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Maji Maji in the Making of the South[1]

If the 'South' has come to signify poverty and underdevelopment in Tanzania, it suggests itself to ask what has been the role of Maji Maji in its creation and perpetuation. As we very well know, in Tanzanian nationalist historiography, Maji Maji has been seen in a positive light and given pride of place as the earliest forerunner of African unity and harbinger of national liberation. But the assessment has always had it gloomy side. It has not escaped attention that Maji Maji was brutally suppressed and turned an ultimate failure, the result of which were the spread of misgivings and discord, and in social and economic terms, gross depopulation and untold human suffering. It can well be thought to have started a long-term downward spiral in the areas in which this took place and which now constitute the 'South', seen in fundamentally different terms from the 'North' as Tanzania's poor and different 'other'.[2] Yet Maji Maji can hardly be said to figure prominently in the present historical self-consciousness of those areas. Nor has it been given much of a place in present explanations of Southern underdevelopment, which concentrate instead on geographical marginalization, precolonial warfare, colonial and postcolonial negligence, or, more recently, villagization.[3]

In this paper, I discuss the role of Maji Maji in the making of the 'South', in terms of both image and reality. My discussion draws on the current more general reassessment of the role and nature of Maji Maji of which this volume, and the conference on which it is based, is a part.[4] I put Maji Maji in the larger historical context of colonialism in Tanzania and provide my own understanding of what it actually was. My aim is to briefly assess its consequences against this backdrop and try to bring the story up to the present. My main argument is that Maji Maji indeed has had quite significant a role in the making of the South, but it itself was a more multifaceted and complicated historical phenomenon than we tend to think: its impacts also were complicated and uneven. They were not only immediate but also mediated through subsequent colonial and postcolonial policies which were implemented differently in different parts of the area. They have become ingredients in long and convoluted historical processes. If it appears that we no longer can think

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[1] This is a substantially revised and expanded version of the paper presented at the Conference Marking the End of Centennial Celebrations of the Maji Maji War, August 4-5, 2007, University of Dar es Salaam. It represent a critical re-reading of my previous work, most of which has been published in *Development for exploitation. German colonial policies in Mainland Tanzania, 1884-1914*, Hamburg and Helsinki, 1994, pp. 229-240. It reassesses the arguments presented there and brings in fresher research on Maji Maji as well as ideas from my own on-going research on the developmental history of the 'South'. I am grateful for the comments by the organizers and participants, especially James Giblin and Bertram B. Mapunda. My special thanks for collegial co-operation go to Jamie Monson.

[2] This begs the question of how the 'South' is to be geographically defined, especially whether the present Songea region should be included. As this is a paper on Maji Maji I obviously deal with Songea.

[3] For a discussion on these, see Bernadeta Killian, 'Impacts of Finnish aid in forestry and rural development: Mtwara and Lindi Regions in Tanzania'. Research proposal, 2003. See also J.A.R. Wembah-Rashid, 'Is culture in south-eastern Tanzania development-unfriendly?', in Pekka Seppälä and Bertha Koda, *The Making of a Periphery*. Uppsala, 1998.

[4] A major landmark of the reassessment is the volume edited by James Giblin and Jamie Monson, forthcoming from Brill. I participated in the project which underlay the volume. This paper would not have been produced without its support.

in terms of one uniform Maji Maji, then we also must understand its consequences and impacts in a more nuanced and differentiated way. Yet I am arguing that there are some patterns underlying the events leading to Maji Maji, its course and consequences, and they should not be lost from sight.

Interpretations of Maji Maji: one big event or many smaller ones?

In order to rethink the consequences of Maji Maji we have to start with some rethinking of the nature of the whole process. What, after all, was Maji Maji? There is no shortage of interpretations. An orgy of mindless anti-foreign violence instigated by shadowy witch-doctors and too much local brew (German colonist-military interpretation)?[5] A great native rebellion predicated on 'economic causes', which constituted the turning point in the German colonial policy in what was to become Tanzania and ushered in the new era of reformist colonialism (colonial reformist interpretation)?[6] A liberation war, the first anti-colonial awakening on the quasi-national scale of the Tanzanians-to-be, the forerunner of the independence struggle (nationalist interpretation)?[7] A revitalist, even millenarian, movement, harking back to a past golden age (more culturalist interpretation)[8] Or a collection of more or less interconnected local uprisings and struggles, each arising from local grievances and political constellations (postcolonial/postmodernist interpretation)?[9] That is, was Maji Maji one big unified event on the regional or quasi-national scale, a myriad of local disturbances coinciding and overlapping in time and purpose, or something in between? Behind all this looms the great moral question: was Maji Maji good or bad, or beyond moral judgement?

The abundance of interpretations is, I think, inversely related to the paucity of facts. The appearance of Maji Maji as a fairly well studied phenomenon notwithstanding, many basic questions are still contentious. Comparing existing accounts and revisiting some of the primary sources it becomes evident that there still is a great deal of room for argument about the correct and relevant 'facts' concerning Maji Maji. A basic chronology can be sketched from the outbreak of open hostilities in late July 1905 to their gradual suppression during 1906 and 1907. But, especially in the early 'African'

[5] E.g'. Über die Unruhen', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung*, 12 August 1905.
[6] The view of the subsequent German governor, Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg, and accepted as historically valid by John Iliffe in his *Tanganyika under German Rule, 1905-1912*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969.
[7] As famously suggested by Julius Nyerere, when representing the Tanganyika African National Union, in his message to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations in 1956, printed in his *Freedom and Unity*. Dar es Salaam, 1966, pp. 40-41. This view has been echoed in most Tanzanian Maji Maji scholarship up to the present.
[8] As suggested by more recent Tanzanian and foreign scholarship, affected by German ethnology, such as Joseph Safari, *Grundlagen und Auswirkungen des Maji-Maji Aufstandes von 1905*. Dissertation, Köln Universität. Cologne, 1972; and Jigal Beez, *Geschosse zu Wassertropfen*. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, Cologne, 2003; idem., 'The Maji-message and its religious influences and consequences', paper presented at Maji Maji Conference, 4-5 Aug 2007, University of Dar es Salaam (footnote 1 above).
[9] As many more recent contributions argue or imply. See e.g. Thaddeus Sunseri, 'Famine and Wild Pigs: Gender Struggles and the Outbreak of the Maji Maji War in Uzaramo (Tanzania)', *Journal of African History* 38 (1997): 235–59; idem, 'Reinterpreting a Colonial Rebellion: Forestry and Social Control in German East Africa 1874-1915', *Environmental History* 8.3 (2003): 36 pars. 16 Jul. 2004; Jamie Monson, 'Relocating Maji Maji: The Politics of Alliance and Authority in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, 1870–1918', *Journal of African History* 39 (1998): 95–120; Felicitas Becker, 'Traders, "Big Men" and Prophets: Political Continuity and Crisis in the Maji Maji Rebellion in South East Tanzania', *Journal of African History* 45,1 (2004): 1-22.

part, many questions remain unanswered. How, actually, did the whole thing start? Who were the combatants and what did they think they were fíghting - for or against? What was *maji* and where did it come from?

Historians will recognize this to a great extent as a source problem: the sources from which the facts concerning Maji Maji have been extracted are relatively few and of questionable reliability, as almost all of them have a particular axe to grind. The German colonial records, outwardly the most extensive, most detailed, and most reliable sources, document and date meticulously every 'disturbance' that came to the knowledge of the colonialists as well as the German countermeasures to these. Yet not only is such a view culturally very thin but the Germans also were badly out of touch with events and often disagreed among themselves. They simply did not know much about what was going on; indeed, had they be better informed, the rebellion might never have reached the proportion it did. Missionary sources are, in this case, inferior to colonialist ones. Missionaries, while ostensibly living near the people, could not possibly have known what was going on among the rebellious 'heathens' before disquieting rumours inevitably reached them on the eve of the imminent attack. Their accounts reflect the concerns of survival of a beleaguered righteous minority and cannot be expected to provide a realistic assessment of the nature of forces threatening their very existence. Oral sources, for their part, originate from research undertaken somewhat fitfully in three broad cycles in the colonial and postcolonial periods.[10] Their great merit, of course, is that they provide the opportunity to hear the voice of those actually involved on the African side; whether they actually accomplish this is another thing. The malleability of oral communication and its susceptibility to the 'contaminating' influence of later written and other authoritative accounts and events is well known; and the further they are from the actual events the less original information they contain and the more they tend to conflate and telescope several historical processes into one. Oral memory is also highly localized; the same events can be remembered and assessed very differently in geographically nearby places.[11]

Yet the problem goes way beyond the sources. The sources have to do with 'simple facts' and historians are basically interested in 'institutional facts', or 'interpretations', to use the vernacular term. The basic requirement for judging the interpretations is, of course, that the interpretation concerned fits the known 'facts', or data, better than its rivals do and makes better sense of what factually seems to have happened. This might be called the 'knowledge' or cognitive requirement. But it also goes the other

[10] The first cycle was during the colonial period, relatively shortly after the events, i.e. before and after the Great War. The most valuable are the work of Father Ambrosius Mayer of the Kipatimu Mission and that of the British colonial official R.M. Bell in Liwale. A few years after the events and independently of each other, they collected oral information on the rebellion from local Africans who had been personally involved. See 'Wie 1905 im Matumbi der Aufstand begann. Nach Aufzeichnungen des P. Ambrosius Mayer', *Gott will es!* Nr. 8, 08, 1914, 225-233 and R.M Bell, 'The Outbreak of the Maji Maji rebellion in the Liwale District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records* 28 (1950): 38-57. Bell's original manuscript is more detailed but unfortunately the copy in Kilwa District Book at the Tanzania National Archives is defective. The two other cycles, the second in the wake of Tanzanian independence in the 1960s, and the third in more recent years, will be commented on below.

