ       | <i>Historische Zeitschrift</i>  |
| HS.ANZ   | <i>Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand</i>                        |
| Jb       | Jahresbericht (annual report/balance sheet, Neu Guinea Compagnie)           |
| Jb A-C   | Jahresbericht Astrolabe Compagnie   |
| Jb J-G   | Jahresbericht Jaluit Gesellschaft   |
| J-G      | Jaluit Gesellschaft   |
| JPH      | <i>Journal of Pacific History</i>   |
| JSS      | <i>Journal of Strategic Studies</i>   |
| KA       | Reichs-Kolonialamt (Colonial Office established on 17 May 1907)             |
| KAG      | Kolonialbank, Berlin  |
| KG       | Kolonialgesellschaft (Colonial Society)                                     |
| KPM      | Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappi (a Dutch shipping company)               |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| KWK   | Kolonial-Wirtschaftliches Komitee (Economics Committee Colonial Society)          |
| KWL   | Kaiser-Wilhelms-Land (Mainland GNG)   |
| KKW   | Kommission der Kolonialverwaltung (Standing Commission of the KA)                 |
| KR    | Kolonialrath (Colonial Counsel)   |
| KWLPG | KWL Plantagen-Gesellschaft  |
| KZ    | <i>Kölnische Zeitung</i> (Cologne daily newspaper)                                |
| LPPL  | Lever's Pacific Plantations Limited.  |
| LLC   | Limited liability company   |
| MB    | Medizinische Berichte (Medical Reports)   |
| MLC   | Member of the Legislative Council   |
| MSch  | Manchester School of Economics  |
| NAA   | National Archives of Australia  |
| NAZ   | <i>Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung</i>  |
| n.a.  | not applicable  |
| n.d.  | no data   |
| NDB   | Norddeutsche Bank   |
| NCO   | Non-commissioned officer  |
| NDL   | Norddeutscher Lloyd (German shipping company)                                     |
| NGC   | Neu Guinea Compagnie (New Guinea Company)   |
| NLC   | Native Land Commission  |
| NLA   | National Library of Australian, Canberra  |
| NKWL  | <i>Nachrichten über Kaiser-Wilhelms-Land und dem Bismarck Archipel</i>            |
| NSW   | State of New South Wales  |
| OAL   | <i>Der Ostasiatische Lloyd</i>  |
| OK    | Ost Karolinen (East Caroline Islands)   |
| Papua | The Territory of Papua  |
| PV    | Plenarversammlung (Board of Director Meeting)                                     |
| PHR   | <i>Pacific History Review</i>   |
| PIC   | Pacific Island Company  |
| PIM   | <i>Pacific Island Monthly</i>   |
| P&L   | Profit and loss   |
| PJ    | Preußische Jahrbücher   |
| PMB   | Pacific Manuscripts Bureau  |
| POW   | Prisoner of War   |
| PPC   | Pacific Phosphate-Company   |
| PR    | Patrol Report   |
| PRO   | Public Record Office, London  |
| PS    | <i>Pacific Studies</i>  |
| PSH   | Preußische Seehandlung (Prussian State Bank)                                      |
| QSS   | Queensland Steamship Company  |
| Qld   | State of Queensland   |
| RGBI  | Reichs Gesetzblatt  |
| RKA   | Reichskolonialamt (Colonial Office)   |
| R&H   | Robertson, Hertsheim & Company  |
| RM    | Reichsmark  |
| R.M.  | Resident Magistrate and Assistant Resident Magistrate                             |
| RT    | Stenographische Berichte des Reichstags (German Hansard)                          |
| RTA   | Reichstagakten (Parliamentary Records, Germany)                                   |
| SAG   | Deutsche Südseephosphat AG  |
| SIDC  | Solomon Islands Development Company   |
| SJ    | <i>Statistisches Jahrbuch</i> (Statistical yearbook 1894–1914)                    |
| SMH   | <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>  |
| SMS   | Seiner Majestät Schiff (His Majesty Ship)   |
| SPL   | Shortland Plantation Limited  |
| SS    | Steam ship  |
| tr    | Translation   |
| StAH  | Staatsarchiv Hamburg (State Archive, Hamburg)                                     |
| StAB  | Staatsarchiv Bremen (State Archive, Bremen)                                       |
| SY    | Steam yacht   |
| TP    | <i>Tropenpflanzer</i> (Journal for Tropical Agriculture)                          |
| VoBl. | Verordnungsblatt (NGC Gazette)  |
| V&P   | Votes and Proceedings Legislative Assembly (NSW, Qld or Vic)                      |
| Vic   | State of Victoria   |
| Wb    | <i>Weißbuch</i> (similar to the Parliamentary Blue Book in Britain and Australia) |
| WK    | West Karolinen (West Caroline Islands)  |
| WW I  | World War I   |
| WW II | World War II  |
| ZE    | <i>Zeitschrift für Ethnologie</i>   |
| ZK    | <i>Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik</i>  |

