

**“To Devour the Land of Mkwawa”:  
Colonial Violence and the German-Hehe War in East Africa c. 1884-1914**

David Pizzo

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Approved by:

Professor Christopher R. Browning

Professor Lisa Lindsay

Professor Konrad Jarausch

Professor Claudia Koonz

Professor Christopher J. Lee

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## **ABSTRACT**

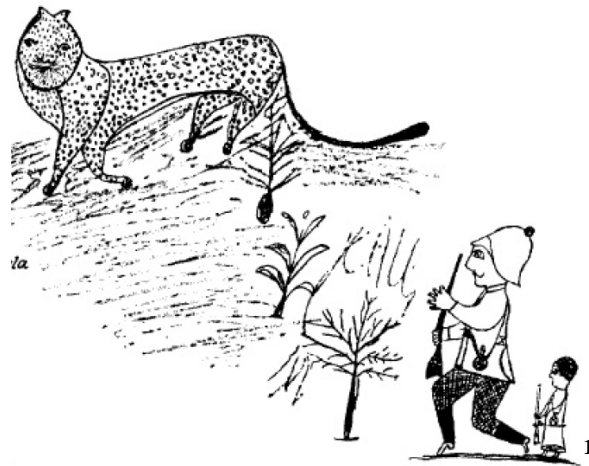
DAVID PIZZO: “To Devour the Land of Mkwawa”:  
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David Pizzo  
UNC Chapel Hill  
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“To Devour the Land of Mkwawa”: Colonial Violence and the German-Hehe War in East Africa” focuses on the German-Hehe War, which raged across the Southern Highlands of what is now Tanzania in the 1890s, and is based on archival and field research done in Berlin, Freiburg, Dar es Salaam, and Iringa. The central question of the dissertation is nature of imperial violence in the African context, in this case perpetrated by German-led colonial forces in their attempt to subdue the large, martially proficient Hehe conquest state, which was similar other states based on the Zulu model. The extreme brutality and destruction that characterized this nearly decade-long campaign resulted not simply from some sort of “special path” of the German Empire or some sort of culturally encoded national pathology, but rather arose from the interplay of conditions and exigencies “on the spot” in East Africa and broader, overlapping circuits of violence that connected processes and events across the globe. I also seek to destabilize the traditional binary of omnipotent European invaders and passive African victims—indeed, the Hehe under Chief Mkwawa were highly effective killers and administrators whose tenacious resistance to the Germans

itself brought forth extreme responses from German colonial forces. My work is transnational *and* comparative: it is the former insofar as the violence that characterized the Hehe-German War was the result of and drew on several concurrent developments that transcended national or other established political boundaries. It is the latter in that I explicitly compare the Hehe-German War with other cases of intense colonial violence across Africa and Asia in order to illuminate what is specific about both the German imperial experience and about the powerful Hehe *Mfecane* State. These events are a part of *world history*, not just East African or German history, and they offer one an opportunity to explore the larger issue of how violence and warfare—particularly irregular, “asymmetrical” warfare—shaped and continue to shape our world.





## Chapter I: Introduction, Literature, Questions and Argument

Faced with tenacious guerrilla resistance and a murderous enemy that he could not see, the German Colonel Eduard von Liebert stated bluntly: “there was nothing left for us to do other than continue with the campaign of annihilation [Vernichtungsfeldzug] and war of destruction [Zerstörungskrieg] of earlier expeditions in order to cut his followers off from the means of existence”<sup>2</sup> He went on to argue that his forces could only achieve victory if they prosecuted a strategy of attempting to “devour the land of Mkwawa” [*das Land des Mkwawa aufzufressen*], in other words the intentional causing of famine in “rebel areas” in order to bring about an end to hostilities.<sup>3</sup> One would be forgiven for assuming

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Weule, “Ostafrikanische Eingeborenen-Zeichnungen: Psychologische Einblicke in die Künstlerseele des Negers,” in *Ipek: Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* 2 (1926): between 96 and 97.

<sup>2</sup> Eduard von Liebert, *Neunzig tage im Zelt. Meine Reisen nach Uhehe Juni bis September 1897* (Berlin: Mittler & Sohn, 1898), 33.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

this incident is a story from the Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union during the Second World War; but this was not Eastern Europe in the 1940s, it was East Africa in the 1890s. These eerie and disturbing similarities across time and space have tempted many, from Hannah Arendt and Frantz Fanon to Fritz Fischer and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, to seek connections—be they structural, ideological, or cultural—between the various atrocities attributable to the Germany and the Germans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Indeed this present study began as just such a search for some sort of *Sonderweg* (“special path”) in the tropics, for something intrinsically German that made their colonies the scenes of slaughter and misery that they were. Several years of work and discussions on three continents, however, have led this work towards some rather different conclusions. Indeed, in focusing on colonial Africa, this study faces the challenge that *both* the Germans and the East Africans (in this case the Hehe) are frequently exoticized, and all too often they are embedded in historical narratives focusing on savagery and deviance. Restoring the African and European participants in the German-Hehe War to their mundane human reality offers some conclusions that seek to get away from many of the stereotypes about Germans, about East Africans, and about the colonial project(s), conclusions that are perhaps *more* disturbing than linear, monocausal renderings of modern history that posit wicked Germans preprogrammed to kill Africans, who in turn are either seen at best as innocent bystanders or victims to colonialism or at worst as savage beasts.

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<sup>4</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (SanDiego; Harcourt Brace & Company, 1951), Part Two: Imperialism; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963); Fritz Fischer, *From Kaiserreich to Third Reich: Elements of Continuity in German History, 1871-1945* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire* (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993).

In attempting to move away from “special path” or “national pathology” based arguments about the “colonial encounter” and the “colonial situation,” in this case as they apply to the German-Hehe War of 1891-1898, a central question remains to be answered. If Germans are not culturally programmed automatons and Africans are not mere primitives existing as a backdrop for European efforts and designs, why was there so much killing in German East Africa? Why were there such extreme levels of destruction and brutality? What are the roots of German colonial violence in the African context? Conventional answers are only partially satisfactory: Sven Lindqvist, George Mosse, Enzo Traverso and others focus on a lineage of Western contempt and racism. Others focus instead on the superiority of European weapons or the bestiality and primitivism/barbarism of Africa itself. This latter explanation is implicit in Conrad and among many of the German participants of the events of the 1890s in East Africa, particularly the missionaries and administrators that had come to the colony to bring it *Kultur und Ordnung*. Indeed this narrative framework is very much with us today from Samuel P. Huntington’s claim that Africa “does not possess a civilization” to the writings of Robert Kaplan and the warped, disingenuous coverage of current events in the so-called Dark Continent.<sup>5</sup> Still others offer cultural explanations and focus on particular dysfunctions or pathologies of the German Empire and of Germans, particularly

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997) and Robert Kaplan, *The coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York: Random House, 2000). On coverage of Africa see, for example *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, ed. Allan Thompson (London: Pluto Press, 2007) and Asgede Hagos, *Hardened Images: the Western Media and the Marginalization of Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000).

when they are seeking to sketch some sort of lineage of atrocity from the deserts of Namibia to the steppes of the Soviet Union. Jan-Bart Gewald makes an argument for a continuity of unique fantasies of superiority and violence from Hegel to Hitler which amounts to a “lineage” of the Holocaust. Isabel V. Hull’s recent work, *Absolute Destruction* posits instead a uniquely self-destructive and self-defeating military culture from the Kaiserreich to the Third Reich.<sup>6</sup> Finally, some authors argue that the tremendous violence of colonization was the result of a clash of civilizations or cultures that are discrete, inimical, and perpetually set against one another. This line of argumentation has become extremely popular in the context of the United States’ Global War on Terror.<sup>7</sup>

None of these explanatory frameworks are satisfactory on their own. This dissertation argues that violence in German Eats Africa was not some sort of whole-cloth cultural import from the Fatherland, the result of African savagery, or a clash of discrete, bounded “civilizations.” The carnage of the 1890s in German East Africa did not face off a collection of malevolent, culturally pathological Germans against a pristine, primitive African landscape upon which the former could inscribe their designs; it was rather the result of a *collision* between two aspiring, globally embedded polities that both possessed sophisticated political and logistical systems. In order to defeat the Hehe state, the Germans ultimately

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<sup>6</sup> Jan-Bart Gewald, *Learning to Wage and Win Wars in Africa: a Provisional History of German Military Activity in Congo, Tanzania, China and Namibia* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2005) and Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) and Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

decided on a policy of terrorism and property destruction, both designed to maximize Hehe casualties, a policy to which they resorted not out of some culturally specific “code of violence,” but out of the contingencies of their situation. They were a tiny minority in a sea of “hostiles” with paltry resources at their disposal with an assignment from the metropolis that was as vague as it was murderous: pacify the colony quickly, cheaply and—as much as was feasible—totally. And it was precisely the capacity of the Hehe polity to resist German designs, at times destroying entire colonial detachments, that convinced the Germans that victory was only achievable through the utmost severity and ruthlessness. The Hehe were anything but helpless, and the Germans were hardly the masters of the situation that they often claimed they were after the fact (or that the literature on colonialism often implies that they were). What the colonial state lacked in numbers, understanding, and resources, it made up for with a “war of annihilation” along the lines described above by Governor von Liebert.

As stated, both of these rival polities were dynamic, emerging, and active historical agents in East Africa. The Hehe and German Empires, while of course grounded in very different continental contexts, both evolved in precisely the same period (the 1820s-1870s), and understanding the violence of the German-Hehe War requires getting beyond reified notions of “Germanness” and “Africanness”. The atrocities and terror tactics that characterize the events of the German-Hehe War were the result of a convergence of a series of processes, events, and structures that were in part globally determined and in part embedded in an extremely dense local context. German colonial violence was, in other

words both “*more*” and “*less*” than German, being primarily determined by levels of causation larger and smaller than the “nation-state.” Eric Wolf offered a caution against the tyranny of nation-state based historiography and social sciences in *Europe and the People Without History*:

Since social relations have been severed from their economic, political, or ideological context, it is easy to conceive of the nation-state as a structure of social ties informed by moral [or cultural] consensus rather than as a nexus of economic, political, and ideological relationships connected to other nexuses. Contentless social relations, rather than economic, political, or ideological forces, this become the prime movers of sociological theory. Since these social relations take place within the charmed circle of the single nation-state, the significant actors in history are seen as nation-states, each driven by its integral social relations. Each society is then a thing, moving in response to an inner clockwork.<sup>8</sup>

Recently many prominent historians of Germany have made similar pleas to get away from the tyranny of the nation-state paradigm, whether used in its positivist guise or (particularly in the German case) in its negative form, in which everything “German” is somehow “evil” or “deviant” from some other normative model.<sup>9</sup> Some have begun to call for “transnational histories” that take into account processes and actors that cannot be neatly forced into nation-state based analytical categories.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>9</sup> See Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 46-61.

<sup>10</sup> This was the subject of Michael Geyer’s keynote address at the September 2006 meeting of the German Studies Association. See also *Das Kaiserreich transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1914*, eds. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

To rephrase, the source of violence and brutality in German East Africa and indeed across what was becoming “colonial Africa” in this period was not located merely at an intersection of “German” and “Tanzanian” forces as argued by the older national historiographies of both countries (in the former case represented by the master narrative of German unification and dismemberment, in the latter as part of the nationalistic “Dar School” of historiography), but rather at layers scaled above and below that. Those other layers determined the environment in which (German) colonial violence was embedded: the “local context,” as in the situation *vor Ort*, and the global, meaning forces that were global and transnational in character. This shift of focus away from more conventional examinations of “German Colonialism” (which was never one thing in any case, but rather several “colonial projects” intertwined and in dialogue, including pan-German, migrationist, *Kultur*-colony, and Liberal ideological threads<sup>11</sup>) or a search for the German *Sonderweg* in Africa gives as a fuller, more nuanced—and at times disturbing—picture of events like the Hehe War, the Maji Maji Revolt, or the First World War. Even new chronologies (such as James Gibling and Jamie Monson’s argument for a unified “time of troubles” from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1920s, discussed below) become necessary and logical when one shifts the focus to convergent, synchronous developments. The role of the *Askari*, African mercenaries who did the vast majority of fighting, killing, and dying for their German employers, is a case in point. While they were indeed led by German officers, they themselves came from a wide variety of

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<sup>11</sup> See Woodruff Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

locations including Sudan, Mozambique, Eritrea, Turkey, and India, and they brought with them extensive experience in the art of waging war. History emanates and is generated from all directions; it is not just a case of Germany or Europe radiating outward and acting on “Africa.” Developments like the *Mfecane* (the Zulu military diaspora) defy any simple Eurocentric chronology or characterization under terms like “Asiatic mode of production” or “tribal warfare.” Just as the Germans were plugged into a whole range of global developments, many of them related to the rise of global capitalism in the late nineteenth century, the Hehe existed at the intersection of the Shaka military revolution, which began 2,000 km away, Indian Ocean trade networks that extended to Java, commerce with Europe and the United States, and numerous local networks of prestige and authority.<sup>12</sup> The collision of the European technological and administrative revolution, *Mfecane* state building, and the Indian Ocean Economy provided both the stakes and the means by which both sides would fight tooth and claw for the better part of a decade. Often, the interlocutors in these transactions are neither African nor European *per se*, but are rather products of *both*. All of these forces, whatever their origin, intersected, influenced one another, and collided in the “shatter zones of empire” in a manner that defies easy categorization as “African” or “German.”

Because the violent events of the German-Hehe War were mutually determined, and conjunctural, we need an account that takes all the factors and players seriously, African as well as European. Even utilizing this continental

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<sup>12</sup> See Jeremy Presthold, “On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism,” *American Historical Review*, 109, 3 (2004): 755-81.



dichotomy is problematic, as is the modernity—pre-modernity bipolarity implicit within discussions of Africa and Europe.<sup>13</sup> Colonial violence was produced by convergent, overlapping revolutions: commercial, industrial, and—most crucially—simultaneous *military/administrative* revolutions in Central Europe and Eastern Africa, both of which are global in scope, not discrete from one another. The German colonial state (especially in its early “freebooter phase”) and the Hehe *Mfecane* state (itself a product of the Zulu military revolution in Southern Africa) were equally dynamic, almost the same age, and represented opposing but in the East African context comparable modes of authority. Indeed, they had more in common than is usually recognized. Both were up and coming, rapacious tributary states that sought to control the same resources and diplomatic-political capital. Uhehe and the German colonial state were also both states in the *becoming* in a region that was undergoing tremendous dislocation and disruption in this period (for example the end, or rather the transformation, of the slave trade). Both made extensive use of rule by terror and demonstrative displays of brutality in a highly competitive atmosphere in which “Big Men” and “Big Women” rose and fell with breathtaking speed. Both were highly proficient at coercion, collection (be it people, military recruits, skeletons, tribute, or *Schutzgeld*—“protection money”), and *killing*. This is why, Giblin, Monson, and other researchers who have collected extensive oral evidence in East Africa have found that villagers on the ground (in Giblin and Monson’s case the Bena people)

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<sup>13</sup> See Marshall Hodgson’s argument for the term “Afro-Eurasia” in reference to the land mass in the eastern hemisphere, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) and Kären E. Wigen and Martin W. Lewis, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

perceive little difference between the various warlords that sought to impose their authority from about 1830 to 1920, whatever their skin color or country of origin.<sup>14</sup> They perceived a continuum and continuity of mass killing and plunder. The profound difficulties faced by a modern army confronting partisans in what can only be described as a “colonial situation” led to a downward spiral of reprisal and increasingly hysterical exhortations for even greater terror. Michael Pesek and Trutz von Trotha have written extensively on the symbolic and psychological aspects of violence and massacre.<sup>15</sup> Terror can be an economical means of imposing the “occidental state structure” when men and money are lacking. This was exacerbated in the case of German East Africa by a lethal combination of lack of accountability and total authority *and* feelings of extreme vulnerability and fear. In other words, the Germans simultaneously were the putative masters of life and death in vast territories (made possible by the latest means of killing made available by the industrial revolution) *and* continually faced “the credible threat of destruction” at the hands of “hostile Africans.”<sup>16</sup> “Administrative

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft in Deutsch-Ostafrika: Expeditionen, Militär und Verwaltung seit 1880* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2005), 191-2. German expeditions were barely distinguishable from “Arab” Caravan expeditions, both in equipment and in personnel. The Germans had to distinguish themselves over time and thereby demonstrate the end of the era of “Arab rule” in East Africa. See James L. Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2005), Jamie Monson, *Agricultural Transformation in the Inner Kilombero Valley of Tanzania 1840-1940* (Los Angeles: PhD Thesis at UCLA, 1991), and “Relocating Maji Maji: The Politics of Alliance and Authority in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, 1870-1918,” *Journal of African History*, 39 (1998), 95-120.

<sup>15</sup> Trutz von Trotha, “‘The Fellows Can Just Starve’: On Wars of ‘Pacification’ in the African Colonies of Imperial Germany and the Concept of ‘Total War,’” in *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914*, eds. Manfred F. Boemeke, Roger Chickering, and Stig Förster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 415-35 and Pesek, *Op. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Von Trotha, 424.

massacre”—to borrow Hannah Arendt’s phrase—was the norm in such situations rather than the exception. “Thus, massacre is not ‘pathological’. Massacre is the rule in the conquest and pacification of rural societies. But massacre also is the proclamation and condensed expression of rule in the ‘colonial situation’.”<sup>17</sup>

Beyond these larger conceptual issues, this study seeks to break down a series of dichotomies and binaries that characterize to a greater or lesser degree much of the literature on colonial violence. The first, and perhaps most insidious (because it is so ingrained in our society) of these binaries is “modernity versus pre-modernity.” In our era the American space shuttle and the Laotian ox cart do not exist in “separate times,” as if Laos is somehow caught back evolutionarily in the past. The shuttle and the ox cart exist in the same reality of fluctuation, commodification, technological transfer, consumption, and modes of thinking. They are both products of the modern world in intercourse with itself. Likewise, the Hehe Empire and the German Reich did not exist in separate temporal worlds: whether it was epidemiology, climate, global population movements, or bullets, they were very much products of the same interconnected world system. The German and Hehe States even formed at the same time! The Hehe, like the Seminoles or the Zulu were an ethnicity that formed in the early nineteenth century out of other constituent communities, and their society was hardly a stranger to rapid social, political, or economic change. And the Germans were not the universal carriers of modernity that they would have us believe, as demonstrated by the overwhelming proportion of aristocratic colonial officers

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<sup>17</sup> Von Trotha, 425. See also Georges Balandier, *Sociologie actuelle de l'Afrique noire: dynamique sociale en Afrique centrale* (Paris: Puf, 1982).

with “von and zu” in their names. Overall, Africa was not “out there” waiting for the arrival of colonialism; it was part and parcel of the whole range of processes of the nineteenth century, sometimes on Africans’ own terms (as demonstrated by Presthold, cited above), often not if they were ordinary people... just like everywhere else.

A second problematic binary is the concept of the pre-colonial versus the colonial (and post—as argued by Fred Cooper and others).<sup>18</sup> The colonial rupture was not as total as many scholars and indeed many of the European participants at the time assumed. Africans were well acquainted with violent interlopers, technology transfers, and political upheaval before the arrival of the *Wazungu* in the 1870s. The colonial state’s acts of violence, massacre, and plunder were in fact embedded in a preceding system that was horrific in its own right, even if in different ways and to different degrees. When it came to inflicting harm on the enemies of colonial power, the German colonial state—whether it recognized it or not—made frequent and liberal use of personnel, techniques, and ideas of the “pre-colonial” era. Ultimately, the Germans plugged themselves into the pre-existing and constantly fluctuating alliance system, making them the biggest of the “Big Men.”

A third problematic dichotomy, one that comes out of the Africanist field, is that of primary versus secondary resistance (primary being the initial armed response to colonial intrusion, secondary being revolts that broke out after the establishment of colonial rule). A concept made famous by T. O. Ranger of the

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<sup>18</sup> See Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), introduction.

Dar es Salaam school of historians, the notion of primary and secondary resistance in its more rigid incarnations ignores a considerable amount of the ambiguity, continuity, and complexity that characterizes African politics in real life.<sup>19</sup> When does resistance cease to be “primary?” When the Germans declare themselves to be the sovereign authority in a territory, or when the Africans that live there actually recognize that authority? If it is the latter, then almost *all* of the resistance until the very end of German colonial rule was primary. In the case of the German-Hehe War, the former generally claimed that the latter were not soldiers of an opposing sovereign power; the Hehe were instead rendered as “bandits,” “rebels,” and “criminals” in colonial documents, despite the fact that Mkwawa and his followers essentially *never* accepted German authority.

Another debate that can obfuscate more than it clarifies when taken to its extremes is the so-called “merrie Africa” versus “Livingston’s Africa” debate. Many of the missionaries and early administrators portrayed “Darkest Africa” as a hellish place in desperate need of saving, and subsequent scholarly works understandably sought to contradict this notion by emphasizing the degree to which pre-colonial African systems functioned well and allowed Africans to control their environment.<sup>20</sup> The reality was rather somewhere in between: nineteenth-century East Africa (like nineteenth-century Asia, Europe and the Americas) was indeed a difficult place to live. People toiled constantly to survive

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<sup>19</sup> T. O. Ranger, “Connections between ‘Primary Resistance’ Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968): 437-53 and IX, 4 (1968): 631-41.

<sup>20</sup> See Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History* (London: James Curry, 1996).

and had to deal with any number of sources of insecurity. The slave trade, while it had not “emptied the continent” as was disingenuously claimed by some Europeans interested in claiming “open lands,” severely traumatized many of the communities in East Africa in this period. In other words Africa was neither paradise nor hell—just like everywhere else.

Scholars have also engaged in an ongoing debate as to whether colonialism was an opportunity or tragedy. Again, it was both, sometimes even for the same person at different times in his or her life. Colonialism created new opportunities at the same time that it closed down others, and many Africans (as will be clear in the narrative) were quite deft and positioning themselves to take advantage of those possibilities that did appear. The resistance versus collaboration debate should likewise be looked at as a fluctuating spectrum rather than an either or proposition. During the course of the German-Hehe War, it is often it is unclear who is using whom. Similarly, the victim and perpetrator pairing can in some cases unintentionally infantilize and primitivize Africans, who appear like semi-helpless objects in the face of European power and designs. Many Africans, one thinks of the Germans’ *Askari* mercenaries, could be simultaneously victim *and* perpetrator. The career of Mkwawa, leader of the Hehe, is perhaps the best case in point, particularly when viewed from the perspective of African third parties like the Bena or Kinga, who had faced and been subjugated by Hehe armies.

A further debate regards the arguments about German versus other colonialisms. Usually more decisive than the country of origin of a given

European actor were the objective conditions on ground, which were affected by politics, ecology, geography, and any of a number of other factors. The Germans' response to Rwanda had more in common with British policy in Uganda (which it resembles demographically, socially, and politically) than it did with policies in other German colonies. And so-called "stateless peoples" of Africa tended to be viewed with disdain and contempt everywhere, not just by the Germans. Robert F. Berkhofer has forcefully argued against contrasting "French," "Spanish," and "British" colonization of the New World:

Such a comparison appears to me to emphasize the seeming differences in aims at the expense of their similarities, and it implies the outcomes depended more upon these aims and motives than upon the natural resources and the level of tribal socio-political organization available for exploitation by the three nations' policy makers and settlers in any given area. Where aims or, more importantly, consequences appear to differ among the colonial powers, one should look more to dissimilar physical environments and differing tribal governments and social organization than to fundamental contrasts in national idealism or racial sentiment. I do not mean to suggest that policies did not differ at all or that race prejudice and missionary zeal did not vary among the three nations. Rather I maintain that these latter are minor matters compared to the larger similarities of aims among the three nations' policy makers and settlers.<sup>21</sup>

I contend that Berkhofer's assertion is equally valid in the African context when attempting to compare and contrast Belgian, German, French, or British colonization.

The final binary concerns those who emphasize the colonizers' ideology that they brought with them from Europe and those who instead privilege practical experience in the field. Often it is argued (especially with the Germans) that the men who projected European military and administrative force in Africa

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<sup>21</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 116.

arrived with an “ideological toolbox” (or in a recent variation by Isabel Hull, institutional framework) that informed their behavior in the colonies, one that prefigured and inherently gave rise to extreme violence. And there is no doubt that the officers of the *Schutztruppe*, the German colonial military, came with a complex array of ideas about race, gender, progress, class and hierarchy, and “law and order.” But this approach perhaps focuses too much on a one-way flow of ideas and people from Europe outwards. I contend that much of what they came to believe about the places they were conquering and the people they were subjugating was formed as a result of practical, real-life experiences of “men on the ground.” I am not necessarily privileging one of the other (in the field vs. metropolitan thought). The *political-economy* of colonial war and the *subjectivities* and *ideas* of war operated dialectically. I get this impression based on common features of their writings, essays, official correspondence, and speaking appearances. My argument is that the colonial officers involved in these campaigns were, in fact, themselves involved in the *articulation* and *formation* of racial conquest ideologies. They were part of an intellectually creative (generative) process that paralleled the physically destructive policies they utilized to forge a lasting colonial order in Africa. Their experiences with the ferocity of colonial warfare and the initially effective strategies of African resistance interacted with the experiences, ideas, and expectations that Europeans carried with them to Africa. Colonial actors had to resolve the profound contradictions that emerged between their expectations and the reality of what is required to quell “native rebellions,” a resolution that was achieved through the



creation of an explanatory model. This model posited a Manichaean world in which conflicts between African and European opponents were profoundly, if ambiguously, racial in nature, resolvable only through the application of overwhelming, deadly force. This ideology was not an unmoved mover that colonial troops simply obeyed in their encounters with African “others.” As with military policy in the colonies, colonial ideology on the question of race and warfare was in large part formulated on the ground as a result of the nature of the conflicts that colonization caused.

### **Literary Review:**

This project necessarily draws on several historiographies. The historiography of the German Empire is extensive, though most of the literature focuses on the Empire’s domestic and European facets. A series of works emerged in the wake of the First World War that, while based on solid empirical data, tended to have a strong anti-German bias. Representative of this genre is Mary Townsend’s *The Rise and Fall of Germany’s Colonial Empire*.<sup>22</sup> A series of important works were published in both East and West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s. In East Germany, Helmuth Stoecker and Heinrich Loth used documents then unavailable to Western historians.<sup>23</sup> Their works remain useful in spite of their dogmatism and polemical style. Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s *The German Empire* and the works of Helmut Bley were extremely valuable contributions from West German

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<sup>22</sup> Mary Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany’s Colonial Empire* (New York: Macmillan, 1930).

<sup>23</sup> Helmuth Stoecker, ed., *German Imperialism in Africa* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1986) and Heinrich Loth, *Griff nach Ostafrika* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1968).

scholarship in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>24</sup> New monographs dealing with the German Empire have begun to incorporate more discussion of the connections between overseas imperialism and the empire in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

The historiography of the German overseas empire is rather small in comparison with its French and English counterparts; the best general (and practically the only) survey in English of the German imperial enterprise is Woodruff Smith's *The German Colonial Empire*.<sup>26</sup> Wilifred Westphal's *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* also presents a good overview of German overseas expansion.<sup>27</sup> There has been a series of works in the last five years applying newer cultural methodologies to German imperialism. Susanne Zantrop's engaging *Colonial Fantasies* examines the German cultural fascination and encounter with colonialism before unification.<sup>28</sup> Nina Berman applies Edward Said's conceptual framework to the German case in her *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne*, and the cultural resonance and implications of the

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<sup>24</sup> Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire*, op. cit.; Helmut Bley, *Namibia under German Rule* (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 1996); Helmut Bley, "The History of European Expansion: A review of German-Language Writing Since World War II," in *Reappraisals in Overseas History: Essays on Post-War Historiography about European Expansion*, ed. P. C. Emmer and H. L. Wesseling (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1979), 140-160.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Stürmer, *The German Empire 1870-1918* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000) and Edgar Feuchtwanger, *Imperial Germany 1850-1918* (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978). He has also written a general work on imperialism that extends Wehler's politically driven "social-imperialist" model with some revision to *all* European empires. Woodruff Smith, *European Imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982). Smith has also written about the imperialist roots of Nazi ideology: Woodruff Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>27</sup> Wilifred Westphal, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (München: Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH, 1984).

<sup>28</sup> Susanne Zantrop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

imperial question are further explored in Russell Berman's *Enlightenment or Empire*.<sup>29</sup> Studies of gender in the German empire have begun to emerge as well: Krista O'Donnel's article "Poisonous Women" offers an excellent and detailed study of the intersection of questions of race and gender in German Southwest Africa.<sup>30</sup> Lora Wildenthal's *German Women for Empire* offers one of the most systematic, and indeed disturbing, treatments of the intersection between Wilhelmine notions of gender and the overseas imperial project.<sup>31</sup> A collection of essays similar to those in *The Imperialist Imagination* has also appeared on the German experience in Asia, which discusses German and other encounters with and interpretations of Islam, China, Japan, and India.<sup>32</sup> Helmut Bley's student Gesine Krüger's work on German Southwest Africa applies new historical and anthropological methodologies as well in *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewußtsein*.<sup>33</sup> Most recently, Isabel Hull's work *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* attempts to link the repeated instances of extreme violence perpetrated by the Germans in Africa with subsequent events in Europe via an argument about the *Kasierreich's*

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<sup>29</sup> Nina Berman, *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne: Zum Bild des Orients in der deutschen Kultur um 1900* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1997) and Russell A. Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Krista O'Donnel, "Poisonous Women: Sexual Danger, Illicit Violence, and Domestic Work in German Southern Africa, 1904-1915," *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 11 No. 3 (autumn), 31-54.

<sup>31</sup> Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> "Barbaren" und "Weiße Teufel": *Kulturkonflikte und Imperialismus in Asien vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Eva-Maria Auch and Stig Förster (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997).

<sup>33</sup> Gesine Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewußtsein: Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des deutschen Kolonialkrieges in Namibia 1904 bis 1907* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999).

institutional military culture.<sup>34</sup> The book makes a compelling argument for the connections between colonial violence and German behavior in the world wars, though it focuses almost entirely on the genocide of the Herero and Nama from 1904 to 1907. One of the problems with the debate on German colonialism is the frequent tendency to emphasize events in Southwest Africa to the exclusion of everywhere else. GSWA was not representative of the practices and goals of *any* other colony—it was the Reich’s only proper settler colony due to its malaria-free environment. As Mark Levene has recently argued:

Indeed, to go down this Holocaust-centric path carries further dangers of both distorting as well as isolating German actions in South-West Africa from the broader picture of imperial advance. After all, there were many elements in the German administration, particularly in the Colonial Office, as well as in German society at large who were resolutely opposed to the von Trotha [exterminationist] approach. This includes one very central player: Leutwein, whose whole governance of the colony from the time of his appointment, in 1889, had been consciously geared towards imitation of the British model of divide and rule. But this itself would be to assume that Leutwein was incapable of using the iron fist, when we know that he repeatedly put down native resistance with uncompromising ferocity. It would also be to accept at face value that the British themselves were paragons of colonial virtue.<sup>35</sup>

As with settler colonies everywhere (Algeria, Kenya, South Africa), the willingness and ability of the colonial state to perpetrate violence far exceeded that of other types of colonies, whether that state was German, British or French. The army that crushed the Nama and Herero, for example, was an almost all-white force, a situation that would have been impossible (and indeed lethal) in Togo, Cameroon, or East Africa due to the prevalence of disease in the latter

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<sup>34</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2005), 237.

cases. For this reason, one must be cautious in generalizing German colonial practice from the Southwest African experience. Events in East Africa deserve a similar treatment and emphasis.

An extensive historiography also exists for East Africa. The doyen of the field, John Iliffe, has written several works on East Africa and German rule. His *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912* and *A Modern History of Tanganyika* remain the foundations of studying the region.<sup>36</sup> M. H. Y. Kaniki's edited volume *Tanzania under Colonial Rule* offers the insightful perspectives of prominent Tanzanian scholars.<sup>37</sup> Several influential studies have appeared that deal with German East Africa as a social and economic unit. Helge Kjekshus's *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History* incorporates social and environmental history in his examination of the effects of conquest on indigenous society.<sup>38</sup> Kjekshus's work dovetails closely with the work of Mike Davis, whose *Late Victorian Holocausts* makes vividly clear the manner in which ecological catastrophe and colonial conquest fed on one another, often with millions of dead indigenes as a result.<sup>39</sup> In a similar vein, Juhani Koponen'

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<sup>36</sup> John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>37</sup> M. H. Y. Kaniki, ed., *Tanzania under Colonial Rule* (London: Longman, 1979).

<sup>38</sup> Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History* (London: James Currey, 1996).

<sup>39</sup> Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001).

*Development for Exploitation* examines the social and economic transformations unleashed by the conquest.<sup>40</sup>

More recently, Jonathan Glassman's *Feasts and Riot* has attempted to use oral data and methodological advances in African studies to explicate the coastal revolts of 1888-1890.<sup>41</sup> Jan-Georg Deutsch has likewise given us a much clearer picture of the long and difficult course of emancipation in the German colony—slavery was, in fact, never explicitly abolished in German East Africa for reasons that had much more to do with expediency and local context than metropolitan ideologies (which were generally *against* chattel slavery).<sup>42</sup> Erick J. Mann's book, *Mikono ya Damu: "Hands of Blood"*, also provides an excellent overview of the "politics of conflict" in German East Africa and contains a useful treatment of the complicated events in the southern highlands in the 1890s.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, I will be tapping into the historiography of African resistance, which is extensive. Two of the best works remain Michael Crowder's edited volume *West African Resistance* and Robert I. Rotberg and Ali A. Mazrui's *Protest and Power in Black Africa*.<sup>44</sup> Bruce Vandervort's recent *Wars of Imperial Conquest*

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<sup>40</sup> Juhani Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German Colonial Policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884-1914* (Helsinki: Lit Verlag, 1994).

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).

<sup>42</sup> Jan Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa c. 1884-1914* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> Erick J. Mann, *Mikono ya Damu: "Hands of Blood": African Mercenaries and the Politics of Conflict in German East Africa* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Michael Crowder ed., *West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1971) and Robert I. Rotberg and Ali Mazrui, eds., *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

in Africa attempts to bring recent innovations and insights in the field to the study of colonial conquest.<sup>45</sup>

Far less has been written about the Hehe-German war itself. Iliffe's study of German rule begins in 1905, and his *A Modern History of Tanganyika* devotes only a few pages to the episode. It is treated largely as a prologue to the Maji Maji Rebellion of 1905. Koponen and Kjekshus address the war only in general terms as part of the larger phenomenon of conquest, doing little to distinguish the Hehe War from that waged by the Germans against the Swahili, Yao, or others. Rotberg's article on indigenous resistance to the German invasion also deals with the Hehe war in only a few pages.<sup>46</sup> Kirsten Zirkel's excellent study of the German military in the colonies likewise addresses the Hehe example only briefly.<sup>47</sup> Alison Redmayne's doctoral dissertation and her article "Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars" examine the revolt at length, but are now over three decades old.<sup>48</sup> I believe that the newer scholarship on the German Empire and on African resistance can add much to her perspective. A thorough anthropological treatment of the Hehe is provided by Brown and Hutt in their *Anthropology in Action*, but their work offers little discussion about the revolt as a turning point in Hehe

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<sup>45</sup> Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa 1830-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

<sup>46</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, "Resistance and Rebellion in British Nyasaland and German East Africa, 1888-1915: A Tentative Comparison," in *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, ed. Prosser Gifford and W. M. Roger Louis, 667-90 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>47</sup> Kirsten Zirkel, "Military power in German colonial policy: the *Schutztruppen* and their leaders in East and South-West Africa, 1888-1918," in *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c.1700-1964*, ed. David Killingray and David Omissi, 91-113 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Alison Redmayne, "Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars," *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968): 409-36.

history and is, needless to say, rather dated.<sup>49</sup> Finally, Martin Baer and Olaf Schröter's *Eine Kopffagd: Deutsche in Ostafrika, Spuren kolonialer Herrschaft* offers an excellent treatment of the context of the German-Hehe War and also chronicles the visit by Mwawa's great-grandson, Is-Haka Musa Sapi Mkwawa, to Germany.<sup>50</sup> The work is, however, biographical and somewhat episodic and leaves much to be done in terms of examining the particularities of the conflict from a social and political standpoint.

I believe that insights offered by the "new military history" can be fruitfully applied to the Hehe case. Exemplary in this regard is James Belich's *The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: the Maori, the British, and the New Zealand Wars*. Belich offers compelling arguments for the study of such conflicts and demonstrates how much can be accomplished in this regard relying on almost entirely European sources (he is essentially applying Ethnohistory to colonial warfare). Another outstanding work that attempts to reexamine colonial revolts using a wide range of newer methodologies and explanatory frameworks is Mahir Saul and Patrick Royer's *West African Challenge to Empire*.<sup>51</sup> Their discussion of French military policies and indigenous responses to colonization offers an excellent comparison with events in Tanzania. German policies in East

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<sup>49</sup> G. Gordon Brown and A. McD. Bruce Hutt, *Anthropology in Action: An Experiment in the Iringa Province Tanganyika Territory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935). The book is also very much colored by the fact that it, like so many works of anthropology in the period, was written to facilitate the administration of the colony.

<sup>50</sup> See Martin Baer and Olaf Schröter, *Eine Kopffagd: Deutsche in Ostafrika, Spuren kolonialer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Links Verlag, 2001).

<sup>51</sup> Mahir Saul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001).



Africa bear a striking resemblance not only to similar methods used elsewhere during the conquest of Africa and the Pacific, but also to the tactics employed by German forces four decades later. Also useful, therefore, will be the theoretical and thematic issues that have been raised by the new studies of German occupation policy in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.<sup>52</sup> Utilizing the questions illuminated by these other fields and by newer studies of East Africa, I intend to offer a more extensive and sophisticated treatment of the Hehe-German conflict, one that contextualizes the war within East African history and within the history of conquest and resistance more broadly. Ideally, my treatment will also recapture as much as possible the perceptions, experience, and significance of the war for both African and European actors.

### **Objectives and Methodology**

The Hehe were anything but passive actors, and Africa was not a *tabula rasa* upon which Europeans could inscribe their will. German forces resorted to highly destructive tactics precisely because the Hehe proved so effective at negating German technological and organizational advantages. This study must of necessity examine the Hehes' mode of resistance, their worldview, and what the war meant for their society. Hehe tactics proved highly successful in the initial stages of revolt, and their subsequent actions and decisions set the parameters within which colonial power was forced to act. Any treatment of the war *must* view the conduct of both sides dialectically. The behavior of the Hehe is

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<sup>52</sup> Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann, eds., *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941-1944* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition HIS Verlag, 1995).

inexplicable without an effective exploration of German policy, and German actions are incomprehensible unless viewed vis-à-vis those of the Hehe. Also crucial to the story is the role of the “auxiliaries” that fought on the Hehes’ side. Indeed, there may have been more Bena, Gogo, and other allies present at Rugaro than actual Hehe, and in the final stages of the war, the Germans made use of detachments of “friendly Hehe” that far outnumbered their own forces—or those of Mkwawa.

Central to any narrative of the German-Hehe War, therefore, is an examination the so-called “friendlies” that fought on the German side, without whom the conquest would have come to nil. Imperial power was forced to compromise and make considerable adjustments in the face of local conditions, local resistance, and local accommodation.<sup>53</sup> Without a range of allies, both local and imported, the German colonizers were practically helpless. An examination of the key role played both by the *Askaris* and the Germans’ indigenous allies does much to destabilize a simple view of the German-Hehe War as a “European-African conflict.” Colonization was about compromise and alliance just as it was about conquest and aggression, and it was a process in which all players had varying degrees of agency.

Some of these allies were local adversaries of Mkwawa, the Hehe leader.

As Jamie Monson compellingly demonstrates in her discussion of events a decade

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<sup>53</sup> Marcia Wright argued forcefully for the importance of the local context in the form and function of German policy. Nearly every decision made was conditioned by the necessity to rule through local proxies. The language of the colony became Kiswahili out of expediency, and Islam was allowed to flower despite vociferous protests from Berlin and from local missionaries. See Marcia Wright, “Local Roots of Policy in German East Africa,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 4 (1968): 621-630.

later, politics in the southern highlands were highly fluid and extremely volatile.<sup>54</sup> The Hehes' repeated successes against their Songea and Bena neighbors had created a considerable well of resentment. It was this local political context upon which the Germans were able to capitalize. But likewise, the Hehes' enemies saw the Germans as a potentially powerful ally in destroying their rival's hegemony. For them, the German invasion was as much an opportunity as an imposition. The motivations and perspectives of these indigenous adversaries of the Hehe are central to the story of the war, a war that was almost as much a civil war as an external invasion.

The Germans also brought in personnel from outside the colony in the form of mercenary troops known as *Askaris*. Initially these were Muslim levies from Sudan or Shangaan from Mozambique, but these were gradually replaced with Muslim soldiers from the coast and then Nyamwezi from the East African central caravan route.<sup>55</sup> The *Askaris*, directed by white officers, provided the majority of the Germans' professional manpower in East Africa, and as such they acted as one of the primary instruments of conquest. Needless to say, their view of their role and of the tasks they were given was not identical to that held by their "superiors." In many regards, Africa—like India—was conquered through the harnessing of its own people to that end, and generally indigenous populations paid for conquest as well. In large part, East Africans conquered East Africa. The conquest was conducted with European direction and logistical systems to be sure, and almost always to European ends, but both the *Askaris* serving in German

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<sup>54</sup> Monson, "relocating," op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Glassman, 250.

forces and the various allies that assisted them in the defeat of Mkwawa had their own political and social agendas. These must be taken into account, therefore destabilizing monolithic models of “colonizers” and “colonized.” A portion of this work will focus on the crucial, mediating role of the *Askaris*.<sup>56</sup>

This study seeks to be transnational *and* comparative: it is the former insofar as the violence that characterized the German-Hehe War was the result of and drew on several concurrent developments that crossed or ignored national or other established political boundaries. These events are a part of *world history*, not just German or East African history. The violence and brutality of these conflicts was the product of several overlapping currents and circuits of violence. As a case in point: the Hehe-German war involved, on the one hand, involved a “European” army with German officers (a country that itself was barely two decades old at the time), soldiers from the coast (“Kiswahili”), soldiers from the interior (increasingly, Nyamwezi), “Zulu” (actually Shangaani from Portuguese East Africa), and Sudanese (proficient killers from the Anglo-Sudanese army evicted by the Mahdists) carrying weapons from Germany and the United States. Recruiters scoured Egypt, Aden, and Ethiopia in search of potential troops. Their opponent, the Hehe “conquest state,” was an amalgam of Zulu tactics (transmitted via the Ngoni and Sangu), experience against the Maasai, and an innovative, highly effective logistical system. Mkwawa had “Arab” advisors and architects

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<sup>56</sup> There exist few extensive studies of the *Askaris* at the present time, but there are works dealing with similar formations from other areas of colonial Africa that may serve as a basis for comparison. See Timothy H. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999) and Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991). Fortunately, Erick J. Mann's *Mikono ya Damu* does deal with the *Askari* at length, *Op. cit.*

and could call on auxiliaries from dozens of neighboring communities (the Bena, the Sagara, Kinga, etc.), and he had complex diplomatic relations with the Nyamwezi, the Ngoni, and (allegedly) the Abushiri rebels of the coast. Both sides in this conflict were hybridized amalgams of a variety of historical actors—both were dynamic, rapidly evolving, and extremely proficient at inflicting violence.

The account presented here also emphasizes the conditions *on the ground*, or *vor Ort*, which had a profound effect in shaping not only German (and Hehe) practices and policies, but also the ideologies that simultaneously justified and grew out of colonial warfare. German policies were, far more than is generally appreciated, formulated by men on the spot with broad, often deliberately vague mandates to achieve “victory” in the name of *Kultur* and civilization. It is also *comparative*, as the final chapter briefly discusses the manner in which similar “colonial situations” on the ground called forth similarly ferocious responses, whether it was the disastrous ambush and then war of terror called forth by Isandhlwana and Little Big Horn or the scorched earth and mass killing of the Philippines and Kaffir Wars. This is not to say they are all identical, but rather than the same lethal mix of local imperatives/violence and global circuits of violence leads to similar results.

It is also my desire to place the Hehe-German War in context, both as a part of Tanzanian history, and as an episode that can shed light on the conquest and colonization of Africa as a whole. In a broader sense, what does the destruction of the Hehe polity say about the colonial project’s goals and methods? How distinct was “German colonialism” (an ongoing debate) from others? Did those

distinctions that do exist arise from German policy goals or from the situation colonialism's agents encountered on the ground? What does this episode say about the state, particularly the colonial state, as a project and a process?

It is my hope that this study will restore the German-Hehe War to the center of recent discussions on the complex history of German colonialism in Africa. Rather than being seen as a prelude to Maji Maji or as a postscript to the pre-colonial period, Hehe resistance must be viewed in its own right as the key limitation on German pretensions in the southern highlands and therefore in the colony as a whole. The war was also an opportunity for the Songea, Bena, and others to form alliances with the invaders, and the relations that crystallized during the Hehe War would prove key axes of political maneuvering when the even larger Maji Maji Revolt erupted in 1905. Neither African nor German actions during the outbreak and suppression of Maji Maji are fully comprehensible without a clear understanding of the war that did so much to set the stage for the events to come.

This study of the Hehe-German War draws on several fields of history and methodological approaches. It is both a social and a political history. German military policy as it evolved over the course of the conflict is analyzed in detail using German documents and memoirs. German actions did not, however, occur in a vacuum. One cannot understand the policies that they selected without a comprehensive examination of both the sociology of the German forces and a detailed study of Hehe society and policies. In contrast to much of the historiography of colonial warfare, German and Hehe actions must be seen in a

dialectical relationship with one another. Hehe tactics proved to be anything but ineffectual. The Hehe military system, made up of warriors with an enormous amount of experience gained in wars with the Bena, Songea and others, proved to be quite successful in the initial stages of revolt. Even once the Hehe had lost their initial momentum and were forced to recourse to guerrilla warfare, their actions and decisions set the parameters within which the Germans had to proceed, both militarily and politically.

Such an examination involves several approaches. Considerable advances have been made in Africanist historiography in the field of resistance studies. Studies such as those of the uprisings in German Southwest Africa, Mozambique, and French West Africa offer an impressive toolbox of questions and techniques with which to examine African initiatives and actions.<sup>57</sup> Such works highlight the centrality not only of commanders, but also of soldiers of the line (often Africans on both sides), of technology, of logistics, and of tactics on *both* sides of a given conflict. Resistance studies elucidate the complicated ways in which Africans managed to negate many of the advantages of European armies and form broader coalitions and alliances with groups and peoples who in the pre-colonial period had been either unaffiliated or even opposed to one another. These authors also highlight the *cultural* modes of resistance and warfare in indigenous societies.

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<sup>57</sup> See Jan-Bart Gewald, *Towards Redemption: A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia 1890-1923* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 1996); Allen F. Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: The Zambesi valley 1850-1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and Michael Crowder, ed., *West African Resistance*, *Op. cit.*

Reconstructing such elements of the Hehe polity and people seems at first a daunting task due to the dearth of documentation from the African perspective. All of the written source material was crafted by German and other European authors, and this material is riddled with biases, blind spots, and in some cases outright deception (particularly those reports intended for the government in Berlin). Historians in many fields, however, have been forced to confront the dilemma of recapturing the actions and beliefs of “subaltern” groups unable to represent themselves in the documentary record. Much of labor history had to proceed with similar limitations, and gender historians like Kathleen Brown have successfully confronted this problem for some time now.<sup>58</sup> Historians of colonial warfare have attempted to do the same. James Belich in his study of the Maori-British Wars offers compelling evidence that this can be accomplished through the analysis of precisely those *biases* that at first glance seem so limiting to our analysis of their indigenous opponents, noting that:

...a type of bias exists, based on shared preconceptions and shared conditioning, which may be subject to general rules. If a given set of cultural factors interacts in a relatively consistent way with a given type of event, then this may produce an interpretive tendency which, broadly speaking, remains constant from case to case. If such a pattern of interpretation, or misinterpretation, can be established, it may be of some use in alleviating the problem of one-sided evidence.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Nearly all of her sources are written by men about women. Women’s own voice is almost totally absent from the documentation available but Brown nonetheless draws a tremendous amount of convincing data and lines of argumentation from them.

<sup>59</sup> James Belich, *The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: The Maori, The British, and the New Zealand Wars* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 13.



I have attempted to undertake such an evaluation of the German evidence based on the method utilized by Belich and others. This involved a careful examination of both the content and the *language* of German evidence. As David Omissi has pointed out, one in effect needs to be a sensitive “translator” in order to make sense of terms from the imperial lexicon: “This is partly a matter of semantics: an awareness that ‘native cunning’ is imperial jargon for ‘tactical skill’.”<sup>60</sup> Likewise, various German observers discuss and seem to explain Hehe actions in a relatively consistent—and generally negative—manner that can be subjected to interpretation. It is significant that the Germans consistently refer to Hehe forces as “bandist,” “criminals,” and “rebels,” not as soldiers or warriors. As such, my study, in addition to studying Hehe and German politics and society, will inevitably have to briefly examine the *cultural* modes of the participants’ thinking and the cultured way in which they acted and reacted to one another.

I have also tried where possible to augment such techniques with oral evidence from the descendents of the Hehe in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. Initially one is justifiably skeptical of the utility of this exercise regarding events over a century distant. But as Jon Glassman has demonstrated in this *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888*, there is a tremendous potential for successful incorporation of oral data collected from Tanzanians about events for which we have no documentary evidence.<sup>61</sup> With all the necessary caveats about memory,

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<sup>60</sup> David E. Omissi, *Air power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force, 1919-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 108.

<sup>61</sup> *Op. cit.*

representation, and presentism, I believe that the Hehe to whom I spoke in Iringa and Dar es Salaam were inordinately helpful, indeed indispensable, in clearly understanding the actions of both sides.

German policy itself required a good deal of reconstruction, and I relied on the archival material in Berlin, Freiburg, Potsdam, and Dar es Salaam as well as the extensive memoir literature written by the participants.<sup>62</sup> There exist as yet no monographs in English on the Hehe War, so the foundation of analyzing the Germans' overall orientation and strategy required a detailed examination of the actual tactics they employed and the course of the war they waged. For better or for worse, a certain amount of establishing "who did what to whom successfully" was necessary before broader interpretative conclusions could be reached. Fortunately, there exists an excellent, if rather small, literature on colonial warfare and on irregular warfare more generally. Many of these rely on a comparative framework in drawing conclusions and seeking pertinent lines of inquiry, and I draw on their insights to a considerable degree. Four of the most effective recent works are those offered by Bruce Vandervort, Ian F. W. Beckett, V. G. Kiernan, and H. L. Wesseling.<sup>63</sup> These authors offer compelling descriptions and interpretations of colonial warfare generally, and in the case of

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<sup>62</sup> See Ernst Nigmann, *Die Wahehe: Ihre Geschichte, Kult-, Rechts-, Kriegs- und Jagd-Gebräuche* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914) and Alfons M. Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes* (Oberbayern: St. Ottilien, 1899).

<sup>63</sup> See Bruce Vandervort, *op. cit.*; Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their Opponents since 1750* (London: Routledge, 2001); V. G. Kiernan, *Colonial Empires and Armies 1815-1960* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1998); J. A. De Moor and H. L. Wesseling, *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1989).

Vandervort on warfare in Africa specifically. Their strong emphasis on the necessity of examining the local context will be crucial for two reasons: military commanders in German East Africa enjoyed a high degree of autonomy to enact policy as they saw fit as long as they could deliver victory, and *African* decisions and actions set the parameters within which those policies were carried out.<sup>64</sup>

Recent works have also offered innovative approaches to the culture and ideology of the conquerors. The edited volume *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c.1700-1964* attempts to incorporate new understandings of culture in the exploration of conquest and the articulation of power.<sup>65</sup> Most of these focus on the British and French colonial experience with its far greater repertoire of secondary material, but I believe that the ideology of the Germans and the evolving “culture of conquest” can and must be explicated. A highly effective attempt in this regard has already been undertaken in the case of German Southwest Africa by Gesine Krüger and more recently by Isabel Hull.<sup>66</sup>

A final interpretative theme important for my work will be the theoretical frameworks developed by those seeking to examine the articulation and exercise of *power* in the colonial context. Considerable theoretical work has been done about state formation and the systematization of violence in East Africa. One of the best works in this regard is Bruce Berman and John

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<sup>64</sup> See Kirsten Zirkel, *op. cit.*

<sup>65</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> Gesine Krüger, *Op. cit.* and Isabel Hull, *Op.cit.*

Lonsdale's *Unhappy Valley*, which makes a convincing and highly nuanced argument for the utility of certain Marxian modes of interpretation in the colonial African context.<sup>67</sup> Trutz von Trotha's work on Togo also offers many insights in this regard in his discussions on the utility of "administrative massacres" in instantiating German colonial power on the ground in Africa. More specific to the conditions in East Africa, Juhani Koponen's monumental work, *Development for Exploitation*, offers a similarly detailed exploration of the highly contradictory nature of German state and military policy, which on the one hand imposed one of the most brutal regimes on East Africans that existed anywhere, but at the same time built one of the best school and public health networks in the entire region.<sup>68</sup> I hope to use their insights about the subtle, complex ways in which the colonial state and its proxies implemented their designs and—crucially—the manner in which the German colonizers were forced to compromise and make significant adjustments in the face of local conditions, local resistance, and local accommodation.

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<sup>67</sup> Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya & Africa* (London: James Currey, 1992). The crucial insight offered by Berman and Lonsdale is their focus on the state's highly *contradictory* position in colonial societies and economies. Its two primary overriding goals—facilitating accumulation and guaranteeing social and political stability—often countermanded one another. The conditions necessary to ensure a steady flow of labor undermined the institutions of control such as direct rule, while maintaining political stability required that the state not act, or at least not appear to act, as a mere proxy of European economic interests.

<sup>68</sup> Juhani Koponen, *Op. cit.*



69

## Chapter II: The Birth and Collision of Two Empires

*The entire colonial story is just a swindle, but we need it for the elections.*  
- Chancellor Bismarck, 1884<sup>70</sup>

*If I send one Prussian lieutenant there [to Sudan], then I will have to send more to him, to get him out again. That leads us very far. The English sphere of interest extends to the source of the Nile, and the risk to me is too great. Their map of Africa is indeed very beautiful, but my map of Africa lies here in Europe. Here lies Russia and here lies France and we are in the middle; that is my map of Africa.*

-Chancellor Bismarck, 1888<sup>71</sup>

Whatever the “Iron Chancellor” may have wanted, German rule in Tanganyika began with a dramatic display of violence and calculated terror. The imperial government in Berlin felt compelled to take over the colony from the incompetent and under-funded German East Africa Company in 1889 after a massive rebellion on the coast erupted which attempted to eject both the company and the region’s nominal overlords, the functionaries of the Sultan of Zanzibar.<sup>72</sup> The insurgents, disorganized and outgunned, were

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<sup>69</sup> Karl Weule, “Ostafrikanische Eingeborenen-Zeichnungen: Psychologische Einblicke in die Künstlerseele des Negers,” in *Ipek: Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* 2 (1926): between 96 and 97.

<sup>70</sup> Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 5. Auflage (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 58. All translations mine unless otherwise specified.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>72</sup> Robert D. Jackson, “Resistance to the German Invasion of the Tanganyikan Coast, 1888-1891,” in Robert I. Rotberg and Ali Mazrui, eds., *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New

defeated after only a few months, and the coast—that crucial nexus of Indian Ocean trade so desired by German colonial interests—was now “pacified” (*beruhigt*). German authorities hoped they would merely have to tap the caravan routes from the coast to the interior, particularly the central route leading to Lake Tanganyika, in order to turn the “jewel” of their African empire into a profitable colony.

Events would soon prove such expectations illusory—the route to the interior was dangerous and unreliable due to raiding by the most powerful polity in the southern highlands, through which the route passed. That polity, Uhehe, was seen as the only major obstacle to the profitable trade with the interior. German forces were dispatched in summer 1891 under Commander Emil von Zelewski with orders to reduce the Hehe and other “rebellions tribes” to submission and secure “peace” in the region. The column, in fact, engaged in a rampage of destruction as it meandered westward, and word of the column’s depredations quickly reached the Hehe.<sup>73</sup> The column was nearly annihilated by a well-planned Hehe ambush on 17 August 1891.<sup>74</sup> Far from the easy victory anticipated by German officials, the war with the Hehe would prove every bit as bloody and far more difficult to win than the coastal rebellion of 1888.

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York: Oxford University Press, 1970). 37-79. More recently, see Jonathan Glassman’s excellent *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).

<sup>73</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Die Wahehe: Ihre Geschichte, Kult-, Rechts-, Kriegs- und Jagd-Gebräuche* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), 15-6 and John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 109.

<sup>74</sup> For the classic account of the ambush and its consequences for the Hehe, see Alison Redmayne, “Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968): 409-36.

Thus, the Hehe War of 1891 to 1898 began with the most humiliating defeat ever suffered by the German colonizers in East Africa, or indeed in any of Germany's African colonies. The destruction of Zelewski's column at Rugaro<sup>75</sup> in Tanganyika's southern highlands was colonial Germany's "Battle of Little Big Horn," their Isandhlwana, and it sparked off a major war between the Hehe under Chief Mkwawa and the German authorities based in Dar es Salaam. A large punitive expedition destroyed Mkwawa's fortress at Iringa in 1894, but far from being defeated, the Hehe waged a sustained guerrilla war for a further four years. German victory in 1898 came only after a protracted campaign of *verbrannte Erde*—scorched earth—and a brutal hunt for Chief Mkwawa, which culminated in the removal of his head to be sent back to Germany.<sup>76</sup>

The German-Hehe War was the longest and most difficult conflict waged by the Germans in East Africa before the outbreak of the infamous Maji Maji Revolt in 1905.<sup>77</sup> The *Schutztruppe* officer Ernst Nigmann would later argue that "no campaign cost us more blood and treasure than this

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<sup>75</sup> There is some confusion as to the name of the Battle of Rugaro, as many German sources refer to it as Lula-Rugaro, and modern works often call it the Battle of Lugalo. Lula was the actual spot where the engagement took place, Rugaro was the nearest village, and Lugalo is the modern name of the same village. I am using "Rugaro" for consistency.

<sup>76</sup> See Martin Baer and Olaf Schröter, *Eine Kopffagd: Deutsche in Ostafrika, Spuren kolonialer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Links Verlag, 2001). See also Dr. Emil Werth, *Der Wahehe – Sultan Mkwawa mid den Drei Köpfen* (Augsburg: Institut für Menschen und Menschhetiskunde, 1955).

