"They walk through the fire like the blondest German":

African Soldiers Serving the Kaiser in German East Africa (1888-1914)

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Abstract

The maintenance of German colonial rule in East Africa depended on a strong military presence. The *Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ostafrika* was established to meet this need, but financial and political constraints dictated that this force be manned by an African rank and file. Initially, most of the African recruits came from outside of the colony, but, as time passed, the Germans began recruiting from a few specific ethnic groups in the colony.

The relationship between the African soldiers and their German employers yielded military successes for the new colonial government and, by extension, an enhanced status for the soldiers themselves. Over time, the Africans within the *Schutztruppe* distanced themselves from other Africans in the colony and began to develop separate communities at the government stations, which in turn fostered the growth of an *askari* group identity. The interests of these communities became inextricably linked to the German presence in the region. The development of this relationship helps to explain the *askaris'* support of the German campaign against the British during the First World War.

Résumé

Une forte présence militaire était indispensable au maintien de l'administration coloniale allemande en Afrique orientale. La *Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ostafrika* fut créée dans ce but. Pour des raisons à la fois financières et politiques, il fallait que la troupe soit constituée d'Africains. Au début, la plupart des recrues africaines venaient d'en dehors de la colonie, mais petit à petit les Allemands commencèrent à recruter dans les rangs de quelques groupes ethniques de la colonie.

La relation entre les soldats africains et leurs employeurs allemands valut des succès militaires au nouveau gouvernement colonial et, par répercussion, une situation privilégiée aux soldats eux-mêmes. À la longue, les Africains de la *Schutztruppe* prirent leurs distances par rapport aux autres Africains de la colonie et établirent des collectivités distinctes dans les postes gouvernementaux, ce qui favorisa le développement de l'identité d'un groupe *askari*. Les intérêts de ces collectivités devinrent inextricablement liés à la présence allemande dans la région. Cela aide à comprendre le fait que les *askaris* aient appuyé la campagne allemande contre les Britanniques pendant la Première Guerre mondiale.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis had its genesis in an undergraduate seminar held at McGill by Myron Echenberg in the academic year 1987/8. Professor Echenberg's choice of subject that year was 'Africa and the Two World Wars', a subject area which allowed me to focus on the German war effort in East Africa from 1914 to 1918. My research soon revealed that the German campaign was only a small, albeit conspicuous, part of a much more interesting story: the history of the African soldiers whom the Germans used to fight their war. These men and their families were forgotten in the many paeans spoken over the corpse of the *Schutztruppe* and its vaunted commander Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck It is my hope that this humble volume will provide a fresh perspective on these men and women and the community they created.

I should like to thank a number of significant people at McGill University for their hitherto unacknowledged help. Foremost in this group is Professor Myron Echenberg, to whom I express profound gratitude for his trenchant commentary, insight and his gift as a teacher. I feel privileged to have worked under his guidance and I hope that this study will do his excellent advice justice. In the same breath I would like to thank Ruby Napier for acting as my advocate on several occasions and for supporting my cause before the departmental chair generally. In addition to these people, I wish to acknowledge the inexhaustible patience and expert diplomacy of the Inter-Library Loan team at McLennan Library, who protected me from the wrath of of university librarians throughout North America, on those occasions when my books were long overdue The expertise and advice of the consultants at the McGill MacIntosh Lab helped me immeasurably to organize this thesis into a document that pleases the eye. Thank you gentlemen

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modest intellect into something that will be put to a productive end some day. I would especially like to express my deepest affection and admiration to Sheila McIntyre for her profound historical knowledge and for embodying so many of the qualities that make me glad to be human. I look forward to the rest of my life with you.

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I, of course, take full responsibility for any errors in this thesis and ensure that the conclusions are my own.

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Introduction

When the words *Schutztruppe* or *Deutsch Ost Afrika* are mentioned to a certain generation of Germans they immediately summon up the name General Paul von Lettow Vorbeck. Lettow-Vorbeck's prolonged campaign against the British in East Africa was the source of considerable pride among Germans in the wake of the First World War and his image as a confident leader against a numerically superior opponent was effectively manipulated by Nazi propagandists attempting to revive German nationalism.[1] Some military historians use him as an example of a European military man successfully adapting to African conditions, while other accounts of the First World War in East Africa credit his leadership and his brilliance as a strategist as the central factors shaping the campaign

Lettow-Vorbeck is not the topic of this thesis, but his exploits from 1914 to 1918 form an essential component of its *Fragestellung*.[2] For, although the period under examination ends with the outbreak of the First World War, the image of the German *askaris* which emerged from the conflict provides the impetus for this discussion During the years 1914-1918 the *Schutztruppe* won a series of military victories against the British, with a force composed primarily of Africans. Generally, the tenacity of the resistance conducted by these men on behalf of the German administration has been attributed to the inspirational leadership of their commander. Upon serious examination, however, this 'Lettow as Robin Hood' thesis fails to account for the *askaris'* level of commitment

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[1] Indeed a number of Lettow-Vorbeck's latter-day descendants have complained that their membership in polite society depends on a detailed knowledge of their namesake's personal history and a general knowledge of the geography of Tanzania.

[2] I apologize for a somewhat pedantic reliance on German in this section, but the word *Fragestellung*, which is translated literally as "the asking of questions", sums up this paper's line of inquiry quite neatly I will also use the word *Problematik* to introduce the central problem or question that my study seeks to answer.

adequately.[1] The proponents of this argument would have us believe that, upon his arrival in the colony, Lettow-Vorbeck magically transformed the *Schutztruppe* into an efficient fighting force by inspiring discipline and unconditional loyalty to The Great White Man in the *askaris*. The premise underlying this scenario argues that the events in East Africa during the First World War were the result of a European military genius whipping a group of lazy and fickle Africans into shape.

The most persuasive evidence calling this racist depiction of the *askaris* into question can be found in the history of the *Schutztruppe* before 1914. The Germans extended their control over the region primarily through military force. In the early phase of the German presence in East Africa, the *Schutztruppe* implemented and enforced the initiatives of the administration, by assuming the roles of local administrator and keeper of the *pax Germanica* The Force was central to the extension of German hegemony over the territory, as it carried out a policy of first isolating and then crushing recalcitrant indigenous leaders. The aggressive posture of the early colonial authorities and the prominent role played by *Schutztruppen* officers in the administration, contributed significantly to the incoherence of German policy in East Africa from 1889 to 1907. Even after 1907, when the colony moved away from military rule at the local level and the power of civilian authorities increased, the Force's importance in the administrative hierarchy did not diminish.

Given the importance granted the military in the administration the German decision to rely on Africans to fill out the the ranks of the *Schutztruppe* amounted to an enormous risk. Simply put, the welfare of the German venture in East Africa lay in the hands of the people the Germans had conquered. A good many of the African soldiers were recruited from outside the colony-- especially during the first expedition in 1889-90 -- but an

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[1]The analogy of Lettow's image to Robin Hood might seem somewhat specious, but that is exactly my point. The case for this is evident in Byron Farwell's depiction of 'Our Hero' in *The Great War in Africa*, (Norton: London, 1986) and the more distorted portrait of the omniscient White Man leading his grinning underlings presented by Josef Viera, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck im Busch*, (Stuttgart: Loewes Verlag, 1937).

overwhelming majority of the *Schutztruppe*'s rank and file were indigenous to the territory. Their critical participation in the conquest of the colony points to a high level of commitment to the administration prior to 1914 and renders absurd the claim of a dramatic transformation of the *askaris*' loyalties during Lettow-Vorbeck's tenure. The integration of the African soldiers into the colonial framework, and not the leadership of individual officers, provides the key to solving the riddle of their sustained and committed allegiance the German administration.

The means by which an externally imposed regime secures the labour of indigenous people and, more importantly, how it secures the confidence of these people provides the central *Problematik* of this thesis. Social and economic factors certainly play a part in the successful recruitment of indigenous soldiers, but these men are faced invariably with a choice between their ethnic and traditional loyalties and the new demands of their employers. For the successful creation of an indigenous colonial army, the colonial regime must resolve the conflict in the hearts and minds of its soldiers. It does not necessarily follow, however, that this battle be resolved only through the capitulation of one side and the triumph of the other. Indeed, the most desirable path embraces the needs of the soldiers without sacrificing the goals of the army and administration. However unrealistic the attainment of these goals may seem, the East African *Schutztruppe* proved that they were attainable and provided a formula for success.

The history of the *Schutztruppe* prior to 1914 has been charted in a single work. This is Ernst Nigmann's official history of the Force, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ostafrika*, written in 1911. Nigmann provides a wealth of information about the activities of the *Schutztruppe* from its origin in 1889 to 1911, but it suffers under the yoke of its task as an officially sanctioned history. While the book celebrates the triumphs and virtues of the military in East Africa using the jingoist language characteristic of *fin de siécle* Europe, it also provides contemporary readers with vital insight into the mindset of the European officers who led this army. Hermann von

Wissmann's *Afrika. Schilderungen und Rathschläge zur Vorbereitung für den Aufenthalt und den Dienst in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, was written after the author's return to Germany and provides a sample of the views held by the *Schutztruppe*'s revered founder. Heinrich Fonck's account of his service in East Africa, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika: Eine Schilderung Deutscher Tropen Nach 10 Wanderjahren,* is the necessary counter-balance to Wissmann's volume because it allows the reader to compare military policy during the first phase of the German presence in East Africa with that of the later period. The remaining primary sources used for this thesis are the memoirs of Germans who spent periods of varying length in the colony and came into contact with the *Schutztruppe.*

This thesis is meant to correct the hitherto myopic treatment of the Africans who served in the *Schutztruppe.* The history of the *askaris* in East Africa transcends the events of the First World War because the relationship which paved the way for Lettow-Vorbeck's licence in 1914 was grounded in the developments of 1889 to 1914. This period witnessed the German's successful use of material incentives, status and community membership to align the *askaris*' personal goals with those of the administration. The manipulation of the self-interest of men and women from a limited number of ethnic groups is revealing of the economic and social changes occurring in these groups during the period in question. In a wider sense, the experience of the *askaris* confirms the importance of group membership for otherwise kinless peoples and provides a new perspective of the economic impact of the German conquest on the groups most prominent in the *Schutztruppe.*

Finally, the story of the men and women who lived in the community of the station illustrates the ability of humans to successfully resist the dehumanizing elements of military life. They created a community out of the hodge-podge of cultural influences and, in a number of cases, forced the Germans to accommodate African practices into European military orthodoxy. The *askaris* were neither a community of unthinking automatons, passively accepting the orders of their European masters, nor were they hapless wretches

duped into serving malign ends by the agents of imperialism. These were men motivated by self-interest, hoping to survive and possibly rise during a period of enormous upheaval. Given the limited options available to them as a result of their low social status, lack of material wealth and the absence of kin, the *askaris* grasped the brass ring of opportunity offered by the *Schutztruppe* and clung to it.

Chapter I

Resistance to Conquest and the Birth of the Schutztruppe

The leitmotif of German expansion in Africa was power. In the period following the Franco-Prussian War the German leadership sought to enhance its nation's position of power and to establish itself as a Great Power beyond dispute. Although African colonies were not a priority for the *Reich* , once German commercial interests became involved in Africa the German government found entanglement difficult to avoid. The justifications given for overseas expansion were various, but all centred around issues of power. Imperial visionaries promised increased economic power for Germany, while others saw the expansion of German territory as a clear manifestation of the *Reich* 's new military and political power; those interested in protecting their own social and economic power saw African colonies as a safety valve to relieve Europe of excess population.[1] Although explicit racism rarely found voice in the various rationales given to justify German imperialism, the basic assumption that Europeans had a right to wield power over subject races permeated the argument of every supporter of the German colonial venture. This thesis will examine the coercive arm of the German East Africa's colonial administration, the *Schutztruppe*, and its role in asserting and maintaining alien control in the region from 1889 to 1914. This examination will focus on the African soldiers who made up the ranks

[1]Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*, (Cologne: 1969).; P.M. Kennedy, "German Colonial Expansion," in *Past & Present* 54 (February, 1972): 134-41.; H. Pogge von Strandmann, "Domestic Origins of Germany's Colonial Expansion under Bismarck," *Past & Present* 42 (February, 1969): 140-59.; Henry A. Turner, "Bismarck's Imperialist Venture: Anti-British in Origin?" in Prosser Gifford and Wm. Roger Louis, eds., *Britain and Germany in Africa* (New Haven: Yale, 1967), 47-82. A discussion of the wider social movements at work in Germany during the period of colonial expansion is well beyond the scope of this thesis. The aforementioned works provide different viewpoints detailing various social and political causes for German imperialism.

of the *Schutztruppe* and discuss the means by which they were successfully integrated into this crucial element of the German colonial framework .

On 4 November 1884 Carl Peters, a charter member of the *Gesellschaft für Deutsche Kolonisation* (Society for German Colonization), landed in Zanzibar with two associates. From Zanzibar they proceeded to the East African coast to launch a series of treaty-making expeditions into the interior, so that, by December, Peters claimed to have secured colonization rights in twelve territories for his organization. Led by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the German government distanced itself from the antics of Peters and his colleagues. Upon Peters's arrival in Zanzibar, Bismarck had sent him a telegram warning that he and his cohorts should not expect the support of the German military if their adventure derailed. The absence of official sanction did not diminish Peters's profile in influential circles. On 27 February 1885, Kaiser Wilhelm I overruled the German Chancellor and granted Peters's new organization, the *Deutsch Ost-Afrika Gesellschaft* (German East Africa Company), a letter of protection.[2]

The Kaiser's action amounted to granting Peters a blank cheque in East Africa. The letter promised the military support of the *Reich* should the *DOAG* encounter hostility among local authorities. During the period 1885 to 1888 Peters used these considerable discretionary powers to launch a host expeditions into the interior to conclude treaties with headmen unaware of the significance of their actions. During this period the *DOAG* also came to an agreement with the Sayyid of Zanzibar, the suzerain of the East African coast, which granted the company permission to conduct trade along the coast. The malign intentions of the company toward the Sayyid's authority quickly became clear as the Germans followed up the agreement with a series of provocative gestures. Upon entering towns opened to them by the Sayyid, company officials immediately seized property and confiscated houses from local inhabitants in order to build *DOAG* trading posts. The

[2]G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, "The German Sphere, 1884-98," in *History of East Africa*, vol.1 Harlow Vincent and E.M. Chilver, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 435-6. This letter of protection was known as a *Schutzbrief* and promised the aid of the Kaiser's Navy if the organization came into difficulty.

existence of these stations deepened resentment among the people of the coast, who already felt abandoned by their ruler for permitting alien incursion. The provocation was not limited to the local level. In December 1887, Peters demanded custom rights over Dar-es-Salaam and Bagamoyo, the two main ports on the coast. The Sayyid conceded this point, only to be confronted six months later by a further German request that their jurisdiction be extended over the whole coast. Dar-es-Salaam was occupied by a detachment of German marines until April 1888, when a new Sultan acquiesced to the German conditions.[3]

The extension of *DOAG* control over the coast only served to exacerbate existing tensions. Traders in the interior feared that the new circumstances meant increased competition from German merchants and interference with the ivory and slave trades; the war-lords along the interior caravan routes were concerned by the potential for interference with the tolls they collected from caravans passing through their territory. The German occupation of seven coastal towns in August 1888 complicated this situation further. When officials in the town of Pangani refused to remove the Sayyid's flag, the German official von Zelewski had the flag pole felled and raised the banner of the *Deutsch Ost-Afrika Gesellschaft*. This action removed any residual doubt about German intentions in Pangani. The town rose in revolt. The German trading post was attacked and Zelewski only restored order with the help of 110 marines and a German warship. Animosity toward the Germans ran high and Zelewski was forced to abandon the town in September, under the escort of the Sayyid's troops.[4]

By September 1888 resistance to the German incursion coalesced around Abushiri bin Salim. The German assertion that the coastal rising was an attempt by Arab slave traders to protect their livelihood in the face of opposition by the *DOAG* and various anti-slavery organizations, proved a naïve under-estimation of the situation. Although

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[3]John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 90-2.; Eugen Krenzler, *Ein Jahr in Ostafrika* , (Ulm: Ebner Verlag, 1888), 89.

[4]G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, "The German Sphere, 1884-98," 439.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 92.; Wilfried Westphal, *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Kolonien*, (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1984), 145. Westphal provides the *DOAG* amendment to the original agreement.

Abushiri's initial following was composed of Arab landowners and slaveholders, the resistance enjoyed a base of support beyond merely coastal slave traders. Abushiri's followers included armed slaves, caravan traders, a band of escaped slaves from Kikogwe, and a disparate collection of warriors from the interior who flooded to the coast when news of resistance spread. North of Abushiri's sphere of influence, in Sadani, resistance was led by Bana Heri a non-Arab former official in the town. The resistance was united by a common threat, but racial tensions and historical mistrust between coastal and interior peoples ensured that any alliance remained fragile.[5]

In mid-September, *DOAG* administrators in Kilwa were met by a group representing the rebels , who demanded that the Germans to leave the town. Both officials refused and were killed, after they barricaded themselves into their station. The *DOAG* ordered all of their representatives to withdraw from their posts and return to Dar-es-Salaam and Bagamoyo. On 22 September 1888, an attack on Bagamoyo was turned back by a detachment of German marines and was followed up with a slaughter of the retreating attackers. The Germans remained under siege in Bagamoyo and Dar-es-Salaam through the autumn as they waited for support from Berlin.[6]

The German leadership faced a dilemma. The letter of protection promised help from the Navy in the event of hostilities, but the marines, although useful for defensive purposes, were too few to pacify a region as large as the East African coast. The action clearly called for the mobilization of the Army, a move which required the assent of the *Reichstag*. There was little support in the *Reichstag* for a large-scale military operation in such an obscure corner of the world. Bismarck held the key to the situation. However reluctant he was to assist the *DOAG*, by late 1888 the Chancellor saw that the situation

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[5]Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ost Afrika* , (Berlin Ernst Mittler, 1911), 2- 7.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 90-3. Nigmann provides the best example of the German view of the *Araberaufstand* or 'Arab uprising' as the work of Arab slave traders exclusively. Iliffe's appraisal of coastal resistance is even-handed, if somewhat influenced by nationalist bias, and provides a fine account of the organization of the movement.

[6]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 93.

necessitated intervention if the Germans hoped to save face. He found the ideal solution to his dilemma of gaining *Reichstag* approval for military action by seizing on the issue of the East African slave trade. Bismarck proposed that the German government send a force to East Africa to quell the rebellion of 'Arab slave traders' and thereby put an end to the slave-trade in the region.[7]

The German Chancellor enlisted the services of Hermann Wissmann, an explorer of some repute, to sell the proposition to the *Reichstag* and to lead the expedition. Wissmann was a product of the swaggering nationalism of post-1871 Germany. He crossed Africa from Luanda to Dar-es-Salaam twice, and his compatriots considered him the foremost expert on Africa. After Wissmann addressed the German parliament, where he conjured up lamentable images of the hardship and inhumanity faced by slaves, the *Reichstag* was persuaded to put up £100 000 to finance a punitive expedition to East Africa.[8] The size of the German commitment was calculated to serve a dual purpose. The *Reichstag* deputies, especially those of the Catholic *Zentrum* party, assuaged their consciences by railing against the evils of the slave trade, but the meagre sum ensured that German troops were not used to carry out the action.

The *Reichstag*'s reluctance to allow an exclusively European force to be used in Africa illustrates the German tendency to draw upon the lessons of British colonialism. During the 1850s, Britain reduced the number of Europeans garrisoned on the West African coast and replaced them with indigenous soldiers after the enormous expense of medical staff needed to treat European soldiers suffering from climate-related diseases became apparent.[9] The *Reichstag* wished to emulate this policy in East Africa. For his part, Wissmann concurred with the view that European soldiers were ill-suited for service

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[7]Alexander Becker, ed. *Hermann von Wissmann. Deutschlands Größter Afrikaner. Sein Leben und Wirkern Unter Benutzung des Nachlasses*, (Berlin: Alfred Schall, 1907), 177-8.
[8]Becker, *Hermann von Wissmann*, 179.
[9]David Killingray, "Race and Rank in the British Army in the twentieth century," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* , 10 (July, 1987): 277.

in Africa because of their physical short-comings. Shortly after the first campaign, he aired his views in an information book written for Germans entering the colonial service:

> ...in terms of morality the white soldier is superior to the black, but the black is physically harder and less demanding regarding food and accommodation and he is well-trained as a warrior in his tribe. Resistance to the harsh climate is of paramount importance, making the black soldier superior to the white.[10]

Wissmann set up the expeditionary force along these lines. In February and March 1889, he assembled a cadre of 25 officers and 56 Non-Commissioned Officers seconded from the German Army, while in April 600 Sudanese soldiers were signed on by a recruiting party sent to Cairo. In addition to these soldiers, the Germans enlisted 100 Shagaan warriors recruited with the help of the government of Portuguese East Africa.[11] The Sudanese and German components of the force joined the party of Shagaan in Bagamoyo at the beginning of May 1889. The force was not integrated racially, although it featured both Africans and European . The Europeans occupied the apex of the hierarchy of command, acting as officers and N.C.O.s, while the Africans were assembled into companies separated along ethnic lines.[12]

The first action of Wissmann's force followed shortly after their arrival in May. Throughout March and April 1889 Abushiri launched a series of attacks on Bagamoyo and had the town virtually under siege, but upon the arrival of the German force the resistance leader attempted to negotiate a truce. Claiming that it was against his principles to negotiate

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[10]Hermann von Wissmann, *Afrika. Schilderungen und Rathschläge zur Vorbereitung fur den Aufenthalt und den dienst in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, (Berlin: Siegfried Mittler, 1895), 58.

[11]August Becker, *Aus Deutsch-Ostafrikas Sturm-und Drangperiode: Erinnerungen eines alten Afrikaners.* (Halle: Otto Hendel, 1911), 105.; Alan H. Jeeves, *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy: The Struggle for the Gold Mines' Labour Supply 1890-1920*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1985), 187-220. The recruitment officer the Germans sent to the Portuguese colony depended on the cooperation of the Portuguese authorities. According to Becker, a second recruitment drive in 1891 was wholly unsuccessful because of the intransigent Portuguese officials who were being wooed by South African mining interests to channel available labour to the Transvaal. Although this date precedes the period during which the South African Chamber of Mines consolidated its grip over labour recruitment in the region, Becker's account is consistent with Jeeves' portrayal of the increased vigour with which the South Africans attempted to draft unskilled labour.

[12]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 4.; Becker, *Hermann von Wissmann*, 189.

with rebels, Wissmann refused to speak with Abushiri and quickly broke the cease-fire with an attack on a 'rebel' boma west of Bagamoyo. The result was a fierce battle which culminated in a successful Sudanese bayonet charge of Abushiri's palisades. The African resisters incurred heavy casualties, losing over 150 men in the artillery and musket fire, but Abushiri eluded capture. The German commander was pleased with the success of the first action given that his men had only been given six days of land training. The officer commanding Dar-es-Salaam, followed the first attack on Abushiri with an expedition against an encampment in the village of Magogoni at the end of May. In another action intended to shore up the German position in Bagamoyo and Dar-es-Salaam, two German companies engaged an army under the command of Soliman bin Sef, an associate of Abushiri, and defeated them soundly. These two skirmishes secured a base of operations for the Germans and allowed them to turn their attention to the northern sector of the coast.[13]

Wissmann arranged for the transport of 500 men along the coast to take Sadani one of Bana Heri's strongholds. On 6 June 1889 the force landed in Sadani. With the help of a detachment of marines, this force set the town ablaze before travelling northward to the town of Pagani, at the mouth of the Pagani River. Pangani was taken by five companies in an amphibious assault preceded by a violent shelling from five warships off the coast. The artillery fire and the German tactics drew the resisters out of their fortifications and into a cross-fire, in which over 100 rebel warriors perished. Pangani was occupied on 8 June and Tanga was secured on 10 June, leaving the strip of coast from Dar-es-Salaam to the Umba River securely in German hands.[14]

In September Abushiri returned to his offensive against alien rule, by attacking and destroying the only *DOAG* station in the interior, at Mpwapwa. This was met by swift

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[13]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 7.; Wissmann, *Schilderungen*, 40. Wissmann mentions that Abushiri made his escape after hiding in long grass as German search parties walked past him. Familiarity with terrain and the techniques of war in East Africa became a recurring theme for those advocating the use of African troops.
[14]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 10-11.

action from Wissmann. Under the command of the *Reichskommissar* -- Wissmann's official title -- 350 men set out from Bagamoyo to take back Mpwapwa. During the journey into the interior Wissmann received word from Kingo, the headman of Morogoro, revealing that Abushiri had attempted to gain his support for an ambush of the German columns. The German commander dispatched a company to locate the enemy encampment and destroy it.[15]

Abushiri was not snared by this manoeuvre, but the campaign to Mpwapwa had far-reaching ramifications for the Arab opposition to the German presence. The Mpwapwa station was rebuilt and reinforced with a 110-man garrison, a clear signal of the German resolve to remain in the interior. To the end of extending the German presence in the region, Wissmann gained his first important collaborator in the person of Kingo. The Morogoro headman provided intelligence crucial to the success of the German operation in the region. Kingo's failure to support Abushiri, forced the resistance leader to seek the help of the Mbunga people in Kisaki. The Mbunga enjoyed an unsavory reputation among neighbouring groups, who were plagued by Mbunga raids throughout the late nineteenth-century. Abushiri's decision to ally with a group hated on the coast undermined his support there.[16]

The Germans were aware of Abushiri's new alliance. In November 1889 the commander of the coastal garrison, Karl Freiherr von Gravenreuth, launched an ambitious action against the Mbunga camp at Yombo, just outside of Bagamoyo. Gravenreuth planned to attack Abushiri's new allies in three separate columns each taking an independent route to the battlefield. The Germans miscalculated the length of time required for each column to reach the enemy, which resulted in Gravenreuth's column arriving without support and facing 5000 Mbunga warriors alone. This battle provided the first occasion where the German force faced the Ngoni-style massed shields and stabbing spears

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[15]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 12.
[16]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 96.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 12.

and this factor, mixed with the overwhelming numbers of the Mbunga. left the sole German column perilously close to defeat. The Germans were forced into a defensive position until dusk, when they withdrew across the Ruvu River and made contact with the second column. On the following day, 20 November, the combined force returned to engage the Mbunga and inflicted horrible casualties before forcing them further inland.[17]

The defeat of the Mbunga was the last gasp for Abushiri's resistance movement. His support eroded substantially after he took up with the Mbunga and their defeat forced him to take flight. On 8 December 1889 the Arab resistance leader was brought to the German station at Pangani after a bounty of £750 was placed on his head. He had tried to escape north to British territory where he hoped to find protection, but this plan was foiled by a northern headman enticed by the German reward. The resistance leader was tried on 8 December 1889 by the commander of Pangani station and was hanged the same day.[18]

Resistance to the German incursion did not end with the demise of Abushiri, however. Four companies and indigenous auxiliary troops known as *ruga-ruga* commanded by Emil von Zelewski, were sent to pacify the resistance of Bana Heri in Sadani. Zelewski's expedition set out from Bagamoyo for Sadani with the intention of rooting out any opposition to German rule in the hinterland. Zelewski arrived in Sadani on 8 November 1889, having left a trail of destroyed fortifications and burned villages in his wake. Not willing to repeat the mistakes of the Mbunga campaign, the Germans carried out careful reconnaissance of the Sadani hinterland until the end of 1889. On 27 December, a detachment sent out to scout the hinterland came across Bana Heri's fortress and attempted to take it by storm. The African leader was waiting for the attack when it came and his troops killed one European and nine *askaris* -- African soldiers -- before repulsing the German attack. The Germans assembled artillery and a large force of infantry to take Bana Heri's boma on 4 January 1890. The German guns proved too light to breach

[17]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 96.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 13.
[18]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 13.

the 4 metre-high earth-supported palisade, but three hours of bombardment opened a number of gaps in the thornbushes surrounding the fort thereby enabling the *askaris* to finally storm the palisades. The action was successful as 1500 of Bana Heri's followers abandoned the defenses and retreated further inland. Certain that his enemy was no longer interested in fighting, Wissmann sent 120 men to pursue the resistance leader and redistributed the rest of his manpower throughout the territory. The German pursuit of Bana Heri continued until March 1890 when the exhausted resisters negotiated an equitable peace through the Sayyid of Zanzibar.[19]

A final obstacle to control over the coast remained in the south. Three *DOAG* officials were killed at Kilwa during the initial phase of resistance in 1888 and the Germans showed little restraint in their reprisal in spite of the eighteen month interval. On 3 May 1890 a flotilla bombarded the town, effectively leveling it, and forced the retreat of the recalcitrant Africans who still remained. Two companies landed at Kilwa and established headquarters in a number of houses abandoned by Arabs, while the rest of the force traveled further south to Lindi where they occupied the town on 10 May. The speed and brutality of the German advance convinced the remainder of the southern coast to submit, thus marking the end of the first phase of military activity in the region.[20]

The period 1889-90 proved crucial to the German military presence in East Africa. Wissmann's mission succeeded in asserting German interests in the region, but more significantly it ensured the long-term reliance upon military force. The experiences of 1888 revealed that the *Deutsch Ost Afrika Gesellschaft* was incapable of administering the territory and thus a greater governmental commitment was required. The military carried on where the *DOAG* failed. East Africa assumed the status of a crown colony on 1 January 1891 and shortly thereafter, in March 1891, Wissmann's expeditionary force was

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[19]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 14-8.; Rochus Schmidt, *Geschichte des Araberaufstandes in Ost-Africa*, (Frankfurt a/O: 1892), 79. Schmidt describes Zelewski's brutal operation in October and November 1889 as "säubern" (sanitizing) the hinterland and reports that the action inflicted horrible casualties on the Africans
[20]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 19.

given the official title the *Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ost- Afrika* (Imperial Defence Force for German East Africa).