[11] Telescoping and local idiosyncracies were evident in interviews made in the Matumbi Hills, Kilwa and Lukuledi valley in 2004 by a group of Tanzanian and foreign scholars, including myself. See 'Mitazamo mipya kuhusu Vita vya Maji Maji . Kumbukumbu ya mahojiano aliyofaniyika katika wilaya za Kilwa, Lindi na Rufiji, Julai-Agosti 2004'. University of Dar es Salaam, History Department. The same sort of confusion is apparent in much of the more recent fieldwork, e.g. Becker, Traders, pp. 21-22.

way around. What is taken as a fact and what is not is dependent also on our interpretative framework, and interpretations are based not only on facts. They also must resonate with the intellectual or political views – whether they are popular or academic, and whether we call them narratives or paradigms - prevalent among the interpreters at that particular time and place. This may be called the 'power' or instrumental requirement. Whereas an interpretation can emerge and survive for some time relying mainly on one or the other of these sets of requirements, in the long run it is the interpretation that fulfils both conditions best that carries the day. For Maji Maji, it is no coincidence that colonial and nationalist interpretations in their solidity are like mirror images, and both have now been challenged by more fragmented postcolonial or postmodern interpretations.

Maji Maji as a unified movement

The traditional understanding of Maji Maji is, of course, that of a unified movement, with shared narratives on its outbreak, spread and suppression.[12] In its most compressed form, the story goes as follows. The rebellion, or war, began in the Matumbi Hills north-west of Kilwa in late July 1905. A few local men went and uprooted a few stalks of cotton in a 'government field' in the village of Nandete. After this symbolic act of defiance the rebellious Matumbi attacked the nearby akida seat in Kibata and a killed a fleeing German settler. Strengthened by some of their Kitchi neighbours, they continued towards the coast, which was reached with the invasion of Samanga on the 1st of August. Within a few days, almost all the peoples living north and west of Matumbi in the Rufiji valley and the plain south of it were on the warpath, the fiercest being the Ngindo. The German Benedictine bishop Cassian Spiss and four of his companions were killed on the way from Kilwa to Songea on the 14th of August. The following day, the German post in Liwale fell to Ngindo rebels; two Germans and six African askari were killed.

During the rest of August the war spread in all directions. In the north, 'disturbances' were reported in southern Uzaramo and a German force was sent there on the 19th. In the north-west, a caravan of the German East Africa Company DOAG was destroyed between Ifakara and Mahenge on the 24th, and the hilltop *boma* of Mahenge was attacked by two forces, consisting of some 16,000 Ngindo and other warriors on the 30th of August. Meanwhile, fighting broke out both in South, in the Lukuledi valley. The mission stations of Nyangao and Lukuledi were attacked on the 26-27th of August, but the missionaries managed to escape. Other rebel contingents marched eastwards and engaged in a series of battles in the vicinity of Lindi town. A few

[12] This is best told in John Iliffe's later account, *Modern History of Tanganyika*. Cambridge, 1979, ch. 6. In addition to a careful reading of a wide range of documentary evidence it makes full use of Tanzanian oral research, especially that by the late Gilbert Gwassa. Gwassa's thesis, 'The Outbreak and Development of the Maji Maji War 1905-07' (Ph.D. diss., University of Dar es Salaam, 1973), remained long unpublished and generally inaccessible but has finally been reprinted in Germany by Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, ed. by Wolfgang Apelt, Cologne, 2005. Meanwhile, parts of his work reached wider audience through articles such as 'Kinjikitile and the ideology of Maji Maji' in T.O. Ranger and I. N. Kimambo (eds.), *The Historical Study of African Religion* ed. (London, 1972), 202-17, and 'African methods of warfare during the Maji Maji war 1905-07', Bethwell A. Ogot, (ed.), *War and society in Africa: ten studies*, London, 1972. The other major source of oral accounts, those of the second cycle, also extensively used by Iliffe, is provided by the collection of papers undertaken under the supervision of Gwassa and Iliffe in the late 1960s, 'Maji Maji Research Project, Collected Papers', (MMRP) University of Dar es Salaam, Department of History, 1968-69.

Makonde jumbes on the northern edge of their eponymous plateau seemed to have joined the rebellion. In Eastern Usagara, caravans were attacked and shops plundered by Vidunda rebels in the closing days of August, and the town of Kilosa was attacked on the 4th of September. Meanwhile, *maji* had reached Ungoni and the much feared Ngoni had decided to mobilize their war machine against the colonial power. Other South Western people joined in. In early September, several tax collectors were killed by Pangwa rebels. As the last outburst of unchecked expansion, Bena warriors attacked the Lutheran mission of Yakobi on the 19th September.

Thus, in late September 1905, some two months after the first outbreak, Maji Maji, understood as a unified rebellion or war, was at its most widespread. Battles apparently involved the majority of the peoples south of the central caravan route from Dar es Salaam to Kilosa and east of the line Kilosa-Lake Nyasa. Outbreaks of violence were feared as far as Mwanza. The loyalty of the African askaris in the German *Schutztruppe* was untested. Fear 'approaching panic' reigned in the capital and a European citizens' guard was established.[13]

The colonial counterattack was gaining force, however. It has its counterstory.[14] Although the German military forces in East Africa numbered barely 2,000 men scattered in small units here and there across the vast country, their armament, mobility and vision proved superior. Governor Götzen speedily reinforced his troops, which moved to wherever new 'disturbances' were reported. The colonial riposte started in the Matumbi Hills in early August 1905. Fresh soldiers, including European marines, were ferried in by German warships from Dar es Salaam. After the early weeks' route the colonialists regained the initiative. The battle of Mahenge is often considered as the turning point in the expansion of the war. Yet although the rebels failed to take the boma, the Germans were unable to prevent fighting from spreading all over. For several months the situation remained unsettled before the superior firepower of the colonial forces made its impact. The machine gun was probably the decisive factor: the arms of the rebels consisted of out-dated muzzle-loaders, bows, arrows and spears, which were a poor match for it. Fighting methods were extremely cruel, on both sides. Enemy men were killed, women captured, and cattle confiscated. The huts, shambas and granaries of the opposite side were burnt down.[15]

The rebels advanced boldly on the colonial forces, relying on the protective force of the *maji* medicine. It must have been a nasty surprise that it failed. They suffered heavy losses under German fire. 'They did not know what a machine gun was. They thought that the Germans had run out of ammunition and were beating empty tins …

[13] A glimpse of the tense atmosphere in the colonial capital is given by Götzen's dispatch from which the quotation is taken. Götzen to Colonial Department, 26 August, 1905, Bundesarchiv, RKolA 1001/722, 110.

[14] It has been told in detail in German popular historical accounts such as Walter Nuhn, *Flammen über Deutsch-Ostafrika. Der Maji-Maji-Aufstand 1905/06*. Bonn, 1998. These basically draw on Governor Götzen's original account, *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Aufstand 1905/06*, Berlin, 1909, complemented with some archival materials. A much more scholarly account based on German sources is provided by Detlef Bald, 'Afrikanischer Kampf gegen Kolonialherrschaft. Der Maji-Maji Aufstand in Ostafrika', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, 19 1976), 23-50.

[15] These are described in a variety of sources. See e.g. accounts in Gwassa and Iliffe, *Documents*; Bell, The Outbreak; Bald, Afrikanischer Kampf, esp. pp. 39-41; and original German military reports, e.g. Paasche, 'Militärpolitischer Bericht über die Tätigkeit der in Ostafrika befindlichen Kreuzer und Marinentruppen', Dar es Salaam, 7 Dec 1905, BA-Militärarchiv, F 4337/XVII, 15-33/2

Far too many people died that day.'[16] Open battles were increasingly replaced by ambushes and guerilla warfare. By the spring of 1906 this, too, was over except in the south-west, where the hard core of the hunted Ngoni, Bena and Ngindo leaders had escaped to the faraway wilderness of Mgende, still today dreaded as an abode of witchcraft. The back of the rebellion was broken only at the beginning of 1907, and some of its leaders continued scattered fighting until the middle of 1908. Meanwhile, not content with military suppression, the German forces enlisted famine as an ally. They deliberately laid waste to the houses and fields of the combatants, believing that 'only hunger and want can bring about a final submission'.[17]

At a very high level of generality, the above may be regarded as a fair 'factual' outline. Yet one does not have to dig much deeper into the narrative before several questions arise and one realises that the story of a unified war or rebellion is indeed only one interpretation among others and not necessarily the most warranted one: *any* attempt to provide a straightforward account of a web of events and processes as complex as this with sources like these is foredoomed. In its simplest form the story of one Maji Maji rebellion is how the German top colonialists understood the succession of events. Hit by complete surprise, having to divide their meagre forces strategically in right proportions across the rebel areas they saw themselves as fighting against a common, hydra-headed enemy.