<sup>77</sup> The other major war was the aforementioned one waged against the Swahili peoples (mistakenly referred to as "Arabs") of the Tanganyikan coast in 1888. Zelewski won his reputation for brutality and ruthlessness while pacifying the Swahili rebels. See Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 258.

one.”<sup>78</sup> Protracted and expensive as it was, the German victory was seemingly so total that the Hehe never again offered serious opposition to German rule, even serving as allies against their rebelling neighbors in the 1905-1907 war. The defeat of the Hehe must be seen as a fundamental turning point, both for the history of the Hehe and the southern highlands and for the history of German power in East Africa. As such, reanalyzing the German-Hehe struggle allows us to acquire a new understanding of several important and difficult questions about the experience of German colonization in East Africa, and indeed regarding the European imperial project more generally. How is it that the Germans were able to defeat a polity that had proved practically invincible in conflicts with its neighbors? How were a handful of inexperienced, vastly outnumbered German conquistadors able to instantiate imperial power in a territory over twice the size of imperial Germany and nearly as large as Western Europe? What does the conflict with the *AvaDaliki* (Germans in Kihehe) tell us about the nature of power in southeastern Africa, particularly among the so-called *Mfecane*-states created by the cascading violence and instability unleashed by Shaka’s “African military revolution”? To what extent was the extreme violence that characterized the German conquest and incorporation of Tanganyika something intrinsic to German culture—as is often asserted—or the German colonial project in Africa? Finally, what light does the German-Hehe war shed on the process of colonization, and what does it tell us about the near

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<sup>78</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 62. Indeed, The Germans lost fewer troops fighting the Maji Maji rebels than defeating the Wahehe.



continual military violence that characterized German rule in East Africa? This chapter will focus on one of the primary sources of that violence—the collision between two ambitious, emergent policies in East Africa, *Deutsch Ostafrika* and the Hehe Empire.



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### **The Establishment of German Power in East Africa**

While the newly unified German Reich would eventually become one of the most important movers in the so-called “Scramble for Africa,” as the quotes at the beginning of this chapter make clear, Chancellor Bismarck was hardly a fervent advocate of colonization. He was the target of constant and ever-strengthening pressure, however, to stake or defend German claims in the “Dark Continent,” particularly from merchants like Hansing and O’Swald and the House of Woerrmann based out of Hamburg. O’Swald enjoyed a

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<sup>79</sup> Image of an *Askari*, or colonial mercenary soldier, bearing the imperial German flag. From Uwe Timm, *Deutsche Kolonien* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1986), 55.

controlling interest particularly in the trade flowing in and out of Zanzibar in East Africa, facing real competition only from the British-backed Indian trading firms that carried goods from Bombay to Zanzibar and back.<sup>80</sup> Pundits and publicists from the German Empire's emerging civil and associational society also attempted to bring public pressure on Bismarck and the imperial government to make good those claims that did exist in Africa and elsewhere. Liberal imperialists like Max Weber and Friedrich Naumann felt that England's colonial empire and the India Raj in particular had made Britain a great and civilized nation, an experience that should be emulated by the new Germany for the same reasons. The most famous and influential of these pundits, however, was Friedrich Fabri, whose *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?* was extremely influential on public and academic opinion with regards to the "colonial question" and helped create a domestic movement for joining France, Britain, Portugal, and Belgium (whose King, Leopold II, was at this time in the process of acquiring a vast domain in the Congo River Basin) in the evolving partition of the world.<sup>81</sup> Bismarck and other civilian leaders in Berlin remained lukewarm to the idea, having been quite explicit about their desire to avoid the costly and bloody entanglements that so often characterized the conquest of new colonial territory. As the chancellor put it, "(t)he German Empire cannot carry on a system of colonization like that of

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<sup>80</sup> Mary Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 46-7. Townsend's study remains the classic work on the German colonial empire from a metropolitan perspective and offers extremely detailed discussion of the motives of Bismarck in turning to colonization.

<sup>81</sup> Friedrich Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?: eine politisch-ökonomische Betrachtung* (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1879). See also Arne Perras, *Carl Peters and German Imperialism 1856-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), introduction.

France. It cannot send out warships to conquer territories overseas, that is, it will not take the initiative; but it will protect the German merchant even in the land that he acquires. Germany will do what England has always done, establish Chartered Companies, so that the responsibility always rests with them.”<sup>82</sup> Bismarck further claimed “it was not part of the Reich’s functions and not in accordance with colonial policy, to restore state institutions among uncivilized peoples, and by means of military might to break down opposition of the Native chiefs to enterprises of German nationals which had not yet established themselves.”<sup>83</sup> This “liberal imperial,” company-driven orientation was in line with the constellation of German politics of the 1870s, which featured an alliance between the Bismarckian state and the National Liberals.<sup>84</sup> The German government would only act in a supportive role; the flag would follow trade, but only reluctantly and cautiously.

Events from 1879 onwards, however, would serve to change the situation dramatically and would convince Bismarck to turn toward direct annexation and imperial administration. Internally, Bismarck’s alliance with the Liberals broke apart, and in 1879 he shifted the focus of his *Sammlungspolitik*—the policy of gathering together large, if unwieldy, coalitions of parties and interest groups—away from the National Liberal Party and towards an alliance of the conservatives and the Catholics (who

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<sup>82</sup> Townsend, 119.

<sup>83</sup> Jon Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 42.

<sup>84</sup> See Gründer, chapter IV, “Die Kolonialfrage im Spektrum der politischen Parteien.”

before 1879 had themselves been the target of Bismarck's persecution).<sup>85</sup> Bismarck became ever more concerned with stabilizing this coalition at the polls, and he came to the conclusion that the "colonial question" was an effective way to do this.<sup>86</sup> As he put it rather bluntly, "The entire colonial story is just a swindle, but we need it for the elections."<sup>87</sup> This political realignment combined with the difficulties brought about by the ongoing Great Depression—which began in 1873—meant a gradual but important shift from *laissez faire* economics to a more direct, state-managed political-economy. Events on the ground in East Africa also profoundly changed the colonial equation, and some argue that the political efforts of self-styled *conquistadores* like Carl Peters, both on the ground in Africa and back in the metropole as nationalist agitators, were the most decisive reason for the "conversion" of Bismarck and other reluctant imperialists towards a German colonial Empire.<sup>88</sup>

Born in Hanover in 1856, Carl Peters seems like an unlikely candidate for the "founder of German East Africa," particularly when compared to roughhewn, martial adventurers like Henry Morton Stanley or Hermann Wissmann, who at this time were both heavily involved in the "exploration"

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<sup>85</sup>For a discussion of Bismarck's shift from an alliance with Liberalism to a coalition of the conservatives and the Catholic Zentrum party, see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), especially chapter III, "Herrschaftssystem und Politik."

<sup>86</sup> Townsend, chapter IV, "Bismarck Stabilizes and Organizes the Colonial Policy under the Slogan 'Safety First'."

<sup>87</sup> Gründer, 58. All translations mine unless otherwise specified.

<sup>88</sup> Arne, 9-12.

of Leopold II's Congo.<sup>89</sup> Peters was an academic and a pundit, not a soldier or a scientist, and he fancied himself to be a German Cecil Rhodes. In 1884 and 1885 Carl Peters "claimed" vast stretches of East Africa for Germany on his own initiative (Bismarck, when asked for state support for the expedition, had asked Peters not to go at all). He and his self-financed band of "explorers" travelled along the caravan routes leading inland from Zanzibar and signed a series of "protection treaties" with local African leaders.<sup>90</sup> These legally and morally flimsy documents would become the basis for the authority of Peters's *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (German East Africa Company) and, by extension, of the German Reich. The DOAG was modeled after other trading companies like the East India Company and the British Imperial East Africa Company.<sup>91</sup>

But rather than working towards the establishment of political stability, he spread destruction in his wake with total contempt for his instructions not to foment any expensive trouble in German East Africa.<sup>92</sup> As

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<sup>89</sup> See Jan-Bart Gewald, *Learning to Wage and Win Wars in Africa: a Provisional History of German Military Activity in Congo, Tanzania, China and Namibia* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2005) and Hermann von Wissmann, *My Second Journey through Equatorial Africa from the Congo to the Zambesi in the Years 1886 and 1887* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1891).

<sup>90</sup> Gründer, 86-7.

<sup>91</sup> Bruno Kurtze, *Die Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft: ein Beitrag zum Problem der Schutzbriefgesellschaften und zur Geschichte Deutsch-Ostafrikas* (Jena: G. Fischer, 1913).

<sup>92</sup> Chancellor Bismarck, never an avid proponent of colonialism, was quite explicit on this point in his biting criticism of the expansionist pretensions of the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft*: "the possibility of military expeditions is out of the question... I would rather give up the whole East African colonial venture than agree to a military campaign in the interior." Quoted in Kirsten Zirkel, "Military power in German colonial policy: the *Schutztruppen* and their leaders in East and South-West Africa, 1888-1918," in *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c.1700-1964*, ed. David Killingray and David Omissi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 95.

he himself proudly described one incident: “The Sultan shall have peace, but eternal peace. I shall show the Vagogo [*sic.*] what the Germans are! Plunder the villages, throw fire into the houses, and smash anything that will not burn.”<sup>93</sup> Peters has justly gone down in history as prime example of the brutality and incompetence of German imperialism in Africa, but he was in very good company: the exploits of Henry Morton Stanley (known to Africans as *Bula Mutari*, breaker of stones) and other “explorers” of the 1860s-1880s offer countless examples of abuse, violence, and gross errors in judgment, which, more often than not, resulted in the deaths of countless Africans.<sup>94</sup> Much as he resented Peters, Bismarck felt that he should acknowledge the



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conquistador’s claims in East Africa for domestic political reasons and as a bargaining chip to be used in future negotiations with other European powers,

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<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All The Brutes* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 50.

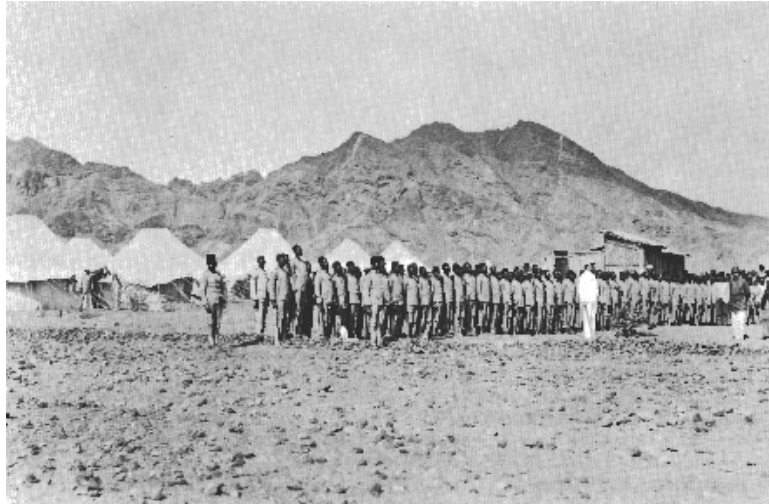
<sup>94</sup> See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998) and Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>95</sup> Image of Carl Peters taken from [http://www.planet-wissen.de/pics/IEPics/Wf\\_kolonien\\_peters.jpg](http://www.planet-wissen.de/pics/IEPics/Wf_kolonien_peters.jpg)

particularly Britain (indeed, he would later exchange Uganda for the tiny Baltic island of Helgoland, much the chagrin of Peters and other colonial advocates). East Africa, in theory under DOAG administration, would now be added to German Southwest Africa—which the chancellor had claimed during the Berlin Conference of winter 1884-1885 to resolve how partition should proceed and what should be done with regards to Leopold's growing claims in the Congo Basin.

But Bismarck and his government's hopes that the DOAG would be an effective and inexpensive method of colonizing East Africa were dashed almost immediately. The company struggled from 1885 to 1888 to even break even and was nearly bankrupt by the eve of the so-called "Arab Revolt." It had precious few personnel at its disposal—no more than a few dozen—and those employees it did have were hardly shining examples of the benefits that German *Kultur* had to offer. This rebellion, which broke out all along the German coast in 1888, was ignited in part by the arrogant behavior of the same Emil von Zelewski who was to be martyred in 1891. A contingent Germans arrived at the coast during the important Muslim religious holiday, Idd al-Hajj, and at one point burst into a mosque during prayers wearing boots and accompanied by Zelewski's hunting dogs. Zelewski then proceeded to pull down the flag of the Sultan of Zanzibar (in whose name the company was nominally administering the land along the coast) and replace it with the flag of the German Reich. Behavior of this sort, which was frequent, caused an uproar on the coast and did much to ignite an already volatile political

situation. By 1889 nearly every community in coastal East Africa was in full rebellion against company authority. It was this rebellion that forced Bismarck to accede to annexation, as he felt compelled to dispatch a military contingent under the aforementioned explorer Herrmann Wissmann to pacify the coast and to bring it under direct imperial administration.<sup>96</sup> Wissmann



recruited whatever African mercenaries he could, most of his recruits coming from Cairo. There, he hired several hundred Sudanese, who were languishing in the capital of British Egypt after their expulsion from Sudan by the so-called “fuzzy wuzzies” of the Mahdi.<sup>98</sup> This force of Sudanese and other mercenaries formed the core of what would become the *Schutztruppe* (protection troops) for East Africa, which was sometimes known as the *Wissmanische Truppe* in honor of its founder. Upon its arrival in East Africa,

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<sup>96</sup> Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 5. Glassman’s book provides an excellent treatment of the Buschiri Revolt.

<sup>97</sup> Photograph of Wissmann and his *Schutztruppe* in front of Buschiri’s camp, 1890. Scanned from Uwe Timm, *Deutsche Kolonien* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1986).

<sup>98</sup> See Ismat Hasan Zilfu, *Karari: The Sudanese Account of the Battle of Omdurman* (London: F. Warne, 1980), introduction and chapter one.



Wissmann's force of several hundred *Askari* began the systematic subjugation of the coast, destroying dozens of villages, razing every city that participated in the rebellion, hanging and shooting countless Africans, and slowly driving the rebels of Bwana Hari and Buschiri to desperation and eventual surrender.<sup>99</sup> Their prolific use of machine guns and other innovations of the late nineteenth century made conquest seem all too easy—and bloody—and represented the culmination of decades of European technological development in the art of killing. Even today African informants can recall stories that have been told



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for over a century about the brutality of the German (re)conquest of the Tanzanian coast during what they refer to as the Buschiri Revolt. In Bagamoyo in 2005, I was shown the *chinja chinja* tree—meaning the slaughtering tree—from which Wissmann's troops supposedly hung captured rebels. Whether this tree actually served this purpose is beside the point: the

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<sup>99</sup> See Glassman, epilogue.

<sup>100</sup> Photograph taken by author of the “hanging tree” in Bagamoyo.

force that would become the *Schutztruppe* spread so much fear in its time that it is remembered 115 years later.

Officers like Tom von Prince, Emil von Zelewski, and Wissmann himself underwent their “trial by fire” in the Arab Revolt, and their overwhelming success—bought at the expense of an untold number of lives and staggering destruction of African property—convinced them that the pacification of the rest of the interior would go quickly and relatively easily now that an actual military force was available. The “Arabs” had been, after all, the most sophisticated and dangerous element opposing German designs on East Africa—or so they thought.<sup>101</sup> They proceeded to establish a series of coastal stations and then began a slow advance along the caravan routes into the interior. The “Wissmann-Truppe” was made the official military of the new “protectorate” (*Schutzgebiet*) of German East Africa, and its numbers were increased to just over 1,200.<sup>102</sup> While sufficient to control the (recently devastated) East African coast, this was a miniscule number to “pacify” a region of over one million square kilometers. This number would slowly grow such that on the eve of the First World War the *Schutztruppe* numbered approximately 15,000 *Askari* and 3,500 German personnel, but even this was hardly up to the task of comprehensively patrolling and securing a territory

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<sup>101</sup> See Norman Robert Bennet, *Arab versus European: Diplomacy and War in Nineteenth-Century East Central Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1986).

<sup>102</sup> On the methodical build of of the *Schutztruppe* see Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1911), Rochus Schmidt, *Der Araber-Aufstand. Seine Ursachen und Folgezustände* (Frankfurt an der Oder, Sigfried Verlag, 1893), and Alexander Becker, *Aus Deutsch-Ostafrikas Sturm- und Drangperiode: Erinnerungen eines alten Afrikaners* (Halle and der Saale: S. O. Hendel, 1911).

twice the size of the entire German Empire in Europe. Indeed, one could argue that the entire undertaking, like countless other colonial ventures, bordered on the absurd. It was precisely this sweeping mandate—pacification of the colony—combined with scant men and resources that made extreme violence all that more likely, as the Arab Revolt along the coast had made brutally clear.

It was during their push inwards along the central caravan route, however, and not on the coast, that the Germans faced the greatest challenge to the “pacification” of East Africa, a fact that *Schutztruppe* officers would realize too late to prevent the worst disaster they ever suffered during their subjugation of Tanganyika. There, several hundred miles from the coast in the southern-central part of the colony, the imperial juggernaut collided with another aggressive, emerging polity: the Hehe Empire.

### **African Politics in the Southern Highlands**

The German colonizers and the historians who have chronicled their efforts often all too often have assumed that Africa was a blank slate, a place of primordial savagery upon which “civilized” Europeans could inscribe their will. Indeed, it was generally thought that Africans had little political or social organization at all. The African societies encountered by the Germans in Tanganyika were indeed highly decentralized, operated locally and on a small-scale, and seldom even had institutions that could be described as a professional military. Many were, in fact “acephalous” or “polycephalous”

societies, known at the time as “stateless people,” who possessed no discernible centralized political authority of any kind (to European observers anyway).<sup>103</sup> Notable exceptions in this regard were the large, hierarchical polities of the Great Lakes Region—the Rwandan, Bukoban, and Burundian monarchies—and the Swahili city-states of the coast. The other region that went against this norm was the southern highlands, where several emerging polities were locked in a harsh struggle for supremacy over one another and over the smaller societies that surrounded them. These included the Mbunga, the Bena, the Sangu, the Ngoni, and the Hehe, who ultimately achieved a near total if ultimately temporary hegemony over the southern highlands.<sup>104</sup> One of these, the Hehe, would eventually outdo all of their rivals to such an extent that the Germans would refer to them as an African *Herrenvolk*. While it would be inaccurate to depict the “Hehe-Empire” as a centralized state directly equivalent to states in Asia or Europe, it was organized on a scale that far surpassed anything the Germans had encountered on the coast, and indeed anything that had existed in East Africa before the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Colson, David Newbury, Felicitas Becker and others argue that polycephalos societies are in fact *more* complex than European nation-states in their structure and composition.

<sup>104</sup> All of these groups were Bantu-speaking peoples, as opposed to the Nilotic-speaking Maasai or the Cushitic peoples of the Great Lakes region. While many authors recognize the importance of the Sangu and Hehe polities, few acknowledge the existence of the Mbunga Confederacy, despite the fact that until their defeat by the Germans in 1893, they controlled both caravan routes north of Uhehe. See L. E. Larson, “A History of the Mbunga Confederacy ca. 1860-1907,” *Tanzania Notes and Records*, No. 81 & 82 (June 1978): 35-42.

<sup>105</sup> Erick J. Mann, *Mikono ya damu: “Hands of Blood”: African Mercenaries and the Politics of Conflict in German East Africa, 1888-1904* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 126.



1. *Wanqoni-Krieger* Barnabas <sup>106</sup>

A veritable “military revolution” was caused by the Ngoni incursions from the southwest into the region in the 1840s, themselves a part of the massive disruption of southern African life unleashed by the Zulu in the 1830s, known as the *Mfecane* (the scattering) or the *Difaqane* (the crushing).<sup>107</sup> The exact causes and consequences of the *Mfecane* remain hotly contested in the literature on southern Africa, but it is agreed that the innovations introduced by Dingiswayo of the Mthethwa peoples and Zwile of the Ndwandwe near the Tugela River in modern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa created the basis for a dramatic and sanguinary project of conquest and state formation under Shaka and the people that would become the Zulu.<sup>108</sup> The creation of the Zulu state in the 1820s displaced hundreds of thousands and

<sup>106</sup> Weule, Zeichnungen, between 96 and 97.

<sup>107</sup> John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), 14.

<sup>108</sup> See Elizabeth A Eldredge, “Sources of Conflict in Southern Africa, c. 1800-30: The ‘Mfecane’ Reconsidered,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1992): 1-35; Carolyn Anne Hamilton, “‘The Character and Objects of Chaka’: A Reconsideration of the Making of Shaka as ‘Mfecane’ Motor,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1992): 37-63; and J. D. Omer-Copper, “Has the Mfecane a Future? A Response to the Cobbing Critique,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (June 1993): 273-94.

maybe even millions of Africans, who fled in various direction northwards and, in seeking to establish themselves in new areas, likewise displaced thousands more. Some have called this narrative into dispute as being a dubious argument created by the intellectuals of Apartheid, who claimed that the area into which the Boer settlers moved was “empty” or “deserted,” thereby legitimating the claims of South African whites to those lands.<sup>109</sup> While it is certainly true that Apartheid historians instrumentalized accounts of the *Mfecane* to justify the policies of their regime from 1948 to 1994, the fact remains that the Zulu state and the military innovations introduced by Dingiswayo and Shaka had profound political and demographic effects on the entire region from Natal to Maasailand in Tanzania. Refugee groups of the *Mfecane* in turn formed their own powerful states in the 1830s and 1840s based on the Zulu model, both in terms of standing, age-regiment driven armies and centralized monarchical organization, in modern Zimbabwe (Mzilikazi’s Ndebele), Malawi (Sebitwane’s Makololo), Swaziland (Sobhuza’s Swazi), Mozambique (Shoshangane’s Gaza), and—most importantly for the Hehe—Zwangendaba’s Ngoni in Tanzania. Even those polities which consciously sought to distinguish and defend themselves from the Zulu, such as Moshoeshoe’s Basuto (which formed the core of modern Lesotho), could only do so by creating new forms of allegiance, acquiring

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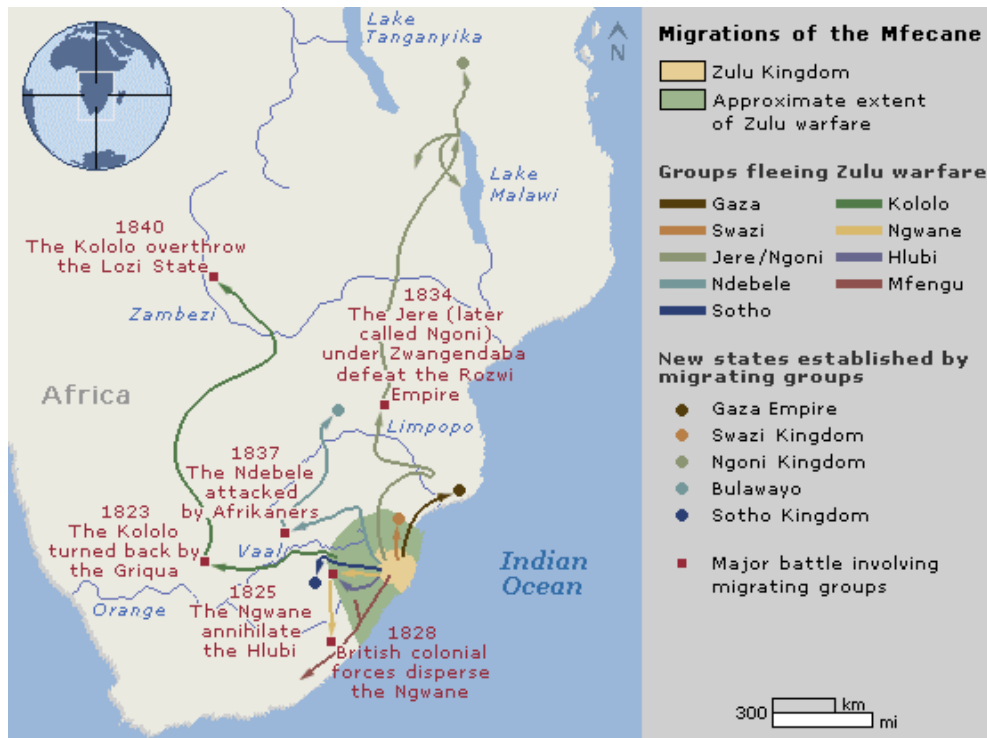
<sup>109</sup> This argument has been put forward most strongly by Julian Cobbing of Rhodes University which gave rise to a debate known as the “Cobbing Controversy.”



large numbers of firearms from European traders, and relocating to inaccessible locations like the formidable mesa-fortress Thaba Bosiu.<sup>110</sup> What is also certain is that the Zulu system of warfare dramatically increased the lethality and destructiveness of conflicts in southeastern Africa, and it was this system as adopted and perfected by the Hehe that would prove so intractable to German designs in the 1890s.

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<sup>110</sup> See Anthony Atmore and Peter Sanders, "Sotho Arms and Ammunition in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (1971): 535-44; D. Fred Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto: Ancient & Modern* (Mojira, Lesotho: Mojira Museum & Archives, 1997 facsimile of the 1912 edition); and Eugène Casalis, *The Basutos* (Mojira, Lesotho: Mojira Museum & Archives, 1997 facsimile of the 1861 edition). The picture of Thaba Bosiu, which was as imposing as it was impregnable (it had a spring in the middle that provided the Basuto with a continual supply of fresh water), was taken by the author in December of 2005.



111

Closely related to the dreaded Zulu both ethnically and linguistically, the Ngoni had adopted Zulu tactics and used them to devastating effect as they moved northeast across the Zambezi River. Originally having fled the Zulu advance in the early 1820s, Zwangendaba and his forces centered around the Jere clan proved as formidable and destructive as Shaka's Zulu. They crossed into what is now southwestern Tanzania in the 1840s, eventually establishing themselves in the region around the modern city of Songea. Like the Zulu of southern Africa, the warfare waged by the Ngoni represented an African form of "total war" that far surpassed its predecessors in terms of ruthlessness and devastation. Like the beginnings of the *Mfecane*, the extent of this devastation in Tanzania is debated by scholars, as it served as one of the primary justifications for European missionary and imperial intervention in the 1880s

<sup>111</sup> Map from [http://encarta.msn.com/media\\_461543363/Migrations\\_of\\_the\\_Mfecane.html](http://encarta.msn.com/media_461543363/Migrations_of_the_Mfecane.html)



(just as theory of “empty lands” created by Shaka served to legitimate Apartheid).<sup>112</sup> Kjekshus, Koponen, and others argue that the effects of the Ngoni *Mfecane* on Tanzania have been exaggerated by self-interested European observers, particularly missionaries and abolitionists, arguing for humanitarian intervention, and it is true that one must be circumspect when reading European accounts of “peopleless deserts” left behind by Ngoni depredations.<sup>113</sup> The fact remains, however, that written accounts as late as the 1890s note razed villages and areas cleared of people by Ngoni raiding (including one by the very same Emil von Zelewski that would attempt in 1891 to “pacify” the Hehe).<sup>114</sup> Likewise, oral accounts of the nineteenth century given to John Iliffe, Alison Redmayne, George Park, James Giblin, Felicitas Becker, and others are adamant that the invasion of the Ngoni and

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<sup>112</sup> Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History* (London: James Curry, 1996), 12 and 19-21. For more on the Ngoni of Tanzania and their effect on the Wahehe, see Elzear Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni and their Origin in the South African Bantu Tribes* (Ndanda-Peramiho, Tanzania: Benedictine Publications, 1987), 78-88 and 182-5 and D. D. Phiri, *From Nguni to Ngoni: A History of the Ngoni Exodus from Zululand and Swaziland to Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia* (Limbe, Malawi: Popular Publications, 1982), 86-8, and Juhani Koponen, *People and Production in Late Precolonial Tanzania: History and Structures* (Helsinki: The Finish Society for Development Studies, 1988), 139-50.

<sup>113</sup> Jamie Monson’s dissertation argues for an “Ngoni myth” crafted and perpetuated by colonial historians. While her point is well taken that Tanzanian societies were perfectly capable of complex political organization prior to the arrival of the Ngoni, I concur with Redmayne, Iliffe, and other scholars that the Ngoni invasion provided a strong impetus to political centralization in the southern highlands. See Jamie Monson, *Agricultural Transformation in the Inner Kilombero Valley of Tanzania 1840-1940* (Los Angeles: PhD Thesis at UCLA, 1991), 109-17.

<sup>114</sup> Von Zelewski an Kolonial-Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes, 8 June 1891, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BAB), R1001/279, 16. These observations are seconded by Karl Weule, the premier German anthropologist who “explored” southeastern Tanzania beginning in 1906. See Karl Weule, *Wirtschaftlichen Ergebnisse meiner Ethnographischen Forschungsreise in den Südosten Deutsch-Ostafrikas* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), 125-31 and Karl Weule, *Negerleben in Ostafrika: Ergebnisse einer ethnologischen Forschungsreise* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1909), 406-16.



The loosely organized, small-scale, polycephalous societies of the region initially proved no match for the Ngonis' highly centralized military state or its well-disciplined, tightly controlled regiments. Ngoni males were almost exclusively employed as warriors, agricultural work being done by women and the thousands of dependents captured and incorporated as a result of Ngoni conquests. The first emerging "state" subjected to Ngoni attacks was the Sangu people near modern Mbeya, who were initially almost helpless to stop Ngoni raiding despite the purchase and use of firearms from the so-called Arabs (often they were Swahili-speaking, Muslimized Africans) moving along the caravan routes from the coast to the Great Lakes. The Sangu under Merere I, however, adopted the "Zulu system" in turn, and soon were strong enough not only to hold off the Ngoni but also wage war upon the hapless Bena and Hehe who bordered them to the north and east. By the 1860s, however, the Hehe under the able Chief Munyigumba—founder of the Musinga dynasty—turned the tables once again, mastering Ngoni and Sangu modes of warfare and soon defeating every polity in the region one after the other.<sup>118</sup> The Hehe arose around the year 1865 out of a small chiefdom under the leadership of the Jinga Clan, based in Nguruhe. It was from this clan that the future leaders of the Hehe came. Munyigumba (political leader from 1855 to 1879) expanded their territory by several provinces through the strength of arms, and his empire would eventually become the northern-most and one of

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<sup>118</sup> Redmayne, 411 and Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 9-12.

the most successful of the *Mfecane*-states.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, Munyigumba is still revered today as the Great Founder of the Hehe “nation” and remembered as the individual who turned the peoples that would become the Hehe from victims to determiners of their own destiny.<sup>120</sup> Peaceful phases of expansion alternated with ever longer periods of warfare during which they consolidated themselves as “Hehe,” waging war against Arab slave and ivory traders, the Sangu, the Ngoni, the Maasai, the Bena, the Kinga, and even with each other. This violent history parallels the overall chaos and bloodshed that afflicted East Africa in the mid-nineteenth century. Based on oral evidence collected among the Bena of the Njombe region, James Giblin has even argued that the period prior to German intervention, the era of “Big Man” state formation and political consolidation, was so tumultuous that less “successful” peoples like the Bena remember the entire period of 1840 to 1940 as one of continual if intermittent violence, a sort of “time of troubles” in which one invader after the other (the coastal Arabs, Ngoni, Sangu, Hehe, the Germans, the British) inflicted successive waves of dislocation and suffering on the population.<sup>121</sup> The German missionary Alfons Adams likewise recounts the frequent “*Bruder-Kriege*” (wars among brothers) in the early years in an environment

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<sup>119</sup> Mkwawa’s descendent, Edmund Mkwawa, and the Tanzanian Minister of Education have collaborated on a project (at this time unpublished) laying out the dynastic history of the Hehe before Mkwawa. *Mtwa Munyigumba Mtengamaumba Muasisi wa Nchi ya Wahehe*, manuscript in author’s possession.

<sup>120</sup> Author’s interviews with Edmund Mkwawa (the grandson of “Sultan Mkwawa”) in Dar es Salaam, 26 July 2005.

<sup>121</sup> Giblin, 28-49. My own interviews with people in Uhehe confirmed this impression of the continuity of developments during the century from 1840 to 1940.

in which it is clear only in retrospect who is “Hehe” versus the diverse peoples around them.

The “Hehe” thus formed out of a “mixture of all the peoples subjugated by the royal family in the course of 40 to 50 years,” and were therefore a “created ethnicity” like the Zulu of southern Africa or the Seminoles of Florida.<sup>122</sup> While it is now generally understood that nations and nation-states, even putatively “old ones” like France or Britain, are ideological constructs that grew out of contingency, circumstance, and the gradual development of a collective, composite identity, it is all too often assumed that “tribes” in Africa are primordial entities that predate European states and are indeed some sort of “fossil” from a previous age.<sup>123</sup> Nothing could be further from the case. The mighty Zulu and the peoples that surrounded them were a product of the *Mfecane*, which scattered some peoples and incorporated others under the auspices of a state-imposed “official identity”—Shaka went as far as to prohibit the use of older languages and the telling of pre-conquest stories in order to foster a new Zulu identity among the diverse array of peoples subjugated by his armies.<sup>124</sup> Likewise, Munyigumba and his son Mkwawa would methodically and voraciously seek

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<sup>122</sup> Alfons Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes. Erinnerungen an mein Missionsleben in Deutsch-Osafrika* (St. Ottilien, Oberbayern: St. Ottilien, 1899), 24.

<sup>123</sup> See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991) and Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>124</sup> See Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) and E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

to conquer and incorporate new subjects in the southern highlands, thereby creating a new state-sanctioned identity as “Hehe.” Their very name is the result of this process: according to Nigmann and informants living in Iringa today, the term comes from the characteristic war cry let loose by Muniyumba’s armies before battle, which then became their moniker among the peoples that surrounded—and feared—them.



Tomb of Muniyumba “the Founder”

Many of the Sangus’ erstwhile vassals, most of the Bena people, and countless small polities like the Gogo, the Sagara, and the Kinga fell under Hehe control. The Germans themselves were well aware of this African military revolution, and they conceptualized it in terms of an evolutionary scale, the state of a people’s weaponry being an open indication of their “level of advancement.” Ernst Nigmann’s quasi-ethnological work on the Hehe and

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<sup>125</sup> Photo taken by author of Muniyumba’s tomb at Lungemba, 62 km southeast of Iringa Town. It was constructed and maintained not by the government, but by Mkwawa’s descendents in Dar es Salaam.

Heinrich Schnee's *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexicon* both discuss the rapid progression of the Hehe from a disorganized people armed with throwing spears (the predominant weapon before the introduction of the Zulu stabbing spear) to a well disciplined, lethally armed force.<sup>126</sup> The Hehe Empire came to be viewed by the Germans as an "Oriental Despotism," a form of *Staatswesen* (loosely, "statecraft") that had reached a higher level of social development than the many smaller polities that lay between it and the coast, which according to the Germans could not really be depicted as having "*Staatswesen*."<sup>127</sup> In this conceptual era of chronological, Darwinian hierarchies, it was self-evident to most European observers that one could classify a society along a sliding, evolutionary, and more often than not *racial* scale, and in many cases it was a people's ability to wage war that determined their level of "civilization." The Hehe polity's ability to wage war was such that it won both the admiration and the loathing of German observers.<sup>128</sup>

Indeed, the art of war brought to the region by the Ngoni reached its most deadly culmination under the Hehe, who had been attacked by the Ngoni many times (above all 1878 and 1882), who themselves had adopted the methods of the Zulu of South Africa. The world knows the "black Napoleon,"

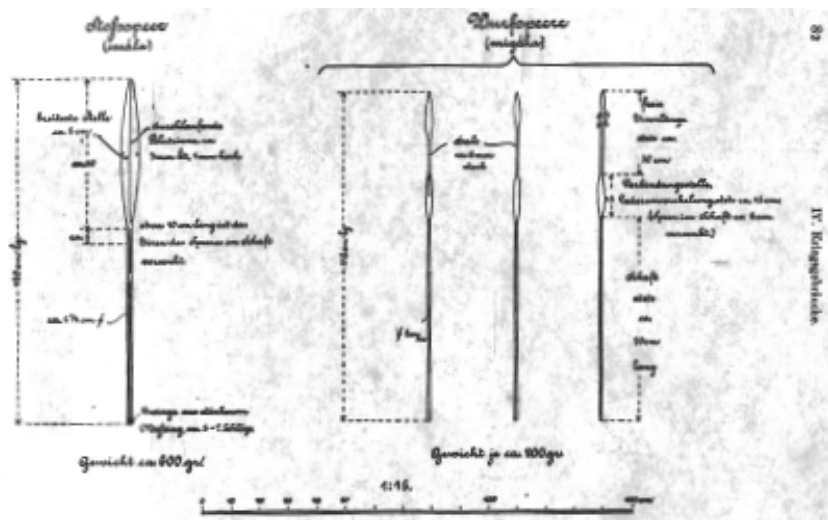
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<sup>126</sup> See Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, cited above, and Dr. Heinrich Schnee Gouverneur, *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexicon*, 1.Band, 685 and 3.Band, 654.

<sup>127</sup> Bernd Arnold, "Die Schlacht bei Rugaro (Tansania, Iringa). Verlauf der Kämpfe und Ursachen der Niederlage des Expeditionskorps der kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika," in *Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus in Afrika* "Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Peter Sebalb", eds. Peter Heine and Ulrich van der Heyden (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlag, 1995), 97-8.

<sup>128</sup> On the pyramidal system of racial classification of African peoples, see Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All the Brutes* (New York: The New Press, 1996).

Shaka Zulu, who ended the use of sandals in 1810 in order to harden his feet for marching across terrain, which would also allow better tactical maneuver. He also ordered the crafting of the original stabbing spear (*iklwa* in isiZulu, which is an onomatopoeia referring to the sound the spear makes when it is removed from a victim's torso, generally referred to as *assegai* by European observers) because the original throwing spear was not appropriate for close combat against humans. The stabbing spear considerably increased the striking power of his units. While the *iklwa* may not look impressive to those acquainted with modern firearms, their undeniable effect on the British at Isandhlwana or the Germans at Rugaro (discussed below) tells a very different story. At close range, a Hehe warrior with proper training and a stabbing spear was highly lethal and more than a match for most opponents, including Europeans with pistols and bayonets.<sup>129</sup> In battle the enemy was destroyed by



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<sup>129</sup> The author was given a frightening demonstration of an *iklwa* at the Ncome (Blood River) Museum in KwaZulu-Natal in October of 2005—it easily pierced the thickest part of a cow skull like a can opener.

<sup>130</sup> Image of Hehe *issala* taken from Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 82.



the “horn formation” (flank attacks from left and right) which annihilated opponents. Flanking attacks were also typical among the Hehe, and the stabbing spear (known as *issala* in Kihehe) was used in close combat after the initial use of the *migoha*, or throwing spear (unlike the Zulu).<sup>131</sup> In the end it was the stabbing spear that also decided the Battle of Rugaro and stole a victory from a force equipped with modern firearms. Hehe military units were likewise based on the Zulu Model of regiments (*amabutho*), though the constant attrition brought about by warfare in the southern highlands meant that they were not strictly organized by age grades, young replacements being constantly incorporated into existing regiments.<sup>132</sup> Hehe regiments, known as *wapuka* (singular, *kipuka*), were smaller than the Zulu *amabutho* and usually numbered between 80 and 500 men. The Hehes’ core army consisted of 2,000 to 3,000 soldiers, usually supplemented by thousands of auxiliaries drawn from the Hehes’ allies and vassals such as the Bena and the Gogo.

Because the Hehe state was wedged between two deadly enemies, the Sangu (who were the first people to adopt Ngoni techniques of attack and intimidation) and the Ngoni, it had to be prepared to wage warfare nearly continuously, potentially on two fronts simultaneously, forcing the Hehe to develop a logistical system that far surpassed that of their rivals, or even

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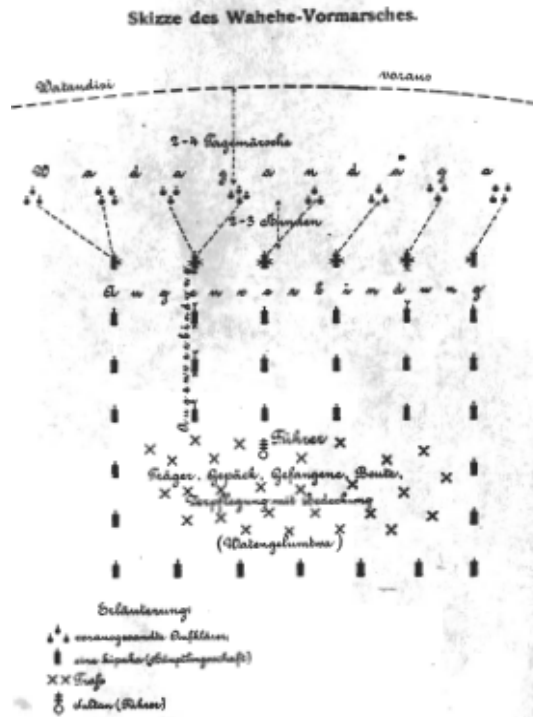
<sup>131</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 88-95 and Mann, 134-5. The Hehe (and the Ngoni) use of the “cattle horns formation,” an innovation of Zulu warfare, is an additional piece of evidence for the transmission of Zulu techniques during the *Mfecane* to the peoples of southern Tanzania.

<sup>132</sup> Alison Redmayne, “*The Hehe*,” in *Tanzania before 1900*, ed. Andrew Roberts (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 44-5.

indeed of the Zulu themselves.<sup>133</sup> Hehe logistics were in many ways superior even to those of the European invaders that arrived in the 1880s, as would be made clear in the 1891-98 war during which the Germans and their *Askari* generally had to recourse to straight-forward, Thirty-Years'-War-style plunder and marauding to obtain supplies. Indeed, Hehe resistance only collapsed when German scorched-earth tactics like burning crops and the mass seizure of livestock ended Chief Mkwawa's ability to wage war. This ability to fight a two-front war was unique in the region and indispensable to the survival of the Hehe polity, as Uhehe lay in the middle of the advance from not only the Ngoni from the south, but also the Maasai from the north. Indeed, Muniyigumba's state was strong enough to simultaneously form the southern boundary of the seemingly inexorable Maasai advance from the great *Nyika* plain southwards *and* the northernmost boundary of the Zulu-initiated *Mfecane* out of South Africa. Overall, the perfection of *Mfecane* warfare by Muniyigumba and his son Mkwawa meant that the invading Germans would not face a pristine, innocent, primitive adversary in the southern highlands; instead, they would be facing an enemy as ruthless and proficient at both killing and collecting supplies as they themselves.

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<sup>133</sup> Mann, 132.



Using this improved “Zulu system,” the founder of the “Hehe-Empire,” Muniyumba, created a highly centralized and militarily proficient state that was far larger than any of its rivals over the span of a decade and a half, covering nearly a fifth of what would become German East Africa (itself twice the size of the German Reich in Europe).<sup>135</sup> As noted above, Hehe ethnicity itself was in fact formed in the context of conquest and resulted from Muniyumba’s highly effective drive to centralize political and social control in the hands of the state.<sup>136</sup> As the Muyinga dynasty conquered new regions and acquired new dependents, these were incorporated as “Hehe” provided

<sup>134</sup> Image of the Hehes’ intricate, highly-orchestrated marching formation taken from Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 87.

<sup>135</sup> The Hehe military system is described in great detail by both Redmayne and by Ernst Nigmann, a veteran of the *Schutztruppe*. See his extensive fourth chapter, “Kriegsgebräuche” in *Die Wahehe*.

<sup>136</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 2.

they adopt the Hehe language and accept the state as supreme. Recently conquered areas were policed by garrisons of 50-300 soldiers under a royally appointed administrator known as *wazagila*, and these garrisons were further reinforced with Hehe settlers that were sent to strategic areas.<sup>137</sup> These garrisons also served as granaries, part of the Hehes' elaborate logistical system, which allowed them to continue fighting in a disputed region even after suffering a defeat in sharp contrast to most of the African enemies the *Schutztruppe* encountered. It was this state that was inherited in 1879 by the man who would become the Germans' arch-nemesis and a Tanzanian national hero, Chief Mkwawa (usually rendered as "Sultan Quawa" in German documents), second son of Munyigumba, born around 1855.<sup>138</sup>

Today, Mkwawa is widely viewed as a proto-nationalist hero throughout Tanzania and particularly by the Hehe.<sup>139</sup> At the time he also enjoyed a practically legendary reputation. The missionary Alfons Adams described the "Mkwawa myth" among his people thusly:

[Mkwawa], though his superior glance and his energetic orders, ruled over the disposition of his underlings to an unusual degree. He was known as a strong, courageous warrior, as a good shot with the rifle, and an unsurpassed spear thrower... A nimbus of the supernatural surrounded him, that is to say as Sultan he drew on supernatural

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<sup>137</sup> Alfred Pawlikowski-Cholewa, *Heeresgeschichte der Völker Afrikas und Amerikas* (Berlin: Junker und Dünhaupt Verlag, 1943), 54-9.

<sup>138</sup> Mkwawa has acquired near mythic status in Tanzania. The local army barracks in Dar es Salaam is called *Lugalo*, and Iringa is full of Mkwawa related sites and monuments (which I will be visiting in August). See, for example, Michael Musso, *Mukwava na kabila lake* (Arusha, Tanzania: East African Publications Limited, 1968) and Fulgens F. A. Malangalia, *Mwamuyinga; Mtawala wa Wahehe* (Peramiho, Tanzania: Benedictine Publications Ndanda, 1987). See also Giblin's excellent discussion of the divergent views of Mkwawa in *A History of the Excluded*, Chapter 1.

<sup>139</sup> Ranger, 442-4.

powers according to the conception of the Hehe... Mkwawa had “mugoda,” meaning “medicine,” which supposedly had the effect of making him intangible, impervious, and invisible in battle; beyond this, his bullets always hit their intended opponent and the spears he threw would simultaneously bore through four to five warriors.<sup>140</sup>

Although he was unquestionably respected, even revered by the Hehe and those people incorporated directly into Hehe lineages, at the time both his internal enemies and his neighbors had a very different view of his rule. One of his praise names was *Lukwale-lwa-mwaka*, “the madness of the year.”<sup>141</sup> Neighboring Africans knew him as *Muhinja*, “the butcher.”<sup>142</sup> Mkwawa was renowned for his ruthlessness and dictatorial behavior, one of his most frequent orders in dealing with internal rivals being *Mukasipele*—“give him to the vultures.”<sup>143</sup> Hehe campaigns continued in the 1880s as Mkwawa successfully defeated both the hitherto much respected Ngoni and groups of Nyamwezi (who themselves under the famous warlords Mirambo and Nyungu-Ya-Mawe underwent an impressive and violent process of “Big Man” state formation from the 1860s to the 1880s).<sup>144</sup> It was precisely Mkwawa’s stunning successes against his neighbors that fostered a vast well

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<sup>140</sup> Adams, 45.

<sup>141</sup> Redmayne, “Mkwawa...”, 433.

<sup>142</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 15.

<sup>143</sup> Francis Kitime, a local teacher and folksinger in Iringa, has collected oral material from people in the surrounding areas on Mkwawa and the war with the Germans. One song lists Mkwawa’s various favorite commands, heard all too often at his court at Kuirenga: *Mukasipele*—give him to the vultures; *Mukadumule*—remove his head; *Mukatite*—suffocate him. CD in author’s possession.

<sup>144</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 12-3 and Redmayne, “Mkwawa...”, 414. On the Nyamwezi, see Aylward Shorter, “Nyungu-Ya-Mawe and the ‘Empire of the Ruga-Rugas’,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1968): 235-59 and Norman Robert Bennet, *Mirambo of Tanzania ca. 1840-1884* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

of resentment among them, and it was this resentment that motivated their behavior during the German-Hehe conflict of the 1890s in a manner that would be all too familiar to Hernán Cortéz, Frederick Lugard, and other infamous empire-builders who made “divide and rule” the cornerstone of their conquest policies.

The intricate, highly fluid political balance in the southern highlands was further complicated by the role of the so-called “Arabs” (Muslimized, Kiswahili-speaking Africans) from the coast, who brought to the interior firearms in return for ivory and the slaves captured in the course of the constant warfare in the area.<sup>145</sup> In some cases these wars were waged specifically for the purpose of obtaining captives for sale, though the majority of those taken were incorporated into Hehe society as agricultural laborers in order to free up nearly all males for military service.<sup>146</sup> The Sangu in particular were

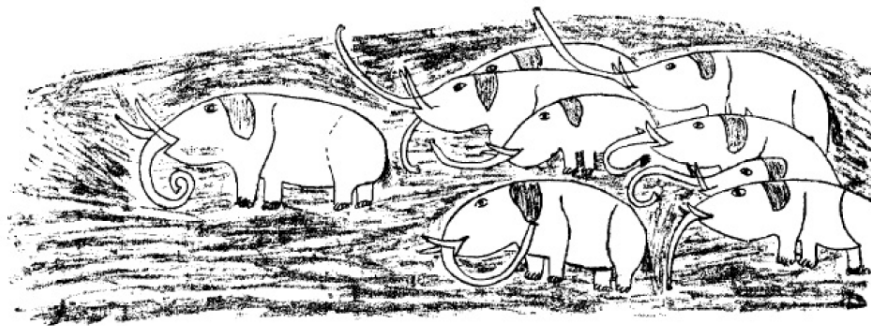


<sup>145</sup> On the prolific and highly destabilizing firearms trade in East Africa in this period, see R. W. Beachey, “The Arms Trade in East Africa in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of African History*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1962): 451-67.

<sup>146</sup> For a detailed description of the effects of the coastal trading system on the interior, see Glassman, *op. cit.*, and Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), chapter 3.

<sup>147</sup> Weule, *Zeichnungen*, between 96 and 97.

quick to adopt firearms purchased from Swahili traders in an attempt to break the supremacy first of the Ngoni and then of the Hehe, but to no avail.<sup>148</sup> The Hehe had very few firearms, and in fact spent more time raiding caravans from the coast than trading with them.<sup>149</sup> But their strength of numbers and awe-inspiring, machinelike discipline proved more than a match for Sangu levies armed with muskets.



3. *Elefantenherde*

*Barnabas*

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The region could only be further disrupted by the arrival of the European *Wazungu*—literally “those who wander aimlessly”—in the mid-1880s. Mkwawa’s exceptional intelligence network kept him well informed about the grim events occurring 300 kilometers away on the coast, and he proved far more prescient than his rivals in anticipating the implications of the *AvaDaliki* (German) invasion of Swahili city-states and their hinterland. Indeed, there is some evidence that he even provided limited material support to members of the “Arab Revolt” of 1889 to 1891, which led some German observers to consider the struggle against the Hehe as an extension of the

<sup>148</sup> Redmayne, “Mkwawa...”, 414-5 and 426-7. The Hehe similarly defeated the well-armed Nyamwezi on multiple occasions.

<sup>149</sup> Those firearms that the Hehe did have only arrived in the late nineteenth century, and these were only distributed among Mkwawa’s royal guard and his elite elephant hunters. Pawlikowski-Cholewa, 68.

<sup>150</sup> Weule, *Zeichnungen*, between 120 and 121.

Coastal Revolt. Nigmann claims that Mkwawa actively assisted the initial attacks on the DOAG (German East Africa Company) stations at Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, and Kilwa. He also asserts that small armed detachments of Hehe assisted the “Mafiti” (more on this below) in their resistance against Wissmann’s advance from Bagamoyo to Mpwapwa in 1889.<sup>151</sup> In 1890 he also attempted to conclude a pact of friendship with his erstwhile enemies the Ngoni under Chief Jabruma, an act that was, according to Nigmann, “unprecedented” for the Hehe, or indeed for any polity in the region.<sup>152</sup> Here Nigmann, generally a compassionate and perceptive observer, is incorrect. There existed a long, complex history of short-term alliances and counter-alliances as the Ngoni, Bena, Sangu, and Hehe each attempted to establish and protect their territorial holdings in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>153</sup> Indeed, it was the Germans’ success at tapping into this system of alliances that eventually led to their victory. Be that as it may, Nigmann accurately pointed out that the “monstrously farsighted” Mkwawa correctly assessed German intentions immediately, if not for the Hehe specifically, certainly overall. The Ngoni, however, hesitated in what Nigmann describes as the “typical *Neger* fashion,”

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<sup>151</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1911), 81. Wissmann, founder of the Schutztruppe, was sent to Tanganyika in 1889 to put down the “Arab Revolt,” which he did with the utmost thoroughness and brutality. Thereafter, the Schutztruppe were sometimes referred to as the “Wismannische Truppe.”

<sup>152</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 15. Even Prince, who has little positive to say about “the madness of the year,” credits Mkwawa with an astounding degree of farsightedness regarding German intentions and the implications of colonial rule. <sup>152</sup> Quoted in Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 107.

<sup>153</sup> Jamie Monson, *Agricultural Transformation*, 106-35 and “Relocating Maji Maji: The Politics of Alliance and Authority in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. 1870-1918,” *Journal of African History*, 39 (1998): 101.



which proved disastrous for both peoples: “these courageous tribes as a consequence of their disunity in the face of the German advance could be subjugated piecemeal.”<sup>154</sup> The traditional enmity between the Ngoni and the Hehe paralyzed all attempts at reconciliation. Indeed, it would have been surprising had they been able to overcome their differences after decades of sanguinary conflict in the highlands, and at first the Germans simply seemed like the latest in a long series of interlopers in East Africa (the Portuguese, Ngoni, Arabs). It is in fact true that German columns in this period were scarcely distinguishable from “Arab” caravans traveling inland from the coast—they were similarly equipped, used the same system of human portorage, used the same Kiswahili-speaking interpreters, built explicitly “Arab-styled” defensive structures, and even dressed similarly. As with the



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earlier arrival of the Omani Arabs on the island of Zanzibar, for some their arrival represented an opening of opportunities as much as a closing of them.

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<sup>154</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 107. Statements like this one along with similar comments from Governors Schele and Liebert indicate that the German policy of *divide et impera* was anything but sub-conscious or unintentional.

<sup>155</sup> Photos taken by author of the first German *Boma* (fortress) at their original capital at Bagamoyo on the Indian Ocean Coast. This structure would have been difficult to distinguish from Omani buildings on the coast and in Zanzibar.

It was precisely the balance between outright terror and providing an “opportunity structure” that over time would bring Tanganyika, and indeed nearly all of Africa, under *Wazungu* control.

In contrast to the Ngoni, the Sangu, with whom Mkwawa did not even try to conclude any sort of agreement, were anything but paralyzed—they quickly realized the great possibility of turning the German invasion to their own advantage.<sup>156</sup> As pointed out by Jamie Monson, “[t]he Germans were seen as potentially powerful allies and protectors by many societies of the southern region. They established alliance relationships using local idioms of affiliation and diplomacy.”<sup>157</sup> The Germans were highly successful in concluding agreements with several of the Hehes’ rivals, particularly the Sangu and the Bena. In these cases it is difficult to discern exactly who was being used by whom. As one German administrator complained after concluding a treaty with another Hehe rival, Henge chief Nalioto: “With cunning tactics (*schlaue Politik*) he thought to use me, and through me to make the superiority of the whites serve his own purposes.”<sup>158</sup> Chiefs Merere III and IV of the Sangu were particularly adept at involving the Germans in their struggles with Mkwawa on their own terms, a fact that did not escape administrators like Tom von Prince, who found both Mereres to be useful but

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<sup>156</sup> Redmayne, “Mkwawa...”, 414.

<sup>157</sup> Monson, 103.

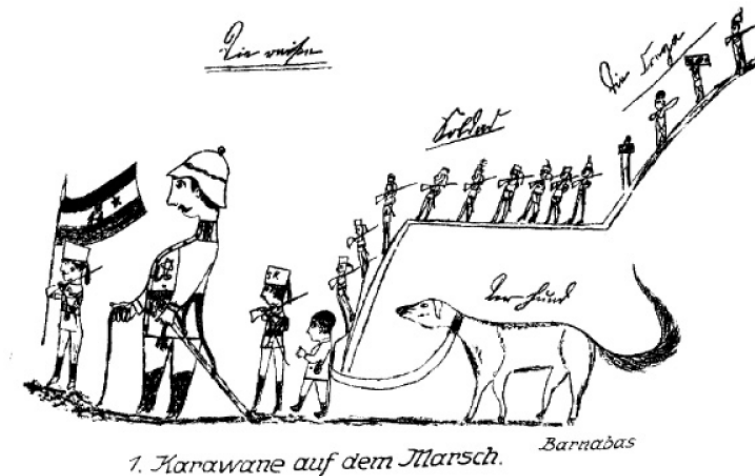
<sup>158</sup> Quoted in Monson, 104.

extremely unscrupulous and at times duplicitous.<sup>159</sup> Ironically enough, it was the German attempt to establish “indirect rule” over the Hehe via political agreement that finally convinced Mkwawa that they could only be a grave threat to his power; after all, he did not really need allies anymore to dominate his local adversaries.<sup>160</sup> Julius Freiherr von Soden, the colony’s first official governor (1891-1893), demanded in 1891 that they cease “terrorizing” their neighbors and raiding the crucial caravan route between the coast and Lake Tanganyika, and the Hehe insisted on the preservation of their complete autonomy and authority in the region. The result was war, a war which both firmly installed the Germans as masters of the south and forever shattered Hehe power, leaving Mkwawa’s state in ashes. The next chapter will focus on the developments that unfolded before the ambush at Rugaro and then examine what lead to such a crushing German defeat after years of military success against other indigenous armies in East Africa.

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<sup>159</sup> For an extended discussion of Merere’s foreign policy, see Marcia Wright, “Chief Merere and the Germans,” *Tanzania Notes and Record*, No. 69 (1968): 41-49.

<sup>160</sup> Redmayne, “Mkwawa...”, 417-8.



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### Chapter III: The Road to Rugaro and the “Zelewski Catastrophe”

*Dear Prince, [our expedition] will be done with these fellows all alone...The fellows haven't even got guns, just shields and spears.*

-Commander Emil von Zelewski, 1891<sup>162</sup>

*From this moment onwards, particularly as a member of the old expedition, my uninterrupted striving was directed at avenging the annihilation of this corps, and henceforth I established no station, led no expedition, engaged in no battle, did nothing official that would not somehow be connected with this goal.*

-Captain Tom von Prince, 1914<sup>163</sup>

### The Causes and Beginning of the German-Hehe War of 1891-1898

The events that inexorably led to the clash between the Germans and the Hehe are only clear in retrospect, and indeed, even now there is a debate in the historiography about why Zelewski and his expedition were deployed at all in the summer of 1891. The first governor, von Soden, only began his tenure on 1 April 1891, and neither he nor the administration knew very much about “the interior”

<sup>161</sup> Karl Weule, “Ostafrikanische Eingeborenen-Zeichnungen: Psychologische Einblicke in die Künstlerseele des Negers,” in *Ipek: Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* 2 (1926): between 120 and 121.