Aside from securing the tacit commitment of the German government, the first phase of 'pacification' was important to the composition of the troops and the tactics employed by the force. Wissmann's force totaled 925 men when they first assembled in Bagamoyo in May 1889, one year later it had reached 1200. The Germans hoped to attract more Sudanese to their ranks, but Wissmann began recruiting from the East African population when British colonial authorities in Egypt impeded any further recruitment in Cairo. Despite initial reluctance among the German officers, East Africa continued to be the principal source of recruits until the First World War. The Germans also used auxiliary troops from the private armies of collaborating chiefs to augment their own forces. The availability of these *ruga-ruga* armies depended upon the goodwill of their leader and a promise of booty from the German commander.

The Germans developed tactics to suit African conditions. The Gravenreuth expedition against Mbunga illustrated the dangers involved in dividing a force and carrying out intricate manoeuvres without extensive reconnaissance. During the later stages of the campaign, Wissmann made certain that his forces were never overwhelmed by their opponents and that they carried out thorough scouting of the region or were supported by *ruga-ruga* familiar with the terrain. Where possible the Germans avoided traveling through unfamiliar terrain by using naval transport. The accessibility of the various strong points along the coast allowed Wissmann to defeat Abushiri and Bana Heri in a fraction of the time needed for a similar expedition overland.[21]

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[21]Wissmann, *Rathschläge*, 11-3.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 13.; Westphal, *Deutsche Kolonien*, 146. Wissmann warned against dividing a forces in Africa, a practice he called *Detachierung*, and in Nigmann he is quoted: " Division rarely leads to the desired end and when one has a weak force, it is an unequivocal mistake. Distances here are too great, our African foe has too great an advantage in mobility and knowledge of the terrain, that they can escape any encirclement as they wish. If the enemy chooses to fight, the absent detatched column becomes painfully obvious and synchronized action is impossible. Thus it is not a divided force, but a force at maximum strength which is necessary to ensure the swift defeat of the enemy."

The Extension of German Control (1890-1900): The Southeast

The operations of May 1890 were followed by a quiet period along the southern coast, a situation Wissmann hoped to maintain with the installation of garrisons at Lindi, Kilwa and Mikandani. The Germans attempted to extend their area of control beyond the narrow band of coastline, by pushing into the interior in October 1890. A large expedition was sent inland from Lindi on 6 October 1890, to become familiar with the Ruvumu River valley and to deal with a grievance made by Machemba, a Yao headman. The three companies were progressing inland toward Machemba's headquarters when they were ambushed by a large force of Yao. The resultant casualties forced the Germans into a retreat to the coast where they assembled 400 men and marched on Machemba's boma. When a second engagement with the Yao in December failed to yield a decisive result, Wissmann turned his attention to another part of the colony and relented in his pursuit of Machemba. To the relief of the coastal commanders, desperately short of men, the Yao leader agreed to submit to the Germans in early 1891.[22]

The respite did not last. Throughout the period 1891-5 the coastal stations were inundated with reports of Yao raids on caravans and Machemba's demand for tribute. When the disruption of caravan traffic and insecurity of the southern interior were not remedied by a reaffirmation of Machemba's submission in 1895, a heavily armed *Schutztruppe* company delivered the Yao leader an ultimatum in June 1899. Machemba's compliance with the order required that he take responsibility for the maintenance of roads, a considerable task in Africa. This inflammatory order and the armed force which delivered it, incited the Yao to take up arms against the Germans again. By July 1899 the coastal garrisons secured reinforcements and initiated an offensive which pushed Machemba's forces south. The result of this action was heavy casualties among the Yao soldiers, who defended their leader's flight into Portuguese East Africa. The Yao submitted after

[22]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 20, 60-61.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 98. My decision to use a geographical breakdown to order the second phase of the German occupation owes its origin to Iliffe

Machemba's escape and the Germans razed his fort near Nangua in an attempt to eradicate the symbols of the Yao past and their leader's power.[23]

The Northeast

German involvement in the northeast during the last decade of the nineteenth century caused a dramatic change in the political alignment of the region. The policies employed by the military shattered the supremacy of previously dominant groups and replaced independent leaders with men beholden to the new overlord. This period also witnessed the rise of a Marealle of Marangu who, through his alliance with the local garrison commander Major Johannes, rose from the status of a minor chief to the unchallenged paramount of Kilimanjaro.

By 1891 the Germans extended their authority over the caravan route through the Nguru Mountains, but encountered resistance further inland from leaders unwilling to collaborate with aliens. The transition from recalcitrance to belligerence did not take long generally. When postal officials and local leaders friendly to the Germans were harassed by other leaders in the Usambara region, the Germans were quick to escalate the dispute with the military. Wissmann viewed two headmen, Sinna and Semboja, as the source of unrest in the region and quickly assembled three companies to deal with them. The Germans accused Semboja of attacking the Ngamein -- whose chief Rindi was a German ally -- and sent an expedition to secure Semboja's submission in January 1891. Faced with the prospect of fighting an enemy of superior strength and a daunting reputation, Semboja quickly recognized German supremacy in exchange for German recognition of his rule over west Usambara.[24]

The column moved through Usambara to Moshi, where they planned to establish their Kilimanjaro headquarters and hoped to encounter Sinna, the other dissenting chief.

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[23]Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika: Eine Schilderung deutshcer Tropen nach 10 Wanderjahren*, (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1910), 136-48.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 62.

[24] Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 20.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 99. The Germans eventually eliminated the influence of Semboja's line after his death in 1895, when the German official at the station in Mazindi hanged Semboja's son and placed a rival on the throne.

The force passed through Moshi when word reached them of Sinna's location at Kibosho, where they engaged his troops on 12 February 1891. The initial German advance on Sinna's emplacement failed after the troops became entangled in a thick banana grove, while being assailed by heavy fire from the African leader's complex of defensive trenches and hedges. The Germans withdrew at dusk, allowing the commanders to co-ordinate their intelligence and plan their attack in a less impromptu fashion. The next morning the German force picked its way over the defenses and stormed the fortress at the cost of nine *askari* lives. Two days following the collapse of his army, Sinna surrendered to the German commander who granted him his throne for his submission.[25]

Unrest continued in Kilimanjaro in 1892 when an *askari* was killed in a private quarrel in a chiefdom subordinate to Moshi. In the minds of the aggressive faction of the colonial administration this incident, coupled with an unsuccessful military adventure under the direction of Carl Peters in September 1891, amounted to a direct challenge to German hegemony in the north. The commander of the Marangu garrison, von Bülow, held the Meru paramount chief Meli accountable for the unrest and took steps to bring him to task. Bülow used one company of infantry and artillery to assail Meli's headquarters on 10 June 1892, but the paramount's forces were up to the challenge and inflicted 20 percent casualties on the German force. The defeat of Bülow precipitated the withdrawl of his troops to the coast and the abandonment of Marangu station, which the Germans judged to be endangered by the turn of events. A single company of 100 men under the command of Major Johannes was sent to reassert the German presence in the northeast and control the damage of Bülow's blunder. In August 1893, with the help of a massive bombardment of the African leader's headquarters, the governor of the colony Freiherr von Schele persuaded Meli to recognize German supremacy in exchange for retaining his throne.[26]

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[25]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 21-2.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 100-1.

[26]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 42-3.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 99. Meli also had his powers curtailed by Johannes, who granted Meli's relinquished jurisdiction to Marealle for providing *ruga-ruga* for the campaign against the Meru. In addition to this humiliation the Meru were forced to build a station for a German garrison on the ruins of Meli's fortress.

The Meru were the target of Schutztruppe operations in the northeast until the end of the century. Successive German commanders sought to undermine the Meru position as the most powerful military force in the Kilimanjaro region by construing any action by Meru leaders as a refusal to submit to Germany. In October 1896, 100 *askaris* and 1000 Chagga *ruga-ruga* were sent to investigate the murder of two missionaries in Meru country. The force returned to the coast in November having defended German interests by defeating the Meru in battle and raping the country with the help of auxiliary troops. The Germans were incited to make war on the Meru again in 1899 when Marealle, a petty chief in the region, convinced the colonial authorities that an attack on the Moshi station was the work of a combined force of Meru and Arusha. In February 1900, 100 *askaris* and a large complement of *ruga-ruga*, enticed by the prospect of booty, fell on Meru country with more vigour than four years earlier. After a few weeks of destruction the people of Meru sued for peace. Major Johannes, the leader of the expedition, rounded up eighteen Arusha and Meru notables including Meli and had them executed in Moshi. Marealle, the petty chief who ingratiated himself with the German authorities, was installed as paramount of Kilimanjaro. The new order was firmly entrenched in the northeast.[27]

The Central Caravan Route

The area of principle concern for the Germans during the period 1890-1900 was the central caravan route. Stretching from Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika to Dar-es-Salaam on the coast, the central caravan route was the principle commercial artery of the colony and the springboard to the interior. The extensive activity of the *Schutztruppe* along this road reflected the administration's preoccupation with controlling infrastructure in the territory. The German penetration along the caravan route was part of the race to secure their claim to the potentially lucrative trading and transport centres of Lake Victoria and Lake

[27]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 60-2; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 102. Iliffe contends that Marealle incited Bülow's original attack on Meli and manipulated subsequent *Schutztruppe* commanders to accrue power for himself.

Tanganyika. They marked their progress along the route with small garrisons intended to meet any challenge to the new order.

The fight for the caravan route began with the arrival of Emin Pasha to the German cause. Emin was Eduard Schnitzer, a doctor who had fled Viennese parlour society and entered the employ of the Khedive of Egypt in search of adventure. He entered the fray for the Germans in April 1890, when he was sent to Mpwapwa on a 'diplomatic mission' to convince Arab traders to redirect their trade away from selling slaves. Accompanying Emin's message of peace were 100 *askaris*, 400 armed porters and a light artillery piece. Shortly after arriving in Mpwapwa Emin's party was diverted to support a series of forrays into neighbouring villages accused of raiding caravans. For two months Emin's force and a *Schutztruppe* detachment looted innumerable settlements, devastating the entire region. In July the mission was diverted a second time. Disregarding his orders to negotiate from Mpwapwa and then move on to Lake Victoria, Emin marched the German force to trading centre of Tabora in the heart of Nyamwezi country. This expedition was carried out after he received a delegation from the town, who sought German protection. Once in Tabora, Emin made a treaty with the leaders of the Arab community, who renounced the slave trade and promised to accept German rule, in exchange for a German assurance that religious freedom and the Arab right to elect local rulers would be upheld.[28]

Emin left 24 soldiers from the original force in Tabora, including the officer originally intended to command the station on Lake Victoria, before he finally moved north. Despite Wissmann's disapproval of Emin's actions the Germans were quick to send reinforcements to the Tabora station. The new force asserted itself in December 1890 when a village of 'caravan raiders' was attacked and the inhabitants massacred. Surprisingly this operation was followed by a period of inactivity in the garrison. Isike the most powerful ruler in the Nyamwezi region refused any contact with the Europeans and an uneasy truce

[28]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 26-28; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 103.; Freeman-Grenville, "The German Sphere, 1884-98," 433.; Hans-George Steltzer, *Die Deutschen und Ihr Kolonialreich*, (Franfurt a/M: Societäts Verlag, 1984), 64.

prevailed between the Tabora detachment and the Nyamwezi leader until June 1892. The garrison had hoped to avoid conflict with Isike and were unprepared when he mobilized his Nyamwezi warriors in June. The *Schutztruppe* commander was forced to call upon the help of an expedition of the German Anti-Slavery Society to support a retaliatory attack on Isike's fort. The Germans attempted to storm the heavily armed fortress with fewer than 100 men and were thrown back with heavy casualties. Two subsequent failures in August and September allowed Isike to take the initiative and venture an attack on Tabora in December 1892 from which the Germans narrowly escaped.

The situation in Tabora reached a critical juncture when the administration sent Lieutenant Tom von Prince, the *Schutztruppe*'s most accomplished officer, to assert the German presence in Nyamwezi. The military force given Prince was predominantly composed of new *askaris* recruited from the territory under German control, providing the first test for Wissmann's experiment with indigenous recruitment on a large scale. Prince's forces stormed Isike's position at dawn on 12 January 1893. The inexperienced *askaris* traversed the outer wall of the fort and engaged in tenacious hand-to-hand combat with Isike's troops. The Germans soon had the complex in their grip when the Nyamwezi leader blew up his headquarters in a suicide attempt. Prince found Isike's barely conscious body in the ruins of the building and hanged him. The *Schutztruppe's* supremacy in Tabora was no longer challenged.[29]

Tabora was the German base of operations in the interior. Once their supremacy over the town was assured they turned their attention to securing the stretch of road between the Nyamwezi country and the coast. The *Schutztruppe* carried out a policy of intimidation and reprisal under the command of Lieutenant von Prince, who was tireless in his pursuit of any African who showed resistance to the new order. From January to

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[29]Herrmann Graf von Schweinitz, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika in Krieg und Frieden*, (Berlin Hermann Walther, 1894), 68-80.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 27, 37-41.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 104.

August 1893 Prince mercilessly ravaged the countryside from Tabora to the coast, looting and burning villages, actions which went under the name of 'pacification'.

The Germans turned their attention to Ujiji in 1894. Mdiga, the paramount of the territory between Ujiji and Tabora, was accused of fomenting rebellion in the area and surrendered to the commander of Tabora on 13 June 1894 after his boma was razed by a detachment of German *askaris*. The greatest threat to German hegemony in the Nyamwezi region came from the Hehe who controlled the area south of the caravan route. The main Hehe army was engaged in extensive action against German forces near Iringa and the Tabora garrison was instructed to lend its support to the action by engaging the Hehe at their emplacement at Nkonko, south of Kilimatinde. The *Schutztruppe* fell upon the Hehe fort defeating their surprised enemy, but incurring heavy casualties.

While the operation at Nkonko extended their presence south, the Germans felt the caravan route was exposed in the north and sought to protect it in 1896. The murder of an *askari* in the Singida area gave the *Schutztruppe* the ideal chance to take action in the northern sector. The accused murderer was brought to the Germans on 30 August 1896, after a column spent three months making their presence felt by pillaging and laying waste to the country. This action marked the successful extension of the *pax Germanica* from the coast to the main caravan route.[30]

Mkwawa's Resistance

No group resisted the extension of German control more vigorously than the Hehe. Inhabiting an area bordered by the Kisogo River in the north and the Kilombero River in the East, the Hehe had a reputation as caravan raiders in the 1850s and expanded their empire westward in the 1880s under their ruler Mkwawa. The first hint that German movement into the interior clashed with Hehe's western expansion arose in 1890 when Hehe warriors raided neighbouring groups who had submitted to the Germans. Both the Germans and Hehe were willing to come to a short-term peace given the risks war would

[30]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 41-3, 51-2, 59.

entail for either side. The German preoccupation with Kilimanjaro and their limited resources left them reluctant to engage the Hehe in 1890. For his part, Mkwawa was anxious to prepare adequately before making war on the Germans.[31]

When a Hehe subordinate chief was discovered aiding Ngoni raiders in June 1891 the new commander of the *Schutztruppe*, von Zelewski, decided to deal with both the Hehe and Ngoni. The punitive expedition was intended to go to Mpwapwa, but detoured to Usagara where the German force burned down Hehe villages and dispersed opposition. This tactic continued through a number of Hehe communities as Zelewski's troops progressed toward Kalenga. Shortly after breaking camp on 17 August 1891, the Germans were ambushed and overwhelmed by 3000 Hehe at Lugalo. Using massed formations of spears and shields against German rifles, the Hehe killed over 200 *askaris* , 10 European officers, and 96 porters. It was fitting that Emil von Zelewski, a particularly malignant example of the *fin de siecle* European soldier, was among the dead. While on campaign his brutality had earned him the nickname 'the Hammer' and his reckless actions in August 1888 at Pangani had sparked the coastal resistance of Abushiri and Bana Heri. [32]

The Germans immediately sent a force to secure the Usagara, but tne demands of campaigns elsewhere left this expedition too weak to risk another defeat to Mkwawa. Early 1892 saw the destruction of Old Kondoa station by a Hehe attack and October 1892 witnessed renewed caravan raids. By early 1893 Mkwawa was confident enough to make war on a neighbour friendly to the Germans. Governor von Schele was able to free Lieutenant von Prince from his duties in Tabora to deal with Mkwawa and the Hehe. On 30 October 1894 a large *Schutztruppe* expedition took Mkwawa's headquarters at Kalenga and razed it, but Hehe resistance continued unperturbed. The Germans seized the initiative and established a garrison at Iringa, in the heart of Uhehe, as their headquarters for the

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[31]Alisson Redmayne "Mkwawa and the Hehe Wars," *The Journal of African History* , 9 (1968): 412-18. Redmayne's research on Hehe resistance is unsurpassed and is the principle source of information for this discussion.

[32]Redmayne, "Mkwawa", 418-20. The Hehe lost 700 men on the day, but Mkwawa ordered all mourning to be put off until the invaders were expelled.

campaign against Mkwawa. Prince appointed Mkwawa's brother Mangapile the new ruler of Uhehe on Christmas 1896, but ordered his execution on 21 February 1897, after suspecting Mangapile of betrayal. Sporadic raids on stations and patrols left the territory unsafe for commerce, but food shortages and the constant unrest eventually took their toll Mkwawa's supporters. Hehe resistance was primarily the domain of Mkwawa and his small complement of followers by 1898. On 19 July 1898 Mkwawa, having lost most of his following and his powerful empire to the Germans, ended his resistance with a self administered gunshot wound.

The ferocity of Hehe resistance and the intelligence of their leadership affected German policy in Uhehe in the period after 1898. Fear of a second Hehe uprising forced the Germans to adopt mild policies in the territory and resulted in *defacto* recognition of the independence Mkwawa fought to protect.[33]

The Role of the Schutztruppe

The period 1891-1900 witnessed a number of organizational changes to the *Schutztruppe*. An important step was taken in March 1891, when the expeditionary force was granted the status of *Schutztruppe* for the new colony of German East Africa. The force came under the ægis of Kaiser Wilhelm's other personal project the Imperial Navy, but more significantly the chain of command placed the Schutztruppe under the command of the colonial governor.[34]

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[33]Redmayne, "Mkwawa", 420-2; Magdalene von Prince *Eine deutsche Frau im Innern Ost Afrika. Elf Jahre nach Tagebuchblättern erzählt*, (Berlin: Mittler, 1908), 75. Prince's perspective is particularly interesting because she was the wife of the garrison commander, Tom von Prince and thus provides an insight into the mindset of the German military during the war with Mkwawa. The Germans were constantly afraid of being fallen upon by the enemy, a fact which explains Prince's rash action when he suspected Mangapile of working with Mkwawa. Iliffe and Redmayne contend that the accusations of treachery against Mangapile were the result of his brother's attempt to implicate him of conspiracy. Prince was not without remorse. His wife recounts the deep saddness both she and her husband felt when Mangapile was executed, because they considered him a friend.

[34]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 22.

The new status granted the Force did not reflect the view of Wissmann held by Berlin. *Reichstag* deputies criticized the commander for spending four times the amount allocated for the expedition and called for his removal from command. The result of the controversy was that Wissmann was recalled to Berlin in 1891 and was passed over for the position of governor. In addition to this slight to the *Schutztruppe*, Wissmann's usurper was Julius von Soden a civilian who wished to pursue a policy of conciliation rather than conflict. The new governor confined the administration's operations to the coast and hoped that the *Schutztruppe* would follow suit. Emil von Zelewski, the new commander of the *Schutztruppe* rejected the governor's project in favour of total autonomy for his force.[35]

The conflict between the military and civilian authorities played itself out in 1891. Shortly after taking command of the *Schutztruppe*, Zelewski by-passed Soden and received Berlin's approval for an expedition against the Hehe. The governor was unable to produce any objection to override Berlin and allowed the expedition to proceed without complaint. Despite being empowered by his office to rescind the orders of the *Schutztruppe*'s commander, Soden could influence neither the actions of the military men in the field nor the political pressure brought to bear by the *Schutztruppe* on the domestic front. The man on the spot had enormous discretionary powers which made consultation with the civilian governor an administrative nicety most soldiers rejected. Soden's situation was complicated further by pressure from Berlin where aristocratic *Schutztruppen* officers were particularly well-connected. The defeat of Zelewski's force at Lugalo increased the governor's grip on the military, but compromised his position *vis-à-vis* the Hehe. Before the events at Lugalo Soden favoured a diplomatic solution over conflict with the Hehe, but the defeat of Zelewski raised cries for reprisal among the officers. Despite the aggressive posture of the *Schutztruppe* the governor stood his ground and suspended all expeditions

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[35]Tom von Prince, *Gegen Araber und Wahehe: Erinnerungen aus meiner ostafrikanische Leutnantszeit 1890-1895*, (Berlin: n.p., 1914), 88; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 108.

into the interior, with the intention of opening negotiations with Mkwawa through intermediaries.[36]

The weakness of the administration's jurisdiction over the *Schutztruppe* revealed itself during the Hehe crisis. Theoretically, orders issued from Dar-es-Salaam could not be ignored, but the men in the field made a regular practice of acting independently. In the course of the dispute between moderate administrators and the aggressive members of the *Schutztruppe* , the military wrested control ot the implementation and formulation of policy away from the civilian population. Soden's order to relent from engaging the Hehe was circumvented by the station commanders in the interior. Tom von Prince, who gained a reputation for ruthlessness in dealing with African resistance, was given command of a chain of forts along the caravan route from Kisaki to Kilimatinde and used this position to launch forays across Uhehe's northern border. Zelewski's defeat and the governor's failure to quash Hehe resistance made Soden's position untenable and he was replaced by Friederich Freiherr von Schele, a military man, in 1893. The appointment of Schele began a trend which favoured retired officers for the post of governor in order to promote consensus between the military and civilian authorities. Schele was succeeded by the rehabilitated and ennobled Hermann von Wissmann, who served as governor from 1895 to 1896. He was replaced by a former Prussian staff officer, Eduard von Liebert. Liebert's successor in 1901 was another former soldier, Adolf Graf von Götzen. These men assured the *Schutztruppe* of influence in the genesis of colonial policy, rather than merely in its implementation.[37]

The unification of military and civilian leadership in one man reflected the importance of the *Schutztruppe* during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The

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[36]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 110.

[37]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 111. Schele, Liebert, and Götzen enjoyed the status of head of the administration and commander of the military and they all took up this dual role with bravado leading their troops into action on different occassions. Wissmann was the exception to this group. During his tenure, the *Schutztruppe* was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Lothar von Trotha, who enjoyed superior rank over Wissmann, allowing him to over-rule Wissmann on military matters. Trotha later gained infamy in South-West Africa during the Herero War.

Imperial Decree of 7 September 1894 announced that the *Schutztruppe*'s responsibilities extended from merely quelling uprisings to include the administration of the interior. The military extended the boundaries of German influence from the narrow strip of coastline secured by the first invasion, to include the northern half of the colony. The central function of the Force during this period was coercive, but its role as the administrative arm in the interior broadened its impact on East African society. The military station embodied the administration for the people of the interior, thereby giving the decisions made by the men in the field additional importance through their responsibility in integrating East Africans into the colonial order. The interaction between the station and its surroundings was critical to the success of the German colonial experiment.[38]

The role played by the military in the north-west corner of the colony reflected the constraints placed on the *Schutztruppe* 's administration of the colony. Emin Pasha established two stations on the shores of Lake Victoria at Bukoba and Mwanza in 1890 as the Germans raced to secure access to every potential commercial highway. The administration's fixation with infrastructure translated into enormous activity in the Lake region despite the dearth of manpower. The campaigns against the Hehe and Isiki in Nyamwezi drew the bulk of the *Schutztruppe* 's resources to the south, thus forcing the two station commanders to use their forces sparingly and seek support from other quarters. This predicament resulted in the officer adopting a "diplomatic mediating rather than a dictatorial military role" and seeking the support of the German Anti-Slavery Committee and local *ruga-ruga* if reinforcements were required. The Germans were vulnerable to attack, but given the disunity of the indigenous states in the region the prospect of the chiefs working in concert seemed remote.[39]

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[38]Imperial Decree cited in Ralph A. Austen, *Northwest Tanzania under German and British Rule: Colonial Policy and Tribal Politics 1889-1939*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), 32.
[39]Quote taken from Austen, *Northwest Tanzania*, 36-7. The Anti-Slavery Committee established a base of operations on Lake Victoria where it planned to launch a steamer to aid their campaign against slave traders on the lake.

By adopting a policy of temporary alliances in the absence of a strong military presence, the *Schutztruppen* officers of the Bukoba garrison were able to promote and maintain disunity among the Haya people who inhabited the Lake Victoria region. Local commanders were careful to observe the authority of the various chiefs -- issuing requests for manpower through them -- but German military strength ensured that these token observances of chiefly authority were not mistaken for weakness. Recalcitrant Haya leaders were dealt with swiftly and brutally. Mutatembwa of Kiziba attempted to co-ordinate resistance against the aliens, only to be betrayed by a rival chief whose forces supported the garrison. The German took advantage of another political dispute between chiefs in November 1892, when Mukotani of Kiamtwara objected to the establishment of a mission in his territory. The Bukoba officer marched his troops to Kiamtwara with the support of 2000 *ruga-ruga* drawn from neighbouring chiefdoms. Kiamtwara's forces were dispersed by the Germans and sought refuge in caves where the German commander attempted to secure their surrender with smoke fires.[40] Refusing to surrender, 400 Haya suffocated in the caves. In 1893 Mukotani regained German favour by employing diplomacy of his own: he supplied the German commander Wilhelm Langheld with a harem.[41]

The activities of the Mwanza station contrasted sharply with Bukoba. Unlike the Haya around Bukoba, the Sukuma inhabitants of the Mwanza region possessed strong states with leadership unwilling to accommodate alien intrusion.[42] The Germans were in almost constant conflict with defiant chiefs who attacked caravans regularly despite warnings from the station. Where the Haya were compliant, the Sukuma refused to supply the Mwanza station with building materials and labour. Antagonism toward the intruders

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[40]Austen, *Northwest Tanzania*, 39-40; Wilhelm Langheld, *Zwanzig Jahre in Deutschen Kolonien*, (Berlin: Wilhelm Weicher, 1909., 91.

[41]Austen, *Northwest Tanzania*, 41.

[42]Austen, *Northwest Tanzania*, 41. In contrast to the Haya, the Sukuma remained insular because they did not suffer from invasions as had occurred when the territory to the Southwest of Lake Victoria was invaded during the 1850s by the Ganda.

boiled over in a series of separate incidents in 1895. After securing the submission of two uncooperative Sukuma rulers with punitive expeditions in early 1895, the Germans received news that a missionary post in Ukerewe was burned down under the orders of the local chief. The chief surrendered to the German commander and thereby averted a large-scale conflict, but the incident pointed to the need for a coherent administrative policy. Lothar von Trotha, the commander of the *Schutztruppe* was present at Lake Victoria during the crisis and issued instructions that his officers had allowed the situation in Mwanza to escalate by becoming too involved in indigenous political disputes. Trotha recommended that Mwanza receive a larger garrison and thereby avoid becoming too closely involved in the political concerns of their African allies.[43]

The German presence at Lake Victoria thus took a new form after 1895. The *Schutztruppe* 's position was more secure after budget constraints were eased and more troops became available. The Force's increased self-reliance and knowledge of local customs resulted in a moderate approach to administration in the northwest. Both Mwanza and Bukoba adopted an administrative system where each indigenous ruler sent a permanent representative to the station to act as a liaison between the chief and the administration. The military continued to reward chiefs who were willing to collaborate with them, but the Germans became concerned increasingly with creating political institutions which they could control. The representatives at the station, or *Kibati*, became important instruments in the *Schutztruppe*'s quest to exercise control over neighbouring groups. In other instances garrisons came to the aid of traditionally elected rulers who were challenged by religious authorities or other factions attempting to gain control of the traditional leadership. In the case of stateless peoples the military commander arbitrarily appointed a local to collect taxes regardless of his authority over the people.[44]

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[43]Austen, *Northwest Tanzania*, 41-44.

[44]Austen, *Northwest Tanzania*, 48-52.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 121. A ruler of Usambara, propped up by the Germans, eventually abdicated his throne because his implementation of unpopular policies made him the target of witchcraft.

The Mwanza and Bukoba administration illustrates a number of tendencies of the military phase of the history of German East Africa. The extension of control over Lake Victoria was consistent with the German affinity for clearly-defined, physical, objectives. Kilimanjaro and the central caravan route were accumulated as trophies of empire, identifiable landmarks which symbolized achievement to both the metropolitan audience and the men responsible for awarding promotions. The diplomacy employed in the northwest followed the pattern of allying with petty chiefs to oppose rebellious paramounts. In the same manner as Marealle in Kilimanjaro, Kahigi of Kianja established himself as the foremost Haya chief by currying the favour of the *Schutztruppen* commander at Bukoba and conspiring with the Germans to eliminate common enemies. The priority of the administration in the 1890s was to establish and maintain power in the interior and to this end they sought collaborators willing to recognize German authority, provide supplies for the garrison and auxiliary troops when needed. In exchange for vows of fidelity, the Africans received the political and military support of the Germans. The demands of the administration curbed the power of traditional rulers marginally, but had little effect on the societies over which they ruled.[45]

In contrast to the limited nature of the administration, the *Schutztruppe* 's military adventures devastated countless East African societies. The Meru and Arusha were ravaged by the merciless campaigning of Johannes throughout the decade. Johannes's men were guilty of extensive looting, while the *ruga-ruga* support troops were motivated solely by the promise of booty. Indeed the limited financial resources of the Force made freebooting an attractive opportunity for an officer seeking financial gain, a fact which certainly contributed to the frequency and extent of German activity along the caravan route. After a village was looted and the enemy dispersed it was the *Schutztruppe*'s practice to set the dwellings ablaze, doubtless in an attempt to demoralize their opponents further. This tactic destroyed hundreds of villages and caused the dispersal of whole

[45]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 121.

communities throughout the period 1890-1900. The technological superiority of the Force complemented the brutality of their methods perfectly: the African campaigns provided the ideal testing ground for the machine gun.[46]

For German officers weaned on the success of the Franco-Prussian War, service in Africa promised an opportunity for professional advancement and adventure. It was this 'Boy's Own' mentality which provided the backdrop for the countless expeditions during the early period. Emin Pasha's campaign in April 1890 in Ugogo resulted in the destruction of 19 villages and the theft of 2000 cattle and Bülow's disastrous series of campaigns against Meli in 1892, illustrated the swashbuckling ambitions of many young officers in the *Schutztruppe*. Some senior officers fancied themselves in the mold of the gentlemen soldier seen in the British colonies. The demise of Zelewski's column against the Hehe was partially a product of the commander's cavalier attitude to warfare in Africa, which he approached as a glorified safari or something akin to a grouse shooting party.[47] Delusions which ended in disaster served as lessons for the soldiers who followed.