Most colonialists believed that there must have been a conspiracy behind such closely timed military actions. A frantic search of masterminds was mounted – to no avail. Unable to personify the enemy, *maji* captured the colonial imagination. It seemed to offer a rare insight into the peculiar logic of native thought while it provided the tangible unifying factor underlying the string of separate military actions by a motley collection of combatants. As Monson has emphasised, *maji* became a sign of rebelliousness and was taken as evidence of participation: whoever had taken *maji* was by definition an enemy.[18] Other martial symbols, such as the habit of the rebels to attach millet stems to their hands and bodies and the belief that these could also be used as anti-white weapons,[19] were overlooked. It was the Germans who coined and propagated the label Maji Maji, a name that most of the rebels apparently were not using themselves.[20]

Our understanding of the nature and origins of *maji,* however, and the spirit mediums or diviners distributing it on the eve the rebellion remains insufficient at best. The Germans thought *maji* was paramount, yet were unable to agree on where to track down its origins. The Tanzanian nationalist interpretation, as promoted by Gwassa

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[16] Mr Abdulrahman Lipunjo Mandwanga from Kibata, 28 Aug 1967, Gwassa and Iliffe, ed. *Records*, p. 21

[17] Capt. Wangenheim, 22 October 1905, quoted approvingly by Götzen, *Aufstand*, p. 149

[18] Jamie Monson, 'The Uses of Medicine: Memory, Modernity and Conversion in the Maji Maji War', paper presented at the Symposium on Rethinking Maji Maji, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, 29 March 2005, p. 5.

[19] Kalembo, MMRP 7/68/1/1, p. 7; Mzee Yonas Mtepa, Nkowe, ibid, 7/68/2/3/2, p 1. For similar Zaramo beliefs, cf. M. Klamroth,'Beiträge zum Vertständnis der religiösen Vorstellunger der Saramo im Bezirk Daressalam (Deutsch-Ostafrika), Zeitschrfift für Kolonialsprachen, 1 (1910-11), pp. 142-143

[20] Götzen speaks of 'Maji-Maji magic', mentions that the war cry was 'maji maji' and occasionally uses the expression 'Maji-Maji rebellion', *Aufstand*, pp. 47, 233. Oral accounts especially from more peripheral areas give 'honga honga' (Lindi, Götzen, *Aufstand*, p. 164) and 'homa homa' as war cries and names (Kilosa, Chipindula, MRPP 2/68/1/1).

and Iliffe, not only upheld the German insistence on *maji* but elevated it to an 'ideology' and gave pride of place to Kinjikitile Ngwale. This 'very eloquent, brave and wise man' (Gwassa) is said to have become possessed by a serpent-like water spirit and to have established a shrine in Ngarambe, next to the Matumbi Hills close to Nandete sometime in 1904. From there he distributed *maji*, a concoction of water with maize and sorghum grains which was either drunk and/or sprinkled on the body and carried away in small bamboo stems. It was a medicine for the fertility of fields and protection against predatory animals but it apparently was also more. Kinjikitile is told to have conducted a whispering campaign, *njwiywila*, promising that the year was 'a year of war'. An important part of the message was that dead ancestors would come back and could be seen in Ngarambe.[21] Attracted by such prospects, hundreds of pilgrims began to flock to Ngarambe probably in early 1905.

After the outbreak of fighting, the Germans hanged Kinjikitile, together with some other mediums. His memory is well alive in both Ngarambe (which is no longer the same village) and Nandete, even though he is assessed very differently in these two neighbouring places: as a prophet and hero in Ngarambe but a troublemaker and swindler in Nandete – a *mchumi*, an economist.[22] Still, Gwassa himself recognizes that *maji* did not originate from Kinjikitile but from somewhere in upper Rufiji[23] and, as Marcia Wright was first to point out, a re-reading of belatedly discovered German sources shows that a host of other mediums and shrines were involved in distributing it.[24]

The wider spiritual context has been known for quite some time but it has been difficult to establish proper links to *maji*. Water medicines and snake spirits were nothing new in this part of Africa. There had been an established water cult called Bokero or Kolelo, associated with a snake spirit and known to a variety of people from the Zaramo to the Luguru and Mwera, and a powerful serpent spirit had been recognized over an even wider area.[25] The issue is the exact relationship between these pre-existing cults and *maji* as anti-German war medicine: the process by which - how, when, and by whom – they were transformed into such.

The story featuring Kinjikitile takes it for granted that he methodologically planned for war and had ready-made war medicine right from the beginning; he simply universalized and propagated it. This relies heavily on oral evidence gathered by

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[21] This is mostly based on oral evidence collected by Gwassa in Nadete and Kipatimu in August-September 1967, complemented by some German sources. It has been widely available in Tanzania in Gwassa and Iliffe, *Records of the Maji Maji Rising.* Nairobi, 1968.

[22] 'Mitazamo mipya', pp. 110 ff.

[23] Gwassa, Kinjikitile, pp, 205-209

[24] These sources have been there for a long time but have started to make an impact only after their translation into English. They include Otto Stollowsky, 'Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte des Aufstandes in Deutsch-Ostafrika im Jahre 1905/06', *Die deutschen Kolonien* 11 (1912): 138-43, 170-3, 204-7, 237-9, 263-6 . This was translated by John East as Otto Stollowsky, 'On the Background to the Rebellion in German East Africa in 1905–1906', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21 (1988): 677–97; and Winterfeld, 'Bericht den zur Erforschung der Ursachen des Aufstandes eingesetzen Kommission', 4 December 1905. Bundesarchiv, R1001/726/91-92, as quoted by Lorne Larson, 'The Ngindo: exploring the center of the Maji Maji Rebellion', mimeo, p. 25. Marcia Wright drew empirically on Stollowsky when embarking on a reappraisal of Kinjikitikle's role in her 'Maji Maji. Prophecy and Historiography', 124-142, David M. Anderson and Douglas H. Johnson, *Revealing Prophets. Prophecy in Eastern African History*, London, 1995.

[25] Larson, The Ngindo, pp. 19-20.

Gwassa in the late 1960s in Nandete and the Matumbi Hills. The evidence can be read in other ways as well: protective power over European bullets may have been a very recent addition to the functions of the medicine, an emergent amalgam of several existing local beliefs. The Matumbi and Ngindo had indigenous *madawa*, which prevented bullets and spears from entering the body.[26] A confluence of many different medicines is apparent in the 1906 report of a German officer, Captain Merker, operating in Matumbi. He thought that what had been distributed in Ngarambe was primarily meant to free people from agricultural worries. He remarked that, in addition, it also gave invulnerability, 'acting in such a way that the adversary's bullets would fall from their targets like raindrops' but was careful to add that this applied only to 'warfare previously customary among the natives'. The same medicine, or the grains in it, could be used by women for fertility of their fields and by men for gunpowder to improve the accuracy of shooting.[27]

In the contemporary imagination, the big name was not Kinjikitile but Bokero: women's *kanga* cloth called 'Bokero's eyes' sold well in southern coastal towns in December 1905.[28] Bokero, however, is one of those multipurpose names that further complicate the identification of the historical actors in Maji Maji (another is *hongo*, see below). Sometimes it referred to a certain medium, in some areas it was the designation of the spirit and the whole cult and at times it was used as a generic term for all spirit mediums. Kinjikitile, too, could be referred to as Bokero. Germans were unable to agree who the greatest Bokero was. It is evident, however, that in addition to Ngarambe there were at least two other major distribution centres of *maji* and several smaller ones. Most accounts situate the most important, and original, source of *maji* at (or near) Kibambwe, in upper Rufiji near the Pangani rapids. *Regierungsrat* Winterfeld, sent to investigate the causes of the rebellion, used the name 'Magumbiro' to refer to the 'medicine man of Rufiji-Pogoro origin' active there; it was later re-spelled as 'Mkumbiro' (Bell). He apparently was the Bokero who, together with Kinjikitile, was hanged by Germans in Mohoro on the 4th of August 1905.[29] Another major independent centre for *maji* was Mabada, where it was distributed by Ngameya, one of the few spiritual leaders who later actively participated in military action.

These shrines are physically located far from each other but obviously there was a connection; its exact nature is unclear. Mkumbiro and Kinjikitile are sometimes mentioned as brothers-in-law. Stollowsky, a German petty official at Mohoro, who believed he had detected a sinister conspiracy before the outbreak, thought that there was 'a large family of magicians' operating over a large area from Rufiji to Matumbi. He thought they were coming from the Matumbi Hills; Bell's Ngindo informants claimed later that all three major mediums were ethnically Ikemba, a small people who have not figured in Maji Maji historiography. Significantly, a fair share of the smaller mediums were women, but few names survive. One is Nawanga, 'an old Matumbi woman' who was given one year in chains by Stollowsky even before any

[26] Gwassa, Kinjikitile, p. 210. Similar beliefs are still active; see e.g. Mzee Abdalla Said Mkogote, 21 July 2004, Mitazamo mipya, pp. 33 ff.
[27] Moritz Merker, *Militär-Wochenblatt*, 91 (1906), as quoted in Götzen, *Aufstand*, pp. 45-46. For a slightly different translation, see G.C.K Gwassa and John Iliffe (eds), *Records*, p. 12
[28] *DOAZ*, 30 Dec 1905, as quoted in Monson, The Uses of Medicine, p. 8. The kanga bore an image of an eye and was 'worn enthusiastically by coastal *bibis*', i.e. elder women.
[29] Based on 'evidence from a coastal Negro', Winterfeld refers to Magumbiro as 'Bokero Mkubwa' and his son 'Legitive' as 'Bokero Mdogo', the latter obviously being a corruption of Kinjikitile. In Stollowsky's eye-witness account Bokero's son was different from Kinjikitile ('Litigire').