<sup>162</sup> Quoted in Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 88. All translations mine unless otherwise specified.

<sup>163</sup> Prince, 113.

when the Zelewski expedition was deployed on 22 June 1891. In the first half of 1891, the government apparently knew nothing specific about Mkwawa, his brother Mpangile, or the Hehe Empire. African authors, who view the conflict from the Hehe perspective, view the Zelewski campaign as a concerted and premeditated attempt to subdue the Hehe Empire. Michael Musso argues that the Germans felt uneasy about Mkwawa because he ruled such a large empire and was renowned for his proficiency at war. The attacks of the Gogo and Dongwe on the caravan route to Tabora were attributed to the Hehe, and for this reason Zelewski was sent to conquer Mkwawa's fortified city at Kalenga. The column intended to subdue and occupy the entirety of the Hehe Empire.<sup>164</sup> Western scholars such as Erick J. Mann, John Iliffe, Olaf Schröter, and Martin Baer concur, viewing Zelewski's campaign as a clear, deliberate attempt to crush Mkwawa's state and subdue the Hehe.

We do know from Nigmann, who spoke to "his Hehe" after the events of the 1890s (he was their commander in Maji Maji—1905-07—and thereafter), that Mkwawa indeed feared precisely this and felt threatened by the Zelewski expedition. He learned of its approach when they were only four days march from Kalenga at Mage: "when the news reached him, the Zelewski expedition had already reached Mage, which lies only four days march northeast of the residence [of Mkwawa]. Quawa [sic] sounded the alarm and moved immediately with the

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<sup>164</sup> Michael Musso, *Mukwava na kabila lake* (Arusha, Tanzania: East African Publications Limited, 1968), 54-5.

approximately 2000 Warriors from Iringa and the surrounding area that this gathered to the ambush at Rugaro, into which the expedition stumbled.”<sup>165</sup>

Bernd Arnold offers a different and intriguing interpretation of the events of summer 1891: “Unbelievable as it sounds, the defeat and subjugation of the Hehe Empire was *not* Zelewski’s goal when he set out in June 1891, and he likewise did not intend to capture Kalenga. He himself did not even know against whom he was supposed to be waging war.”<sup>166</sup> Indeed, the documents available offer several potential opponents. On 8 June 1891, Zelewski wrote German Chancellor von Caprivi that he intended to “undertake a campaign in order to throw back the Mafiti that have broken into the hinterland of Kiloa [meaning Kilwa on the coast] and to chastise the marauding and uncompromising Wahehe... From there [Usagara] I will turn to Mpapua [Mpwapwa in Ugogo] and then attack the Wagogo and the Wahehe.”<sup>167</sup> Logical as this plan may sound, it is an itinerary that involves huge distances—the distance from Kilwa to Mpwapwa alone is approximately 350 kilometers, a distance that had to be covered on foot and with mules! In his subsequent report from Matumbi, dated 29 June 1891, he

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<sup>165</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Die Wahehe: Ihre Geschichte, Kult-, Rechts-, Kreigs- und Jagd-Gebräuche* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), 77. “In the case of danger to the residence itself of the Sultan, accelerated mobilization was accomplished through the sounding of a real alarm by beating the great sultan drum, upon which the warriors of the residence and the area surrounding it assembled without delay at the seat of the sultan... The great drum of the sultan, a hollowed out tree trunk covered with cow’s hide, approximately 2 meters high, burned during the storming of Iringa [meaning Kuirenga] on 30 October 1894.” *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Bernd Arnold, “Die Schlacht bei Rugaro (Tansania, Iringa). Verlauf der Kämpfe und Ursachen der Niederlage des Expeditionskorps der kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika,” in *Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus in Afrika*” *Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Peter Sebald*, eds. Peter Heine and Ulrich van der Heyden (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlag, 1995), 95.

<sup>167</sup> Von Zelewski an Reichskanzler von Caprivi, 8 June 1891, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BAB), R1001/279, 9.

informs Governor von Soden that he was “still without news about the whereabouts of the Mafiti.”<sup>168</sup> This was the last anyone heard from him, as no further letters reached the government in Dar es Salaam.

Arnold further argues that this means that the Hehe capital, Kalenga, was not in fact threatened, as the column was headed towards Nguruhe, ancestral homeland of the Hehe, not Kalenga. Why Zelewski intended to do this is not stated anywhere. It is also true that the name of the leader of Hehe Empire, Mkwawa (Quawa in most German documents) first appears as “Kuawa” in a report from Lieutenant von Tettenborn, a participant and one of the only survivors of the expedition, from 30 August 1891, in which he states the apparent death of “Kuawa” as the reason for the Hehes’ “leaderlessness.”<sup>169</sup> The name of the capital, stated variously in later sources as “Kwirenga,” “Iringa,” or “Kuirenga,” is not mentioned anywhere, and it is unclear if the Germans even knew of its existence at this point in time. Equally confusing is the identity of the so-called “Mafiti” against whom Zelewski was putatively campaigning. If one asks Tanzanians today, scholars and average people alike, about the “Mafiti,” they will tell you they have never heard of them in sharp contrast to the Hehe or Gogo or the peoples that lie between them and the southeastern coast where the Mafiti supposedly resided. *Kompanieführer* Rochus Schmidt later explained this to the Governor in the following way:

I noticed in this case that, taken precisely, instead of Mafiti the name Mahenge should be used, though I always use the name Mafiti because on the coast around Usamaro it is applied especially to the Mahenge. In

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<sup>168</sup> Von Zelewski an Gouverneur von Soden, 29 June 1891, BAB, R1001/279, 16.

<sup>169</sup> Von Tettenborn an Gouverneur von Soden, 30 August 1891, BAB, R1001/279, 96.

general, the name Mafiti includes the Mahenge, the Wahehe, and the Magwangwara, which are all related Zulu-tribes...<sup>170</sup>

The “Magwangwara” is the name of a tributary of the Ruwuma River, by which part of the Ngoni were known by their neighbors.<sup>171</sup> “Mafiti,” as “explorer” and anthropologist Friedrich Füllerborn credibly reports, is a collective term in East Bantu languages for “enemy” deriving from the word “Mazitu.” “Mafiti” was both a designation applied to warlike neighbors as well as a term sometimes used as a term for one’s own fighting unit when one wanted to extort “Hongo” from neighbors or caravans. The scholar L. E. Larson offers yet another interpretation: he claims that the Mafiti were, in fact, the unrecognized fifth polity of southern Tanzania, the Mbunga Confederacy.<sup>172</sup> If Füllerborn and, to a lesser extent, Schmidt are to be believed, “Mafiti” was not an ethnonym at all, and it probably is for this reason that the Zelewski expedition could not find them. Even if he really meant the Mbunga as Larson suggests, he was headed in entirely the wrong direction. Indeed, who would have dared identify themselves as “the enemy” when asked by a force as imposing and dangerous as the German column of

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<sup>170</sup> Kompanieführer Schmidt an Gouverneur von Soden, 12 September 1891, BAB, R1001/279, 138. Many authors discuss Schutztruppe campaigns against the “Mafiti” without any sense that the label might be problematic. See Paul Reichard, *Deutsch-Ostafrika. Das Land und seine Bewohner. Seine politische und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung* (Leipzig: Otto Spamer, 1891), 202-11; Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika: Eine Schilderung deutscher Tropen nach 10 Wanderungen* (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1910), 22-3; and H. F. von Behr, *Kriegsbilder aus dem Araberaufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1891), 259-90. In all three cases, they seem to use “Mafiti” as a generic label for the “Bantu peoples” that lay between Kilwa and the southern highlands.

<sup>171</sup> Friedrich Füllerborn, *Das Deutsche Njassa- und Ruwuma-Gebiet, Land und Leute* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1906), 140 and 408.

<sup>172</sup> L. E. Larson, “A History of the Mbunga Confederacy ca. 1860-1907,” *Tanzania Notes and Records*, No. 81 & 82 (June 1978): 36.



nearly a thousand men (with porters), particularly after their well-known record of destroying villages en route!

Governor von Soden would have probably denied authorization for the haphazard expedition had he known more about the “Prussia of East Africa,” as the Hehe state was later known. To be sure, two years later acting Governor Friedrich von Schele (who himself was far more of a hawk than von Soden), being more familiar with the Hehe, forced “*Reichskommissar* H. Wissmann” to desist in any attempt to go after the Hehe while the latter was on the so-called “Steamer Expedition” (the *Dampfer-Expedition*, during which Germany’s “greatest African,” as he was known by the 1930s, brought a steamship in pieces to Lake Nyassa in order to explore the region and in theory fight the slave trade). When seeking to discover why Governor von Soden authorized such a large expedition whose goals and putative targets were both so unclear, one is led to a letter written by von Soden to Chancellor Caprivi, dated 15 June 1891, which offers a justification that is as cynical as it is pragmatic:

The most serious thing about the entire campaign, which look like it will run harmlessly, is: that it will cost about 40,000 Marks... Nonetheless, I have some doubts whether the expedition is unconditionally necessary at all, and still more doubts whether it is necessary to the size and extent in which it is being undertaken, but still the following considerations are holding me back from laying down a veto: 1) Disturbing reports and also refugees from these areas have in fact come in... 2)...in view of the peaceful conditions here, the soldiers there and on the coast are militarily and for other reasons not utilizable otherwise. It is therefore, even admitting the superfluosness of the expedition, still more practical to at least deploy the soldiers where their appearance is not necessarily needed but is at least of some use, while 3) the lack of activity here on the coast could directly lead to a danger.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Gouverneur von Soden an Reichskanzler von Caprivi, 15 June 1891, BAB, R1001/279, 7f. The German public and officer corps were furious when this letter became public in the wake of the destruction of the Zelewski expedition.

Von Soden was most likely correct in seeing the large number of Sudanese and Shangani *Askari* on the coast as potentially dangerous were they not given anything to do for long periods, although in retrospect this appears as a questionable justification for sending out several hundred of them to wreck havoc on the “interior” and, ultimately, to their deaths at the hands of the “Mafiti.”

The available documents leave one uncertain as to what Zelewski thought he was doing when he marched eastward with his column. It would seem he did not have the clear goals ascribed to him by scholars like Musso and Mann, but he did clearly know that a collection of “marauding tribesmen” of uncertain quantity and location were subverting German attempts to control “the interior” of the colony, their authority hitherto being restricted almost entirely to the coast. Indeed, the manner in which the *Schutztruppe* column indiscriminately destroyed villages along their path implies that Zelewski did not particularly care. On his way, he engaged in a campaign of destruction against villages, crops, and people of the sort that had on the coast earned him the Swahili name, *Nyundo*—“the hammer.”<sup>174</sup> The accounts of the participants, cited below, abound with terse accounts of the shelling of villages, shooting of “bandits,” and the burning of fields with a seeming disregard for the people to whom they belonged. While this destructive strategy seems to the contemporary observer as counterproductive in light of the myriad experiences with “counterinsurgency” in the twentieth century, as both the “Arab Revolt” and subsequent events in Uhehe made clear, it was par for the course in German East Africa. These tactics would reach their culmination

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<sup>174</sup> Alison Redmayne, “Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968): 418.

in the brutal suppression of the Maji Maji Revolt of 1905-1907, which, while often readily acknowledged, is generally discussed in isolation of the campaigns of the 1890s. German-led forces treated most of East Africa as enemy territory, as indeed it was, full of “hostile natives” and potential enemies in all directions. While the savvier members of the *Schutztruppe* proved masters at the sly diplomacy of divide and rule, many—Zelewski included—responded to conditions with the utmost ruthlessness.<sup>175</sup>



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However ambiguous the specific purpose and opponent of the Zelewski expedition, the fact remains that by 1891 the Hehe were the undisputed masters of the southern highlands, a fact that stood in the way of both the pretensions of their competitors and the hopes of many of their vassals. Equally, Hehe power also

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<sup>175</sup> One is reminded of the behavior of the *Schutztruppe*'s successors in a later attempt at empire building, the Wehrmacht's “war of destruction” on the Eastern Front from 1941 to 1944. More on this comparison will be offered in chapter five. As to “divide and rule” diplomacy, the annals of German colonial history offer many inveterate masters. Governor Theodor Leutwein of German Southwest Africa was quite candid regarding his policy of divide and rule. “It is obviously more convenient to deal with a politically divided (*zerrissen*) Herero nation, than with a closed and unified one.” Leutwein in Windhoek to the Colonial Department, 17 June 1894, BAB 2100. For more on Leutwein's view that a divided society would be more beneficial to the regime, see Theodor Leutwein, *Elf Jahre Gouverneur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* (Berlin: Mittler Verlag, 1908), 77.

<sup>176</sup> Askari from German East Africa, <http://www.deutsche-schutzgebiete.de/ostafrika-english.htm>

stood as the primary obstacle to German designs in the entire southern half of their East African colony. Neither the southern highlands nor the all-important caravan route from the coast to Lake Tanganyika could be brought under German sovereignty as long as “marauding bands,” be they “Mafiti” or organized raids launched by the Hehe polity, refused to submit to German authority. As implied in von Soden’s comment about refugees, the Hehe indeed continued to attack their neighbors as they always had, neighbors that were potential German allies. That these attacks were not only on caravan traffic, but also on Africans affiliated with mission stations made *Beruhigung* (pacification) seem all the more imperative, even if it was unclear which group was causing the disruptions.<sup>177</sup> The Gogo people, considered by the Germans to be one of their “*Hilfsvölker*” (“helpers”), were particularly avid about halting the predations of the Hehe, and 800 of their warriors assisted in an expedition in the summer of 1890 that attempted to resoundingly “punish” the “Mafiti” as part of the ongoing pacification of the coastal regions afflicted by the “Arab Revolt.”<sup>178</sup> This initial “punitive actions” (*Vergeltungsaktion*), resulting in the destruction of numerous villages and the seizure of 1,600 cattle, did little to stop the Hehe, who launched a campaign of their own against Usagara on the main caravan route linking Tabora with the coast.<sup>179</sup> It seemed clear that German control over the highlands and the adjacent lanes of commerce could only be established by a successfully waged

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<sup>177</sup> Prince, 116-9.

<sup>178</sup> Von Behr, 259-90.

<sup>179</sup> *Deutsches Kolonialblatt (DKB)* 1 (1890): 275.

war of punishment, a war intended to be a strong statement about the realities of the colonial “new era.”<sup>180</sup>

It soon became apparent that Mkwawa and the Hehe, or rather the “Mafiti,” would neither submit to German authority nor cease their raiding on caravan traffic, an “impudence of the Hehe” (*Frechheit der Hehe*) that, according to the *Stationsleiter* at Bagamoyo, “had to be punished, in order to restore order on the caravan route.”<sup>181</sup> Whatever his specific goals, Emil von Zelewski marched forth in June 1891 with a column of nearly 1,000 men including porters and auxiliaries. Even after sending the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company under Lieutenant Tom von Prince back towards the coast to alleviate supply difficulties, Zelewski was left with a still formidable force of 13 European officers, 362 *Askari*, and 200 porters which headed into Uhehe.<sup>182</sup> As indicated in the document above, Soden had opposed the campaign on account of its cost and murky objectives, but Zelewski and his colleagues had browbeaten the governor until he acquiesced, no doubt due to his aforementioned concerns about the dangers of leaving the idle *Askari* on the coast. As noted above, *Nyundo* “the hammer” engaged in a scorched earth campaign from the hinterland of Kilwa and Dar es Salaam inwards, burning villages and setting fire to crops.<sup>183</sup> One officer described the “successes” of the

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<sup>180</sup> Prince, 191.

<sup>181</sup> Rochus Schmidt, *Der Araber-Aufstand. Seine Ursachen und Folgezustände* (Frankfurt an der Oder, Sigfried Verlag, 1893), 305.

<sup>182</sup> Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, 108 and Thomas Morlang, “‘Die Kerls haben ja nicht mal Gewehre’: Der Untergang der Zelewski-Expedition in Deutsch-Ostafrika,” *Militärgeschichte*, Heft 2, 2. Quartal (2001): 23.

<sup>183</sup> Redmayne, “Mkwawa...”, 418.

expedition as it wandered towards the Hehe capital succinctly enough: “on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July a fortified settlement bombarded with 20 Shells and 850 Maxim cartridges.”<sup>184</sup> A second report from the same Lieutenant went on: “On the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of August 25 farmsteads burned to the ground and three Hehe killed, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> near Mage a further 50 farmsteads set ablaze.”<sup>185</sup>



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### **The Battle of Rugaro—17 August 1891**

Mkwawa’s intelligence services quickly reported on Zelewski’s advance, and he had sufficient time to assemble nearly 3,000 warriors for an attack on the column at Rugaro. The Hehe reconnaissance network, developed over decades of warfare across thousands of square miles, proved decisive, and the superior intelligence enjoyed by the Hehe force at Rugaro was perhaps their most decisive advantage. Mkwawa’s *Watandisi* (scouts) provided detailed information about *Nyundo*’s movements and whereabouts, and their intelligence was so accurate that the Hehe commanders at Rugaro knew not only the size of the German column, but also its composition and the position of the Germans machine guns and artillery. The

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<sup>184</sup> Privatbrief des Oberleutnants von Tettenborn, 29 July 1891, *DKB* 2 (1891): 393.

<sup>185</sup> Bericht von Tettenborn an Soden, 30. August 1891, *DKB* 2 (1891): 435.

<sup>186</sup> Weule, between 96 and 97.

Hehe field commanders wondered about the tactical behavior of the Zelewski Expedition, especially the fact that they were marching single file. Using their constant procedure of gathering intelligence with scouts and their carefully maintained “cow horns” marching formation, a Hehe force would not have been annihilated in such a trap. The Hehe made use of two types of reconnaissance, the *Watandisi*, who operated two to four days march in front of the army, and the *Wadagandaga*, who reconnoitered the field only a few hours in front of the main army. The main army itself marched in an open formation which allowed a constant battle-readiness, and they could face and respond to an attack from any direction.

After the defeat at Rugaro, there would be an acrimonious discussion as to what went wrong, and many commentators focused on the fact that, in contrast to the formations employed by the Hehe, Zelewski’s column marched in single file. But this was standard practice in German operations in East Africa, largely due to the constraints of terrain and communications. Shortly before his death, Commander Zelewski himself had discussed the issue of “Truppenführung in Ostafrika” (commanding troops in East Africa) in a letter to the government in Dar es Salaam. It is worth quoting at length:

Even if the fundamental rules of waging war remain the same anywhere, nonetheless the nature of the battlefield, the manner in which the enemy fights, and the characteristics of one’s own troops impose a special character [on warfare in East Africa]. This character finds its expression in marching, in battle, and in the provision of troops. I. Marching. The formation of the marching column is first and foremost determined by the terrain. In East Africa we find a land almost entirely covered by man-high grass in which individual trees are scattered about. The native... for this reason usually chooses wild paths [created by animals and livestock] for marching. These footpaths impose marching single-file on infantry and

cavalry... Because of this... the column ends up being quite long and small fluctuations in the marching speed make themselves felt to a great degree. The march to battle takes quite long... In the marching order the artillery must be near the front, if possible right behind the first group, so that they determine the speed of march and can be quickly brought into use, because the artillery must not only be brought forward, but also assembled [which the Germans were unable to achieve at Rugaro]. The securing of the path of advance and proper reconnaissance as we know it is not possible due to the lack of cavalry [tsetse fly made much of East Africa deadly to horses]. The securing of the path of advance comes little into consideration due to the minimal initiative of the opponent here and the invulnerability of the long column to an attack from the side. If the front of the column suddenly encounters the enemy, then the other companies march up right behind, attack the enemy's flank, and the column it folds in on itself in order to be battle ready. If the column is attacked from the side, then the portion of the column under attack turns to the direction from which they are being assaulted and the line of fire is already formed. The other portions of the column form themselves to the sides of the enemy's line of attack and go forth to attack the enemy's flank. It is only for smaller detachments that there exists a danger of surprise attack, because their consciousness of their weakness makes it easy for them to panic. A surprise attack by cavalry or unexpected, annihilating gunfire do not happen here because the former does not exist and the latter is not an issue, as the enemy is such a bad shot. II. Battle. Battles of encounter [as in two forces unexpectedly running into one another] are the great exception in East Africa. Both Arabs and Negroes love waiting for any attack from behind fortifications or features of the terrain; they themselves only advance when they enjoy clear superiority, and even then they fear storming [positions] with mere hand-to-hand weapons.<sup>187</sup>

What seemed to be sound logic to Zelewski, an officer experienced at warfare in East Africa, proved to be his column's undoing on 17 August 1891. Many of his assumptions proved utterly false: his large column *did* stumble into an ambush, the enemy showed tremendous initiative, and the German column was anything but invulnerable to attack from the side, as this is precisely how the Hehe annihilated them. Zelewski's arrogance about the minimal capabilities of his foe is reminiscent to the derisive opinion of the Zulus held by Lord Chelmsford in the

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<sup>187</sup> Von Zelewski an Gouverneur von Soden, 29 June 1891, BAB, R1001/279, 128.



lead up to the crushing British defeat at Isandhlwana. Indeed, Zelewski considered an attack with stabbing spears completely impossible. For this reason, he sent the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company under Lieutenant von Prince back from the Rufiji River. It was in this context that the following dialogue between Zelewski and Prince took place: “But the 3<sup>rd</sup> company is the strongest, you may yet need them, Herr Commander!” Zelewski replied, “Nonsense, these people don’t even have rifles, just shields and spears!”<sup>188</sup> This complacency spared von Prince, but it cost the life of nearly everyone else in the column.

Having been to the battlefield at Rugaro, I can concur that the terrain made marching single file almost the only option, though this in no way meant that the Germans could not have sent scouts ahead of their advance. I suspect the German commanders did not trust their troops enough to allow them to operate so independently—they would not even let the *Askari* march with their weapons loaded, and they trusted their auxiliaries even less. The terrain at Rugaro was tailor-made for an ambush; visibility is almost zero in any direction, as shown below in a picture taken by the author of the area where the German column was ambushed (the column would have been marching towards the viewer). As noted above, the Hehe knew the position and composition of *Nyundo*’s column, and—having heard about events on the coast—they were well aware of the futility in attacking well-armed detachments of *Askari*. In order to defeat the *Schutztruppe*, the Hehe would have to prevent them from forming their infamous *Rundumverteidigung* (circular defensive firing formation, the *Schutztruppe* equivalent of the British square formation). This meant that an ambush was the

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<sup>188</sup> Prince, 88.

logical choice; the question remained, however, as to where should Hehe forces position themselves to attack the Germans. Generally the decision to attack Zelewski at Rugaro and the specifics of the Hehes' plan of attack are attributed to



\*view from the spot at which the Zelewski was ambushed, facing back towards the rest of what would have been the column (photo by author)

Mkwawa (no doubt part of the aforementioned “Mkwawa myth”). According to our informant at the site, and confirmed by local historian and folksinger Francis Kitime, it was actually one of Mkwawa’s cousins that made the decision to attack where they did. Hehe commanders were originally intending to ambush the column earlier at Ruaha Mbuyuni (one of the crossings of the Ruaha River), but Alfred Stefan Myota Kwaganise claims that Mkwawa’s cousin and “minister of information and intelligence,” Kilonge, had a dream indicating that this plan

would fail. It was he that advised the commanders to instead ambush Zelewski's troops near the village of Lula-Rugaro, next to the Mgella River.<sup>189</sup>

In any case, Mkwawa personally commanded the column, joined by many of his greatest generals and by both "mayors" of Kalenga, Ngosi Ngosi and Mtemiuma.<sup>190</sup> The most powerful of his brothers, Mpangile, was also present, and some even attribute the plan of attack to him.<sup>191</sup> As will be discussed in chapter six, Mpangile would later be installed as the Sultan of Uhehe by the German administration in Iringa on 24 December 1896, only to be executed thereafter in February 1897 allegedly for "conspiring" with his brother.<sup>192</sup> Or did someone perhaps betray Mpangile, as Bernd Arnold argues, to his worst enemy, Lieutenant von Prince, who therefore executed him for his role as the commander at Rugaro? Whoever's plan it was, upon receiving word of Zelewski's approach, Mkwawa quickly assembled approximately 2,000 (Prince claims it was anywhere from three to five thousand) Hehe warriors and moved to the location near Rugaro with at least as many Bena auxiliaries held in reserve. The latter were engaged protecting the actual village of Lula-Rugaro in the event that *Nyundo's* column was able to fight its way through the ambush. It was agreed that a signal in the

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<sup>189</sup> Author's interview with Alfred Stefan Myota Kwaganise, 17 August 2005. I was assisted by Francis Kitime's son, Richard Kitime of Iringa.

<sup>190</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 16f. It is difficult to say with any certainty which of Mkwawa's generals were present, but his most important commanders were: Ngosi Ngosi Mwa Mugumba, Mpangile (his brother), Muhamike Mwamuyinga, Mbwana Mwa Lalika, Sakaligida Mwautenga, Kongoke Mabohola Mwamuyinga, Malimbila Mwauyinga, and Kaleka Nagana. Private Papers of Francis Kitime.

<sup>191</sup> Bernd Arnold's informant, Charles Mwabulambo, told him that the ambush was devised by Mpangile.

<sup>192</sup> Alfons Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes. Erinnerungen an mein Missionsleben in Deutsch-Osafrika* (St. Ottilien, Oberbayern: St. Ottilien, 1899), 53-61.

form of a gunshot would the unleash the Hehe hiding along either side of the path towards Kalenga in an area where it was well nigh impossible to see, much less form a firing circle. European block formation and fire discipline *en masse*, often so decisive in engagements with indigenous peoples, could actually be transformed into a disadvantage in East Africa. The self-styled “conquistador” and founder of German East Africa, Carl Peters, would later note in a letter of 23 November 1891 to Governor von Soden that it was actually only through pure luck that a disaster like that at Rugaro had not befallen German forces earlier, as their training was entirely oriented towards fighting in tight, orderly formations. But for the reasons already outlined by Zelewski himself, they generally marched single file, meaning that their combat training was worse than useless, as they were in no way used to taking their own initiative and fighting as individuals.<sup>193</sup> The *Askari*, while undoubtedly proficient at killing as indicated by their

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<sup>193</sup> BAB, R1001/279, 45f. “Ich habe mich gewundert, daß bei der öffentlichen Diskussion der Uhehe-Katastrophe von keiner Seite hingewiesen worden ist, daß in derselben doch vernehmlich eine Kritik des Wißmann’schen Schutztruppen-Systems geliefert ist. Zelewski war, vom preußischen Standpunkte aus gesehen, sicherlich ein reichlich so gutturaler Offizier als Wißmann; hier in Afrika, aber, in Bezug auf die Schutztruppe ein größerer Wißmann als dieser selbst. Er ging in der eingeschlagenen Richtung eben noch einen Schritt weiter. Aber auch Wißmann wird doch nicht bestreiten wollen, daß Zelewski’s Vorgehen genau seinen Prinzipien entsprach. Als Wißmann die zweite Matachembe-Expedition ausschickte, ließ er sein Leute im Kompagnie-Exerzieren drillen, obwohl sie in ein Terrain kamen, wo alles Andere, nur kein kompagniemäßiges Operieren möglich war, auf ein Terrain nämlich, won Einem hinter dem Anderen zu marschieren hat, im Gänsemarsch, wo demnach die Gewöhnung an Kompagnie-Exerzieren nicht nur nichts nützen konnte, sondern schaden mußte, weil es die Leute noch mehr des individuellen Vorgehen entwöhnte. Auch hat keine der Wißmann’schen Expeditionen gegen Binnenafrikaner (von Simra, woe in klares Angriffsobjekt gegeben war, abgesehen) ein klareres Resultat gehabt als die Zelewski’sche. An allen Punkten haben sie zurückkehren müssen, und wenn eine Katastrophe erspart blieb, so war dies wirklich bloßer Zufall! Die Herren glauben eben immer daß die Sicherheit des Erfolges hier in den Waffen und ihrem reglementsmäßigen Drill liegt [indeed, often this was true], während derselbe doch nur durch ein Eingehen auf die individuellen örtlichen Umstände und ein Reagieren gegen dieselben zu erzielen ist.”

performance against the so-called Arabs the year before, were quite simply not trained to respond to an attack of the sort that occurred at Rugaro.<sup>194</sup>

And so it was that at about 7am on 17 August 1891, the Hehe ambushed the German expedition, nearly annihilating the entire force. The deadly breechloaders (Mauser M71s), machine guns, and artillery of the German column, so often the decisive factor in warfare between Europeans and Africans, proved on this occasion to be almost useless.<sup>195</sup> As noted, Zelewski in his arrogance had ignored the advice of his guides about Hehe envelopment tactics, and he had neglected to send patrols along the column's line of advance, which at Rugaro was so narrow that they could only march single-file, their view on both sides obscured by bushes and boulders.<sup>196</sup> The Hehe troops rushed the column from cover only thirty paces away: "The enemy was so quickly in our ranks that the soldiers could only fire once or twice."<sup>197</sup> Only four Germans, fifty *Askari*, and

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<sup>194</sup> See also Ernst Nigmann, *Felddienstübungen für farbige (ostafrikanische) Truppen* (Dar es Salaam: Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung Verlag, 1910). To be fair to Zelewski, most contemporary observers shared his smug opinion about warfare against Africans. "In the Wissmann-led engagements, the Arabs were estimated as worthy opponents and...more often than not the natives of the interior fled the field of battle...Zelewski, like many others, thought it impossible that even the Hehe would dare risk attacking a large column on the march." Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 112.

<sup>195</sup> The imperial historian V.G. Kiernan offered a succinct analysis of this disparity in reference to the British conquest of northern Nigeria in 1900: "Lugard sent a strong detachment to educate them with a rocket tube and five machine-guns, the equivalent for such a people of an atomic raid on a modern country." Such overwhelming displays of force became so common that in 1906 the Colonial Office forbade expeditions merely for the purpose of "teaching the natives the efficacy of the maxim." V. G. Kiernan, *Colonial Empires and Armies 1815-1960* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 100.

<sup>196</sup> Hugold Felix von Behr, "Der Kampf gegen die Wahehe," *Militär-Wochenblatt* 77 (1892): 422-27.

<sup>197</sup> Bericht des Leutnants Tettenborn an Gouverneur v. Soden, *Deutscher Reichs-Anzeiger*, 9 Oktober 1891.

thirty porters made it back to the coast alive on 20 September.<sup>198</sup> One of the only survivors, von Heydebreck, depicted the engagement as follows in his written report on the disaster:

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of August the expedition set out at about 6am in the usual marching order... At the front marched the lead squad of about 6 Zulus [meaning Shangaani recruited from Portuguese East Africa], then came the commander [Zelewski], [the doctor] Dr. Buschow and Lieutenant von Pirch, then came the 7<sup>th</sup> Zulu Company, at the end of which marched NCO Schmidt and Hengelhaupt the gunsmith, and then came the artillery: cannon, Sergeant Tiedemann, artillery officer Herrlich and artillery NCO Wutzer, and then me [von Heydebreck]. Behind me came Lieutenant von Zitewitz, the 5<sup>th</sup> Sudanese Company and Sergeant von Tiedewitz, then the medical helper Hemprich and the porters, in which were scattered about 60 men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company, then a contiguous portion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company with Lieutenant von Tettenborn and sergeant Kay along with 20 heads of cattle and 60 goats under the cover of 12 men of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company...

This was the usual “geese formation” described by Zelewski and later derided by Carl Peters. At Around 7am the column arrived at what would become the battlefield of Rugaro:

Just as the column had marched far enough for the artillery to be surrounded by the bush on both sides, Lieutenant Zitewitz shot at an eagle. This shot had the effect of a signal, immediately after it 5-10 shots from so-called Shenzi Rifles fired<sup>199</sup>, and suddenly the war cry of the Wahehe resounded, who we saw at a distance of about 30 paces running at a dash down from the outcropping to the left. Their number was monstrous; as far as one could see the entire ridge was covered by them. Lieutenant von Zitewitz and I immediately took our rifles from the boys and fired. Simultaneously the column began to fire, but the attack happened so quickly and unexpectedly that the thick heaped salvoes fired at point blank range had so little an effect on the fury of the attack that the Sudanese of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company were hurled back into the bush, from which they individually fired shots backwards. The confusion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Company was considerably worsened by the fact that the donkeys of the artillery

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<sup>198</sup> Prince, 307.

<sup>199</sup> These were muzzle loaders of indigenous production. The shots were fired by Mkwawa’s elite troops, his elephant hunters.

together with their loads of cannon and munitions broke into flight back down the path.<sup>200</sup>

At this point von Heydebreck was wounded and fell into unconsciousness, but his report continues:

The entire sequence of events up to this moment had played itself out in two to three minutes. I know that before I was wounded, the Sudanese had already fled at breakneck speed into the bush after having fired off maybe two shots... For Lieutenant, me, and the 5<sup>th</sup> company the matter was decided in our favor at the first moment of the attack since we saw the enemy coming at us, even if only at 30 paces, and we therefore were able to return fire. All those that found themselves among the bushes were completely surprised. If I am not mistaken, I heard Sergeant Tiedemann say he had been wounded before he had the chance to fire.<sup>201</sup> In any case, it was not possible to see further than five paces into the bush from the path. Also no one could have escaped in the direction of our march because it was precisely there that the main force of the Hehe must have been. It is apparent that their intention was to attack us only once the entire column had disappeared into the bush. They therefore definitely had occupied a stretch of the path in front of us that was the same length as our column. They knew the entire length of the column precisely after days of observation. The thwarting of their plan and thereby the survival of a part of our expedition was only caused by the coincidental shot of Lieutenant von Zitewitz.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Recounting the same sequence of events, NCO Wutzer stated: "... und gleichzeitig sprangen links seitwärts aus dem Grase eine große Anzahl Wahehe mit Geheul auf nuns los. Hierdurch wurden die Esel scheu gemacht, so daß sie in wildem Galopp theils nach rechts, theils zurück davon liefen, da die zwischen ihnen marschierenden Soldaten zu ihrer Selbstvertheidigung zum Gewehr griffen und sich um die Esel nicht mehr kümmerten." Unteroffizier Wutzer, BAB, R1001/279, 160. See also Adams, 28.

<sup>201</sup> "I saw Sergeant Tiedemann wounded with by the stab of a spear to his abdomen while he was trying to unfasten a Maxim Gun from a donkey." Ombascha Tscheka. BAB, R1001/279, 162.

<sup>202</sup> Report on the destruction of the Zelewski-Expedition, BAB, R1001/279, 154-6.





\*View of the ridge to the left of the column from which the Hehe attacked (photo by author)

As to the death of Commander Zelewski, Tom von Prince later wrote, “As was depicted to me later...by Wahehe eyewitnesses, he defended himself with his revolver and shot down three men, when a Mhehe stabbed him in the back. This Mhehe was approximately 16 years old and received from Quawa three cattle as a decoration.”<sup>203</sup> Thus ended the life and career of *Nyundo*, stabbed in the back while riding on a donkey by one of the Hehes’ “mere spears.” The commander of the *Schutztruppe* for East Africa did not survive beyond the first two minutes of the engagement.

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<sup>203</sup> Prince, 306. The Mhehe’s name was Muvangulumemile mwa Mpunza. Redmayne, “The Hehe,” 51.





\*The spot where Zelewski was killed as shown to us by Alfred Stefan Myota Kawaganise (photo by author)

But the battle dragged on longer than the two or three minutes von Heydebreck witnessed before he fell unconscious. “According to the testimony of Wahehe that participated in the struggle, the battle did not end as quickly as the Europeans in the rear of the column assumed, instead the broken line continued to defend itself in small groups until 10:30am and killed many enemies [Wahehe].”<sup>204</sup> Worse still for the Hehe, the rear of the column did not fall into the trap and was able to form a defensive position in an abandoned tembe (hut) on a hill just east of where the main detachment of the column was destroyed. In 1894 Prince could still see the tembe in which a portion of the *Expeditionskorps*

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<sup>204</sup> Wilhelm Arning, “Die Wahehe (Schluß),” in *Mittheilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, ed. Dr. Freiherr von Danckelmann, Vol. 10 (1897): 54.

hid itself. Firing their M71s from behind cover, the *Askari* inflicted horrific casualties on the Hehe, who made repeated attempts to storm the hill and take the tembe. After regaining consciousness, von Heydebreck observed:

It was Murgan Effendi [Effendi was a rank for indigenous officers], the black officer of the Sudanese, who along with about 10 men managed to make his way back along our original path of march... The Sudanese discovered a single small house built out of lime with a flat roof near where I lay. I moved into this [tembe] and ordered shooting holes to be broken in the walls... I was attacked several times by Wahehe detachments, but the Sudanese continued to fire with great calm and thereby inflicted numerous losses on the enemy.<sup>205</sup>

It seems likely that the vast majority of the Hehes' casualties were suffered in this attempt to dislodge and kill Heydebreck and the other members of the rear of the column who had escaped the ambush. He, three other Germans, 50 *Askari*, and 30 porters were the only survivors out of the column; 10 Europeans, 290 *Askari*, 200 porters, 2 machine guns, and 300 small-arms were lost. As for the Hehes' losses, it is difficult to tell with any precision how many Hehe died that day. We do know that these losses were indeed severe, so severe in fact that Mkwawa forbade the traditional period and ceremonies of mourning, most likely afraid of the effect this would have on the morale of his subjects and vassals.<sup>206</sup> As Redmayne also notes, most Hehe that know anything about what happened at Rugaro state that Mkwawa forbade mourning until two years later, when he finally ordered the brewing of beer and the slaughter of cattle for a mourning feast.<sup>207</sup> One contemporary German observer claimed that "[t]he losses of the

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<sup>205</sup> BAB, R1001/279, 155f.

<sup>206</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 17.

<sup>207</sup> Redmayne, "Mkwawa...", 420.

Hehe were such, as they themselves say, that their wives did not sing victory songs in spite of the great victory, but instead had let loose cries of anguish.”<sup>208</sup> The local missionary, Alfons Adams, concurred: “[t]he loud cries of the grieving wives supposedly were not dampened for an entire month.”<sup>209</sup> Contemporary estimates of Hehe losses suggest that they suffered approximately 700 casualties, while many modern scholars like Bernd Arnold and Erick Mann claim that the number was closer to two or three hundred (which would still be over a tenth of Mkwawa’s core forces).

In his *Mukwava na kabila lake*, Michael Musso offers several reasons why the losses were so severe. The “trap” closed far too soon due to the coincidental shot of Lieutenant von Zitewitz, and Musso argues that this gave the *Askari* time and opportunity to deploy machine guns, but this was not the case, even during the struggle at the tembe. The fact remains, however, that when used in tight formations and particularly from behind cover the breechloader *Jägerbüchse* M 71 was a deadly weapon. It fired an 11mm, 390 grain soft lead bullet at over 1,400 feet per second, which was large and powerful enough to remove limbs or heads and inflicted massive wounds to the torso.<sup>210</sup> When fitted with the eight-round tubular magazine below the barrel, as later models were, it represented the cutting edge of firearms technology at that time.<sup>211</sup> More often than not, the

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<sup>208</sup> Arning, “Die Wahehe (Schluß),” 54.

<sup>209</sup> Adams, 46f.

<sup>210</sup> By way of comparison, modern rifle bullets, such as the M16’s 5.56mm round, tend to weigh only about 60 grains and are about half the diameter of the 11mm Mauser round.

<sup>211</sup> For a more detailed discussion of firearms in the German colonies, see Reinhard Klein-Arendt, “‘Bautz! Schuß durch den Ast und durch den Kerl...’ Der Einsatz moderner Infantriawaffen gegen

Germans in East Africa and their African mercenaries also tended to use *dumdum* bullets which while specifically illegal for use against fellow Europeans, were the norm for use against “savage” opponents.<sup>212</sup> *Dumdum* rounds, whose name originally derives from the Dum Dum factory outside of Calcutta in British India, were either hollow-points or had a soft lead core designed to expand dramatically upon impact, thereby creating far more vicious wound channels that—if the victim was lucky enough to survive in the first instance—did not heal well and created an even higher risk of infection. From the reports of surviving Germans, one can discern several reasons why they were able to escape and thereby inflict high losses on the Hehe. Lieutenant Tettenborn claimed: “[t]heir chief Kuawa and their leader Mrawatu had fallen. It is only to this situation of leaderlessness that I attribute our lucky escape.”<sup>213</sup> While the notion that Mkwawa died at Rugaro is patently false, it is true that both “mayors” of the city Kalenga, Ngosi Ngosi and Mtemiuma, were among the dead.<sup>214</sup> Alfred Stefan Myota Kawaganise, again seconded by Francis Kitime, claims that one of the most important of

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afrikanische Widerstandsbewegungen in Deutsch Ostafrika,” in *Die (koloniale) Begegnung: AfrikanerInnen in Deutschland 1880-1945, Deutsche in Afrika 1880-1918*, eds. Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst and Reinhard Klein-Arendt (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003), 171-91. See also Ernst Nigmann’s manual of the training and effective use of *Askari* in combat with indigenous opponents, *Felddienstübungen für farbige (ostafrikanische) Truppen* (Dar es Salaam: Verlag von der Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung, 1910).

<sup>212</sup> See Lindqvist, 52 and Trutz von Trotha, “‘The Fellows Can just Starve’, On Wars of ‘Pacification’ in the African Colonies of Imperial Germany and the Concept of ‘Total War’,” in *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914*, eds. Manfred F. Boemke, Roger Chickering, and Stig Förster (Washington: the German Historical Institute, 199), 433.

<sup>213</sup> BAB, R1001/279, 96.

<sup>214</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 16f. Mrawatu was most likely a Swahili rendering of Malavanu, the subordinate ruler of Image, who in actuality died a few years before the Battle of Rugaro. Redmayne, “Mkwawa...,” 420

Mkwawa's generals died. This was most likely Ngosi Ngosi Mwa Mugumba, an important subordinate ruler of Kalenga and a key member of Mkwawa's command staff.<sup>215</sup> According to Kawaganise, who lives in the nearby village of Lugalo (the modern name of Lula-Rugaro), people still come to the place where Ngosi Ngosi died as if it were a site of pilgrimage. The loss of Ngosi Ngosi was a grave one for the Hehe, and those who had to inform Mkwawa of his death were so ashamed and afraid of his potential reaction that they lied and said he had died en route, killed by wild animals.<sup>216</sup>



\* Alfred Stefan Myota Kawaganise in front of the place where General Ngosi Ngosi supposedly was dragged to die (photo by author)

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<sup>215</sup> Ngosi Ngosi's death is also noted by Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 16-17.

<sup>216</sup> Author's interview with Alfred Stefan Myota Kwaganise, 17 August 2005.

Further complicating the Hehes' ability to pursue and wipe out the last remnant of the column was the fact that the fleeing baggage mules and porters were a great temptation to the Hehe warriors, and the opportunity for plunder made the discipline of many evaporate.<sup>217</sup> Nigmann noted that between this looting and the need to care for a large number of their own wounded, it was difficult for the Hehe to engage in a protracted, relentless pursuit in the manner experienced by British Redcoats in 1879 as they fled the hill at Isandhlwana and were methodically cut down. "A close, energetic pursuit of the retreating debris of the Zelewski expedition was not possible since the Wahehe were fully occupied with their own heavy losses and were quite despondent in spite of their great success... Their scouts observed, that is to say reported, the marching off of the troop, otherwise nothing happened."<sup>218</sup> Whatever the reason for their escape, the remaining "debris" of the column reached the coast over a month later on 20 September 1891, a mere shattered remnant of what had been the most powerful column of the dreaded, hitherto undefeated *Schutztruppe*.

For the once unbeatable *AvaDaliki*, this was to be the only defeat ever suffered by the Germans in East Africa, and every officer in the colony vowed thereafter to wage a campaign of vengeance against the Hehe. The annihilation of the Zelewski column likewise caused an uproar in the metropolis and an

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<sup>217</sup> "Auf der Höhe angekommen hatte ich etwa folgendes Bild vor Augen: nach rechts davonlaufende Soldaten, die nach rückwärts Schüsse abgaben, entlaufende Träger, die ihre Lasten weggeworfen hatten, viele Wahehe, damit beschäftigt, unsere Lasten mit ihren Speeren aufzuschneiden und damit das Weite suchend." Von Tettenborn, BAB, R1001/279, 157.

<sup>218</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 17.



acrimonious debate in the Reichstag.<sup>219</sup> The official newspaper of the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (German Colonial Society), the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, acknowledged the defeat as nothing less than a catastrophe for the East African colony: “The 17th of August 1891 will always count as one of the most unfortunate days in the history of our colonial wars, because since the beginning of our colonial policy no day has cost as many sacrifices as this one, upon which the Expedition Corps of the German *Schutztruppe*, which made up a fifth of our entire military strength in East Africa, was rubbed out.”<sup>220</sup> Governor von Soden, however, was under extreme pressure from Berlin to keep costs in bounds, and he vetoed any campaigns of revenge, a position he maintained until his departure 18 months later.<sup>221</sup> This order was ignored by officers in the field and by his successor for reasons that will be discussed in the next chapter.

The next chapter will discuss the period between the Battle of Rugaro and the siege of Kalenga by Governor von Schele (August 1891-September 1894), a time of indecisive skirmishing and confusing, erratic diplomacy on all sides. Both the Germans and the Hehe sought to draw other societies and other regions into the war, a situation that potentially threatened German control of not only the southern highlands but of the colony as a whole. Indeed, the Germans would have to deal with the Hehes’ neighbors one by one, either by winning them over

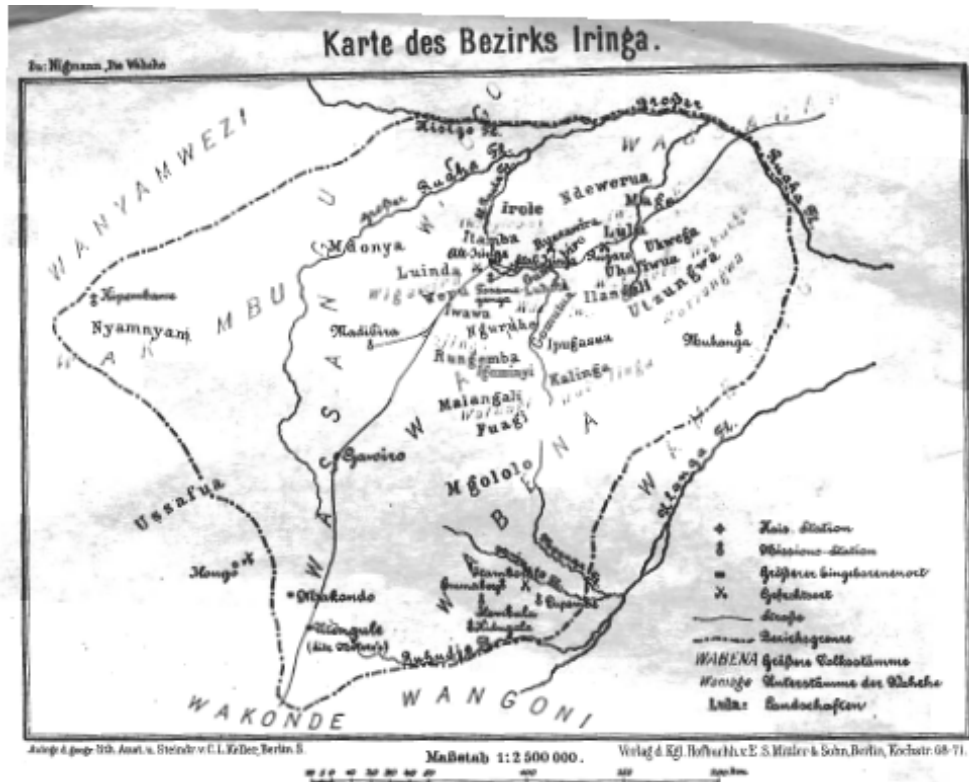
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<sup>219</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*, Bd. 120, 1892.

<sup>220</sup> “Ein Unglückstag für die deutsch-ostafrikanische Schutztruppe,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 19 September 1891.

<sup>221</sup> *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages* 1895 Bd. 120, 4578.

to the emerging colonial project or by ending their independence with the ruthless application of armed force.



<sup>222</sup> Map of Iringa district (Uhehe) and surrounding areas. Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, pullout at end of text.



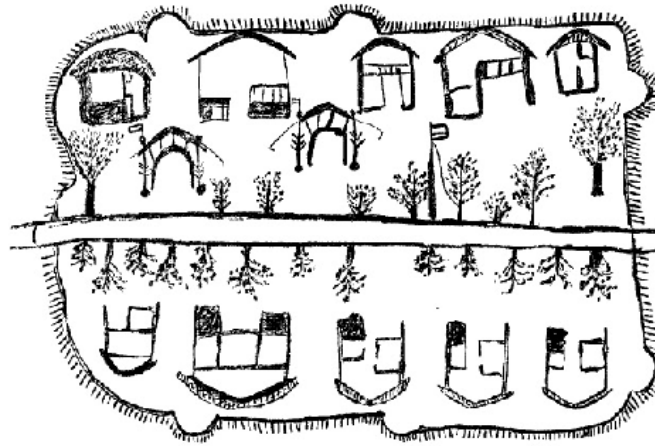


Abb. Die Boma von Mchulda

Barbari

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#### Chapter IV: Stalemate and the Logic of Conquest: From Rugaro to Kalenga (1892-1894)

*As soon as their goods were taken out of their houses, they began making noise. They ran along side and said: if anyone enters our house, we will strike him down with our spear. To this Bwana Bumiller responded: I demand that...someone...come here and bring me a small gift. If you all do not do this, I will lay waste to your entire country with fire because I do not fear your spears... Just my two rifles would suffice to conquer an entire country for myself.*

- Selim bin Abakar<sup>224</sup>

*When we depict Wahehe, Mafiti, and others with moral indignation as murderers, cattle thieves, and highwaymen, it becomes difficult for them to see the difference between us and themselves other than the color of [our] skin, better weapons, and high-sounding phrases.*

-Governor Freiherr von Soden, 1891<sup>225</sup>

The destruction of the Zelewski contingent was the worst—and some would say only—defeat ever suffered by the Germans in East Africa, and every officer in the colony vowed thereafter to wage a campaign of vengeance against the Hehe. The annihilation of the Zelewski column was greeted with horror and astonishment in

<sup>223</sup> Karl Weule, "Ostafrikanische Eingeborenen-Zeichnungen: Psychologische Einblicke in die Künstlerseele des Negers," in *Ipek: Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* 2 (1926): between 96 and 97.

<sup>224</sup> Selim bin Abakar, "Meine Reise nach Nyassa," in *Schilderungen der Suaheli von Expeditionen v. Wissmanns, Dr. Bumillers, Graf v. Götzens, und Anderer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1901), 95-6.

<sup>225</sup> Von Soden an Reichskanzler von Caprivi, 19 October 1891, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BAB), R1001/280, 14.

the metropolis, and bitter debate followed in the Reichstag.<sup>226</sup> As quoted in the previous chapter, the official newspaper of the German Colonial Society expressed its shock and disgust that “mere tribesman” could wipe out a fifth of the colony’s entire military in a single morning.<sup>227</sup> This loss should be seen as particularly severe when one remembers not only the small numbers of *Schutztrupp* on the ground in East Africa, but also the scant financial resources made available to them from the parliament and government in Berlin. As much as metropolitan authorities and officers on the ground wanted to punish the Hehe as soon as possible, however, it would in fact take over three years for the Germans to decisively strike against Mkwawa’s empire. It would take a change in leadership, the rebuilding of the Schutztruppe with new recruits from outside and inside the colony, and the pacification of other opponents to colonial rule elsewhere in German East Africa before “punitive devastation” could be inflicted on Uhehe. This chapter focuses on events after Rugaro, when the struggle between the Hehe and the Germans shifted to a creeping war of position as the Germans methodically created boma “garrison oases” along the edges of Uhehe. The period culminates in the governorship of von Schele and his systematic campaign to defeat all the states bordering Uhehe, thereby encircling it and preparing it for invasion. This “final,” massive campaign against the Hehe was intended to storm and destroy the Kalenga (also referred to as Kuirenga and Kuiringa) fortress near the present-day town of Iringa, an operation that was

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<sup>226</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages* (hereafter *Stenographische Berichte*), Bd. 120, 1892.

<sup>227</sup> “Ein Unglückstag für die deutsch-ostafrikanische Schutztruppe,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 19 September 1891.

supposed to serve as an overwhelming display of German power that would end Hehe resistance once and for all, and it is the subject of the next chapter.

The three years after Rugaro and before the siege of Kalenga can be characterized as an uneasy and at times bloody strategic stalemate between two rival conquest states—the Germans and the Hehe—during which neither side was able to gain decisive advantage over the other. The events of this confusing, violent period between August 1891 and September 1894 highlight several of the aspects emphasized in chapters through three: the competitive world of “big men” in East Africa; the fluid, unstable matrix of intra-African politics in the southern highlands; the German desire to concentrate the means of violence in the hands of the emerging and at this point still fragile colonial state; and the multiple, overlapping circuits of violence that created an environment in which brutality and atrocity by the colonizers was not only not punished, but was in fact rewarded and justified by those in authority. This chapter will first examine the overall strategic and political situation in the colony in the wake of the Battle of Rugaro, then will move on to discuss the goals and priorities of the Germans and the Hehe respectively, as well as highlighting the context that defined their policies. From there the narrative will move to the engagements and campaigns of the period between the Battles of Rugaro and Kalenga, particularly after the beginning of the tenure of the hawkish new governor, Friedrich Radbod Freiherr von Schele, in September 1893.

## Strategic and Administrative Situation after the “Zelewski catastrophe”: German Priorities, Policies, and Constraints

As discussed in chapter one, German authority in East Africa was always tenuous at best. They had only a handful of personnel to “control” a million square kilometers of hostile territory. Before the battle of Rugaro, the *Schutztruppe* had had only approximately 1,200 men at their disposal, and that engagement had wiped out about a fourth of that number.<sup>228</sup> Many of the *Askari* who fell at Rugaro were members of the original *Wissmanntruppe* that had pacified the coast—these Sudanese and “Zulu” (actually Shangaani mercenaries from Portuguese East Africa) troops formed the core of German forces and were difficult to replace.<sup>229</sup> This lack of forces had always made the Germans dependent on the staged, theatrical display of violence as a form of deterrent. As the scholar Michael Pesek has convincingly argued, their administrative and military policy was one of impressing and awing through violence, which yielded both physical and symbolic effects.<sup>230</sup> Trutz von Trotha likewise argues that, contrary to theories which state that colonial violence is somehow uneconomical

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<sup>228</sup> Before Rugaro the *Schutztruppe* consisted of 10 officers, 32 NCOs, and 1,200 African mercenaries, the majority of whom *Reichskommissar* Wissman had recruited in Cairo. Friedrich von Schele, *Über die Organisation der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe in Deutsch-Ostafrika und die kriegerischen Operationen daselbst während der Jahre 1893/94*, supplement to the *Militär-Wochenblatt*, vol. 9, 1896, ed. Generalmajor von Estorff (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1896), 442. The *Schutztruppe* never had more than 160 German officers and NCOs and 1,600 *Askari* during the conquest phase of the 1890 to control an area twice the size of Imperial Germany.

<sup>229</sup> Tanzania National Archive, Dar es Salaam (hereafter TNA), G/2/2 and G/2/3 on German recruitment efforts outside the colony. Even two years later, the new governor, von Schele, was unable to get sufficient recruits from Sudan by way of Egypt (the primary source for Wissmann’s original ‘*Wissmanntruppe*’ in 1889-90). Von Schele an Reichskanzler von Caprivi, 25 September 1893, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BAB), Reichskolonialamt (R)1001/283, 145.

<sup>230</sup> Michael Pesek, *Koloniale Herrschaft in Deutsch-Ostafrika: Expeditionen, Militär und Verwaltung seit 1880* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2005), 195.

or “inefficient” or a sign of some sort of German propensity to tend towards excess, violence and massacre are both inherent to the colonial project and an economical way of establishing authority in contexts like that of the southern highlands:

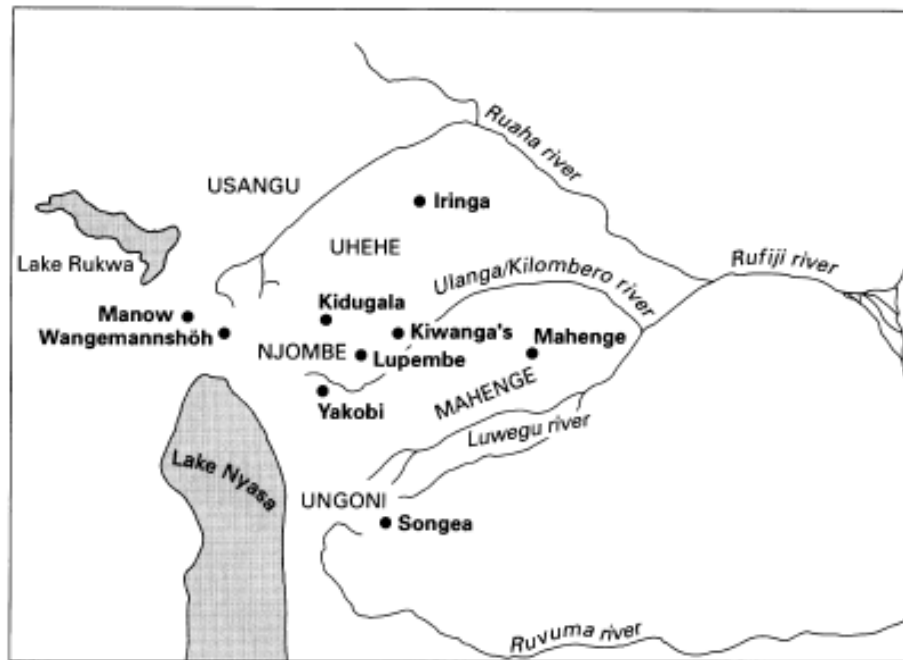
Violence is an extremely economical means of rule in the face of scant resources. Violence is very convincing. It is simple and obvious. There are no communication problems. The “language of violence” needs no translation—and this applies particularly to a world in which the colonial conquerors could make themselves understood in meetings with Africans only when they were accompanied and assisted by interpreters. In the language of violence, conquerors can express themselves directly and may also know that they have been understood.<sup>231</sup>

This had been Carl Peter’s doctrine in the 1880s and again when he was the district officer at Kilimanjaro, and it would be the policy of Governor Friedrich von Schele in 1893 and 1894. It is precisely the centrality of this policy of intimidation that made the disaster at Rugaro so dangerous for the Germans, as it fatally undermined their credibility throughout the colony and in the southern highlands in particular. Indeed, von Prince and others blamed Mkwawa’s success for the intransigence of Isike at Tabora (to whom we will return in this chapter), “Sultan” of the powerful Nyamwezi polity of Unyanyembe. Ernst Nigmann, the semi-official chronicler of the *Schutztruppe* in East Africa and longtime head of what would become the Iringa garrison, noted that the Hehe victory had dramatically increased their already formidable reputation, while at the same time

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<sup>231</sup> Trutz von Trotha, “‘The Fellows Can just Starve’, On Wars of ‘Pacification’ in the African Colonies of Imperial Germany and the Concept of ‘Total War’,” in *Anticipating Total War: The German and American Experiences, 1871-1914* (Washington: the German Historical Institute, 199), 422. See also Trotha’s discussion of massacre as administrative policy in Togo in *Koloniale Herrschaft: Zur soziologischen Theorie der Staatsentstehung am Beispiel “Schutzgebietes Togo”* (Tübingen: J. C. B Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994), 37-43.

severely damaging the prestige of the Germans.<sup>232</sup> It was imperative that the Germans avenge this defeat as soon as possible in order to restore their “martial honor” (*Waffenehre*)<sup>233</sup> and thereby restore the aura of invincibility that the Europeans supposedly enjoyed before Rugaro.