During the period 1891-1900 the *Schutztruppe* underwent a number of significant organizational changes. Prior to 1891 Wissmann's force was little more than a collection of mercenaries under personal contract to their commander, but by the turn of the century the soldiers were official servants of the administration, a status enhanced by the introduction of a standard uniform. Most significant to the function of the *Schutztruppe* was its growth from a force of fewer than 700 men to twice that number by 1900. The additional recruitment took place in the newly conquered interior and on the coast as the military stretched to meet the dual commitment of administration and defence. The main military stations were located in areas where local rulers posed the most significant

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[46]Wissmann, *Schilderungen*, 17-24. Wissmann discusses the ransacking and burning of African villages in a routine fashion indicating that the practice was not unusual. He also indicates that the Germans avoided battles of annihilation because the cost to replace soldiers was too high for the financially strapped *Schutztruppe* and would only engender hostility among the conquered people.

[47]Some days before Lugalo, Zelewski's sentries mistakenly shot three emmissaries sent by Mkwawa to negotiate peace and hardened the Hehe leader's resolve to fight.

challenge to German hegemony and around prominent geographical features. In addition to the stations along the coast and those defending caravan route, the German forces were concentrated in the Kilimanjaro region, on Lake Victoria and at Iringa in Uhehe.[48]

The Consolidation of the Pax Germanica (1900-1905)

The relative calm of the period 1900-5 disguised the upheaval caused by changes in the German administration of the colony. The system which granted sweeping discretionary powers to the commanders of military stations in the interior, made the formulation and implementation of a coherent colonial policy problematic. The regional and ethnic diversity of the colony dictated that the government station adapt to the needs of the region. Despite variations throughout the territory general trends did prevail because the requirements of colonialism demanded that each station produce common results. During the first decade of the German venture in East Africa administrators sought an end to indigenous resistance and the extension of German rule; once this goal was achieved around the turn of the century, the Germans began a program to entrench their position in the colony.

The Germans extended their rule through the *Schutztruppe* and the military was central to the implementation of the new agenda. The introduction of civilian rule on the coast during the 1890s was gradually extended into the interior at the beginning of the century as the government attempted to conclude the "golden age of [military] adventure".[49] Regardless of Dar-es-Salaam's lofty intentions, this period witnessed an increased role for the military in the administration of the colony. The policy of consolidation was approached on a number of fronts, all of which required the active participation of the man on the spot and a large contin nt of support staff. The

[48]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 77. The German forces were concentrated in the north at Kilimanjaro (Moshi), around Lake Victoria (Mwanza and Bukoba), on the northern and southern tips of Lake Tanganyika (Usumbura and Bismarckburg), along the central caravan route (Ujiji, Tabora, Kilimatinde, Mpwapwa, Kilosa and Kissaki) and along the coast (Tanga, Panga..i, Bagamoyo, Dar-es-Salaam, Kilwa and Lindi). The stations not located around identifiable landmarks were the Iringa and Mahenge stations in Hehe country and those clustered around the border of the Ngoni- dominated southeast, at Langenburg and Songea.
[49]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 56.

Schutztruppe took on the responsibility for public works. Unlike the earlier era when stations were constructed by the *askaris* and their families, this phase of military administration required the local recruitment of labour who were supervised by the *askaris*. The *Schutztruppe* oversaw the construction of bridges, public wells, medical stations, abattoirs, and market places, and most significantly they undertook to maintain roads. The military also set up small-scale brick firing and logging operations to meet the demand for building supplies. The Germans viewed all of these projects as integral to their function as promoters of *Kultur* in Africa, a process which would lay the ground work for a lasting colonial presence.[50] One officer view the *Schutztruppe*'s role in this way:

> The work of [the *Schutztruppe*], beyond exclusively military terms, as a preparation and torchbearer of every aspect of *Kultur*, provides a foundation for the erection of an efficient colonial framework.[51]

The military station increased its importance during this phase by taking an active part in judicial affairs and administering the hut tax of 1898. The role of the garrison commander as the dispenser justice broadened the impact of the *Schutztruppe* on the societies of the interior and raised the profile of the officer *vis-à-vis* the Africans under his jurisdiction. This duty increased contact between the fort and its surroundings, as the commander-- or in some cases officers of a lower rank -- made journeys to neighbouring settlements to arbitrate disputes. Visits up country served the dual purpose of increasing the station's radius of influence and acting as regular reminders of the Germans' dominant position in the region.[52] Predictably, the administration of the hut tax did not improve the esteem of the *Schutztruppe*. The aim of the four rupee tax was to integrate the indigenous

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[50]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 79, 81-84.; Wissmann, *Rathschläge*, 49.; Geographical Section of the Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff, Admiralty, *A Handbook of German East Africa*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), 202. Nigmann refers to the German presence in East Africa as "Kulturarbeit", the raising of the Africans' cultural standard.

[51]J. Stentzler, *Deutsch Ost Afrika: Kriegs und Friedensbilder*. (Berlin: Weicher, 1910), 37.

[52]Stentzler, *Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, 42-5.; Hans-Poeschel, *bwana hakimu. Richterfahrten in Deutsch Ostafrika*, (Leipzig: Koehler, 1940), 139.; Austen, *Northwest Tanzania*, 72. The role of the regional administrator was sufficiently vague to allow abuses to occur, but these incidences were not frequent. Contact with the groups of the interior gave the officers the opportunity to learn a variety of dialects.

people of German East Africa into the monied economy and the project succeeded in those areas with an established history of commerce. Thus the tax was surprisingly easy to collect in the northern half of the colony, where it seemed easier to pay than suffer an armed reprisal from the *Schutztruppe*. Resistance occurred in the hinterland of Kilwa and in Ubena in the southern part of the colony, however, because the area had been left largely untouched by German interference. In Kilwa, the Matumbi's refusal to pay the tax precipitated a German military campaign, while in Ubena an *askari* reacted to resistance by confiscating the community's cattle. However heavy-handed, the instances where the *Schutztruppe* resorted to force were rare and illustrate the degree of influence the military enjoyed by 1905.[53]

The new course did cause some disruption. John Iliffe has described the breakdown in diplomatic relations between the military stations and collaborating chiefs as the "collapse of local compromise". The collaboration between a number of chiefs and the Europeans during the first phase of the German incursion was discussed earlier. This relationship generally saw the leader friendly to the Germans increase his power at the expense of his enemies, but the entente between the station and the indigenous ruler was a personal one. Station commanders began to be replaced in 1900 by new officers who were wary of paramounts with too much power, while at the same time the *Schutztruppe* had deepened its ranks sufficiently to no longer depend on the support of local chiefs.

The demise of Marealle exemplifies the collapse of local compromise. When Marealle's staunchest ally Major Johannes was relieved as commander of Kilimanjaro in 1903, his replacement came under the influence of two minor chiefs attempting to displace the paramount. The new officer was soon convinced that Marealle intended to attack the German station and vowed to strike first. Marealle understood the consequences of an engagement with the *Schutztruppe* and fled to Kenya. The tendency of the station

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[53]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 132-34.; John Iliffe,*Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 160.

commander to work in concert with a single chief witnessed in the 1890s, was soon replaced by a new self-sufficiency where the *Schutztruppe* was beholden to no one.[54]

The *pax Germanica* was upheld by force and as the Germans attempted to consolidate their hold over the colony they did not shy away from the tactics of the previous decade. The most significant military action during this period extended German power in the kingdoms of Ruanda and Urundi between Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. Götzen -- who later became Governor of the territory -- was the first Westerner to make contact with the region in 1894 and the Germans established a station between both territories at Usumbura in 1896. Despite the series of successional wars which plagued the ruler of Urundi at the turn of the century, the *Schutztruppe* did not become involved in the politics of the region until July 1902 when the station commander Captain von Beringe issued a report on the political situation in the region to Dar-es-Salaam. It was Beringe's view that the Germans should despatch a punitive expedition to Urundi to gain the potentate's unequivocal submission and restore order in the region. The request was denied by Götzen who felt that the uproar in Urundi would adversely affect the relationship the administration enjoyed with the stable centralized state in Ruanda. Beringe was convinced that the Germans must bring Kissabo the ruler of Urundi to heel and did not allow Götzen's refusal dissuade him. By 7 June 1903, the Usumbura commander successfully circumvented Dar-es-Salaam and secured the additional troops required for an attack on Kissabo. The Germans engaged the Urundi forces in late June and on 6 July Beringe gained Kissabo's submission.

Beringe's expedition was in direct opposition to the course the Governor hoped to take. Officials in Dar-es-Salaam wanted to rule through the existing state structures in Urundi by securing the unequivocal fidelity of the ruler in exchange for promises to uphold his authority. In the wake of the expedition against Kissabo the Usumbura commander granted independence to a number of important chiefs opposing the potentate. His

[54]Iliffe,*German Rule 1905-1912*, 120-1, 147-8.

replacement sought to reverse this policy in 1904. During the year which followed, the German commander was given the task of upholding Kissabo's authority and intervening only where it was challenged. The effective implementation of this policy resulted in a few minor skirmishes which culminated in the defeat of the last challenge to Kissabo's rule in early 1906.[55]

The German involvement in Ruanda did not precipitate antics similar to those of Beringe. The rulers enjoyed undisputed paramountcy over the territory and thus the intervention of the garrison established at Ishangi in 1902 was never necessary. Götzen's personal contact with the leaders of Ruanda in 1894 allowed them unchallenged independence of action. The governor sought to reiterate the position of Ruanda, when he issued explicit instructions to the Usumbura garrison that they were not to intervene unless they had the cooperation and permission of the ruler Musinga. The region remained firmly under Musinga's authoritarian control under the strict guidelines of Götzen's form of indirect rule. Both Musinga and Kissabo understood that the Germans were useful allies and made good use of their resources in putting down their enemies.

The case of Ruanda and Urundi were exceptional in German East Africa, for in the other regions the administration preferred direct control. The *Schutztruppe* did not shake off its military cloak as its bureaucratic responsibilities increased, but Governor Götzen's attempt to monitor the military appeared successful. The colony experienced less disruption during the period 1900-05, than at any time since the German incursion, although campaigns against the ubiquitous caravan raiders still occurred. Any fear within the *Schutztruppe* that force served a purely bureaucratic or even decorative function was extinguished in 1905.

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[55]W.R. Louis, *Ruanda- Urundi 1884-1919*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 114-20. I have abbreviated Louis's unsurpassed discussion of the situation in Ruanda and Urundi somewhat because it required so little direct intervention by the *Schutztruppe*.

Maji-Maji

The *Schutztruppe* played only an indirect role in the eruption of the *Maji-Maji* uprising in 1905. When the Matumbi people refused to pay the hut tax of 1898, the German Defence Force had entered their territory and forced their submission. The goal of the tax was to force all East Africans into the monied economy and for the Matumbi this meant employment on German cotton plantations or forced labour on roads. Governor Götzen devised a cotton growing scheme in 1902 to test a common crop on the land of the headmen in all southern coastal areas. Each of the headman's male subjects were obligated to fulfil 28 days service on the land in return for payment for their work. The plan seemed to solve two problems, by offering an opportunity to experiment with a new cash crop and integrating the Matumbi into the colonial economy by paying them for their labour. The crop scheme proved a dismal failure. The service required by the headmen seriously interfered with the Matumbi's own crops, while the meagre payment aroused further hostility to the plan. The rebellion was not a response to the methods used to extract taxation, rather *Maji-Maji* began as a protest against the common hardship faced by the Matumbi under the government's cotton growing scheme. With the encouragement of the religious authority it escalated into a general movement against all alien interference in the south-east.[56]

The revolt grew through the support of the Matumbi spiritual leadership. As a stateless people, the Matumbi had no means of assembling a force for an offensive war, but the prophet Kinjikitile Ngwala provided the figure around whom the movement coalesced. Kinjikitile's possession by the spirit Hongo synthesized a host of local beliefs which were quickly transformed into a millenarian movement. The prophet Kinjikitile promised that Hongo would protect his children from the European bullets if they were anointed with the

[56]Iliffe,*German Rule 1905-1912*, 23.

blessed water or *maji-maji*. By mid-1904 pilgrims visited the prophet's temple at Ngarambe and he soon recruited lieutenants to take on the leadership at a local level.[57]

The Matumbi leadership lost patience with the religious leadership and decided to go to war against the Europeans. In late July 1905 the first outbreak of violence was aimed at an Arab *aikida* who was chased from his residence in the Matumbi Hills. In the days which followed the Matumbi attempted to clear their whole region of aliens, killing a German planter who refused to flee and later attacking a trading post at Somanga. Within two weeks the entire Rufiji Valley rose up against the Germans. Götzen's reaction upon receiving the news on 1 August 1905 was to dispatch 70 men to reinforce Kilwa and Mohoro stations, but when the punitive expeditions sent to investigate the uproar were confronted by overwhelming enemy forces the Governor sent Major Johannes and an additional 120 *askaris* south. On 8 August Johannes marched his force to Kibata in the Matumbi Hills and within a week he secured the surrender of a handful of the rebels. This was an insignificant reversal, however, and the German commander returned to Dar-es-Salaam to relieve the imperiled capital. While Johannes's forces were in the Matumbi Hills the German military post at Liwale was overwhelmed by a Matumbi host who massacred the two European officers, all of the *askaris*, their wives and children. A group of traders who dealt with the *Schutztruppe* were butchered in a similar fashion removing any residual doubt about the virulence of the Matumbi's enmity toward the aliens and those who did business with them.[58]

The crisis caught the *Schutztruppe* by surprise. Of the 1700 troops in the colony, 1123 were stationed in the north where the Germans previously encountered the most opposition to their regime. The military vastly underestimated the potential for resistance in the south and hoped to rectify the disparity with additional forces. The *Reichstag* rejected Götzen's numerous appeals for a company of German troops and the governor was forced

[57]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 133, 168-9.
[58]Adolf Graf von Götzen, *Deutsch- Ostafrika im Aufstand 1905/6*, (Berlin: Schall, 1909), 54-66.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 91-96.; Iliffe,*German Rule 1905-1912*, 19-20.

to explore alternative sources of manpower. A recruiting party sent to Eritrea yielded 200 new soldiers, but a request to renew recruitment of Sudanese soldiers in the British colonies was turned down. Despite German misgivings about using fresh indigenous recruits against their 'compatriots', the acute nature of the crisis forced the *Schutztruppe* to raise troops within the borders of the colony. This goal was achieved with monies supplied by the *Reichstag* after they had fobbed off Götzen's initial request for German troops. Recruitment methods included the direct enlistment of young Africans into new *Schutztruppen* companies, a levy among the European population in the capital and an appeal for auxiliary troops from chiefs friendly to the administration.[59]

As the movement achieved success against alien targets in late 1905, the cult of Hongo spread beyond Matumbi to the Ngindo people in the southern-most region of the colony. Kinjikitile's network of lieutenants proved highly successful in Matumbi, as these men spread the message to their own people and to Ngindo after the prophet was executed by the Germans.[60] The Ngindo presence in the movement introduced new elements which elaborated the *maji-maji* ritual, widening its appeal, but more significantly Ngindo involvement meant the cooperation of large segments of the Ngoni people. Marriage bonds between a Ngoni leader and a women from the Ngindo elite gave the new leaders of the Hongo cult sufficient leverage to secure an alliance with the Ngoni. By early 1906 the movement spread at such a rapid pace that the *maji-maji* was administered by local headmen rather than just religious leaders.[61]

The first months of the rebellion were disastrous for the Germans. The movement seemed to have taken over the entire southern half of the colony and measures which secured one rebel strong-point exposed the Germans elsewhere. Attacks reached the gates

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[59]Götzen, *Aufstand 1905/6*, 54-55.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 91, 96-98.

[60]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 172. The Germans captured Kinjikile on 4 August 1905, and the fact that his clarion call for the expulsion of the Europeans was still central to the movement speaks of the level of organization achieved by the Matumbi medium and his subordinates.

[61]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 172. Often headmen who refused to administer the water were deposed by the religious leaders.

of Dar-es-Salaam before they were turned back by the German offensive in September 1905. The explosion of violence in the south caught the stations unaware resulting in annihilation at Liwale and siege conditions at Mahenge. An expedition from Songea sent by Götzen to rescue Liwale was ambushed and defeated. Subsequent attempts to send large detachments from Kilwa were repulsed by the overwhelming rebel forces, but a heavily armed complement of freshly recruited *askaris* from the coast finally broke through to Liwale in September 1905 and discovered the devastation. At Mahenge the station was under siege through August and September. When news of an uprising reached the garrison in August, Hassell the commander had travelled east to determine the extent of the disturbance. On 25 August the Mahenge officer and his 60 *askaris* were surrounded by rebel forces in a small village and were fortunate to escape to their headquarters the next day. Hassell ordered the defenses of Mahenge station upgraded to thwart any possible ambush and on 30 August 8000 African warriors attacked the fort. The German machine guns massacred the massed formations of the Africans inflicting some 300 casualties. Mahenge remained heavily fortified and in siege conditions until a company relieved them three weeks later.[62]

When the Germans became aware of the extent of *Maji-Maji* they took immediate steps to halt its spread in the north. Ever suspicious of Nyamwezi power the German commander of Tabora threatened to raze the town if the Nyamwezi joined *Maji-Maji*. In Iringa the initial fear that the Hehe might join the rebels soon disappeared as their lack of interest became apparent. By ensuring the security of the north, the station commanders in Hehe country were able to free troops for the German counter-offensive. The Iringa garrison took the precaution of upgrading the defenses of the fortress before allowing one of its companies to relieve the Mahenge detachment. The combined forces of Iringa and Mahenge moved south in a concerted effort to relieve the station at Songea which found itself in the plight Mahenge had suffered during the previous month. The Germans landed

[62]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 98-108.; Iliffe,*German Rule 1905-1912*, 176.

at Songea on 15 October and took on a Ngoni army again with the help of machine guns. The magnitude of the rebellion in the south caused the *Schutztruppe* to approach the offensive in a haphazard and poorly coordinated fashion until they gained the submission of several Ngindo headmen in Mahenge in May 1906.[63]

By early 1906 a second German offensive began from the south under the guidance of Major Johannes. This force had moved from the coast to Songea where a number of Ngoni chiefs submitted to the commander in late 1905. Johannes viewed these actions as a Ngoni ploy to gain time and this view was validated by a Ngoni attack on a German patrol in January 1906. The *Schutztruppe* reassembled with a complement of auxiliaries and forced the Ngoni resistance westward toward Lake Nyasa where Johannes encircled the Ngoni force and took 1500 prisoners. After a further engagement in April gained the submission of the remnants of Lake Nyasa resistance, a second encirclement took place in June 1906 at Mgende and resulted in the final capitulation of the rebels. The *Maji-Maji* rebellion thus came to a close.

During the course of *Maji-Maji* the *Schutztruppe* devastated the southern half of the German East Africa. Despite expressing some regret at destroying 'their own land' the Germans employed scorched earth tactics in the hope of gaining their enemies' submission through starvation when they could not achieve it in battle. All agriculture that could be used by the rebels was destroyed or stolen. Indigenous auxiliaries were drawn frequently from groups with long-standing animosity toward the rebellious groups, furthering the ferocity of attacks and the extent of looting. The women and children in the territory were not targets, however. Following the example of the Boer War the Germans decided to put them in concentration camps in the Matumbi Highlands. Little is known about conditions in the camps, but the casualty figures given for the region would indicate that many women and children died during the campaign despite German efforts. It is estimated that the *Schutztruppe* was responsible for the deaths of 1/3 of the population of the south, most of

[63]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 115-8.; Iliffe,*German Rule 1905-1912*, 20.

whom died in the famine which resulted from the scorched earth tactics and farmers being forced from the land. For its part, the Force lost 700 *askaris* and 35 German officers and non-commissioned officers.[64]

The Period of Reform to the First World War (1907-14)

Maji-Maji acted as a catalyst for reform in the administration of all the German colonial possessions. The East African uprising, along with the war against the Herero in Southwest Africa, raised colonial concerns to the level of campaign issues among metropolitan politicians in the 1907 election. The resounding electoral triumph of Chancellor Bülow's conservative 'Bloc', campaigning on a platform of law and order and support for the military effort in East and Southwest Africa, seemed to underscore the German desire for greater involvement in the affairs of the colonies. Bülow had already appointed Bernhard Dernburg to the office of Colonial Director in 1906 and the new man's dynamism in articulating the Chancellor's policies was crucial to the conservative victory in the national election of the following year. These factors came together to raise the profile of colonial issues among deputies in the increasingly conservative *Reichstag*, a situation which allowed Dernburg greater resources and the freedom to pursue a new colonial policy.[65]

The reforms implemented in German East Africa, although possible only through the changing perspectives in Berlin, were initiated and carried out by the men on the spot. Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg replaced Götzen as governor of the colony in September 1906 and implemented changes which were meant to change the very nature of the colony. *Maji-Maji* led many administrators to reconsider the path of the territory's economic development and, indeed, forced the recognition of the necessity for a new direction. Rechenberg sought to make the East African venture economically viable, a goal that he viewed to be synonymous with peace. Unlike his predecessor the new governor felt that

[64]Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 200.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 131.; Götzen, *Aufstand 1905/6*, 81, 111.
[65]Iliffe,*German Rule 1905-1912*, 30-48. Iliffe is exceptional in covering the political context in which Dernburg's ambitious plans were carried out.

economic self-interest when mixed with improved working conditions and wages could act as a fulcrum for peace and stability in the region.[66]

It was against the backdrop of reform that the role of the *Schutztruppe* in the colony was modified. *Maji-Maji* helped to push administrative reforms which had been initiated prior to 1905 to their logical conclusion, as all but a few stations came under the civilian district commissioners. In practice this meant that the *Schutztruppe* was relieved of administrative duties and became a purely military organization for the first time. Civilian bureaucrats managed the affairs of the interior from government stations, defended by larger garrisons, resulting from *Maji-Maji*. Despite the general air of reform, the proximity of the uprising ensured that the military was not reduced in size.

Theoretically, the administrative reorganization completed under Rechenberg relegated the military to a subordinate position in the administrative hierarchy, but most of the officers felt that the *Schutztruppe* benefitted from the changes. Their new role allowed military men to concentrate on military matters finally. The creation and growth of a separate civilian police force from 1905 to 1914 virtually eliminated police and administrative tasks from the ægis of the *Schutztruppe* granting it the opportunity to become a specialized military force. The increased military budget and the perceived importance of the *Schutztruppe* in the colony following *Maji-Maji* allowed it increase in size from 1700 *askaris* in 1905 to 2154 in at the outbreak of the First World War.[67] In addition to expanding in number, the military improved its training procedures and created specialized units of sharpshooters, reconnaissance patrols and a 50 porter carrier detachment for each company. A signal corps consisting of 36 *askaris* literate in Swahili and German was also added to the Force during this period.

For the individual *askaris*, *Maji-Maji* had a more lasting effect than mere administrative reform. Ex-*askaris* were attacked and killed by rebels during the conflict

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[66]Iliffe,*German Rule 1905-1912*, 49-81.

[67]Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1920), 19.

and the violence directed at them as extensions of alien rule motivated many African retired from service to return to the German colours. In return for what the Germans viewed as clear manifestations of loyalty the administration introduced a pension for long-serving *askaris*, an innovation which forced the men to maintain regular contact with the station in order to collect their benefits. This practice both upheld the retired soldier's tie to the military and conveyed a sense of continuity between the new *askari* community and the old. The Germans wished to make it clear that service in the *Schutztruppe* involved a life-long commitment from both parties.

The relative quiet of the period 1905 to 1914 witnessed a dramatic reorientation in the *Schutztruppe*'s strategic planning. In the early years of the German administration little thought was given to the ramifications of a European war for East Africa. During their service in the colony, Governors Liebert, Götzen, and Rechenberg addressed this issue in memoranda to Berlin, but only in a cursory fashion. They all resigned themselves to the possibility that the British would violate colonial neutrality and that the colony would be left virtually defenceless, its fate to be decided at the conference table after the war. All three memoranda were unanimous in their certainty that a European war would be a precursor to indigenous insurrection. Yet among military planners an alternative scenario was slowly taking shape. An April 1912 memorandum issued from Berlin outlined a detailed series of measures to be adopted in the case of a European war. This document was significant because, for the first time, the Germans looked beyond the apparent inevitability of rebellion and sought to respond to the threat posed by other colonial armies in the case of war. The plan also marked a break with the official wisdom of the past insofar as it envisioned an aggressive rather than purely defensive role for the *Schutztruppe*, which gave it responsibility for destroying infrastructure and defenses in the British and Belgian colonies.[68]

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[68]Ludwig Boell, *Die Operationen in Ostafrika: Weltkrig 1914-1918*, (Hamburg: W. Dachert, 1951), 22.

The *Schutztruppen* commander in 1912, Freiherr von Schleinitz, endorsed the Berlin plan when it was presented to Governor Rechenberg, but it was with the arrival of Schleinitz's replacement Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck in January 1914 that the reorientation began to take shape. Upon arriving in East Africa, Lettow immediately canvassed a number of key settlers to support a campaign against the British possessions should war break out in Europe.[69] Indeed, the commander of the *Schutztruppe* learned that the settlers in the northern part of the colony planned to organize voluntary militias to assist in any colonial conflict with the British. Lettow-Vorbeck's tenure over the *Schutztruppe* marked the end of the era of pacification. A broad consensus developed between the military and settlers which indicated that the European situation posed a greater threat to their position in the colony than the indigenous population. Implicit in this belief was the conviction that the German administration and colonists had East Africa firmly in their grip and that the *Schutztruppe*'s primary obligation was to the Fatherland. Although Governor Heinrich Schnee was not convinced of the military-settler view until after hostilities had broken out, early 1914 signified a new phase in the history of the *Schutztruppe*, one which introduced a host of new factors and ultimately brought war to the territory.

Conclusion

From the date of the official German incursion in East Africa, through the period of pacification to the First World War, the *Schutztruppe* played a role of singular importance in the maintaining the German presence in East Africa. For the duration of their presence in the region German authority was maintained only through force or the threat of force. The first phase of colonialism saw the Germans substantiate their claim for power with coercion from military men in the interior and along the coast. The destruction caused by the *Schutztruppe* from 1889 to 1905 exhausted indigenous resistance and underscored the administration's determination to enforce the new order with a mailed fist. It was in its capacity as the administration's bludgeon against dissent and an arbiter of local disputes

[69]Lettow-Vorbeck, *Reminiscences*, 3-7.

that the *Schutztruppe* provided the most direct link between that the inhabitants of East Africa and the colonial regime. The financial and political straight jacket which bound the civilian administrators for most of the colonial period foisted the various roles of diplomatic corps, public works managers, justices of the peace and initiators of local policy on the officers corps of the *Schutztruppe*. Given the frequency of upheaval and war, particularly during the first years of the German occupation, these men were not terribly well suited to action beyond the realm of their military backgrounds.

As an armed force, however, the *Schutztruppe* carried out its responsibilities with consistent success. This characteristic was borne out in the four years of conflict which followed 1914, but was present in the series of military successes throughout the period of pacification. Not just a collection of dates, names, policy initiatives, or general concepts, the history of the *Schutztruppe* involves the story of people who possessed no patriotic or political stake in the extension of German control over African territory, but whose association with the colonial authorities lay at the heart of the success or failure of the German venture East Africa. These men-- Africans variously originating from the southern Sudan, Congo, Somali, but primarily from the East African territory conquered by the Germans -- became *askaris*. Despite the absence of a nationalistic or patriotic consciousness, the *askaris*' vigour in executing their commands of their superiors had a terrible legacy in the region. Among the East Africans, whom the Germans considered the *askaris*' compatriots, the behaviour of the *askaris* earned them a reputation for violence and unpredictability. The *askaris*' adherence to the colonial regime was spurred on by a number of factors which cannot be packaged neatly as blind loyalty to Europeans or betrayal of Africans. The reasons for their involvement are specific to their situation, but also speak to wider questions about the nature of exploitation and accommodation in the colonial context.

Chapter II

Ethnicity and Recruitment in the Schutztruppe

The ethnic composition of the *Schutztruppe* was the result of a series of choices made by both patron and client. The Germans chose to recruit their force from specific ethnic groups for a variety of reasons-- some dictated by prejudices, others the result of political considerations irrelevant to the military situation in East Africa. Africans entering the armed service of the conquerors were motivated by equally complex factors. In the end choices were made by individuals, but over-representation by a few groups in the *Schutztruppe* overwhelmingly suggests that the ethnic composition of the Force was a result of more than the decision of a large number of individuals acting independently. What motivated one African man to seek enlistment in the German army drew many men like him; yet the attraction was not universal. Some peoples joined the *Schutztruppe* by the legion, while others, seemingly better qualified for full-time military service, were disinterested or failed to withstand the scrutiny of the German commanders. An examination of the ethnic composition of the *Schutztruppe* is illuminating both of the historical situations of various ethnic groups in German East Africa and of the motivation and origins of the recruits.