'disturbances' had broken out. She was charged with 'extracting money under false pretences'.[30]

Also, reliable information on warriors and war leaders is in short supply. Beyond the colonial image of hordes of rebels attacking 'hard' and 'soft' targets alike, and the anti-colonial image of Germans retaliating with superior firepower, summarily hanging 'ringleaders' and 'magicians' and wreaking havoc with their scorched earth tactics, our general picture of the actors, activities and their background remains hazy. Warriors evidently were men, probably of younger and middle generations, commonly organized on the basis of clans: clan leaders mobilized their 'children and other relatives'.[31] Only the names and careers of a few key leaders are known with any certainty and contradictions abound in the accounts.[32] Most of these were *jumbes*, local leaders appointed by Germans to double as their agents. Among the Matumbi and Kichi, Mkechekeche Kyuta and Ngogota Mhiwa are mentioned. A major figure in the Ngindo area was an elephant hunter and rubber collector named Abdullah Mapanda, 'the bravest and most intelligent' of rebel leaders, who lived in Kitandangora, some twelve hours' walk north-east of Liwale. He was one of the few non-jumbe rebel leaders. Jumbe Kapolo of Madaba missed the start but remained among the hard core till the bitter end.[33] Abdallah Mshimaye, a Ngindo, is remembered mainly as the murderer of Bishop Spiss. The man who is commonly credited as having taken the war to the South was the Mwera headman Selemani Mamba, considered by some colonialists to be the most resourceful and moderate of rebel leaders.[34] Jumbe Gabriel Mbuu from Rupota emerged as another Southern leader of some prominence.[35] In Southern Uzaramo, jumbe Digalu Kibasila of remote Kisangire, just out of one month's stint in a colonial prison, was a dominant figure, while the warriors in Uvidunda were led by another ex-prisoner, ex-slave trader and ex-jumbe Chitalika, a Nyamwezi.

In South-Western kingdoms, the leaders were more easily recognizable. Maji was taken over there by the kings and other royals. This was especially evident in the northern Ngoni kingdom of Mshope, ruled by *nkosi* Chabruma Tawete while *nkosi* Mputa Gama of the southern kingdom of Njelu was internally in a weaker position and could not convince all of his sub-chiefs, *ndunas*.[36] In Njombe, the moving spirit was not the old chief Mbeyela, but his sons Mpangire and Nkozinkozi. A truly transregional role was played by the enigmatic figure of Omari Kinjala, a Ngindo who brought *maji* to Ungoni, co-operating with Bibi Mkomanile, a Ngoni *nduna* whom he had married.

Maji Maji as a series of local uprisings

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[30] Bell, Outbreak, Kilwa District Book, TNA; Stollowsky, Background, p. 686
[31] Gwassa, Outbreak, p. 277
[32] Even their names are spelled in many different ways. I follow the spellings commonly employed in Tanzanian Maji Maji historiography of Gwassa-Iliffe tradition.
[33] Iliffe, Modern history, pp. 171, 196, 198; Nuhn, *Flammen*, p. 153; Bell, pp. 52 (quotation)
[34] For Mamba, Götzen, *Aufstand*, p. 231, Abdul Karim Jamaliddini, *Utenzi wa vita vya Maji Maji*; Becker, Traders, pp. 5-6. His role has also been contested, eg. by Gwassa, Outbreak.
[35] Iliffe, *Modern History*, pp. 174-75, 195; Nuhn, *Flammen*, pp. 91, 93, 155. Nuhn uses the German way of spelling, Mburu.
[36] For the war in Unongi, O.P. Mapunda and G.P.Mpangara, *The Maji Maji War in Ungoni*. Nairobi, 1968. See also Patrick Redmond, 'Maji Maji in Ungoni: a reappraisal of existing historiography', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8 (1975), pp. 407-24

If the accounts are so garbled and fragmented, could it be that it is not only because our sources are so defective but because of our image of a unified Maji Maji was in fact not the case? What if it indeed was a collection of very loosely if at all interconnected local uprisings and struggles, each arising from local grievances and political constellations, just as the emerging postcolonial, or postmodernist interpretation claims? After all, Maji Maji did not have much military organization worth the name. There was no military plan, no general command, no common agenda. There is no sign of military co-ordination or other synchronization of the rebel tactics. Most peoples had their rebels and loyalists and the borderline was sometimes blurred: many individuals were divided among themselves. Kinjala, who had been a tax collector of the Ngoni in Ngindoland and then a German jumbe, had originally opposed the rebellion but had been forced to carry *maji* to Ungoni to save his life. The Kitchi rebel leader Mkechekeche may have been the same *jumbe* 'Kechekeche' who is reported to have sat in the *ex tempore* German military court in Mohoro, which condemned Bokero and Kinjikitile to death.[37] Chief Merere of Usangu first accepted *maji* but had to relinquish it under pressure from his senior relatives and ended up providing auxiliaries to the Germans. The Makua chief Hatia provided men for Selemani Mamba's troops but other Makuas, probabably fearing Mwera expansionism, declined to participate. The Yao ruler Mataka turned down Chabruma's bid for alliance. The warlike Hehe, despite some temptation, no longer moved against the Germans. In addition to Merere, Kiwanga of Ubena provided auxiliary troops to them. As a rule the military encounters were local, which was why the rebels were so easy to overcome. Their early success proved deceptive; it had to do more with colonial ignorance and exclusion than rebel strength.

It is also important to recognize the geographical limits to the rebellion. Far from the 'whole of the South' was involved. Sustained military activity was concentrated in relatively few areas. The heartlands were the Matumbi Hills and their surroundings up to the coast, the militarily and commercially important areas around Liwale and Madaba inhabited by the Ngindo and Pogoro, some spots along the Lukuledi valley from Nyangao to the vicinity of Lindi, and much of Mshope and Upangwa in the South-West. The rest of the rebel areas were involved more sporadically, by way of a few isolated battles, even if some of them were big. Large areas remained almost untouched. The battles did not really spread into the densely inhabited areas south of the Lukuledi river expect for some initial disturbances among a few northern Makonde headmen and Mwera-Makua raids on the Yao stronghold of Luagala.[38] The coastal areas under closer colonial control also escaped, especially the Lindi plantations.

In this view, it was not one big bang but a series of independent outbreaks stemming from myriad different grievances and leading to a long series of loosely if at all interconnected independent struggles, each feeding on a contingent precedent. In postcolonial research, many suggestions, echoing a postmodernist belief in the death of great narratives, have been made. In Uzaramo, Sunseri wants us to believe, it was more about changing gender relations than colonial exploitation. Local headmen tried to regain some of the power and patronage they had lost to the womenfolk during

[37] Stollowsky, Background, p. 691

[38] For the role of the Makonde in Maji Maji, see Götzen, *Aufstand*, p. 164; and Becker, Traders, p. 15. Cf. Iliffe, *Modern History*, p. 194.

early colonialism.[39] Becker thinks Maji Maji represented a continuation of power game among local 'big men'. Proactively, 'fighters tried to seize a promising moment so as to secure or extend the benefits they had reaped or hoped to reap from the ongoing changes in commercial, political and military relations'.[40] In Njombe, Mpangire, the 'firebrand' (Iliffe) son of Mbeyela, was said to have been more interested in seizing the wife of the missionary Gröschel of Yakobi than building up anticolonial political alliances. Giblin even doubts whether *maji* ever reached Ubena.[41] In Songea, *nkosi* Chabruma was very doubtful when Kinjala, a Ngindo, formerly tributary to the Ngoni, arrived with *maji*. Chabruma consulted his diviners and tested *maji* on a dog and a prisoner. Both died when shot. 'Let us drink the maji maji medicine so that we may all perish', he is reported to have declared.[42] Yet he accepted it and made his subjects do the same; his reasons apparently were at another level.

Intriguingly, the oral-based accounts of the very outbreak of the whole affair at Nandete can be read in a postnationalist vein. In the dominant version we have a group of local men, tired of being exploited in the local communal field, going and uprooting a few shoots of cotton as a symbolic act of defiance. In most original accounts, it is otherwise although there is no agreement as to how it was. The earliest oral testimonies, as collected by Father Ambrious Meyer at Kipatimu, depicted it as a spat between Akida Seif and Jumbe Mtemangani of Nandete, which escalated out of control. Seif apparently was a universally hated man but Mtemangani is also remembered as impatient and arrogant and emerges here as the original instigator. The two came into conflict, for reasons which are not clear, and Mtemangani decided to attack. He destroyed the official cottonfield of the akida and that of Kulita (who belonged to the same akidat), forcing Kulita to join.[43] Captain Merker also mentions that the origin of the fighting was 'a private quarrel between two Matumbi *jumbes*'.[44] In later accounts, commoners began the rebellion and Mtemangani joined in later or not at all.[45] According to another version, two Matumbi men got fed up with whip of the akidas on the cotton field and beat them up. Waiting for the inevitable colonial retaliation to come, they uprooted the cotton and started to prepare for war.[46] Another, slightly different account connects grievances of cotton and whipping at Nandete with

[39] Sunseri, Famine and wild pigs. How the restoration was supposed to take place is hard to fathom from Sunseri's argument. More recently, he has suggested that the outbreak was a a popular reaction to establishment of forest reserves: *Wiedling the Ax, ...*

[40] Becker, Traders, p. 17

[41] James Giblin, 'The War of Korosani" and Oral History at Jacobi, Njombe', forthcoming in Giblin and Monson, eds. (fn. 4 above). Cf. Seth I. Nyagava, *A History of the Bena*, Iringa University College, 1999, p 133, who says that the attack was 'not connected' with the arrival of *maji*..

[42] G.P. Mpangara, 'Songea Bbano', seminar paper, University College Dar es Salaam, as quoted in Iliffe, *Modern History*, p. 187

[43] ‚Wie 1905 im Matumbi…', Father Ambrosius spells the name as 'Temangani'.

[44] As quoted by Götzen, *Aufstand*, p. 46

[45] The names of the commoners in question differ slightly in different versions. In the Gwassa-Iliffe account they are Ngulumbalyo Mandai and Lindimyo Machela. The same names are mentioned, with varying spellings, in the accounts referred to below. In Nandete in 2004, a third name was added: Ndumbalio Machela, Mitazamo mipya, p. 119.