Map 1. The southern highlands of Tanzania.

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This need to display German “martial prowess”—meaning the colonial state’s willingness and ability to wield tremendous violence against local leaders and populations that did not comply with its wishes—was made all the more imperative by the nature of politics in the southern highlands (and of East Africa more generally). The realities of German manpower, resources, and local knowledge being what they were made the colonizers incredibly dependent on

<sup>232</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1911), 34.

<sup>233</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 46.

<sup>234</sup> Map from Jamie Monson, “Relocating Maji Maji: The Politics of Alliance and Authority in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, 1870-1918,” *Journal of African History*, 39 (1998): 100.

alliances with local “Big Men” like Merere III of the Sangu or the “Arab” slave-owning class of the Swahili coast.<sup>235</sup> Until they could prove otherwise, the Germans remained simply the latest in a series of interlopers that had violently inserted themselves into the political and economic landscape of Tanganyika. Like the Arabs and their Swahili allies in the 1830s-1870s and the Ngoni in the 1840s-1880s, they found that it was imperative that they make use of and incorporate local political structures. Where persuasion and/or offers of material gain were not sufficient, force would in theory accomplish the task. Indeed, Ngoni conquest and state-building in East Africa had been incredibly violent, but it had eventually created a tributary structure that was both stable and acceptable to local elites that before annexation had not considered themselves “Ngoni.” The Hehe conquest state worked in the same manner, annihilating those who would or could not be amalgamated into the emerging tributary pyramid and rewarding and creating ever-denser kinship relationships with those who would. The difference between the Germans and their predecessors—the *Mfecane* states and the Arab-Swahili alliance—was that the Germans were even more likely to recourse to violence and massacre. They were far less deft at understanding, much less utilizing, local political structures. Indeed, they often argued that the “natives” did not have any meaningful political organization at all.<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, it was far more difficult for them to integrate with local elites, particularly because what

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<sup>235</sup> Merere will be discussed below. For a discussion of the Germans complex relationship with the coastal Swahili elite, see See Jan Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa c. 1884-1914* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006).

<sup>236</sup> The *Kolonial-Lexicon* compiled by East African governor Heinrich Schnee does not even have an entry for indigenous politics, and the individual entries for specific African politics are, to put it mildly, highly contemptuous and saturated with evolutionary notions of African inferiority. See Heinrich Schnee, *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexicon* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1921).

had been a standard practice in the region—intermarriage and the incorporation of conquered elites into new “chiefly” lineages—was a practice that racial theorists were busy labeling as “race treason” or “race defilement” both in the colony and back in Germany.<sup>237</sup> The Germans’ near total ignorance of local languages, practices, and history (versus the Ngoni, who spoke a language rather similar to the Bena, Sangu, and Hehe) made them even more likely to recourse to sanguinary violence, and their (at least theoretical) formidable superiority in the technological means of violence meant that it was all too appealing to communicate their intentions through property destruction and demonstrative slaughter.

Much as many Germans wanted to engage in precisely this sort of a demonstration vis-à-vis the “impudent Hehe,” Governor Julius Freiherr von Soden, was under extreme pressure from Berlin to keep costs in bounds, and he vetoed any campaigns of revenge, a position he maintained until his departure two years later.<sup>238</sup> The Hehe state was to be contained and, if possible, neutralized through negotiation rather than war. Von Soden’s unwillingness to engage in costly military expeditions made him a rarity among the governors of German East Africa and had much to do with his background. He was the only civil

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<sup>237</sup> Much has been written on race and race phobia in the German context. See Woodruff Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate all the Brutes: One Man’s Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide* (New York: The New Press, 1996), and *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

<sup>238</sup> *Stenographische Berichte* 1892, Bd. 120, 4578. The Colonial Department of the Foreign Office had to submit the budget for *each* colony every year (a situation unique to the German colonies) to the Reichstag due to the latter’s control of the purse, which meant that the German *Schutzgebiete* were both a source of constant acrimonious parliamentary debate and were perpetually underfunded.



servant to serve as governor of the colony during the struggle with the Hehe—indeed, his predecessor von Wissmann and most his successors were officers drawn from the metropolitan military.<sup>239</sup> In contrast to the military careers of von Schele, von Wissmann, or von Liebert (his successors during the Hehe War), he

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<sup>239</sup> Kirsten Zirkel, “Military power in German colonial policy: the *Schutztruppen* and their leaders in East and South-West Africa, 1888-1918,” in *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c. 1700-1964*, ed. David Killingray and David Omissi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 97. See also Wolfgang Petter, “Das Offizierkorps der deutschen Kolonialtruppen, 1889-1918,” in *Das Deutsche Offizierkorps, 1860-1960*, ed. Hans Hubert Hofman, 163-74 (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1977). For the sequence and periods of service of governors in German East Africa, see <http://www.deutsche-schutzgebiete.de/deutsche-kolonien.htm>:

**Die Reichskommissare und Gouverneure des Schutzgebietes Deutsch-Ostafrika**

Amtszeit	Name	Lebensdaten
27.05.1885 -	Dr. Carl Peters, Reichskommissar	1856 - 1918
08.02.1888 08.02.1888 -	Herrmann von Wissmann, Reichskommissar	1853 - 1905
21.02.1891 14.02.1891 - 1891	Julius Freiherr von Soden, Gouverneur (1. Amtszeit)	1846 - 1921
1891	Rüdiger (provisorisch)	?
1891 - 15.09.1893	Julius Freiherr von Soden, Gouverneur (2. Amtszeit)	s.o.
15.09.1893 - 26.04.1895	Friedrich Radbod Freiherr von Scheele, Gouverneur	1847 - 1904
26.04.1895 - 03.12.1896	Herrmann von Wissmann, Gouverneur	s.o.
03.12.1896 - 12.03.1901	Eduard von Liebert, Gouverneur	1850 - 1934
12.03.1901 - 15.04.1906	Gustav Adolf Graf von Götzen, Gouverneur	1866 - 1910
15.04.1906 - 22.04.1912	Georg Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg, Gouverneur	1861 - 1935
22.04.1912 - 14.11.1918	Dr. Albert Heinrich Schnee, Gouverneur	1871 - 1949 <sup>239</sup>

had begun his career in the justice system of Württemberg, then served in the imperial consulates in Bucharest, Algiers, Canton, Havana, and St. Petersburg. Thereafter he served simultaneously in 1885 as the first governor of German Cameroon and the *Oberkommissar* of Togo.<sup>240</sup> He was also the only governor who was not Prussian and was therefore not inculcated in the Prussian military or administrative tradition. His only military service—a brief stint as a volunteer with the 4<sup>th</sup> Württemberg cavalry regiment during the Franco-Prussian War—had not been with the Prussian military. His career in the foreign service and extensive experience abroad meant that during his time in East Africa he always emphasized political and diplomatic solutions whenever possible. He had effectively been railroaded into authorizing the ill-fated Zelewski expedition in the summer of 1891, and thereafter until his departure in September 1893 he refused to let Tom von Prince and other officers engage in operations against the Hehe (orders which von Prince ignored, as will be discussed below). Shortly after the Rugaro debacle he told the Chancellor that he doubted whether “punitive expeditions” (*Stafexpeditionen*) were an effective way to create stable conditions in the colony, and that they would rather antagonize the indigenous population and provoke—rather than prevent—further resistance, an opinion that stood in stark contrast to the received wisdom among *Schutztruppe* officers that Africans only respected armed force and would never cease resistance until they felt

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<sup>240</sup> *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexikon*, ed. Heinrich Schnee (the last governor of German East Africa) (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1920), volume III, 369.

German authority “physically.”<sup>241</sup> Shortly after the battle of Rugaro, he ordered all station heads to proceed in a “diplomatic” rather than a “military-dictatorial” manner in relations with Africans and to engage in negotiations whenever possible.<sup>242</sup> He even noted in another dispatch to Chancellor von Caprivi that *Schutztruppe* expeditions were often scarcely distinguishable from the “plunder expeditions” (*Raubzüge*) of the Hehe—for which the latter were putatively being punished—at least from the perspective of Africans: “When we depict Wahehe, Mafiti, and others with moral indignation as murderers, cattle thieves, and highwaymen, it becomes difficult for them to see the difference between us and themselves other than the color of [our] skin, better weapons, and high-sounding phrases.”<sup>243</sup> Such sentiments were a rarity not only in German East Africa, but in colonial Africa in general.<sup>244</sup>

All claims of officers like von Prince or von Schele aside, the potential for a negotiated solution between the Hehe Empire and the German colonial state did

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<sup>241</sup> Von Soden an Reichskanzler von Caprivi, 18 October 1891, BAB, R1001/280, 9 and following.

<sup>242</sup> Von Soden an Schwesinger, 6 December 1891, BAB, R1001/274, 160 and *Stenographische Berichte*, Bd. 120, 1892, 4578.

<sup>243</sup> Von Soden an Reichskanzler von Caprivi, 19 October 1891, BAB, R1001/280, 14.

<sup>244</sup> Compare von Soden’s attitude with that of Colonel Callwell, the premier intellectual of colonial warfare in Great Britain: “The adoption of guerrilla methods by the enemy almost necessarily forces the regular troops to resort to punitive measures directed against the possessions of their antagonists. It must be remembered that one way to get the enemy to fight is to make raids on his property—only the most cowardly of savages and irregulars will allow their cattle to be carried off or their homes to be destroyed without making some show of resistance. Antagonists who will not even under such circumstances strike a blow, can only be dealt with by depriving them of their belongings or burning their dwellings... Uncivilized races attribute leniency to timidity. A system adapted to La Vendee is out of place among fanatics and savages, who must be thoroughly brought to book and cowed or they will rise again.” Colonel C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles & Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1906), 145-8.

exist. The Germans quickly reached local arrangements with the “Arabs” (meaning Muslim, Swahili speaking Africans) of the Tanganyikan coast in the wake of the so-called “Arab Revolt,” and much of the salaried German administration—the *Akidas* and *Jumbes*—was made up of Swahili elites that had reached an accommodation with the new German rulers. Often this was preferable to facing the increasing demands of their own enslaved populations.<sup>245</sup> Likewise, pragmatism dictated that the Germans reach a political accommodation with the sophisticated, highly centralized kingdoms of the Great Lakes region—Rwanda, Burundi, and Bukoba—which were incorporated with their territory and much of their authority intact into the colonial system as a German equivalent of “indirect rule.”<sup>246</sup> Such a solution could have been sought with the Mkwawa’s Hehe. Indeed, Mkwawa made repeated attempts to negotiate with the German administration rather than pressing the advantage his forces theoretically possessed in the wake of the destruction of the Zelewski column (for reasons discussed below). These negotiations went on for several months through various intermediaries sent by Mkwawa to the German stations on the coast and to the new capital at Dar es Salaam, but ultimately these discussions came to nothing in

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<sup>245</sup> See Jan Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa c. 1884-1914* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), 151-4 and Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), epilogue.

<sup>246</sup> Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 251-7. This form of governance would have fateful consequences in the decades after the German conquest, as the “Hamitic hypothesis” about a Tutsi “master race” began as an intellectual exercise to justify and solidify the authority of the Germans’ elite African allies in Rwanda and Burundi. See also René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996) and Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

large part because German officials doubted the sincerity of the Hehe “sultan” and because of the aforementioned general contempt and disregard Germans felt vis-à-vis African political structures.<sup>247</sup> This pattern of Hehe attempts at conciliation answered with German skepticism and refusal to negotiate in good faith would repeat itself in the period after the destruction of Kalenga. Whatever Governor von Soden might have wanted, most German officers were of the opinion that there could be no diplomatic solution with an African state that had inflicted such a humiliating defeat on a *Schutztruppe* column, and they acted accordingly. Lieutenant (and after the siege of Kalenga captain) Tom von Prince, who was the most important officer “on the ground” in the southwest portion of the colony, was explicit on this point: “From [the destruction of the Zelewski column] onwards, particularly as a member of the old expedition, my uninterrupted striving was directed at avenging the annihilation of this corps, and henceforth I established no station, led no expedition, engaged in no battle, did nothing official that would not somehow be connected with this goal.”<sup>248</sup>

The widespread desire among *Schutztruppe* officers aside for vengeance aside, Governor von Soden and the administrators and officers on the grounds had to contend with conflicting imperatives: on the one hand the fiscally bounded nature of German colonialism (in which the budgets of each individual colony were debated and approved by the Reichstag), especially before the colonial

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<sup>247</sup> Interview with Tanzanian Minister of Education (now Minister of Home Affairs) Joseph James Mungai, 25 August 2005; Rochus Schmidt, *Geschichte des Araberaufstandes in Ost-Afrika: seine Entstehung, seine Niederwerfung und seine Folgen* (Frankfurt a. Oder: Trowitzsch, 1892), 310 onwards; and Pesek, 196.

<sup>248</sup> Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 113.

economy was up and running, meant that von Soden and even von Schele had few resources with which to undertake an expedition. The acrimonious debates unleashed by the annihilation of the Zelewski column made clear how unwilling German parliamentarians were to contribute unlimited amounts of treasure to the pacification of East Africa.<sup>249</sup> On the other hand, the prestige of the *Schutztruppe* had been seriously tarnished, and their defeat by the Hehe meant that African political leaders were beginning to turn to open resistance elsewhere, particularly Isike's Nyamwezi at Tabora and the Mbunga Confederacy, which bordered Uhehe on the east and southeast. Terror and intimidation, so crucial as administrative tools in the early stages of colonialism, do not work when the "vast sea of *Neger*" is not intimidated. As one chief of the Sagara (who themselves had long been targets of Hehe raiding and intimidation) put it, "These people [the Hehe] were the only ones able to bathe the sand with the blood of the feared white foreigners whose far-reaching and deadly 'pipes of fire' no one was able to resist."<sup>250</sup> Von Prince likewise reports that due to the fact that the shattered remnant of the Zelewski expedition under Lt. Tettenborn passed through Usagara, the hitherto "harmless" Sagara "no longer held European superiority in high esteem."<sup>251</sup> Indeed, many villages adjacent to German boma continued to send Mkwawa and the Hehe Empire tribute up to the destruction of Kalenga, a direct

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<sup>249</sup> *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*, Bd. 120, 1892.

<sup>250</sup> Report to Fr. De Breck by unnamed Sagara village chief near Lalongu Mission by Kilossa, Leipzig Mission Central Archive (LMCA) Section IX, vol. 2, (2 September 1891), quoted in Erick J. Mann, *Mikono ya damu: "Hands of Blood": African Mercenaries and the Politics of Conflict in German East Africa, 1888-1904* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 137.

<sup>251</sup> Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 106.

affront to the Germans prestige, legitimacy, and—importantly—their ability to collect revenue.<sup>252</sup>

### **Strategic and Administrative Situation after the “Zelewski Catastrophe”: Hehe Priorities, Policies, and Constraints**

Many wonder why Mkwawa did not push his advantage after the battle at Lula-Rugaro—Erick Mann, Alison Redmayne, and other authors claim that Hehe casualties were too severe to do anything but go on the defensive. Indeed, Hehe forces did not attack the coast and did not mount any major operations against the Germans along their frontier (which the Germans were methodically encircling). Certainly, severe Hehe losses were one factor—Ernst Nigmann’s informants in the years immediately after the defeat of Mkwawa, as well as Redmayne’s informants and those consulted by the author state that losses at Rugaro were so severe that Mkwawa forbade the traditional mourning ceremonies out of a fear of demoralizing the survivors and his people as a whole.<sup>253</sup> The exact number of Hehe losses is disputed. Was it 300, 700, or 1,500? Lt. Tettenborn (one of the only survivors of the Rugaro disaster) claimed that the Hehe suffered over 3,000 casualties of which 700 were killed, but this estimate seems rather high

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<sup>252</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 46.

<sup>253</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Die Wahehe: Ihre Geschichte, Kult-, Rechts-, Kriegs- und Jagd-Gebräuche* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), 17 and Alison Redmayne, “Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968): 420. Her conclusion was also based on letters from Bonifas, Mkwawa’s son, to G. Gordon Brown in 1933 as part of the collection of material for his and A. McD. Bruce Hutt’s *Anthropology in Action: An Experiment in the Iringa District of the Iringa Province Tanganyika Territory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935). Author’s interview with Alfred Stefan Myota Kwaganise, 17 August 2005. I was assisted by Richard Kitime of Iringa.

considering the total number of Hehe participants at Rugaro.<sup>254</sup> The scholar Bernd Arnold estimates that it was closer to 200-300.<sup>255</sup> Whatever the number, it included many of Mkwawa's best troops, including general Ngosi Ngosi Mwa Mugumba, an important subordinate ruler of Kalenga and a key member of Mkwawa's command staff.<sup>256</sup>

It also seems likely that Mkwawa hoped his diplomatic overtures (which will be discussed in more detail below) to Isike's Nyamwezi, the Songea Ngoni, the Mbunga Confederacy, and others would help him forge an effective "anti-*Wazungu*" alliance. In this respect, there is a grain of truth to the Tanzanian nationalist accounts that portray Mkwawa as a "proto-national hero" who foresaw the need for regional unity against German encroachment years before others in the area would come to the same conclusion and join the Maji Maji Uprising of 1905. Had these efforts succeeded, the Germans would have conceivably faced a front stretching from Tabora in the west to Songea in the southeast, which would have effectively cut the colony in half. But it was not to be—the campaigns of the new governor, von Schele, in 1893 and 1894 made clear in a "language that needs no translation" the cost of collaborating with Mkwawa or resisting German authority, and the complex, fluid nature of politics in the southern highlands—so

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<sup>254</sup> Bericht von Tettenborn an Soden, 30. August 1891, *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* (the official publication of the German Colonial Department, hereafter *DKB*) 2 (1891): 435 and Von Tettenborn an Gouverneur von Soden, 30 August 1891, BAB, R1001/279, 96.

<sup>255</sup> Bernd Arnold, "Die Schlacht bei Rugaro (Tansania, Iringa). Verlauf der Kämpfe und Ursachen der Niederlage des Expeditionskorps der kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika," in *Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus in Afrika* "Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Peter Sebald," ed. Peter Heine and Ulrich van der Heyden (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlag, 1995), 97-8.

<sup>256</sup> Interview with Alfred Stefan Myota Kwaganise, 17 August 2005. Ngosi Ngosi's death is also noted by Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 16-17.



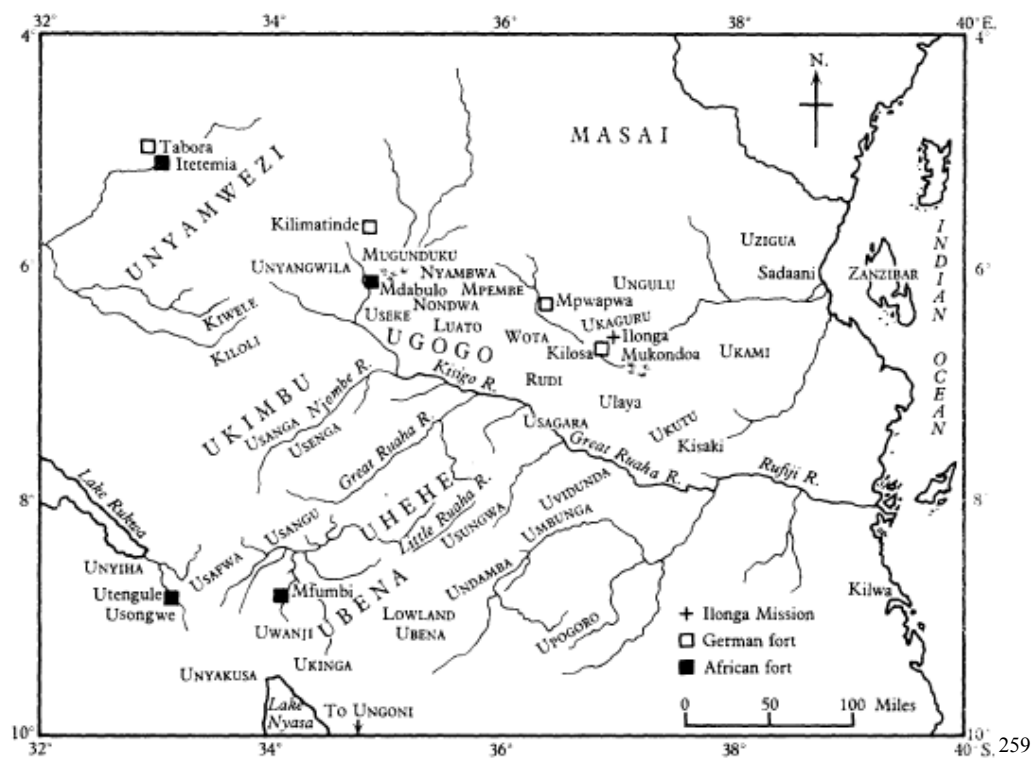
well described by Jamie Monson—did not lend itself to sweeping, permanent alliances.<sup>257</sup> This African political reality, one of temporary alliance by expediency and constant struggle for supremacy, was far more complicated and flexible than German observers gave credit, but the latter would over time be able to exploit these divisions to deadly effect.

Beyond these issues of grand strategy, the Hehe polity had to confront growing German encroachment from the north and east: this creeping *Avadaliki* (German in Kihehe) advance meant that the Hehe could potentially be cut off from the caravan route extending from Bagamoyo to Tabora. In order to maintain access to this lifeline of commerce, and therefore royal prestige, the Hehe continued raiding caravan traffic. Their push northward decades earlier had been motivated in large by the desire to tap into the coast-interior trade network as a source of slaves, money, weapons, and prestige. Indeed, the “strongman states” of the region had made raiding a fundamental economic activity upon which the emerging monarchies were dependent. Mkwawa also had to worry about the defection of his erstwhile “vassals” to the Germans. While the Battle of Rugaro had certainly driven home to the Kinga, Sagara, Bena and other “subject peoples” that Hehe hegemony was here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future, the growing number of German fortress strong-points along what the latter perceived to be the Hehe frontier offered these peoples new room to maneuver, if not totally out from under Hehe suzerainty at least in a manner that gave them more leverage

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<sup>257</sup> Jamie Monson, “Relocating...,” op. cit. and “Memory, Migration and the Authority of History in Southern Tanzania, 1860-1960,” *Journal of African History*, 41 (2000): 347-72.

against the Mkwawa “the butcher.”<sup>258</sup> The Germans were, after all, just the latest in a series of interlopers, and the Sagara and other historic victims of Hehe depredations saw in them the chance to restore their autonomy (in stark contrast to how the Germans viewed the situation: Africans accepting “protection” from the Germans were supposedly *ceding*, not *restoring*, their sovereignty). Both the Germans and the Hehe were locked in a deadly contest of power displays, competitive acquisition of “vassals,” and reciprocal massacre. The Hehe *Mfecane* state and the emerging German colonial conquest state would grind indecisively against one another for the next three years.



<sup>258</sup> For the Kinga view of these events, see George Park, *Twin Shadows: Moral Strategies of the Kinga of Southwest Tanzania* (Unpublished work available at <http://users.eastlink.ca/~gpark/>, 2001).

<sup>259</sup> Redmayne, 412.

### **Between Rugaro and Kalenga: The Conflict up to 1894 in Uhehe and Beyond**

Since they could not directly confront the Hehe state, the German colonial authorities began a steady process of encirclement. Governor von Soden sent Lt. Tom von Prince to the region to establish a series of new garrisons along the Hehe border, nominally to protect the caravan route and the Hehes' "harmless" neighbors such as the Gogo and the Sagara from Hehe "plunder expeditions."<sup>260</sup> In October of 1891, Prince established *Militärstation* Kilossa near Kondoa along the central caravan route. From here he hoped to prevent Hehe raiding into Usagara, which threatened both the all-important caravan trade towards the Great Lakes and the already severely tarnished reputation of the Germans among the Sagara, who were supposedly German allies.<sup>261</sup> Prince was adamant that the Germans had to behave as if the losses suffered at Rugaro were easy to replace in order to restore their aura of invincibility. Prince also informed the government in Dar that the Kilossa station would cut off the Hehes' access to the important trade goods that came in from the Swahili coast: gunpowder, cloth, raw iron, and wire.<sup>262</sup> As Glassman explains in *Feast and Riot*, these trade goods were the lifeblood of chiefly authority in this period, providing local elites and aspiring "Big Men" with the opportunities to demonstrate their power and to win new followers.<sup>263</sup> In reference to the Hehe and Mkwawa specifically, Edgar Winans

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<sup>260</sup> Militär-Stationen in Deutsch-Ostafrika, BAB, R1001/1027 (Station Ugogo) and R1001/1034 (Stationen Mpapua, Kilimatinde, Kilossa).

<sup>261</sup> Prince, 109. Also DKB 3 (1892): 146.

<sup>262</sup> DKB 3 (1892): 283.

<sup>263</sup> Glassman, introduction. See also Jeremy Presthold, "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *American Historical Review*, 109 (2004), 3, 755-81.

claims that the economy that Mkwawa inherited from his father Munyigumba was both highly predatory (like that of the neighboring Ngoni and Sangu) and highly dependent on access to the caravan trade, through the trade of slaves and ivory, the purchase of commodities, the charging of “tolls,” and—most infuriating to the Germans—through the raiding of caravan traffic by bands of Hehe “*ruga-rugas*” (armed robber bands).<sup>264</sup> Cutting the Hehe off from interaction with the caravan trade was tantamount to downgrading their status from “Empire” to just another community concentrated around a has-been Big Man, dozens of whom had risen and fallen in the decades before the 1890s.

While Prince’s men were building the Kilossa Station, a delegation from Mkwawa sought to begin negotiations, or at least a dialogue with them to see what their intentions were.<sup>265</sup> Prince felt that it was imperative to show the Sagara that the Germans considered it impertinent for the Hehe to even attempt to speak to them, and he claimed that it was against his convictions to negotiate with them at all.<sup>266</sup> Not only were they responsible for the humiliating destruction of the Zelewski column (of which Prince was supposed to be a part—Zelewski had sent him back to the coast with the 3rd company just before Rugaro), but according to him, “The negro lies far more than average; it cannot be doubted that

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<sup>264</sup> Edgar V. Winans, “Trade and Warfare in Uhehe in the Period 1850-1900,” *University Social Sciences Council Conference* (Nairobi: University of East Africa, December 8-12, 1969): 194-201 and Winans, “The Political Context of Economic Adaptation in the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika,” *American Anthropologist*, vol. 67, no. 2 (April 1965): 435-41. See also Aylward Shorter, “Nyungu-Ya-Mawe and the ‘Empire of the Ruga-Rugas’,” *The Journal of African history* vol. 9 no. 2 (196): 235-59.

<sup>265</sup> Interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005 and Michael Musso, *Mkwawa na kabila lake* (Arusha, Tanzania: East African Publications Limited, 1968), 59.

<sup>266</sup> Prince 112-4.

a lie comes more easily from [their] lips than the truth.... In *Schauri* [the local Swahili word for negotiation] it is a given that he lies.”<sup>267</sup>

During this dialogue, which closely resembled all previous and subsequent attempts at negotiation between the Hehe and the Germans, Prince demanded that the Hehe renounce any further operations outside what he and the government in Dar deemed to be the Hehe border before any other points could even be considered. They expected the Germans to negotiate with them as equals, a position that is not all that surprising considering the events of the previous August, when Mkwawa’s forces had decisively demonstrated their power in the region.<sup>268</sup> But Prince, like Zelewski, Schele, and most other officers of the *Schutztruppe* considered the Hehe to be “*Räuber*” (bandits) rather than representatives of a legitimate state or political authority. This criminalization of African opponents, which only served to exacerbate the general European contempt for African political structures, was the norm in dealing with “savages,” and it made serious discussions between the governments in Dar and Kalenga all but impossible.<sup>269</sup> This inability of the “man on the scene,” von Prince, to engage in any meaningful dialogue with Hehe representatives is made all the more tragic by the fact that Governor von Soden was simultaneously attempting to initiate talks with Mkwawa through Monseigneur de Courmont of the Holy Ghost

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<sup>267</sup> Prince, 115.

<sup>268</sup> Musso 58-9.

<sup>269</sup> For a discussion of the criminalization of “savage opponents” in official discourse, see David E. Omissi, *Air power and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force, 1919-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 108 and Matthew Carr, *The Infernal Machine: A History of Terrorism* (New York: The New Press, 2006), Chapter 4 “Savages.”

Missions (located near Ilonga and Morogoro). One of their priests, Father Toussaint did indeed travel into Uhehe several times in an attempt to bring the Hehe to the peace table.<sup>270</sup> He did his best to convince Mkwawa's subordinates that the Germans only wanted peace, but the actual behavior of the units stationed along the Hehe frontier made it manifestly obvious that they had other things in mind. And just as the Germans "reputation" (*Ansehen*)<sup>271</sup> had been severely damaged by the battle at Rugaro, Mkwawa stood to lose political credibility in the event that the Germans were allowed to deny the Hehe access to the central caravan route and—more threatening still—if they were able to station garrisons among people that were once vassals, tributaries, or targets of Hehe "requisitioning operations."

The Hehe therefore responded in late October with a series of raids that extended up to the Kilossa station itself, destroying Sagara villages and killing those Sagara unable to flee for their "collaboration" with the German invaders. Raids against the Wasagara, recounted with grisly detail by Prince, were probably motivated by the desire to punish them for working with the Germans, thereby offering a harsh example to anyone who dared do the same.<sup>272</sup> Prince was ordered to both protect the Sagara as much as possible from Hehe retribution and to further extend German power by building another garrison.<sup>273</sup> German punitive raids struck Hehe villages and those of their vassals (it was often

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<sup>270</sup> Redmayne 420 and interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005.

<sup>271</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 35.

<sup>272</sup> Prince, 114-20.

<sup>273</sup> Soden an Prince, 30 November 1891, BAB, (R)1001/280, 45.

impossible to tell which was which) southwest of Kilossa. As per usual in East Africa's nineteenth century, third parties like the Sagara (or the Bena on the Sangu-Hehe frontier) suffered most in these contests, which is why the era from arrival of the Ngoni to the end of the First World War is known to local Africans as one of continual slaughter and dislocation, even if the identity of the perpetrators continually revolved from Ngoni, to Arabs, to Hehe, to Germans, to—finally—the British.<sup>274</sup> In this case, the Hehe and the Germans were engaged in a tit-for-tat contest of massacre and village destruction intended to demonstrate which polity would have the right to gather tribute from the Sagara and from the caravans that passed through their territory. As Soden had warned shortly after Rugaro (see above), it must have been difficult for the Sagara, the Kinga, the Gogo, and other “neutral peoples” to differentiate between Hehe “plunder expeditions” (as the Germans always referred to them) and German ones. Indeed, one German directive to garrison heads notes that “because it is difficult at this early stage [before the official establishment of taxes] to buy the supplies we need from the surrounding peoples, it may be necessary to charge protection money [*Schutzgeld*] to secure necessary supplies.”<sup>275</sup> Many people were indeed evacuating areas where the Germans set up garrisons, as they had a voracious appetite for supplies for which they often could not pay due to the parsimoniousness of the government in Dar es Salaam. The term “protection

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<sup>274</sup> See the oral material gathered by James L. Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2005), Chapter 1, “Imagining a Private Space in an Era of War.”

<sup>275</sup> *DKB* 6 (1895): 446.

money” makes clear how fuzzy the line was between criminality, illegal (Hehe) violence, and legitimate (German) violence for all involved.

In the midst of this indecisive period of raiding and counter raiding, Prince managed to establish a second garrison in May of 1892 about 100 km southeast of Kilossa at Kisaki, which was explicitly designed as a launch-point for operations into Uhehe. Prince hoped to “drive back Hehe power” from Usagara for good, and he hoped the chain of forts from Mpwapwa (in German “Mpapua”) to Kilossa to Kisaki would suffice to contain any further Hehe expansion.<sup>276</sup> Prince intended to use the Kisaki garrison in conjunction with the units stationed at Kilossa to attack the Hehe and thereby make permanent their eviction from Usagara and impress on the Sagara, the Mbunga, and others that German power was not only here to stay, but it was on the march.<sup>277</sup> After quickly building the *boma* at Kisaki, Prince prepared for a “demonstration of power” (*Machtdemonstration*) against the Hehe, an operation that—as was so often the case in German East Africa and in colonial Africa generally—he decided to undertake on his own authority with the resources he had on hand.<sup>278</sup> The description of this summer 1892 operation (“*Streifzug*”: punitive expedition) focuses mostly on the trials and tribulations of his *Askari* as they roamed through the northern areas of Uhehe—they continually ran short on food, could find no

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<sup>276</sup> Prince, 130-1.

<sup>277</sup> Prince, 141.

<sup>278</sup> For an extended discussion of the propensity of German colonial officers to operate without the consent of or sometimes in direct contravention of the orders of their superiors, see Zirkel, “Military power in German colonial policy: the *Schutztruppen* and their leaders in East and South-West Africa, 1888-1918,” *ibid.*, 91-113.



“friendlies” that would provide them with provisions, and suffered from frequent desertion.<sup>279</sup> His report to his superiors in Dar focused instead on the extreme destruction his units wrought upon northern Uhehe. Dividing his men into four patrols of thirty-five *Askari* each, he ordered his men to march in a line parallel to one another “sweeping the countryside,” burning down every village they came across and shooting down any Hehe that “dared to show his face.”<sup>280</sup> This operation was a preview of the more systematic “war of destruction” that would be waged by the Germans in Uhehe in 1896 and 1897 after the fall of Kalenga: Hehe “impudence” would be answered with terrorism, property destruction, and a policy of food denial through the burning of crops and shooting down of animals. The only reason the operation was called off was the outbreak of a revolt near Kilimanjaro which required the rushing of Prince’s units to the northeast. His replacement, Lieutenant Heinrich Brüning (who was the son of the mayor of the German town of Gotha), was left at Kilossa to deal with the consequences of von Prince’s bloody summer “sweep and clear” operation.

At this point it was obvious that further negotiation with the Germans would be fruitless, and Mkwawa ordered a massive retaliatory strike on both Kondoa (a caravan town full of “Arabs,” Sagara, and Gogo) and the adjacent Kilossa station.<sup>281</sup> Hehe forces annihilated a large caravan moving through the

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<sup>279</sup> Prince, 152-65.

<sup>280</sup> Prince an Gouvernement, “*Streifzug gegen die Wahehe*,” 15 August 1892, BAB, R1001/281, 105-12. Also DKB 3 (1892): 544-5.

<sup>281</sup> Musso 58, Redmayne 420, interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005, interview with Edmund Mkwawa (Mkwawa’s grandson and “patriarch” of the family in Dar es Salaam), 26 July 2005.

Mukondoa Valley on 6 October 1892 in a direct and flagrant refutation of German claims to sovereignty in the region. Hehe units plundered and destroyed Kondoa village, killed the German-installed *Wali* (warrant chief), and slaughtered many Africans who had accepted German protection. A detachment of two German officers and thirty-five *Askari* from the Kilossa Station under Lt. Brüning came out to meet the “plunder horde” of the Hehe destroying Kondoa, and the latter were driven away by several salvos from the *Askaris*’ breechloaders.<sup>282</sup> As the other German present, Sgt Köhler, reports, the *Askari* had only been issued fifteen or twenty cartridges apiece, so part of the patrol was sent back to get more ammunition. Köhler climbed a tree to get a better view of the scene and to his horror witnessed a “swarm” of Hehe rushing Brüning and his men. Several salvos were insufficient to halt their “inexorable advance,” and they quickly surrounded and fell upon the *Schutztruppe* patrol. Most of the “Zulu” (Shangaani mercenaries) then fled for their lives, leaving the Lieutenant and four of his men to their fate. Having left the safety of the fort with its high walls, rifle ports, and machine guns, the *Schutztrupplers*’ technological advantage, as at Rugaro, quickly turned against them: “A lack of cartridges allowed the attack of the overwhelming mass of Hehe to succeed, Brüning was encircled, and he died a hero’s death with four Zulu-Askari that held out beside him.”<sup>283</sup> Köhler pulled his men back to the fort and waited for the inevitable follow-up attack. The

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<sup>282</sup> Bericht des Sargeanten Köhler, 16 October 1892, BAB, R1001/281, 142-4 and DKB (3) 1892: 609-11 and Schele, 443.

<sup>283</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 35. See also TNA G 16/6, Nachlasses des am 6.10.1892 gefallenen Leutnants Heinrich Brüning, 1892-1893.

survivor's barely managed to return to the Kilossa Station, and the Hehe had succeeded in claiming the life of another of the *Schutztruppe*'s German officers.

The Hehe continued destroying "German-friendly" villages for the next two months until they had nearly reached the Kilossa boma itself.<sup>284</sup> On 7 December 1892, Köhler's replacement, Lt. Fließbach, marched east towards Kondoa to investigate a report of further Hehe attacks. The next day, an Msagara ran to the fort and informed Dr. Wilhelm Arning, the temporary commander, that 200 Hehe warriors had attacked the nearby village of Munisagara. Arning quickly took half the Kilossa garrison out to find the Hehe and, if possible, to "throw them back."<sup>285</sup> The *Schutztruppe* column soon found the Hehe in the Mukondogwa Valley near Munisagara. Nearly all the villages in the valley had already been destroyed by Hehe raiding and "punitive expeditions" designed to deny the Germans allies and supplies.<sup>286</sup> By his estimate, Arning saw between 600 and 800 Hehe massed in the center of one of these destroyed villages, as well as an untold number moving above the tall grass in the valley (he saw the "glints of their spears everywhere").<sup>287</sup> The unit quickly took a position on a hill, formed a circle, and waited for the inevitable attack, which was not long in coming. The Hehe massed and charged, staying low to the ground and using the man-high grass as cover. Arning, who had about forty *Askari* under his command, estimated that about 1,500 Hehe were involved in this attack, the largest force the

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<sup>284</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 35.

<sup>285</sup> Dr. Arning an Gouvernement, 11 December 1892, BAB, R1001/281, 265-6.

<sup>286</sup> Report of Lt. Fließbach, DKB 4 (1893): 59-60.

<sup>287</sup> Report of Lt. Fließbach, DKB 4 (1893): 59-60.

Germans had seen since the ill-fated battle at Rugaro. The doctor waited until they Hehe were about 150 meters away before ordering the *Askari* to let loose nine salvos in a row, then gave the order to fire at will. The charging Hehe made it to within fifteen paces of the *Schutztruppe* line, and “their throwing spears flew past our heads and into the middle of our circle.”<sup>288</sup> But the wall of Mauser fire was enough to break the Hehe charge, and as soon as they began to route Arning ordered the *Askari* to advance and shoot them down. The Hehe massed in an area of tall grass a kilometer away and began a rapid retreat with the *Askari* continuing to fire upon them. The German detachment then attempted a pursuit, but after six hours Arning gave up, as the Hehe column—even while dragging their numerous wounded—moved far faster than the *Askari* with their heavy packs, rifles, and thick boots. Arning was unable to estimate how many Hehe died in this engagement, as many of the wounded were dragged away by their comrades. The tall grass made an exact count impossible, and many of the corpses were quickly dragged away by wild animals. Lt. Fließbach, who rushed with all haste to the Munisagara to reinforce Arning’s detachment, counted dozens of corpses strewn about the battlefield and noted with satisfaction that there were clearly far more obscured by the large number of vultures swarming over the bodies.<sup>289</sup>

The Battle of Munisagara, while it did not end Hehe raiding in the region and certainly did not end their ability to wage war, was in fact the Germans first decisive victory since the beginning of hostilities two and a half years earlier.

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<sup>288</sup> Report of Lt. Fließbach, DKB 4 (1893): 59-60 and DKB 4 (1893): 59.

<sup>289</sup> DKB 4 (1893): 60.

Indeed, in the manner typical for colonial warfare, the German patrol had managed to drive back an opponent that outnumbered them (if Arning is to be believed) almost 40 to 1 without taking a single casualty of their own.<sup>290</sup> While the Hehe remained the biggest threat to German power in the region (according to Fließbach, Prince, and Arning), after Munisagara they restricted their operations to attacks on the Germans allies and to small-scale raiding. Contrary to contemporary and indeed current stereotypes about pre-colonial and colonial African warfare being static or slow to evolve, all Africans had a steep learning curve when it came to the devastating power of modern weapons in the hands of well trained troops, be they indigenous or European. Just as the Ndebele of what would become Southern Rhodesia had charged machine guns and breechloaders in 1893 but three years later instead resorted to “cowardly” guerrilla tactics like slitting the throats of whites in their sleep, the Hehe never again attacked a fort or large German detachment head on.<sup>291</sup> Prince lamented this situation, as it denied the Germans the ability to make use of their Maxim guns. “No uncultivated (nor

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<sup>290</sup> See Roger Ford, *The Grim Reaper: Machine-Guns and Machine-Gunners in Action* (New York: Sarpedon, 1996), Chapter 4: “‘Whatever Happens...’: The Maxim gun in Africa 1890-1905”; Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), Chapter Seven: “Arms Gap and Colonial Confrontation”; and John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), Chapter IV: “Making the Map Red.” It should be noted, however, that as was often the case, the colonial troops came within a hair’s breadth of being annihilated as at the Battle of Rugaro, having only stopped the Hehe at 15 paces. Similarly, at the infamous battle of Omdurman, often cited (to use the eye-witness Winston Churchill’s formulation) as “the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians,” almost ended very differently, as many of the Sudanese in the British firing line were down to one or two Martini-Henry cartridges by the time the Mahdist charge broke and was thrown back. Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All The Brutes* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 69. See also Ismat Hasan Zulfo, *Karari: The Sudanese Account of the Battle of Omdurman*, translated from the Arabic by Peter Clark (London: F. Warne, 1980).

<sup>291</sup> See T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-97* (Evanston: Northwest University Press, 1967) and Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor, and Terence Ranger, *Violence & Memory: One Hundred Years in the ‘Dark Forests’ of Matabeleland* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000).

even a cultivated) race can withstand sustained fire by a tight column from a few hundred meters for long.” The capability to “hurl 500 shots per minute” at oncoming, spear-equipped enemies was indeed the only way to stop far more numerous African attackers, even “fanatics” like the Sudanese Mahdists, as Prince reports having seen charging Hehe troops close a 500 meter gap in not much longer than a minute!<sup>292</sup> Since the Hehe would no longer show themselves in set-piece battles, the Germans continued their methodical encirclement of Hehe, building a chain of smaller, temporary forts between Kisaki, Kilossa, and Mpapua along the Hehe frontier, and the indecisive “dirty war” of raid and counter-raid, massacre and counter-massacre continued for the next twenty months. The colonial state thus followed a policy of containment while the bulk of *Schutztruppe* forces focused on crushing Mkwawa’s potential and actual allies.

### **Highland Politics: The Hehe Polity under Stress, the Rise of Rivals, and the Destruction of Potential Allies**

The Hehes’ crushing victory over the Germans in August 1891 was well known across East Africa—Africans talked about it in Usagara, Songea (the Ngoni capital), Bagamoyo, Tabora, and Usafwa (the Sangu capital), much to the consternation of European witnesses like Nigmann and Prince. But by late 1892 and certainly by 1893, it was becoming obvious to all that not only were the Germans here to stay, their power along the Hehe frontier was growing, as was their presence further and further inland from the coast. Many of the Hehes’ erstwhile vassals (and even more of their enemies) began to contemplate

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<sup>292</sup> Prince, 161.

switching sides. The Sagara, who had once lived in fear of Mkwawa and sent him a steady stream of tribute, now settled near the German stations and openly flouted the Hehe monarch's authority. The Sangu, who had one been the terror of the Hehe, Bena, and others in the 1850s and 60s, suffered greatly under both Muniyumba and Mkwawa after the Hehe consolidated their power and turned the tables in the 1870s and 80s.<sup>293</sup> With the creeping encroachment of the Germans all along the north and east of Uhehe, Merere Towelamahamba (also known as Merere III) and his Sangu subordinates saw an unprecedented opportunity to turn the tables once again. Soon the Sangu would not only be one of the Germans' most important allies in the southern region of the colony, they would actually draw the Germans into action against the Hehe at times and places of their choosing.<sup>294</sup> Even the once placid Bena and Kinga began to resist Hehe exactions and demands in the hope that the Germans and the Hehe would grind one another down.<sup>295</sup> At the battle of Rugaro the Bena had provided over 1,000 auxiliaries; now two years later they were beginning to refuse to even send food or other material tribute.<sup>296</sup> Just as Rugaro had dramatically undermined the

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<sup>293</sup> Giblin, 27-30.

<sup>294</sup> See Marcia Wright, "Chief Merere and the Germans," Tanzania Notes and Records, No. 69 (1968): 41-49 and A. Merensky, *Deutsche Arbeit am Njassa, Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Berliner evangelische Missionsgesellschaft, 1894), Chapter 13, "Merere."

<sup>295</sup> Giblin, 28-49; interview with Richard Kitime (local historian in Iringa), 12 August 2005; interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005; and letter from Mkwawa to Lt. Engelhardt, 1 August 1896, in the possession of the Kalenga Museum, Tanzania. The letter from Mkwawa (written in Kiswahili in Arabic script) laments not only Merere's marauding and violence, but also complains about the "once-loyal" Bena chiefs who by 1896 had been openly flaunting Mkwawa's authority for over three years.

<sup>296</sup> This response was not universal: as late as 1894 some Sagara and Bena continued to send Mkwawa tribute even though they lived in villages adjacent to German garrisons. It seems

Germans' ability to persuade and win local compliance, be it symbolically or literally by force of arms, the indecisive and bloody skirmishes of 1892 and 1893 and the establishment of Kilossa and Kisaki were now undermining the once dreaded reputation of the Hehe and their leader, "the Madness of the Year."

Even worse for Mkwawa, a "peace faction" emerged within the Hehe court under his brother Mpangile (who would indeed later replace Mkwawa as "Sultan of the Hehe").<sup>297</sup> Historically Mkwawa had handled such dissent with total ruthlessness (hence his praise names such as "the Butcher," "Madness of the Year," and so on), having given countless of his political adversaries—to use his favorite formulation—"to the vultures."<sup>298</sup> Now he had fewer options: his "Big Man" status, contingent as it was on his ability to distribute wealth and goods to his subordinates, was imperiled by the decline of trade goods like guns and cloth as the control of the colonial state over the caravan routes gradually tightened.<sup>299</sup> Furthermore, the vigorous German suppression of Hehe raiding and "slaving" among the Sagara, the Fipa, the Gogo, and others meant a sharp reduction in the number slaves and particularly women flowing into Uhehe. Jan-Georg Deutsch's recent work on slavery in German East Africa notes, "[The] colonial administration rigorously suppressed the outbreak of armed disputes between

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individual communities weighed their options and sought to, if not play the German and Hehe off against one another, at least give each as little as required to placate them.

<sup>297</sup> Mann, 137 and Alfons Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes. Erinnerungen an mein Missionsleben in Deutsch-Osafrika* (St. Ottilien, Oberbayern: St. Ottilien, 1899), 53-62.

<sup>298</sup> Redmayne, 433.

<sup>299</sup> Winans, 194-5 and ); Felicitas Becker, "Traders, 'Big Men' and Prophets" Political Continuity and Crisis in the Maji Maji Rebellion in Southeast Tanzania," *Journal of African History*, Vol. 45 (2004): 1-22.



neighbouring villages and polities. Previously these conflicts had been a major source of supply for slaves.”<sup>300</sup> In some cases the Hehe had waged wars specifically for the purpose of obtaining captives for sale, but the vast majority of those taken were incorporated into Hehe society as agricultural laborers in order to free up nearly all males for military service.<sup>301</sup> These captive women (most men were killed outright, similar to Ngoni practice) had formed the backbone of the Hehe agricultural labor force and had allowed social, political, and biological reproduction. Indeed, when Kalenga finally did fall, one of the German participants reported:

The number of prisoners of war, mostly women, is enormous. For years a constant flow of these arrived from the plunder expeditions of this warrior-people. Among these women one finds Mahenges, Mafitis [Mbunga?], Wassangus, Wassagaras, Waniemwesis, Wewembas [Bemba], Massais, and many others. This explains the overwhelming amount of foreign blood in this people that migrated from the south...<sup>302</sup>

The obvious, if slow, decline of Mkwawa’s wealth and ability to project Hehe power, which had seemed so inexorable to all observers in and beyond Uhehe just three years before, fed the flames of dissent and encouraged Mpangile and others to assert their authority and impose some sort of political solution with the Germans on Mkwawa.

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<sup>300</sup> Deutsch, 174-5.

<sup>301</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, 74-5 and BAB R7367/20, 98 “Anhang zu den Berichten der einzelnen Verwaltungsstellen, 1899-1900. For a detailed description of the effects of the coastal trading system on the interior, see Glassman, *op. cit.*, and John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), Chapter 3.

<sup>302</sup> Kompagnieführer von Elpons, “Uhehe,” in *Mittheilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, ed. Dr. Freiherr von Danckelmann, Vol. 9 (1896): 77.



While the events of 1892 and 1893 were slowly turning against Mkwawa, Merere Towelamahamba of the Sangu, on the other hand, saw a real opportunity in the arrival of the Germans and their war with the Hehe Empire. The Sangu, with whom Mkwawa did not even try to conclude any sort of agreement, were anything but paralyzed—they quickly realized the great possibility of turning the German invasion to their own advantage.<sup>304</sup> As pointed out by Jamie Monson, “[t]he Germans were seen as potentially powerful allies and protectors by many societies of the southern region. They established alliance relationships using local idioms of affiliation and diplomacy.”<sup>305</sup> Merere was one of the shrewdest, and ultimately exasperating, of the Germans’ “allies.” Prince met with him on more than one occasion under orders from the government in Dar to conclude some sort of agreement with the Sangu, who seemed like ideal allies due their location on the far western side of Uhehe and their decades-old animosity towards Mkwawa and his people.<sup>306</sup> Governor von Soden also made use of the recently arrived missionaries in the area, the Berlin Evangelical Mission Society, to open

<sup>303</sup> Weule, *Zeichnungen*, between 96 and 97.

<sup>304</sup> Redmayne, 414 and interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005.

<sup>305</sup> Monson, “Relocating...”: 103.

<sup>306</sup> Dr. Hans Schmiedel, “Bwana Sakkarani: Captain Tom von Prince and his Times,” *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, No. 52 (1959): 41.

negotiations with Merere and maintain a “government-friendly” relationship with him.<sup>307</sup> The relationship between the missionaries and Merere was a highly ambivalent one. The chief missionary, Merensky, found the Hehe to be appalling and barbaric, but he likewise saw Merere as “a heathen despot” who was extremely cruel to his people and a ferocious slaver in his own right.<sup>308</sup> But most of the Berlin missionaries argued that Merere was a useful ally, a strong “African Prince” who could not wait for the chance to make war on the Hehe.<sup>309</sup> Merere himself wrote Soden indicating that he was eager to join in an alliance to crush the “*Wahingi* of Mkwawa,” but only if the Germans would quickly and substantially come to his aid.<sup>310</sup> As is so often the case in the volatile, fluid world of southern highlands politics of this period, it is unclear who is using whom. The Germans certainly benefited from their relationship with Merere and subsequently his son, both of whom provided auxiliaries and guides right up until the end of the German-Hehe War, but the Sangu-German alliance was probably more Merere’s creation than a German one. Merere had wisely sought out the Berlin Missionaries as intermediaries with the governor in Dar es Salaam, knowing full well that the neighboring Moravians and Scottish missionaries viewed him as being as bad if not worse than Mkwawa.<sup>311</sup> Merere Towelamahamba and his

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<sup>307</sup> Soden an Merensky, 9 August 1891, TNA IX A6 and Soden an Nauhaus, 21 August 1892, Kidugala I (Berlin Mission), TNA IX A6.

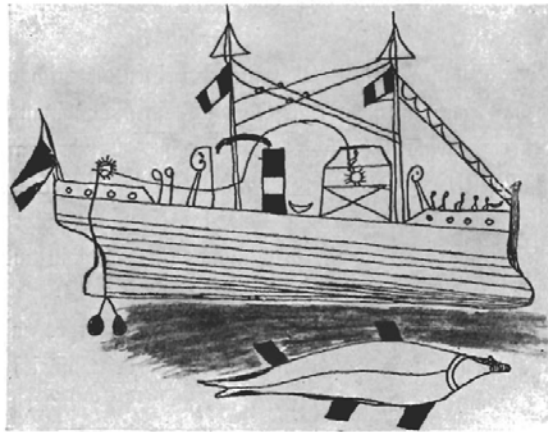
<sup>308</sup> A Merensky, *Eine neue Missionsstation im Innern von Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Berlin Evangelical Mission Society, 1896).1-3.

<sup>309</sup> Soden an Berlin-Station Kondeland, 28 April 1892, TNA IX A6.

<sup>310</sup> Merere an Soden, 5 January 1892, TNA IX A6.

<sup>311</sup> Wright, 44.

successor, Merere Mugandilwa (Merere IV), both continually pushed the Germans to formalize their alliance and wage a two-front war on the Hehe. This alliance would not come to fruition until a subsequent trip by von Prince as part of the infamous Wissmann Anti-Slavery Expedition in 1893 and 1894.



Dampfer Rufidhi, nach einer Zeichnung des Enaheli Bafari (l. S. 430).

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Led by Germany's "greatest African" and founder of the *Schutztruppe*, Hermann von Wissmann, the Anti-Slavery Expedition was funded by the Anti-Slavery Lottery in Berlin (which in turn was funded by sizable contributions gathered at churches and fundraises across Germany). Nominally, its intent was to explore the southwestern portion of the East African colony and to contribute to "the fight against the slave trade," "the advancement of culture," and "the development of the colonies."<sup>313</sup> Noble as all of this sounded, as was so often

<sup>312</sup> Dr. Karl Weule, *Negerleben in Ostafrika: Ergebnisse einer ethnologischen Forschungsreise* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1909), 32. This is an African depiction of one of the steamers used by the Anti-Slavery Expedition.

<sup>313</sup> Anti-Sklaveri Lotterie Komite an Kaiser Wilhelm II, BAB R1007, 46 and Nachweis der Einnahmen und Ausgaben des Deutschen Anti-Sklaveri-Komitees für die Jahre 1891 und 1892, abgeschlossen am 31. Dezember, 1892, BAB R1008, 92. Soden actually opposed the expedition, as he did not want Wissmann founding a separate government beyond the control of the regime in Dar es Salaam, and because he feared the expedition would stir up animosity among the slave-holding classes of Tabora and elsewhere, as they were the "only support we enjoy" in the western part of the colony. Soden an die Kolonial-Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes, 25 July 1892, TNA VI B 26.

the case in the history of the European crusade against slavery in Africa (Leopold II's philanthropy in the Congo being only the most notorious case), the actual behavior of the expedition did little to "advance culture" and much to spread terror in the area around and between Lakes Nyasa and Victoria. The expedition became infamous for its brutal and destructive operations around the lakes. One of Wissmann's favorite exercises was to offer recalcitrant Africans a demonstration of the Germans overwhelming firepower—he would assemble them and cut down trees with one of the expedition's Maxim guns and warn all present that they could either submit to German authority or be "punished."<sup>314</sup> In one typical episode, *Askari* under the command of Lt. Bumiller forcibly seized supplies from inside the homes of local villagers:

As soon as their goods [*Lebensmittel*] were taken out of their houses, they began making noise. They ran along side and said: if anyone enters our house, we will strike him down with our spear. To this Bwana Bumiller responded: I demand that...someone...come here and bring me a small gift. If you all do not do this, I will lay waste to your entire country with fire because I do not fear your spears.. Just my two rifles would suffice to conquer an entire country for myself.<sup>315</sup>

This same officer was the man whom von Wissmann entrusted to establish relations with Merere and the Sangu. Wissmann hoped not only to enlist Merere's assistance in founding a station on Lake Nyasa (the expedition's

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<sup>314</sup> Juhani Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German Colonial Policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884-1914* (Helsinki: Lit Verlag, 1994), 130.