As is so often the case in colonial history, the initial decisions regarding the composition of the *Schutztruppe* were taken in the metropole and were the result of the political considerations of the German leadership. The original East African expeditionary force provide a fine illustration of the constraints imposed on Bismarck in the late 1880s. The *Deutsch Ost Afrika Gesellschaft'* s imperiled position clearly called for the intervention of the *Reich*, but an operation to rescue a commercial venture or aimed at preserving German interests in the region would not pass through the *Reichstag*. Thus the abolition of

the slave trade in East Africa, a cause which enjoyed wide support in Britain and France, became the vexillum under which Bismarck rallied the *Reichstag* deputies. Bismarck was not an opponent of the slave trade *per se*, but he recognized its negative appeal among members of the Roman Catholic *Zentrum* party, for whom a war on slavery took on moral ramifications which transcended even national interests. Coastal traders and landholders in East Africa, however, viewed the German incursion as an attack on an institution at the very heart of their society and economy. By choosing the high road on the question of German intervention in East Africa, Bismarck committed unwilling *Reichstag* deputies to a policy of disruption and long-term involvement in East Africa.[1]

Despite its general support and encouragement for an operation to combat slave traders, the *Reichstag* was careful to place limits on the expedition. A jingoistic faction of deputies and a number of conservative newspapers joined Carl Peters's call for direct support from the regular army, but these shrill voices influenced the *Reichstag*'s cautious majority little. The tropical climate and the distance made any German government reluctant to use a European force in Africa. The British experience in West Africa had shown that European soldiers stationed in Africa could not meet the demands of the tropical climate and thus incurred prohibitive medical costs for their home government.[2] Equally, the wages of German soldiers and the transport expenses were too costly for suppressing a disturbance in such an obscure corner of the world. Hermann Wissmann, the man Bismarck appointed to lead the expedition, shared the opinion that German lives were too valuable to waste in Africa. Instead he sought to create an army where "one did not ask about casualties, but instead asked about the financial costs". A web of financial and

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[1] Fritz-Ferdinand Müller, *Deutshland-Zanzibar-Ostafrika: Geschichte einer deutschen Kolonialeroberung 1884-1890*, (East Berlin: Rüten and Loening, 1959), 402. Ever the pragmatist, Bismarck changed his opinion to suit the circumstances. On the issue of the slave trade, he conveniently reversed the opinion he held in 1884 when he told an abolitionist that he had no business interfering with the slave traders, because *"Die Sklaven gehen Sie nichts an!"* ("The slaves are none of your business").

[2] David Killingray, "Race and Rank in the British Army in the twentieth century," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 10 (July, 1987): 277.

political considerations thus conspired to create a situation where the recruitment of Africans was Wissmann's sole option.[3]

Finding a cadre of German officers was Wissmann's first undertaking and proved a surprisingly easy task. For officers and non commissioned officers weaned on the glory of the Franco-Prussian War, East Africa seemed to provide relief from the daily tedium of the barracks and an opportunity for adventure. The army was equally accommodating to the needs of the *Schutztruppe*, allowing soldiers recruited by Wissmann in Germany to leave the service for up to three years without sacrificing their seniority. The extraordinary powers granted him as *Reichskommissar* allowed Wissmann to shape the corps of officers to his taste. A nucleus of Europeans was formed by a number of the commander's military cronies. Some of these men possessed African experience or a smattering of Arabic and Swahili, but most of the 25 officers and 56 non-commissioned officers recruited for the Wissmann expedition met their first African experiences in 1889.[4]

The recruitment of Africans began in Cairo. Under the auspices of Lieutenant Theremin, an officer fluent in Arabic, the Germans enlisted 630 Sudanese soldiers left unemployed after their Egyptian regiments were disbanded. In addition to these men, Theremin found 40 Somali sailors and a handful of Turkish policemen to join the new force. Aside from searching the slums of Cairo for potential soldiers, the Germans enlisted the Portuguese colonial authorities to help sign on 100 Shagaan warriors from

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[3]Alexander Becker, ed., *Hermann von Wissmann: Deutschlands größter Afrikaner. Sein Leben und Wirken unter Benutzung des Nachlasses*, (Berlin: Alfred Schall, 1907), 185.; Müller, *Zanzibar-Ostafrika*, 430. Müller makes the point that the *Reichstag* and Wissmann both viewed an all German force as a mistake because neither wanted public scrutiny until the operation was brought to a successful conclusion. The prospect of public outcry resulting from heavy German casualties in an overseas war convinced them of the necessity of foreign mercenaries. Wissmann paralleled his creation with the early British experience in India, where he assures us, "man nicht nach den Opfern, sondern nach den Kostenpunkt fragte" (translated above).

[4] Becker, *Hermann von Wissmann*, 189.; Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, (Berlin: Ernst Mittler, 1911), 2.; Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika: Eine Schilderung deutscher Tropen nach 10 Wanderjahren*, (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1910), 11.; Hans-Georg Steltzer, *Die Deutschen und Ihr Kolonialreich*, (Frankfurt/M: Societäts Verlag, 1984), 62. According to Becker, instructors at various military academies Germany complained that they were losing their best young cadets to the *Schutztruppe*. The apocryphal tone of this anecdote is significant for it reveals the view the officers corps had of itself: youthful, ambitious, and bent on adventure. The actions of many officers reinforced this opinion.

Mozambique and drew upon the small force of East African *askaris* in the pay of the *Deutsch Ost-Afrika Gesellschaft.* [5]

The *Reichskommissar* was acutely aware of the cultural misunderstandings which could arise from European officers commanding a polyglot force. Before the troops arrived in East Africa, Wissmann explained what he demanded from his German officers vis-à-vis their African charges:

> He who takes it upon himself to maltreat one of these people or fails to respect their women or the rank of black officers and non-commissioned officers, or who grossly offends the religious practices or values of the Sudanese, can expect harsh punishment from me.[6]

In spite of his noble pronouncements, Wissmann was not in favour of the Africans being treated as equals, stating, "I am no friend of shaking the hand of every 'black brother', indeed I see more good in maintaining a healthy distance, especially in relation to the officers."[7] Officers were meant to assume a posture of paternal deference when dealing with their men and were instructed to observe a high standard of justice. Wissmann's speech guided his officers to modify traditional responses to their new environment and as a consequence many Germans took pains to bridge the cultural gap between themselves and their men, without losing their sense of superiority.[8]

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[5] Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 3.; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 95.; Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 10. In the time since the First World War the term *askari* has acquired various meanings in Swahili, but for the purposes of this paper *askari* will be used to identify African soldiers. Nigmann puts the number of East African *askaris* at 80, bringing the total African contingent to 850 men.

[6] Quoted in Hans-George Steltzer, *Die Deutschen und Ihr Kolonialreich*, (Frankfurt a/M: Societäts Verlag, 1984), 63.

[7] Hermann von Wissmann, *Afrika: Schilderungen und Rathschläge zur Vorbereitung für den Aufenthalt und den Dienst in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, (Berlin: Ernst Mittler, 1895), 6. Wissmann goes on to say, "the Negro should recognize that his officer is working in his best interests (*ein Herz für ihn hat*)".

[8] Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 5. The author recounts the story of one officer who attempted to teach his men to stand at attention, only to see one of the Shagaan warriors under his command fall out and begin a ritual dance. This scene was repeated by a number of Africans before the officer asked for an explanation. He was told that his men were showing their bravery and willingness to fight. Rather than punish his men, the officer congratulated them on their courage and explained that they must learn the German war dance-- Prussian drill-- in order to use the German rifles.

Wissmann intended to use only foreign soldiers in the *Schutztruppe*, and stipulated that his African force be raised exclusively outside the East African territory. Initially, questions were raised about enlisting Sudanese Muslims to put down an uprising of their 'Islamic brothers' in East Africa. Wissmann dismissed this concern, arguing that the same men served the British with distinction in the Sudan where they defeated an army of their countrymen and fellow Muslims. This ambitious policy of using only foreign mercenaries quickly became unmanageable. Attrition coupled with the growing needs of the occupation to force the *Schutztruppen* commanders to increase the size of their force, but the foreign sources of recruits were rapidly drying up. The British initially refused to supply their colonial competitor with more manpower, after the Germans asked permission to recruit more Sudanese soldiers in 1889. A second complement of Sudanese soldiers did arrive in German East Africa in April 1890, after the British acquiesced to German requests, but they proved vastly inferior to the earlier group. Clearly an alternative was necessary.[9]

The Germans were forced to look to the East African territory for new reinforcements. The circumstances of the African resistance to the German incursion helped persuade Wissmann to abandon his original recruitment plan in favour of a more expedient solution to the manpower crisis. Experiences in combat against Abushiri and Bana Heri undermined Wissmann's belief in the absolute supremacy of foreign mercenaries. While the Sudanese performed beyond the Germans' expectations, the Shagaan soldiers disappointed their commanders. The latter group were returned to Mozambique after the coastal resistance was eliminated and were replaced by East Africans. Wissmann's original force had included indigenous *askaris* formerly employed by the *Deutsch Ost Afrika Gesellschaft* and their satisfactory performance in battle -- especially when compared to the Shagaan -- encouraged the Germans to recruit from the ethnic groups of the interior in early 1890 [10]

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[9] Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 24.

[10] Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 69.; Fonck *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 10. Fonck explained that the 'Zulus' were contracted from Mozambique until 1892. Given the extreme manpower shortage and the financial

Despite abandoning the 'foreign mercenary policy' of the coastal campaign, the imperatives of 1889 continued to guide the *Schutztruppe*'s recruitment pattern. Bismarck applauded Wissmann's decision to employ an African mercenary army, having himself put forward an identical suggestion to the *DOAG* when the first disturbances occurred in 1888.[11] The *Reichstag* was less concerned by the source of *Schutztruppe* recruits than the cost of Wissmann's force. The original allotment of £100,000 was intended to keep the expedition modest and the commander avoided tactics which would incur casualties or cause long-term damage to the German position in the territory. Wissmann advocated building "golden bridges" of diplomacy if submission without war seemed attainable and warned his officers against risking heavy casualties in elaborate encirclements or battles of annihilation. As the campaign progressed from the coast to the interior, expenses spiraled far beyond the *Reichstag* allotment of £100,000 and eventually totaled £450,000. In March 1891, Berlin received word of Wissmann's lavish spending and ordered his immediate return to Germany.[12]

When Bismarck handed Hermann Wissmann the command of the East African expeditionary force he gave the young officer enormous discretionary powers, stating: "I am not the Military Attaché to the Imperial Court in Vienna and you will be a thousand miles away; stand on your own feet. I shall give you but one order: Win!"[13] This freedom of movement allowed the first commander to shape the *Schutztruppe* as he wished. Thus the policies which were successful under Wissmann proved difficult to alter after his tenure because they enjoyed the authority of experience and precedent.[14]

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constraints impinging on the Germans, the 'Zulus' ' premature release from the Force in early 1891, is testament to their poor performance.

[11] Müller, *Zanzibar -Ostafrika*, 403. Bismarck's first response to the *DOAG*'s plea for hep was to suggest that the company's reconquest of the colony be pursued through garrisons of African mercenaries. *"Garnisonen muß die Gesellschaft stellen dazu Mietstruppen haben. Die Flotte kann daß nicht Dazu muß man Negersoldaten mieten. Kaffern."* ("The Company needs garrisons manned by mercenaries. The fleet cannot do this... to this end we must hire black soldiers. Kaffirs.")

[12] Wissmann, *Rathschläge*, 17-21.; Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 108.

[13] Becker, *Hermann von Wissmann*, 180.

[14] The tendency of the Germans to ape policies derived from the British colonial experience in Africa and India, is an important component of the German colonial mentality. Although innovative in some of their

Financial constraints continued to restrict the expansion of the Force and encouraged freebooting by *askaris* and officers alike: Commander Johannes considered plunder an important objective in his expeditions in Kilimanjaro throughout the 1890s and his behaviour was condoned by the financially strapped military arm of the administration[15] It was in the context of limited finances that the *Schutztruppe* came to rely on the support of local *ruga-ruga* armies to carry out reconnaissance and mopping-up operations in lieu of regular troops. Wissmann had little faith in these forces for defensive purposes, but he believed that indigenous auxiliaries could easily supplant a *Schutztruppe* detachment in pursuit of a dispersed enemy force. The Germans followed this initiative by making extensive use of *ruga-ruga* until the First World War.[16]

Ethnicity and notions of the superiority of certain ethnic groups, were significant organizational features of the *Schutztruppe*. Originally, the companies of Wissmann's force were divided by ethnic origin, but attrition made this policy impossible to maintain over the long term. Even after combat units were integrated, ethnic considerations continued to guide German perceptions. The Germans followed the traditions established in the British and French colonies and subscribed to the theory that certain peoples had martial inclinations, while others were useless for the requirements of military service. It was in the context of 'martial races' that Wissmann's biases and prejudices enjoyed an enduring legacy.[17]

The Germans briefly entertained the thought of using coastal peoples to defend the *Deutsch Ost Afrika Gesellschaft* during the first phase of resistance in 1888. This option

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later colonial policies, the Germans continually sought validation for their actions through precedent or previous success elsewhere. In the absence of a long history in their own empire, the Germans sought to learn the lessons of British colonialism vicariously.

[15] Iliffe, *History of Tanganyika*, 117.

[16] Wissmann, *Rathschläge*, 24; Geographical Section of the Naval Intelligence Division, *A Handbook of German East Afrika*, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920), Wissmann invoked a rule among the soldiers that all booty be divided equally, a clear recognition, if not encouragement of looting. *Ruga-ruga* were tempted by similar payments: Masai auxiliaries were employed on expeditions at the rate of one cow per man.

[17] Wissmann, *Rathschläge*, 65.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 69.

was quickly dismissed by a company official who judged the Swahilis and Zanzibaris "a cowardly people, incapable of being instructed in the art of war."[18] The same official admitted that it was primarily the political situation which mitigated against employing people whose loyalty to the German cause was questionable. The issue of loyalty was uppermost in Wissmann's mind when he turned to Sudanese soldiers for the bulk of his force and, perhaps predictably, the Sudanese were the first ethnic group in the *Schutztruppe* to acquire the martial brand. After the decision was taken to employ East Africans in the Force, a number of indigenous groups gained reputations which rivaled, but never surpassed that of the Sudanese. In his 1911 account of the ethnic composition of the *Schutztruppe*, the Force's official historian discussed the successful integration of soldiers in a typically nativist fashion:

> A number of tribes were particularly valuable as reinforcements. So it was that Manyema recruits were in high demand in the 'nineties. [The] Manyema showed themselves fine warriors, although they could not be used in peace-time because of their disregard for discipline.The brave Nyamwezi...contributed a larger number of reliable and faithful soldiers... similarly their neighbors the Sukuma, a majority of whom were of magnificent build and stature, made an excellent right flank for the company.[19]

Some groups did not meet the Germans' expectations because of perceived character flaws or cultural traditions which conflicted with the conditions of service:

> In contrast, the Masai are ill-suited for service...the frequent attempts, made with great care and patience, to make use [of them] have been complete failures... The Masai are sloppy, lazy and were usually released before their time was served. The other interesting warrior tribe in the colony, the Hehe, did not provide the troop reservoir for which we had hoped....For service in their homeland we had more recruits than we needed, service outside of the region was unpopular.... Those who served made excellent soldiers and generally rose quickly through the ranks.[20]

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[18]Müller, *Zanzibar-Ostafrika*, 430.
[19]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 70.
[20]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 70-1.

The martial/ non-martial nomenclature had its colonial origin in the Indian Army. Sikhs and Punjabis were favoured by British recruiters because of their physical stature, but the 1857 revolt of Bengali soldiers serving the East India Company marked a turning point for Punjabi fortunes in the British service. The rise in status of Sikh soldiers was accelerated when they were employed to suppress the mutiny. What once was an inclination among British recruitment officers became an entrenched principle to actively enlist 'martial' Sikhs. The martial/non-martial classification becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy, where an externally imposed ethnic stereotype is exacerbated by members of the group who act within the parameters of said type. Those members of the group who do not conform to the stereotype are written off as aberrations under the convenient rubric, 'the exception that makes the rule'. These prejudices often have their origins in the observation of economic roles. Money lending was a business which did not engender mutual admiration between lender and borrower, and subsequently money lenders gained a reputation for greed and meanness. Indian merchants on the East African coast filled an economic void by supplying capital to Arab plantation owners and small loans to individuals, and quickly gained an unsavory reputation among those who came to depend on them. The pattern follows: Indians lend money *ergo* all Indians are mean and inspired by greed. Local prejudice against Indians was exacerbated by the fact that these people were foreign to the region in question.[21]

The German theory of martial races in the *Schutztruppe* took the shape of a pyramid with their first successful recruits, the Sudanese, occupying the apex. Throughout the period in question Sudanese tenacity and loyalty to the German cause fascinated their commanders and earned them a special status. One long-serving officer cogently described the position of the Sudanese soldiers in the *Schutztruppe*'s hierarchy:

> Handled correctly, the Sudanese is a brave, responsible and, to the officer he trusts, an unconditionally loyal soldier.

[21]Anthony Kirk-Greene, "*Damnosa Hereditas* : Ethnic Ranking and the Martial Races Imperative in Africa," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 3 (October 1980): 394-7.

> Goodwill, fairness and strictness in even doses provide a simple recipe to make him an ideal soldier. In all fairness, it must be emphasized that a number of long-serving *askaris* from the local tribes with extensive experience on expeditions and at war are as accomplished as the Sudanese. The latter, however, possess an intangible soldierly spirit and a feeling for discipline in their blood.[22]

Another officer had a more romantic explanation for the Sudanese martial pedigree:

> They are born soldiers. They have known no other profession for generations; sons followed the example of their fathers and thus the military spirit and military capability is in their blood. They are the truest successors of the old *Landsknecht*, defending the flag to which they pledged loyalty until they succumb to disease or the wounds of battle.[23]

Despite the unrestricted praise for these successors to the *Landsknecht* tradition, some Sudanese soldiers betrayed their supposedly innate martial qualities. These men were explained away with 'exception that makes the rule' rationalizations. Hauptmann Fonck explained the release of a number of Sudanese soldiers lacking their compatriots' "intangible soldierly spirit", as a collection of "the victims of bad command, common drunkards and rabble-rousers".[24] As these anomalies grew to a significant number, the Germans refined their martial theory: the darker skinned Dinka recruits from the southern Sudan were the warrior caste, while the 'yellow' Sudanese from the predominantly Arab north were non-martial agitators.[25]

While, for the purposes of this thesis, the term Sudanese has been used to describe both the Dinka and Arabs from the Sudan, it is important to draw a distinction between the two groups. The Dinka recruits served in British regiments during the Mahdist uprising where they acquired important first-hand experience of European military ritual and practice. A large measure of their military knowledge, however, was rooted in the community from which they certainly originated. From the eighteenth century onward

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[22] Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 15.
[23] J Stentzler, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika: Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, (Berlin: Weicher, 1910), 13.
[24] Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 9.
[25] Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 24.

slaves originating from the southern Sudan regularly fought wars on behalf of northern magnates, establishing a tradition as a reservoir of military labour. The employment of these slaves as soldiers was systematized during the 1820s when Muhammed 'Ali Pasha reigned as viceroy of Egypt and established a new model army he called the *Jihadiyya* . Dinka slaves were a crucial component of this new force, acting as garrison troops for the provinces of the southern Sudan and supporting the Turco-Egyptian regime's interests. The men recruited originally in Cairo were predominantly Dinka, but there were a small number of Arabs in this group and they performed well enough to avoid being distinguished from their darker skinned colleagues. Although lacking the martial heritage of the Dinka, the Arab Sudanese did not arouse special notice until a second complement of recruits from Cairo, containing a high proportion of Arabs, joined the *Schutztruppe* in 1891. This group's poor performance under fire marked the beginning of the differentiation between 'black' and 'yellow' skinned Sudanese.[26]

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the Sudanese legacy was the fact that these soldiers made up only a small proportion of the *Schutztruppe* after 1889-91 campaign. Wissmann estimated that only 1/4 of his soldiers were Sudanese in the 1892, yet accounts by officers until 1914 recognize this minority as the nucleus of the Force and repeatedly emphasize their courage and loyalty. These lionized portraits clearly reflect a tie between the officers and Sudanese soldiers, which went beyond a German desire to perpetuate the myth of martial races or romanticize the exploits of one particular group. The bond between German officers and Sudanese soldiers was linked to the dynamics of the patron-client relationship.

Employment in Wissmann's East African expeditionary force saved those recruited in Cairo from abject poverty. Upon hearing news that a recruitment drive had begun in 1889, soldiers from disbanded Egyptian regiments streamed into the city from the

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[26]P.M. Holt, *A Modern History of the Sudan. From the Funj to the Present Day*, (London: Weidenfeld, 1961), 35-59.

hinterland. One of the recruiters was appalled by the physical state of the men describing them as, " ragged, emaciated human forms", whose poverty had been exacerbated by the Egyptian government's refusal to pay wages accrued during the campaign against the Mahdi. The Germans did not make the same mistake. They paid the Sudanese soldiers at regular monthly intervals and in return received the obedience, if not the commitment, of men practiced in European discipline and experienced in war.[27] The patron-client relationship was a symbiotic one, in which superior results for the patron were rewarded with an elevated status for the client. The Sudanese regarded themselves as superior to the Africans indigenous to the region, an attitude implicitly encouraged by the Germans who built each company around a nucleus of experienced Sudanese *askaris* and paid the original complement of recruits a higher wage than their East African colleagues.[28] This latter point had as much to do with the terms of enlistment in 1889 as it did with any perceived soldierly superiority: the Sudanese originally signed on at a rate of £2/ month, which was converted to 30 rupees/month, compared with 20 rupees/ month for native East Africans.[29] The fact that indigenous *askaris* achieved wage parity only in 1907, however, seemed to confirm the exalted position of the Sudanese. The Sudanese loyal defence of the administration was inextricably linked to preserving their special status in the new colonial order.

Given the financial and manpower constraints facing the *Schutztruppe* at the end of the first campaign, it was understandable that Wissmann ignored the dissenting voices of his officers corps and began recruiting soldiers indigenous to the German territories. During the period 1891-1900, the Germans recruited the indigenous population to fill out the ranks of the *Schutztruppe* and these East Africans proved loyal and obedient servants of the colonial regime. The *Schutztruppe* experimented with a variety of peoples, mostly

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[27]Rochus Schmidt, *Geschichte des Araber-Aufstands in Ost-Afrika*, (Frankfurt /O: Trowitsch, 1892), 46.
[28]Magdalene von Prince, *Eine Deutsche Frau im Innern Deutsch Ost-Afrikas*, (Berlin: Ernst Mittler, 1908), 19.; Naval Intelligence Division, *Handbook of German East Africa*, 200. Magdalene von Prince was amused by the fact that the Sudanese dealt with the Africans of the interior from a position of superiority.
[29]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 73.

from the northern half of the colony, but it soon became apparent that a handful of groups dominated the Force.

The Nyamwezi and Sukuma were subordinate only to the Sudanese in the German martial hierarchy. As the number of Sudanese soldiers in the *Schutztruppe* diminished through attrition and old-age, the Nyamwezi and Sukuma filled the manpower void. Their commanders praised them in terms previously reserved for the Sudanese, one went so far as to contend, that both groups were soldiers born with "German discipline in their souls".[30] While the exact numerical breakdown of the force is unclear, it is evident that the Nyamwezi and Sukuma provided the majority of recruits to the *Schutztruppe* shortly after the first incursions into the interior and composed the majority of the Force by the mid-1890s.[31] This shift in the composition of the force was influenced by a number of factors shaping the perceptions of the German recruiters and those of the Sukuma and Nyamwezi.

The German affinity for the Nyamwezi was the result of two factors. During his two African journeys in 1881 and 1883, Hermann Wissmann twice passed through the territory of the Nyamwezi warlord Mirambo and established cordial relations with him. The German explorer was deeply impressed by the Nyamwezi leader's political organization and his knowledge of military tactics and weaponry, but saw him as a man above his race.[32] Mirambo unified the chiefdoms of greater Nyamwezi under his paramountcy through a combination of military genius and political guile.[33] The Germans considered Nyamwezi soldiers to be well-suited for service in the *Schutztruppe* because they represented one of the colony's martial races and were familiar with a highly developed military organization. Equally important to the success of the recruitment drive in greater Nyamwezi was the fact that it was located on the central caravan route and

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[30] Ludwig Deppe, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck durch Afrika*, (Berlin: August Scherl, 1919), 77. Deppe's feelings toward the Nyamwezi and Sukuma are likely coloured by the experiences of the war, but this fact is testament to their dominant position in the *Schutztruppe* through 1914.
[31] Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Africa*, 201.
[32] Becker, *Hermann von Wissmann*, 49-52.
[33] Norman Robert Bennett, *Mirambo of Tanzania. ca. 1840-1884.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 160-175.

therefore was an early target for pacification in the interior. Nyamwezi country was one of the few areas in the colony where the Germans felt secure enough to enlist potential defenders of the administration, during the 1890s. The Sukuma's close political association with the Nyamwezi and their presence throughout greater Nyamwezi made them a natural target for German recruiters. As with Sikhs in India, the Sukuma's imposing stature made them particularly attractive to the *Schutztruppe*.

However greatly the Germans desired the presence of Nyamwezi and Sukuma soldiers, it must be remembered that enlistment in the *Schutztruppe* was voluntary. The fact that soldiers were not pressed into service, illustrates less the good nature of the colonizers than the impracticability of such an option. Without the enforcement mechanisms available in Europe, African soldiers unhappy with life in the *Schutztruppe* could desert easily. The Germans realized that a military force whose members could not be motivated to remain at their posts could scarcely be trusted with the defence of the administration. Employment in the *Schutztruppe* had to be attractive to Africans. In the instability which followed the *Schutztruppe* 's conquest of the interior, the Germans found willing collaborators among peoples whose historical situations made them particularly amenable to the overtures of invaders.

Greater Nyamwezi was the scene of a series of social and political upheavals throughout the nineteenth century. During the early part of the century the Nyamwezi were famous for their cattle herds, but the violent migration of the Ngoni people from the south and the advent of interior trade routes during the 1840s effected a reorientation of their pastoral society. The rewards of involvement in the ivory and slave trade and the risks inherent in pastoralism during unstable times, transformed Sukuma and Nyamwezi society, bringing about a specialized labour market and a reorganization of political and social institutions.[34]

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[34]Andrew Roberts, "The Nyamwezi," in Andrew Roberts ed., *Tanzania before 1900*, (Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House, 1968), 127.

As the demand for ivory and slaves increased during the nineteenth century, Arab traders attempted to gain access to new sources of both commodities and thus penetrated to Lake Tanganyika establishing the trading community at Ujiji. To remain profitable caravans required tremendous manpower resources and, initially, traders solved the problem by using slaves as porters. Interior chiefs were remunerated for providing slave-carriers for the new trade routes, but as ivory rose in value the giant tusks became objects too precious to be left in the hands of slaves. Freedmen were induced to join the trade and out of this new situation a subculture grew linking the caravans to traditional Nyamwezi society.[35]

Porters became a group unto themselves during the latter half of the nineteenth century as prestige and respect within the society became associated with participation in this highly specialized and lucrative profession. Porterage became a rite of passage for every Nyamwezi male; the first step toward manhood for a young man involved establishing his own trading enterprise. The element of travel was associated with both of these concepts and it has been observed that, "no young man could really gain respect at home and find a wife until he had seen the sea."[36] The emergence of the professions of porter and trader saw the beginnings of a separate society within the wider Nyamwezi society.

The system was refined further as a result of Ngoni raids on the caravan traffic. Private armies sprang up as various Nyamwezi chiefs sought to profit from the trade routes themselves, rather than simply providing manpower. These troops were the earliest incarnation of the *ruga-ruga* and were created to protect the chief's own caravans or to exact tolls from traders passing through his sector of the trade route. Shortly after this innovation was introduced to the system, powerful chiefs rose to prominence throughout East Africa. This period witnessed Mirambo's unification of greater Nyamwezi, through a

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[35] Roberts, "The Nyamwezi," 129.
[36] Roberts, "The Nyamwezi," 129.

strong *ruga-ruga* and a highly centralized political apparatus; after his death in 1884 Mirambo's military organization remained an important factor in Nyamwezi politics.[37]

The final upheaval in Nyamwezi society during the nineteenth century occurred with German conquest of the interior. The Germans ended the rule of the *ruga-ruga* along central caravan route when they secured the territory's main commercial artery in the 1890s and gained a significant number of Nyamwezi collaborators at a very early juncture.[38] The emergence of the caravan tradition helps to explain the ready cooperation of the Nyamwezi. The trade routes brought an external influence to the region forty years earlier and the German incursion amounted to a comparatively minor modification of behaviour. The Nyamwezi adapted the elements that emerged after 1840 to meet the new challenge. Porterage established a distinct *class* within the society, its elitism closely linked to this sense of separateness and the associated aspect of travel. The *ruga-ruga*, another innovation of the caravan era, shared the elitist character of porterage, but was specialized further by the martial nature of its task. In the wake of the German pacification of the central caravan route and the demise of private armies, enlistment in the *Schutztruppe* provided ex-*ruga-ruga* with the only opportunity to continue their elite profession In the successional struggles which followed Mirambo's death, the Nyamwezi leader's former officers allied their forces with the highest bidder illustrating the transient nature of *ruga-ruga* loyalty. The service of indigenous soldiers in the *Schutztruppe* was less an act of disloyalty than a response to a shrinking market for their talents. The German policy of stationing *askaris* away from their home region, also appealed to the Nyamwezi belief that travel helped to define manhood.