[46] This is from a handwritten account by Mzee Michael Mwiru from Kipatimu:'Historia ya vita ya Maji Maji (Mapokeo)', collected in 1983 by Hubert Gundolf und partly published in German translation in his *Maji Maji – Blut für Afrika*. St.Ottilien, 1984, pp. 137-40. It is based on the oral testimony of Mzee Ali Hemedi Lipunjo Mangdangwa from Kibata. The exact identities of him, the man interviewed by Gwassa, fn. 15 above, and the one interviewed later by ourselves in 2004; see the footnote immediately below, remain speculative.

the Germans sending an expedition to arrest Kinjikitile. 'Two Germans came from Mohoro and Samanga and went to Nandete. Ngurimbalo Mandai said "Let us fight them"…. When the Germans brought askari to Ngarambe [to arrest] Kinjikitile medicine was prepared and there was an order from Ngarambe, let us fight the white man.'[47]

In all accounts, fighting ensued, a few people died, and the akida fled. But the point shared by all Matumbi versions is that originally this was very much a Matumbi affair which might have taken place in any case and would not on its own have led to wider consequences. Father Ambrosius argues that if there had been no agitation, or further instigation from Ngarambe, the Matumbi disturbances would have died down and the people would have happily returned home. Basically the same view is alive and well in Nandete today – had Kinjikitile not come around with his fake magic water, events would have taken a different turn. The Matumbi-German war continues to be understood as separate from Maji Maji.[48]

Maji Maji as chain of connected struggles

Whatever the explanatory power of these particularistic circumstances and revisionist views, and it must vary from case to case, I think it is obvious that they are in danger of not seeing the forest for the trees. They are based on highly localized memory. They overlook or downplay the multitude of wider connections and unifying factors and frameworks that in each case were there and ignore many of the patterns that emerged once the train of events was set in motion. I would argue for the need of combining the insights from unified and localized interpretations and thinking in terms of an overall chain of several, loosely connected waves of regional struggles, brought together mainly by the *maji*. How the nets and nodes in these zones should be seen is another question: I would tentatively suggest thinking in terms of two zones, primary and secondary, both with cores and peripheries of their own. The primary zone was located in the Liwale-Lukuledi-Mahenge area, with more peripheral sub-zones in Uzaramo, the Kilombero valley, and Uvidunda-Kilosa; and the secondary zone is in Ungoni-Upangwa-Njombe. They were bound together by the *maji*, often mediated by people with a Ngindo or, possibly, Pogoro connection.

In this framework, a major difference is caused by the historical relationship of the peoples concerned with the pre-existing water cults. That the fighting first broke out in Nandete, which is in Matumbiland, has obscured the essential role of the Ngindo, or Donde,[49] something which has now been ably rescued by Lorne Larson.[50] The Pogoro living in the Liwale district seemed to have been early and deeply involved

[47] Mzee Ali Hemed Lipunjo, Kibata, 18 July 2004, Mitazamo mipya, pp. 57-58. He was born in 1928 and told us that he had learned all this from his father, a police askari in the German service.
[48] Focus group discussion with wazee of Nandete, 17 July 2004, Mitazamo mipya, pp.105 ff.
[49] The Germans often referred to Wadonde but these have disappeared from the ethnographic map of Tanzania, being conflated with Wangindo. However, there are still people called and calling themselves Wadonde, living in the Liwale highlands as distinct from Ngindo lowlanders. I follow the modern custom of generally conflating the two.
[50] In his contribution to the forthcoming Giblin-Monson volume, see fn. 4 above. I am grateful to Dr Larson for making it available to me in mimeo.

but their role remains much less investigated and understood.[51] After Kibata, the next rebel targets were Kingwhochiro, 14 miles from Liwale-Kilwa road; Liwale, a German police post some 200 km south-west of Matumbiland; and Madaba, a trading centre more than 100 km east of Nandete in what is now Selous. These attacks were independent of those in the Matumbi Hills. With the communications of those days – and of today as well – these are geographically faraway places, at several days' walking distance from each other. It is reported that the leader of the attack in Kingwhochiro and Liwale, Abdallah Mapanda, had been to Ngarambe and received *maji* from Kinjikitile whereas Madaba, as noted above, was an independent distribution centre for *maji* in its own right and the medicine man Ngameya participated in the military action himself. Also, the Mwera people had been in touch with the northern water cults. The leaders who took the war to the South in late August, Selemani Mamba and his nephew Said Toroka, had gone to Ngarambe, and a sizeable amount of Ngindo and Donde, warriors participated in their troops.

While all the above war leaders had had a close personal connection with the northern shrines and medicine men, *maji* reached Uzaramo and Kilombero valley through emissaries called *hongo* and was taken further by other emissaries from there to Usagara and Uvidunda. In Uzaramo, the Kolelo cult had been active but personal contacts with Rufiji had not been that close. The movement was largely confined to the Southern part with jumbe Digalu Kibasila of Kisangire at its head. Some of Kibasila's kinspeople are told to have gone to Rufiji for 'Koleo magic', but Kibasila himself denied a direct connection with *maji*. He is said to have converted to the cause because of its promise to bring the ancestors back.[52] Elsewhere, *maji* crossed the limits of pre-existing water cults carried by hongos.

Very little is known about the hongo. In some accounts, 'Hongo' figures as a proper name of one of the original Matumbi mediums while elsewhere it apparently came to denote anyone carrying *maji* from one place to another.[53] In the Kilombero valley the main actors, in addition to the Pogoro, were the Mbunga, culturally related to the Ngindo but with a hierarchical political and military organisation. They attacked the Ifakara boma and carried *maji* further. They also attached the Mahenge boma two days after the original attempt. The Germans exhausted their resources in the defense of the boma and were unable to prevent Mbunga hongos going up to Kilosa and Uvidunda and recruiting allies there. Chitalika seized the moment and organized an attack at Kilosa with troops of more than 3,000 men consisting of Sagara and Mbunga.

The secondary zone was in the South West - Ungoni, Upangwa and Njombe, again with considerable internal differentiation. Its relations with the original water cult were practically non-existent. While there were some shared beliefs, the Rufiji water shrines carried no particular meaning here. These societies and cultures were also very different from those in the first, primary zone. The Ngoni, descendants of the Zulu people in South Africa, were dreaded as conquerors. They had migrated into the

[51] The active role of the Liwale Pogoro is emphasised by Bell but there has not been much subsequent research on this. The later understanding is that the Pogoro living elsewhere often refused *maji*, see e.g. Kazimoto, MMRP, 8/68/1/1; and Iliffe, *Modern History*, p. 177.
[52] 'Kibassira und die Unruhen im Bezirk DSM', *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Zeitung (DOAZ)*, 22 Sept 1906; Klamroth, Beiträge pp. 140-141, also extract in Gwassa and Iliffe (ed.) *Records*, pp. 16-17.
[53] Kalembo, MMRP, 7/68/1/1, pp. 3-4. 7-8

area in the late 19th century, imposed themselves upon the original inhabitants and established two centralised kingdoms, Mshope and Njelu. After this they had continued pillaging their neighbours, not least the different Ngindo-related groups such as the Ndendeuli and submitted many of these to a tributary relationship.

But they had not properly resisted the German conquest and *maji* gave their leaders the opportunity to do so in the context of a wider anti-colonial uprising. It is possible to see an ethnic connection here: Kinjala, a Mngindo, approached the Ngoni through a part of Mshope inhabited by Ndendeuli, a Ngindo-related people. But the decision to fight was that of the Ngoni aristocracy. After Chabruma had decided to take *maji*, he actively encouraged its spread by dispatching hongos to Njelu and Upangwa. How, or even whether, *maji* reached Ubena is contested. The traditional understanding is that it came from Ungoni but there were also reports that it spread through Mbunga emissaries. In any case, there apparently were enough local grievances, from heavy taxation to missionary meddling with existing cultural and political relations to induce old Mbeyela and his sons to join the spreading rebellion.[54]

From this perspective, Maji Maji was a network of anti-colonial military actions of various kinds where *maji* functioned as the medium of communication and symbol of alliance. Colonialism should be understood widely enough and the role of *maji* seen differentially in various contexts. Anti-colonial feelings ran high. Although German rule was thin on the ground in terms of German agents, the indirect colonial presence was pervasive and the attacks were directed against almost all who were understood as colonial collaborators. *Maji* created a bond between very different actions and, above all, distinguished 'insiders' from 'outsiders'.

Seen as such, Maji Maji appears as a 'hinterland' movement, excluding coastal peoples. Activities taking place on the coast were carried out by warriors from inland. Not only did the coastal people refuse to join but they carefully distanced themselves from the *shensi* of the interior.[55] Yet this does not mean that all the rebels would have been uncouth backwoods people. Both Christianity and Islam had started making inroads into the rebel areas and it is clear from the names of the rebel leaders alone that there were Muslims and apparently also Christian converts among them. *Maji* itself, I will suggest below, had more global ambitions.