<sup>315</sup> Selim bin Abakar, 95-6. Subsequent Anti-Slavery Expeditions, while smaller in scale, proceeded similarly. By their own admission, the German officers involved in these operations did little to stop slavery and much to terrorize the caravan traffic they were supposed to encourage. Lieutenant Schweinitz and Captain Langheld were notorious for forcing villagers near caravan routes to sell them supplies at gun-point to the point that they were even criticized by their fellow officers. See damning and highly critical reports by Lt. Herman, *Herman an Gouvernement*, 22 March 1892, BAB R1007/4, 5 and *Herrman an Gouvernement*, 12 March 1892, BAB R1007/4, 7.

nominal purpose) but also to join in the grand struggle against Mkwawa and the Hehe Empire. While this was in direct contravention of Governor von Soden's orders not to get entangled with the Hehe as part of his general strategy of avoiding unnecessary military entanglements (meaning expenditures), Wissmann and Bumiller nonetheless encouraged Merere to dispatch messengers to the Songea Ngoni in an attempt to revive their old anti-Hehe alliance. These messengers were, however, attacked and forced back en route by Hehe units, which convinced Wissmann that the Hehe intelligence network and force projection capabilities were too formidable to be challenged directly by the small German force, even with Sangu assistance. Instead he decided to send them to Lake Rukwa to force the submission of Kimaraunga, a task with which Merere was all too happy to help the Germans, as the Rukwa warlord was a Sangu leader who had slipped from his control.<sup>316</sup>

Unfortunately for both Merere and the Germans, the Rukwa expedition was a fiasco. The Sangu sent a massive force with the Germans: Selim bin Abakar (one of the guides) puts the number at 4,000, whereas the Germans claim it was closer to 500.<sup>317</sup> Either way, Bumiller's force had so many Sangu in full war-regalia accompanying it that Kimaraunga and his Nyiha subjects refused to believe that it represented German and not Sangu interests. The first few villages surrendered without a fight, but one village under chief Nzunda refused to capitulate. When Bumiller seized Nzunda and several of his men in the middle of

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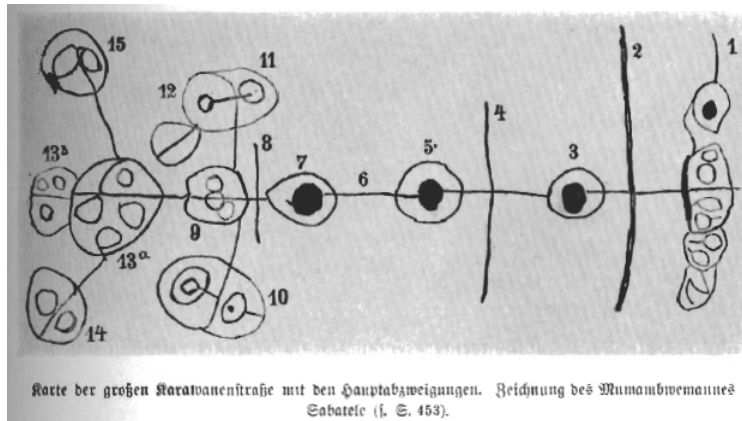
<sup>316</sup> Wissmann an die Anti-Sklaveri-Komitee, 26 April 1893, TNA IV B 26.

<sup>317</sup> Selim bin Abakar, 102-3.

negotiations and informed the village that their headmen would be executed if they did not surrender, they once again refused to yield and began a vigorous defense against the combined Sangu-German force.<sup>318</sup> Bumiller laid siege to the village and waited five days for additional *Askari* to arrive from Wissmann's main force. Their attempt to storm Nzunda's village failed due to the tenacity of the gun- and spear-armed defenders and the formidable fortifications surrounding their community (featuring palisades and a massive thorn-filled ditch). Wissmann then sent additional troops a cannon and a Maxim gun, but even these reinforcements were not enough to overwhelm the Nyiha. Finally, Wissmann himself arrived and decided—making good on Bumiller's earlier promise—that only fire could conquer the village. His *Askari* succeeded on their second attempt, setting the closely-packed huts ablaze. The Nyiha scattered and were cut down in large numbers by the Sangu, and Wissmann took possession of the charred remnants of the village that had resisted their demands and superior firepower for almost two weeks. While this meant victory for the Wissmann expedition and his Sangu allies, it had come at such a cost that the entire operation was abandoned, and the Germans would not make use of Sangu troops until the end of 1894, and then only indirectly (more on this below). The Sangu monarch died shortly after the ill-fated Rukwa campaign in late 1893, thereby ending the first phase of the German-Sangu relationship. But the Sangu under Merere Towelamahamba's son, Merere Mugandilwa, would come to play a crucial part in the German-Hehe War's most brutal phase in 1896-98.

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<sup>318</sup> Beverly Brock, "The Nyiha (of Mbozi)," *Tanzania before 1900*, ed. Andrew Roberts (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), 78-9.



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Merere and his son may have been Mkwawa's most determined African foes, but another (in)famous East African "Big Man" came very close to joining forces with the besieged Hehe monarch: Isike of the Nyamwezi (usually rendered as "Siki" in German documents). In my interview with then Education Minister Joseph J. Mungai, he discussed the close ties between Isike's Nyamwezi and Mkwawa, including a marriage treaty cemented through the latter's marriage to Isike's sister Ilagila (who Mkwawa had heard about through the Nyamwezi who traded along the caravan route). Whether the Germans knew this or not, they soon moved on Isike.<sup>320</sup> They had plenty of reasons to want to cut Unyamwezi's most powerful warlord down to size beyond any potential pact between Isike and Mkwawa. Isike was the inheritor of a decades-long legacy of "Big Man politics" in west central Tanzania, the rise of the Nyamwezi, the commercial revolution of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and fierce competition with the Tabora Arabs. The Germans, however, believed him to be a "puppet of the Arabs" on the coast and deeply resented the fact that he had sent almost 500 men to the coast to assist the towns

<sup>319</sup> This is a contemporary African drawing of the primary caravan routes in Tanganyika. Tabora is the circle labeled "9." Weule, *Negerleben in Ostafrika*, 15.

<sup>320</sup> See Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 31-49.



revolting against the Germans in 1889-90.<sup>321</sup> Isike's fortress town at Quikuru-kwa-Siki (near modern Tabora) sat astride the important caravan routes to Uganda and to Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika, which made him, like Mkwawa, a serious obstacle to the "material progress of the colony." The fact that Isike could mobilize between 7,000 and 11,000 *ruga-rugas* made him one of the most dangerous Big Men in the entire colony, and any alliance with Mkwawa or any other African power held the potential to seriously undermine the process of conquest. A period of indecisive raiding and skirmishing not unlike events along the Uhehe frontier, including several unsuccessful attacks on Isike's territory as part of the Anti-Slavery Expedition, drove the warlord at Quikuru to seek to forge a pan-Nyamwezi alliance, as well as an alliance with Mkwawa by the summer of 1892. The attacks of the Anti-Slavery Expedition, as well as his earlier experience with the Emin Pascha Expedition, convinced both Isike and the Germans that war was inevitable.<sup>322</sup> Isike attempted to make the first move and sent his son with a sizeable force of heavily armed *ruga-rugas* to storm the German garrison at Tabora. While this was not successful, the *Schutztruppe* counter-assault on Quikuru was likewise unsuccessful. These engagements convinced the Germans that they needed to both bring in more auxiliaries from other areas—in this case Ngoni, Tutsi, Nyamwezi from Urambo—and to strike alliances with local Nyamwezi chieftains opposed to Isike's power, particularly

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<sup>321</sup> See Norman Robert Bennet, *Arab versus European: Diplomacy and War in Nineteenth-Century East Central Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1986), Chapter 6, "The Central Route" and Mann 166-7 and Rochus Schmidt, *Die Geschichte des Araberaufstandes in Ost-Afrika: Seine Entstehung, seine Niederwerfung und seine Folgen* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Königlichen Hofbuchdruckerei Trowitzsch und Sohn, 1892), 55-76.

<sup>322</sup> Andrew Roberts, "The Nyamwezi," in *Tanzania before 1900*, op. cit., 141.

Isike's rival Nyaso (one of the only "Big Women" of this period). Nyaso, like Merere in Usangu, saw the Germans as an opportunity to assert her authority vis-à-vis the otherwise stronger Isike.<sup>323</sup> A joint attack by Nyaso's men, the *Askari*, and the auxiliaries from Urambo in August also failed to break Quikuru. Finally a highly experienced detachment under Lt. von Prince was sent on December 1892 to Tabora to recruit more Arab troops (the local Arabs also saw the Germans as the best way to end Isike's dominance in the region, which had displaced their own in the 1880s) and to prepare to storm Quikuru once and for all.

It was precisely at this moment that Mkwawa's delegation to Isike showed up, sent by the Hehe monarch to conclude a treaty of friendship with the Nyamwezi that was explicitly directed against the growing power of the Germans.<sup>324</sup> Isike offered Mkwawa's representatives his sister, Ilagila (or "Iragila" in Prince's rendering), in marriage and agreed to the alliance which could have proved so dangerous to German interests. He simultaneously negotiated with Prince in order to buy time for the alliance to come to fruition.<sup>325</sup> It was not to be—Prince began his siege on 10 January 1893 with 66 regular *Askari*, 80 recruits from Tabora, a force of Ngoni auxiliaries from Urambo, a large force of Nyaso's warriors armed with 200 rifles Prince seized from an incoming caravan, and a number of her men who served as porters that kept the

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<sup>323</sup> Prince, 194-9.

<sup>324</sup> Prince, 198 and Bericht des Lieutenants Prince über den Ruchmarsch der Tabora-Expedition, DKB (4) 1893: 266.

<sup>325</sup> See TNA G50/1 for a copy of a temporary treaty between Isike and Prince in both Arabic and German.

Germans' mortar and quick-firing gun operating.<sup>326</sup> Isike's fortress held over one thousand men, most armed with muskets (there were also about twenty modern breechloaders), and they held out for three days before Prince's men—in a preview of events to come at Kalenga—successfully stormed the walls of Quikuru. The Nyamwezi defenders had already taken heavy casualties from the Schutztruppe's mortar and cannon, and their muskets were severely outclassed by *Askari* Mauser breechloaders. Soon the German force reached the inner sanctum, but rather than be captured, Isike locked himself in the powder room and blew himself up.<sup>327</sup> Thus ended the power of the region's greatest warlord, and here Prince's account terminates: "Whatever one thinks of Isike, he died a hero's death. If his timing had been more exact a great deal of his conqueror would have also gone up in the air."<sup>328</sup> But "family historian" Joseph Mungai and the historian Norman Robert Bennett claim that the display of German ruthlessness did not end there. They both claim that Isike, while badly wounded, did not actually die in the explosion, and Prince—not content to let Isike deny him the satisfaction of imposing German justice upon him—had his *Askari* drag the "sultan" out to the square and hung him, half-alive, until he expired.<sup>329</sup> Grisly or not, this calculated demonstration of the severe and summary justice of "*Bwana*

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<sup>326</sup> Prince 201-2, Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 38, and Bericht des Lieutenants Prince über die Niederwerfung des Häuptlings Sike von Tabora, DKB 4 (1893): 189-91.

<sup>327</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 40.

<sup>328</sup> Prince, 210.

<sup>329</sup> Interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005 and Norman Robert Bennett, *Mirambo of Tanzania 1840?-1884* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 173. "After the explosion his still-living remains were uncovered and barbarically hanged by his enemies. Isike died as he had lived, as a determined Nyamwezi ruler devoted only to the narrow interests of the advancement of his own state."

*Sakkarani*” (Prince’s African name) and the German colonial state had the desired effect:

Those who had begun fighting oppose each other, and some of them began spying on their brothers, revealing their secrets to their enemies. For this reason, fighting [against the Germans] could not succeed. For a short time, they fought obstinately, but then stopped after suffering great losses, without making any of the gains to be expected from fighting. Many realized that it was better to surrender than to keep up continual opposition which offered no hope of success. They realized that the Europeans had more powerful weapons of many kinds.<sup>330</sup>

Colonial state terrorism, in this case in the form of savage “frontier justice,” was indeed as effective as it was expedient.<sup>331</sup>

The events near Tabora in late 1892 hold significance for the course of the German-Hehe War for several reasons. Isike’s death effectively ended the possibility of a Nyamwezi-Hehe alliance, which would have posed a grave danger to German efforts across almost the entire middle of the colony, and it left Mkwawa almost totally isolated. But like the German “victories” in and around Uhehe, the margin of success for the colonizers was a narrow one; had they failed to storm Quikuru yet again, or had Prince and his officers been killed in the explosion unleashed by Isike from the powder store, German power and prestige throughout the region would have been fatally compromised. Also significant is that in Unyamwezi as in Uhehe, German victory only came through the colonial state’s interface, however lopsided, with the local political system. Had Nyaso and other lesser, aspiring Nyamwezi “Big Men” (and Women) not aligned with the Germans for their own reasons, and had the large force of Ngoni and others

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<sup>330</sup> Mwami Kizozo, “Habari za Usumbwa,” *Wangaluka* (Tabora, Tanzania), November 1961.

<sup>331</sup> Trutz von Trotha, “‘The Fellows Can just Starve’...,” 422

from Urambo not been present, the victory at Quikuru would have not been possible. State terrorism was, therefore, a policy designed to work hand in glove with, rather than *against*, a policy of collaboration with local elites and the steady recruitment of indigenous personnel. After the victory of Isike, the Nyamwezi would come to be the one of the primary sources for new *Askari* and porter recruitment.<sup>332</sup> In this early period of colonization, with its scant resources, lack of supervision, and propensity to use the *Schutztruppe* to solve local political problems, German administrative methods of necessity resembled those of the famous “Big Man” Mirambo. Andrew Roberts’s statement about the nature of Mirambo’s authority applies to the authority of the new German “Big Men” as well:

His methods were military rather than political: whereas his great contemporary Nyungu ya Mawe created a new class of territorial governors, Mirambo’s agents were essentially border guards. Political authority was retained by the local chiefly families. They might live in terror of Mirambo’s *ruga-ruga*; but Mirambo himself could only be sure of the *ruga-ruga*’s loyalty as long as he could provide them with cattle, slaves, ivory and cloth. And once he was dead, they were no more likely to support his successor than any other chief who could support them. Mirambo had indeed realised this: he confessed to [the French missionary] Becker that “My headmen obey me only out of fear... as for my captains, they are good for nothing but fighting.”<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> See Thaddeus Sunseri, *Vilimani: Labor Migration and Rural Change in Early Colonial Tanzania* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002), Chapter 7, “‘Wamekwenda Vilimani!’: Transformations in Rural Society”; Mann 174; TNA G2/3 Anwerbung von Söldner für die Schutztruppe (29 March 1892 – 26 July 1894); and TNA G2/4 Anwerbung von Söldner für die Schutztruppe (1894-1908).

<sup>333</sup> Roberts, 130. See also Bennett, *Mirambo*, op. cit.

With time, the colonial state would come to more closely resemble the sophisticated political and administrative system of Nyungu ya Mawe with its rotating, centrally-nominated governors and professional standing army.<sup>334</sup>

Prince's destruction of Isike's Nyamwezi state ended once and for all the possibility of an alliance between the Nyamwezi and the Hehe while at the same time consolidating the Germans position along the northwestern flank of Uhehe. The southeastern flank, however, took longer to pacify and bring under German military control. There the Mbunga—the seldom recognized fifth polity of the southern highlands region—intensified their resistance to the Germans, partially emboldened by the German humiliation at Rugaro. The Mbunga “Confederacy” (as L. E. Larson referred to the Wambunga polity) had coalesced from the 1850s to the 1860s in the area between Uhehe and Songea (home of the Ngoni).<sup>335</sup> Originally descended from the Ndendeuli, an Ngindo-speaking group of acephalous peoples from southwestern Tanzania, they were driven out and then conquered by the invading waves of Maseko Ngoni and then the Mshope-Njelu Ngoni and subsequently absorbed into the Maseko Ngoni military system.<sup>336</sup> They were, like the Bena, Sangu, Ngoni, and Hehe, a product of the *Mfecane* in southern Africa, more specifically the Ngoni invasions from the southwest, and

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<sup>334</sup> Shorter, “Nyungu-Ya-Mawe and the ‘Empire of the Ruga-Rugas’,” op. cit.

<sup>335</sup> L. E. Larson, “A History of the Mbunga Confederacy ca. 1860-1907,” *Tanzania Notes and Record*, No. 81 and 82 (1977): 35-42. The Mbunga are sometimes referred to as Wahenge, other times as Mafiti (hence the German confusion described in chapter 2) in German documents.

<sup>336</sup> For a detailed examination of the Ngoni conquest of southeastern Tanzania, see J. D. Omer-Cooper, *The Zulu Aftermath: A Nineteenth-Century Revolution in Bantu Africa* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966); Elzear Ebner, *The History of the Wangoni and their Origin in the South African Bantu Tribes* (Peramiho [Tanzania]: Benedictine Publications Ndanda, 1987); Patrick M. Redmond, *The Politics of Power in Songea Ngoni Society, 1860-1962* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1985).

like their more well-known neighbors they created a political and military structure to provide protection during this time of profound insecurity and violence based on the adoption of the regiment system, the stabbing spear, and other Zulu innovations. By the time of the German arrival in the late 1880s, the Mbunga—like the Bena, Sangu, Sagara, and others—had suffered greatly under Hehe expansion, raiding, and depredations. Many Mbunga communities actually derived from refugee communities driven from the Mofu Sultanate.<sup>337</sup> The German explorer Graf Joachim von Pfeil found many of the Mbunga leaders eager and willing to strike some sort of agreement with the newly arrived Germans in 1886: “Having arrived again in the lowlands, I found an open welcome among all the tribes that I know visited. This was because people saw us as enemies of the Wahehe and therefore as natural allies against them.”<sup>338</sup> Mbunga chief Nalioto was particularly enthusiastic, even assigning a detachment of warriors to von Pfeil for his protection. This delegation of Mbunga troops to the expedition gave Pfeil a glimpse of the potential advantages and opportunities to use indigenous manpower: “Here among the Mahenge [Mbunga] it seemed to me that a hint was given as to how we could create an armed force whose regular upkeep would not be our burden, but whose deployment would rest with us.”<sup>339</sup> Even at the time, however, Pfeil complained (as would be the case later with Merere and Mpangile) that he was unsure whose purposes were being served:

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<sup>337</sup> Wilhelm Arning, “Die Wahehe (Schluß),” *Mittheilungen von Forschungsreisenden und Gelehrten aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, ed. Dr. Freiherr von Danckelmann, Vol. 10 (1897): 51-2.

<sup>338</sup> Joachim Graf von Pfeil and Klein Ellguth, *Zur Erwerbung von Deutsch-Ostafrika : ein Beitrag zu seiner Geschichte* (Berlin: K. Curtius, 1907), 170.

<sup>339</sup> Pfeil, 175.

“With cunning tactics [*schlaue Politik*] he [Nalioto] thought to use me, and through me to make the superiority of the whites serve his own purposes.”<sup>340</sup>

Unfortunately for the colonial authorities, the Mbunga subsequently came to a more substantial agreement with Mkwawa and the Hehe, the latter agreeing to delineated “spheres of influence” and withdrawing the pressure on Mbunga territory.<sup>341</sup> In 1889 the Mbunga near Kisaki supported the Abuschiri Rebellion on the coast, and by 1891, the Mbunga saw the German drive into the interior as a bigger threat to their autonomy than the Hehe, and they resisted them accordingly. First to be “punished” were the Kisaki Mbuga who had helped Abuschiri: in early 1892 the *Schutztruppe* force establishing the Kisaki Station (see above) was repeatedly harassed by Mbunga raiding parties. The response of the station chief, Lt. Johannes, was to have his men set all the Mbunga villages in the area to the torch and to drive the Africans across the Great Ruaha River into the core of the Mbunga confederacy.<sup>342</sup> Von Prince departed the Kilossa Station and arrived at Kisaki shortly afterwards; upon his arrival he demanded that all Mbunga leaders report to the Kisaki station. His letters were disdainfully ignored, and no one responded.<sup>343</sup> Instead, the Mbunga massed a sizeable force in July and August 1892 for a concerted assault into the Uluguru Mountains deep in German territory. The army contained troops from all of the members of the confederacy and even some Ngoni, indicating that this was no mere raiding party but was

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<sup>340</sup> Pfeil, 174.

<sup>341</sup> Arning, 52.

<sup>342</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 36.

<sup>343</sup> Prince, “Polizeizug gegen die Mafiti,” 124-7 and Tom vno Prince, “Über die neue Station Kissaki und die augenblicke dortige Lage,” DKB 3 (1892):421-3.



rather a concerted attempt to strike decisively at German hegemony in the region. The German detachment at Kisaki under Lt. Johannes quickly rushed to intercept them and fought three ferocious and bloody battles against them, the last of which on 27 August is recounted in detail by Johannes in his report to his superiors.<sup>344</sup> The *Schutztruppe* force managed to inflict a decisive defeat on the much larger Mbunga force, killing at least 200 of them in the process (Johannes reports that the banana groves were littered with a countless number of bodies), and then drove *all* the Mbunga out of the Kisaki region, who numbered between 3,000 and 8,000 before the campaign.<sup>345</sup> He hoped that this battle and the subsequent (to use modern terminology) ethnic cleansing of the Mbunga from the area around Kisaki had “taught them a lesson that this region is no longer suitable for their marauding.”<sup>346</sup> Prince, however, lamented that as with the Hehe in his district further to the west, “raiding can be made ineffective, but it cannot be made impossible.”<sup>347</sup>

Following the battle of 27 August, some Mbunga finally sought relations with the Germans. Several Mbunga chiefs, who enjoyed far more autonomy than their Sangu or Hehe equivalents due to the loose nature of Mbunga political structures, sent a letter seeking an alliance to Governor von Soden. It is probably not a coincidence that the Mbunga elites that sought relations with the Germans

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<sup>344</sup> Lt. Johannes, “Bericht über ein am 27. August stattgefundenes Gefecht bei Mhunzi zwischen 60 Mann der 4. Kompanie der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe und den Mahenge-Mafitis,” DKB 3(1892) 559-63 and report of the same title, BAB, R1001/281,127-34.

<sup>345</sup> Johannes, DKB 3 (1892): 562.

<sup>346</sup> Johannes, DKB 3 (1892): 562.

<sup>347</sup> Prince an Gouvernement, 2 October 1892, BAB, R1001/282, 11-13.

were those who bordered Uhehe, whereas those south of the Kilombero River were more remote from Hehe actions and were coming under the increasing influence of the Mpepo Ngoni.<sup>348</sup> The northern Mbunga hoped, therefore, to use German power to counteract the presence of both the Hehe and the Ngoni. The leadership of the confederacy thus divided, the Germans now had their opportunity to strike at the heart of Mbunga power. The new governor, Freiherr von Schele personally led a large *Schutztruppe* expedition over the Rufiji River from the east in late 1893.<sup>349</sup> The German detachment achieved near total surprise and encountered far less resistance than expected, allowing von Schele's force to quickly "restore order in the area of the Mafiti."<sup>350</sup> Schele's men carried out a series of punitive actions and destroyed dozens of villages as they marched towards the center of the confederacy, and on 20 December 1893 von Schele forced the leaders of the Mbunga to assemble before him. At this meeting, he prohibited any further "marauding, plundering, or slaving" by the Mbunga, and he declared them to all be "subjects [Unterthan] of the German Kaiser." In order to drive home his point, the Governor had Lubiki-w-mtu, *nkosi* of the Ifakara Sultanate and by Schele's estimation one of the most intractable of the Germans' enemies among the confederacy's leaders, hanged in front of those assembled. Once again, law-giving and a demonstrative act of violence and summary justice were intertwined, putting German intentions and the limits of their patience in

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<sup>348</sup> Prince an den Gouverneur, 2 October 1892, BAB, R1001/281, 11-14.

<sup>349</sup> Bericht über die Expedition des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Ostafrika in das Gebiet des Rufiji und Ulanga, am Nyassasee und in das Hinterland von Kilwa, 27 March 1894, BAB, R1001/284, 56-87.

<sup>350</sup> Schele, 459.

blatant, bloody terms that needed no further translation. The 1893 invasion of the Mbunga confederacy ended their resistance to the Germans after four years of struggle, pacifying the hinterland of Kilwa and allowing the *Schutztruppe* to further encircle the domain of Mkwawa. Indeed, Mbunga territory would henceforth be the staging ground and the launch point for all further major operations against the Hehe. Their defeat in conjunction with the ever cozier relationship between the Germans and Merere IV's Sangu put the Hehe in a precarious position and would culminate in the storming and destruction Kalenga itself.

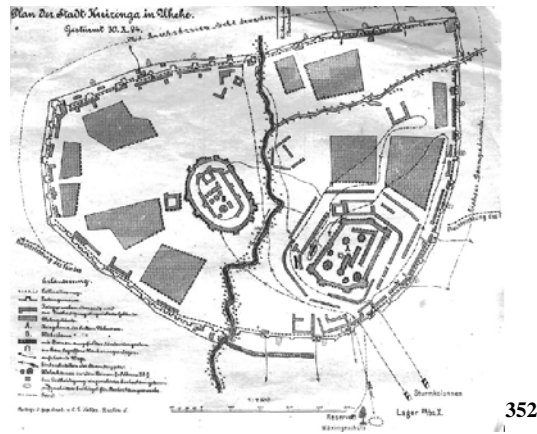


Ftbr. v. Schele 1893—1895.

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<sup>351</sup> Governr Freidrich von Schele, scanned from Nigmann, *Geschichte*.



## Chapter V: Shock and Awe—the Siege of Kalenga and the Battle of Mage (1894)

*...I admit in all honesty that if I had known the conditions before hand, I would not have undertaken the expedition with the forces I had available. Now that we had come this far turning back was impossible; we could only hope that by means of our superior weapons and discipline we would succeed in defeating our opponent.*

-Governor Friedrich Freiherr von Schele, 1894<sup>353</sup>

*The Wahehe suddenly attacked the column as we were passing through a lightly forested area and...ignoring [my] 4<sup>th</sup> company passed directly in front of the company's field of fire...sustaining enough casualties to force their withdrawal just before reaching the position occupied by Governor von Schele, the expeditionary staff, and a few Askari...Thank God...that we did not lose another commander of the Schutztruppe*

-Lt. Tom von Prince, 1895<sup>354</sup>

## The Era of Schele and the Siege of Kalenga, Late 1894

Governor von Soden, the first official and the only civilian governor in German East Africa's history, finally left office in 1893 after years of fighting with both

<sup>352</sup> Karl Weule, "Ostafrikanische Eingeborenen-Zeichnungen: Psychologische Einblicke in die Künstlerseele des Negers," in *Ipek: Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* 2 (1926): between 96 and 97.

<sup>353</sup> Friedrich von Schele, *Über die Organisation der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe in Deutsch-Ostafrika und die kriegerischen Operationen daselbst während der Jahre 1893/94*, supplement to the *Militär-Wochenblatt*, vol. 9, 1896, ed. Generalmajor von Estorff (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1896), 465.

<sup>354</sup> Prince to the Government in Dar es Salaam, 14 January 1895, quoted in Erick J. Mann, *Mikono ya damu: "Hands of Blood": African Mercenaries and the Politics of Conflict in German East Africa, 1888-1904* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 141.

his military subordinates in East Africa and his superiors in Berlin, many of whom felt he lacked the “martial spirit” to successfully come to terms with the colony’s problems. His replacement, Friedrich Radbod Freiherr von Schele was a very different man and more to the *Schutztruppe* officers’ liking: he was a Prussian aristocrat with a background in both the Brandenburg and the Imperial German military, had been Lt. Governor in Dar es Salaam since 1891, and by 1892 his promotion to colonel already made him the commander of the *Schutztruppe* in East Africa.<sup>355</sup> This change in leadership was important and reminiscent of the significance of Governor Theodor Leutwein’s replacement by Lothar von Trotha ten years later in German Southwest Africa—in both cases a praetorian, militarily-focused commander had replaced a technocrat/legalist. Kirsten Zirkel’s “civil-military dualism” (the constant feuding between military and civilian officials in the colony) had been replaced by a new consensus that Mkwawa had to be humiliated and the Wahehe put in their place as soon as possible. Like most officers, he considered the duty of avenging the destruction of the Zelewski a personal as well as a professional duty, and he methodically worked towards that goal from the moment he came to office in September of 1893. Colonel von Schele was a hawk to the core, and he and his fellow administrators discounted the seriousness of Mkwawa’s attempts to negotiate a permanent settlement in mid-1892 and 1893. The governor reported to his superiors that a “punishment expedition” against Mkwawa and the Hehe should be launched with all due haste, as they had laid waste to and depopulated large

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<sup>355</sup> *Kolonial-Lexicon*, vol. 3, 262. Soden had been a civilian from the metropolitan bureaucracy—every single governor thereafter, including Schele, would be a military man.

swathes of “fertile land” (which indeed they had in their attempt to punish anyone working with the Germans and to deny them access to food or other supplies). He furthermore argued that “all natives have an unending fear of [the Hehe]; the Wahehe-Question is gradually becoming a great danger for the entire colony, and the necessity of subjugating this tribe as quickly as possible is becoming ever more pressing.”<sup>356</sup> Schele and the other officers of the *Schutztruppe* were not, however, in a position to launch a “*Rachezug*” or “*Strafexpedition*” against the Hehe for a further two years due to budget constraints (the colony was always ruled on a shoestring), the need to rebuild German forces in the region, the poor moral of the *Askari* resulting from the rout at Rugaro, and the almost continual state of unrest that prevailed in the colony that required the *Schutztruppe*’s constant attention.<sup>357</sup>

Schele considered the first order of business to rebuild and expand the *Schutztruppe*’s ranks from whatever source available. German agents began moving away from their original base of recruitment in the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (Sudan) and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), as both of these sources were drying up due to events in the colonies in question and due to souring relations with both Britain and Portugal in the era of Wilhelm II’s

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<sup>356</sup> Schele an Gouvernement, Bericht über die Expedition des Gouverneurs von Deutsch-Ostafrika in das Gebiet des Rufiji und Ulanga, am Nyassasee und in das Hinterland von Kilwa, 27 March 1894, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BAB), R1001/284, 86.

<sup>357</sup> Even during the “*Rachefeldzug*” of 1894, Schele depicted the moral of the Sudanese and Shangaani *Askari* (imported from neighboring colonies of other European powers) as extremely low: “*denn selbst die Sudanesen, so tapfer sie an sich sind, hatten ein gewisses Grauen vor ihren Gegnern, weil die Erfahrung, welche sie gemacht und die Verluste, welche sie im Kampf erlitten haben, doch zu Ernst gewesen waren.*” Schele, 465.

aggressive new “World Policy.”<sup>358</sup> Schele and others regretted this tapering off of recruitment possibilities, especially with regards to the Sudanese, who Schele, Nigmann, Prince, and others all regarded as the best “soldier material” and the most proficient killers the *Schutztruppe* possessed.<sup>359</sup> To replace the losses of August 1891 and the campaigns that followed, the German government in Dar es Salaam sent recruiters to Aden, Cairo, Massawa, and Zanzibar, and they communicated with their consuls in Portuguese East Africa, British Egypt, and in the Ottoman Empire seeking to replace their losses.<sup>360</sup> After long negotiations, the British grudgingly allowed another recruitment drive in Egypt to replace the Sudanese that fell at Rugaro and elsewhere, and the Italians allowed the Germans to recruit mercenaries in Massawa, the major port city of Italian East Africa (now Eritrea).<sup>361</sup> But soon they shifted for practical reasons to coastal peoples who lived in areas of German East Africa that had been pacified the longest. Most of these recruits were Muslim, which caused a good deal of missionary resentment over the use of Kiswahili as the language of the military and instruction, as they saw it as a vehicle of “Islamicization.”<sup>362</sup> As mentioned above, the Germans also turned towards and to specific groups in East Africa, such as the Nyamwezi of the

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<sup>358</sup> See Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London: The Ashfield Press, 1980), Chapter 12, “The ‘New Course’ and Colonial Rivalries (1890-6)” and Gerd Fesser, *Der Traum vom Platz an der Sonne: deutsche Weltpolitik 1897-1914* (Bremen: Donat, 1996).

<sup>359</sup> See, for example, Schele 446 and 450.

<sup>360</sup> TNA G2/3 Anwerbung von Söldner für die Schutztruppe (29 March 1892 – 26 July 1894); and TNA G2/4 Anwerbung von Söldner für die Schutztruppe (1894-1908).

<sup>361</sup> Schele, 444.

<sup>362</sup> Marcia Wright, “Local Roots of Policy in German East Africa,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 4 (1968): 621-630.

Tabora region, who they viewed as good “soldier material” (the German analogue to the British notion of “martial races”).<sup>363</sup> While at first very few locals would join the *Schutztruppe*, the more established it became, the more appealing it became for those who would rather pacify than be pacified. For some it was a way out of slavery, for others it was a question of money, and for some it was a way to keep and enhance one’s “martial honor” in a context in which war between local peoples was now prohibited.<sup>364</sup>

For the Nyamwezi, who came to compose one of the largest contingents of local soldier in the *Schutztruppe*, service as *Askari* was in part a continuation of their previous role as the dominant porters on the caravan route, in both cases working for wages and asserting their autonomy vis-à-vis other African groups. Particularly once the railroad began replacing porter-bound caravan traffic (after 1910), Nyamwezi men joined the German colonial military in ever growing numbers. Ernst Nigmann and other *Schutztruppe* instructors drilled these new recruits incessantly until they were able to stand fast in the face of shrieking attackers who outnumbered them ten or more to one.<sup>365</sup> By early 1894, the *Schutztruppe* numbered nearly 2,000, having more than replaced the catastrophic

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<sup>363</sup> See the entries in the *Kolonial-Lexikon* on Nyamwezi, Ngoni, Hehe for a discussion of the suitability of “certain races” for military service. See also *Das Deutsche Kolonialreich: Eine Länderkunde der deutschen Schutzgebieten*, ed. Dr. Hans Meyer, (Leipzig: Verlag des Bibliographischen Instituts, 1909), vol. 1 Ostafrika und Kamerun, 71-81 on the “peoples of East Africa.”

<sup>364</sup> See Deutsch, Chapter 7: “Negotiating Social Marginality”; Mann, 229-41; and John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chapter 13: “The Honour of the Mercenary.”

<sup>365</sup> See Ernst Nigmann’s manual of the training and effective use of *Askari* in combat with indigenous opponents, *Felddienstübungen für farbige (ostafrikanische) Truppen* (Dar es Salaam: Verlag von der Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung, 1910). See also Schele an Caprivi, 25 September 1893, BAB, R1001/283, 145.



losses suffered at Rugaro, and Schele felt confident that he had sufficient forces to crush the Hehe once and for all.



Wahad in Interim.

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Schele first had to crush the recalcitrant Mbunga in the campaign described above—this operation not only allowed him to further encircle Uhehe but also gave him a base from which he could launch his assault and—most importantly—requisition and stockpile provisions. The *Schutztruppe* garrisons in

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<sup>366</sup> Weule, *Negerleber*, 467 and Uwe Timm, *Deutsche Kolonien* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch Verlag, 1986), 58. The top image is of Sudanese recruits awaiting “processing” in Dar es Salaam; the one on the bottom is of *Askari* engaged in rifle training in full uniform.

the Mahenge (Mbunga) district and all along the Uhehe frontier began doing exactly that, seizing food supplies in such large quantities that many Mbunga in the area actually starved to death, food security having always been an issue in the extreme political and ecological environment of the 1890s.<sup>367</sup> Across East Africa in this period a series of environmental catastrophes—locusts, cattle-killing *Rinderpest*, sand fleas, and severe drought—both enabled and were made worse by the arrival of the European colonial invaders.<sup>368</sup> This was in part related to global developments, namely the major shift of ocean currents that occurred several times in the late nineteenth century that unleashed famine and death across much of what would become the “Third World.”<sup>369</sup> There were also causes of this major demographic upheaval more local to East Africa, namely the severe disruption by colonial conquest of indigenous methods of ecological control such as irrigation, the burning back of bush, and the culling of disease transmitting wild animals.<sup>370</sup> Helge Kjekshus argues that German “pacification operations” pushed many communities over the edge, even beyond those killed by actual

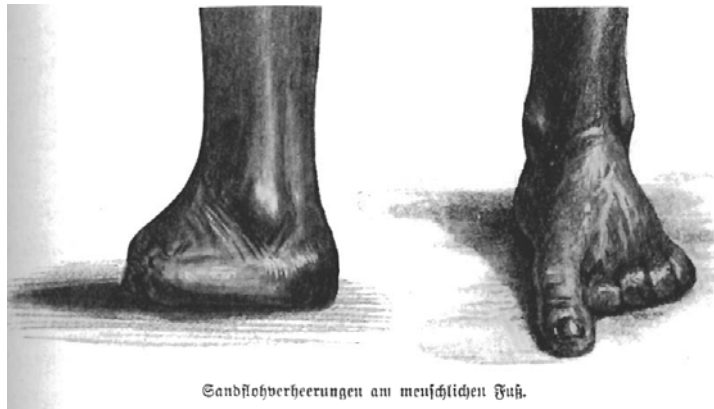
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<sup>367</sup> The missionary Basilus Ferstl claims that the Mbunga were exaggerating the extent of their hunger, though he admits that they were “very inhospitable and did not want to give us a thing. They claimed to have nothing but hunger.” Basilus Ferstl, “Ein Spaziergang nach Uhehe,” *Missionsblätter von St. Ottilien* (Ottilien, Oberbayern, 1897): 137-8.

<sup>368</sup> The Germans themselves reported widespread famine and misery throughout 1894 and 1895 wrought by a vast swarm of locusts. “Linderung der Hungersnoth,” DKB 5 (1894): 481.

<sup>369</sup> See Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001).

<sup>370</sup> See James L. Giblin, *The politics of environmental control in Northeastern Tanzania, 1840-1940* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); *Custodians of the Land: Ecology & Culture in the History of Tanzania* (London: James Currey, 1996); <sup>370</sup> Thaddeus Sunseri “Famine and Wild Pigs: Gender Struggles and the Outbreak of the Maji Maji War in Uzaramo (Tanzania),” *Journal of African History*, 38 (1997): 235-59; and Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History* (London: James Curry, 1996).



Sandfliegenverheerungen am menschlichen Fuß.

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combat or execution, leading to the starvation of untold thousands of Africans.<sup>372</sup>

This *inadvertent* famine policy was furthermore in many cases augmented by a *deliberate* famine policy (which will be discussed much more in the next chapter), meaning a systematic policy of food denial and scorched earth. This was how Prince and Schele fought the Mbunga and likewise how they would wage war in Uhehe after 1894. Despite the hardship it caused, the Germans also stockpiled food all along the Hehe frontier, filling their stores in Ulanga, Kisaki, Kilossa, and elsewhere. As discussed in chapter two, in 1891 it had been the Hehe who enjoyed logistical superiority over Zelewski's ill-fated expedition; by 1894 a combination of logistical support from the metropolis (case after case of brass cartridges and artillery shells supplied by the world's fastest growing industrial power) and provisions "requisitioned" locally closed the gap between the Hehe with their elaborate garrison and stockpiling system and the *Schutztruppe*.

The Germans also sought to address what was perceived by many as the second major failing of the 1891 campaign, i.e., poor intelligence. Several additional years of military operations in East Africa along with the ever-growing

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<sup>371</sup> Weule, *Negerleben*, 307. Image of a villager's mangled feet caused by sand fleas (known in the U.S. as "chiggers").

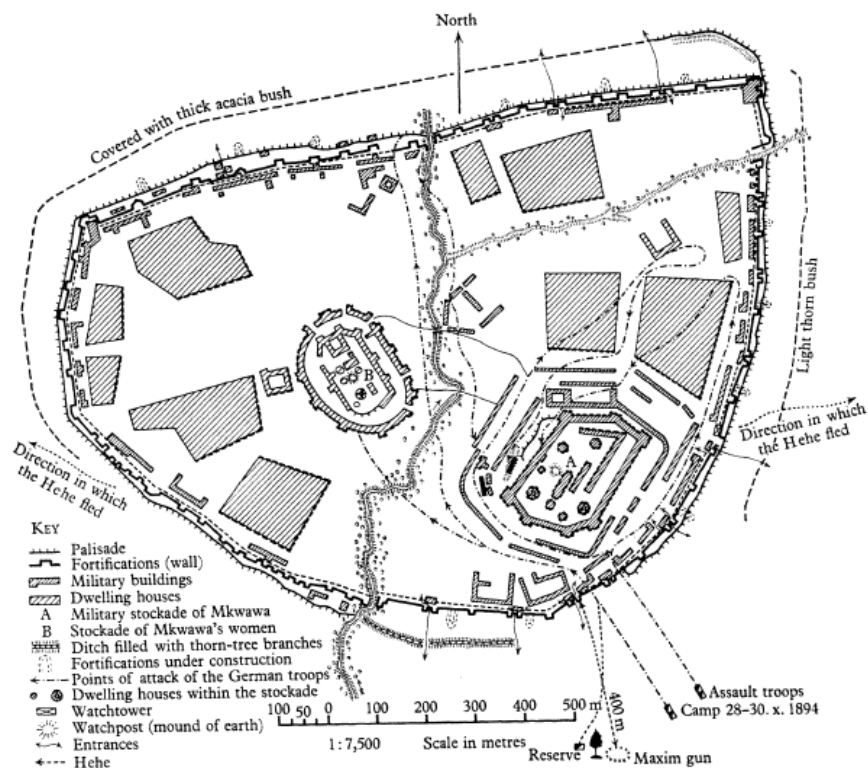
<sup>372</sup> Kjekshus, 137-51

missionary presence meant that the *Schutztruppe* enjoyed far better access to information about local conditions and politics than three years prior. Also helpful was the ever-denser local *political* network built up by the Germans: their alliances with Merere IV, the northern Mbunga chiefs, and others provided them with knowledgeable indigenous guides and auxiliaries, which had been distinctly lacking when Zelewski had set out from Bagamoyo in June of 1891 looking for “Mafiti, Wahehe, and other plunderers.” Also in the Germans’ favor was the fact that some Hehe actually helped the Germans (as, most notoriously among the Hehe, Mkwawa’s brother Mpangile would after the fall of Kalenga). Joseph Mungai tells the story of a Mhehe named Mtaki. He might be a metaphor for any of a number of perceived “collaborators” with the invading *Avadaliki*, but he is also mentioned by the local Iringa historian Richard Kitime. Mungai claims that Mtaki had been crucial in the initial forging of a relationship between the “Arabs” and the Hehe in the late 1880s, and that he had been made a sub-chief as a reward.<sup>373</sup> Thereafter he was one of the supervisors of the construction of the *lipuli* (fortress) around Kalenga. He was also (again supposedly) the one who brokered the marriage between Isike’s sister Ilangila and Mkwawa. Mungai claims that in mid-1893 in the wake of the Hehe attacks on Kilossa, Kisaki, and Kilimatinde, Mtaki was sent by Mkwawa and his ministers to Dar es Salaam to negotiate with the Germans. There, the Germans as per usual demanded Mkwawa’s unconditional surrender. It was at this point that Mtaki allegedly proposed assisting the Germans and himself ruling Uhehe after Mkwawa’s defeat. It was Mtaki who would then show the Germans an alternate route for attacking

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<sup>373</sup> Interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005.

Kalenga, one that Mkwawa's troops would suspect far less than the direct route taken by Zelewski in 1891. The Germans were also assisted by several other local "scouts" (Mungai says there were four, one of whom was Mtaki) on their march towards the Hehe capital in October 1894. Whatever the specific details of these "collaborators," it is clear from the oral evidence and the account of Prince and his wife after the fall of Kalenga that an ever-growing number of Hehe saw a chance to better their situation through accommodation to the harsh but sometimes lucrative realities of German rule.



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After Rugaro, Mkwawa massively reinforced Kalenga with "Arab" assistance: he ordered that the walls be extended, the ramparts and palisades be further built up, and new defenses such as a double ring of deep trenches filled

<sup>374</sup> Redmayne, 421.

with thorn bushes be dug all around Kalenga. By late 1894 the Hehe occupied the most formidable stone structure in the southern highlands and probably in all of German East Africa. The walls were five kilometers around and four meters thick with a bastion every 100 meters. The foundations are still visible at the Kalenga village today (see photographs below). Mkwawa believed that the Hehe army could fight from behind cover with long-range weapons like the Arabs on the coast (who had maintained forts there since the seventeenth century after forcibly evicting the Portuguese), or indeed like the Germans in their *bomas*.<sup>375</sup> The Kalenga *lipuli* was certainly formidable enough to withstand any attack by an African opponent, and as events would soon show, it was even difficult to take by a force armed with the latest weapons from Europe. Overall and with the benefit of hindsight, however, remaining in the fort was probably a major mistake—had



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Mkwawa evacuated the city and forced the Germans to pursue him even deeper into Uhehe, it is likely that Schele's column would have run out of supplies and would have had to return to German territory without the satisfaction of

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<sup>375</sup> Interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005,

<sup>376</sup> Foundation of the east wall of the Kalenga *lipuli* in the contemporary town of Kalenga, Iringa District, taken by author, 15 August 2005.

“punishing” the Hehe. Remaining in Kalenga also negated the Hehe army’s two greatest advantages over the *Schutztruppe* with its long supply chains and heavy equipment: surprise and mobility. Redmayne, Kitime, and Mungai believe that Mkwawa simply could not imagine the sort of intense bombardment made possible by quick-firing artillery when properly positioned, as the Hehe had never confronted anything like this before.



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By late 1894 the Governor felt prepared to finally lead a major expedition against the Hehe, and he assembled a column of thirty-three German officers, two Maxim machine guns, 609 *Askari*, four cannons, and 1000 porters.<sup>378</sup> This force was one of the largest ever assembled in colonial East Africa until the First World

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<sup>377</sup> Richard Kitime (blue shirt) and our driver standing on what is left of the foundation of the *lipuli's* wall at Kalenga town, taken by author 15 August 2005.

<sup>378</sup> This was large by colonial standards before the turn of the century. Indeed, it was far larger than the column annihilated three years earlier at Rugalo. By way of comparison, the Upper Volta Region of West Africa—an area significantly larger than metropolitan France—was conquered by only a few hundred French troops. See *Mahir Şaul and Patrick Royer, West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani War* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).

War, and Schele was confident that it would be sufficient to teach the Hehe a lesson once and for all. He claimed that his “shock and awe” campaign would quickly drive into Uhehe, reach Kalenga, and force the Hehe to fight a large set-piece battle that would lead to their annihilation.<sup>379</sup> In addition to the overwhelming power of the main column under Schele’s command marching into Uhehe out of the east from Kisaki and the Ulanga valley (thereby avoiding the route taken by Zelewski in 1891), the Governor ordered the garrisons at Tabora, Ulanga, Kilossa, Kisaki, Langenburg, and Mpapua to deploy their units—seventeen Europeans and 517 *Askari* in total—in a broad arc around Uhehe to prevent any escape to the north. Another company was sent to Lake Nyasa to prevent any escape to the southwest, and Merere IV made good on his promises of assistance and deployed a large force of Sangu all along the Hehes’ western frontier.<sup>380</sup> It was a truly monumental operation in terms of logistics, planning, and coordination; August 1891 had made it abundantly clear that nothing less would suffice.

From the very beginning, however, almost nothing ran according to plan. Schele recounts a series of mishaps that occurred both before and after the columns departure from the rally point at the Ulanga Station (in what had once been the Mbunga confederacy). The aforementioned climactic calamities—exacerbated as they were by the presence of such a large, voracious army—made gathering enough food and porters next to impossible. Locusts and drought had

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<sup>379</sup> Schele an Reichskanzler, Bericht über den bisherigen Verlauf des Feldzuges gegen die Wahehe, 1 December 1894, BAB, R/1001285, 108-10.

<sup>380</sup> Auswärtiges Amt an Kaiser Wilhelm II, 10 November 1894, BAB, R1001/285, 76.

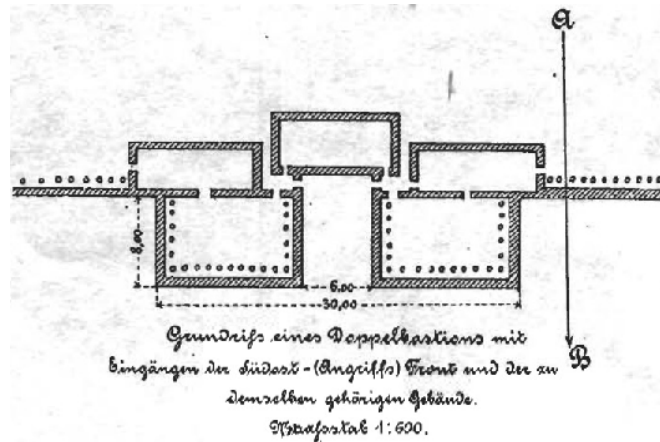


destroyed whatever food the Germans could not requisition, and the *Schutztruppe* force could only gather enough food for the trip to Kalenga; there would be nothing for the trip home.<sup>381</sup> Similar if not quite as extreme scenes of hardship awaited them in Uhehe, both due to the presence of locusts and the fact that Mkwawa's forces would inevitably destroy food stores and crops in advance of the German army.<sup>382</sup> Further worsening the Germans' supply situation was a fire that broke out on 26 September 1894 and destroyed much of the accumulated supplies in the Ulanga Station's storehouse: this fire ruined all the spare cannon barrels and sent much of the army's food up in smoke. Despite these supply problems, Schele's lumbering column set off from Ulanga on 19 October, and they reached the outskirts of the Kalenga fortress nine days later on the 28<sup>th</sup>. The sight that greeted the *Schutztruppe* contingent shocked even the most seasoned of the "old Africans" (as the more experienced white officers were called). Kalenga was far larger and more sophisticated than anything they could have imagined with its four meter thick walls, palisades, and bastions. Surrounding most of the fortress was a deep, broad dry moat filled with thorns which made a direct

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<sup>381</sup> Schele, 460-2.

<sup>382</sup> Schele, 460-2.



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approach nearly impossible. Schele also reports that the city was defended by untold thousands of Hehe. Indeed, between the scale of the fortifications and the number of defenders, Schele frankly states:

...I admit in all honesty that if I had known the conditions before hand, I would not have undertaken the expedition with the forces I had available. Now that we had come this far turning back was impossible; we could only hope that by means of our superior weapons and discipline we would succeed in defeating our opponent.”<sup>384</sup>

Schele deployed moved his force to about 500 meters of the wall, had his men build a temporary palisaded fort out of thorn bushes, and sent his machine gunners up into nearby trees so they could rain fire down on the inside of the fortress. Finally, he sent a detachment of men with the 6.7cm artillery piece to the hill at Tossamaganga. This large hill, whose name means “place from which stones are thrown” to commemorate the events being described presently, would later be the home to the Benedictine Catholic Mission (featured in Alfons Adams’s *Im Dienste des Kreuzes*).<sup>385</sup> It is located about 11km (by road)

<sup>383</sup> Diagram from Schele, *Organisation*. Cross-section of one of Kalenga’s bastions.

<sup>384</sup> Schele, 465. Schele and other observers were astonished at the size and formidability of the Kalenga fortifications, which he had “*bei den Negern nicht vermutet*.” Schele, 472.

<sup>385</sup> Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes*, op. cit.

southwest of Kalenga, and it gave the Germans a perfect view of Kalenga. With Mtaki's guidance (again according to Mungai), the Germans took up position here and prepared their 6.7 cm cannon. Kilometers away from the Hehe positions, they began shelling Kalenga at their leisure, causing much loss of life and destruction, as many of the shells landed inside the wall among the densely packed *tembes* (maze-like, clay structures in which the Hehe lived). Here one sees one of the most decisive advantages of European-equipped armies over African ones, though all too often (as at Rugaro) they were not in a position to be used. Mkwawa's seemingly formidable, entrenched position at Kalenga in fact made a perfect target, a mistake repeated by others elsewhere.<sup>386</sup>



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<sup>386</sup> The French conquest of the Western Sudan was characterized by a series of sieges in which the armies of African states hid behind massive mud brick walls, which the French proceeded to knock down with quick-firing artillery time and time again.

<sup>387</sup> Contemporary view of the Benedictine Mission on Tossamaganga hill, taken by author, 15 August 2005.



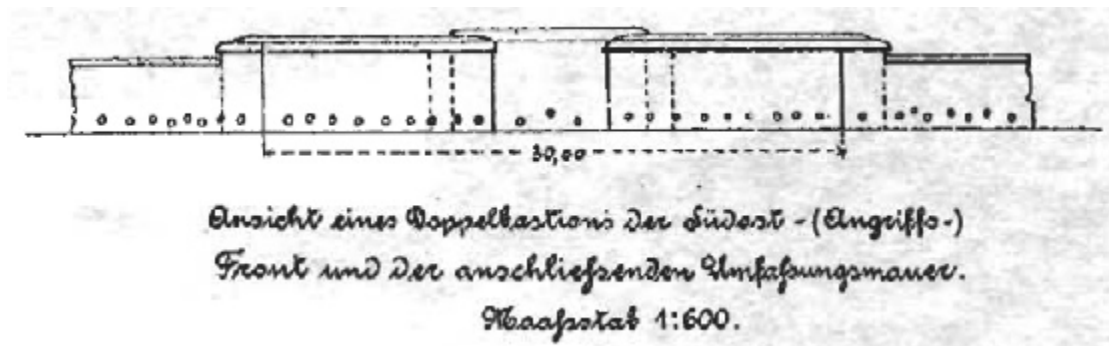
Contrary to Schele's hopes and expectations, this intense bombardment by artillery and machine-gun fire was not enough to break the Hehes' "fighting spirit"; to his horror, the effect of most of the shells that struck the wall "was exactly zero."<sup>389</sup> This fact combined with their dwindling supply of food left the German force with no choice—they would have to storm Kalenga directly. Over the next few hours, the *Schutztruppe* units methodically leap-frogged closer and closer to the wall under a hail of musket fire and—once they got closer—throwing spears. One unit under Lt. Jany launched a feint attack further south, which successfully drew several hundred Hehe out of the fort and away from the 100 meter section where two detachments, one under Lt. von Prince and one under Lt. Elpons, were preparing to make their assault. Fortunately for the attackers, the Hehe had not completed the thorn-trench in one section on the

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<sup>388</sup> Contemporary from Tossamaganga hill facing to the northeast towards Iringa at the approximate place where the Germans positioned their 6.7 cm field-gun, taken by author, 15 August 2005. The Kalenga fort would have been visible—and vulnerable to shelling—from this position.

<sup>389</sup> Schele, 466.

southeast side (see map above), and this allowed them to approach and scale the wall. At 4:30am on 30 October 1894, *Schutztruppe* units poured over the wall into Kalenga with the Maxims providing covering fire and engaged in close-quarter, house-to-house fighting for several hours.<sup>390</sup> By early afternoon the *Askari* had made it to Mkwawa's citadel in the center of Kalenga, Hehe resistance ceased, and victory was declared.



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Upon his return to coast, Schele telegraphed Berlin with the results of the expedition: “150 enemies buried, many others burned in the houses, Iringa destroyed.”<sup>392</sup> Taking Kalenga had cost the *Schutztruppe* relatively little: one European officer (Lt. Maaß) and eight *Askari* killed, four Europeans and forty-four *Askari* wounded.<sup>393</sup> After the end of the battle, Schele ordered the entire town set to the torch and destroyed. This burning of Kalenga made determining the number of Hehe casualties impossible, as most of the corpses were incinerated in the ensuing blaze; Prince was certain that it was in the “many hundred,” and

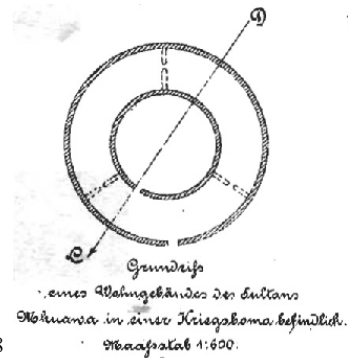
<sup>390</sup> Elpons, 76-7 and Prince, 298-303.

<sup>391</sup> Diagram from Schele, *Organisation*. This view from the southeast is where von Schele's forces broke through into the fortress.

<sup>392</sup> Telegramm Scheles an Reichskanzler, 19 November 1894, BAB, R1001/285, 86.

<sup>393</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 48.

Schele later calculated that it was no less than 250 and probably many more<sup>394</sup> The punitive expedition also seized a sizeable amount of loot from Kalenga, including 2,000 head of cattle, 5,000 goats and sheep, between 15 and 20,000 pounds of black powder for muskets, 10,000 Marks worth of cloth, and between 80,000 and 100,000 Marks worth of ivory (most of it from Mkwawa's personal storehouse).<sup>395</sup> Indeed, the Germans seized so much ivory at Iringa (and at Isike's boma, discussed in chapter four) that the colony as a whole reported a marked upswing in export revenues from the sale of that ivory abroad.<sup>396</sup> Schele also reported the "liberation" of "1500 women and children, mostly stolen slaves (from caravans)..."<sup>397</sup>



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Despite Schele's enthusiastic reports back to Berlin, what seemed to be a crushing victory over the Hehe was, in fact, anything but. This destruction of Kalenga aside, the Schele expedition achieved neither of its primary goals, namely the

<sup>394</sup> Prince, 303 and Schele, 469.

<sup>395</sup> Schele, 469.

<sup>396</sup> "Die Entwicklung von Deutsch-Ostafrika während der letzten zehn Jahre," *DKB* 11 (1900): 180.

<sup>397</sup> Bericht Scheles vom 1. Dezember 1894, *DKB* 6 (1895): 39-44.

<sup>398</sup> Diagram of Mkwawa's inner sanctum from Schele, *Organisation*.

capture of Mkwawa or the destruction of his army—the Hehe monarch slipped out of the fortifications with the majority of his 3,000 soldiers during the battle. There is a debate as to how Mkwawa responded to the storming of his mighty fortress. When Alison Redmayne gathered oral evidence on the fall of Kalenga in the 1950s and early 1960s, some claimed he was so despondent that he sought to blow himself up (like his brother-in-law Isike the year before).<sup>399</sup> He does seem to have been paralyzed. Mungai claims that his generals had to dissuade him from suicide and practically drag him out through the wall.<sup>400</sup> It is also said that his last act in Kalenga was to order the execution of Chanzi, the “soothsayer” who had predicted a Hehe victory in the battle. Whatever his immediate reaction, Mkwawa and most of his army melted away into the countryside of Uhehe.



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### After Kalenga: The Battle of Mage

<sup>399</sup> Alison Redmayne, “The Hehe,” in *Tanzania before 1900*, op. cit., 53.

<sup>400</sup> Interview with Minister Mungai, 25 August 2005.

<sup>401</sup> Monument to *Schutztruppler* Lieutenant Erich Maass who died during the storming of the Kalenga *lipuli*, 30 August 1894. Taken by author, 15 August 2005.

<sup>402</sup> Plaque on the Erich Maas monument. Taken by author, 15 August 2005.