The Manyema were the ethnic group most prominent in the *Schutztruppe* after the Sukuma and Nyamwezi. Although this group originated from the region west of Lake Tanganyika, the Germans recruited Manyema soldiers in greater Nyamwezi; the Manyema

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37 Roberts, "The Nyamwezi," 133-9.
38 Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 70.

presence in Unyamwezi was a result of the caravan trade. As the slave trade became more lucrative during the latter half of the nineteenth century, Nyamwezi traders made a practice of going to Manyema country in search of slaves; as a result, Manyema provided the bulk of domestic slaves found in greater Nyamwezi. In addition to those who were brought to the region against their will, a large number of Manyema came east to find their fortunes as traders along the caravan routes. The central caravan route also attracted Manyema of another sort. By 1880 guns and powder were widely available in the area west of Lake Tanganyika and the Manyema established a reputation as the most feared caravan raiders in the Congo Basin. Manyema warriors found ready employment with minor Nyamwezi chiefs wishing to establish strong *ruga-ruga* to raid or demand tribute from caravans passing through their territory.[39]

Given the choices open to the Manyema in Nyamwezi, their willingness to enlist in the *Schutztruppe* is not surprising. Clearly, employment as a soldier provided a dramatic change in status for a slave; rather than remaining the property of another man, a slave became part of an elite warrior community, protected from any claim by his owner through the German anti-slavery regime.[40] When the Germans effectively ended caravan raiding in the 1890s, the Manyema *ruga-ruga* became targets of the *Schutztruppe*'s recruitment drive. Given the comments by the *Schutztruppe*'s official historian regarding the Manyema's wildness and their volatile nature it seems that the bulk of their number were originally raiders whose way of life was upset by the German conquest.[41] For these men, the logical alternative to unemployment was a change of sides.

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[39] Roland Oliver and Gervase Matthew, eds., *The History of East Africa* . (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 282.; Roberts ed., *Tanzania before 1900*, vii. Roberts provides a useful map of Tanzania presenting the locations of various ethnic groups.

[40] Myron Echenberg, "Slaves into Soldiers: Social Origins of the *Tirailleurs Senegalais*," in Paul E. Lovejoy, *Africans in Bondage*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 323. Unlike the *Tirailleur Senegalais* , which also had a high proportion of ex-slaves in its ranks, the *Schutztruppe* never gained the unsavoury reputation of a slave repository. Prejudice of this sort does not seem to have affected the attraction of enlistment adversely.

[41] Naval Intelligence, *A Handbook of German East Africa*, 201. ; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 70.

The circumstances of slaves and caravan raiders in the 1890s made service with the Germans a logical decision, but the enlistment of succeeding generations of Manyema points to the enduring legacy of Wissmann's indigenous recruitment formula. The presence of a large proportion of Manyema in the *Schutztruppe* until the First World War, illustrates the policy of internal recruitment which became entrenched after 1900. Despite the fact that the Manyema who joined after 1900 were born almost entirely in the East African territory, the Germans continued to regard them as a foreign element in the Force. During the decade prior to the Great War the Germans increasingly relied upon internal recruitment for new soldiers; the children of *askaris* and the soldiers' personal servants, known as *askari boys*, provided an ample cadre of fresh soldiers. The Nyamwezi, Sukuma, and Manyema did not relinquished their dominant place in the *Schutztruppe*, as the Germans remained content with their initial assessment of the martial merits of their various subject people.

The initial reluctance of the Masai and Hehe in German East Africa to enter the pay of the *Schutztruppe* require some explanation. Recalling the earlier description of the Masai, German attempts to train Masai recruits according to the elaborate rituals of European drill failed miserably. The failure of the German experiment is understandable, despite the reputation this ethnic group acquired as the dominant military force on the East African plateau. The pastoral nature of their society did not facilitate the integration of Masai recruits into the barracks and parade square life of the *Schutztruppe* ; the conditions of enlistment, which included service in other parts of the colony, were irreconcilable with the life Masai soldiers knew as civilians.

The Hehe did not flock to the German side after the demise of Mkwawa in 1898, much to the dismay of the *Schutztruppe*'s commanders. The defeat of the Zelewski expedition in 1891 and the protracted campaign which followed did not inspire hatred for the Hehe among the Germans, rather it provoked interest in the colony's "warrior

nation".[42] The centralized Hehe chiefdom brought together several small chiefdoms during the period 1855-79 as a defense against Ngoni incursion. Under Mkwawa the Hehe sought to expand their territory westward from the area they occupied between the Kilombero and Kisogo Rivers to gain greater access to the most lucrative caravan traffic. The earliest Hehe armies established a reputation for raiding caravans and Mkwawa used this experience to build a powerful military force during the 1880s.[43] In the course of their costly armed struggle, German officers were impressed by the Hehe's organization, leadership and courage and, after 1898, unsuccessfully attempted to encourage Hehe participation in the *Schutztruppe*. The Hehe did not enter the German service in significant numbers until shortly before the First World War.[44] One officer who studied the Hehe at length reported that they willingly served the *Schutztruppe* in Uhehe, but steadfastly refused to be posted away from their homeland.[45]

The Masai and Hehe shared some characteristics which discouraged enlistment in the *Schutztruppe*. Despite their reputations as warrior peoples, both societies were closely attached to the way of life offered in a particular region: the Masai were pastoralists used to a transient existence on the open steppe and the Hehe were an agrarian people tied to their fertile plateau. When given the choice of abandoning their traditional way of life for a lucrative new profession, both the Hehe and Masai were reluctant to abandon the ways of the past. Pride in the earlier military accomplishments of their respective ethnic groups did not engender in the Hehe or the Masai the cavalier loyalty seen among mercenary *ruga-ruga*

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[42]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 70.

[43]Roberts, "The Nyamwezi," 43,

[44]Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Africa*, 202.; Kirk-Greene, "*Damnosa Hereditas*", 401. Interestingly, the Hehe made up for their lack of participation in the early years of the *Schutztruppe* , by rising to the forefront of the British military service during the period of protectorate status, after the First World War.

[45]Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Africa*, 202.;Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 70.; Ernst Nigman, *Die Wanehe. Ihre Geschichte, Kult-, Rechts-, Kriegs-, und Jagd-gebräuche*, (Berlin: Ernst Mittler, 1908). Nigmann was stationed in Uhehe long enough to make detailed observations of their rituals and political organization. His statements regarding their refusal to be stationed outside of their home territory should be taken at face value, but British Naval Intelligence also suggests that the Hehe did not adjust well to the damp climate of the lowland regions and were particularly vulnerable to disease.

in Nyamwezi. In light of the bitter campaign against the Germans, the prospect of Hehe warriors flocking to join their conquerors was remote.

An examination of the reasons for the low participation of Masai and Hehe in the *Schutztruppe* reveals one undeniable characteristic separating those societies which contributed large numbers of *askaris* and those societies whose members avoided service: the ability to adapt to change. From the 1850s onward, the Nyamwezi and Sukuma sought to profit from the caravan route which passed through their region and adapted their economic lives accordingly. They became vital components of the system, working as porters and traders, or they survived as parasites of the caravans, living off the booty of caravan raids as *ruga-ruga*. Not all Nyamwezi gave up agriculture, but farm work was increasingly the sphere of Manyema slaves owned by wealthy Nyamwezi merchants. The Manyema showed an equal measure of adaptability as slaves, *ruga-ruga* or as migrants seeking their fortune as caravan traders. The traditional life of these societies was irreversibly altered by the economic demands of the caravan trade and those who recognized the changing situation earliest were the first to profit from it. The willingness of the Sukuma, Nyamwezi, and Manyema, to enlist in the German *Schutztruppe* was a result of this experience. Recruitment was most successful among the peoples best prepared to embrace innovation, while it remained unsuccessful among the ethnic groups who were not force to accommodate the changes of the latter half of the nineteenth century

Despite the critical role of ethnicity in German recruitment, ethnic differentiation was eliminated soon after soldiers entered the ranks of the *Schutztruppe* The Germans attempted to establish an *ésprit de corps* among the lower ranks of the *Schutztruppe*, instiling the men with a loyalty to their company ahead of a loyalty to their ethnic group. The introduction of uniforms, military drill, German commands, and barracks allowed the *askaris* to establish the trappings of a community separate from all other communities extant in East Africa. The very nature of their existence as the coercive arm of the

administration heightened this sense of self-awareness and arrogance.[46] The emergence of an *askari* identity in the territory was critical in history of the *Schutztruppe*, as the second generation of Africans who entered the German service were recruited from within the *askari* community itself. With the integration of *askari boys* and the children of *askaris* into the rank and file, the original composition of the *Schutztruppe* grows in its historical importance. The ethnic groups who made up the first generation of *askaris* established a virtual monopoly on service in the *Schutztruppe*.

The *Schutztruppe* was not composed only from a few northern groups and Sudanese. A number of Hehe agreed to the conditions of enlistment and served with distinction, while Swahili, Yao and Ngoni also joined in significant numbers; Somalis and Eritreans were enlisted as the commanders sought to replace aging or retired Sudanese soldiers.[47] None of these groups, however, challenged the dominant position of the recruits from greater Nyamwezi. The social change which occurred during the forty years before the German incursion in East Africa prepared them for service in an organization separate from their own society and their experiences in the *ruga-ruga* or with the trade routes inclined them toward élitism. By breaking down ethnic differences among the rank and file and establishing an *ésprit de corps*, the Germans created an new community within the colony. It was through this community that the Germans enforced their new order.

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[46]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 71.

[47]Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Africa*, 202. As they better established their presence in the southern region of the colony, just prior to the First World War, the Germans successfully recruited from the Nyasa, Ngoni in the southwest and among the Yao along the border of Portuguese East Africa. Again, figures are unavailable, but they were certainly not overwhelming in number.

Chapter III

The Life of the Askari

German military order controlled the lives of African recruits from the time of their entry into the *Schutztruppe* until their posting to companies in the interior. Although the European military regimen continued to dictate the course of the *askaris'* work day in the interior, their private lives also grew in importance at the station. The *askaris'* lives were shaped significantly by the unofficial structures which developed in the local *askari* community. This community helped to shape the *askaris'* image of themselves and of the importance of the *Schutztruppe*. The values and norms which emerged from the community were a vital factor in the smooth operation of the Force. This chapter will discuss how official military structures and the unofficial structures of the *askaris'* private lives converged at the station. In addition, this chapter will explore and analyze how these various elements in their daily lives contributed to the African soldiers' understanding of their emerging role in the German colony.

The circumstances of an *askari's* entrance into the *Schutztruppe* varied according to the time and place of his recruitment. For a Sudanese soldier recruited in 1889, the prospect of escaping the daily uncertainty of poverty in Khartoum or Cairo for the security of regular employment would certainly have enticed him to enter the German force. A Manyema slave employed in a Nyamwezi chief's *ruga-ruga* in the late 1890s joined the *Schutztruppe* to profit from his acquired skills and to claim his free status. In the years immediately prior to the First World War, when previously recalcitrant communities such as the Hehe, Ngoni and Yao began enlisting, service as an *askari* was firmly-established as an avenue for upward social mobility.

The process of enlistment was regularized over time. The officers initially sent to Egypt, Somalia and Mozambique to recruit foreigners for Wissmann's force depended on the services of local recruiters entirely. Ramsay, the recruiting officer sent to Mozambique, quickly assembled a force of 200 Shagaan soldiers, by way of an agreement between the German and Portuguese governments which obligated Portuguese colonial authorities to bring forward a predetermined number of fit men. In 1891, however, a second recruitment drive in the Portuguese colony bore no fruit because the authorities on the spot were more interested in the personal profit they could gain by channeling African labour to mining interests in the Transvaal. In other instances, the German reliance on local liaisons led to public violence. A riot broke out in the streets of Aden in 1891, when a group of 50 men recruited by a Somali employee at the German consulate met a large group assembled by two competing recruiters hired by the local liaison. When the Germans turned their attention to the task of enlisting men from the colony proper, the *Schutztruppe* established a central recruiting depot in Dar-es-Salaam. Unless the local station's demand for manpower was critical, men recruited in the interior were sent to the capital for training and official enlistment. On the coast large numbers of Nyamwezi and Sukuma *askaris* were recruited directly from porterage when their caravans reached Dar-es-Salaam.[1]

The primary motivation for a recruit at this early stage was financial. The *Schutztruppe* offered an *askari* employment at a rate of 20-30 rupees/ month for the duration of his five year contract.[2] With a base rate of 20 rupees/ month, the military pay compared favourably with the wages of African labourers in the colony: unskilled workers earned 20 rupees/ month in the peak year 1913; railway workers were considered well-paid

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[1] August Becker, *Aus Deutsch-Ostafrikas Sturm-und Drangperiode: Erinnerungen eines alten Afrikaners*, (Halle: Otto Hendel, 1911), 105; Hermann Graf von Schweinitz, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika in Krieg und Frieden*, (Berlin: Hermann Walther, 1894), 4.

[2] Geographical Section of the Naval Intelligence Division, *A Handbook of German East Afrika*, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920), 202.; Adolph Graf von Götzen, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika im Aufstand 1905/6*, (Berlin: 1909), 39.; Eugen Krenzler, *Ein Jahr in Ostafrika*, (Ulm: Ebner, 1888),101. This wage was a vast improvement over the 8 rupies/ month received by the *askaris* in the employ of the *Deutsch Ost-Afrika Gesellschaft* in 1888.

at 17-25 rupees/ month and porters-- excepting extraordinary circumstances-- made 13-19 rupees/ month.[3] Coupled with the relatively good wage upon enlistment, the *Schutztruppe* offered the security of regular pay over a five year term and the possibility of advancement. Advancement within the ranks provided an *askari* with ample incentive for extending the original term of his enlistment, for the Germans usually promoted only experienced African soldiers. The financial reward commensurate with promotion from private to the rank of lance corporal increased a man's salary to 45 rupees/ month, while the higher-ranking N.C.O.s made over 50 rupees/ month.[4]

The monthly pay packet of the *askaris* was regularized after 1891, when the Force was given official recognition with the granting of the imperial title of *Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ost-Afrika*. Prior to this date, Wissmann's men were frequently paid in kind. They received luxury items such as tobacco, cigarette paper, soap, or coloured beads, wire and European cloth to trade with local merchants, in addition to their regular food rations. On Lake Victoria the *Schutztruppe* was paid with cowrie shells, the local currency, which they collected from neighboring chiefs as tribute. Salary payment became more standardized after 1891 with the introduction of a common colonial currency, the rupee, in addition to an *askari* paybook. From the date of his enlistment, the paybook was the centrepiece an *askari's* life as an employee of the administration. Every aspect of his official existence was detailed in it, including a list of his previous commanders, the expeditions and battles in which he took part, commendations, promotions, all disciplinary actions taken against him, his shooting ability and his marital status. The document, of course, also provided the individual *askari* with a tally of earnings In the case of an *askari's* death the paybook acted as his will, specifying his dependants to the authorities.[5]

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[3] John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 156-8
[4] Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Africa*, 202.; Götzen, *Aufstand 1905/6*, 39 ; Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika: Eine Schilderung deutscher Tropen nach 10 Wanderjahren*, (Berlin. Vossische Buchhandlung, 1910), 52.
[5] Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 48.

Upon his entrance into the *Schutztruppe* every African recruit was given a thorough medical examination by an army physician. His general health, eyesight and hearing were all tested, with extra care taken to detect diseases which might be transmitted to Europeans or the other men. These precautions were standard, ensuring that the rank and file were of a high calibre before additional time and money were spent on them. Indeed, so impressed were the Germans by the level of fitness among the African men who volunteered, that Wissmann proposed they forgo the standard German Army regimen of daily calisthenics in favour of extra time on the shooting range.

When the *askari* recruit passed his medical, he was taken into the force for three months of intensive military training, during which time he learned the complex rituals of European military life. The first obstacle for him to overcome was language. All commands were in German but were translated into Swahili by the indigenous liaison officer-- known as an *effendi* -- assigned to each company. The position of *effendi* was created during the early days of the Wissmann expedition in response to the communication gap between African soldiers and company commanders, and was only phased out in the years immediately prior to the First World War. The Germans stripped down their language of command to its essentials hoping to make it easily intelligible for the African liaisons, but the *effendis* were only able to speak the German they were taught. Consequently few of the African officers spoke a version of German which was not strongly influenced by the dialect, inflection and diction of the individual *Schutztruppen* officers who had acted as their personal language instructors. There were exceptions, but generally the *effendis* spoke in a German dialect which was heavily accented by African inflection and meaningless to those outside of the company.[6] One experienced officer offered this assessment of the *effendis*' command of German,

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[6] Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 35. In fact one Sudanese *effendi* named Leopold Serur possessed a remarkable grasp of German and was described by his officer as a, "subject of Austria, although his nationality was pure black Sudanese, who spoke German with greater proficiency than his mother tongue."

> For the most part the experienced *effendis* have very good diction, but the words are as meaningless to them as to the soldiers. Because the sound of a command is their indicator, a strong voice is of even greater import over there [in Africa] than at home. The men always require time to hear their way into a new commander's diction.[7]

Their role in transmitting the instructions of the officers to the ranks was vital to the smooth operation of the patron-client relationship and required that these men remain unconditionally loyal to their colonial masters. The *effendis* were also required to help the soldiers, originating from regions untouched by German efforts to establish Swahili as the colonial *lingua franca*, acquire a rudimentary knowledge of the coastal language before instructing them in the language of command. Indeed, through their successful accommodation to life in the German service, the *effendis* became agents of the German colonial mission, possessing the qualities and talents necessary to advance in the *Schutztruppe*. The Germans reinforced the loyalty of the *effendis* and their lofty position in the hierarchy of African troops with a salary three times that of an enlisted *askari* [8]

During the training period, African soldiers were expected to learn the subtle differences between 'attention' and 'at ease' and the commands 'march', 'double-time', and 'run'. The traditionally elaborate German drill was pared down for African soldiers -- the parade march was abandoned altogether -- and only those skills seminal to fighting in African conditions were retained. It was expected that a man become a crack shot and understand the fundamental tenets of German discipline in the transition from recruit to *askari*. Paul Reichard's assessment of the *Schutztruppe*'s training programme reflected the pride the Germans felt toward their efforts to drill a competent force,

> The initial training went very quickly, and after only six months one could respectably drill a company of

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[7]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 72. Fonck also remarked that it was not unusual while at a station in the interior to hear a Sudanese *effendi* barking out orders in a broad Berlin dialect.

[8] Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe für Deutsch Ost Afrika*, (Berlin: Ernst Mittler, 1911), 72-3.; Magdalene von Prince, *Eine deutsche Frau im Innern Ost Afrika Elf Jahre nach Tagebuchblättern erzählt*, (Berlin: Mittler, 1908), 55-57. A number of *effendis* received special mention by Nigmann for their bravery in battle and their staunch loyalty to their colonial masters. Magdalene von Prince recounted the position the wife of their company *effendi* held at the social apex of the *askaridorf*, a fact which underlines the position of privilege held by her husband.

> Sudanese beside a company of regular infantry without a second thought, and without the former coming out on the poor end of the comparison.[9]

The early training sessions introduced the men to the two staples of military life: repetition and regularity. The symmetrical movement of the march, the daily schedules, and the repetition of drills for three months, gave the recruits an early taste of their lives under German command. The leader of one early expedition outlined the preparation of his unit,

> Our daily routine stressed regularity, and each day ran in the same sequence as the one before. I rose before dawn and marched my men into the bush. Given our intention to head upcountry as soon as possible, I immediately organized field training for the men. At regular intervals they were trained on the individual skills required in the field...For three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon, I occupied my troops. Occasionally I organized a more serious manoeuvre for them.[10]

The narrator's depiction of the first training sessions disguises the fact that the recruits entered the *Schutztruppe* from an environment decidedly less structured than that of *fin de siecle* Europe. True, many of the men who entered the German service originated from caravan porterage where profit dictated the adoption of routine, but a significant number of the indigenous *askaris* were Manyema caravan raiders. Although they were eventually answerable to a chief or his lieutenant in their previous occupation, the ex-*ruga ruga* were accustomed to operating independent of daily control. The three month training program allowed the Germans to separate those men who would accommodate the strictures of

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[9]Reichard, *Deutsch-Ostafrika. Das Land und seine Bewohner*, (Leipzig: Otto Spomer, 1892), 155-63. The Sudanese soldiers were considered extremely attractive recruits because they required minimal training, compared to the men indigenous to the colony. Their experience as soldiers in the British service gave them a general notion of European drill and thus shortened the period of orientation and cut costs for the financially strapped *Schutztruppe*.

[10]Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 17. Schweinitz's expedition had different objectives from the *Schutztruppe* proper because it was organized by the German Anti-Slavery Organization. It is difficult to differentiate this force, however, from Wissmann's at this time (1891) because of the *ad hoc* nature of the latter and the integration of both forces for a number of significant engagements. With regard to training Schweinitz compared his methods briefly with those of the *Schutztruppe* stating: "The training of the *Schutztruppe*'s soldiers did not provide an example for us because of the more general nature of our task. The *Schutztruppe* follows our German regimen very closely, while I was required to leave the most parade-like aspects of it out."

European military discipline from those who could not. Early training also provided sufficient time to instill the soldiers with the norms and expectations of their new overlords.[11]

Upon his completion of three months of standing at attention, marching, shooting and learning German or -- more correctly, learning the Swahili translations of German words -- the *askari* was given an identification tag which corresponded with a number in his pay book. The acquisition of this metal tag began the recruit's existence as an *askari*. His uniform, consisting of a khaki tunic with white metal buttons, khaki trousers, blue puttees, a red tarbush with a khaki cover and basic equipment such as a water bottle, food pouch, ammunition pouches, bayonet and an M.71 rifle had been issued to him when he began his training.[12] The final item was handled with a reverence that would please the toughest Marine drill sergeant today. Reichard was amazed by the African soldier's attachment to his weapon,

> The Black, even the Zulu who is otherwise distinguished by his uncleanness, cleans his rifle with the greatest love and reverence and can recognize it out of thousands of apparently identical ones. He is unable to decipher the weapon's serial number, but can readily distinguish it from another by the thousands of tiny nicks and scratches.[13]

Possessing a German gun was a symbol of the *askari*'s role and elevated status in the colony. It was the means to exercise power over other Africans and signified his membership in an invincible military force. The uniform heightened these elitist feelings

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[11]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 69.; J. Stentzler, *Deutsch-Ostafrika: Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, (Berlin: Weicher, 1910), 16-7. Desertion was most likely during the training period and Stentzler suggested that the solution to the issue of loyalty might be solved by German officers adopting a posture of patrician concern. He writes, "On the one hand we expect the efficient execution of their duties from our *askaris*, but on the other we conscientiously look after their welfare. This personal *Fürsorge* [interest in their well-being] and this personal interest [by of the officer] is fully understood by the black soldier who grants his devotion and obedience to the officer in return.

[12]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 44-6. There was considerable controversy surrounding the appropriate footwear for the soldiers. Fonck complained that the heavy, ankle-high lace up boots were not only impractical, but that many of the *askaris* preferred to go barefoot rather that wear them. These leather boots were neither comfortable in the heat nor could they stand up the rigours of the rainy season, Fonck recommended that the use of sandals and puttees would best suit the African conditions.

[13]Reichard, *Deutsch-Ostafrika*, 160.

and effectively set the *askari* apart from his community of origin by the time he first joined a company. Over the course of three months, the all-encompassing nature of military life had divorced the soldier from his traditional group and provided a new community ready to make room for him.

The Community of the Station

The station was the principal unit of the decentralized administrative structure of German East Africa. With the possible exception of the coastal region, the Germans were never entirely secure with their authority over the colony. Indeed a major schism arose between the military and civilian leadership in 1914 because the governor, Heinrich von Schnee, insisted that the concentration of *Schutztruppe* forces in the northern part of the colony amounted to an invitation for rebellion to the people in the south. The threat of a sudden uprising in the colony shaped German troop distribution until the First World War and a network of garrisons was constructed as a bulwark against such an eventuality. Thus stations of the interior were established to safeguard areas such as the caravan route, the lakes, and the highland plateaus and mountain regions, all of which the Germans considered crucial to maintaining control over the colony. The *Schutztruppen* commanders were expected to be the prime agents of colonial rule in the early years of pacification.[14]

In the period after the *Maji-Maji* rebellion, the majority of stations came under civilian control, and the administration used them as bases of operations for collecting taxes, holding court and initiating new policies in the field. This did not necessitate a diversification of the station's function, however, since the duties assumed by the civilian administrators were merely those transfered from the military. The station remained the first line of defense and the district centre, but the advent of non-military officials at the

[14]Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Afrika*, 217.; Heinrich Schnee, *Als letzter Gouverneur in Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, (Heidelberg: 1964), 134.; Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa 1914-1918*, (New York: Longmans, 1986), 107-9. Farwell offers the traditional view of the conflict between Governor Schnee and Lettow-Vorbeck, coming down on the side of the latter, while Schnee's memoirs offer the governor's perspective on the dispute between the military and civilian authority.

station eliminated a host of onerous administrative chores from the jurisdiction of the *Schutztruppen* officers. With the introduction of civilian control, the German military personnel -- who had never been happy in the role of jack-of-all-trades -- were allowed to concentrate on military tasks exclusively. Official paranoia acted as an important counter-balance to ambitious civilian administrators wishing to extend their jurisdiction, enabling the *Schutztruppe* to maintain its supremacy at the station and at the local level in general.[15]

Irrespective of the division of roles within the hierarchy of the station, the architecture and design of the fortress reflected its primary function as a military base. Thus the station into which an *askari* entered after his period of training was an impressive structure designed to protect the garrison against surprise attack and to accommodate Europeans, Arabs and Indian traders seeking refuge during periods of upheaval. Although the walls of coastal fortresses were made of stone, the stations in the interior were built from materials most readily available to the builders. Early experiments with wooden palisades were thwarted by termites and the Germans eventually settled on defensive walls constructed of unburnt bricks reinforced by earthen revetments.

Measuring 60 metres square, the fort had 5 metre-high walls of mud and unburnt bricks topped with shards of glass and thorns to dissuade any attempts to scale the walls; bastions, used to house machine guns or light artillery, were erected on opposite corners of the structure. Its height and size, coupled with its position in an area cleared to give the troops a firing field of 220 metres, made the station an imposing reminder of the power of German authority. The fort was only one part of the settlement. European quarters -- divided along civilian/ military lines -- were on one edge of the area protected by the fort, while the dwellings of the African soldiers and their families occupied an adjacent portion of the clearing. The vast open area, including the quarters, was enclosed by a defensive stockade of barbed wire, uprooted tree stumps, thornbushes, pointed stakes and cacti.

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[15]Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 124. Following *Maji-Maji* the *Schutztruppe* were relieved of their administrative duties in the colony.

This first line of defense was not intended to repel an attack, but would hinder a quick advance by a massed formation.[16]

The settlement was the product of the labour of 160 *askaris* and their families. The *Schutztruppe* had been forced to rely on its African soldiers to provide the labour to build the stations because no comparable force of local labourers could be secured during the earliest phase of the German expansion. Artisans were available locally, but they merely supplemented the labour supplied by the African soldiers and their wives. Beginning with the defenses, the station went through a number of phases of development from rudimentary structures made of wood and grass to more sophisticated buildings constructed of brick and stone. The final version of the settlement was often left unfinished until years after the station had been established. Although later renovations were completed by local manpower, the role of the *askaris*, their wives and their children in the construction of the first station gave them a stake in the successful operation of the settlement from the outset.[17]

The station became the focus of the existence of every African who entered the *Schutztruppe* for reasons other than his involvement in its construction. His whole life coalesced around the small settlement of European administrators, officers, the 160-odd *askaris* and their families; it was where the soldier ate and slept, where he received his orders and carried out his duties. In short, the newly minted *askari*'s daily life took shape at the station. More importantly, the *askari*'s earthly possessions --his wife and children-- were an integral part of his association with the station. The integration of family into the

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[16]Hermann von Wissmann, *Afrika Schilderungen und Rathschläge zur Vorbereitung für den Aufenthalt und den Dienst in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, (Berlin: Mittler, 1895), 49.; Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Afrika*, 216-19.; Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 76. Please see appendices II and III.

[17] Stentzler, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika: Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, (Berlin: Weicher, 1910), 40-1.; Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 76. Stentzler described the routine that the *askaris* and their families lived during the construction of the station: "Our daily routine was as follows: at 6 o'clock reveille was sounded for the *askaris* and labourers. I visited the construction site, issued the workers instructions and set them to work. At 7 o'clock we took a short breakfast. Then would take a stroll through the town and supervise the work further. With a half-hour break between, work continues until 12. Lunch, which takes place at noon, is followed by a break until 2:30. Work proceeds from 2:30 until 5:30."

life of the station helped an *askari* personalize the collective interests of the company: the well-being of his family and property were related directly to the success of the company. Although the daily routine of the soldiers was dictated by European officers, the involvement of their families in their professional lives provided the *askaris* with a necessary link to the station and helped to secure their loyalties. More than any official edict or proclamation, German toleration of *askari* communities within the confines of the station aligned the interests of the soldiers with those of the administration and thereby marked the soldier's irrevocable break with any residual loyalties to the world outside of the station.

The *askaridorf*, as the community was known, was a collection of well-ordered housing blocks made to accommodate the askari and his entourage. The living arrangements of the station required that the Germans abandon any notions of applying European standards to the African situation and attempt to accommodate the needs of their men to the nature of their function,

> ...only a few *askaris* stay in the boma itself, the other part [of the company] is housed in barracks. By this one cannot think in terms of our barracks at home, such structures are found only in Dar-es-Salaam and Lindi, these bomas [barracks] are simple long houses in the fashion of African huts.
>
> Each *askari* has a separate room for himself and his family, for without exception they are almost all married.[18]

These dwellings, measuring a mere 12 square metres of enclosed space, were built in rows of four and laid great emphasis on common space. Eight units shared a common yard measuring 6 metres by 20 metres and streets 10 metres wide separated the blocks of houses from one another. The *askaris*' housing arrangement were not universal throughout the colony and the model long house barracks often existed cheek by jowl with an alternative solution,

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[18] Stentzler, *Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, 28. The word *dorf* means village in German.