Currencies: (Rate of exchange: *The Economist*, 8 Aug. 1885, p. 974)

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| £Stg  | Pound Sterling (Stg) = 20 Shillings. 1s = 12d = RM20.48 = F25.15             |
| A£    | Pound Australian = Pound Stg for the period under review                     |
| s     | shilling: 20s = £1   |
| d     | pence  |
| RM    | Reichs Mark = 100 Pfennig  |
| Pf    | Pfennig: 100 Pf = £1   |
| F     | French Franc = RM1.25 = 10d  |
| Hfl.  | Dutch Gulden (Florin) = 100 cents = RM1.70                                   |
| \$    | Dollar USA = 100 cents = RM4.75 = Peseta 5.60                                |
| Mex\$ | Chilean/Mexican Dollar—subject to price of silver = 2s 6d to 4s stg in 1887  |
| SS\$  | Straits Dollar (SS\$ or M\$) RM2.04 in Dec. 1897; fixed at 2s 4d stg in 1906 |
| \$    | Gold Dollar = 4s stg or RM4.08, traded from 1895                             |

Weights:

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| catty      | Catty (kati) = 1.33 lb; 500 g  |
| cwt.       | Hundredweight = one twentieth of a ton   |
| dwt.       | Pennyweight (24 grains or one twentieth of an ounce troy)  |
| DWT        | Total contents of ship in long tons  |
| dz         | Doppel Zentner = 100 kg  |
| g          | gram   |
| gr         | grain  |
| GRT or BRT | Gross register ton = 100 cft or 2.83 cbm; gross internal (ship) capacity<br>Register or net ton = net internal (ship) capacity |
| kg         | kilogram = 1000 grams (g)  |
| l          | Litre = 1000 cu. centimetres; 4.55 l = 1 Imperial Gallon = 8 Pints   |
| lb         | metric pound = 500 g = 0.5 kg – weights stated for GNG are in metric   |
| lb         | pound = 0.4536 kg; 112 lb = one hundred weight   |
| oz         | Ounce = 28 gr = a unit of one sixteenth of a pound avoirdupois   |
| picul      | picul = 107 litres of grain = 8 piculs = 1000 lbs  |
| t          | Long ton = 2,240lb; Freight ton = 1,016kg or 40 cu. ft; Metric tonne = 1000kg  |
| tahil      | tahil (tael) = 1.33 oz   |
| troy       | Troy weight = 12 oz = 5,760 gr = 0.3732 kg   |

Other measurements:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1° l. at Equator | 60 nautical miles = 111.112 km                          |
| ac               | Acres   |
| chain            | 66 ft   |
| cm               | centimetre = 0.01                                       |
| km               | kilometre = 1000 metres = 3,280 ft                      |
| dm               | dezimeter = 0.1 m                                       |
| fathom           | Faden = 6 ft = 1.8 m                                    |
| ft               | feet  |
| ha               | hectare = 2.47 ac                                       |
| Km               | kilometre = 1,000 metres = 3,280 ft                     |
| knot             | nautical mile per hour                                  |
| Land mile        | German geographical mile = 7428 metres                  |
| League           | League = ~3 miles = c. 4,812 m                          |
| m                | metre   |
| mm               | millimetre = 0.001m                                     |
| n.m.             | nautical mile (c. 2025 yards = 1852 metres = 10 cables) |