The view advocated here does not presuppose an evil conspiracy or grand plan but rather sees Maji Maji as a 'chain rebellion' where one event sparked another. Timing is of utmost importance. In the established, unified struggle narrative the action in the cotton field in Nandete starts late in July 1905, perhaps around the 25th. But we know that trouble had been brewing before this. Germans had got the earliest warning on the 13th when the akida of Kibata sent a letter to Kilwa complaining that a medicine man was 'encouraging insubordination' among the people. At the same time the Mohoro district office had been temporarily taken over by the overzealous Stollowsky, who was determined to put an end to the 'nonsense' of the group of magicians swindling people of their money and sent police askaris to both Ngarambe and Kibambwe to arrest Kinjikitile and Bokero. The arrests were ordered on the 12th

[54] Nyagava, *Bena*, pp. 129 ff.
[55] Most notably, Abdul Karim Jamaliddini, *Utenzi wa vita vya Maji Maji*.

and 16th of July; Kinjikitile was brought to Mohoro on the 16th, Bokero a few days later.[56]

If these events are connected with the disturbances at Nandete, as in one oral account above, it can be suggested that the latter may have taken place earlier in July. In that case there was a longer interval between these and the Matumbi attack on Kibata on the 28th. After the Matumbi returned home, the Ngindo and Porogo, with Abdullah Mapanda at the helm, took over the *maji* and carried on fighting; Selimani Mamba and the other southerners climbed on the bandwagon; and Kinjala persuaded Chabruma to join in. In this scenario, the Germans were completely in the dark, not for a few days but for weeks. After the first open attacks they thought they were dealing with 'local disturbances'. Confusion reigned in colonial headquarters. Governor Götzen says he realised himself only on the 15th of August, that is when Mahenge was attacked, that he had a full scale rebellion at hand.[57] Could it be that this was one of those seminal historical interregnums during which the world for a while loses its predictable coordinates and things turn upside down?[58] Was it perhaps only during this political and spiritual interregnum that what had started as local struggles turned into a full-scale rebellion?

Discussion on causes: one big cause or many small ones?

While such a view does not presuppose prior planning it assumes the presence of a number of underlying structural conditions which hatched the processes, contributed to trigger them and enabled them to run their course. If there are so many question marks concerning what actually happened and how, how can we ever imagine obtaining a satisfactory view of the possibly common underlying factors and mechanisms? Whatever Maji Maji was, it was something unprecedented, as puzzling to the colonialists as to later historians. Why did tens if not hundreds of thousands of combatants belonging to at least twenty or more different African peoples decide to rise against the colonial power so forcefully? How was it possible for them to do it so simultaneously over such a wide area? If Maji Maji was an anti-colonial uprising, why was it confined to the South? Why did it not spread to the North which was much more heavily under colonial assault?

Maji Maji as an anticolonial and anti-cotton movement

The causes of the rebellion have been debated since it broke out. The debate is patently unfinished. What is common to most interpretations is that they see Maji Maji as a movement *against* rather than *for* something. But against what? One obvious suggestion put immediately forward was that it was a general anti-colonial uprising against the manifest oppression and brutality which were built-in features of German colonial policy.[59] The hut tax, forced labour, compulsory cultivation, petty despotism by the akida and askari, heavy and intense flogging, conservation of forests and wild animals at the expense of African interests, forced attendance of Islamic children at missionary schools in some places - all these were mentioned in an official report by Götzen as factors which had aroused the dissatisfaction of Africans. By

[56] Götzen, *Aufstand*, p. 62; Stollowsky, Background, pp. 685 ff., 694.
[57] Bald, Afrikanischer Kampf, pp. 31-32.
[58] This idea is inspired by Jonathon Glassman, *Feasts and Riot*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, 1995.
[59] The following draws on my earlier work, Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, pp. 234 ff.

reading this report aloud to the *Reichstag* in Berlin, the great socialist orator Bebel considered he had proved that German colonial policy was an 'exploitation policy' and that the rebellion gave no reason for surprise. The missionaries who were most affected - mainly the German Benedictines and Berlin I, and more peripherally also UMCA and the Spiritans - repeated much the same list, emphatically denying their own culpability through forced schooling or otherwise, and emphasizing the brutality of non-African akida and deceitful practices of Indian traders.

As was quickly pointed out, whatever the general accuracy of these claims, they had one obvious weak point. The rebellion did not break out in the north-eastern areas of the colony, which were most heavily under the colonial yoke, but in the south, to which the colonial administration and colonial economy extended far less directly and which had been considered thoroughly ‘pacified’. In the south, too, while the small European farms in Kilwa were attacked, the larger plantations in Lindi avoided the rebellion. Accordingly, most officials and pro-colonial politicians were inclined to seek causes of the rebellion in restricted local mistakes and 'excesses' rather than in any general structural features of colonialism. Basically any of the grievances mentioned in Götzen’s list would do, but in subsequent discourse, one has been raised above the rest: forced cultivation of cotton. It was blamed by the colonialists, and taken over by the nationalist historians. In the popular imagination, in tourist guidebooks, newspaper articles, and even in some research, in Tanzania and elsewhere, Maji Maji continues to be seen as a great anti-cotton uprising.

In dealing with this discussion we need to recognize that the views on the nature of the movement and its causes are closely intertwined, and in the social life the variety of factors that carry causal power operate differently in different contexts. Any debate on the causes of historical and social events and processes becomes confused if it fails to differentiate between the various causal factors and influences. At the very minimum, we have should categorize the ’causes’ into those that are more basic and those that are more contingent. On the one hand, we can speak of ultimate causes or structural factors, and on the other hand of proximate causes, or enabling and triggering factors. Any major historical event or process can then be seen to originate from a combination of these various factors.

In this framework the cotton explanation begins to look very narrow. At best it can be taken as a contingent, triggering factor. That was how it was originally perceived – it was elevated to the category of a more general cause only later. It was not the cultivation of cotton that was seen the problem but a very particular form of it, compulsory cotton growing in village fields and what were called 'jumbe shambas'. This was practised in many areas where the rebellion broke out and was widely resented. All contemporary investigators of the origin of the outbreak, while differing on many other matters, mentioned it among the main grievances, albeit with differing emphases. In his analysis of the causes of the rebellion, the next Governor, Albrecht Freiherr von Rechenberg, found the communal field system largely responsible for the outbreak, and Iliffe, the most influential historian of Maji Maji, endowed this claim with the status of a historical explanation. In oral research conducted by Gwassa, the starting shot of the whole rebellion took place as an act of defiance in the communal field in Nandete.

Yet forced cotton cultivation must be put into a larger colonial context. It seems reasonable to regard the village shambas, despite their importance, as one cause of discontent among many. They were only operated in some parts of the coastal districts, not in other districts of the interior, and their forms varied from district to district. Their prominence in the contemporary discussion is partly explained by the fact that they provided a suitable scapegoat, to be done away with by the pretext of rebellion. Dissatisfaction with the system was by no means confined to the African people. European colonists and colonist-minded officials also bitterly resented this 'communist way of cultivation'. A labour shortage was looming and village shambas had heightened competition for labour. The conspicuous command economy run by akidas withdrew people from the labour reserve of European employers and missions and left them less time for individual cash crop production. Colonists and their mouthpieces launched several attacks against village shambas much before the rebellion. After its outbreak it was easy for the anti-village shamba lobby among the Germans to force their abolition. Today, there is no reason to cling to the colonialist line of argumentation that they were *the* cause of Maji Maji.

Structural framework of Maji Maji

But even if we would be ready to abandon the search for one overarching cause we do not have to give up the issue of causality altogether or adopt the view of later postcolonial historians of Maji Maji, who regard it as a series of localized battles with locally varying causes, only indirectly if at all connected with colonial rule. It is certainly warranted and long overdue to give serious consideration to basically internal factors in the societies involved, such as age and gender differences, exacerbated by aspects of colonial rule. Yet, considering the extent and timing of the disturbances, it still must be warranted to search for some underlying patterns. And I think such patterns must be sought in the colonial system as well as and in changes in the African societies that were involved.

I have previously suggested that colonial tax and trade statistics might give as a clue.[60] I still think this line of argumentation is valid; and some more recent research lends new corroboration to it. The value of such statistics is that they give us some indication as to what was happening in the areas that joined the rebellion. Obviously they were not under direct colonial control as closely as the urban or estate areas in the northeast, but they were by no means aloof from the colonial political economy. Indicators are admittedly approximate and open to interpretation, but they point in the same direction. Tax statistics reveal that the tax load was at least as heavy or even heavier in districts which joined the rebellion – that is, Lindi, Kilwa, Rufiji, Dar es Salaam, Mahenge, Songea, partly Morogoro - than in the European farming districts and it was increasing, while taxation in other parts of the country was appreciably lighter. Trade statistics show that the value of exports from southern harbours continuously exceeded that of imports. Yet this is not say that those areas would have been 'clearly prospering'[61]; rather they must be seen as heavily exploited. More

[60] For details and sources, ibid, pp. 237-39.
[61] As famously suggested by Iliffe, *Modern Tanganyika*, p. 130.

resources were taken out than were brought in and the coastal trade was stagnating or declining in the early years of the 20th century.[62]

If we combine what has been said above about trade, the geographical spread of the rebellion and the movements of *maji* it is easy to see that the areas of the primary outbreak of Maji Maji broadly coincided with those of intensive trade carried from precolonial times onwards and it spread through trading routes, both along the main long-distance routes going south-west from Kilwa through Ngindoland to Songea. and along the route in Lukuledi valley from Lindi to Masasi.as well as the smaller north-south routes criss-crossing these. But it was not simply a question of precolonial traders resisting colonial intruders. The trade itself was being transformed and had acquired new dynamics. Instead of ivory and slaves, much of it, especially in Ngindo and Mwera areas, was based on collection of *landophia* rubber. In stark contrast to earlier high-value trade goods, rubber collection was open to anyone with access to a knife. By the early years of the 20th century it had attracted thousands of small entrepreneurs.[63] Much of this had degenerated into reckless exploitation of exhaustible resources, with differential and seasonally fluctuating rewards. The rubber trade was conducted by giving advances to the collectors, and good years were inevitably followed by bad. One of the main grievances going beyond colonial harassment recorded among the people was the heavy indebtedness many rubber collectors and petty traders had incurred in this game.