> [The *askaridorf*] is near the station so that troops can be called upon quickly in the case of an emergency... single block barracks are preferable to control the nightly tumult so relished by the Africans. Detached dwellings, however, have the advantage of hindering arguments between families. In a single block barracks the soldier is given an empty room which he furnishes with a be and other necessities for housekeeping. Mats and tapestries are used as dividers. Detached dwellings offer more space and small separated rooms. The *askari* houses his wife, children and the rest of his entourage here.[19]

The villages were not luxurious, but they were a far cry from European-style barracks where the concept of a private sphere of influence was incompatible with soldiering. Significantly, the quarters of European administrators and officers were located on another part of the enclosure, far away from the nightly clatter and hubbub of the *askaridorf*.[20]

Of course, the inclusion of wives with the soldiers was not a stroke of genius by a single visionary in the German command. It was a product of necessity. The prospect of attracting a reliable cadre of soldiers would have diminished considerably if women were not factored into the arrangement. Wissmann's speech to his officers with regard to their treatment of the soldiers' traditional practices clearly recognized this fact. Wisely, the Germans were flexible on the issue of including women and eventually saw their necessity for the soldiers. Stentzler summed up his impressions of the women and the *askari* family in few words saying,

> Generally these people lead a good family life and treat their children with the utmost tenderness. The wife, however, holds a position only slightly better than a housekeeper.[21]

Opinions on this issue vary, however. Other observers noted that his wife virtually ruled the soldier's household, controlling his wages, minding the children, cooking for the household and looking after her husband's uniform.[22]

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[19]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 64.
[20]See appendices II and III.
[21]Stentzler, *Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, 29.
[22]Magdalene von Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 62.

Families were permitted to follow the *askaris* on expeditions except during times of war. The result was columns swelling to twice their normal size as camp followings, composed of the families of both the soldiers and the porters, trooped behind the *Schutztruppen* company and their baggage. These expeditions were colourful spectacles, contrasting sharply with the orderly processions to which most German officers were accustomed. One traveller was entranced by the sight of the camp of his column and their porters,

> Our camp was a wonderful sight especially in the evenings. In front of every tent was a watch fire, each carrier family had its own small tent and hundreds of these tents combined to make a picturesque scene of disorder, a beautiful initiation for those new to Africa. From the distance we could hear music coming from different parts of the camp that was not unpleasant.[23]

During wartime operations the camp-followers were not permitted to join the column. The lachrymose response of the women and children on these occasions revealed the strength of the bond between the *askaris* and their families and the dependence of the latter group on the soldiers.

> The German flag fluttered proudly in the morning breeze before us and the drums of the musicians at the head of the column beat out a merry rhythm. As long as the column was still in the vicinity of the town [we] were accompanied by innumerable women and children running in the dew-laden grass alongside the *askaris* and in accordance with their traditions, bade their men Godspeed with a shrill series of wails and ululations.[24]

The *askari*'s departure underlined the women's stake in the successful conclusion of campaign. They were aware of their vulnerability if their husbands perished in battle and referred to themselves as 'grass widows' while the *askari*'s were away. Magdalene von Prince saw many parallels between her own situation and that of the wives of the Sudanese soldiers,

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[23]Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 22.
[24]Becker, *Sturm und Drang*, 55.

> In many respects my Sudanese women share my fate-- they too are strangers here who left their homeland to follow their husbands to an unknown land; at the moment they too are grass widows [while their men are away] because the Sudanese are our best *askaris* and they have to go on every one of our expeditions. The Sudanese women are very loyal to their men and exceptions to this rule are as rare as among whites.[25]

For their part the women shared many of the transient characteristics of the men. Wissmann allowed the Sudanese *askaris* to bring their wives to Bagamoyo in 1889, but many of these women perished in the first years after their arrival in East Africa. The *askaris* found a solution to the absence of companionship and free labour, by purchasing slave women. Although slave-holding was illegal, *askaris* were permitted to buy a woman's freedom for a sum arbitrated by a government official.[26] Given that the original *raison d'être* of the *Schutztruppe* was to combat the slave trade, the government's toleration of this arrangement had the effect of reinforcing the notion that the *askaris* were above the laws applicable to other inhabitants of the colony. The practice of taking slave wives moved the *askari* community toward a society where kith and kin were of secondary import. Composed of a *pot pouri* of Dinka mercenaries, Manyema *ruga-ruga* and Sukuma and Nyamwezi porters, the *Schutztruppe*'s rank and file may have sought women who were kinless or possessed distant family ties and who owed their freedom to their husbands in order to establish themselves as the undisputed heads of a family structure.

Polygyny may have arisen among the *askaris* to fill the vacuum left by the absent familial allegiances or was a practice retained from their cadre of indigenous traditions. Whatever the case, the practice was frowned upon by the Germans. The *askaris* were usually able to circumvent any German curiosity with explanations worthy of the most respectable Victorian gentlemen,

> The soldier may have only one wife. Polygyny is not permitted. If a female visitor arrives she is usually explained away [by the *askari*] as *shemegi* (sister-in-law) or

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[25]Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 80.
[26]Fonck,*Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 10.

> *ndugu* which means relative or cousin, but is usually nothing less than the forbidden second wife. Once the impropriety is discovered the 'visitor' ends her stay.[27]

The European officers intervened in the matters of the *askaridorf* reluctantly and the *askaris* were allowed to benefit from the surplus of women at the station with impunity. The death of *askaris* and the dislocation of women and children during periods of upheaval, allowed soldiers an ample pool of persons willing to exchange personal labour for the security offered by the station. This situation resulted in countless domestic disputes between women attempting to assert their supremacy in a given household.[28]

The women were primarily responsible for bearing and raising the children of the soldiers and gratifying their husbands' sexual needs. The crucial responsibility for the personal maintenance of the *askari* was played by a child or young man who existed on the fringes of the family, and was known simply as the *boy*. The *boy* was a figure who acted as the *askari*'s manservant or batman, but his origins generally remained obscure,

> The *askariboys* are a special class of people. Their origins are unknown, they are simply there. Often they are boys without kin who are kidnapped as children or are sold [by their parents]; runaways who are captured and sold, continually displaced until they end up at a garrison where they take up service with an *askari*.[29]

Some evidence suggests that many of the *boys* were from the interior and ended up on the coast where they adopted Swahili dress and Islam, but this was only the case for older *boys* who entered the service of European officers. The *askariboys* were usually younger than 10 when they entered a household, indicating slave rather than free origin.

The slave origins and the absence of kin did not set the *boys* in the *askaridorf* apart from the rest of the community, rather it was the all-encompassing nature of their task which distinguished them. An *askariboy*'s life was hard. He was expected to fetch water, collect firewood, cook, wash and repair his master's uniform, go to market, look after the

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[27]Fonck,*Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 64.
[28]Prince, *Deutsch Frau*, 81-2.
[29]Fonck,*Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 66.

children and generally help the women of the *askaridorf* while the *askari* was on duty. During a campaign the *boy* 's duties became crucial. Whereas the women and children were left behind the defenses of the station, in a time of war the *boy* became an integral part of the *Schutztruppe*'s support system acting as a porter for his *askari*'s tent, blankets, cooking equipment and his supplies for the expedition. The *boy* constructed his master's tent and prepared his meal, upon a column's arrival at an encampment, thereby freeing the *askari* for other tasks more in keeping with his profession.

Yet compared with the alternatives available to a 10 year old waif in nineteenth century East Africa, the life as an *askariboy* was not without its advantages. The child received the regular -- albeit meagre sum of 2 rupees every month -- but more importantly he was given social identification through the family of the *askari* with whom he ate and slept. He was allowed to call his employer *Baba* and, in turn, the *askari* was expected to look after the *boy*'s well-being and provide him with protection. His privileged position allowed the *boy* to travel with the *askaris* on campaign and this experience assisted his eventual recruitment into the *Schutztruppe*. Once they were strong enough to enter the German service the *boys* provided a useful reservoir of local recruits for the station commander.[30]

Life at the station for the *askari* allowed the soldier an ample measure of private time. The society of other families and soldiers offered an entertaining outlet for his energies and again hastened his integration into the professional community of soldiers. The *askari* could spend his off-duty evenings drinking local spirits and cavorting with his comrades at a *pombe* house in one of the neighboring villages or he could remain in the

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[30]Fonck,*Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 64-67.; Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa*, (London: n.g., 1920), 23-5. Fonck noted that his troops were much more efficient on campaign when the *boys* were taken along. Indeed Lettow-Vorbeck encountered a storm of protest when he suggested that his soldiers leave their manservants behind during the campaign against the British. The loyalty of the *boys* depended greatly on the treatment they received from their *Babas*; most refused to testify against their masters unless they were mistreated or paid irregularly.

askaridorf to enjoy the singing and dancing of the communal fire.[31] In the evenings these communal fires provided a lively sample of the life hidden beneath the apparent order of the *askaridorf*,

> My walk took me through the town. I saw a variety of *gomas* (local games and dances) [Upon seeing me] the dancers attempted to show me their finest steps and movements performed, naturally, at the highest tempo. To walk through the wide streets, which are kept extremely clean, is an fascinating experience. All life is played out on the street. Everything moves through the night air, dancing or sitting on the verandahs-- the houses are used only for sleeping or to protect against the cold. The doors are always open and as the streets are always dark, the figures around the fire can be seen as magnificent silhouettes in the distance.[32]

Officials at the station attempted to link the growing group identification of the *askaris* with the German colonial mission, a practice which generally deepened the consciousness of the *askaridorf*, but also reinforced the distance between the Europeans and Africans. From the days of Wissmann's expeditionary force, the Kaiser's birthday was celebrated with enthusiasm by the *Schutztruppe*, as German officials attempted to inculcate African subjects of the *Reich* with a sense of German power. This red letter day at the station invariably began with an *askari* band playing German military marches and the *askaris* from the local *Schutztruppe* company demonstrating their martial skills and discipline in the parade square. Following the parade, the Germans held foot races and shooting competitions among the *askaris*, awarding prizes and various commendations to the soldiers; the station commander invariably ended the official activities with a speech emphasizing the importance of the day. The formal ceremonies were followed by a feast for the *askaris*, their families, and headmen from the surrounding region. The Africans

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[31]Prince, *Deutsch Frau*, 94-5; Fonck *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 67-9.; Fritz-Ferdinand Müller, *Kolonien unter die Peitsche*, (East Berlin: Rüten and Loening, 1959), 85. Alcohol was as much a disciplinary problem among African soldiers as among soldiers serving in Europe. Müller and Fonck document instances of soldiers being disciplined for drunkenness on duty. Prince tells of an instance where her houseboy smoked hashish and went on a shooting spree in the house. Obviously a variety of intoxicants were available to soldiers in need of escape from their daily routine.

[32]Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 97.

then performed traditional dances while the Europeans watched dispassionately from a distance. The African celebrations carried on into the night in the *askaridorf*, while the Germans, retreating into their enclave of culture, were treated to a formal dinner in the officers mess followed by a concert of classical music performed by the *Schutztruppen* musicians.[33]

This nascent group consciousness of the *askaridorf* did not extend beyond the enclosure. The station was a magnet for commerce, but the role of the *askaris* in promoting and maintaining the new colonial order ensured that contact between their community and the neighboring villages would not take place on an equal footing. The *askaridorf* had an inward-looking character which stressed the loyalties developing out of daily contact or the shared experiences of military campaigns. These loyalties effectively substituted ethnic ties which had been lost or abandoned. The relationship which evolved between the Africans on either side of the station's stockade is revealing of the *askaridorf*'s integration into the colonial framework and this community's gradual alienation from traditions which conflicted with their role in the new order.

The villages which surrounded the station were founded by merchants anxious to profit from the German presence in the region. The caravan trade had established a tradition where local chiefs sold produce or livestock along the route. The *Schutztruppe* quickly became a lucrative customer for these traders and chiefs who seized the trading opportunity to curry favour with the military authorities. The Germans were conscious of their dependance on these people as Magdalene von Prince noted during her passage into the interior,

> We are now frequently sought out by Jumbes (village headmen) who bring sheep, hens, eggs, and goats

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[33]Poeschel, *Bwana Hakimu: Richterfahrten in Deutsch Ostafrika*, (Leipzig: Kochler, 1940), 46-50.; Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 63-67.; Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 63,75-6. Wissmann advocated the use of parades and festivities on the Kaiser's birthday to impress the troops with the traditions of the conquerors; he also issued extra rations of luxury items such as tobacco, tea, coffee, and meat to the men. Magdalene von Prince describes a Christmas celebration at a station which had much of the fanfare usually reserved for the Kaiser's birthday.

> as gifts, for which they expect generous reimbursement...we can be very happy that they bring anything at all, some Europeans who are not so favoured or are less well-known are brought only the most essential supplies.[34]

In larger towns existing markets sought to take advantage of the German isolation and dependance upon locals for food. Prince later complained in her diary after her first visit to the market at Perondo,

> Everything is expensive here. One egg costs 5 Pesas (10 pfennigs), an emaciated chicken costs 1 Rupee (1.35 Marks). A Greek has opened a lucrative business here and today he awaits the arrival of 150 loads of foodstuffs. Rice is found in abundance.[35]

High prices generally took advantage of Europeans rather than the steady African clientele, but the Germans' patience for this practice had its limits. Merchants seeking to enrich themselves at the expense of the station did so at their own peril, for the *Schutztruppen* commander could fine or even close a business guilty of unwarranted inflation or price fixing. The Europeans, not the *askaris*, were the targets of these tactics by local business men. The frequency of squabbles between locals and *askaris* attests to the fact that the soldiers and their families were wise to crooked practices.[36]

The requirements of the station had a two-fold effect upon the district. The *Schutztruppen* commanders actively sought to meet the garrison's demand for food by establishing farms of their own. The Mwanza station on Lake Victoria was an archetype of the self-sufficiency the *Schutztruppe* sought,

> Surrounded by gardens and plantations yielding African and European vegetables in abundant quantities and possessing large herds of especially valuable cattle, the station carries out agriculture that leaves nothing wanting [it boasts] a diet complete with beef, milk, and butter in addition to other delights.[37]

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[34] Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 13-14.

[35] Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 39.

[36] Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 90-1. Schweinitz reported that the Tabora commander had the authority to control prices in this manner at a very early stage in the German presence there. Given the vagaries of commerce in the interior, legitimate grounds for such extreme measures would seem to be difficult to provide.

[37] Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 117.

Most stations did not attain this ideal and there was ample opportunity for Africans to profit from the captive market. Villages were established just beyond the perimeter of the German enclosure, where the inhabitants raised cattle and other produce which they hoped to sell to the askari community primarily. For these satellite villages, the station also provided insurance against attack by a hostile enemy.[38]

Contrary to the Germans' constant fear of panethnic uprising, the relationship between the African community of the station and the locals was often acrimonious. Wissmann's view of so many 'black brothers', contrasted sharply with the African assessment of the situation. The *Schutztruppe* was a victorious army which seemed invincible to the *askaris* and to the population from the surrounding area. The arrogance the soldiers felt *vis-à-vis* their neighbors, was promoted by the Germans in a variety of ways. Stations were often built on the ruins of the fortresses of defeated rulers to reinforce the supremacy of the garrison to local inhabitants. In these cases the subjects of the defeated headman suffered the humiliation of being conscripted to build the *Schutztruppe*'s new station.[39] If this practice did not engender a feeling of superiority among the rank and file, the Germans removed any residual doubts by habitually emphasizing that 'their' *askaris* were a new tribe emerging in the territory. Concurrent with literally communicating this message to their men, the *Schutztruppe*'s commanders rarely sent them on work detail and never forced them to work side by side with locals. *Askaris* were sent to guard or supervise work parties hired to undertake public works projects, a practice which clearly fuel the *askaris*' growing elitism.[40]

Animosity often arose simply from the *askaris* position as foreigners in the region. The early recruitment of outsiders to pacify East Africa had the effect of alienating locals from the *Schutztruppe* and the *askaris*, even those recruited from the territory, distanced

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[38]Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 59-60.
[39]Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 173.
[40]Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Afrika*, 219. The British report that the Germans stressed this differentiation to their soldiers with great effect.

themselves from communities outside of the enclosure. The Germans promoted this tendency by posting *askaris* outside of their home region and discouraging excessive contact between the men and the world beyond the station. The German caution revealed their ignorance of the relationship between the *askaris* and the inhabitants of the region Locals viewed the *askaris* as a foreign army to be feared and despised, not as compatriots or even potential allies. The enlisted men were well aware of their position in the eyes of the locals and were not above exploiting their reputation. The *askari* practice of training their rifles on local merchants whose prices were too high, forced Tom von Prince to ban his men from carrying their weapons in the market place.[41]

The relationship between the *askaris* and the surrounding area exacerbated the insular tendencies of the community. Separated from their ethnic roots African soldiers sought to distinguish themselves within the parameters of their new lives. Some denied their ethnic origins when they recognized that it would hinder them in the community, while others sought to acquire the cachet of Sudanese ferocity by imitating the facial scars of the Dinka warriors. The uniform, the acquisition of the German words of command and the soldiers' common purpose, gave the *askari* community a loosely defined group identity.[42]

His family granted the *askari* a private domain in which he was able to exercise a modicum of personal freedom, but his *raison d'être* at the station ensured that this independence remained limited. At 6:00 am the company reported for duty and military exercises were held until 8:00 a.m., after which the troops and their weapons were inspected thoroughly. The daily duty roster assigned men to carry out a number of small chores such as cleaning rifles, machine guns and small artillery pieces until 11 o'clock.

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[41]Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 29-30.

[42]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 72.; Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 84. The *askaris* also took to shaving their heads when they returned from a successful expedition, but more importantly the East African *askaris* attempted to acquire a smattering of Arabic, which along with the Sudanese markings was meant to intimidate the locals. Whatever the source of the imitation of the Sudanese, the practice speaks of the interchange between the soldiers of different ethnic origins.

Because of the intense noon-time heat, the men returned to the *askaridorf* for their meal and rest from 11:00 until 2:30 p.m.. The balance of the day was used honing the martial skills of the company as the men practiced firing formations, marksmanship and sustained marches into the field; field exercises were used to practice setting up camp, building trenches and field defenses.[43]

Wissmann recognized that the success of his original expedition required the development of a strong bond between patron and client and followed suit by recommending that his officers observe the highest level of tolerance toward their charges. The *askari* should be able to expect just treatment and a sympathetic ear from his superior, an attitude which Wissmann was certain would engender a sense of obligation to the officer. Officers, he felt, should be induced to stay in the *Schutztruppe* as long as possible so that the trust and dependence between officers and men could be groomed as a substitute for the abstract notions of patriotism or nationalism. Ever the pragmatist, the founder of the *Schutztruppe* was certain that the immediate goals of the force could be realized only if a strong personal bond existed between Africans and Europeans.[44]

Linguistic and cultural barriers impeded the realization of Wissmann's ideal, but the manner in which the officers and men dealt with these impediments gives us valuable information about the evolution of their relationship. Just as each *effendi* incorporated the idiosyncrasies of each new officer's diction and inflection into his understanding of the German language of command, the *askaris* adapted to the demands of their new community. Similarly, the Germans made concessions for the sake of efficiency in their new environment. On the individual level officers learned Swahili and the languages of the interior in order to understand their colonial subjects, while on the official level the *Schutztruppe* abandoned the strict German Army drill in favour of softer regimen. In both

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[43]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 74-5.
[44]Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 68-70.

instances, German accommodation to the African situation acknowledged that European standards had to be loosened if the *Schutztruppe* hoped to recruit Africans.

Convincing the young German officers of the utility of a non-European language proved difficult while the recruit was still in Germany. All of the young men sent to serve in East Africa were required to take a Swahili language course offered at the *Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen* in Berlin, but this was considered a formality by most. The young officers preferred the diversions of the bustling capital to the dusty atmosphere of the *Seminar* and subsequently learned very little Swahili. Necessity provided much better motivation than official initiatives and most of the military men posted to East Africa were forced to pick up the colonial *lingua franca* soon after their arrival on the coast.[45]

For the newly posted officer the acquisition of Swahili was an important tool in his quest to understand his men and to be understood by them. It was clearly a concession to Africa. The white officer spoke a language entirely foreign to African ears and although the German words of command were drilled into them, only exceptional soldiers acquired more than a rudimentary knowledge of the language. The German was forced to communicate on African terms or forsake any hope of communication. A European language could not be imposed on the *askaris* because it was unrealistic to make language skills a criterion for entrance into the *Schutztruppe* and extensive German instruction would add to training costs considerably. By learning some of the languages indigenous to the coast and interior, the officer was able to exercise additional control over his men. He no longer relayed his instructions through a translator, but issued them directly to the men and he understood what was being said about him by the *askaris*.

German officers ignorant of African languages were often the brunt of jokes among the soldiers. These jokes could enter the realm of public humour as the *askaris* sought to find names for their commanders more easily remembered than the complicated German

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[45]Jake Spidel, "The German Colonial Service: Organization, Selection, and Training", (Ph. D. dissertation: Stanford University, 1972), 285.

surnames. Officers were given the monickers *Tumbo* , the stomach, *Kolongo,* the stork, *Malole*, four eyes, *Sungula mardardi*, the vain hare, or *Mapengo*, gap-tooth.[46] On other occasions the *askaris* would make jokes about an officer in front of him if they were certain he didn't understand Swahili. Language provided a barrier against the influence of the officer, behind which the *askari* could express his dissatisfaction with some aspects of life in the military. An astute officer would attempt to eliminate this avenue of resistance as quickly as possible.[47]

The isolation of the station afforded the new officers ample opportunity to refine their Swahili. One German accounted for the evolution of his language skills in this way:

> Understanding the natives was quite difficult at first, and misunderstandings were unavoidable. But after a few weeks my command of Swahili advanced enough for me to be able to discuss the events of the day with the more intelligent people and could issue orders that could be understood. I was left without a translator and thus was forced to speak only the native language, a circumstance to which I attribute my rapid improvement. Necessity is always the best school master.[48]

The gradual improvement of their leader's communication skills allowed the *askaris* to approach him personally for permission to take leave, to adjudicate disputes or to gain a clearer picture of the place from whence the Germans came. Loneliness and the abrupt transition from European to African surroundings gave many company commanders stationed in the interior the impetus to seek out contact with their men. The African soldiers helped the Germans understand local languages, customs and generally aided the process of European reorientation. For the Germans trained in European methods of warfare, service in Africa necessitated a radical rethinking of the dynamics of battle and the *askaris* supplemented the officers' dearth of information with their own experiences of African

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[46] Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 73. Fonck also advised the officers to learn Swahili as quickly as possible because of the dangers of allowing translators too much power within the company.

[47] Language was not only used to escape the tyranny of the European officer, but also as an exclusionary method of communication between soldiers of the same ethnic origin. Knowledge of a native language was one of the last bastions of ethnic association within the *Schutztruppe.*

[48] Stentzler, *Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, 39.

warfare. The African soldiers taught the Germans to construct thorn zaribas that were sturdier and more effective than barbed wire, they instructed the Europeans on the importance of camouflage and they revealed the tactics employed by the various peoples in the colony.[49]

The *askaris* provided *Schutztruppen* officers with invaluable intelligence about the nature of warfare and politics in Africa and deepened the sense of mutual dependance between the patron and client. Naturally the bond between the officer and the men was strengthened by the small measure of expertise granted the Africans by the Germans. The exchange of information was usually informal, but clearly enhanced the standing of the *askaris* in the eyes of their officers.[50] On officer described the gatherings which occurred in the evening after a long day on the march,

> [In the evenings] I would sit on a bench smoke a cigar and drink a dram of the local grog, while the villagers, porters, and *askaris* sat on their haunches in a circle around me. Soon a lively conversation began where I either answered their questions [about Germany] or I asked them about their families, their hunting traditions, or their norms and practices. Through this simple method one was able to learn about every aspect of a tribal practice or a local dialect.[51]

Communication between the Germans and the *askaris* and among the soldiers themselves helped to deepen the group identity of the company by giving them a vocabulary that was distinct within the colony. The *askaris* spoke a language which reflected the disparate cultural influences brought together in the *Schutztruppe*'s ranks, by

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[49]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 80-2.

[50]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 80-1. The Germans were dependent on the Africans under their command for all pertinent knowledge regarding terrain and orientation. Fonck freely admitted as much, "For service in the field the native possesses ideal characteristics for he has a grasp of effective use of the terrain for camouflage, as well as knowledge of the enemy, and tracking skills all of which are developed in childhood. He has a talent for orienteering in the field and is able to make a trail through the densest bush or find sources of fresh water, all of these capabilities are the result of his wealth of experience."

[51]Stentzler, *Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, 45-6. Even Germans sensitive to the necessity of communicating with their African charges were aware that language alone could not eliminate the barriers between them; at a very early stage in the history of the force Wissmann advocated that his officers attempt to understand each man as an individual. Stentzler embraced this philosophy, but remained deeply influenced by the racism of the age, frequently referring to Africans as large children.

incorporating various expressions from Arabic, Nyamwezi, and German to suit their needs. The ethnic origins of the soldiers revealed a tendency for recruits to come from groups, such as porters and mercenary armies, accustomed to social upheaval and prepared to embrace innovation. The insular nature of the caravans and the *ruga-ruga* during the nineteenth century resulted in the creation of languages exclusive to those communities, a characteristic which effectively set them apart from their communities of origin. No evidence exists to support a claim for an exclusive *askari* language, but the daily use of German military jargon and the fact that Swahili was a second language for the vast majority of African soldiers would suggest that the *askaris* were able to use their customized language to distinguish themselves further from other Africans.[52]

Discipline was the realm of the company commander. Although the original drill of the metropolitan Army was pared down for use in Africa, the *Schutztruppe* expected a high level of discipline and professionalism among the *askaris*. The officers were instructed to avoid intruding on the personal life of the soldier unless the man asked for his intervention to settle a dispute or if the officer suspected his soldier of polygyny. Other than these exceptional circumstances, the *askaridorf* was considered the private realm of the soldiers. Indeed, the officers generally conceded the *askaris* their right to cultural "peculiarities" while off-duty.[53] Breaches in discipline by soldiers on duty were an entirely different matter. The officer was expected to maintain a high level of discipline among the rank and file and therefore had a wide array of punitive measures at his disposal. Minor offenses were dealt with through fines or restrictions on a soldiers food allowance or by sentencing the man to extra work detail. Serious offenses were punished through whipping or expulsion from the company, while crimes such as murder or fomenting insurrection received the death penalty. The latter offenses came under the ægis of criminal law and

[52]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 72. Curses, of course, were the first words to make their way into the new vocabulary, but one can see the precedent for a language of hybrid influences in the language of the caravan routes. The Swahili spoken by the *askaris* was not a new language, but it reflected the growing elitism of the rank and file who flaunted their meagre knowledge of German and their professional jargon.
[53]Fonck,*Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 64-5. Fonck uses the word *Eigentümlichkeiten*.

were usually adjudicated by civilian officials in Dar-es-Salaam, but this circumstance was preceded by the *askari*'s expulsion from the *Schutztruppe.*

The early period of German involvement on the East African littoral witnessed the brutal treatment of indigenous soldiers by European officials who advocated the saw, 'the Negro can only be governed with a whip' and habitually placed *askaris* in chains for minor offenses.[54] The advent of the *Schutztruppe* marked the realization that the *askari* was a representative of the German administration and should be afforded the respect commensurate with that position. This meant that all disciplinary procedures against African soldiers were handled and administered internally by the *Schutztruppe* and, conversely, that attacks by African civilians upon the person of an *askari* received harsh and summary punishment. The civilian and military leadership of the colony was careful to keep the garrison commanders at a short tether by providing them with a chain of procedures to be followed when punishing a soldier. Wissmann proclaimed that these measures were not intended to undermine the authority of the officer, but to ensure that the rank and file were motivated by, "soldierly respect rather than slavish fear".[55] The *Schutztruppe*'s internal reform programme reached its apex in 1897 with the introduction of formal court martial procedures for African soldiers. After this year, all courts martial were composed of three adjudicators, including one judge drawn from the ranks of African officers. The African could not overturn a ruling alone, but his presence on the bench gave the appearance of African participation in the process. All of the measures taken to regularize the procedure and punishment of internal misconduct the *Schutztruppe* reduced the arbitrary powers of the officers in the field and calibrated responses to breaches of discipline according to the offenses committed.[56]

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[54] Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 36-7.; Krenzler, *Ein Jahr*, 102.
[55] Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 63.
[56] Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 63- 65. Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 70-71. Except in a time of war, the death penalty could not be carried out summarily by the officer on the spot, all cases to be dealt with by capital punishment had to be sent to Dar-es-Salaam for the governor's review.

The administration of local justice through the garrison commander enhanced the *askari*'s station among the people from the area surrounding the station because it reinforced the African soldier's special status in the colony. European commanders were forbidden to carry out any floggings personally and thus the advent of formalized corporal punishment actually empowered the *askari* because it placed the whip in his hand. In addition to this symbolic differentiation, the severity of punishment meted out to civilians differed substantially from that administered to *askaris*. Attacks on soldiers or their personal domain were punished vigorously; a local attempting to seduce the wife of an *askari* was given 10 lashes, while an action by a civilian which could be construed as a denigration of the *askari*'s position received between 25 and 50 lashes from a government whip.[57] The murder of an African soldier in the Kilimanjaro region was used as justification for a series of bloody campaigns against the Meru in 1892, while the murder of an African leader by an *askari* in 1897 resulted in a paltry 5 year prison term. The judicial double standard only served to deepen the arrogance of the *askaris vis-à-vis* their surroundings.[58]

In the final analysis, the officer was a focus of curiosity, fear and trust within the company. He was responsible for maintaining the company's discipline at the station and on campaign, a position which allowed him to administer severe punishment almost arbitrarily. The apparent arbitrariness of his decisions, coupled with his foreign appearance, strange language and manners to hinder the development of a personal bond between the officer and his men during their initial acquaintance. Yet as the German overcame his unfamiliarity with Swahili through conversations with his soldiers, the personal link between patron and client was able to evolve to a significant level of trust. The best illustration of the trust the *askaris* had in their superiors can be seen in the regular appeals by African soldiers to the garrison commander to adjudicate disputes among them.

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[57]Müller, *Kolonien*, 84-7.

[58]Prince, *Deutsche Frau*, 85-9.; John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 99.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 42-3.

This level of trust could have developed only through positive experiences and faith in the fairness of the officer's decisions. Although he remained the brunt of jokes and name-calling by the *askaris* , humour never manifested itself as direct challenge to the officer's authority.