Governor Friedrich Freiherr von Schele and his commander, Tom von Prince waited several days after their seizure and occupation of Mkwawa's massive walled city at Kalenga on 21 October 1894. Governor Schele was totally convinced that, surely, the Germans' overwhelming victory at the battle of Kalenga would force Mkwawa and his generals to negotiate a surrender. Indeed, common wisdom about colonial wars said that one had to either destroy the Africans' army or—more likely—seize their ruler's *Residenz* as a concrete demonstration of the colonizers' overwhelming ability to project and enforce their political will.<sup>403</sup> In his attempt to examine and explain the truisms of colonial warfare as learned by the Germans in East and Southwest Africa, General H. Rohne argues that precisely because Africans seldom possess a “standing army” that can be encircled and destroyed in the manner advocated by Clausewitz in *On War*, the most efficacious means of defeating indigenous forces is to capture and hold their capital. “[In colonial warfare Proper armies] do not exist—which is the rule—but the people do possess a recognized supreme leadership, therefore the conquest of the residence can suffice to break [their] resistance.”<sup>404</sup> Only in dealing with “uncivilized peoples” and “savages” (*Wilden*) like the Herero and the Maasai, who unlike the Hehe did not possess a clear *Oberhaupt*, was it necessary

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<sup>403</sup> Typical in this regard is the treatment of the subject by Colonel C. E. Callwell in his *Small Wars: Their Principles & Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1906), 97-107.

<sup>404</sup> *Generalleutnant* H. Rohne, “Über die Führung von Kolonialkriegen,” Vortrag, gehalten in der Versammlung der Mitarbeiter des Militär-Wochenblattes am 8. Mai 1905, *Beihefte zum Militär-Wochenblatt* 1905, ed. V. Frobels, Generalmajor (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1905), 252.





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to engage in widespread property destruction.<sup>406</sup> Another preeminent expert on and practitioner of colonial warfare, Major Carl Zimmerman (who had extensive service experience with the *Schutztruppe* in Cameroon), likewise noted that the bombardment and storming of African cities and residences was generally more than sufficient to force them to surrender.<sup>407</sup> Africans had supposedly ceased to

<sup>405</sup> Schele's depiction of the battle of Mage. Schele, appendix.

<sup>406</sup> Rohne describes Wissmann's (Germany's so-called "First African") "very reasonable" war of destruction against the Maasai in 1890, during which his Sudanese—fresh from their successful defeat of the "Arab Revolt" along the coast—collected all the cattle they could and shot the ones they could not: "The savages, who felt their property threatened, begged for mercy on their knees and retreated with all haste." Rohne, 256.

<sup>407</sup> Major Carl Zimmerman, entry on *Gefecht*, *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexicon*, volume I, ed. Heinrich Schnee (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1921), 683.

even bother building fortifications since the Germans' arrival due to the "impression made by our superior weapons and methods of waging war."<sup>408</sup>

Much to Schele and Prince's consternation and contrary to the received wisdom regarding "war against savages," Mkwawa and the Hehe defied German expectations, for reasons discussed below. The *Schutztruppe's* victory had indeed been decisive—Schele's telegram to Berlin claimed that he had "buried 250 enemies, burned many houses, and destroyed Iringa," as well as seizing 7,000 animals, and 3,000 kegs of gunpowder.<sup>409</sup> Lt. Prince estimated that the number of Hehe killed amounted to "several hundred."<sup>410</sup> Perhaps most importantly he had taken 1,500 women and children prisoner, many of whom were members of Mkwawa's or other chiefs' lineages. These noncombatants were held as hostages, in many cases until the cessation of hostilities in 1898, and they became the first of thousands of civilians taken into custody and resettled by German authorities in and around their stations (which amounted to a late nineteenth-century equivalent of "strategic hamlets").<sup>411</sup> By Schele's own admission, Mkwawa and the majority of his 3,000 warriors had escaped the siege of Kalenga, but the governor fully expected the loss of property and the possession of hostages to be more than enough to bring Mkwawa to beg for terms

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<sup>408</sup> Zimmerman, entry on *Befestigungen*, *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexicon*, volume I, 154.

<sup>409</sup> Telegramm Scheles an Reichskanzler, 19 November 1894, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BAB), R1001/285, 86.

<sup>410</sup> Prince to Governor von Schele, 12 November 1894, BAB, R1001/285, 72.

<sup>411</sup> On the fate of these hostages, see Martin Baer and Olaf Schröter, *Eine Kopffagd: Deutsche in Ostafrika, Spuren kolonialer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Links Verlag, 2001), 61-3.

of surrender.<sup>412</sup> Schele and his massive column waited for days for some sort of signal of Mkwawa's readiness to capitulate to German demands, but, much to the Germans frustration and astonishment, "not a single person showed up."<sup>413</sup> After almost two weeks of waiting among the smoldering ruins of Kalenga, Governor Schele felt he had no choice but to pull out without either defeating Mkwawa or establishing a permanent military station in the area. His supplies were running low, as the demands of his column—the largest the Germans had ever assembled in East Africa to that date with 33 German officers, 609 *Askari*, over 1000 porters, and now 1,500 hostages—were voracious. More worrisome, another uprising had broken out in the hinterland of the southern coastal city of Kilwa under the leadership of the "infamous slave trader" Hassan bin Omar, who had attacked the Kilwa station in the governor's absence and almost succeeded in storming it.<sup>414</sup> Governor Schele ordered his *Askari* to destroy the city, setting the remaining structures to the torch, and on November 3<sup>rd</sup> the lumbering column set off towards the coast, denied the decisive victory that Schele had been predicting since his ascension to the governorship the year before and that nearly all *Schutztruppe* officers had called for since the Zelewski disaster of 1891.

It was therefore all the more ironic that, much to the horror of the leaders of the "victorious" column, they almost suffered a repeat of the August 1891 ambush of the Zelewski column in almost the exact same location, which

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<sup>412</sup> Schele an Reichskanzler, Bericht über den bisherigen Verlauf des Feldzugs gegen die Wahehe, 1 December 1894, BAB, R1001/285, 120.

<sup>413</sup> Prince, 303.

<sup>414</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 49.

von Schele's expedition passed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November. On 6 November, east of Lula-Rugaro near Mage, Hehe forces attempted to ambush and destroy Schele's column—they had regrouped after evacuating Kalenga and moved swiftly to encircle and annihilate the German led column, a tactic they had honed in decades of brutal and at times disastrous conflict with the Ngoni across the southern highlands. Mkwawa and his generals hoped to turn what had been an unmitigated disaster for the Hehe state into a last minute success, as indeed they had on more than one occasion during the Sangu and Ngoni wars. Several hundred of Mkwawa's best soldiers and officers rushed past the *Schutztruppe* column undetected and prepared an ambush, hoping to achieve another surprise victory over the *AvaDaliki*. And indeed, on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> they caught the lumbering German column, part of which had not even left camp yet, largely by surprise. Schele admits that he failed to send reconnaissance patrols ahead of the main column onto the Mage mesa because "half of the column had not left the encampment yet."<sup>415</sup> The head of the *avant-garde* moved into an area of thick bush—much as at Rugaro—and was attacked by a detachment of Hehe at close range. Governor Schele, who heard the firing from several hundred meters away, was then informed that another force of 500 Hehe was rushing the column from the begin the edge of the mesa. At this point he only had his "boys," a translator, and his standard bearer with him and was largely unguarded:

The attack happened so surprisingly that, since I had mistakenly sent the third group forward [leaving Schele himself unguarded], I had no means whatsoever of countering an attack available to me. There was nothing left to do other than to shoot into the thick swarm of the enemy, who did not come directly at me, but rather flew past me and pounced on the

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<sup>415</sup> Schele, 471.

porters, supported by my boys who kept handing me new rifles, and my translator and flag bearer.<sup>416</sup>

Ironically enough, perhaps because Schele's group was so small and unprotected, the Hehe did not seem to notice that they had missed their chance to surround and slay another commander of the *Schutztruppe* only kilometers away from the spot where Zelewski had been attacked and killed under similar circumstances.

This time, however, the *Schutztruppe* force was far larger, more experienced, and the *Askari* were allowed (unlike at Rugaro) to march with their Mausers loaded and at the ready. The Hehe ambush was also far more hastily prepared, and they had fewer warriors available with which to execute it. Tom von Prince described the Mage ambush:

The Wahehe suddenly attacked the column as we were passing through a lightly forested area and...ignoring [my] 4<sup>th</sup> company passed directly in front of the company's field of fire...sustaining enough casualties to force their withdrawal just before reaching the position occupied by Governor von Schele, the expeditionary staff, and a few *Askari*...Thank God...that we did not lose another commander of the *Schutztruppe*.<sup>417</sup>

Several waves of Hehe warriors charged the hastily created German-*Askari* formation at the front of the column, but unlike at Rugaro, the *Askari* were able to methodically launch salvo after salvo of 11mm ammunition into the Hehe ranks. During the chaos, several of the women taken from Kalenga managed to escape, and several of the porters were wounded or killed. Another wave attacked the right flank of the German force, and it too was answered with several volleys of rifle fire. Once these Hehe flanking detachments had been driven back, the colonial troops noticed hundred more waiting in reserve and fired upon them from

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<sup>416</sup> Schele, 471.

<sup>417</sup> Prince to the Government in Dar es Salaam, 14 January 1895, quoted in Mann, 141.

1,000 meters away.<sup>418</sup> The Hehe withdrew, and the *Askari* were unable to engage in any pursuit without abandoning the governor and the rest of the column. Prince notes that while ultimately the Battle of Mage ended in a decisive victory for the Germans, the battle could have easily gone the other way had the Hehe more completely surprised the *Schutztruppe* column (the terrain was not as favorable as at Lula-Rugaro), had they been able to assemble more men for the attack, or merely if the force that attacked from the rear had discerned the identity of the lone *Mzungu* accompanied by a small band of “boys,” a translator, and a flag bearer. Nigmann, Prince, and other German observers claimed that the Hehe suffered severe losses at Mage, which only added to the demoralization caused by the Battle of Kalenga two weeks before, though this was difficult to prove as the Hehe only left behind thirty bodies.<sup>419</sup> “Also on this occasion we did not find a single wounded [Hehe], further evidence for the fact that the black, even if wounded severely, can move long distances with wonderful tenacity.”<sup>420</sup> That the Hehe did suffer severe losses is confirmed by the oral evidence compiled by Alison Redmayne in the 1960s, and Joseph Mungai likewise says that Mage was nearly as traumatic for the Hehe military as Kalenga (which they escaped intact if not unscathed). Indeed one of Mungai’s ancestors along with countless other Hehe fell at the battle of Mage. While we do not have even an approximate count as to the number of Hehe dead or wounded suffered in the failed ambush, the oral

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<sup>418</sup> Schele, 472.

<sup>419</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 49.

<sup>420</sup> Schele, 472.

evidence implies that these may have been nearly as bad as the losses suffered at Kalenga itself.<sup>421</sup>

While many *Schutztruppe* officers were pleased that Mkwawa had finally been humiliated by the force of German arms, colonial critics back in Berlin in the Reichstag sharply condemned the 500,000 *Reichsmark* budget deficit [*Etatüberschreitung*] caused by the expedition. Those parliamentarians already inclined to criticize the government and its colonial policy were appalled at more than just the fiscal excess brought about by Schele's operation—they attacked the inhumanity of the now generalized practice of seizing (“liberating”) female and children hostages and transferring them to the coast or to fortified villages near German garrisons.<sup>422</sup> The Social Democrat August Bebel, always the determined opponent of the government's policies condemned the practice as “a barbarity of the first order” [*eine Barbarei ersten Ranges*] and called for an end to hostage taking and forced resettlement. Both practices would, in fact, soon become routine in Uhehe. In another parallel with the situation in German Southwest Africa a decade later, Governor Schele was awarded the *Orden pour le Mérite* by the Kaiser, but he was also recalled to Berlin in an attempt to quiet the storm of criticism that his expedition had caused.

The destruction of Kalenga was for the Germans ultimately a pyrrhic victory: Hehe resistance would continue for another four years. As the official

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<sup>421</sup> Alison Redmayne, *The Wahehe People of Tanzania* (Oxford: PhD Thesis, 1964), 228-35 and author's interview with Tanzanian Minister of Education (now Minister of Home Affairs) Joseph James Mungai, 25 August 2005.

<sup>422</sup> See *Stenographische Berichte*, Bd. 139, 1559 and 1582.

history of the *Schutztruppe* put the matter, because Mkwawa and his followers after the Battle of Kalenga began to wage a guerrilla war [*Kleinkrieg*] against the colonial authorities, henceforth the German tactic would have to be “to isolate Sultan Quawa to rob him of his followers, to turn these to the side of the government, and to wage war against Quawa personally.”<sup>423</sup> Thus began the move to harsher measures and scorched earth policies, eventually carried to their extreme by Governor von Liebert. As Erick Mann puts it, *Schutztruppe* officers, after Rugaro and even more so after the fall of Kalenga “conducted their military operations with even more terror and destruction of civilian centers and agricultural areas, so as to re-establish the image of the *Schutztruppe*’s invincibility. These destructive tactics were played out to the fullest between 1894 and 1898, during the final phases of the war.”<sup>424</sup> Indeed, the growing frustration with Mkwawa’s and Hehe resistance leads the *Schutztruppe* to recourse to far more violent and destructive tactics after the fall of Kalenga. Likewise, after the fall of Kalenga and particularly after the establishment of the German garrison at “New Iringa,” Mkwawa would resort to ever more brutal, “irregular” tactics, mostly directed at those Hehe who chose to work with the emerging colonial state in Uhehe. These methods and the Germans’ response gave the events of 1896-98 the character of a not only a guerrilla war, but also of a civil war in which at least as many Hehe fought on the side of the *AvaDaliki* as on the side of the ruthless, “wonderfully tenacious” Hehe monarch. This cycle of attack and reprisal would leave much of Uhehe in ashes by the end of the

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<sup>423</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 49.

<sup>424</sup> Mann, 138.



German-Hehe war. This dark and difficult period is the subject of the next chapter.



## Chapter VI: Guerrilla War and Scorched Earth in Uhehe (1895-1898)

*From this point on a dreary, two-year guerrilla war prevailed, which to be sure offered no more large battles, but whose demands still claimed a large number of lives of those operating in small groups, on patrol, on transport duty, or serving as messengers*

-Ernst Nigmann, 1911<sup>426</sup>

*The stomach is what affects the negro the most, and this reality would help me years later in bringing the harsh mentality of the Hehe under German rule, to impose order on them, which allowed neighboring peoples to live in security.*

-Captain Tom von Prince, 1914<sup>427</sup>

The previous chapter ended with the destruction of the Hehe fortress at Kalenga.

Chapter three dealt with the Germans' attempt at fighting a *war of maneuver*;

chapters four and five examined their *war of position* and their putatively

successful siege of the Hehe fortress at Kalenga. This chapter, on the other hand,

deals with the German *counter-insurgency war* against Mkwawa and his allies

after the fall of Kalenga in October 1894. This phase of the conflict, which is

generally the least discussed due to the lack of any large, set-piece battles between

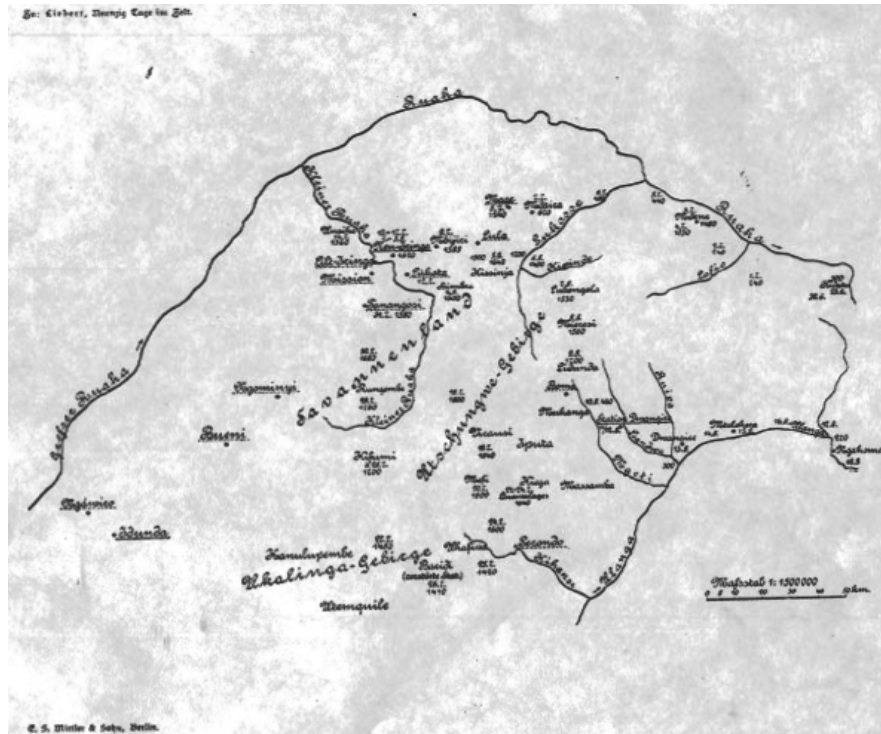
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<sup>425</sup> Karl Weule, "Ostafrikanische Eingeborenen-Zeichnungen: Psychologische Einblicke in die Künstlerseele des Negers," in *Ipek: Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* 2 (1926): between 96 and 97.

<sup>426</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1911), 55.

<sup>427</sup> Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 174.

the Hehe and Germans, was in fact the most brutal phase of the war and the time during which ordinary Hehe suffered most (a suffering that is still vividly recounted today by their descendents). German anti-guerrilla strategies included *concentration* of the “enemy” population, the *execution* of “Mkwawa sympathizers,” and the *destruction* of crops, homes, and livestock leading to famine and the spread of epidemic disease. It was also the time when German *political* maneuvering finally brought thousands of Hehe over to the Germans’ side. The chapter ends with the death of Mkwawa and Germans’ final victory over the Hehe, which guaranteed them dominance over the southern highlands of Tanzania. The order they imposed on Uhehe, however, could best be described in the words of Tacitus in his characterization of the Roman counter-insurgency war against the ancient Britons: *Auferre, trucidare, rapere, falsis nominibus imperium; atque, ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*. “To ravage, to slaughter, to usurp under false titles, they call empire; and where they make a desert, they call it peace.”



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### The Situation in Uhehe after the Fall of Kalenga

At the same time that Schele's enormous column was massing at Ulanga, another battle between the Hehe and the Germans took place on the other side of the colony. As was mentioned in chapter four, the garrison at Tabora had been mobilized as part of the broader containment operation all along Uhehe's northern frontier. To this end, the station chief at Tabora, *Kompagnieführer* Herrmann, set forth in September 1894 with five Europeans, 100 *Askari*, and one cannon to face off against the nearly 2,000 Hehe that were at that time laying siege to the "government-friendly" village at Usseke.<sup>429</sup> Herrmann hoped to drive these Hehe back and attack their fortress-garrison ("Quikuru") at Konkuru, thereby keeping

<sup>428</sup> Map from Eduard von Liebert, *Neunzig Tage im Zelt. Meine Reisen nach Uhehe Juni bis September 1897* (Berlin: Mittler & Sohn, 1898), foldout at end of text.

<sup>429</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 51.

them occupied and unable to come to Mkwawa's aid at Kalenga. The *Schutztruppe* detachment surprised the Hehe besieging Usseke and drove them into "wild flight, some of them even leaving behind their shields—which among the Hehe are as decorated as among the ancient Romans."<sup>430</sup> Herrmann's attack on the Quikuru at Konko on 13 October 1894, on the other hand, was a bloody and protracted affair. The *Schutztruppe* only managed to overwhelm the Hehe garrison after ten hours of brutal combat at point blank range, and Lt. von Bothmer as well as six *Askari* "died a heroic death" in the operation. *Kompagnieführer* Herrmann himself, the company doctor (Dr. Preuß), Sgt. Richter, and twenty-four *Askari* were also wounded.<sup>431</sup> The Battle of Konko was one of the first engagements in which the Germans used *Askari* entirely indigenous to German East Africa, and Hermann reported that the locally born Nyamwezi had proven themselves to be every bit as brave and effective as the Sudanese, and perhaps even better.<sup>432</sup>

The success at Mage and Konko aside, the Schele expedition achieved none of its primary goals, namely the capture of Mkwawa, the destruction of his army, or the establishment of a permanent military strongpoint in Uhehe, which would have to wait another eighteen months. As if the failure of the colony's hitherto largest expeditionary force to force the "Sultan" of the Hehe into submission were not enough, the specifics of the expedition brought a storm of

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 52 and *Kompagnieführer* Herrman aus Tabora über seinen Zug nach Konko, *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* (the official publication of the German Colonial Department, hereafter *DKB*) 6 (1895): 70-1.

<sup>432</sup> Herrmann, 71.

criticism down upon the colonial government and on Schele specifically. Colonial critics in the Reichstag, already highly sensitive to news from the Hehe front after the “catastrophe” of August 1891, sharply condemned the 500,000 *Reichsmark Etatüberschreitung* caused by the column’s efforts, and others attacked the inhumanity of what would soon become the generalized practice of seizing (“liberating”) female and children hostages and transferring them to the malarial coast or to fortified villages.<sup>433</sup> Even parliamentarians generally sympathetic to the government’s arguments about the necessity of and difficulties associated with the colonial project in Africa were appalled to learn that von Schele’s expedition had already spent nearly the entire budget allocated for the following year in a matter of a few weeks, a fact made all the worse by the ongoing conflict with the Hehe and with Hassan bin Omar’s forces near Kilwa. The Social Democrat August Bebel, who had been scathing in his criticisms of the mistakes that led up to the destruction of the Zelewski column, went beyond mere condemnation of the government in Dar es Salaam’s profligate spending and the failure of the Schele column to achieve any meaningful victory. He now condemned the practice of hostage taking and the transfer of prisoners to more secure (and generally unhealthy) areas as “a barbaric act of the first order” (*eine Barbarei ersten Ranges*), and he demanded that the Chancellor and Governor von Schele explain their actions, as hostage taking and mass deportation were hardly policies becoming of the putative “civilizers” of East Africa.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages*, Bd. 139, 1895, 1559 and 1582.

<sup>434</sup> *Stenographische Berichte*, *ibid.*, 1582-3. Bebel would raise even stronger objections to the rumors and reports of the mass shooting of prisoners during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and the

Although Governor von Schele was granted the *Orden pour le Mérite* by the Kaiser, the financial debacle unleashed by the 1894 Hehe Expedition combined with his failing health (he had become ill while campaigning during the rainy season of 1893, probably while fighting the Mbunga Confederacy) led to his recall by the authorities in Berlin on 26 April 1895.<sup>435</sup> The fact that he was awarded the *Kaiserreich*'s highest military medal of honor for a campaign that did not bring decisive results, had nearly ruined German East Africa's treasury, and was characterized by critics as one of "barbaric acts of the first order" is perhaps suggestive of the lack of accountability enjoyed by German officers in the field regardless of their performance or the potentially criminal nature of their actions, particularly in the colonies, so vividly described by Isabel Hull and others.<sup>436</sup> Indeed, a decade later, General Lothar von Trotha would be granted the same honor under similar circumstances during the German-Herero War in Southwest Africa, during which he encircled but failed to defeat the Herero at the infamous Battle of Waterberg. Similarly, the storm of protest unleashed by his inhumane treatment of Herero women, children, and the elderly and claims that his strategy was wasteful led to his eventual recall without any explicit refutation of those

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Herero-Nama War of 1904-05. 60.Sitzung des deutschen Reichstages, 17.3.1904, BAB, R2113 and Helmut Walser Smith, "The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation: Notes on Debates in the German Reichstag Concerning Southwest Africa, 1904-14," in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 108-21.

<sup>435</sup> *Deutsches Kolonial-Lexicon*, volume III, 262.

<sup>436</sup> See Kirsten Zirkel, "Military power in German colonial policy: the *Schutztruppen* and their leaders in East and South-West Africa, 1888-1918," in *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c.1700-1964*, ed. David Killingray and David Omissi, 91-113 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) and Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

policies. It should be noted, however, that some colonial militaries were even *less* accountable than the *Schutztruppe*, whose metropolitan superiors at least had to explain themselves to the Social Democrats. The *Force Publique* of Leopold II's Congo Free State—so graphically depicted in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost*—could and did depopulate entire districts larger than all of Belgium with total impunity.

In the case of East Africa, von Schele was replaced with none other than Hermann (recently elevated to *von*) Wissmann, the original founder of the Sudanese and Shaangani *Wissmannische-truppe* and Germany's most famous Africa explorer, who would rule the colony as governor from April 1895 until December 1896. Wissmann, who had a reputation for “vigorous action” and total ruthlessness gained from his defeat of the “Arab Revolt” from 1889-1890 and of the Maasai in 1890, was quite explicit that the Hehe were a continual threat to German interests. Wissmann had been eager to attack the Hehe and avenge the death of his protégé Zelewski since 1891 and, as mentioned in chapters three and four, in 1892 then acting Governor von Schele had forced “*Reichskommissar* H. Wissmann” to desist in any attempt to go after the Hehe while the latter was on the so-called “*Dampfer-Expedition*” (during which Germany's “greatest African,” as he was known by the 1930s, brought a steamship in pieces to Lake Nyasa in order to explore the region and in theory fight the slave trade). Now three years later as governor, he hoped to provoke a conflict in order to “remove Mkwawa from his position” and install a more quiescent successor. Should this fail, he and Prince intended to “shatter the Hehe Empire into its small component tribes” (das



*Reich der Hehe in ihre kleinen Sonderstämme zu zersplittern*).<sup>437</sup> Based on his extensive experience in East Africa and with “pacification” in particular, Wissmann fully expected to be able to eradicate the “Hehe-menace” in a timely fashion during his tenure as governor, but like his two predecessors, he was to be disappointed by the tenacity of Hehe resistance and the continued sway of Mkwawa’s leadership over his nominally defeated people.



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Governor Wissmann

### **Mkwawa and the Hehe State after Kalenga**

Far from leading to a total Hehe defeat as Schele had anticipated, Mkwawa and his supporters decided on a two-track policy. On the one hand, rather than face

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<sup>437</sup> Wissmann an Hohenlohe, 24 September 1896, BAB, R1001/287, 8-17 and 70.

<sup>438</sup> Picture from *Hermann von Wissmann, Deutschlands größter Afrikaner: sein Leben und Wirken unter Benutzung des Nachlasses*, eds. Alexander Becker and C. von Perbandt (A. Schall: Berlin 1907).

the Germans directly in battle as in the unsuccessful counterattack at Mage, Hehe forces would settle into dogged, guerrilla-style resistance against the Germans. Mkwawa ordered his forces to avoid pitched battles, to continue raiding official and caravan traffic, to attack isolated German patrols, and to harass the growing but still scattered and incomplete network of German *boma*, or fortresses.<sup>439</sup> On the other hand, Mkwawa would continue his attempts to negotiate with encroaching German authorities. While the destruction of Kalenga certainly made an impression on the Hehe and on their neighbors in particular (who increasingly saw the Germans as the eventual victors in the struggle with Mkwawa), the fact that almost the entire Hehe army had escaped and that Mkwawa and his forces were allowed to reoccupy the Kalenga site almost immediately convinced Mkwawa that the Germans could still be forced to come to some sort of compromise. The Hehe moved back to Kalenga and began the partial rebuilding of the royal *lipuli*, if not on the same scale as before the siege of October 1894.

Mkwawa faced a similar situation to that confronting the Germans after Rugaro—a decline in prestige and the sharp reduction of his ability to impose compliance through fear or otherwise. The station chief at Kilossa, Freiherr von Schenck, reported that, in the wake of the German victory at Kalenga, many of the *jumbe* (chiefs) in his district were now accepting the German flag and the “protection” of the colonial state. “The constant fear of the Wahehe, which up until had hindered every activity and development among the inhabitants of

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<sup>439</sup> Redmayne, *The Wahehe* (PhD), chapter 6, and author’s interview with Mungai, 25 August 2005.

Kondoa, has now almost completely disappeared.”<sup>440</sup> Von Prince reported a similar decline in the fear of the Hehe among local people near the Kilimatinde Station (near Konko).<sup>441</sup> The decline of Mkwawa and the Hehes’ reputation should, however, not be overstated. While it is clear that Merere IV and the Sangu—who were busy annexing territory in western Uhehe with the approval and indeed assistance of the Germans—as well as many Bena no longer feared, or at least no longer respected, the authority of the once dreaded Mkwawa, most Hehe continued to obey him in the year and a half following Schele’s leveling of Kalenga, and many would continue to do so even after the establishment of the Iringa garrison by von Prince in May 1896. Tribute continued to flow to the royal court from Hehe vassals, and Mkwawa was still able to field and command troops drawn from the male populace of Uhehe. More problematic than the fealty of “ordinary Wahehe” were the aspirations of Mkwawa’s younger brother, Mpangile (also rendered as “Mpangire” in some German documents) and his allies. After the disaster at Kalenga, Mpangile pushed for the abdication of his older brother, blaming him for the catastrophes that had befallen the Hehe in 1894. While nothing came of this “treason” initially, a year and a half later when the newly promoted Captain Tom von Prince returned to Uhehe to found “New Iringa,” it would be Mpangile who would be selected to be the new Hehe “Sultan.”

### **German-Hehe Relations after Kalenga**

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<sup>440</sup> DKB 6 (1895): 132.

<sup>441</sup> Kompagnieführer Prince, “Ueber seinen Marsch nach Kilimatinde und die Anlage der dortigen Station,” DKB 6 (1895): 544.

However much von Schele's successor in Dar es Salaam, Hermann von Wissmann wanted to crush the Hehe once and for all, like Soden and Schele (in his first year as governor), he was soon forced to concede that the colony did not have the resources to defeat Mkwawa outright. Indeed, he was also directly ordered before his departure from Germany that "now finally this constant waging of war would have to end."<sup>442</sup> This recognition of reality meant that Mkwawa found in him a willing negotiating partner, at least initially. In May of 1895 Mkwawa sent a peace delegation to Kilossa, and Wissmann entrusted the station chief, Lt. Georg von Elpons, with the negotiations. As had been the case in 1892 and 1893, the negotiations dragged on with no conclusion for months. This time, however, an agreement was actually reached between Elpons and Mkwawa's representatives on 23 December 1895. Mkwawa agreed to subject himself to the Kaiser's supreme authority and to return any prisoners-of-war or weapons he still had in his possession.<sup>443</sup> He also agreed to cease any operations beyond Uhehe's jointly recognized border. In return, the Germans recognized Mkwawa as the supreme authority in his territory, and they agreed to return several Hehe prisoners taken in October 1894. The official organ of the Colonial Department, the *Deutsches Kolonialblatt*, went as far as to declare: "According to the conviction of experts, the marauding attacks of the Hehe may be at an end, peace may reign, and trade and traffic may now be open."<sup>444</sup> It looked to many on both

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<sup>442</sup> Alexander Becker, *Aus Deutsch-Ostafrikas Sturm- und Drangperiode: Erinnerungen eines alten Afrikaners* (Halle an der Saale: S. O. Hendel, 1911), 173.

<sup>443</sup> Elpons an Wissmann, 14 October 1895, BAB, R1001/286, 161-5 and "Friede mit den Wahehe," DKB 7 (1896): 8-12.

<sup>444</sup> DKB 7 (1896): 70.

sides as if peace would finally prevail in and around Uhehe after four and a half long years of bloody and indecisive warfare between Mkwawa and the German



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colonial state.<sup>446</sup> Had this agreement been honored by both sides, it might have laid the foundation for a form of “indirect rule” in the southern highlands. Such a situation was not beyond the realm of possibility, as the Germans would soon come to precisely this sort of an arrangement with the powerful, highly centralized, Great Lakes monarchies in Bukoba, Urundi, and Ruanda.

But there were problems on both sides. Elpons reports that at one point during the negotiations, Mkwawa declared his unwillingness to appear at the Kilossa Station in person out of fear that it would be a trap. When his brother Mpangile eagerly offered to come in Mkwawa’s place, however, the latter threatened Mpangile with death. “According to statements by chiefs in this area,

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<sup>445</sup> Wissmann negotiating with Africans during the “Arab Revolt,” 1890. Uwe Timm, *Deutsche Kolonien* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch Verlag, 1986), 17.

<sup>446</sup> “Beendigung der Verhandlungen mit den Wahehes,” DKB 7 (1896): 69-70.

Quawa is full of mistrust for his close relatives. He believes that Mpangire wants to align himself with the Germans in order to eliminate him.”<sup>447</sup> Mkwawa’s paranoia was well known even before the disasters of 1894—now it reached a fever pitch (with justification as it turns out, at least as regards the ambitions of his brother). Mkwawa also feared the rapacity of his neighbors and former vassals. His bitter rival, Merere IV, was obviously scheming to annex large portions of western Uhehe and still enjoyed excellent relations with the Germans. The treaty between the Hehe and the Germans declared that the latter had the responsibility of mediating disputes between local powers, but this was cold comfort to Mkwawa and those subordinates that remained loyal. Eight months after the signing of the treaty, a letter from Mkwawa to Lt. Engelhardt dated 1 August 1896 laments not only Merere’s marauding and violence, but also complains about the “once-loyal” Bena chiefs who by 1896 had been openly flaunting Mkwawa’s authority for over three years. Mkwawa requested German permission to “teach them a lesson.”<sup>448</sup> The Germans, for their part, did even more to undermine the agreement. Although Mkwawa had explicitly proclaimed his legal and symbolic subjugation to German authority, the authorities in Dar es Salaam held fast to their demand that a military station be established in Uhehe, despite the fact that it was well known that Mkwawa would consider such a move as an act of war.<sup>449</sup> In addition to Governor Wissmann’s unwavering conviction

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<sup>447</sup> “Friede mit den Wahehe,” DKB 7 (1896): 9.

<sup>448</sup> Letter from Mkwawa to Lt. Engelhardt, 1 August 1896, in the possession of the Kalenga Museum, Tanzania (written in Kiswahili in Arabic script and translated by the Museum).

<sup>449</sup> Elpons an Wissmann, 5 November 1895, BAB, R1001/286, 160.

that troops had to be garrisoned in Uhehe, many local German officers continued to demand a war that would result in their “total submission.”

Knowing full well what the result would be (having been warned by von Elpons and others of the inevitable consequences), Wissmann nonetheless gave the order to Capt. von Prince in May of 1896 to establish a military station near Kalenga (now referred to by the Germans as Old Iringa). In the event that Mkwawa resisted Prince’s attempt to establish this station, the captain had orders to respond immediately “with violent means” and to remove Mkwawa from the territory. Thereafter he was ordered to replace Mkwawa with a more German-friendly monarch, or—in the event no one suitable could be found—to divide the Hehe Empire into pieces (in the event the Germans would end up doing both).<sup>450</sup> As Elpons had predicted in his reports of the previous year, Mkwawa resisted what he considered a violation of the spirit if not the letter of the December 1895 agreement. In Prince’s mind, his drive into the heart of Uhehe was only directed at Mkwawa personally, who he considered to be a bloodthirsty tyrant (indeed, he had vowed his overthrow in 1891), and not at the Hehe as a people. He at least hoped to limit any operations directed at the populace.<sup>451</sup> Prince gave the Sultan ten days to comply and allow the construction of a station near the Kalenga fortress, and a Hehe delegation negotiated day after day with the Germans. Prince claims that he “tried everything peaceful,” but it became obvious after ten days

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<sup>450</sup> Stellvert. Gouverneur Banningsen an Prince, 23 May 1896, BAB, R1001/287, 74.

<sup>451</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 55.

that Mkwawa was just stalling for time.<sup>452</sup> He therefore launched his attack as per Wissmann's and Bennigsen's (the lieutenant governor) instructions in the middle of the discussions with the Hehe: on 31 August Prince's detachment assaulted Mkwawa's camp, catching the Hehe by surprise. The result was a rout as the Hehe "scattered in wild flight," and the *Askari* began an "energetic pursuit."<sup>453</sup> Prince hoped to drive Mkwawa into less populated areas and then hunt him ruthlessly so that he and his men would have no time to prepare one of the surprise counterattacks for which the Hehe were by now justly famous. Henceforth, the government in Dar considered Mkwawa a "deposed rebel," not a "sultan" with any legitimate political or legal standing. Prince's superiors ordered him to arrest Mkwawa and initiate legal proceedings against him for his numerous "acts of murder."<sup>454</sup> Just as Hehe troops operating against the Germans in 1891-1894 had been criminalized as "bandits" and "marauders," thereby obstructing Hehe attempts to negotiate with the Germans as equal opponents in a legitimate armed conflict, Mkwawa and his supporters could now expect nothing other than German summary justice meted out against them as if they were common criminals.

In the course of the next few weeks, Prince's units continued their pursuit of Mkwawa and his men, and they engaged in a series of "one-sided bloody encounters" in which at least 500 Hehe were killed. Additionally, 50 men, 600

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<sup>452</sup> Kompagnieführer Prince, "Ueber eine Zug nach der Landschaft Uhehe und the Begründung einer Staion in Kuirenga," DKB 7 (1896): 774.

<sup>453</sup> Prince an Gouverneur, 20 September 1896, BAB, R1001/287, 116.

<sup>454</sup> Gouverneur an Prince, 12 October 1896, BAB, R1001/287, 125.



women, numerous children, and 8,000 head of cattle were seized.<sup>455</sup> These prisoners were either held as hostages to compel Hehe men still in the field to surrender or sent to “government villages” near the newly established Iringa Station, which lay about two and half hours from what was henceforth known as “Old Iringa” (meaning Kalenga). Prince’s lieutenants (von Stocki, Graf Fugger, and Glauning) brought a steady stream of captives and body counts to “New Iringa,” and cattle and other livestock were seized as part of a policy of food denial designed to starve Mkwawa and his soldiers into submission.<sup>456</sup> Prince remarked with pride that “[t]he belief of the Hehe in Quawa, who now could not even protect his cattle was shattered; the dense organization that made the Hehe and their tributaries so dangerous has been loosened.”<sup>457</sup> Upon observing the speed and dexterity with which the Bena, Sangu, Kinga and others entered negotiations with the new master of Iringa, Prince claims that they “express surprisingly clear political terminology for negroes,” once again demonstrating the profound contempt and lack of understanding on the part of the Germans for indigenous political structures.<sup>458</sup>

Prince quickly moved to consolidate political and military control over Uhehe. In October, Mpangile came to the Germans and struck the alliance with them that Mkwawa had always feared—Mpangile was made head of central and

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<sup>455</sup> Feldzugsbericht über den Kriegszug des Kompagnieführers bzw. Hauptmann Prince in Uhehe vom 12. Juli bis 25. Dezember 1896, 24 February 1897, BAB, R1001/288, 25-34.

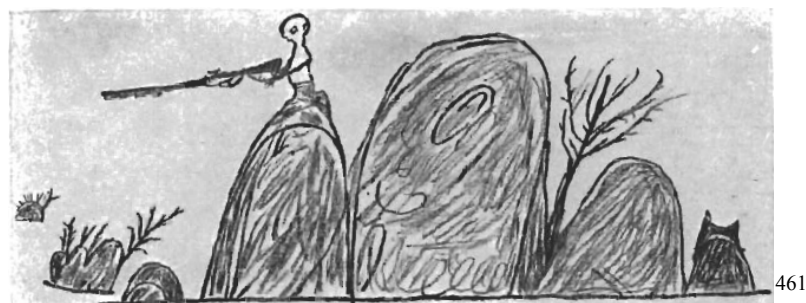
<sup>456</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 55.

<sup>457</sup> Prince, “Ueber eine Zug nach der Landschaft Uhehe...,” DKB 7 (1896): 775.

<sup>458</sup> Prince, “Ueber eine Zug nach der Landschaft Uhehe...,” DKB 7 (1896): 775.

eastern Uhehe, and western Uhehe was separated and given to Merere IV as a reward for his and his father's participation in hostilities against the Hehe since 1892. That this meant handing over Bena villages to a ruler who was as feared and detested as Mkwawa was of little consequence to the Germans, further contributing to the impression of third party observers that the German-Hehe War was just a sordid tale of oppressors replacing each other one after the other.<sup>459</sup> By November 1896 ninety percent of Mkwawa's soldiers had laid down their arms, and Prince declared the region to be pacified: "the tasks assigned to me are complete. Quawa has been removed and is followed by very few loyalists."<sup>460</sup> Prince believed that hostilities were now over and that he could begin the real work, namely the economic development of the Iringa District.

The new ruler of Iringa was indeed correct in that there would never again be any set-piece battles between the Hehe and the Germans. But he and his superiors were to be severely disappointed—in January 1897 Mkwawa began a protracted, bitter guerrilla war against German power and anyone who



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<sup>459</sup> James L. Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2005), 29-30.

<sup>460</sup> Prince an Gouvernement, 4 November 1896, DKB 8 (1897): 42.

<sup>461</sup> Contemporary African depiction of mountain warfare of the type fought in Uhehe. Dr. Karl Weule, *Negerleben in Ostafrika: Ergebnisse einer ethnologischen Forschungsreise* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1909), 87.

collaborated with it in Uhehe. He attacked smaller military outposts, ambushed supply trains, attacked patrols, and murdered “German-friendly” Hehe in large numbers. Terrain is everything in waging (and winning) guerrilla conflicts, and Uhehe was tailor-made for a prolonged partisan war with its numerous valleys, hills, and caves. Mkwawa and his supporters also knew this terrain infinitely better than their German pursuers (though the latter could increasingly make use of “government loyal” Hehe guides). As Nigmann put it, “From this point on a dreary, two-year guerrilla war [*Kleinkrieg*] prevailed, which to be sure offered no more large battles, but whose demands still claimed a large number of lives of those operating in small groups, on patrol, on transport duty, or serving as messengers.”<sup>462</sup> Quoting Prince, Nigmann continues:

This officer [Glauning] managed to follow Quawa for weeks on end through the bush without any trails. It soon became clear that Quawa always cold-bloodedly snuck by units right next him on watch, or he slipped between the lines of patrols. He was able to do this whenever the population sustained him while on the run. Quawa was in fact always provided with food, supplies, and news while these same inhabitants refused to provide our troops a single piece of information, lied about the obvious signs of Quawa’s recent presence, sought to deliberately lead us astray, among other things. It gave the impression that the people were active participants in all of this, because in spite of the constant and rapid change of Quawa’s position, there always existed a close correspondence between his movements and the behavior of the indigenous people. In the middle of the bush while on Quawa’s trail we would find meals and local beer placed out [for Mkwawa]. The people always knew where Quawa was to be found, in which direction he was moving, which points he would pass. It often happened that Quawa would dismiss his exhausted retinue—usually 20 to 30 men and more women—and simply take the entire population of the nearest village with him [as replacements]. Overall it was obvious that he exercised considerable personal influence over the local people, because in spite of any threat to their lives they could not refuse him. The troops pursuing him managed to surprise Quawa’s caravan several times; but in these cases the locals threw themselves against the attacking soldiers, offering up themselves in

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<sup>462</sup> Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 55.

sacrifice and thereby giving Quawa time to take flight. A planned capture of his persons was therefore unthinkable, no one know what he looked like.<sup>463</sup>

It is a description that is all too familiar with those acquainted with the history of “dirty wars” (to use De Gaulle’s formulation—*la sale guerre*—in reference to the Algeria War) in the twentieth century.<sup>464</sup> Prince’s contemporaries were also quite familiar with the sort of war he was describing. Across the colonial world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, countless indigenous insurgencies were resisting foreign occupation in the manner described by Prince and Nigmann. Euro-American commanders from the Philippines to Cuba, Rhodesia to South Africa, Aceh to New Zealand were locked in struggles very similar to the one now facing the *Schutztruppe*.<sup>465</sup> In all of these cases, the “cowardly tactics” of the insurgents encouraged the occupiers to engage in ruthless wars of attrition, as the situation described by Prince above led them to the conclusion that victory could only come by waging war on *entire populations* in order to force them to stop supporting the “bandits.” If the guerrillas were “fish in the ocean,” (to use Mao’s famous formulation) and the local populace was the water, then government forces would have to (as Chiang Kai-shek put it) “dry up the sea.”

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<sup>463</sup> Quoted in Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 56.

<sup>464</sup> Matthew Carr, *The Infernal Machine: A History of Terrorism* (New York: The New Press, 2006), 101.

<sup>465</sup> See, for example, Colonel C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles & Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1906), Chapter XI: “Guerilla Warfare in General.” These and other cases will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.



Over the course of the period from late 1896 to mid-1898, the *Schutztruppe* under the command of Capt. von Prince operating out of the New Iringa Station waged precisely this sort of war of attrition against Mkwawa, his followers, and any civilians perceived to be giving them aid. Mkwawa's "banditry" and "marauding" infuriated the Germans, and his attacks and murders pushed them to retaliate with ever growing ferocity, creating a frightening and destructive spiral of reciprocal violence and atrocity. Wissmann's failing health led to his departure from the colony on 3 December 1896, and it would be up to his replacement, Eduard von Liebert to bring the vicious *Kleinkrieg* to its conclusion.<sup>467</sup> Liebert, who was the first member of any unit in the German

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<sup>466</sup> The new governor, Eduard von Liebert. Picture from [www.deutsche-schutzgebiete.de](http://www.deutsche-schutzgebiete.de)

<sup>467</sup> *Kolonial-Lexicon*, vol.3, 721.



Negerpfad im Matouchebisch. Gegen von Kahuta.

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colonies to make it to the rank of general, was a military man like Schele and Wissmann. He had taught at the military school in Hannover before becoming a staff officer to the Hanoverian army, and he subsequently commanded a regiment in Frankfurt an der Oder. He was also very sensitive to the rapidly evolving pro-colonial faction in the Reichstag and their constituents, whose interests he claimed to represent, particularly with regards to the “settlement question.” As the new governor he was now determined to “put an end to the matter” of Mkwawa and continued Hehe resistance. The conflict with the Hehe, which Liebert referred to alternately as “little war” or, more often, as “*Pori-Krieg*”—derived from the Kiswahili word for bush—had already dragged on far too long and had cost too many lives, German and African (meaning both *Askari* and local allies).<sup>469</sup>

“Quawa and his followers, who had fled into the extensive mountainous terrain of

<sup>468</sup> Typical path through the “bush” in East Africa—and ideal terrain from which to fight an insurgency. Weule, *Negerleben*, 313.

<sup>469</sup> Liebert 8, 18, ad 21.

Utschungwe and Ukalinga, attacked the small German military posts, set fire to the locations surrounding the German stations and led prisoners and cattle off into the mountains,” thereby “making the subjugation and pacification of large tracts of Uhehe and Ukena as difficult as possible.”<sup>470</sup> As he frankly put it, “the protracted resistance against German overlordship [*Oberherrschaft*] has already cost Quawa the possession of his empire, has made him into a restlessly shifting bandit captain, and undoubtedly must yet cost him his body and his life.”<sup>471</sup> He immediately proclaimed a 5,000 Rupie (worth nearly 8,000 *Reichsmark*) bounty on Mkwawa’s head. By way of comparison, the bounty on the feared Nama guerrilla leader Hendrik Witbooi eight years later in Southwest Africa was only 5,000 *Reichsmark*. But as was the case with his predecessors, it would take Liebert nearly half a year to gather the necessary *Askari*, porters and supplies for a



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substantial expedition into Uhehe—until then Captain von Prince would be on his own, supported by the adjacent Kilossa, Ulanga, and Kisaki garrisons as well as

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<sup>470</sup> Liebert, 8 and 21.

<sup>471</sup> Liebert, 28.

<sup>472</sup> Photograph by author of the Iringa Station established by von Prince in mid-1896.

the numerous smaller stations that left the Germans spread extremely thin on the ground. Prince's forces relentlessly hunted Mkwawa throughout 1897 with no success, despite the ever growing number of Hehe auxiliaries now working for the Germans, brought over to the Germans' side by his constant and tireless negotiation with the evolving local leadership. As his wife, Magdalene von Prince, reports, her husband spent at least as much time in tense and complicated *Schauri* (negotiation) with the Hehe elite as he did in the field hunting for the "rebels."

Magdalene von Prince's diary also vividly described the perpetual sense of unease and fear that the inhabitants of New Iringa felt during this period of constant harassment and attack by Mkwawa and his insurgents. Her account offers perhaps the most vivid and detailed account of this final, protracted period of the German Hehe War.<sup>473</sup> Almost daily, she reports that *Askari* and *jumbe* loyal to the Germans turn up murdered by Mkwawa's insurgents, an experience that deeply shook the Princes, as some of these "loyal Africans" had been their friends for six months or more.<sup>474</sup> She also reports Mkwawa's ruthless and, for a time, highly effective campaign of terror against Bena and other non-Hehe Africans that had sought protection in or around the station.<sup>475</sup> Mkwawa's agents even succeeded in killing the brother of Chief Kiwanga, the most important Bena "collaborator" with the Germans in the era before Maji Maji. The constant fear

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<sup>473</sup> Magdalene von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau im Innern Deutsch-Ostafrikas* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908).

<sup>474</sup> Magdalene von Prince, 76.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 83-4.



felt by the Germans at the Iringa station was enhanced by the fact that “[i]t is difficult here, to tell friend and foe apart.”<sup>476</sup> Magdalene von Prince had a keen understanding of Mkwawa’s attrition strategy:

Quawa has ordered the Wahehe to strike down everything that gets in their way, caravan traffic, post, traders, etc., to murder all Wahehe friendly to the whites, then to disappear into the *Pori* [bush] so that it would wear down the Germans and they would withdraw. In this manner he wishes to drive us from the land. He can terrify us, he proves that daily—but we will remain nonetheless... When one is back home in Germany, one thinks that it is easy to finish these *Neger*, they are after all lowly creatures, that it would be a small matter to rule them. Now I wish that everyone who holds this view (as I earlier did) could be here to see that people without an education are also very clever.<sup>477</sup>

She is clear that this constant sense of fear and resentment—Mkwawa even haunted the Europeans in their dreams—can only end one way: with the annihilation of one side or the other.

We stand in a genuine struggle for our existence. The Wahehe wanted their annihilation, they began this struggle through their murderous deeds. Now it is a matter of going forward aggressively, because Tom’s humane policies were held by the Hehe, who are accustomed to Quawa’s cruelty, to be a sign of weakness. The nights are horrible. Today I could not sleep at all because the calling up of patrols droned through the night and kept me awake. I am incidentally not doing well. Winkler and Stierling also are not sleeping well because they dream of the Wahehe, murder, and being beaten to death, despite their iron nerves.<sup>478</sup>

Magdalene echoes the opinions of the other Europeans in the Iringa garrison: Mkwawa and his insurgents had to be “annihilated” if the Germans and their African subjects were ever to know a moment’s peace.

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<sup>476</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 93.

Bad as things were militarily, politically things did not go well for the Germans either. Having nominated Mpangile to the position of “Sultan” on Christmas Day 1896, by February 1897 Prince suspected that Mpangile was, in fact, giving succor to the enemy and was still in contact with Mkwawa. He decided that Mpangile was a traitor and had him executed with three of his relatives.<sup>479</sup> Prince briefly considered placing Merere IV in charge of all of Uhehe, but quickly reconsidered and decided not to nominate anyone to the position of “Sultan of the Wahehe.” The Hehe would not live under a monarch until the British period, when they nominated Adam Sapi, Mkwawa’s son, to be the “warrant chief” of the Hehe as part of their policy of Indirect Rule.

In June of 1897 Liebert assembled a sizeable force to “explore” Uhehe and to put an end to Mkwawa’s “marauding.” The governor wanted to tour the region first and foremost in order to assess its economic potential: Schele had declared Uhehe to be a “most valuable object of exploitation for us,” and Elpons, Arning, and others had all commented on how fertile the soil on the Uhehe plateau seemed, and the altitude (about 5,000 meters) meant that the climate was mild enough to grow European foodstuffs (today large amounts of potatoes are grown in

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<sup>479</sup> See the diary of Prince’s wife for an extended discussion of the Mpangile episode. Magdalene von Prince, 55-74. See also Adams, Alfons Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes. Erinnerungen an mein Missionsleben in Deutsch-Osafrika* (St. Ottilien, Oberbayern: St. Ottilien, 1899), 53-61. Mungai offers an alternative interpretation of events. He claims that Mkwawa and Mpangile were indeed collaborating behind Prince’s back, but in February 1897 Mkwawa found out that Mpangile was sleeping with his wives. Furious, he let the rumor spread that he would be attending one of the funerals so common to this period the following week, and he left his ladder on the wall of Mpangile’s residence. When Prince inevitably heard the rumor about Mkwawa’s intended presence in Iringa, he rushed to Mpangile’s house and found the dreaded bandit leader’s ladder. Not believing Mpangile’s insistence that he know nothing about the matter, Prince had him executed. Interview with Mungai, 25 August 2005.

Uhehe).<sup>480</sup> More importantly, its geography made it relatively free of disease in a manner similar to the “White Highlands” in neighboring Kenya. As in Kenya, observers in the colony and back in the metropolis, eagerly anticipated the possibilities of European settlement on the plateau.<sup>481</sup> Several parliamentarians had already contacted von Liebert about the possibility of establishing settlement societies in Uhehe to draw in willing agricultural colonists from the Fatherland.<sup>482</sup> On 17 July Liebert’s massive expedition set off, and it was even larger than the one deployed by von Schele three years earlier: it contained 2,000 *Askari*, “*Hilfsvölker*” (auxiliaries/friendlies), and porters. Liebert’s force simultaneously surveyed Uhehe and attempted to hunt down and destroy Mkwawa and his remaining 800 warriors. As they advanced through Uhehe, they methodically burned all the crops and all the villages, seized all the livestock, and shot down all those who resisted them. Over 500 women and children were taken prisoner, and a large swathe of Uhehe was laid to waste in an attempt to deny Mkwawa and his men supplies or assistance by any Hehe civilians. The German forces resorted to a strategy of attempting to “devour the land of Mkwawa” [*das Land des Mkwawa aufzufressen*], in other words the intentional causing of famine in “rebel areas” in

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<sup>480</sup> Friedrich von Schele, *Über die Organisation der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe in Deutsch-Ostafrika und die kriegerischen Operationen daselbst während der Jahre 1893/94*, supplement to the *Militär-Wochenblatt*, vol. 9, 1896, ed. Generalmajor von Estorff (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1896), 477.

<sup>481</sup> See, for example, Dr. Wilhelm Arning, “Uhehe als Ansiedlungsgebiet für deutsche Landwirte,” Vortrag in der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft, Abteilung Berlin (Göttingen: Lous Hofer, 1905). The Colonial Society was extremely interested in Uhehe as a possible site for creating a new “Germany abroad.”

<sup>482</sup> Liebert, 9.

order to bring about an end to hostilities.<sup>483</sup> Liebert was explicit about his policies; he intended to:

...stop Quawa through the confiscation of supplies and the destruction of crops, to make life impossible for his people and thereby to bring about the dissolution and steady reduction of his retinue. All captured women will be brought with their children to Iringa. In many cases this compelled the men to follow their women [to the government village at Iringa] and to subject themselves to “bwana sahran” [the German authorities]—not out of love, but rather because without the women the fields remain uncultivated.<sup>484</sup>

August Bebel’s objections aside, Liebert’s campaign of mass hostage-taking, food-denial, and search and destroy missions gradually “made life impossible” for Mkwawa and those Hehe still loyal to (or at least terrified of) him. But the eventual German triumph was attributable to more than the just application of a “*rücksichtlose Politik*” (as Deputy Governor Lothar von Trotha referred to it). Crucial to German victory was the fact that the Hehes’ traditional rivals, the “*deutschfreundliche*” Sangu and the Bena quickly sided with the Germans and waged a parallel war of vengeance against the Hehe.<sup>485</sup> Furthermore, the Hehes’ allies and vassals systematically deserted them one after the other as the Germans proceeded to thoroughly demolish the Hehe military state, much to the satisfaction of participants like Prince.<sup>486</sup> By late 1897-1898 many of auxiliaries deployed by the *Schutztruppe* were in fact Hehe, and it was only through the participation of these local levies of “*Hehe-Hilfskrieger*” (recruited by chiefs

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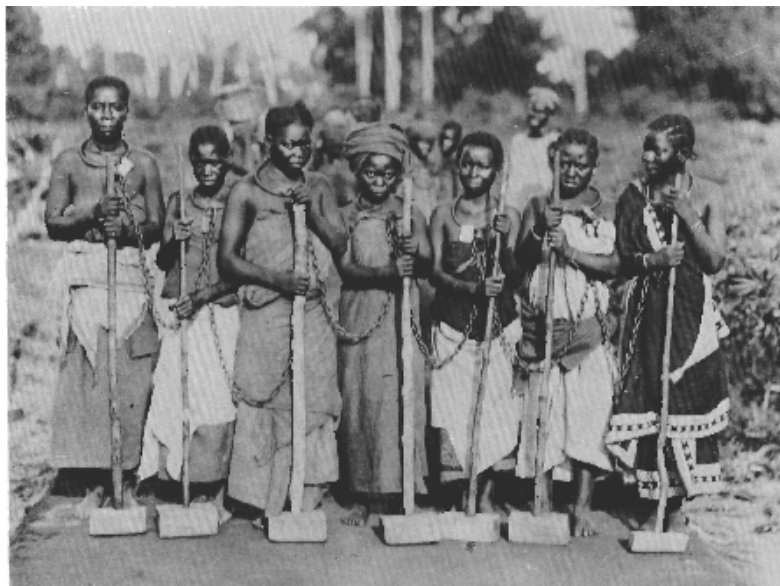
<sup>483</sup> Liebert, 48.

<sup>484</sup> Liebert, 31.

<sup>485</sup> Redmayne, 414 and Prince, 190-1.

<sup>486</sup> Prince, 185.

systematically installed or backed by the Germans) that the colonial forces were able to seal off villages and fields, thereby preventing the local populace from assisting Mkwawa.<sup>487</sup> Liebert was adamant that without the ever growing force of loyal Hehe *jumbe* and soldiers, the insurgency would have gone on for years longer. The destruction of the Hehe Empire was made possible by the very people who had so deeply feared its hegemony for decades. It was highly ironic, therefore, that the Hehe managed in 1905 to completely turn the tables on these same enemies, an issue that will be addressed in chapter seven.



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But try as they might, the expedition *still* could not find Mkwawa. As Governor Liebert explained, “there was nothing left for us to do other than continue with the campaign of annihilation [*Vernichtungsfeldzug*] and war of

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<sup>487</sup> “Allein durch diese Hilfskräfte war es möglich,...ihm Abbruch an Leuten und Vieh zu thun und ihm langsam die Existenzmittel zu entziehen.“ Liebert, 8.