At the same time, the colonial apparatus was by no means absent. The Germans were pushing on with their intervention, albeit mainly through middlemen of various types. On the coastal hinterland, in much of what was been called above the primary zone of Maji Maji, the colonial intervention took the form of a profusion of taxes, decrees and regulations. As *Regierunsrat* Haber recorded from his inspection tour to Kilwa and Lindi, he heard complaints 'over and over again ... that the Serkal (government) never tired of regulations and orders, hastened to proclaim new taxes, new imposts, new labours; the akidas and jumbes did not know what to arrange first, the natives were hounded, punished, embittered.' In addition to coerced cultivation and other forced labour, among the unpopular measures frequently mentioned were restrictions on hunting, especially the prohibition of hunting by nets. Also, factors such as resettlement of people along the roads, or the compulsory schooling of children were occasionally noted. The *jumbes*, as close representatives of their own people on whom the colonialists placed increasingly onerous demands, felt between a rock and a hard place. Many were attracted to join the rebellion.

Further in the interior, in the secondary zone, more discontent was obviously generated by taxation, the tangible marker of the intruding colonial state imposing itself. In particular, the money tax and the often brutal methods of its collection raised resistance. Money was much rarer in the interior than nearer the coast. When tax payment was demanded in cash, it forced the people to intensify the collection of rubber or copal or to engage in wage work as porters or estate labourers, or alternatively, to settle tax obligations labouring for the local boma. Not only were

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[62] See Patrick Krajewski's research, summed up in 'Dampfer und Dhaus. Küstenhandel und Landwirtschaft vor dem Krieg', Felicitas Becker and Jigal Beez (eds), *Der Maji-Maji Krieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika 1905-1907*, Berlin, 2005, pp. 49-58.

[63] Marcia Wright, 'Towards an Appraisal of the Place of Rubber in Tanzania History: the German Period', Paper for the Historical Association of Tanzania Conference, 1976; Becker, Traders, pp. 9-11.

rebellious districts among the most heavily taxed, but also within districts the more heavily taxed areas tended to join the rebellion more easily. There were considerable internal differences, of course. Whereas the Ngindo and Pogoro were heavily involved and indebted in the rubber trade and deeply in debt – as personified by Abdallah Mapanda, who was indebted to the German trader his men killed in Liwale - for the Mbunga more resentment probably stemmed from German interference in their traditional warfare. The common underlying factor was that areas which participated in Maji Maji paid a substantial amount of tax in 1905 while areas that remained outside paid little or nothing. The sub-district Liwale, where the rebellion began, was among the most heavily taxed areas of the colony. Also, African oral sources make it clear that discontent with the money tax was strong and widespread.

Thus it can be argued that Maji Maji took place in areas in which the colonial economy was in the grips of an extractive mode and which at the same time were being incorporated more closely into the colonial political economy. The earliest German colonial policy was, I have argued elsewhere, not only exploitative but extremely extractive.[64] It can be best seen as a drive to carve a colonial economy on the booming mercantile extraction of resources, with only a few hesitant attempts at developing a productive economy. It was not by coincidence that the Germans had entered an area where a brisk pre-colonial trade was taking place. What they first had in mind was to impose themselves as masters on the indigenous trading system and exploit it by taking their share of it. But local resistance, especially that along the coast, made this preferred policy of 'exploitation without development' unworkable in most places even prior to Maji Maji. One of the few areas where it seemed to have any prospects was in the southern rubber collection areas. The direct presence of the colonial coercive apparatus was weak here and a more forceful colonial intervention was called for. Such a situation, it can be suggested, in many ways created preconditions conducive to a rebellion. Falling rubber prices and accumulating debt gave ample reason for discontent in some areas, while rising taxes and heavy-handed collection methods did so in others. Pre-existing trade routes, complemented by new colonial roads built by forced labour, supplied the necessary means of communication by which the *maji* message was able to travel.

Maji Maji as a socio-religious movement: God of Black People

People may be seen to work in and through social structures but how they themselves think about what drives them on is rather different. To appreciate the workings of their agency we should understand their own categories of thought. This takes us back to the intricacies of *maji* but also beyond them. As should be evident from what has been said above, the traditional understanding of *maji* as a ready-made anti-European war medicine, uniform across the rebel area, must now be taken as suspicious at best. Many details may be irretrievably lost but I suggest that if we read the available evidence in the light of the interpretation suggested above it is warranted to emphasise the forward-looking elements in *maji* and its affinities with other 'socio-religious movements' elsewhere. While the German interpretation saw Maji Maji as an atavistic drive to return to the past, and the nationalist interpretation made it a modernist harbinger of national liberation, both missed the possibility that its real innovations lay on the spiritual side. Maji Maji of course was not a religious war in

[64] Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, pp.177 ff.

the sense of pitting adherents of one religion against another but I do not think much sense can be made of it without taking its religious dimensions seriously.

The question of what constitutes a religion is a moot one but should not deter us here. Few scholars would doubt that in the world view of African people, living in the period of transition from pre-colonial to colonial rule, the physically immanent world and invisible spiritual forces were inextricably intertwined. As Rhonda Gonzales has most recently suggested, among the Bantu people it was taken for granted that in creating social institutions, spirits mattered because they played a part in accessing power. Spirits, both of ancestors and of different natural places or phenomena, influenced the sphere of the physical as well as the reverse.[65] That this was the case with Maji Maji is amply evident from what has been said above; in fact; it has been evident for long. Yet the religious dimension of the rebellion has been oddly narrowed down to the belief in *maji* and the 'indigenous religions' it implied. This may be more understandable for the colonialists, who were not inclined to recognize the African belief systems as 'religion' at all, but also later historians, in their eagerness to emphasize the ideological and rational side of the rebellion have evaded the religious undertones that went beyond the *maji* magic. Tackling Maji Maji in religious terms still raises quite a few eyebrows. But I wish to suggest that we take the evidence seriously and view it in the light of Gonzales' argument that in looking at the early history of Bantu peoples, religion should not be taken as 'incidental to any institution … but rather as a dominant prism'. It then makes sense that Maji Maji is seen as unfolding together with a major religious innovation: the emergence of an interventionist God, capable of interfering in the lives of people.

The evidence for this is scanty, fragmentary and indirect, but there is some. The best of it comes from among the Zaramo where Martin Klamroth, a perceptive German missionary, reported that the Kolelo cult was undergoing an internal transformation in early 1905. Not only was its message turning more political, but in addition to the big snake-spirit Kolelo, or Bokero, a high God was said to have appeared. This was presented as the 'God of the Black People'. Klamroth recounts local accounts that in 1905 Kolelo concerned himself with politics. He forbade the further payment of taxes to the white foreigners and prophesised that a great flood would come and destroy all the whites and their followers, or the earth would open and swallow them. 'Later it was said that … no bullets but only water would come from the soldiers guns…. 'Be not afraid, Kolelo spares his black children.' Soon, however, it was no longer Kolelo but 'God himself who cared for his children… Kolelo has not adequately fulfilled his task, so that God himself appeared.' Only God had the unlimited power over life and death and could resurrect the ancestors.[66]

There are remarkable similarities here with what anecdotal evidence we have from the rebel areas. All the main mediums of the spirit Bokero similarly declared that a new God had arisen and claimed the power to bring the ancestors back. Bokero at Kimbabwe preached that a great flood would come. Only the mountain summits would stand above the water and on these the black people would find a safe refuge while all the foreigners would perish. Kinjikitile told his German interrogators that he

[65] Rhonda Gonzales, *Societies, Religion and History. Central East Tanzanians and the World They Created, ca 200 BCE to 1800 CE*. Columbia University Press, 2008. Accessible via Gutenberg – ebooks. I am indebted to Jamie Monson for drawing my attention to this work.
[66] Klamroth, Beiträge, pp. 140-141, as quoted in Gwassa and Iliffe, *Records*, p. 16

was just a 'poor man before God' and the money people had given to him for *maji* had been taken by God. Bokero famously declared from the scaffolding in Mohoro that he was not afraid to die: he had been sent by God, and all the black people would stand together as his medicine had already reached Kilosa and Mahenge. Kinjala, cutting an image of a prophet in his white *kanzu*, was variously referred to as a son or brother of God while the captured rebel soldiers said they were *askari ya Mungu*, God's soldiers.[67]

A caveat is in place. The concept of 'God' has been, of course, subject to long and erudite discussion and it is far from clear to what kind of God these mostly garbled colonial or missionary accounts refer to. But this must not lead us to overlook that something very important was happening in this respect. There is not much doubt that all the people who were involved in the rebellion recognized a Creator, a singular force that had been there since the beginning of time, or *Mulungu* in Kizaramo and other nearby languages (with *Mungu* as a Swahilized version, which was later appropriated to mean the Christian, omnipotent God). Originally, however, Mulungu was not known to show any interest in later intervening in what he had once initiated nor had the people any means to communicate with him; they were dealing with the spirits.[68] Against this, the new 'God of the Black People', with the powers of sending prophets, taking in money, to bring ancestors back to life, and actively caring for his flock, cuts a revolutionary figure and represents a major shift in the systems of belief. That it may be impossible for the moment to understand how such an idea emerged - it would be a subject to a new research project – does not obliterate its historical significance.