The common purpose of Europeans and Africans in the *Schutztruppe* drew them together more often than it divided them. The bond between patron and client, evident and refined at the station, was cemented by their mutual experiences in battle. Both parties held war to be a positive and possibly lucrative affair. The *askaris* were anxious to share in the spoils of war and found an ideal vehicle for their ambitions in the young German officers bent on adventure and commendation during their tour of duty in East Africa. Perhaps spurred on by the swashbuckling expectations of the young officers recruited from the German military academies, ambitious expeditions dominated East Africa from 1888 to 1900. Other means were rarely explored as the Germans sought to conquer the territory swiftly. By offering the Germans seconded to the *Schutztruppe* from the German Army to count their period of service in the colony for double toward their Army pensions and allowing them the additional bonus of equating each expedition as a year's service, official policy encouraged the men on the spot to pursue actions which exceeded the requirements of pacification. In this way an officer who served 2 $^{1}/_{2}$ years in East Africa and took part in 4 expeditions during that period, earned 9 years of service toward his pension. During the period 1889 to 1896 the *Schutztruppe* undertook eight or nine punitive expeditions on average, 1897 to 1899 saw the figure drop to four campaigns per annum and only two expeditions of any importance took place from 1900 to 1905. The *Maji-Maji* uprising of 1905 served as the last great military action by the *Schutztruppe* prior to 1914.[59]

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[59] Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Afrika*, 211, 200-1.

Life on the March

Marches into the interior punctuated the extended periods the *askaris* spent in the station. Punitive expeditions could arise from a host of circumstances, a recalcitrant group or leader refusing to collect revenue for the colonial government; repeated raiding on caravans in defiance of the administration or even a direct attack on the government station. These military actions involved whole companies meeting challenges to the German presence with an iron fist. In other instances, the *Schutztruppe* was used to prevent the escalation of existing tensions. Small detachments of 15 to 30 *askaris* regularly escorted caravans through territory peopled by groups known to interfere with commercial transport. Through both large-scale operations and frequent smaller actions the Germans made plain their resolve to support their policies with force.[60]

For the *askari* the result of the German reliance on the *Schutztruppe* was a life spent dealing with the travails of life on the march, in addition to conquering the forces of miscreant chiefs. German military actions in the colony were rarely unexpected because the rapid dissemination of information from village to village eliminated surprise attacks as a consideration. Rather than risk defeat in a quickly prepared surprise attack, *Schutztruppen* officers took great pains to prepare their expeditions adequately. They enlisted large numbers of porters to ensure regular supplies in hostile country and secured reinforcements from the coastal garrisons. The process of organizing a military action could take up to a month, during which time the *askaris* were drilled with increased intensity, lines of communication into the area of unrest were scouted out and secured with small temporary posts set up every 35 miles, and supplies from the coast or the surrounding region were brought to the station and packed for the impending campaign. *Ruga-ruga* were also recruited for the purposes of scouting or as reserve troops for the column.

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[60]Naval Intelligence, *Handbook of German East Afrika*, 215-232.; Fonck,*Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 83-94. Unless otherwise indicated, the bulk of the information in this passage is taken from these two sources.

Once the work of preparation was completed mobile companies, consisting of nearly 600 men, formed into columns and began the march. The force left the station in formal style, marching past the settlement bordering the station to the cries and wails of their wives and children as they headed into the dense undergrowth of the East African bush. Theoretically the columns were to march two abreast, but the narrowness of the bush paths made this an almost impossible feat, forcing the columns to travel single file. The terrain and vegetation made the journey doubly difficult,

> The sun rose higher, causing us to sweat profusely and once on the steppe, the thorny branches of its foliage encroached on the narrow footpath. One particularly nasty plant was a harmless looking green bush under whose leaves were small, razor-sharp thorns which penetrated our clothes and left their indelible mark. It wasn't long before these bushes and their thorns shredded the khaki puttees on my leg, a dreadful turn of events on the first day of an expedition reckoned to last weeks.[61]

The march formation was consistent. Each column was headed by a point of 4-10 *askaris* sent 50 metres ahead of the main column to secure the front of the caravan. The actual length of the column varied according to the size of the expedition, but usually each porter was expected to add 5 metres to the length of the column and each *askari* an additional 3 metres. One mobile company consisted of 585 officers, medics, *askaris*, and porters stretched 2 $^{1}/_{2}$ kilometres, a fact which made communication between front and rear problematic. Messages from commanders to the rank and file were sent down the line by runners or, in narrower paths, the messages were sent orally from one man to the next. Flanks were scouted by the indigenous *ruga-ruga*, who ensured that no surprise attack was forthcoming. Fanning out through the thick vegetation on either side of the *Schutztruppe*'s path, the *ruga-ruga* left the camp two hours in advance of the column in the hope that they would be able to warn the advancing column of enemy ambush. A heavily armed rear-

[61] August Becker, *Aus Deutsch-Ostafrikas Sturm und Drangperiode: Erinnerungen eines alten Afrikaners*, (Halle: Hendel, 1911), 56-7.

guard under the command of a European following the column, was designed to fend off a strong attack from behind.

These precautions did not eliminate the possibility of ambush. In some cases the hostile forces fell upon the column unmolested after allowing the *ruga-ruga* scouts to pass in front of them, while they occupied the area behind them. The possibility of such a force eluding detection made it imperative that the *askaris* be constantly prepared to take evasive action at the sound of a shot or cry. Both *askaris* and porters were armed with loaded weapons and were drilled extensively to defend themselves against a surprise assault. Josef Viera's patriotic novel *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck im Busch*, gives us some indication of the tactics employed by the columns during an ambush,

> First they drop to the ground as fast as lightning, and they wait for the order to open fire. The man at the head of the column shoots straight ahead, while the last man shoots to the rear, the rest of the men shoot to the left or the right.... The detachment fires to all sides of the path, as if they were behind an enclosed fortress and even if the unseen enemy is hiding, he cannot approach from any side with out being shot.[62]

The unreliability of porters in these conditions made it necessary for *askaris* and local auxiliaries to be distributed evenly through their ranks. In extreme cases, the porters were roped together to prevent desertion. Machine guns were available at the head and the rear of the column and were employed if an attack could not be turned away by conventional methods.[63]

These long days marching through heavy undergrowth in unfamiliar territory placed extreme strain on officers and soldiers soldiers alike. The stress of constant preparedness against ambush in addition to the 20-25 kilometer marches under the weight of heavy packs left the men exhausted when the set up camp for the night. Wissmann expressed wonderment at the *askaris*' resilience in these difficult conditions,

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[62]Josef Viera, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck im Busch*, (Stuttgart: Loewes Verlag, 1937), 45., Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 89. During the early period the Germans adopted the technique of firing into impassable bush to ensure that it was clear.

[63]see Appendices IV and V.

> [The *askari*] marches 3 to 4 miles under the broiling sun with a 70 to 80 pound burden on his back, eats 2 or 3 baked potatoes, drinks a litre of water and throws himself on an antelope skin to sleep covering himself only in a woolen rag... this he does for months at a time.[64]

The routine during the passage altered according to the circumstances. The soldiers spent 5-6 hours a day on the march during peace-time and up to 10 hours when on campaign. Reveille sounded at dawn and the men were expected to fold up their tents within 15 minutes and to fall in 15 minutes later. The columns formed and marched with 15 minute breaks after every hour and a rest period of 1 $^1/_2$ hours after five hours. In the driest periods of the year the procession halted after the morning march and waited for the afternoon heat to pass before continuing on to their destination after dusk. At other times of the year, the columns continued until 15:00 when the company would halt for the night. The men rested, ate and carried out the multitude of small details necessary to secure the camp. At 18:15 weapons were loaded and bayonets secured as the *askaris* received the next day's orders. After dusk, the night watches assigned by the commander at the end of the march, took their posts and the rest of the camp turned in for the night.

Encampments varied in permanence. While giving chase to an enemy, companies generally did not construct elaborate defences and the camp consisted of little more than tents pitched in a clearing. Watches were posted around the perimeter to act as the first line of defense against a surprise attack. In instances where the enemy did not reveal himself for extended periods of time, the camp resembled that of an occupying force. Temporary shelters were constructed out of wood and mud, thorn *zaribas* and other impediments protected the perimeter, while nightly watches patrolled the defenses. On expeditions where the Germans employed *ruga-ruga*, the auxiliaries were separated from the *Schutztruppen* force. The Germans considered *ruga-ruga* too unpredictable and

[64]Wissmann *Schilderungen und Rathschlage*, 64. This poetic description of the *askaris* was clearly used to illustrate to the metropolitan reader that the Germans had enlisted a troop of faithful Africans to serve the Kaiser. It seems unlikely that the *askaris* would have remained in a force that only fed them "2 or 3 baked potatoes" and a litre of water, the usual daily ration was a 2 pounds of a mixture of grains such as rice, corn meal, and white mtama, and meat was also distributed regularly

undisciplined to risk having them in the same camp as the *askaris*. Civilians were forbidden to enter the enclosure of a *Schutztruppen* camp while a company was on campaign, a decision which served to seal the camp from influences beyond the community of *askaris*, porters and officers.

During the early period of colonial conquest the *Schutztruppe* had little difficulty in coaxing indigenous leaders into pitched battles. German policy aimed at gaining the capitulation of dissident leaders by inflicting heavy casualties on their forces and capturing their main fortifications. Tom von Prince was one of the German officers who relished the insane heroics of the early period and his description an assault on an African fort provides a fine description of the nature of these engagements,

> I allowed my Zulus to climb onto the roof... shots came through the roof between our feet. The enemy was obviously inside. I quickly became bored. My men refused to enter the dark rooms below us until I agreed to lead a few in. [After we were inside] we suddenly shouts and shots on the roof. The enemy attempted to escape and had fallen into the hands of the auxiliaries waiting below.... The whole operation was almost finished when I suddenly heard a shot fire a metre away from me, giving off an deafening blast. I returned fire immediately, but neither of us was injured by the other... My enemy took a split second to slip out of the door and I was sincerely sad that he didn't escape. Once outside he was impaled by one of our bayonets. To this day, I can hear his horrible shriek.[65]

While the policy of storming enemy strong-holds resulted in the surrender of a number of resistance leaders in the early period, indigenous forces soon recognized the folly of allowing the Germans to exploit their technological superiority. For its part, the *Schutztruppen* command became aware that its resources were too small to continue sacrificing more men in frontal assaults. Wissmann advocated building "golden bridges" as an an alternative to the suicidal, albeit heroic, tactics of the earlier period.[66] This policy

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[65]Tom von Prince, "Tembekämpfen", ed. Werner von Langsdorff, *Deutsche Flagge über Sand und Palmen*, (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1936), 76-7.
[66] Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 17

allowed officers to negotiate the retreat of surrounded enemy forces, with a view to their eventual pacification by diplomatic rather than military means.

As the Germans attempted to establish a *pax Germanica* throughout the colony, conflagrations took a different form forcing the *Schutztruppe* to adopt more conservative tactics. The Force became increasingly responsible for enforcing the new order. This new role required the *Schutztruppe* to police the interior, apprehending dissident rulers and punishing acts of defiance. Companies were now sent on expeditions into hostile regions against enemies both reluctant of negotiation with the Germans and hoping to avoid full-scale conflict with them. These two competing emotions usually resulted in a strategy of ambushing *Schutztruppe* columns entering into the territory.

Thus the campaigns featured sporadic ambushes on the advancing company of *askaris*. Invariably these raids were turned back, but they inflicted their share of casualties on the *Schutztruppe*,

> We proceeded step by step, hacking away at the undergrowth which was barring our progress. The Europeans --rifles in one hand, bayonets in the other-- worked diligently [alongside the *askaris*] to carve a hole in the mat of vegetation. Suddenly two muzzle-loaders rang out from dark jungle, less than 10 metres away and in the space between me and Major Natzmer, a Sudanese officer Abdallah Sheik fell from wounds to the chest and knee. He took the shots that had been intended for us.... The *askari* Osmani took a direct hit in his stomach and was transported down the line where he died three days later.[67]

Menace appeared at every turn of the bush paths for *askaris* marching through hostile territory. Shots fired from the relative protection of the dense undergrowth delivered salvos of home fashioned iron balls, shards of metal, nails and other shrapnel at the passing column of *askaris*, killing the men or, worse, allowing them to linger in agony before dying. This atmosphere had a two-fold effect on the soldiers. The omnipresence of danger, when coupled with the daily march, tested the limits of the *askaris*' stamina and

[67]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 147.

nerve. But the isolation of the march and the camp, their common enemy and the forced recognition of interdependence through battle experiences, served to galvanize the *askaris* into a cohesive unit.

However important on their own, the experiences of the campaigns were only significant because of the level of success of the *Schutztruppe*. Without the series of military triumphs won by the *askari* s between 1889 and 1905, the African soldiers in the *Schutztruppe* could not have enjoyed their elite position in colonial society. Experience taught these men the value of superior weaponry and training, but they viewed their personal contribution as essential. There existed something special in uniform of the *Schutztruppe* for the *askari* that had little to do with the Germany or even with the German administration. This is not to say that African soldiers exhibited any arrogance *vis-a-vis* their colonial masters -- although they were not above snobbery when dealing with less influential Europeans.[68] There simply emerged, through the accumulation of experiences, a sense that to serve in the German *Schutztruppe* was to enjoy a privileged status. Equally it was understood that this privilege was only available to those who fulfilled their military obligations satisfactorily.

After the First World War, during which thousands of *askaris* remained in the *Schutztruppe* and thousands of *ruga-ruga* joined, the Germans gleefully cited their military campaign as proof of their African subjects' desire to be ruled by a German government. In memoirs of German officers who served in East Africa during the Great War, *askaris* were portrayed as loyal fighters, who surrendered with great reluctance. The argument which flows from these heroic anecdotes, equates *askari* support for the regime with a broader indigenous loyalty to the Germans.

The sense of community the *Schutztruppe* engendered in the *askaris* and their families reveals the hollowness of the German claims of widespread indigenous loyalty to

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[68]Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 45. The *askaris* accorded the highest respect to the Europeans whom they saluted; those who weren't accorded this formality were treated as "petty bureaucrats" by the African soldiers.

the war effort. Membership in the community of the station was based largely on differentiation. The development of the *askaridorf*, preferential legal treatment for the soldiers and extra privileges for their families, alienated the *askaris* from the surrounding peoples and assisted the promotion of a group identity among the *Schutztruppe*'s rank and file. By allowing the men and their families to develop as a community, the Germans allowed for the development of an interest group within the colony, whose ideological tie to the *Schutztruppe* as an institution served as the basis for the continuation of the war effort after 1914.

Chapter IV

Loyalty and Ideology

Over the course of the German presence in East Africa, the *askaris* were active participants in the territory's conquest and, eventually, became the central figures in the implementation and enforcement of German policy in the colony. In contrast to the experiences of other colonial powers who employed Africans in their colonial armies, the Germans faced neither mutiny nor mass desertions among their troops during this period.[1] Indeed, by 1914, the African soldiers were considered a highly reliable element in the colonial framework. This situation, in addition to the enduring service of so many *askaris* during the First World War, begs the question of motivation. Why would a group of African soldiers feel bound to a European institution, especially an institution whose chief objective is the subjugation of Africans?

The *askaris'* experiences of colonialism was unique because they were shaped by both, the German regime and the political order it replaced. By examining the basis of the *askaris'* loyalty -- and the means by which the *Schutztruppe* secured it -- this chapter hopes to penetrate the African soldiers' perspective of their position in the colonial framework, in addition to providing a clearer picture of the forces at work in East Africa during a period of colossal change. The issue of loyalty also provides the story of the *askaris* with a transcendent quality, addressing the universal elements of their historical situation rather than its mere particulars. This chapter begins with an overview and assessment of various perspectives used by historians, propagandists and *Schutztruppen* officers to explain the

[1]Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe fur Deutsch Ost Afrika*, (Berlin: Ernst Mittler, 1911), 64-7. In 1896, 1500 African soldiers in the Belgian Congo mutinied against their officers because of their poor pay and meagre rations. The fact that this relatively insignifcant episode in a neighbouring colony received mention in Nigmann's official history suggests that the Germans took note of it.

askaris' loyalty to the German cause. The discussion will compare these explanations in light of the evidence presented in the previous chapters and attempt to draw some conclusions regarding the origins of this loyalty and its general nature.

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The events which followed this period of study marked the apex of the history of the German military presence in East Africa. Under the command of Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, the *Schutztruppe* carried out a successful guerilla campaign for four years against a numerically superior British host. Despite the fact that the Germans drew upon African levies and European volunteers to raise their number to 11,000, the professional *askaris* employed by the *Schutztruppe* prior to the War comprised the nucleus of Lettow-Vorbeck's force. The tenacity of their resistance to the British invasion earned the *Schutztruppe* -- particularly its commander -- a reputation for extraordinary discipline and military skill. For contemporary observers, the East African campaign bore witness to Lettow-Vorbeck's ability to engender, in the *askaris*, a patriotic commitment to the German cause.

Although the African soldiers' alleged patriotism receives mention in most accounts of the First World War, historians of the period have failed consistently to look beyond the events of 1914-18 to examine the origins of the *askaris'* loyalty. Some elements of the African involvement in the German war effort were exclusive to the circumstances of the campaign. The shared hardship of the march, the elimination of European privilege, the daily personal contact between the races and the series of early German victories, all served to deepen the *askaris'* commitment to the German cause, but were also circumstances unique to the War. The essential elements of the African soldiers' loyalty to the *Schutztruppe* existed long before Lettow-Vorbeck's arrival in 1914. Events in the

period 1889 to 1914 forged allegiances within the Force, which were based on the mutual obligations of patron and client, but also encompassed wider loyalties.

If a biography of the *askari* were composed from the historical literature surrounding the *Schutztruppe*'s role in the First World War, loyalty would figure most prominently in the depiction of the African soldier's character. Portrayals of the *askaris* have taken two forms and have differed according to their German or non-German origin. The German accounts generally emphasized the German values adopted by the *Schutztruppen* rank-and-file. In a post-war account a former German official delivered a paean to the many Africans who died in Lettow-Vorbeck's force,

> How many of you brave lads have since [the beginning of the campaign] spilled your blood on the soil of your homeland, for Germany. None of you understood the imperative of your mission. Opportunities to abandon the Germans and enter the service of the numerically superior enemy were legion. You, however, made the German cause your own and proved to the world that a black man would gladly march to his death for the German colours. This we shall never forget.[2]

Manipulation of history in this manner was characteristic of the strong *revancheist* sentiments permeating German society in the wake of the Paris Peace Conference and during Hitler's ascendancy. German writers who addressed the colonial experience were careful to emphasize those aspects which seemed to support their territorial claims in Africa. By linking the notion of *askari* loyalty and bravery with African gratitude to the Germans, these writers attempted to create the image of an indigenous constituency who embraced German rule and actually preferred it to the British regime. Josef Viera's novel ***Mit Lettow-Vorbeck im Busch***, illustrates this tendency magnificently. In reconstructing a conversation between a wizened German *effendi* and a British *askari* after the German surrender at Abercorn in November 1918, the author would have us believe that Lettow-Vorbeck commanded a troop of black Germans,

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[2]Hans Poeschel, *bwana hakimu: Richterfahrten in Deutsch Ost-Africa*, (Leipzig: Kochler, 1940),143. Poeschel authored the phrase comparing the *askaris* prowess under fire to the courage of "the blondest Germans".

> One day he approached the guard watching the entrance [of the internment camp] and looking him straight in the eye said: "Hey weren't you once a German *askari* ? I am certain that I know you. How is it that you are serving our enemies? You are a traitor!"
> "The English pressed me into their service," answered the guard somewhat meekly.
> "What do you mean pressed!", the older man raged, "That cannot be. A German *askari* does not allow himself to be pressed!" And the older man raised his hand, to strike the guard, who accepted the punishment,... tacit acknowledgement of his misdeed. Yes, a German *askari* does not allow himself to be pressed...[3]

In contrast to the German characterization of the *askaris*, other -- mostly British -- writers did not address the issue of loyalty directly, but merged it with the less distinguishable category of discipline. This amounted to crediting Lettow-Vorbeck's leadership and his ability to forge an efficient fighting force out of limited means as the principle factors behind the loyalty of the African soldiers. However benign this characterization seems in comparison to the ominous penumbra which surrounds all German historiography of the interwar period, the non-German portrayal of the *askaris* casts them in a decidedly more passive role. They are reduced to the status of so many beakers into which Lettow-Vorbeck poured an intangible substance known as discipline. For these writers Africans made no choices in their arrangement; they accepted European wisdom simply because they possessed none themselves. A racial theory is obviously at work in attempts to account for African soldiers' commitment to the German cause in this way. These histories imply that African soldiers could never acquire discipline on their own. It had to be imposed externally.[4]

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[3]Josef Viera, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck im Busch*, (Stuttgart: Loewes Verlag, 1937), 91.; Ludwig Deppe, *Mit Lettow-Vorbeck durch Afrika*, (Berlin: August Scherl, 1919), 80. Viera's descriptions--of Abercorn at least-- were not created out of thin air. Deppe reported of the bad feelings which existed between the Africans in the German and British armies. A *Schutztruppen effendi* insulted a British guard and Deppe noted that British *askaris* were generally timorous in the face of their enemy soldiers even when the latter were behind barbed wire fences.

[4]Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa*, (Norton: London, 1986) 266-7.; J. R. Sibley, *Tanganyikan guerilla. East African Campaign 1914-18.* (Pan/ Ballantine: London, 1971), 19. Farwell's account portrays Africans in a particularly passive manner, leaving them as objects which are acted upon or used by Europeans. He describes the *askaris* as having been "well trained and disciplined by German officers and NCOs and they were, at least initially, man for man, better soldiers, for bush fighting, than the British,

The most realistic assessment of the tie between the African soldiers and the *Schutztruppe* can be found in the pre-war reminiscences of German officers who served in East Africa. These men had no delusions about the rank-and-file's loyalty to the German imperial mission, preferring instead to view their men as mercenaries whose reliability depended on regular pay and a personal bond to long-serving officers. In 1895 Wissmann went so far as to conclude,

> The concept of loyalty has no meaning to the black, except in the slave or patriarchal context...he lacks our highly valued moral concept of loyalty and is in fact incapable of any deeper long-lasting emotion.[5]

Subsequent experiences with African soldiers taught the officers that Wissmann's assessment was overly harsh. Most concluded that their soldiers' commitment resulted from just treatment by their officers and high wages. Despite the many instances of spectacular bravery, in the eyes of their officers the *askaris* remained mercenaries who could only be expected to exhibit loyalty within the confines of that role. Heinrich Fonck, a supporter of the *Schutztruppe*'s foreign recruitment policy, tempered his enthusiasm for the Force with reference to the contractual nature of the *askaris*' loyalty,

> [The *Schutztruppe*] has never let us down and proved itself to be a perfectly reliable *mercenary* army. Maintained at sufficient strength and under the command of officers possessing its trust, [the Force] will be prepared to put down any insurrection in the colony.[6]

Indeed Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck doubted the depth of commitment he could expect from the indigenous inhabitants of the German colony, for the reasons expressed by one East

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Indians, or South Africans. It took the British an unconscionably long time to realize that African tribesmen could be turned into first class soldiers particularly for bush warfare..." Major Sibley is guilty of the same fault, "Discipline and punctuality, well-known Prussian characteristics were instilled into the men".

[5] Herrmann von Wissmann,*Afrika. Schilderungen und Rathschläge zur Vorbereituung für den Aufenthalt und den Dienst in den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, (Berlin: Mittler, 1895), 62-3. It must be noted however that Wissmann felt that this situation could be improved and the *askaris* brought to a recognition of their obligation to the Kaiser through integrative measures discussed in chapter 3.

[6] Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika: Eine Schilderung deutscher Tropen nach 10 Wanderjahren*, (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1910), 94. My italics.

African who told him, "It is all the same to us whether the English or the Germans are our masters."[7]

Regardless of the absence of widespread support for German rule in East Africa, an undeniable sense of purpose existed among the men enlisted in the *Schutztruppe*. The efficient operation of the military was a critical facet of the new administration's extension of control over the colony. From Abushiri in 1889 to the *Maji-Maji* uprising, the military faced an assortment of challenges which required unflinching commitment from the rank-and-file. The Germans used a variety of means to integrate the *askaris* into the new order and in mobilizing their support for that order. For African soldiers, the *Schutztruppe*'s initial appeal resulted from material and status considerations, rather than abstract notions of philosophical commitment to the German cause. The observation that the *askaris* passively accommodated the demands of their German employers simply in exchange for material reward, however, fails to acknowledge the fact that the effective operation of the *Schutztruppe* required accommodation on the part of both patron and client. As the *askaris* were integrated into the Force their commitment to the institution became increasingly ideological, but this component of their integration was linked to the German willingness to accommodate certain conditions the Africans placed on their service. Even in their role as upholders of the new order, the *askaris* resisted some of the demands made by the Germans upon their labour.

The *Schutztruppe* offered a qualified recruit the opportunity to acquire wealth and cachet in the region. With the introduction of specie into East Africa in 1891, the *askaris* were given a privileged position in the colonial economy. Government employees, paid in rupees and given a comprehensible tally of their weekly wages, were the earliest initiates into the monied economy. Compared with other wage earners in the colony the soldiers enjoyed generous salaries and the early use of standardized currency, although certain to have caused confusion initially, reinforced the *askaris*' position at the vanguard of the

[7]Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *My Reminiscences of East Africa*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1920), 32-33.

rapidly evolving new society taking shape in East Africa. Regular wages and standardized payment of those wages were issues particularly important to the soldiers recruited by Wissmann in Cairo, who had been denied their accrued earnings by their British regiments after the Mahdist wars.

Although not as significant initially as remuneration, the image of the *askaris* among the surrounding peoples was crucial to the development of the soldiers' allegiance to the German cause. The foreign origin of the *Schutztruppe*, with its German uniforms and Dinka and Shagaani nucleus, in addition to the policy of posting African soldiers at stations outside of their home territory, engendered a sense of mistrust among the population of the locality. Stations were established in the wake of wars -- in some cases on the ruins of a local ruler's headquarters -- fueling hostility among locals unhappy with the mantle of subject people. The arrogance exhibited by the African soldiers in their dealings with locals was supported by a host of monetary and legal privileges granted them by the German administration. The soldiers acquired slave wives, received consistently lenient sentences when brought before the court and were permitted to loot while on campaign. In the minds of the indigenous population the *askaris* were little more than a hostile army of occupation, a fact which exacerbated the existing alienation between the African agents of colonialism and the Africans being colonized.

The hostility indigenous East Africans felt toward the *Schutztruppe* and the administration as a whole reached its pinnacle during the *Maji-Maji* uprising. Stations were attacked and besieged by rebel armies, caravans were annihilated and foreign merchants and officials were slaughtered. Most significantly a number of retired *askaris* living in the area of unrest were killed by the rebels, who saw the ex-soldiers as agents of the administration.

The attacks of the years 1905-6 erased residual doubt regarding the *askaris'* allegiances. When retired and expelled *askaris* flocked to their local stations to enlist their support against the insurrection, the hitherto perceived alliance between the African soldiers

and the German administration became manifest. Self-preservation was the overriding motive of these ex-*askaris*, for whom re-enlistment promised both protection and the opportunity to reassert their position in the region. Through their association with the *Schutztruppe*, they recognized that they had cast their lot with the Germans and their future in the colony rested on the successful suppression of *Maji-Maji*. Whether the events of 1905 marked the dissolution of the remaining ties linking indigenous *askaris* to the people inhabiting the territory, or merely signified the most obvious manifestation of a rupture that had occurred a decade earlier, is of secondary import. More significant to this discussion is the fact that *Maji-Maji* revealed that the *askaris* viewed the accommodation necessary to serve in the *Schutztruppe* as less malign, than forsaking their interests by abandoning the regime.[8]

This episode reveals the complexity of the issue of loyalty. While the actions of ex-soldiers during *Maji-Maji* found their inspiration in self-interest rather than loyalty, this motivation forms a vital component of the *askaris'* commitment to the *Schutztruppe*. Their commitment to the German cause in Africa was not grounded in nineteenth century European ideologies, such as patriotism or nationalism, but was based on the personal loyalties which developed between the officers and the men and, beyond these relationships, on an allegiance to the *Schutztruppe* as an institution. This sense of obligation felt by many *askaris* toward the German military organization found voice in

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[8]Lettow-Vorbeck, *Reminiscences*, 10.; Ernst Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 73.; Adolf Graf von Götzen, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika im Aufstand 1905/6*, (Berlin: 1909), 66. Nigmann mentions that the retired *askaris* were given a pension following the *Maji-Maji* uprising in order that those who settled near a station after their retirement would have regular truck with the garrison. Lettow-Vorbeck tells of an incident with a group of retired *askaris* shortly before the outbreak of hostilities with Britain in 1914, which underlines their bond to the *Schutztruppe* :

> "At Boma la Ngombe, a place between Moshi and Arusha, a number of old Askari had been settled by the late Lieutenant-Colonel Johannes they were mainly engaged in cattle dealing, and had become well-to-do. The news of my coming preceded me, and the people appeared in full strength to greet me on my arrival. I had the impression that this was not a mere show of loyalty; the people not only told me enthusiastically of Gemans under whom they had served, but after the outbreak of war, unasked and withouth the slightest pressure, they placed a large sum of money at our disposal to help the force."

the soldiers' willingness to accommodate and adhere to the military rules of conduct and in their long service. Through the accumulated experiences of military service and the associations surrounding the life offered by the *Schutztruppe*, the relationships and allegiances within the Force were transformed into an ideology of common purpose among the rank and file of the *Schutztruppe*. The historical origins and the experiences of the soldiers lie at the root of this ideology.