<sup>488</sup> East African women compelled to work for the government, probably in the form of *Steuerarbeit* (tax-labor), around 1900. Timm, 53.

destruction [*Zerstörungskrieg*] of earlier expeditions in order to cut his followers off from the means of existence ”<sup>489</sup> Capt. von Prince heartily agreed, arguing: “The stomach is what affects the *Neger* the most, and this reality would help me years later in bringing the harsh mentality of the Hehe under German rule, to impose order on them, which allowed neighboring peoples to live in security.”<sup>490</sup> Ten years later during Maji Maji, Governor Liebert’s successor, Adolf Graf von Götzen, would make the same arguments and use the same scorched earth policies to devastating effect against the very people Prince was “protecting” in the 1890s. Nearly as effective a weapon as famine, Liebert adds that the hostage policy—the mass roundup of Hehe women and children in “rebel areas”—was one of the “most effective means in this type of *Negerkrieg*” at breaking the men’s will to fight, an assertion likewise turned into policy by the British in South Africa against the Boers during the same period. Eventually these policies had the desired effect. Fourteen further expeditions in the hills and valleys of Uhehe between mid-August and early November 1897 brought in 1,700 half-starved Hehe prisoners, mostly women and children. Station Chief von Prince’s wife, Magdalene von Prince, was shocked and appalled at the “miserable physical condition” of the prisoners.<sup>491</sup> Many of the prisoners were in fact captured while they were desperately scrounging for insects and roots with which to feed their starving children.

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<sup>489</sup> Liebert, 33.

<sup>490</sup> Prince, 174.

<sup>491</sup> Magdalene von Prince, 138.

By January 1898 German patrols were running into “mostly just skeletons,” as Prince put it.<sup>492</sup> Prince declared the last region in rebellion, Uhafiwa, “pacified” on 14 April 1898, the last 250 of Mkwawa’s followers having been either shot or taken prisoner.<sup>493</sup> This left Mkwawa alone, still relentlessly pursued by German patrols and by “pro-government Hehe” seeking the sizable bounty on the former sultan’s head. The German-Hehe War finally ended on 19 July 1898 when Mkwawa, driven to total desperation after nearly all



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of his soldiers had surrendered and the land was stripped of food and supplies, was finally cornered by a small patrol led by Corporal Merkl from the Iringa Station. In a final act of defiance, the once-mighty Sultan committed suicide with

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<sup>492</sup> Prince an Gouvernement, 17 January 1898, BAB, R1001/289, 19.

<sup>493</sup> Liebert an das Kolonial-Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes, 14 April 1898, BAB, R1001/289, 44-7.

<sup>494</sup> The cave at Mlambalasi where Mkwawa spent his last days, about 50 km from Iringa town. Photograph taken by author, 15 August 2005.

his rifle near the cave at Mlambalasi where he has spent the last few months of his life. His head was taken and sent back to the Bremen Anthropological Museum as a final trophy of German victory.<sup>495</sup> Specifically mentioned in the Article 246 of the Versailles Treaty in 1919 as a part of the reparations that Germany owed the victorious allies, Mkwawa's skull was supposed to be returned within six months of the ratification of the treaty, but it was not brought back to Tanganyika until 1954.<sup>496</sup> Mkwawa's suicide marked the end of an era for the Hehe and for German power in the southern highlands of East Africa. "With the death of Quawa the struggles in Uhehe came to an end; since that time the Wahehe have never risen against the government again, even during 1905 when they managed to stay out of the Uprising."<sup>497</sup> It is true that the Hehe would never again take up

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<sup>495</sup> For the bizarre and disturbing story of the fate of Mkwawa's skull, see Martin Baer and Olaf Schröter, *Eine Kopffagd: Deutsche in Ostafrika, Spuren kolonialer Herrschaft* (Berlin: Links Verlag, 2001).

<sup>496</sup> ARTICLE 246 (<http://history.sandiego.edu/gen/text/versaillestreaty/ver231.html>)

Within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty, Germany will restore to His Majesty the King of the Hedjaz the original Koran of the Caliph Othman, which was removed from Medina by the Turkish authorities and is stated to have been presented to the ex-Emperor William II.

Within the same period Germany will hand over to His Britannic Majesty's Government the skull of the Sultan Mkwawa which was removed from the Protectorate of German East Africa and taken to Germany.

The delivery of the articles above referred to will be effected in such place and in such conditions as may be laid down by the Governments to which they are to be restored.

<sup>497</sup> Nigmann, 58.





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arms against the colonial regime. Indeed, in the years after 1898, they would become some of the Germans most important allies in the southern highlands and would serve as a major source for police and military recruits. This dramatic reversal of Hehe fortunes and of the political situation in the southern portion of the colony is the subject of the next and final chapter, which will also attempt to draw conclusions from the course and outcomes of the German-Hehe War.

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<sup>498</sup> Skull of Mkwawa at the Kalenga Museum, picture taken by author, 15 August 2005.



## Chapter VII: Aftermath, the Evolution of German Power, and Conclusions (1899-1914)

*The Laws of war have always answered two questions: When may one wage war? What is permissible in war? And international law was always given two completely different answers to these questions, depending on who the enemy is. The laws of war protect enemies of the same race, class, and culture. The laws of war leave the foreign and the alien without protection. When is one allowed to wage war against savages or barbarians? Answer: always. What is permissible in wars against savages and barbarians? Answer: anything.*

-Sven Lindqvist, *A History of Bombing*<sup>500</sup>

*The Point must be stressed. When we note the surprising fact that the concentration camp was invented by Britain, in 1900, this is an indictment not of Britain but of 1900. The concentration camp was called forth by the times themselves. War was total, so that the enemy population had to be dealt with.*

-Reviel Netz, *Barbed Wire: An Ecology of Modernity*<sup>501</sup>

### Aftermath

Mkwawa's death in 1898 ended hostilities between the Germans and the Hehe once and for all. Thereafter, the Hehe never again challenged German authority. After years of uncertainty, constant violence, and instability, the "peace of the

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<sup>499</sup> Karl Weule, "Ostafrikanische Eingeborenen-Zeichnungen: Psychologische Einblicke in die Künstlerseele des Negers," in *Ipek: Jahrbuch für Prähistorische und Ethnographische Kunst* 2 (1926): between 96 and 97.

<sup>500</sup> Sven Lindqvist, *A History of Bombing*, trans. by Linda Haverty Rugg (New York: The New Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>501</sup> Reviel Netz, *Barbed Wire: An Ecology of Modernity* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 145.

graveyard” now prevailed in Uhehe. The chief of the Iringa station and the conqueror of Mkwawa’s once mighty empire, Captain Tom von Prince, proudly reported in 1899:

The political circumstances are such that the locations named [various locations in Uhehe] appear in the long term, indeed for all time, to be secure. The *jumbe* that we have installed are either people that proved themselves to be trustworthy in difficult times or are the descendents of those aristocratic families that have all the reason in the world to hate Quawa and his Wahehe. All of them owe their present position to the station. No *jumbe* has enough power to maneuver on his own, and the unity of the Wahehe has been eliminated for all time. This is all the more important in that the station chief has ruled out the possibility that other tribes near northern and eastern Uhehe could be cultivated as a counterweight.<sup>502</sup>

The years after 1898 were characterized by the gradual consolidation of German authority in the southern highlands. While some districts in German East Africa, particularly those that had been “pacified” first such as Lindi and Tanga on the coast, were turned over to civilian authority, the Iringa district remained under military authority until the coming of the First World War.<sup>503</sup> Pundits like the former Governor Eduard von Liebert, the former *Schutztruppe* doctor Wilhelm Arning, and others attempted to rally support back in the metropole for a systematic settlement program in Uhehe. The conclusion of the presentation of Dr. Arning, who had served for several years in the stations in and around Uhehe and was the commander at the Battle of Munisagara discussed in chapter four, makes it clear that the formerly “rebellious” land of Mkwawa and his insurgents

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<sup>502</sup> “Bericht des Stationschefs von Iringa über die dortigen Verhältnisse,” *Deutsches Kolonialblatt* (the official publication of the German Colonial Department, hereafter *DKB*) 10 (1899): 658.

<sup>503</sup> See John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), chapter 3 and L. H Gann and Peter Duignan, *The Rulers of German Africa 1884-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 118-20.

was now one of the best possibilities in the Germans' colonial empire for settlement. He concluded his talk, "May the warm-hearted man who now stands at the top [of the administration of, the governor] of German East Africa feel satisfaction that there in the highlands is developing that which he believed he had found upon his first visit to Uhehe—a new Germany."<sup>504</sup> Attempts were made both by the state in the form of an agricultural research station and by the missionaries (discussed below) to plant and cultivate European crops such as potatoes, wheat, and European vegetables in anticipation of supporting a new European settle population and of creating a cash-driven market in food crops.<sup>505</sup>



6. *Missionstation Musasa*

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The situation on the ground was also changing as Christian missionaries began to arrive in Uhehe and other highlands areas in ever-growing numbers. Many Hehe, Bena, and other peoples of Uhehe had fled to the emerging network of missions in the conquered territories in response to the extreme privation unleashed by the war.<sup>507</sup> Life at these mission stations was in many ways preferable to facing either the exactions of Mkwawa's insurgents or the harsh

<sup>504</sup> Wilhelm Arning, *Uhehe als Ansiedlungsgebiet für deutsche Landwirte: Vortrag, gehalten in der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft, Abteilung Berlin* (Göttingen: Hofer, 1910), 16.

<sup>505</sup> "Deutsch-ostafrikanische Bezirksämter und Stationen ium Berichtsjahre 1899/1900," *DKB* 11 (1900): 515 and Versuchsstation Uhehe (Dabaga), January 1891-July 1900, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter BAB), R1001/8647.

<sup>506</sup> An African depiction of a mission church in southern Tanzania, Weule, *Zeichnungen*, between 96 and 97.

<sup>507</sup> See Giblin, 30.

realities of life in the Germans' forced "settlements" around their stations. The first civilians to arrive in this context of deprivation and insecurity were the Benedictine missionaries from St. Ottilien, Bavaria, who in the latter phase of the hostilities between the Hehe and the Germans established the Tossamaganga Mission on the very spot from which Governor von Schele's artillery had shelled Mkwawa's fortress at Kalenga in 1894.<sup>508</sup> Indeed, this station was established under the protection of Prince's *Askari* and was built with mostly unfree labor as part of the ever-more systematic practice of extracting corvée *Steuerarbeit* (tax-labor) from Africans in areas under colonial administration.<sup>509</sup> The Catholics were soon followed by Lutherans and Moravians, who established missions across the southern highlands, particularly in the former Bena territories of the Hehe Empire and along the Uhehe-Usangu border.<sup>510</sup> The Berlin (I) Mission, founded by the Bohemian Lutheran Pastor Jänicke in 1800, established a mission in Uhehe in 1900 and several more stations in the years thereafter, and it along with the other missions in Uhehe began the systematic process of compiling ethnographic and linguistic information about the Hehe and their neighbors the Bena, the Kinga, and others (who the missionaries noted were all "tribal- and

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<sup>508</sup> See Adams, Alfons Adams, *Im Dienste des Kreuzes. Erinnerungen an mein Missionsleben in Deutsch-Ostafrika* (St. Ottilien, Oberbayern: St. Ottilien, 1899), conclusion and Rev. Fr. Sebastian Wolfgang Napachihi, *The Relationship between the German Missionaries of the Congregation of St. Benedict from St. Ottilien and the German Colonial Authorities in Tanzania 1887-1907* (Peramiho, Tanzania: Benedictine Publications Ndanda, 1998), 78-9.

<sup>509</sup> For a discussion of unfree labor in German East Africa see Thaddeus Sunseri, *Vilimani: Labor Migration and Rural Change in Early Colonial Tanzania* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002); Bernd Arnold, *Steuer und Lohnarbeit im Südwesten von Deutsch-Ostafrika, 1891 bis 1916: Eine historisch-ethnologische Studie* (Münster: lit Verlag, 1994); and Jan Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation without Abolition in German East Africa c. 1884-1914* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), 220.

<sup>510</sup> See Marcia Wright, *German Missions in Tanganyika 1891-1914: Lutherans and Moravians in the Southern Highlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 66-75.

language-relatives”).<sup>511</sup> The Catholics likewise sought to become more adept at understanding and maneuvering at the local level, offering sermons in Bena and Hehe and engaging in medical work, such as the inoculation of tens of thousands of Africans against smallpox.<sup>512</sup> Uhehe was slowly becoming not just a land appropriate for the settlement of German *Landwirte*, but a Christian land as well. The Tossamaganga Mission was actually one of the only mission stations *not* attacked during the infamous Maji Maji uprising of 1905 due in part to the close relationship that prevailed between Ernst Nigmann—von Prince’s successor at Neu-Iringa—and the Hehe *jumbe*.



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There were other ways, however, in which the people of Uhehe were proving difficult to manage: drawing in their labor via any means other than direct coercion. As elsewhere, the Germans hoped to pull Hehe and other highland peoples into the labor market, but in many cases they refused to deal with the colonial state. Missionaries and administrators alike lamented the Hehes’

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<sup>511</sup> “Aus dem Bereiche der Mission und der Antisklaverei-Bewegung,” *DKB* 11 (1900): 465.

<sup>512</sup> “Aus dem Bereiche der Mission und der Antisklaverei-Bewegung,” *DKB* 11 (1900): 552.

<sup>513</sup> Photograph by author of the Tosamaganga Mission established by the Benedictines from 1896 to 1899.

unwillingness to give up “stealing” and “swindling” and turn instead towards jobs linked to the evolving colonial cash economy.<sup>514</sup> On one occasion, the head of the Berlin Mission station at Musindi even attempted to offer grain out of the mission’s sizable stockpile during one of the periods of repeated shortages that occurred following the German-Hehe War. The Hehe refused any assistance from the Germans and chose instead to go elsewhere, sometimes over great distances, to get relief from family members or distant relatives rather than to rely in any way on the generosity or goodwill of the *AvaDaliki*.<sup>515</sup> And relief from the state was also hardly generous: the Hehe were given grain from the state’s collected surplus but were forced to repay it later with interest, when a good harvest allowed it either in kind or in cash.<sup>516</sup> The local economy and ecology of Uhehe had been severely disrupted: scorched earth tactics by both sides had led to chronic shortages, the once mighty herds of Hehe cattle (one of the primary resources in Uhehe) had been dramatically reduced, and the mass movement—both voluntary and, more often than not, involuntary—of people in and around Uhehe unleashed by the war had led to a major decline in harvests all over the district. It was a prelude of things to come.

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<sup>514</sup> *DKB* 11 (1900): 552. For an extended discussion of the “*Arbeiterfrage*” (the discourse regarding the chronic shortage of labor in German East Africa), see Sunseri, *Vilimani*, *Op. cit.*.

<sup>515</sup> “Berliner Missions Berichten, Miss. Bunk in Musindi,” *DKB* 12 (1901): 120.

<sup>516</sup> “Deutsch-ostafrikanische Bezirksämter...,” *Op cit.*, 516.

## Uhehe During the Maji Maji Revolt, 1905-1907

By 1905, it seemed that the wheel had come full circle for the Hehe with the outbreak of the Maji Maji Revolt all across southeastern Tanganyika. In that year, the Sangu, Ngoni, and other former German allies rose in revolt against their erstwhile “protectors” in an attempt to prevent the collapse of their authority in the face of the harsh changes brought about by a decade of colonial rule. Tom von Prince and others complained bitterly about the deep sense of betrayal they felt watching the people that they had “saved” from the Hehe rise against them.<sup>517</sup> The brutality of the German response, which led to an even greater loss of life and property than the German-Hehe War, was such that the Maji Maji Revolt of 1905-1907 is sometimes referred to as “the greatest uprising in the whole of early colonial Eastern and Central Africa.”<sup>518</sup> Maji Maji in many ways is the pivotal point around which both the scholarship on German rule and the debates about “Tanzanian nationalism” revolve, and it is worth reiterating the ways in which Maji Maji has been described and explained insofar as these relate to many of the themes elaborated upon in the present work. Several schools evolved in the historiography to explain the revolt, and because of the highly politicized nature of Maji Maji (it was continually invoked by the Tanzanian liberation movement, TANU, and its supporters as an antecedent to their struggle for independence) and

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<sup>517</sup> Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanischen Leutnantszeit 1890-1895* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 119. Only the Bena remained “*deutschfreundlich*” from the early colonial period until 1918, probably because they viewed *all* of the contenders for power in the southern highlands—Hehe, Sangu, Ngoni, and Germans alike—as power-hungry, ruthless conquerors. See A. T. & G. M. Culwick, *Ubena of the Rivers* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935), chapter I and James L. Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd., 2005), 29-30.

<sup>518</sup> Koponen, 229.



indeed of earlier “anticolonial revolts” such as that of the Hehe against German rule, each school was closely affiliated with a specific political orientation.

Broadly stated, the theories designed to explain the revolt’s outbreak, and implicitly its significance, can be cast as positing either *economic* or *ideological* causes for the revolt. Most historians used both but heavily emphasized one or the other. East German historians cited economic exploitation and German brutality as the cause of what became in essence a large “tax revolt” aimed—secondarily—at independence.<sup>519</sup> The “Dar es Salaam School” of historians, centered around T. O. Ranger, Iliffe, and G. C. K. Gwassa, attempted to show the unifying, “trans-ethnic” character of Maji Maji’s religious “hongo” ideology. Maji Maji was cast as an attempt to overcome internal divisions, the primary obstacle to effective resistance, via an innovative messianic ideology. It was also explicitly cast as a precursor to TANU’s struggle in the 1950s and 1960s for independence.<sup>520</sup> These two lines of interpretation evolved contemporaneously with the revolt itself. Governor von Liebert’s successor, Governor Gustav Adolf von Götzen, and the authorities in Berlin explained the revolt as a “witchdoctor conspiracy,” therefore ideologically driven. Leftwing critics from the Social Democratic Party, as always spearheaded by the intractable critic of the German

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<sup>519</sup> Helmuth Stoecker, *German Imperialism in Africa: From the Beginnings until the Second World War* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1986), 148.

<sup>520</sup> The mark of T. O. Ranger is profound in the Dar School. His work on the Ndebele and Shona revolts was the pre-eminent example of a work focusing on religion as a trans-ethnic, organizing force that facilitated resistance. T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia: A Study in African Resistance*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967. As to the continuity between primary and later nationalist resistance, the foundational work was his two-part “Connections between ‘Primary Resistance’ Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968): 437-53 and IX, 4 (1968): 631-41.

Empire, August Bebel, disputed this, claiming that it was economic exploitation and administrative malfeasance that caused the desperate Africans to rebel.<sup>521</sup>

Representative of, and indeed the foundation of, ideologically centered treatments was once again the work of Iliffe. Beginning with his “The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion” (1967) and extended and qualified in his 1969 and 1979 monographs, Iliffe offered a three-stage model of the outbreak and spread of Maji Maji that attempted to avoid overly teleological and regionally undifferentiated simplifications.<sup>522</sup> In the eastern region where the rebellion was first organized and initiated, Maji Maji was an overwhelmingly peasant movement caused by the specific hardships and abuses engendered by the newly introduced German cotton regime.<sup>523</sup> Its subsequent spread was only possible because surrounding areas received Maji Maji as a prophetic, millenarian movement whose ideas resonated with local symbols and ideologies.<sup>524</sup> Finally, once Maji Maji spread into the southern highlands where indigenous state structures were more established (among the Sangu, Ngoni, and some Bena), it crumbled as “pan-tribal” unity gave way to a disjointed rebellion based on pre-revolt kinship, ethnic, and political loyalties.<sup>525</sup> Overall, Maji Maji was “an

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<sup>521</sup> For an extensive discussion of the media and popular reaction to Maji Maji in Germany, see Inka Chall and Sonja Mezger, “Die Perspektive der Sieger: Der Maji-Maji-Krieg in der kolonialen Presse,” in *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, eds. Felicitas Becker and Jigal Beez (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2005), 143-153.

<sup>522</sup> John Iliffe, “The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion,” *Journal of African History*, VIII, 3 (1967): 495-512.

<sup>523</sup> Iliffe, *Organization*, 497-9.

<sup>524</sup> Iliffe, *Organization*, 504-5.

<sup>525</sup> Iliffe, *Organization*, 499 and John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), 181.

explosion of African hatred of European rule.”<sup>526</sup> East German scholarship characterized Maji Maji similarly if rather monolithically as a “national struggle against foreign rule” and as a “peoples’ war” brought about by German exploitation and brutality.<sup>527</sup> West German scholars such as Karl-Martin Seeberg fell more in line with the Dar es Salaam School interpretation.<sup>528</sup> The title of his 1989 work is clear enough: *The Maji Maji War against German Rule: Historical Origins of National Identity in Tanzania*. The revolt was both a “religious and rational revolution” that “paved the way” for the independence struggles of TANU.<sup>529</sup> It represented Tanzania’s first “collective experience” and was a profound act of “ethnic solidarity.

Scholarship of the 1990s focusing on local politics and issues of gender has convincingly shown that the arguments of Iliffe, Seeberg, and others require a good deal of qualification, and these newer works highlight many of the themes discussed already in relation to the German-Hehe War. The strongest of these were Thaddeus Sunseri’s “Famine and Wild Pigs” (1997) and Jamie Monson’s “Relocating Maji Maji” (1998), which did much to show how Maji Maji was understood and utilized at the local level, belying overly simplistic

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<sup>526</sup> Iliffe, *Modern History*, 168.

<sup>527</sup> Heinrich Loth, *Griff nach Ostafrika: Politik des deutschen Imperialismus und antikolonialer Kampf, Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin: VEB Verlag, 1968), 89 and 86; Stoecker, 112.

<sup>528</sup> Karl-Martin Seeberg, *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg gegen die deutsche Herrschaft: Historische Ursprünge nationaler Identität in Tansania* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1989).

<sup>529</sup> Seeberg, 103 and 18.

master narratives of the revolt.<sup>530</sup> Sunseri asserted that the outbreak of Maji Maji had a good deal to do with the traumatic restructuring of gender relations in Tanganyika, brought about by the changes wrought by the colonial economy. As more and more men had to leave their communities in order to avoid forced labor and pay taxes, ever more burden fell on female producers. The Germans' prohibition on killing game and cutting down trees led to a massive increase in the number of wild pigs, formerly kept away from the fields by men.<sup>531</sup> Women had to defend crops against predators and do most of the clearing once performed by men, causing them to demand recognition of their increased burden and right to appropriate male gender roles. German cotton policies only exacerbated the labor shortages and deepening exploitation of women.

German labor and agricultural policies seem to have doubled the frequency of famines in the region by 1904, even in those areas that had not suffered the harshness of German counterinsurgency tactics as the Hehe had in the 1890s. Ultimately, it was a catastrophic famine in early 1905 that caused Africans in the Uzaramo region to revolt. Male elites whose power was evaporating before their eyes felt compelled to act: "A primary motive for the participation in the Majimaji war for headmen was to reclaim their authority in rural society by turning back German policies which upset local patters if

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<sup>530</sup> Thaddeus Sunseri "Famine and Wild Pigs: Gender Struggles and the Outbreak of the Maji Maji War in Uzaramo (Tanzania)," *Journal of African History*, 38 (1997): 235-59 and Jamie Monson, "Relocating Maji Maji: The Politics of Alliance and Authority in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. 1870-1918," *Journal of African History*, 39 (1998): 95-120.

<sup>531</sup> Sunseri, "Famine and Wild Pigs," 250-1.

environmental control and household stability.”<sup>532</sup> Most men and particularly women, however, spent the majority of their time struggling to prevent the total dissolution of their communities rather than engaging in armed revolt. Even the spread of “hongo” had more to do with women’s attempts to salvage agriculture than with “trans-ethnic solidarity.”<sup>533</sup> Monson also emphasized the disproportionate burden that fell on women before, during, and after the revolt.<sup>534</sup> Their increasing discontent and agitation did much to encourage elites in the southern highlands to consider revolt as a means of restoring their waning power—the war was largely launched by Ngoni elites and was intended to benefit them.<sup>535</sup> Likewise, those that sided with the Germans did so entirely for their own political reasons rather than any ideological solidarity with the colonial state, as demonstrated by the Bena, who by this point were sick of repeatedly exchanging one oppressor for another.<sup>536</sup> Overall, one must examine the extremely fluid ethnic and political boundaries in Tanganyikan society and the complexity and ever-changing nature of the of the local alliance system before reaching conclusions about “peoples’ wars” or “pan-tribal” movements. Just as in the 1890s, the Germans, in fact, were generally seen as one potential ally among many, albeit an ever more powerful one. For many in the southern highlands, it was the behavior of German officials and German missionaries in particular that

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<sup>532</sup> Sunseri, “Famine and Wild Pigs,” 238.

<sup>533</sup> Sunseri, “Famine and Wild Pigs,” 244.

<sup>534</sup> Monson, 114.

<sup>535</sup> Monson, 112.

<sup>536</sup> Monson, 111.

provoked the insurrection—the Germans were seen as meddling in social and political matters that were none of their concern and were perceived to have violated an implicit “contract” with their African allies.<sup>537</sup> Just as Jonathan Glassman demonstrated in *Feasts and Riot*, Maji Maji had as much to do with local political, class, and gender struggles as it was caused by the imposition of colonial power.<sup>538</sup> As in the German-Hehe War, the shifting and contingent realities of local politics mattered, and one must be careful when using simplistic categories such as “pro-German” or “anticolonial rebel.”

The methods used to crush all resistance in German East Africa from 1905-06 during the Maji Maji Revolt are well known and are often cited jointly with the Herero-Nama War as compelling proof of the Germans’ proclivity for slaughter in the colonies.<sup>539</sup> To be sure, the governor and commander-in-chief in that conflict, Adolf Graf von Götzen, explicitly declared the burning of African infrastructure (homes, crops, fields) and the mass starvation that ensued to be the Germans’ “best friends” in bringing the revolt to heel. Such highly destructive tactics were referred to as “indispensable allies” when pacifying recalcitrant Africans.<sup>540</sup> Since “whole populations” were considered the enemy in districts

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<sup>537</sup> Monson, 103-6.

<sup>538</sup> Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995).

<sup>539</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 131-8. For details on this conflict and its suppression see Walter Nuhn, *Flammen über Deutsch-Ostafrika: Der Maji-Maji-Aufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1905-1906, die erste gemeinsame Erhebung schwarzafrikanischer Völker gegen weiße Kolonialherrschaft* (Bonn: Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1998) and Seeberg, op cit.

<sup>540</sup> Quoted in Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History* (London: James Curry, 1996), 144-6. See also G. A. Graf von Götzen, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Aufstand 1905-06* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1909).

like Songea and Rufiji, war was waged on those entire populations in ways all too familiar to anyone acquainted with the German colonial state's way of waging war during the 1890s in Uhehe and elsewhere. Such policies led to even greater deaths than in the previous wars in East Africa and indeed led to more fatalities than those inflicted on Africans during the Germans' genocidal war against the Hehe and the Nama of Southwest Africa from 1904-1907. Scorched earth methods in southern Tanzania most likely killed hundreds of thousands of people.<sup>541</sup> German officials themselves admitted that upwards of 75,000 Africans had died as a result of "war, failing harvests, famine, and plagues" between the outbreak of hostilities in mid-1907 and 1907.<sup>542</sup> They also acknowledged that it would take years if not decades for some districts (such as Rufiji, Lindi, and Kilwa) to recover from the precipitous drop in population caused by the rebellions and its suppression. Modern scholars put the number closer to 200,000 or 300,000, but it will most likely never be known how many people lost their lives during Maji Maji.<sup>543</sup>

Returning to the ways in which Maji Maji affected the Hehe, in a striking mirror image of the events of the 1890s, the Sangu and Ngonis' enemies once again rushed to share in the spoils of German victory, turning colonial policy to their own purposes. On this occasion, however, it was the Hehe that served as the

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<sup>541</sup> For a discussion of German scorched earth tactics during the Maji Maji War, see Ludger Wimmelbucker, "Verbrannte Erde: Zu den Bevölkerungsverlusten als Folge des Maji-Maji-Krieges," in *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika*, op cit., 87-99.

<sup>542</sup> *Jahresbericht über die Entwicklung der deutschen Schutzgebiete in Afrika und in der Südsee, 1906/07* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), 9.

<sup>543</sup> See Becker and Beez, *Op. Cit.*, 94 for a discussion of the numbers provided by Gilbert Gwassa, John Iliffe, and others.

Germans allies against the Maji Maji rebels, and they fought with such distinction that the German view of them underwent a dramatic reversal. As local commanders pointed out, the Hehe on the whole remained loyal, partially because of the trauma inflicted on them in the 1890s and partially because their leadership was so divided between different Hehe chiefs.<sup>544</sup> This division—which Captain von Prince had created by design—was particularly acrimonious between Farhenga and Mtaki (who is most likely the same Mtaki who led the Germans to Iringa as discussed in chapter five). Each feared that if he were to throw in his lot with the Maji Maji rebels, the other would turn to the Germans for assistance and political favor and would thereby become the new “paramount chief” in Uhehe, a position that had not existed since the execution of Mkwawa’s brother Mpangile in early 1897. The oral history accounts of the Maji Maji Research Project, gathered by students and instructors from the University of Dar es Salaam in the 1960, echo this sense of fear of the Germans, resentment of the Sangu and Ngoni, and internal division amongst the Hehe.<sup>545</sup> The informants make clear that the maji “medicine” reached Uhehe shortly after it was sent out in all directions from the Songea Ngoni, but it met with either an indifferent or an apprehensive reception among the Hehe. Even those *jumbe* (chiefs) that were inclined to join the rebels were dissuaded by fear. As one informant noted:

All Hehe jumbes had to lead their people to fight the rebels for the Germans. If any jumbe had remained or refused to aid the Germans he

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<sup>544</sup> H.A. Tomaschek. “Der Aufstand in Deutsch-Ostafrika und die Wahehe,” *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung*, 30 September 1905. See also Graf von Götzen, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Aufstand*, “Der Zug des Hauptmanns Nigmann,” 127-151.

<sup>545</sup> *The Maji Maji Research Project, 1968; Collected Papers* (Dar es Salaam: University College of Dar es Salaam, History Department, 1969), especially the interviews on pages 146-196.



would have been suspected of being a rebel and would have been either killed or deported. The Germans were very cruel; they killed people by tying them with a rope around their necks. The Germans had a very strong hold over the government and we never dreamt of a day when they would leave this country to the British. The Germans were far more cruel than the British.<sup>546</sup>

Other chiefs fought for the potential to gain wealth and new territory (just as the Sanu had in the 1890s at *their* expense), such as those Hehe *jumbe* that fought in Ukena and Ukwaga, who were rewarded with a “gratuity” and the long-term control over lands in those areas.<sup>547</sup> On the whole, the structure created by von Prince in Uhehe after 1896, one characterized by an alliance with those Hehe elites that had much to gain by working with the Germans (or feared their rivals more), continued to function during the Maji Maji War and beyond.

It was this performance during the 1905-1907 period that did much to change the German view of the Hehe. Ernst Nigmann, who led units of Hehe *Askari* during Maji Maji as the new head of the Iringa military district, displayed none of the revulsion so characteristic of his predecessor von Prince’s renderings of Mkwawa and the Hehe. The Hehe, who in the time of governors von Schele, Wissmann, and von Liebert had been referred to variously as “murderers,” “bandits,” and “criminals,” had now become an African “*Herrenvolk*” (roughly: “master race,” analogous to the British notion of “martial races”), and their state was now known as the “Prussia of East Africa.”<sup>548</sup> Indeed, far from wishing for

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<sup>546</sup> Interview with Malangali Udilichuna (3/68/1/3/13), *The Maji Maji Research Project*, op cit., 177.

<sup>547</sup> Interview with Mufindi, Ikwaga (3/68/1/3/15), *The Maji Maji Research Project*, 179.

<sup>548</sup> Ernst Nigmann, *Die Wahehe: Ihre Geschichte, Kult-, Rechts-, Kriegs- und Jagd-Gebräuche* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1908), 15-6 and John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1.

the Hehes' complete destruction as most *Schutztruppe* officers had in the 1890s, Nigmann now feared that the Hehe faced cultural extinction due to the inexorable march of progress ushered in by Prince's self-proclaimed "new era":

Already now, the memory of the old customs and manners is fading among the surviving line very quickly, which will in just a few years be permanently gone. This made me determined to lay out my collected knowledge of this people now and thereby protect the things worth knowing about the customs of this high-spirited people from disappearing without a trace.<sup>549</sup>

German colonial Ethnography, which had always been highly contingent on the practical realities, dangers, and opportunities of conquest in East Africa, had rapidly shifted the analytical framework that it applied to the Hehe.<sup>550</sup> Rather than a people that deserved destruction (or as Magdalene von Prince had put it in the midst of the brutal counterinsurgency war in 1897, "the Wahehe wanted their own annihilation"), the Hehe were now an artifact of a more innocent time that needed to be preserved for the benefit of future colonial researchers and experts. In the wake of Maji Maji, the bewildering complexity of southern highlands politics had—once again—led to new alliances, new configurations of power, and new perceptions of the definition of friend and foe.

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<sup>549</sup> Nigmann, *Die Wahehe*, i.

<sup>550</sup> For an extended discussion of "military ethnography," see Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), Chapter 7: "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation: The Political Economy of Anthropological Objects"; Andrew Zimmerman, "What Do You Really Want in German East Africa, Herr Professor? Counterinsurgency and the Science Effect in Colonial Tanzania," *Comparative Area Studies*, 48 (2006): 419-461; and Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).



### **The Primacy of Local Politics and Commanders: Expediency and Violence**

To reiterate the argument made in chapter one and throughout the subsequent chapters, the extreme violence that characterized the German-Hehe War was the result of the intersection of several factors: the collision in southern Tanzania of two aggressive states that were the products of separate military revolutions (the European military revolution of the nineteenth century and the *Mfecane* state system initiated by Shaka Zulu); the volatile nature of politics in the southern highlands in the nineteenth century; and the realities of conquest for a force of Europeans who were outnumbered, underfunded, often ignorant of local conditions, and far from the direct supervision of any superior authority. However much their behavior was determined by the cultural and ideological baggage they brought with them from the Reich—and this baggage was considerable—officers of the *Schutztruppe* were thinking far less about Hegel or their training at home (which had focused entirely on set-piece battles between European armies) than about the dirty realities of imposing authority on a people that lived thousands of kilometers from the empire's center with scant resources to accomplish this task. The price of failure was more than just humiliation or the end of any last chance to save their already damaged careers (see the

<sup>551</sup> Punitive labor during the Maji Maji uprising. Weule, Zeichnungen, between 96 and 97.

discussion below on honor courts)—as Zelewski, Brüning, Maas, and other Germans had discovered, failure when fighting the Hehe meant certain death.

The period after the fall of Kalenga (1895-98) had been particularly destructive and corrosive to the morale of both sides, as “expediency” in this case meant a policy of scorched earth, a “logical” if frightening response to the uncertainty and fear generated by successful insurgencies. German frustration came not only from the disastrous defeat they had suffered at Rugaro in 1891, but also from the massive but ultimately unsuccessful operation against the Kalenga fortress in 1894. Attempts by the Hehe to negotiate in 1895 and 1896 were either rebuffed or accepted and immediately violated by local German officers who demanded a war that would result in their “total submission,” and Prince had seized on the Hehe refusal to allow troops to be stationed in their territory to recommence hostilities, this time as commander of all forces.<sup>552</sup> As described in the previous chapter, the war dragged on for a further two and a half years as Mkwawa and his forces fought a highly mobile, skilled partisan war. The Germans had responded with “strategic hamlets” (the concentration of all Hehe in fortified, patrolled villages), the destruction of crops and villages on a massive scale, and the mass execution of anyone accused of assisting the Hehe rebels. As Governor Liebert explained, “there was nothing left for us to do other than continue with the *Vernichtungsfeldzug* and *Zerstörungskrieg* of earlier

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<sup>552</sup> The governor at the time, Hermann Wissmann (former commander of the force that crushed the coastal revolt of 1888), acknowledged the Hehe as a continual threat to German interests, and he hoped to provoke a conflict in order to “remove Mkwawa from his position” and install a more quiescent successor. Should this fail, he and Prince intended “das Reich der Hehe in ihre kleinen Sonderstämme zu zersplittern.” Wissmann an Hohenlohe, 24 September 1896, BAB, R1001/287, 8-17 and 70.

expeditions.”<sup>553</sup> The German forces resorted to a strategy of attempting “*das Land des Mkwawa aufzufressen*” (devouring the land of Mkwawa), in other words the intentional causing of famine in “rebel areas.”<sup>554</sup> One typical report from Commander Prince cited in the last chapter described one engagement as a series of “*einseitig blutigen Zusammenstößen*” (one-sided bloody engagements) in which 500 Hehe were killed, 600 women and children taken as hostages, and 8000 cattle seized.<sup>555</sup> The war only ended in 1898 when Mkwawa, driven to total desperation after nearly all of his soldiers had surrendered and the land was stripped of food and supplies, committed suicide in. These policies, which were well known in other colonial contexts (some of which will be discussed below), were not the result the inherent weakness of African armies and political structures or their *inability* to resist the partition of the continent. The Hehe were all too good at killing, both their local African adversaries and—when the opportunity presented itself—their German opponents.

German triumph in their war against the Hehe was attributable to more than the application of a “*rücksichtlose Politik*” (as the infamous Lothar von Trotha referred to such policies later in Southwest Africa). Crucial to German victory was the fact that the Hehes’ traditional rivals, the “*deutschfreundliche*”

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<sup>553</sup> Eduard von Liebert, *Neunzig tage im Zelt. Meine Resien nach Uhehe Juni bis September 1897* (Berlin: Mittler & Sohn, 1898), 33.

<sup>554</sup> Liebert, 48. Liebert explicitly endorsed the policy, “*durch Wegnahme von Vorräthen und Zerstörung von Planzungen dem Quawa Abbruch zu thun, seinen Leuten das Leben schwer zu machen, und so seinen Anhang zum Abfall zu bringen und stetig zu mindern. Alle gefangenen Weiber wurden mit ihren Kindern nach Iringa gebracht. Das veranlaßte in vielen Fällen die Männer, denselben Weg zu gehen und sich zu unterwerfen.*“ Liebert, 31. The hostage policy was one of the “*wirksamste Mittel in so einem Negerkrieg*“ at breaking the men’s will to fight, an assertion likewise turned into policy by the British in South Africa against the Boers during the same period.

<sup>555</sup> Prince an Gouvernement, 20 September 1896, *DKB* 7 (1896): 773-4.

Sangu and the Bena quickly sided with the Germans and waged a parallel war of vengeance against the Hehe.<sup>556</sup> Furthermore, the Hehes' allies and vassals systematically deserted them one after the other as the Germans proceeded to thoroughly demolish the Hehe military state, much to the satisfaction of participants like Prince.<sup>557</sup> By late 1897-1898 many of auxiliaries deployed by the *Schutztruppe* were in fact Hehe, and it was only through the participation of these local levies of “*Hehe-Hilfskrieger*” (recruited by chiefs systematically installed or backed by the Germans) that the colonial forces were able to seal off villages and fields, thereby preventing the local populace from assisting Mkwawa.<sup>558</sup> The destruction of the Hehe Empire was made possible by the very people who had so deeply feared its hegemony for decades. Likewise, Mkwawa's power over the Hehe had been undermined and eventually destroyed by the Germans' success at offering his Hehe rivals and vassals better, or at least more lucrative, opportunities under colonial rule. It was highly ironic, therefore, that the Hehe managed in 1905 to completely turn the tables on these same enemies, as discussed above.

As was noted repeatedly in the preceding chapters, the power politics of Uhehe and the surrounding regions were characterized by fluidity and dramatic reversals both before and during German rule, but in the end and over time, this was a situation that progressively benefited German colonial *Herrschaft*. It was a

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<sup>556</sup> Alison Redmayne, “Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 3 (1968): 414 and Prince, 190-1.

<sup>557</sup> Prince, 185.

<sup>558</sup> “*Allein durch diese Hilfskräfte war es möglich,...ihm Abbruch an Leuten und Vieh zu thun und ihm langsam die Existenzmittel zu entziehen.*” Liebert, 8.

situation that would be entirely familiar to the conquerors of Mesoamerica or the Indian subcontinent. Cortez's victory over the Aztecs was possible only because of the tens of thousands of indigenous allies that assisted him, allies who saw the Conquistadors as a means of finally ending Aztec exactions and conquest. Likewise, India was conquered by the British using almost entirely Indian troops and Indian wealth. While this reality is generally recognized by scholars of imperial expansion, often the phenomenon of collaboration or "divide and rule" is cast in terms of European desires and clever manipulation. As should be clear from the Hehe case, it was in fact African initiative at least as much as the German aspiration to work through local agents that led to the alliances that brought down the mighty Hehe Empire. The Sangu, Ngoni, and Bena, alienated by decades of Hehe dominance of the region, readily seized the opportunity to use the *Wazungu* as an instrument of their power. Likewise, the dramatic change of affairs in and around the Iringa district in the 1905-1907 period created new opportunities for the Hehe, many of whom who in the latter parts of the struggle with Mkwawa had already become trusted German *liwali* and *jumbe*. The very peoples that had turned down Mkwawa's attempts at creating a "pan-southern highlands alliance" in 1892-1893 were now the targets of Hehe attacks under German auspices. Any attempt to examine the series of wars that raged across the highlands and beyond without an eye to East African political realities can only lead to simplification and misappraisal.

In the same vein, approaches to the German-Hehe War that focus solely on policies—or military culture—emanating from Berlin and Dar es

Salaam overlook the fact that it was largely officers on the spot who determined the course of events, often in direct violation of their instructions, as they attempted to deal with situations that were chaotic, complicated, and (as the Zelewski case showed) potentially deadly. On several occasions in the 1890s, German officers such as Zelewski and Prince initiated or prolonged hostilities with the Hehe with total disregard for the desire of political authorities, be they Hehe or German, to negotiate a peaceful solution to the conflict (especially during the tenure of the “dove” governor, Julius Freiherr von Soden). Similarly rash, ambitious behavior on the part of officers had provoked the outbreak of the Herero-Nama Uprisings of German Southwest Africa.<sup>559</sup> Likewise, Maji Maji spread to many areas that were initially unaffected as punitive expeditions led by over-zealous officers fanned out, shooting any Africans they encountered. As Tom von Prince stated in his account of the Hehe War, it was well nigh impossible for the Germans to tell the various “*Neger*” apart.<sup>560</sup> Kirsten Zirkel offers a trenchant analysis of this phenomenon:

The attitudes and actions of local military commanders were the main reasons why both rebellions [Herero-Nama and Maji Maji] can be counted among the most destructive wars in German, indeed European, colonial history. During the wars, the militarization of colonial policy on the spot reached its apogee and brought German colonial rule close to collapse. The collapse was prevented only by massive expenditure on the part of the Reich and, finally, by a radical change in policy.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> See Jan-Bart Gewald, *Herero Heroes: A Socio-Political History of the Herero of Namibia 1890-1923* (London: James Currey, 1999), 149 and 152-4.

<sup>560</sup> Prince, 173.

<sup>561</sup> Kirsten Zirkel, “Military power in German colonial policy: the *Schutztruppen* and their leaders in East and South-West Africa, 1888-1918,” in *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c. 1700-1964*, ed. David Killingray and David Omissi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 99.



The actions of officers like Prince during the Hehe War, while far less costly to the Reich due to the war's smaller scale, proceeded according to a similar pattern of contempt for authority and the utmost ruthlessness based on what commanders on scene felt was the best, or at least the most expedient, policy.

Tom von Prince, who served in the colony from 1890 until 1900, wrote one of the primary memoirs of the conflict, and he was one of the only actors present from beginning to end (during the same period four different governors ruled the colony). *Gegen Araber und Wahehe* highlights both the centrality of alliance politics with Hehe rivals and, inadvertently, the near total autonomy granted to officers like Prince in conflicts against “natives.” Prince is ecstatic once he is granted his own unit of “Zulus” and sent to operate alone in the field, and for months at a time a mere lieutenant, almost completely unsupervised, had almost total political and military power over areas populated by tens of thousands of people.<sup>562</sup> At the same time, Prince admits to almost total ignorance about the Hehe or the local political situation in most of the areas in which he was operating—he was, therefore, almost entirely dependent on “Arabs” and *jumbe* (chiefs working with the Germans) for information and interpretation.<sup>563</sup> Many of his operations involve granting “protection” to peoples allegedly terrified of the Hehe. While such statements should not be taken at face value, it is clear the Sagara, Kutu, Konda, and other communities were eager to make use of German

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<sup>562</sup> Prince, 109, 114-6, 185-6.

<sup>563</sup> Prince, 114 and 173.

“protection” for their own benefit after years of living under the shadow of *Muhinja* “the Butcher.”<sup>564</sup>

Prince also demonstrates near total contempt for the orders of Governor von Soden and other civilians and a willingness to use the most extreme methods to achieve victory against a determined, numerically superior enemy. Soden had explicitly forbidden any operations after the Zelewski disaster, but Prince’s memoir describes numerous small-scale *Strafzüge* against Mkwawa’s allies and vassals such as the Gogo. Following the destruction of Zelewski’s column, Prince is quite clear about his state of mind: “From this moment on, particularly as a member of the old expedition, my uninterrupted striving was directed at avenging the annihilation of this corps, and henceforth I established no station, led no expedition, engaged in no battle, did nothing official that would not somehow be connected with this goal.”<sup>565</sup> The campaigns he waged, both authorized and “unofficial,” were characterized by such frequent violence and brutality that Prince at one point complains after shooting a group of Hehe from 100 yards, “again the old situation, several enemy dead, otherwise nothing.” Later, he describes a multiple execution carried out on his orders, casually noting afterwards, “as always something repulsive [to do]!”<sup>566</sup> His policy overall is put accurately enough: “The stomach is what affects the *Neger* the most, and this reality would help me years later in bringing the harsh mentality of the Hehe

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<sup>564</sup> Prince, 112-3 and 152.

<sup>565</sup> Prince, 113.

<sup>566</sup> Prince, 223.

under German rule.”<sup>567</sup> What this translated to in reality, as Prince himself describes, was the widespread destruction of crops and food-stores during his “cleansing” (*Säuberung*) and “pacification” (*Beruhigung*) operations in the valleys of Uhehe, a policy that by design could only and did result in famine. Ten years later during Maji Maji, Governor Götzen would make the same argument and use the same scorched earth policies to devastating effect against the very people Prince was “protecting” in the 1890s.

In the rare moments he admits to having qualms about the task at hand, he is quite clear that “such is the nature of African warfare” and that the fault lay entirely with the targets of punitive operations because they had resisted German authority and—crucially—continued hostilities against German allies.<sup>568</sup> The hundreds of warriors he cuts down with Maxim guns and Mauser rifles merely demonstrate the inferiority of “*unkultivierte*” (uncultivated or uncultured) enemies vis-à-vis European-equipped armies.<sup>569</sup> His narrative ends with his appointment to captain and joint commander of operations in 1895, precisely the moment when he, as noted, personally initiated hostilities against the Hehe in spite of their attempts to negotiate. The long, bloody guerrilla war of 1895-1898, during which Prince was in command, disappears entirely from his narrative. “I will speak on

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<sup>567</sup> Prince, 174.

<sup>568</sup> Prince, 118. Governor Liebert echoed this sentiment: “*Ich habe in Böhmen und Frankreich den Krieg praktisch kennengelernt, ich habe 30 Jahre hindurch unausgesetzt mich mit Kriegswissenschaft und im Besonderen mit Kriegsgeschichte beschäftigt, aber was ich hier in Uhehe erlebte, stand außerhalb des Rahmens alles bisher Dagewesen. Es war echt Afrikanisch.*” Liebert, 28. That the „echt Afrikanisch“ character of the war had much to do with Liebert’s own policies did not seem to strike him as pertinent.

<sup>569</sup> Prince, 160-1.

that another time.”<sup>570</sup> For the Hehe, the adventures of Prince, Schele, and Liebert were nothing short of a catastrophe. With regards to the German imperial enterprise, however, Prince’s performance was exemplary in spite of his disobedience. Operating almost entirely on his own initiative, firmly locked into the complex politics of the region, Prince’s war of destruction against the Hehe was expedient and, for the governments in Dar and Berlin, *cheap*.

### **“Civil-Military Dualism” and the Operation of German Colonial Policy**

Prince, Schele, and other officers were operating as the empire’s agents; it was they who had the task of actualizing an authority that before the wars of the 1890s had only existed on paper. Why then, did officers in East Africa so frequently act in ways that actually subverted the goal of “stability” in so far as they perpetuated or in some cases even provoked costly, bloody hostilities? In order to understand what seems to be a rather contradictory situation, one must turn to the manner in which colonial rule operated in German East Africa.

As Marcia Wright and Kirsten Zirkel have compellingly demonstrated and this study has confirmed, both military and civilian policymaking were largely driven by “men on the spot” responding to the exigencies and complexities of local social and political realities. Wright argued forcefully for the importance of the local context in the form and function of German policy. Nearly every decision made was conditioned by the necessity to rule through local proxies. The language of the colony became Kiswahili out of expediency, and Islam was

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<sup>570</sup> Prince, 332.

allowed to flower despite vociferous protests from Berlin and from local missionaries.<sup>571</sup>

Following the pattern set in Cameroon, the first colony brought under effective German control, the military in East Africa had considerable autonomy from the beginning. The *Schutztruppe*, while allegedly responsible first and foremost to the governor, had its command vested in a separate office.<sup>572</sup> The considerable *esprit des corps* of the officers meant that if they made a concerted effort—as happened on several occasions, they could often outmaneuver the governor to such an extent that at times they made policy as much as they enforced it.<sup>573</sup> This situation did not change significantly until after the 1906-1907 “colonial scandals” in Germany, which erupted largely because of the reports of horrors entailed in suppressing the almost simultaneous Maji Maji and Herero-Nama revolts.<sup>574</sup> Even after the regularization of administration after 1907, officers maintained an enormous amount of influence over civilian policy.<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Marcia Wright, “Local Roots of Policy in German East Africa,” *Journal of African History*, IX, 4 (1968): 621-630.

<sup>572</sup> Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 99.

<sup>573</sup> Contrary to Hull’s claim that “[t]hese units lacked the cohesiveness and specific group culture that regimental history and long service encouraged,” the *Schutztruppe* in East Africa demonstrated a high degree of cohesion, common culture, and an evolving “regimental history.” Some of its officers, like Wissmann, Prince, or Nigmann, served for a decade or more (Prince was a *Schutztruppler* for over 20 years, from his induction in 188 till his death at the battle of Tanga in 1914). Hull, 133.

<sup>574</sup> See Smith, chapter 12, for an extensive discussion of the shift in German policy.

<sup>575</sup> Zirkel, 103-4.

The autonomy granted to local military officials, especially in the early colonial period, had a good deal to do with the financial structure of the German colonies. It is often said that the British were “parsimonious” and “frugal” in their imperial undertakings; the Germans were downright stingy. This reality was a result of the fact that the German colonies were under the control of the metropolitan legislature to an extent unique among the colonial powers. Contrary to Wehlerian models of the German Empire, which argue that the Reichstag was a “sham parliament,” the budget for each colony was reviewed and extensively debated by the Reichstag *every year*.<sup>576</sup> Every single expenditure down to salaries, the hiring of translators, or the purchase of capital goods had to be justified to the legislature, leading to a continual lack of funds available to local officials. It was for this reason that colonial officials had to depend so much on indigenous allies, and they were left to acquire whatever resources they could locally. Before the colonial economy was established and revenue could be collected via taxation, this meant, more often than not, “requisitions” from the local populace, particularly when on campaign in “hostile territory.” Like Frederick the Great in the eighteenth century or Mkwawa in the nineteenth, the *Schutztruppe* was waging war to pay for war.

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<sup>576</sup> This is the major interpretive thrust and great innovation of Iliffe’s *Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912*. See particularly chapters 1 and 3. See also Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Helmut Walser Smith, “The Talk of Genocide, the Rhetoric of Miscegenation: Notes on Debates in the German Reichstag Concerning Southwest Africa, 1904-14,” in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

From the very beginning, military conflict provoked by local officials had subverted Berlin's intentions of setting up a civilian-administered, inexpensive colony. German imperial rule in East Africa ended as it began, in a conflagration of sanguinary, unauthorized violence. In 1884 and 1885 East Africa was "claimed" for Germany by, the infamous Carl Peters, who fancied himself a German Cecil Rhodes. But rather than working towards the establishment of political stability, he spread destruction in his wake with total contempt for his instructions not to foment any expensive trouble in German East Africa.<sup>577</sup> As he himself proudly described one incident: "The Sultan shall have peace, but eternal peace. I shall show the Vagogo what the Germans are! Plunder the villages, throw fire into the houses, and smash anything that will not burn."<sup>578</sup> Similarly, the 1888 rebellion, was ignited in part by the arrogant behavior of the same Emil von Zelewski who was to be martyred in 1891. It was this rebellion that forced Bismarck to accede to annexation.<sup>579</sup> Thereafter, attempts to create a "model colony" were continually subverted by financial constraints and the ambitious rapaciousness of German officers on the spot. This phenomenon reached its apogee during World War I, when Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck blatantly

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<sup>577</sup> Chancellor Bismarck, never an avid proponent of colonialism, was quite explicit on this point in his biting criticism of the expansionist pretensions of the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft*: "the possibility of military expeditions is out of the question... I would rather give up the whole East African colonial venture than agree to a military campaign in the interior." Quoted in Zirkel, 95.

<sup>578</sup> Quoted in Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate All The Brutes* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 50.

<sup>579</sup> The Germans arrived at the coast during the important Muslim religious holiday, Idd al-Hajj, and at one point burst into a mosque during prayers wearing boots and accompanied by Zelewski's hunting dogs. Behavior of this sort, which was frequent, caused an uproar on the coast and did much to ignite an already volatile political situation. Glassman, 5.

disregarded the instructions of Governor Heinrich Schnee and the General Staff in Berlin and waged his own private guerrilla war across a vast stretch of East Africa.<sup>580</sup> The campaign itself led to hundreds of thousands of African dead and left whole swathes of Tanzania, Nyasaland, and Mozambique in ruins.<sup>581</sup> As indicated above, the Hehe-German War was to a considerable extent defined by the same dynamic as the wars that came before and after it, and as such is a preeminent example of a larger pattern.

The first official governor of East Africa, Freiherr von Soden, was painfully aware of the stringent financial constraints within which he had to operate, and as a civilian he sought as much as possible to create a stable, civilian bureaucracy for the colony. Furthermore, he hoped to avoid expensive military conflict at all costs; it was for this reason that he sought to integrate officers of the *Schutztruppe* into the local administration.<sup>582</sup> His assumption was that by appointing military personnel as district officers throughout most of the colony, he would strengthen his control over them and deploy them as instruments of policy as he saw fit. Precisely the opposite occurred—this decision, imposed on Soden by financial realities and the fact that the *Schutztruppe* were practically his only method of imposing control, led to the near total *militarization* of the administration of East Africa. Between 1891 and 1897, local commanders, acting

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<sup>580</sup> See Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Meine Erinnerungen aus Ostafrika* (Leipzig, Koehler, 1920). See also Melvin E. Page, ed., *Africa and the First World War* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1987).

<sup>581</sup> David Killingray, “African Voices from two World Wars,” in *Historical Research*, vol. LXXIV, no. 186 (November 2001): 439.

<sup>582</sup> Zirkel, 97.



putatively as proxies of the governor, in fact officially waged more than sixty campaigns against the African population.<sup>583</sup> Many of these were not authorized by the governor much less by metropolitan authorities, and this number does not even include the hundreds of small-scale operations undertaken by commanders which were not even reported to their superiors.

Soden euphemistically termed this system and the problems that it generated “civil-military dualism,” and it was a system that continued to plague German attempts to run a peaceful, profitable colony up till 1918. As stated, this policy was not motivated by something intrinsically praetorian about German colonial policy, but by the Reichstag’s unwillingness to generously fund colonial adventures and by the local realities of conquering a colony nearly as large as Western Europe inhabited by over seven million people. The fact that colonial and particularly military officials on the ground could dominate the decision-making process that led to the consolidation of colonial rule was hardly the preserve of the Germans any more than mass killing. David Killingray quotes the British strategist Lord Chatfield in describing the reality of this situation in the British colonies: “soldier argued with soldier, political agent with political agent, and both with each other.”<sup>584</sup> The French conquest of the Western Sudan is a textbook example of military men on the spot handing their metropolitan

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<sup>583</sup> Zirkel, 97 and Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule*, chapter 1.

<sup>584</sup> Killingray, 9.

superiors *fait accomplis* in flagrant defiance of their orders from Paris or from civilians on the scene.<sup>585</sup>

But the administrative friction of the sort that plagued Soden and his successors perhaps reached its apogee in the short-lived African empire of the German Reich. In both German East Africa and German Southwest Africa, military officers maintained an enormous amount of influence over the nature and course of colonial policy making, a state of affairs preserved even after the supposed conversion to “civil administration” in the wake of the colonial scandals of 1905-07.<sup>586</sup> Zirkel points out that “the military could even reach a position of omnipotence in times of war... The actual decision-making powers vis-à-vis the periphery rested less with the Colonial Department in the Reich than with the men on the spot. Thus the former acted purely as a means of legitimating *fait accomplis* which had long before been brought about by military participants.”<sup>587</sup> Indeed, this situation was largely tolerated by authorities in Berlin and in the colonial capital of Dar es Salaam as long as officers in the field could deliver “victories” without the necessity for additional expenditure or forces. This

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<sup>585</sup> See A. S. Kanya-Forstner, “The *Régime du Sabre*—West African Style: The French Marines in the Western Sudan, 1880-99,” in *Armies of Occupation*, ed. Roy A. Prete and A. Hamish Ion (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 55-76. See also A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *The Conquest of the Western Sudan: A Study in French Military Imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>586</sup> Zirkel, 109. The profound friction between military officials and their civilian superiors both in Africa and in Germany reached its highpoint, in fact, during the Great War when Lettow-Vorbeck blatantly disregarded the instructions of Governor Heinrich Schnee and the General Staff in Berlin and waged his own private war across a vast stretch of East Africa. For more on the politically debilitating colonial scandals, which encompassed abuses in all four of Germany’s African colonies, see Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (New York: Avon Books, 1991), 622-8.

<sup>587</sup> Zirkel, 109.

effectively gave them *carte blanche* in their districts. This combination of local autonomy with the lack of available European manpower or expenditure had several decisive consequences for the nature of warfare in the 1890s generally and for that waged against the Hehe specifically.