The alienation of the surrounding peoples and the status or financial considerations impinging upon Africans who entered the German army, have been discussed above. These issues, although important in initiating action among recruits or providing incentive for soldiers already serving, do not supply an adequate explanation for the sustained allegiance of the African rank and file. The unique character of the *askari* community at the station and its psychological proximity to service in the *Schutztruppe* are linked inextricably to the *askaris*' emergence as a cornerstone of the East African administration The *askaridorf*, located behind the barriers erected at the station to keep Africans out, housed an ethnically heterogeneous community. The majority of the adults in this community either were foreign to the region, such as the Dinka and Somali recruits, or were kinless peoples of slave origin, such as the wives of many men and the Manyema enlisted from indigenous *ruga-ruga*. Even for those born in the territory, the German policy of stationing men outside of their home regions enabled the *askaris* to maintain their status as strangers to the indigenous population. This aspect of the *Schutztruppe* generated a siege mentality *vis-à-vis* the locals and a sense among the *askaris* that they were a unique group within the colony, defined by their function rather than their ethnic allegiances. This latter characteristic was further entrenched by non-conformist elements deserting or being weeded out of the Force during the initial three months of intensive training.[9]

[9]Geographical Section of the Naval Intelligence Division, *A Handbook of German East Afrika*, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920), 202.; Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 69-80.; Heinrich Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 69.; Norman Bennett, *Mirambo of Tanzania ca. 1840-1884*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) 91.The relentless harping by German officers on this aspect of the soldiers existence -- that is their presence as a 'separate tribe'-- certainly had its effect in this respect. Proof of the growing group awareness

The most significant feature affecting the attitude of the *askaridorf* was the presence of the soldiers' families within the walls of the station. This presence was significant in two respects. Initially, the *askaridorf* filled the void left by absent ethnic allegiances and kinship ties, but more importantly it allowed the soldier a private sphere which was integrated into his professional purpose at the station. The *askaridorf* became the point where the African soldier's personal interests and the interests of the company intersected. The *Schutztruppe*, thereby, acquired a close association with the *askaridorf* in the mind of the African soldier. His personal and professional lives inextricably linked in this manner, the *askari* served his company as he could be expected to serve his personal interests-- with vigour and dedication.

The existence of the *askaridorf* highlights one of the seminal features of the *Schutztruppe*: the ability of the *askaris* to dictate the terms of their enlistment. Throughout this thesis, the terms 'German regime' and 'military discipline' have been used interchangeably, reflecting a somewhat monolithic approach to the issue of discipline. The treatment of discipline as something imposed by the Germans upon African soldiers and accepted by the latter party *holus bolus*, distorts a complex process between patron and client. The *askaris* were co-opted by the Germans to lay down their lives in the name of German colonialism, but the Germans were forced to concede their African recruits special privileges. For their part, the *askaris* actively sought o dictate the terms of their enlistment in the *Schutztruppe*. Although they did not express their discontent with aspects of the German regime in the way of Mkwawa or Abushiri, the *askaris* set limitations to their service, by resisting German attempts to control all aspects of the soldiers' lives.

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can be seen in the rituals introduced by the men to indicate membership in the *Schutztruppe* such as the adoption by indigenous *askaris* of Dinka ritual scarring and the practice of a soldier shaving his head upon returning from a campaign. Indeed the existence of many of the men as members of the *Schutztruppe* came as a result of integrating their ethnic traditions with service. I am thinking particularly of the Sukuma and Nyamwesi whose ethnic traditions predisposed them to travel and service outside of Unyamwezi. In Nyamwezi tradition an untravelled man was considered a 'milksop'.

The ability of these Africans to maintain some control over their lives, in the face of complete domination, mirrors the efforts of accommodationist slaves in the Southern United States. In *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, Eugene Genovese's epic social history of American slaves, the author describes a form of resistance in accommodation which is appropriate to both the *askaris* and slaves.

> Accommodation itself breathed a critical spirit and disguised subversive actions and often embraced its apparent opposite- - resistance. In fact, accommodation might best be understood as a way of accepting what could most be helped without falling prey to the pressures for dehumanization, emasculation, and self-hatred. In particular, the slaves' accommodation to paternalism enabled them to assert rights, which by their very nature not only set limits to their surrender of self but actually constituted an implicit rejection of slavery.[10]

Of course, the situation of a slave and an *askari* differ in a number of crucial ways. Slaves were either captured or born into slavery, whereas *askaris* signed limited contracts in return for a regular wage. Free will and choice, both absent from the existence of an American slave, could be exercised to a limited degree by an African soldier serving under the Germans. Yet, in the realm of discipline, the similarities are striking. The all-encompassing nature of daily life at the station can be compared to that of the slave community on a plantation. Both *askaris* and slaves had their daily routines dictated by white patrons and only escaped the officer or master's control through the company of their fellows in the *askaridorf* or the slave quarters. Equally, a parallel can be seen in the misleading portrayals of accommodationist slaves and the *askaris*, as traitors to the interests of their fellow Africans.

Genovese's perspective is helpful in moving away from this myopic '*askaris* as traitors to their people' view. Applying his analytical prism, the *askaris* are men asserting certain rights and dictating the terms of their employment in a manner only open to those Africans enlisted in the military. Enlistment meant security, but as the mutually dependant

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[10]Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll. The World the Slaves Made*, (New York: Vintage, 1976),597-8.

nature of their relationship with the administration became clear, African soldiers soon realized their value to the authorities and asserted control through seemingly insignificant avenues. From the outset, the soldiers exhibited a sense of control over their own labour, by using circumstances to shape their terms of their enlistment. Certainly the unemployed soldiers recruited in Cairo clamored to sign on with the *Schutztruppe*, but the Germans were forced to make a number of significant concessions in order to secure the best soldiers, such as transporting their wives to the territory and assuring them that their wages would be paid regularly. The issue of wages maintained its prominent position in the German handling of these long-serving soldiers and eventually resulted in the Cairo recruits receiving a substantially higher wage than their indigenous counter-parts. The multitude of economic opportunities in East Africa required the Germans to offer a competitive wage to indigenous recruits.[11]

The most significant symptom of German accommodation to the needs of the African soldiers, was the officers' admission that European standards could not apply in Africa. Although Wissmann's recruits were more fit than German soldiers -- a fact which made agility and endurance training superfluous -- he felt that the drill for the *askaris* be kept as simple as possible, so as to minimize their confusion. They were not forced to learn the precision marches of parade drill and they reveal a consistent inability to differentiate between 'attention' and 'at ease'. This latter short-coming was accepted with resignation by the German officers as further evidence of African inferiority.[12] The *askaris*' prowess in battle raised expectations about the African soldiers' capabilities, but this did not translate into vigilance on the parade square. African soldiers successfully

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[11]Nigmann, *Geschichte*, 73.; Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 34. This situation was a result of two factors. The Sudanese soldiers signed on at a wage of £2/month in Cairo and these terms were honoured with the introduction of the rupee in 1891, resulting in wages which were 50% higher than those of indigenous *askaris*. The German honour in this case would seem to have been spurred by the 1898 revolt of Sudanese soldiers complaining of poor wages in the Uganda. Fonck gave a prominent place to the mutiny in his account, revealing an acute awareness of the link between wages and good faith among the Sudanese.
[12]Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 60-1.

avoided the confines of strict European discipline until the dissolution of the *Schutztruppe* in 1918.

The *askaris* gained special consideration for themselves, as Africans, by manipulating Europeans conceit. The Germans' sense of their own racial superiority is neatly summed up in Wissmann's advice to potential officers. The founder of the *Schutztruppe* advocated a middle ground between underestimating and overestimating the capabilities of Africans, advising,

> [The officer, having reached this middle position,] can begin to develop the positive characteristics, which lie dormant in the African and can raise him to achieve the highest performance, indeed, he can bring him to perform beyond his limits. As soon as the positive influence of the European ends, the Negro reverts to his previous condition of laziness and helplessness.[13]

This attitude did not support harsher discipline for the Africans, rather it accepted their indiscipline as innate. Wissmann's suggestions provided the basis for the accommodation of a host of 'native peculiarities' by the German officers. This loosening of the regimen translated into increased freedom for the *askaris*.

Foremost among the African 'peculiarities' tolerated by the Germans, was the acceptance of the *askaridorf* into the *Schutztruppen* stations. This institution, which the Germans viewed as a minor concession to the end of securing the loyalty of the *askaris*, became a significant avenue of escape from the pressures of the daily routine and military service in general, for the African soldiers. Once off-duty, the men returned to the *askaridorf* to spend time with their families and extended family of comrades, *boys*, and concubines. These hours granted them the opportunity to make independent decisions and exercise personal influence. Occasionally the men indulged in homemade spirits, but most of the time they merely sat around a communal fire and sung and danced with other members of the community. Song was one aspect of the *askari* existence which remained

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[13]Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 68.; J. Stentzler, *Deutsch Ost Afrika: Kriegs und Friedensbilder*, (Berlin: Weider, 1910), 16-7.

impervious to European influence, allowing the men to express their dissatisfaction, sadness and happiness with impunity.[14]

The German reaction was rooted in the perceived inferiority of Africans, but their lenient attitude must not be mistaken for magnanimity. The accommodation of 'native peculiarities' resulted from African resistance to the conditions of their employment and signalled an attempt to establish control over their own labour. On long expeditions into the interior, carriers often withheld their services by delaying the first day's march until they had taken care of matters of private concern. Fonck claimed to have circumvented this problem by announcing the time of departure to be two hours before he planned to leave. This is perhaps the best example of German accommodation of East African labour practices because it clearly reflects the European acceptance of their own inability to change indigenous practices. On other occasions *Schutztruppen* expeditions were halted by carriers complaining of excessive marching. The Germans were forced to lower their standards to obtain necessary African labour.[15]

Obviously the requirements of a mobilized army did not afford the Germans the luxury of tolerating work stoppages during battle, but resistance of other branches of the *Schutztruppe* left the Germans acutely aware of their tenuous control over the soldiers. Indeed, the importance of the *askaris* to the officer's command over auxiliary labourers forced him to provide the men with incentives which would strengthen their adherence to his command. The officers condoned plundering by the *askaris* while on campaign and

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[14]Hermann Graf von Schweinitz, *Deutsch-Ost-Afrika in Krieg und Frieden*, (Berlin: Hermann Walther, 1894), 22.; Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 39. Wissmann notes that "the Negro is used to celebrating harmless festivals on moonlit nights, and these celebrations should not be curtailed unless a jusitfiable reason is at hand." Other German accounts are universal in their lack of appreciation for African music, describing it variously as "monotonous" and "noise". Schweinitz goes so far as to call the music coming from the encampment as "the hyena like wails of the Nyamwezi".

[15]Fonck, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, 119.; Schweinitz, *Krieg und Frieden*, 37. Fonck describes the scene on the day of a march, "Naturally many of the carriers are absent... a few are still in the market, others bid their friends and family good-bye, another returns home to fetch his sleeping mat... still others cannot bear to wrench themselves from their palm wine and beer at the coastal taverns.... The expedition leader knows all of these tricks already and gives a time of departure that is two hours earlier than he anticipates leaving." As an expedition moved inland, Schweinitz noted the progressive loosening of discipline among soldiers and carriers alike. Men unhappy with comrades who worked too hard, would reprimand them in Swahili, saying "*Pole, Pole* " which was translated as 'easy, easy'.

actually sought to regulate it by bringing in policies intended to divide the spoils evenly among the company. Cattle were most frequently targeted as booty by the soldiers and it was not unusual for a company to return from an expedition with a herd expropriated from a recalcitrant chief or group. The freebooting policy consolidated the officer's position while on campaign and must have seemed familiar to the Manyema *askaris* recruited from indigenous *ruga-ruga* . Older East Africans who still recalled the rule of Mirambo's *ruga-ruga* along the central caravan route, could be excused for drawing a parallel between the *Schutztruppe*'s rapacious actions and those of a generation earlier when the Nyamwezi chief established his hegemony. The *Schutztruppe*'s officers could count on the obedience of their men, but the *askaris*' adherence to orders relied heavily on the knowledge that the commander had their interests in mind. The profitability of their endeavour provided African soldiers with ample incentive for campaigning.

For a time, language provided a barrier behind which an *askari* could veil his dissent. During the initial phase of contact between the Germans and the men under their command, the Africans were able to exploit the Europeans' ignorance of Swahili to vent their grievances among one another. This form of resistance manifested itself in the soldiers giving the officers Swahili nicknames, which poked fun at their appearance or their mannerisms. The language barrier eroded as the officers gained a grasp of Swahili, which curbed the open derision the *askaris* directed at their superiors, but not before the Germans became aware that they were the brunt of the *askaridorf*'s humour. Most officers recognized that they were powerless to change the irreverence of their men and sought instead to gain their respect by modifying their own practices. Wissmann concurred with this view, advising patience when dealing with the soldiers and to avoid brusqueness wherever possible,

> Africans are easily assuaged by mild words and promising answers to their requests...sharp replies by officers [are to

be avoided because they] soon land them the nickname *bwana kali* (the angry man).[16]

In the battle to gain the allegiance of the soldiers, officers prone to brusqueness were viewed as liabilities who only lowered the Germans in the eyes of their *askaris*.

The African soldiers' assertion of control over certain aspects of his employment exposes the simplicity of the analysis which would cast him as the passive, accommodating traitor of his African brothers and sisters. The *askaris* entered the *Schutztruppe* because it afforded them the highest return for their labour investment. The alternatives available to the men recruited during the first phase of German expansion ranged from urban poverty, among the Cairo recruits, to the slow economic and social improvement offered by a lifetime on the caravan route. But gradually military service came to represent those interests beyond steady pay and regular meals; the *Schutztruppe* became closely associated with family and community. This feeling was certainly intensified by the sense of estrangement the *askari* felt toward the people of the region surrounding the station, and the growing antagonism directed at him as a soldier of the German administration. He was pushed increasingly into the community of his peers and their families. The close personal bonds that the *askari* may have enjoyed with his officer through years of campaigning resulted from genuine affection and a sense that the German acted in his best interests, but a second factor undoubtedly affected this relationship. The *askari* knew that in certain situations the officer's normally rigid discipline was pliable and he could be moved to concede anything from plundering a village to allowing a second wife to cohabitate with his family. For the African men who served and died for the Germans in East Africa, the *Schutztruppe* represented a partnership, not of equals, but of mutually dependent parties.

The *askaris* digested a significant morsel of the colonial experience. They viewed their alliance with the Germans as not only mutually beneficial, but as one which best served their own interests best. It would be premature to discuss this revelation as class

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[16]Wissmann, *Schilderungen und Rathschläge*, 69. The author translates *bwana kali* into German as *der böse Herr*.

consciousness because no evidence exists supporting traditional class formation -- such as marriage alliances or co-operative business ventures or other broadly based movements indicating a deeply-rooted group consciousness. The Germans were supremely successful, however, in inculcating their soldiers with a sense of common interest wrapped in patrician benevolence. They appealed to the self-interest of the dislocated men and women who made up the *askari* community and managed to sustain this appeal even after the outbreak of hostilities in November 1914.

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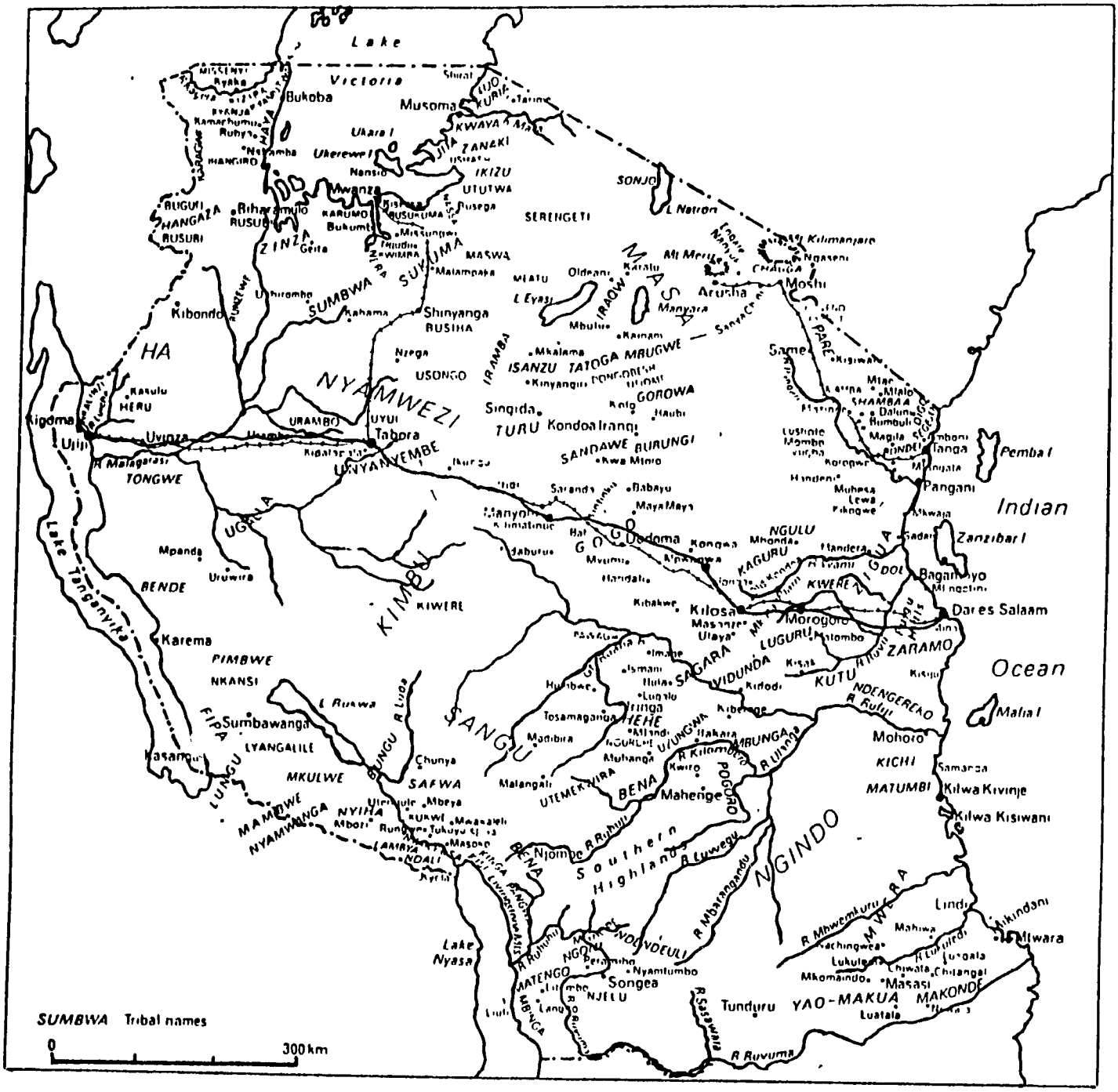
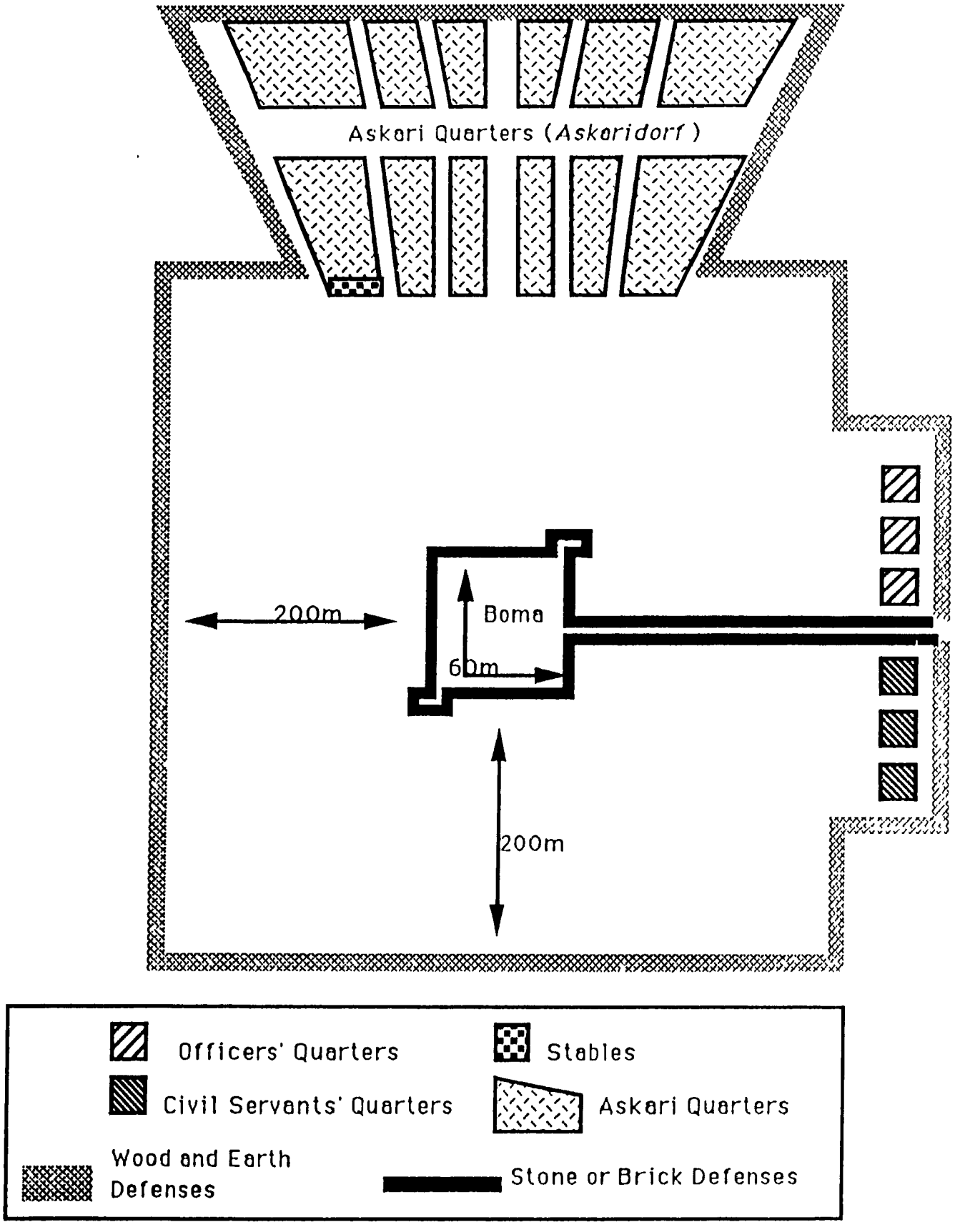
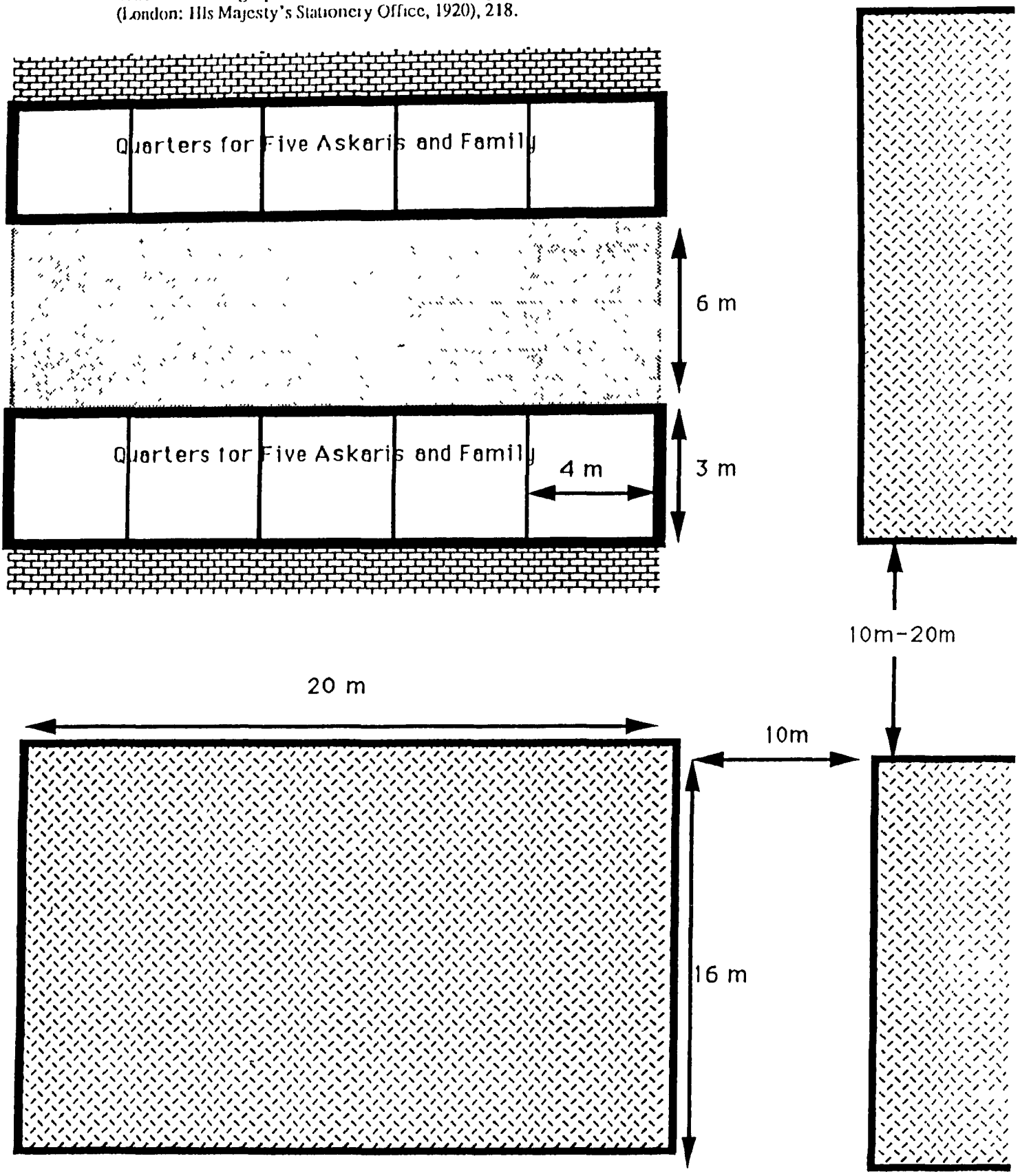
Appendix I: German East Africa



Appendix II: Layout of a German Fort
Taken from: Geographical Section of Naval Intelligence Division, *A Handbook of German East Africa* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), 218.

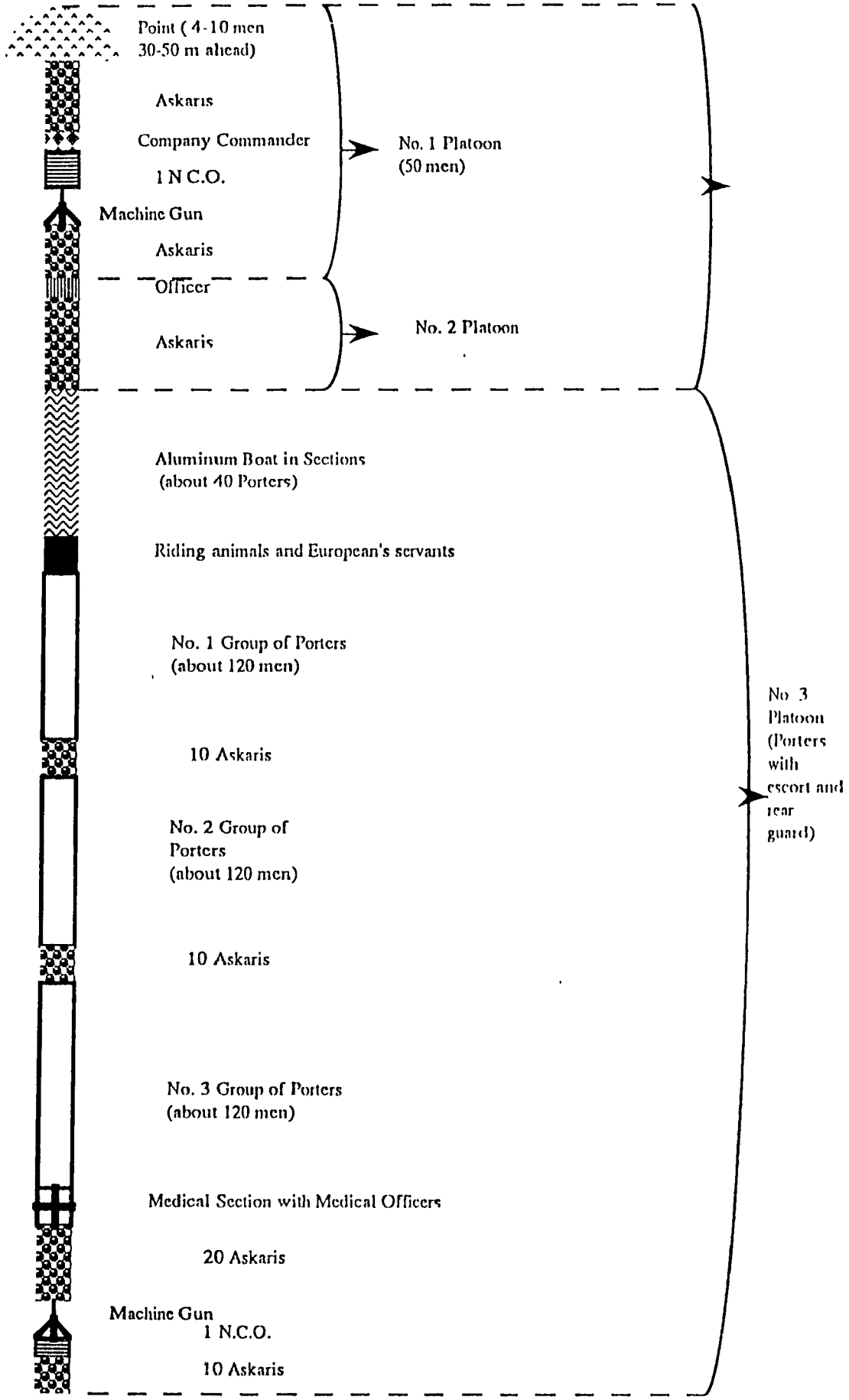


Appendix III: The *Askaridorf*
Taken from: Geographical Section of Naval Intelligence Division, *A Handbook of German East Africa.* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), 218.



Appendix IV: March Order of One Schutztruppe Company

Taken from : Geographical Section of Naval Intelligence Division, *A Handbook of German East Africa.* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office,), 227.



Appendix V : March Order of A Schutztruppe Expeditionary Force of Four Companies
Taken from : Geographical Section of Naval Intelligence Division, *A Handbook of German East Africa.* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), 227.