The combination of little or no supervision as well as no logistic support created a strong incentive for officers to proceed with extreme ruthlessness, defeating opponents in as “expedient” a manner as possible.<sup>588</sup> What they lacked in material support from Berlin or Dar es Salaam they made up for in sheer terror and crass vandalism when dealing with effective guerrilla resistance. Vastly outnumbered, German officers exploited the advantages that they did have—superior weaponry and a willingness and ability to annihilate the productive base of indigenous societies. This was a highly effective—and cheap—way in which to subjugate populations who often outnumbered the invaders by hundreds or even thousands of times. This is precisely what occurred during the campaign against Mkwawa and the Hehe. It is often recognized that this is what led to the draconian suppression of the Maji Maji Revolt, but such policies did not begin in 1905. These tactics were institutionalized in the wars of the 1890s, many of the same officers, *Askari*, and African auxiliaries (in the case of the Hehe *jumbe* that turned against Mkwawa from 1896-98) serving both then and against Maji Maji.

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<sup>588</sup> The colonial encyclopedia compiled by the last governor of German East Africa, Heinrich Schnee, has a section devoted to colonial warfare. The dearth of material resources and lack of infrastructure in the German colonies were such that the contributors emphasized swift, brutal, *total* victories over indigenous opponents as the most “*zweckmäßiger*” way to victory. Schnee, 1.Band, 683-5.

A second effect was the Germans' near total dependence on indigenous allies, either imported from outside the colony or raised locally through a complicated system of alliances with African societies and polities. The overwhelming majority of the *Schutztruppe* was made up of mercenary forces, the *Askari*. As discussed in chapters two through four, initially these were Muslim levies from Sudan or Shangaani from Mozambique (referred to erroneously by the Germans as "Zulus"), but these were gradually replaced with Swahili Muslim soldiers from the coast and Nyamwezi troops from the area around Tabora in central Tanzania.<sup>589</sup> The *Askari*, directed by white officers, provided the majority of the Germans' professional manpower in East Africa, and as such they acted as one of the primary instruments of conquest. Needless to say, their view of their role and of the tasks they were given was not identical to that held by their "superiors," but on the whole they proved highly reliable, even during the appalling conditions of the First World War. As Tom von Prince and Ernst Nigmann discuss at length, the *Askari* already had some proficiency at warfare, especially the Sudanese, most of whom were survivors of the Mahdist expulsion of the British in the 1880s. They were given extensive European-style training and equipped with the latest Mausers and Maxims, against which most Tanganyikan adversaries could only muster spears or muskets (which were

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<sup>589</sup> Glassman, 250. There exist no extensive studies of the *Askaris* at the present time, but there are works dealing with similar formations from other areas of colonial Africa that may serve as a basis for comparison. See Timothy H. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1999) and Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857-1960* (1964 (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991).

admittedly quite deadly if the Africans got close enough or could surprise colonial units).

Just as the Germans were also forced to work through *jumbe* administrators (usually Swahili or Arabs from the coast imposed on local societies), they had to rely until a very late date on local allies to pacify “rebellious tribes.”<sup>590</sup> German conquest of the interior would have been well nigh impossible without the frequent participation of “native levies.”<sup>591</sup> The extensive involvement of Africans in the German conquest was the main factor that prevented a unified resistance against the *Schutztruppe*, which the tiny colonial forces would have been in no position to oppose. Such alliances had everything to do with local politics, as many Africans—particularly African elders and leaders—saw the Germans not as alien invaders as much as an *opportunity* to settle old scores and reinforce their power within their own societies and vis-à-vis their neighbors. The free hand enjoyed by Prince and his colleagues, when combined with the ease with which they could find ready and willing allies proved a deadly mixture for the Hehe. Indeed, it was the interaction of these two elements that led to the Hehe Empire’s destruction.

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<sup>590</sup> Iliffe argues the era of compromise lasted until the end of the decade before World War One, at which point most of the alliances were replaced by a regular administration and attempts at settler “self-government.” See Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule*, chapter 7 and Sunseri, *Vilimani: Labor Migration and Rural Change in Early Colonial Tanzania* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).

<sup>591</sup> Zirkel, 97.

## War in Colonial East Africa

Having established the actions of local officers as key catalysts in both the Hehe conflict and colonial wars in East Africa more generally, one is still left wondering why their tactics were so wasteful of the very “human capital” that was so desperately needed for the colonial labor force, a labor force which was the colony’s primary asset and a continual obsession for German officials until 1918.<sup>592</sup> German behavior during the Hehe conflict begs the question, why did the autonomy of officers in the field not have a *moderating* effect on their behavior?

The overwhelming violence deployed by Prince, Schele, and Liebert is indeed part of a broader pattern of behavior displayed by the colonizers during their wars in East Africa. The depredations of Peters and later Lettow-Vorbeck have already been cited, but their behavior pales in comparison with the well-known brutality and destruction wrought by the Germans in their suppression of the Maji Maji Revolt of 1905-1906, one of “the two greatest risings in East Central Africa.”<sup>593</sup> The “scorched earth” methods used to crush all resistance in German East Africa during the Maji Maji Revolt are often cited jointly with the Herero-Nama War as compelling proof of the “Hun’s” proclivity for slaughter in the colonies. To be sure, the governor and commander-in-chief in that conflict, Adolf Graf von Götzen, explicitly declared the burning of African infrastructure

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<sup>592</sup> See Thaddeus Sunseri’s works, *Vilimani, op. cit.* and “Labour Migration in Colonial Tanzania and the Hegemony of South African Historiography,” in *African Affairs*, 95 (1996): 581-98.

<sup>593</sup> Ranger, 446. The other case was the Ndebele-Shona Risings of 1896-1897 in Southern Rhodesia.

(homes, crops, fields) and the mass starvation that ensued to be the Germans' "best friends." As noted above, these highly destructive tactics were referred to as "indispensable allies" when pacifying recalcitrant Africans.<sup>594</sup> Such policies resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Africans, most of whom were not even involved in the conflict.<sup>595</sup>

The manner in which German officers exercised their freedom of action had everything to do with their sociology and the situation they faced on the one hand, and the nature of the imperial project as a whole on the other. As to the first issue, the scholar Wolfgang Petter offers several explanations for the officers' eagerness to initiate *Buschkriege*.<sup>596</sup> Many of the officers in the colonies faced honor courts back in Germany for gambling debts, adultery, and various other offenses. Others saw themselves as having no prospect of advancement in the metropole, lacking the connections or background often necessary to win promotions in the peacetime army.<sup>597</sup> The colonies offered a second chance to such officers, and there was therefore strong incentive to engage in hostilities whenever possible in order to deliver career boosting victories. For individuals living like warlords, surrounded by *Askari* loyal to them and them alone,

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<sup>594</sup> Quoted in Kjekshus, 144-6.

<sup>595</sup> See John Iliffe, "The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion," *Journal of African History*, VIII, 3 (1967): 495-512.

<sup>596</sup> Wolfgang Petter, "Das Offizierkorps der deutschen Kolonialtruppen, 1889-1918," in *Das Deutsche Offizierkorps, 1860-1960*, ed. Hans Hubert Hofman, 163-74 (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1977).

<sup>597</sup> Petter, 167.

controlling the destiny of thousands of people with practically no oversight, the temptation to engage in “excesses” was great indeed.

Added to this was the situation faced by all colonizers during the initial decades of their rule in Africa. The *Schutztruppe* were often thrust into the middle of “enemy territory,” surrounded by vast numbers of “hostiles” whom the Germans did not know or understand. “Often the time spent in the middle of potential enemies led to nervousness and, connected with the awareness of superior firepower, to the overreaction typical of all colonial wars.”<sup>598</sup> The constant fear felt by Magdalene von Prince and her husband during their time in the Iringa garrison, discussed in the last chapter, proved to be a powerful incentive to engage on policies that bordered on massacre. Paranoia combined with Europe’s most sophisticated killing instruments was a deadly mixture; as the English writer Henri Belloc put it: “Whatever happens we have got/ the Maxim gun and they have not.”<sup>599</sup> The late nineteenth century was characterized by the greatest disparity in world history between the arms of Europeans and those of their opponents; it was a gap that would steadily close throughout the twentieth.

The people of the southern highlands were hardly strangers to warfare; indeed, it had been endemic to the region for decades as discussed in the context of the formation of the Hehe Empire in chapter two. And African warfare was anything but “*Neger* with spears” (as German officers thought all too often before experience taught them otherwise)—the Shaka revolution, adopted and elaborated

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<sup>598</sup> Petter, 164.

<sup>599</sup> Quoted in Jon Bridgman, *The Revolt of the Hereros* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 67.



upon by Munyigumba and Mkwawa, provided the Hehe state with enormous coercive capability and a standing army full of some of the most proficient killers on the continent. The Hehe even proved to be highly adaptable, whether it was the tactics they developed to avoid massed German fire or—in contrast to the Zulu or the Sokoto Caliphate—their ability to transition from set-piece warfare to guerrilla war. But the kind of warfare brought by these ambitious aliens was of a very different character than what the indigenous people had known before. The Germans were equipped and supplied by one of the world's premier industrial powers, a power that did not hesitate to use new weapons on colonial enemies that allowed a handful of troops to slaughter untold hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of warriors and civilians.<sup>600</sup> Furthermore, while the armies of the Hehe and their enemies drew on the local subsistence economy and generally took sufficient supplies to last one month and could furthermore draw on a formidable system of stockpiled food stored across the empire, the *Schutztruppe* had to live off land the land in a manner reminiscent of soldiers of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>601</sup> Hehe armies were too large to live exclusively on plundered goods, and their leaders—even the dreaded Mkwawa—had to consider the political and social consequences of destroying the assets of the very people he was trying to absorb and incorporate into the ever-growing Hehe tributary state. German officers and their *Askari* were essentially professional mercenaries who numbered far fewer than their African opponents and had no need to return to farm the land—they

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<sup>600</sup> See Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1981) and John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1986).

<sup>601</sup> Nigmann, 77.

could wage “total war” on a local scale indefinitely as long as there was sufficient ammunition and, as Prince notes time and again, alcohol.

Overall, even if the Germans were basically inserting themselves into the local political system, their backing from the metropole and ability to muster resources from across the colony often meant that they behaved with no restraint other than what their own power would allow. Even *Muhinja* had to observe certain conventions, as it was not impossible that one day his Sangu or Bena enemies would return the favor in Uhehe. The goal of Hehe warfare was to incorporate enemies, not annihilate them or drive them to the point of total social collapse. This was precisely how Uhehe had grown in the first place, like the Ngoni. As Nigmann points out, prisoners of war and female captives were taken by the Hehe as a crucial part of the agricultural labor force.<sup>602</sup> Women were the backbone of Hehe agricultural society, and captives from newly annexed territories were the primary mechanism of extending chiefly lineages and kinship networks. German officers had neither the ability nor often the inclination to deal with large numbers of prisoners; they simply did not bother taking them unless it was part of the “strategic hamlet policy” or the Hehe in question were useful as hostages to compel “their men” to submit to summary German justice.<sup>603</sup> Even if the Germans had wanted to instantiate themselves into local African politics, which in many cases they did, a variety of factors discussed in the previous chapters prevented this process from going smoothly. The Germans were not

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<sup>602</sup> Nigmann, 101.

<sup>603</sup> The policy of summarily shooting or hanging all Hehe taken in battle, as well as an Hehe encountered carrying a weapon, was explicitly pronounced by Governor Liebert in July 1897. Proklamation Lieberts, 11 July 1897, BAB, R1001/288, Bl. 184.

allowed (legally or culturally) to take African wives or become the founders of new African lineages or dynasties (unlike the Portuguese *Prazeros* of Mozambique that had set up kingdoms there between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries), they did not understand African political structures, did not speak the local languages, and could not point as the Ngoni or the Hehe could to previous generations of local elites that were now high-ranking members of a new imperial society. And after their term of service, unless they became a settler like Tom von Prince and his wife, German officers left the colony; they did not have to deal with the medium to long-term consequences of their actions the same way that an African conqueror like Mkwawa or Merere did. All of this meant that the Germans were inclined—in their minds compelled—to use extreme forms of violence as a means of political language, negotiation, and administration.

As stated, the extreme brutality that characterized the Hehe War and others like it also had much to do with the imperial project as a whole. In the case of German Southwest Africa, Governor Theodor Leutwein was chastised for waging a similar war of destruction against the Herero. His retort is both telling and unusually candid:

A consistent colonial policy would no doubt require the execution of all prisoners capable of bearing arms. I myself would not like to adopt this practice, but I would not reproach anyone who did. Colonization is always inhumane. It must ultimately amount to an encroachment on the rights of the original inhabitants in favor of the intruders. If that is unacceptable then one must oppose all colonization, which at least would be a logical attitude. What is impossible is to on one hand to take land from the natives on the basis of questionable treaties and risk the life and health of one's countrymen to this end, and on the other hand to enthuse about humanitarian principles in the Reichstag. Yet this is precisely what many delegates have done.<sup>604</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Leutwein to the Colonial Department, 4 July 1896, BAB, R2101.

Indeed, the Germans' goals—which were non-negotiable—of protecting trade, stamping out slavery, and ending “intertribal warfare,” however laudable in their own minds and to their advocates back home in Germany, involved an inherent outpouring of imperial violence, legitimated by the admitted repugnance of many of these practices. The “new era” the Germans wished to create could only mean the end of a way of life for millions of Africans, a way of life they would not give up without a life or death struggle.<sup>605</sup>

Colonization was an inherently destructive process as much as it was a creative, or “developmentalist” one—indeed, the two were inextricably linked.<sup>606</sup> Colonial regimes tended to move as quickly as possible to regular, peaceful administration once “pacification” was complete. In the German case, this occurred only after the end of the great colonial wars of 1904-1907. Even then, the military maintained a disproportionate influence over colonial affairs to the institutionalization of their practices and often their modes of thinking as well. The historian Bruce Vandervort claims that the “cult of violence” that arose out of Europe’s colonial wars led to a cynical belief in the moral supremacy of armed force —“might makes right”—that poisoned both European domestic politics and

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<sup>605</sup> This reality was described eloquently by Thomas Pakenham: “To succeed, a European colony demanded a revolution in African society. The Germans wanted land for settlement, cattle for export, gold and diamonds for mining—and Africans to work for long hours for little or no money. Neither the Witboois nor Herero shared this vision. Their fathers had been nomads, worshipping their ancestors, living by cattle and the gun. This was the order of things, and they would, if desperate enough, give their lives to try and preserve it.” Pakenham, 606.

<sup>606</sup> For an extended, brilliant discussion of development in German East Africa, see Juhani Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German Colonial Policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884-1914* (Helsinki: Lit Verlag, 1994).

colonial policy in general.<sup>607</sup> Colonial officials, both civil and military, created and maintained structures that were fundamentally militaristic in nature, and they maintained an almost unwavering faith in the "salutatory effect" of mass killing and property destruction that lasted until the end of the wars of decolonization.<sup>608</sup> A racist, and in some cases homicidal, contempt for Africans, already a prominent feature of the discourse surrounding the "Scramble," was enshrined as a cornerstone of imperial policy. But in specific cases such as the Hehe, the official attitude towards African peoples could undergo startling reverses in the face of changed political circumstances. The Hehes' transformation from nemesis to romanticized *Herrenvolk* ("lordly race") has parallels elsewhere: the Ndebele of what would become Southern Rhodesia came to be viewed as a "martial race" with noble qualities, and the Zulu—once the terror of British forces—came to be seen as Britain's answer to the American notion of the "noble savage."<sup>609</sup> And just as the view of African opponents continually shifted in both the British and the German context, policies of extreme violence were hardly unique to the Germans. A few examples of other events around the world that were contemporaneous with the German-Hehe War indicate, as the historian Reviel Netz in his recent work *Barbed Wire: An Ecology of Modernity* argues, that "[t]he

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<sup>607</sup> Some scholars argue that empire poisoned the political and administrative processes of Europe as a whole. See, most famously, Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism: New Edition with Added Prefaces* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), Part II: Imperialism and Herman Lebovics, *Imperialism and the Corruption of Democracies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

<sup>608</sup> Vandervort, 218-9 and 212-3.

<sup>609</sup> For a discussion of the highly contingent nature of race, racism, and imperial policy, see David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

point must be stressed. When we note the surprising fact that the concentration camp was invented by Britain, in 1900, this is an indictment not of Britain but of 1900. The concentration camp was called forth by the times themselves. War was total, so that the enemy population had to be dealt with.”<sup>610</sup> The harsh realities of colonization and the horrors of the *fin de siècle* world, horrors that were not confined to any one European power, were recognized at the time, as indicated by the satirical cartoon from a 1905 issue of the German journal pacification used by *all* the European powers of the era.

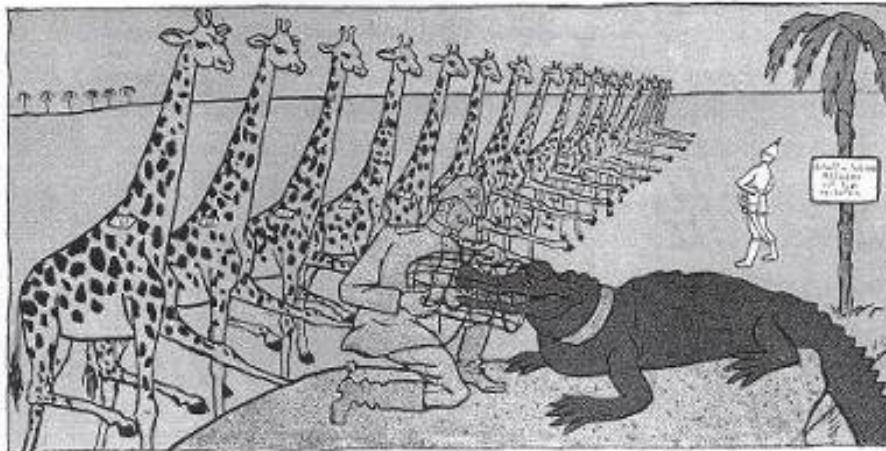
Thomas Theodor Heine’s depiction of the colonial powers involved in the conquest of Africa is one of turn of the century cultural stereotypes. The Germans are so obsessed with order that they post regulations about dumping snow, and they attempt to arrange the animals in a neat, subdued row. The English squeeze indigenous peoples dry, pouring alcohol into an African’s mouth while money is extracted from him as an Anglican pastor stands by. The French are depicted as interbreeding with their Africans (part of a general disdain that both the Germans and the English had for the French policy of *assimilation* in their colonies). Worst of all, King Leopold II of Belgium dines on a meal of an African, a comment on what was then public knowledge: the rubber trade and government construction projects were slowly grinding down the Congolese population by about half (which, by the Belgians’ own estimate, meant the deaths of 10 million people).<sup>611</sup> Stereotypical as it is, the cartoon is a frank admission of

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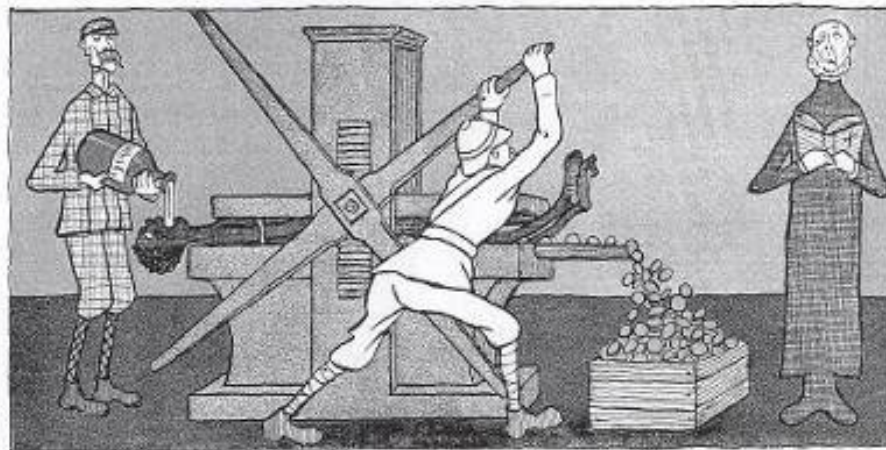
<sup>610</sup> Netz, op cit., 145.

<sup>611</sup> See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998) and Lindqvist, *Exterminate all the Brutes*, op cit.

## Kolonialmächte



So kolonisiert der Deutsche.



So kolonisiert der Engländer.



So der Franzose.



und so der Belgier.

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<sup>612</sup> Cartoon by Thomas Theodor Heine from the German satire magazine, *Simplicissimus* from 1905 in the midst of the “colonial scandals” of the Herero War and Maji Maji, 1905.

what most Europeans knew at the time—or at least they knew enough to know that they did not want to know—that colonization was, at its core, organized violence. Conrad put it succinctly enough: “The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much.”<sup>613</sup>

### **Colonial Warfare During the Age of the “New Imperialism”**

Other wars of imperial conquest could quickly become every bit as destructive, or even “genocidal,” when waged by other powers for reasons similar to those indicated above. Michael Lieven’s article, “‘Butchering the Brutes all Over the Place’: Total War and Massacre in Zululand, 1879” makes clear what methods European commanders would deploy when the threat of defeat at Africa hands loomed before them. Contrary to images of the Zulu War as a “noble conflict” that bore no similarity to the slaughter of the Great War, “the war should be seen rather as an example of total war in which the British systematically destroyed the economic basis of Zululand and carried out a policy of refusing to take prisoners and massacring the wounded; towards the end of the war they were only saved from a policy of genocide by the capture of the Zulu king.”<sup>614</sup> Lieven notes that

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<sup>613</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: Heritage Press, 1969), 13.

<sup>614</sup> Michael Lieven, “‘Butchering Brutes all over the Place’: Total War and Massacre in Zululand, 1879,” *History: The Journal of the Historical Association* 84 (Oct 1999), 614. The only journalist with the force at the start of the campaign was unequivocal in arguing that: “the fallacy of fighting with an uncivilized race with the same feelings of humanity that dictate out wars with civilized races was thoroughly proved; and it thus was shown that in Zululand neither men, kraals, cattle, nor crops should be spared on any pretence whatever, except on the complete submission of the whole nation.” Lieven, 618.



the “total war”<sup>615</sup> in Zululand stopped just short of the kind waged by the Germans in Southwest Africa, but this was only because the highly centralized war machine of the Zulu collapsed with the defeat of the monarchy. As described in chapters five and six, Mkwawa’s refusal to surrender and decision to wage guerrilla war on the Germans meant that the Hehe war entered a “total” phase after 1896. This was equally true of many conflicts with so-called “acephalous peoples” (meaning those that putatively lived without states or clearly defined leaders) such as the Nama of Southwest Africa, the “forest peoples” of Congo, the Igbo and the Tiv of Nigeria, the Baule of the Ivory Coast, and the Shona in Southern Rhodesia, none of whom had clear objectives to take or powerful leaders with whom to negotiate (who could then impose a settlement). The greater difficulty in bringing decentralized “guerrilla” armies to heel is amply demonstrated in Nigeria. There, Sir Frederick Lugard experienced exactly the same phenomenon. The conquest of Hausaland was relatively brief and did not degenerate into a ruthless scorched earth campaign against guerrilla fighters. There, the Hausa state authorities were strong enough to negotiate and enforce a settlement with the British on their own people once induced to surrender in open battle.<sup>616</sup> But when Lugard’s forces attacked the “stateless” Tiv in central Nigeria, “they found it a long, difficult, and expensive process—not because the

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<sup>615</sup> Lieven uses the term “total war” to refer to the deliberate annihilation of mass numbers of people and their source of livelihood, rather than in the sense of the “total war” waged during World War One, which referred to a war in which the mobilization of the entire society’s productive base and human resources was necessary. Lieven’s “total war” is in essence a *Vernichtungskrieg* of the sort waged by Prince, Liebert, and other German officers.

<sup>616</sup> Woodruff Smith, *European Imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Chicago: Nelson–Hall, 1998), 180.

Tiv were particularly numerous or warlike, but because no one could surrender for all of the Tiv kinship groups together.”<sup>617</sup>

In the Zulu case as in German East Africa, commanders on the scene were left to figure out how to end the war, but like the German-Hehe case they had to act in accordance with the uncompromising mission given them by their political masters:

If [the British forces] used a strategy of total war to reduce Zulu civilians, chiefs and warriors to submission then they did so because there was no other way to successfully carry out the demands of their political masters [total victory]. Ultimately the cause of the massacres and of the policy of total war lay not in the morality of individuals but in the logic, or pathology, of the European imperial expansion in Africa.<sup>618</sup>

Just as in East Africa, when metropolitan leadership demanded victory at any price and left its men on the spot to their own devices, the result could be massacre or even genocide, a situation that “emerged necessarily from the pathology of empire when confronted with the possibility of defeat.”<sup>619</sup> One colonel pointed out, in one sense accurately enough, that killing all prisoners and annihilating civilians “was beastly but there was nothing else to do. War is war and savage war is the worst of the lot.”<sup>620</sup> He was correct in the sense that “savage war,” or what colonial warfare expert Colonel C. E. Callwell

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<sup>617</sup> Woodruff Smith, *European*, 180.

<sup>618</sup> Lieven, 632.

<sup>619</sup> Lieven, 616.

<sup>620</sup> Lieven, 622.

Eurocentrically and euphemistically termed “small wars,”<sup>621</sup> often turned into outright slaughter when Africans offered effective resistance to imperial designs.

The revolt against British rule of the Ndebele and the Shona in Southern Rhodesia in 1896-1897 bore even more similarity to what occurred, not in East Africa, but in German Southwest Africa, a fact that was widely recognized at the time in the era before the “Black Legend” of German colonialism (noted in chapter one) had gained wide currency. A flurry of editorials in London and the Cape closely followed the outbreak and course of the Herero rebellion in neighboring Southwest Africa in 1904, with many observers expressing sympathy for the Germans. The reactions in the non-German press did much to place the horrors of the Herero revolt and other German colonial wars in an international context. South African and British newspapers forecasted that, as was the case with the Zulus, the Germans would have to utterly crush the Herero before they would yield. Many also called for solidarity with the “imperiled” white race in German Southwest Africa. The *South African News* asserted that the Germans were fully justified in responding with extreme severity, as “the Herero, like the Matabele [Ndebele], are worse than useless.”<sup>622</sup> An editorial in *The African Review* pointed out that the “savagery” of the Africans, rather than German malfeasance, was to blame for the revolt. The Herero were just like the Ndebele

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<sup>621</sup> See Colonel C. E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles & Practices* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

<sup>622</sup> *South African News*, 24 February 1904, BAB, R2111. This and other articles were meticulously annotated and filed by the German Colonial Department of the Foreign Office during the Herero-Nama Revolt. It seems obvious that the government in Berlin was paying close attention to both their critics and their supporters in Britain and South Africa. The international context of their actions was at least partially clear to them at the time. It was certainly clear to Theodor Leutwein and Lothar von Trotha.

and deserved to be treated as such—with the utmost severity and swiftness.<sup>623</sup>

The London *Times* praised the infamous Lothar von Trotha as an effective, firm commander who would act appropriately.<sup>624</sup> As General von Trotha himself indicated, he was well aware of precedents for his actions elsewhere in the colonial world, and he cited these comparable cases in justifying his own policies. Accurately enough, he answered his critics: “Have the streams of blood been forgotten that have flowed and still flow in India and in the Cape, in North Africa and now in Somalia? Colonies must be conquered; nothing of that can be withdrawn. The natives have to give way, see America or Australia. Either by the bullet or via mission through brandy.”<sup>625</sup>

Harshest of all, a commentator in South Africa echoed von Trotha in blasting the missionaries for encouraging the Africans to think of themselves as equals to their white masters. The Herero and Ovambo were among the “dying nations” of the world, and as such one was “fully justified” in utilizing “extreme measures” to crush them.<sup>626</sup> The author then approvingly cited “ethnographical opinion” in Britain and Germany, which agreed that “the two races [African and European] possess so many physical and instinctive differences that

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<sup>623</sup> *The African Review*, 30 January, BAB, R2111. The author then approvingly quoted Sir Frederick Lugard (whose campaigns in Nigeria and Uganda were probably as brutal as those described above): “It is unfortunately the case that the African savage in his primitive stage can, as a rule, understand nothing but force, and he regards arguments and verbal lessons as weapons of the weak, to be listened to for the moment and set aside when convenient. If, however, he is once convinced by coercion that the white man has power to enforce his admonitions, he will in future respect them to some extent.” The author dwelled considerably on the exaggerated atrocity stories about mutilated German women and children.

<sup>624</sup> *Times*, 9 May 1904, BAB, R2114.

<sup>625</sup> Gerhard Pool, *Samuel Maharero* (Gamsberg: Macmillan, 1991), 248.

<sup>626</sup> *South Africa News*, 31 May 1904, BAB, R2115.

zoographically we should classify them in different species... as much, for instance, as horse and donkey, which we admittedly treat very differently.” He concluded by highlighting the “beneficial results” of revolts like those of the Herero, Shona and Ndebele, because they suddenly made available to the settlers an ample supply of land and subservient, rootless African labor.

The comparison was an apt one. Just as in Southwest Africa, the African population in Southern Rhodesia rose in revolt against the settler population after years of abuse. The white population was so outraged that there were many vocal cries advocating genocide against the Ndebele and particularly against the “villainous Shona.” General Carrington deployed his 2,140 white and 603 African troops in April 1896 and immediately began a “scorched-earth” campaign to destroy the Ndebele and their productive base piecemeal.<sup>627</sup> As was so often the case in colonial warfare, the stateless Shona society proved even more difficult to conquer—and more vilified—than the relatively centralized Ndebele who managed to come to a negotiated settlement quickly.<sup>628</sup> When the

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<sup>627</sup> Carrington’s staff officers were, like their German colleagues, clear on this point. Without a single, stationary king as a target as in the initial conquest of the territory in 1893, the Ndebele as whole would have to be ground down. “In the 1896 rebellion there was no king or country to overthrow so the object then was the destruction of kraals and the capture of supplies and cattle, and then to hunt the rebels relentlessly into their strongholds and caves.” Ranger, 178.

<sup>628</sup> Significantly, these negotiations occurred at the behest of Cecil Rhodes and the British South Africa Company, who were being financially decimated by the conflict. Negotiations had been prohibited by both the civilian and military authorities of the Empire, who demanded nothing less than “total surrender” from the Ndebele. Imperial authorities had consistently demanded a “hard line” against the Ndebele and the Shona. As early as 1885, the Deputy Commissioner of British Bechuanaland, Sir Sidney Shippard, declared: “I must confess that it would offer me sincere and lasting satisfaction if I could see the Matabele Matjaha cut down by our own rifles and machine guns like a cornfield by a reaping machine and I would not spare a single one if I could have my way.” Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 130. Rhodes, like Colonel von Deimling in Southwest Africa, handed them a *fait accompli* and publicized the agreement, thereby forcing imperial authorities to accept it.

scattered, acephalous Shona rose in rebellion a few months after the Ndebele, the British responded with precisely the sort of “total war” (i.e., war of annihilation) described in chapter six and by Lieven in reference to the Zulu War. For several months in 1896 Colonel Alderson’s forces went from kraal to kraal burning the dwellings and crops, and “subsequently all the caves which could be located were blown up.”<sup>629</sup> On 13 October alone 150-200 huts were torched. The head of the Native Department, Brabant, took his “Black Watch” (African auxiliaries with white officers) throughout the countryside, blasting and shooting all resistance they encountered.<sup>630</sup> The systematic destruction of crops by Alderson and Brabant threatened entire regions with famine.<sup>631</sup> Thousands of women and children were taken hostage to force the rebels to surrender, and many women were “given” to loyal “friendlies” and African police as rewards for their service. British authorities forced those women not given out in patronage to do hard labor at camps set up throughout the country, often at missionary settlements.<sup>632</sup> By the end of 1896 the Shona were so hated that Father Biehler, Grey’s chaplain, echoed

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<sup>629</sup> Ranger, 283.

<sup>630</sup> E. A. H. Alderson, *With the Mounted Infantry and the Mashonaland Field Force 1896* (London: Methuen & Co., 1898), 208. The Shona were as experienced with and proficient at guerrilla warfare as the Nama of Southwest Africa and the Hehe of East Africa. They had resisted both the Portuguese for centuries and the Ndebeles’ attempts at occupation and exaction for decades before the invasion of the territory of the B.S.A.C. in 1893. The Shona possessed a well-established system of caves into which their communities would flee in the event of attack. The British, infuriated at the Shonas’ unwillingness to “fight fairly” began a systematic policy of collapsing these caves with dynamite, killing all inside.

<sup>631</sup> Alderson ordered his forces to drive out the Shona, torch their dwellings, and station a small garrison in each district to “give the natives no rest and prevent them from planting their crops.” Alderson, 165-6.

<sup>632</sup> Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1992), 39-40.

popular sentiment when “He state[d] that the only chance for the future of the race is to exterminate the whole people, both male and female over the age of fourteen.”<sup>633</sup>

The “War of the Heads,” generally known as the “Hut Tax War” of 1906 in British South Africa ended similarly with militia and army units systematically destroying the subsistence base of much of the area in revolt and killing thousands of Africans.<sup>634</sup> To these examples from British Africa could be added many others. It is for this reason that in 1920 the famous British critic of colonialism in Africa E. D. Morel attempted to caution his readers against uncritically accepting the “Black Legend” of German colonization:

Without minimising in the slightest degree the action of the Germans in South West Africa, we should do well to have at the back of our minds the sort of indictment which would have been drawn up by a successful enemy in occupation of Rhodesia and Bechuanaland [Botswana], desirous of demonstrating our iniquities to the world in order to make out a case for retaining those territories for himself. The treatment of the Matabele and the Mashonas by the Chartered Company would certainly not have appeared any less black if it had been supported by the affidavits of individual Matabele and Mashonas...<sup>635</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> Lindqvist, *Exterminate*, 62. In February 1897 Biehler reiterated this point: “The different method of fighting when dealing with these coward Mashona must be adopted. It seems to me that the only way of doing anything at all with these natives is to starve them, destroy their lands and kill all that can be killed.” Ranger, 295. Alderson and his successor, Colonel de Moleyns, acted in full agreement with Biehler. Many subsequent observers have been baffled by von Trotha, and the settlers’ desire to liquidate much of the very base upon which their livelihood depended. Even at the time Leutwein, Rohrbach, and other observers was astounded at the ferocity of the settler community and the troops brought in to quash the revolt. But the desire to “exterminate all the brutes” was the inevitable outcome of an inherently unstable situation. Settlers and soldiers, all rhetoric aside, lived in constant terror of the “sea of black” that surrounded them. As Dane Kennedy explains: “Taken to the logical extreme, relief from such terror terminated in either the complete segregation or the complete extermination of the indigenous inhabitants. Each scenario represented a pure expression of racial fear. Equally, each posed catastrophe for settlers by eliminating the cheap black labor upon which they depended. Thus, a continual tension existed between the extreme demands raised by racial fears and the practical needs felt by economic functions.” See Kennedy, 147.

<sup>634</sup> See Benedict Carton, *Blood from Your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

<sup>635</sup> See E. D. Morel, *The Black Man’s Burden* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1969), 57. Morel also cites examples in Bechuanaland (Botswana), Sudan, and elsewhere.

Morel knew his subject: he was one of the primary movers in the social movement that helped end King Leopold II's rule over the so-called "Congo Free State," and while at the beginning of his efforts he believed that the British model represented a more humane form of colonization than that of the Belgians (or Germans), by 1920 he had come to the conclusion that the territories flying the Union Jack bore witness to just as much brutality and inhumanity as those ruled by any other nation.

Nor should one assume in turn that the British and Germans were alone in resorting to "*Vernichtungskriege*" in Africa. The French army conquering the "hinterland" of the Ivory Coast from 1909 to 1911 in the wake of the Baule Revolt quickly came to the same conclusions as their European colleagues. The acephalous Baule proved impossible to defeat with "normal methods," so the French changed their tactics:

The French strategy was as simple as it was brutal. Frustrated with their failures in previous encounters with Baule guerrillas, the military adopted a full-scale search-and-destroy policy culminating in the destruction of the homes, possessions, and crops of the rebels. By pursuing the Baule through two successive rainy seasons and systematically destroying their newly planted crops, the French brought the rebels to the brink of starvation... The population of the region appears to have been diminished by hundreds of thousands as a result of the military engagements and the famine and epidemic that swept the region in their wake.<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>636</sup> See Timothy C. Weiskel, "Changing Perspectives on African Resistance Movements and the Case of the Baule Peoples," in *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. B. K. Schwartz Jr. and Raymond E. Dumett (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1980), 556. and Timothy C. Weiskel, *French Colonial Rule and the Baule Peoples: Resistance and Collaboration, 1889-1911* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), chapter VI.



Weiskel believes that over 250,000 Baule died and hundreds of thousands more fled to neighboring British territory to avoid Governor Angoulvant's expeditions (thereby reducing the population of the north half of the colony by over half). Many aspects of the French wars against the Baule echo themes and events discussed in the preceding chapters: a crusade against "slavery" in the interior of Africa, a dispute over trade and the right to mediate it, recalcitrant African elites who refused to bow to French authority, and—due to the acephalous nature of Baule political organization—a vicious guerrilla war that only ended after the French waged a war of destruction on the entire Baule population. The scorched earth policies utilized against the Baule were also not an isolated incident.



4 d Governor Gabriel Angoulvant, author of strong-arm tactics for complete suppression of Baule resistance after 1908.



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<sup>637</sup> Photo of Governor Angoulvant and of a pacification atrocity from the Baule War (the object impaled on the stake is a Baule head). Scanned from Weiskel, pictute section.

During the even larger Volta-Bani War, hundreds of thousands of Africans in what is now Burkina Faso took up arms in 1915 against the brutality and arbitrariness of French taxation and conscription policies during the First World War. Over a million people joined in the insurgency against French rule, and tens of thousands (at least 30,000 and probably more) of “rebels” and civilians perished over the course of French reprisal operations, which likewise featured widespread crop destruction, the shooting of noncombatants, and the prolific use of new weapons like the hand grenade.<sup>638</sup> Similar examples could be drawn from the French conquest of Madagascar, the western Sudan, and Vietnam.

Nor were the original European powers alone in their ability and willingness to wage near-genocidal violence against local populations. The American occupation of the Philippines (1899-1913) brought forth tremendous violence that may have led to the deaths of between 50,000 and 500,000 Filipinos (the number is widely disputed).<sup>639</sup> Some at the time even argued that total excess deaths may have numbered close to a million. In 1908, Manuel Arellano Remondo, in a book *entitled General Geography of the Philippine Islands*, wrote: "The population decreased due to the wars, in the five-year period from 1895 to 1900, since, at the start of the first insurrection, the population was estimated at

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<sup>638</sup> See Mahir Şaul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001), 24.

<sup>639</sup> Retort, *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (London: Verso, 2005), 85. For detailed accounts of the war and American counterinsurgency tactics, see Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989) and Frank Schumacher, “‘Niederbrennen, plündern und töten sollt ihr’: Der Kolonialkrieg der USA auf den Philippinen (1899-1913), in *Kolonialkriege: Militärische Gewalt im Zeichen des Imperialismus*, edc. Thoralf Klein and Frank Schumacher (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006), 109-44.

9,000,000, and at present (1908), the inhabitants of the Archipelago do not exceed 8,000,000 in number."<sup>640</sup> A similarly volatile mixture of local politics, guerrilla warfare, fear and frustration on the part of the occupying forces, and a lack of supervision led to myriad atrocities. H. G. Wells noted at the time: "There is no question that our men do 'shoot niggers' somewhat in the sporting spirit... Undoubtedly, they do not regard the shooting of Filipinos just as they would the shooting of white troops... The soldiers feel that they are fighting with savages, not with soldiers."<sup>641</sup> The U.S. counterinsurgency war featured many of the same acts of extreme violence that characterized the Germans' war against the Hehe, including concentration camps, the destruction of villages and crops, and frequent massacres such as that at Budja Daro in 1906, when over 1,500 women, children, and the elderly were shot and bayoneted in a volcanic crater as part of "nation building" (pictured below).<sup>642</sup> The American troops made frequent use of torture, including the infamous "water cure" (featured in the picture below), and General Jacob H. Smith reportedly ordered his men to turn one island into a "howling wilderness" and to shoot every Filipino above age ten. President Theodor Roosevelt was very clear as to the reasons that this sort of violence occurred: "The warfare that has extended the boundaries of civilization at the expense of barbarism and savagery has been for centuries one of the most potent factors in the progress of humanity. Yet from its very nature it has always and everywhere

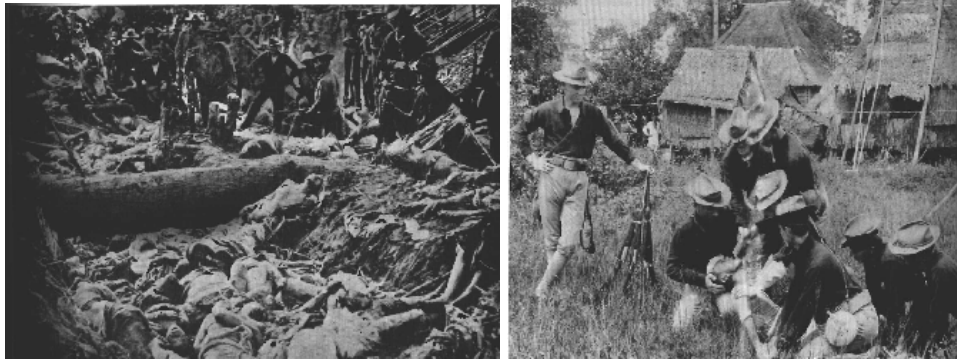
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<sup>640</sup> Quoted in Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 125.

<sup>641</sup> Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 87.

<sup>642</sup> Kramer, 218-9.

been liable to dark abuses.”<sup>643</sup> The Filipinos and Hehe would, of course, have taken little consolation from the notion that their deaths had all occurred in the name of the spread of “civilization.”



Why European militaries used such tactics to beat colonial opponents is not difficult to explain, and those tactics seemingly depended little if at all on the nationality of the colonizers in question in these and other cases. Commanders like Alderson, Carrington, von Liebert, and Lugard felt that they had to beat their opponents decisively and completely with limited resources. The only perceived way to overcome the overwhelming numerical superiority of their African adversaries was to rapidly destroy the region’s “productive base” (which included homes, crops, and often non-combatants) through a scorched earth policy. The deployment of the Europeans’ massive firepower was the other way to compensate for their numerical inferiority, and machine-guns, magazine rifles, and artillery inevitably and quite deliberately caused crippling losses to any indigenous armies the Europeans faced.<sup>645</sup> “Native warfare” often became a

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<sup>643</sup> Kramer, 87.

<sup>644</sup> Kramer, 143 and 219.

<sup>645</sup> Kennedy, 130. Baden Powell describes one occasion where a single British soldier with a Lee-Metford magazine rifle managed to hold off eight Ndebele attackers simultaneously, shooting down several and forcing the survivors to flee in terror. Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell, *The Matabele Campaign 1896* (London: Methuen & Co., 1897), 58.

“partridge hunt” bordering on absolute slaughter, as von Prince, von Liebert, Baden-Powell (who fought against the Ndebele in 1896), Angoulvant, and others described it.<sup>646</sup> Africans were, of course, well aware of this fact after several bloody encounters with superior European arms. It was for this reason that they adopted “insidious methods” of guerrilla warfare. Indeed, Mkwawa learned precisely this lesson from the disastrous siege of his capital at Kalenga and repeated engagements with the *AvaDaliki*.

European technological superiority, therefore, did not mean that the Europeans were invulnerable; indeed, as the fate of the Zelewski column shows, entire contingents of Europeans and their African troops could be wiped out. The determined ferocity of African opponents and the dehumanizing weaponry the Germans, British, French, and others used to crush them were extremely brutalizing to the European combatants and the Africans and Asians that served with them. The need to maintain cohesion and discipline in a harsh, alien environment surrounded by “hostile hordes” of enemies who would most likely not take prisoners, whether they were white or black (in the case of the *Askari* and other similar indigenous forces), had an electrifying effect on colonial soldiers. In all likelihood they could be induced to carry out instructions to kill women and children through a combination of factors. Peer pressure and group bonds that enforced conformity in a dangerous situation, the sanctioned authority of their superiors, and the perceived need to maintain the “dignity of the master race” in a barbaric no man’s land combined to create a potent mix that greatly enhanced the likelihood of troops acting with extraordinary ruthlessness. The widespread racist contempt most Europeans seem to have held for Africans by the turn of the

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<sup>646</sup> Baden-Powell, 63-4. See footnote 221 on the “Jew hunts” and partisan operations during the *Ostkrieg*.

century both legitimized such behavior by officers and men and encouraged “excesses.” European forces imagined themselves the guardians of a master race facing a large, hostile population. Commanders like von Prince or Carrington and their men correctly perceived that they could act with practical impunity when it came to defeating “kaffirs.”<sup>647</sup> Indeed they were often encouraged to think this way by the military and civilian officials above them; the legitimization of the soldiers’ behavior by Governors like von Schele and by von Liebert—and Kaiser Wilhelm II, who awarded Schele the *Orden pour le Mérite* —meant that soldiers and officers could act to some degree in good conscience because of the powerful sanction given them by the state.<sup>648</sup> These aspects of the colonial experience when taken together made it all too likely that European conquerors would take what Sven Lindqvist refers to as the “colonial shortcut,” meaning the targeting of entire recalcitrant populations in the event that they resisted the imposition of state authority. As he notes, however, “the ‘colonial shortcut’ was forbidden in Europe. Here it was a crime against humanity to save the lives of soldiers by bombing women, children, and old people. Human rights seemed to forbid what military necessity seemed to demand—a contradiction that has colored the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>647</sup> While work has been done on this theme in the context of German warfare on the Eastern Front in the Second World War, I have yet to see any such treatments of the conduct of warfare in the “colonial situation.” Most accounts are either standard narratives of these conflicts or valorize the bravery and sacrifice of the European combatants. See Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992) and Omer Bartov, *Hitler’s Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>648</sup> See Herbert C. Kelman and V. Lee Hamilton, *Crimes of Obedience: Toward a Social Psychology of Authority and Responsibility* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1989) and Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

<sup>649</sup> Lindqvist, *Bombing* 5.

### ***Fin de siècle Colonial Warfare and World History***

The Germans were, therefore, very much embedded in the discourses, practices, and events of their era. The catastrophic population decline that struck German East Africa, described by Kjekshus, Koponen, Iliffe, and others was hardly unique. Enzo Traverso in his *The Origins of Nazi Violence* offers a short but striking list of some of the “achievements” of “civilization” in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sri Lanka’s population fell from 4-10 million to 1 million; Algeria’s population declined from 3 to 2.3 million; the Ivory Coast’s population fell from 1.5 million to 160,000, British Sudan witnessed a decline from 8 or 9 million to between 2 and 3 million; the Belgian Congo’s population declined from 20 to 10 million; and many pacific islands, such as Tahiti and New Caledonia, suffered a ninety percent decline in population. “According to the most trustworthy calculations, the victims of the European conquests in Asia and Africa in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century numbered 50 million to 60 million, roughly half being due to the famine in India.”<sup>650</sup> Indeed, the mega-famines of India, which are explored in great detail in Mike Davis’s *Late Victorian Holocausts*, were very much a part of the imposition of colonialism and may have carried away as many as 30 million people.<sup>651</sup> These are truly staggering figures which, while they in no way diminish the brutality and

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<sup>650</sup> Enzo Traverso, *The Origins of Nazi Violence*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (New York: The New Press, 2003), 65.

<sup>651</sup> See Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001), especially chapter 2

costs associated with German rule in East Africa and elsewhere, serve to put German atrocities in perspective. As Reviel Netz says, “this is an indictment not of Britain [or in the present case, Germany] but of 1900.”

This atmosphere of conquest, chauvinism, and a profound belief in the inevitability and desirability of the spread of Western civilization paved the way for even more catastrophic events in the twentieth century. As several authors have pointed out, lessons learned in the course of Europe’s so-called “small wars” of the nineteenth-century had dire consequences for the planning of the First World War and its disastrous course in the war’s first few months.<sup>652</sup> Military planners learned, in fact, all the *wrong* lessons from campaigns such as that waged against the Hehe. Believing their own claims that victory in such conflicts had been achieved through moral superiority and the exemplary honor of European armies almost totally obscured any realization of the potentially horrific effects that modern weaponry and tactics would have on warfare when both sides deployed Europe’s newest death tools against one another. Such dangerous misunderstandings about the new nature of warfare were further exacerbated by a blind devotion to obsolete conceptions of masculine honor of the sort trumpeted by von Prince and other *Schutztruppe* officers.<sup>653</sup> From 1914 to 1918, the colonial powers would subject one another to a vast bloodletting all too familiar

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<sup>652</sup> See John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1975), Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1981), and Bruce Vandervort, *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa 1830-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 211.

<sup>653</sup> Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 226-7. Such antiquated notions rendered European generals and doctors completely incapable of understanding or handling “shell shock.”



to their respective “colonized peoples,” as the weapons and tactics developed to conquer and pacify those peoples were turned upon Europeans. “The death-rattle of the dying and the shrieks of the mad [that] echo[ed] in the sublime stillness of infinity” were now heard across the European continent itself.<sup>654</sup> The First World War, the “original catastrophe of the twentieth century,” led in turn to the Second and an even grander project of racial conquest and imperial aggrandizement: the Third Reich’s war for *Lebensraum* in the East:

Deportations, dehumanizations, and racial extermination as undertaken by Hitler’s Germany are in line with earlier ideas that were firmly anchored in the history of Western imperialism. The fact that National Socialism was the first to envisage a policy of extermination within Europe itself, targeting nations of the Old World, and in particular a people active at the origins of Western civilizations, does not negate the connection. The “logical and factual precedent” for Nazi crimes is to be found in colonial wars, not in Bolshevik Russia.<sup>655</sup>

The idea that the Holocaust and the War in the East had its origins, at least in part, in previous developments in the colonies is not new—this was one of the major thrusts of Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. What is often forgotten, however, is that her imperial examples were not primarily German, but rather British or French—South Africa, Egypt, India, and Algeria. And the most direct examples of colonialism polluting European domestic politics is not Germany but rather Spain: the army that laid waste to much of Civil War era Spain, that had bombed Guernica, was the very same army that had just finished

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<sup>654</sup> *Der Feldzug gegen die Herero*, vol. 1, *Die Kämpfe der deutschen Truppen in Südwestafrika I* (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1906), 213-4.

<sup>655</sup> Traverso, 73.



waging a ruthless war of destruction against the Berber rebels of Morocco's Rif Rebellion (1921-1926).<sup>656</sup> The Rif Rebellion and other colonial wars in Morocco had been Franco's formative experiences:

In 1920 he participated in the founding of the Spanish Foreign Legion, composed of riffraff that liked to parade with their enemies' heads mounted on the points of their bayonets. The discipline was such that a soldier could be shot for the slightest offense, but was allowed to commit whatever outrages he liked in the conquered Moorish villages. It was these legionnaires that the German air force moved over to Spain at the beginning of the Civil War in 1936. They brought with them all the brutality of the colonial war. To rule Morocco was to terrorize its people. To rule was an expression of inborn superiority. The people were children who needed a father's firm hand. Franco brought these colonial attitudes back home. The occupation of Morocco stood as the model for his forty-year occupation of Spain.<sup>657</sup>

The second European power to blur the distinction between the colonial world and the metropole was Italy, whose 1935 war against Ethiopia was both the last of the European conquests of the so-called Dark Continent and the first major war of what would become the fascist attempt to reorder the world. The Abyssinian War "bridged the gap between nineteenth-century imperialism and the

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<sup>656</sup> Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>657</sup> Lindqvist, *Bombing*, 51.

Nazi war for German Lebensraum.”<sup>658</sup> Mussolini’s forces in Africa under the command of Rudolfo “the butcher” Graziani (a name he had acquired during his time as the infamous governor of Italian Libya) utilized tanks, machine guns, and even poison gas bombs in their attempt to crush all Ethiopian resistance.<sup>659</sup>

When Hitler, the greatest totalitarian of all, spoke on the connections between his war against “Slavic barbarism” and prior imperial projects, his examples were indeed global rather than specifically German. Many were references to British India, which the Germans (and indeed the British themselves) regarded as one of the primary sources of Great Britain’s global power: “What India was for England, the eastern territories will be for us.” “If the English were to be ejected, India would waste away. Our role in the East will be analogous to that of the English in India.” “It must be possible to dominate that eastern region with 250,000 men led by good administrators. Let us follow the example of the English, who, with 250,000 men in all, of whom 50,000 are soldiers, rule over 400 million Indians. The eastern space must be ruled in perpetuity by the Germans.”<sup>660</sup> He also made frequent references to the “race war” between Native Americans and European settlers: “The natives will have to be shot... Our sole duty is to Germanize the country by the immigration of Germans, regarding the natives as redskins.” The war in the East was to be like

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<sup>658</sup> Travesto, 67.

<sup>659</sup> See Piers Brendon, *Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, 2001), chapter 13, “Mussolini’s Abyssinian Adventure.”

<sup>660</sup> Quoted in Travesto, 71.

“the war waged on the Indians in North America.”<sup>661</sup> “We also eat Canadian wheat and don’t think about the Indians.”<sup>662</sup> “This will become a real Indian war.”<sup>663</sup> The resemblances and convergences of colonial warfare with war on the Eastern Front go far beyond the random statements the *Führer*. To name but one specific example of the explicitly colonial character of warfare in the East, S.S. Major General Jürgen Stroop, the officer charged with liquidating the Warsaw Ghetto after the population there rose in revolt, refers to the Germans’ Baltic auxiliaries as “*Askaris*.”<sup>664</sup> This term, used in Warsaw to refer to the Germans’ Ukrainian and Latvian troops, was the same Kiswahili word used for African soldiers that served with the British and German armies in East Africa. It seems that in both conceptual and very concrete ways the methods and weapons used to conquer Africa had indeed come home to Europe itself, and they now transformed the colonial metropolitan heartland into what can only be called the true “Dark Continent.”<sup>665</sup> And these colonial legacies were not the exclusive property of the Germans. As Conrad himself noted when describing the archetype of colonial atrocity, the fictional Colonel Kurtz of the Belgian *Force Publique*: “His mother

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<sup>661</sup> Travestio, 71.

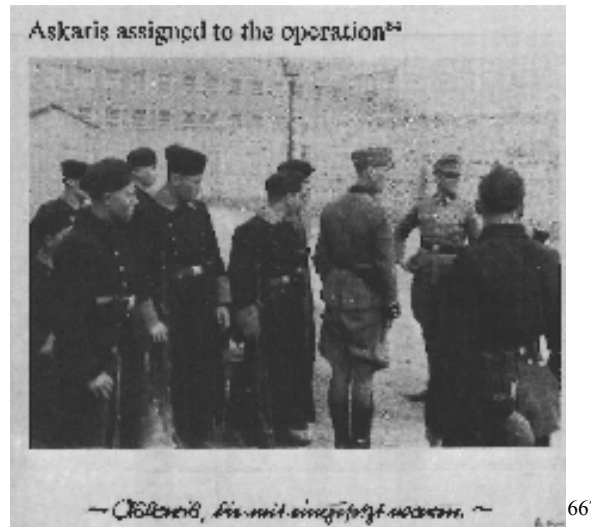
<sup>662</sup> Quoted in David Blackbourn, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006).

<sup>663</sup> Travestio, 71.

<sup>664</sup> Jürgen Stroop. *The Stroop Report: The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw is No More*, trans. Sybil Milton (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), photograph accompanying note 34.

<sup>665</sup> Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe’s 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York: Knopf, 1999).

was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz...”<sup>666</sup>



Even if most Germans have scant memory of their country's time in East Africa, much less its war against Mkwawa, the epic confrontation between the Germans and the Hehe still resounds today in the minds of many Hehe, and indeed throughout Tanzania. Their war was not only a part of Tanzanian or German history; it was a part of world history. The brutality, the atrocities, the destruction: the German-Hehe War was both a reflection of the many imperial episodes that came before it and a dark sign of things to come in the following century, a century in which more human beings would be slaughtered than in all previous centuries *combined*.<sup>668</sup> If the twenty first century is to be any less violent, it is imperative that we reexamine events such as those of German East

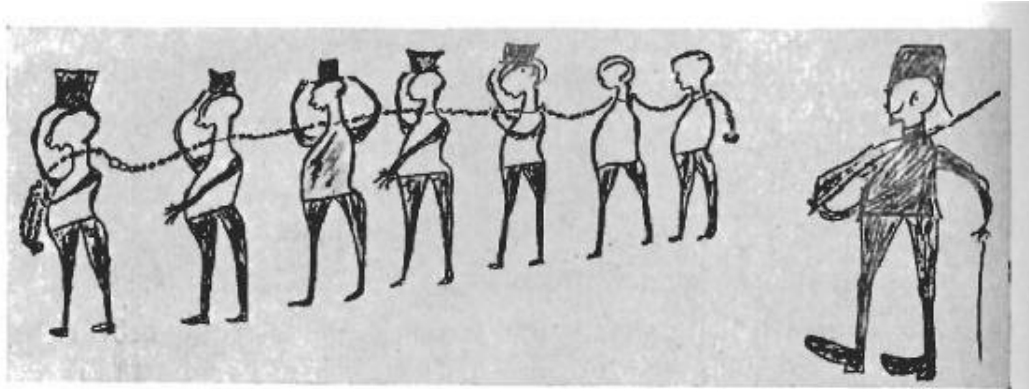
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<sup>666</sup> Conrad, 135.

<sup>667</sup> Jürgen Stroop. *The Stroop Report: The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw is No More*, trans. Sybil Milton (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), photograph accompanying note 34.

<sup>668</sup> Gabriel Kolko, *Century of War: Politics, Conflicts, and Society since 1914* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), introduction.

Africa of the 1890s in a manner that moves beyond cultural stereotypes—be they of Africans or of certain groups of Europeans—and seeks to reintegrate these events, however disturbing, into the mainstream of global history.



Kettengefangene, nach einer Zeichnung des Mnyahajünglings Salim Matola (i. S. 451).

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<sup>669</sup> African depiction of a chained column of Maji Maji prisoners. Dr. Karl Weule, *Negerleben in Ostafrika: Ergebnisse einer ethnologischen Forschungsreise* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1909), 42.

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- R1001/1034 Militär-Stationen in Deutsch-Ostafrika, Stationen Mpapua, Kilimatinde, Kilossa
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G 16/6, Nachlasses des am 6.10.1892 gefallenen Leutnants Heinrich Brüning, 1892-1893

G50/1 Treaty Between Isike and Lieutenant von Prince

IV B 26 Anti-Sklaveri-Komite

VI B 26 Governor von Soden and the Foreign Ministry

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