In this configuration, origins of *maji* as war medicine can be better appreciated. In spite of the similarity in beliefs, the Zaramo did not have *maji* of their own and the most of them did not join the rebellion. I believe this indicates that *maji* was transformed into a war medicine against the Europeans and a medium of African military alliance in the encounter between the new religious ideas and the Rufiji shrines; and I suspect this happened at a rather late date. There does not seem to be much reason to doubt that originally the Rufiji medicine was a wide-spectre panacea, which, in Merker's description, was meant to free people from agricultural worries, guarantee a good harvest, confer prosperity and health, protect from famine and sickness, and especially to protect the fields against the devastation of the wild pigs, which had become a plague as they recovered rapidly from devastating panzootics at the same time as the colonial hunting restrictions made it more difficult to contain them. *Maji* apparently had the potential of protection against a human enemy as well but it can be suggested that it attained its militant anti-foreigner content only gradually, and this probably was connected with the advent of the God of the Black People. 'Black' here obviously refers as much to the colour of skin as to the socio-political position. The way German rule was organized in these areas caused all indigenous people, from *jumbes* to commoners, suffer from it and all people who

[67] This is based mainly on Stollowsky, Rebellion, 685-687, 692. Bell's account corroborates it. Götzen, *Aufstand*, attributes the famous words to Kinjikitile. In Stollowsky's eye-witness account it was Bokero who uttered them. For Kinjala, see Iliffe, *Modern History*, p. 185; and Bernita Walter, *Sustained by God's Faithfulness: The Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing.* Vol II, St. Ottlien, 1992, fn. 34, p. 172

[68] Direct evidence comes, again, from amongst mainly non-combatant peoples, the Zaramo and the 'Ruvu: Klamroth, Beiträge; and Gonzales, *Central East Tanzanians.*

were subjected to exigencies and tribulations of colonialism were seen as black. *Maji* may not have had its specific function as an anti-European war medicine, with its strict taboos on things like sexual intercourse, until the very eve of the outbreak of fighting. This is speculation, of course, but it is corroborated by some pieces of evidence. According to some accounts the military training and the order to 'destroy the read earth [the European]' was not given in Matumbi until during the interregnum, when the decision to fight the Germans had been made. Not a few Ngindo believed that the one who gave *maji* its military twist was Abdullah Mapanda.[69]

Whereas Maji Maji was unique in Tanzanian history, it can be understood as one among 'socio-religious movements' which tend to emerge in similar circumstances in which formerly independent local societies are subjugated to foreign rule and opened to rapid social and economic changes.[70] These are social and political movements based on concerted and common action, rooted in genuine social and political grievances; but their ideologies tend to be spiritual and religious in the sense that they draw on otherwordly forces, which may not be seen but whose efficacy is not doubted. Such movements commonly contain both forward-looking and backward-looking elements and as much as they spring from their internal dynamics they also are influenced by outside factors, in the case of Maji Maji obviously by the incoming two major world religions. Suggestions of considerable Muslim and Christian influence have been made right from the beginning. No doubt some was there; the evocation of a God of the Black People carries the same sort of unifying message as the universalist world religions. But it is also clear that the rise of the new God was based on pre-existing grounds and must have to a great extent been a consequence of more spontaneous internal spiritual development. Similarly, *maji* grew from the encounter of indigenous beliefs with all the intruding forces, material and spiritual, and its basic nature emerged in this process.

This also helps us to tackle the suggestion that the central point of the *maji* message was what is called 'nativistic'. Although the connotations of the term may lead one astray, I think there is a point here: Maji Maji can indeed be seen as an attempt to 'purge the society of unwanted aliens', a hallmark of such movements.[71] True, Maji Maji was not as indiscriminately against every single foreigner as the colonialists claimed. Sometimes the Indians were spared (as in Madaba), sometimes the missionaries (some missions, such as the Anglican one in Masasi and the Lutheran in Milo were burned down, but the missionaries were let go unscathed while the Catholic mission of Kwiro, a stone's throw from the Mahenge boma, was not touched at all).[72] But by and large, those who were understood as colonial agents were attacked, and this was done in order to get rid of the colonialists.

Yet Maji Maji should not be seen as an attempt to return to a pre-colonial arcadia. It had its hybrid, forward-looking elements which distinguish it from a standard nativistic model. *Maji* itself was physically a concoction of water with a traditional grain, millet, and maize, a more recent addition. It was also something that was paid

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[69] Cf. the accounts of Sebastian Upunda in Gwassa and Iliffe, *Records*, p. 13 and Mwiru/Lipunjo in Gundolf, *Blut*, pp. 138-139. For the Ngindo, A.R.W. Crosse-Upcott, 'The Origin of the Majimaji Revolt, *Man*, 97,98 (1960), pp. 72-73.
[70] Beez, *Geschosse*, 1st ch.; cf. ibid, Maji-message.
[71] Beez, idem.
[72] Bell, Outbreak; Beez, Geschosse, p. 93; Götzen, *Aufstand*, pp. 91-93.

for, and mostly with money, from one to three pesa according to differing descriptions. While both Stollowsky and later local cynics claimed that people were being deceived by swindlers whose main purpose was to enrich themselves, this implied that those who acquired *maji* must have been involved in the monetary economy. Kinjikitile's claim that 'God' had taken the money he had collected may perhaps be seen as a reference to a common resource pool. But Maji Maji's most remarkable forward-looking element was its attempt to overcome the intense locality of the old society and its quest of God-given unity among the 'Black People', i.e. all those subjected to colonial tribulations. The dominant nationalist interpretation may have played down the role of God and overplayed that of 'national' sentiments but it realised that the gist of Maji Maji was the emphasis on the search for connection. I think this insight has to be safeguarded.

The differences between different zones of rebellion must again be emphasized. While the movement grew up and acquired the character of popular resistance in the Ngindo-Pogoro-Matumbi-Mwera complex, its nature changed when it was exported to more hierarchical societies such as the Mbunga and Ngoni, and forwarded from these onwards. There *maji* was used for more politically instrumental purposes, for forging alliances against the common colonial enemy, both within their own societies and outwards, towards previously hostile or subjugated African societies. The understanding of *maji* was necessarily different: it was war medicine right from its importation. It spread during the first heady weeks of the expansion when it seemed to work. It was this stage that it became the medium of communication and symbol of alliance. At the same time, its forms changed. In Ungoni, warriors flocked to the Luhira river, 'all drinking of the same water as a sign that they want to take part in the war'.[73] Later on, when *maji* had failed in some battles, more of the original ware was imported from Ungindo. But at this stage, the Ngoni leaders were so committed that they had no way out. If there were any millenarian messages they were rather subdued.

And, finally, consequences: not one big one but …

It would be tempting to argue that Maji Maji, and its suppression, must have been the big catastrophe that triggered the downward spiral of the South from its former prosperity. Some southerners even believe that it led to a colonial 'hidden agenda' to deliberately leave the South undeveloped, in fear of new resistance.[74] While a terrible loss of human life is not in doubt, such views suffer from evident weaknesses. To start with, the assumption of a former prosperity is questionable: as argued above, the fact that these areas exported much and contributed considerable tax income to the colonial treasure is an indication of the level of their exploitation rather than that of prosperity. Late pre-colonial and early colonial exploitation had seriously depleted the natural and human resources of the area. And great, multifaceted historical convulsions, such as Maji Maji not only have multiple causes; they also have multiple consequences. Some are immediate and visible, others will take shape only gradually over time. Some are physically tangible, others work through mediating channels such as colonial and postcolonial policies. In the long-term course of history, such consequences lose their specific identity and merge with other factors working upon these societies. Maji Maji was followed by: a brief stint of a different German policy;

[73] Kigonsera Chronicle, 5 Sept 1905, as quoted in Walter, *God's Faithfulness,* p. 159.
[74] Wembah-Rashid, Culture, pp. 46-48.

the Great European War; British colonialism; and all the postcolonial policies ranging from *ujamaa* and villagization to free market, or *laissez faire*. Thus we must look at the consequences of Maji Maji through the prism of all the subsequent developments.

Devastation and depopulation

What caught the immediate eye was the destruction and loss of human life. The contemporary German sources abound with grim descriptions while African oral testimonies tell of brutalities of the askari of which even the mildest are revolting. On the German side the casualties were counted in hundreds: 15 Europeans, 71 askari, 316 auxiliaries. On the African side, tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives, most of them civilians succumbing to famine deliberately unleashed by the German military after the operations. The rebels had been destroying crops of those who had declined to take *maji* but by far the worst casualties came from the systematic colonialist use of the scorched earth tactic. The result was a three-year famine, compared to which all other famines were 'mere babes… People denied their children and wives. It was only those who really loved each other who remained together.'[75] Some 90 % of the Pangwa were reported to have perished. Of 40,000 Vidunda some 5,000 survived. The total estimates are bound to remain speculative. Gwassa speaks of 250,000 to 300,000 dead – a third of the population in the rebellious regions. Iliffe, usually a cool-headed historian, says he 'may be right'. The losses reverberated generations ahead as the famine dented human fertility. A much quoted study from Ulanga estimated that some 25 per cent of the next generation remained unborn.[76]

The human losses were real and devastating. Yet three points must be made. First, it is simply impossible to know any exact numbers. The death toll may be lower than the highest estimates suggest. It is highly likely that many people simply moved away and never returned. Secondly, the losses varied from place to place. They were particularly heavy in the Matumbi Hills and much of Ngindoland as well, as in parts of Ungoni, Upangwa and Uvidunda. Elsewhere they varied more, and were practically non-existent in the case of areas that remained outside military activities, such as, it will be remembered, most of the densely populated South-Eastern triangle of the country South of the Lukuledi river. And thirdly, from our present day vantage point, most of these areas must have more than fully recovered long ago in terms of population. After all, more than 100 years have now passed.

The recovery has been uneven and taken many forms. There have been spirals both upwards and downwards. While some areas may now be better off than they were before Maji Maji, for others this is manifestly not the case. Different areas display different tendencies. Most of Ungoni seems to be doing quite well. Ruvuma region has pockets of poverty but it is now, after some colonial stagnation, one of the major maize producing and exporting areas in the country and its development indicators are at a safe middle level. The Matumbi Hills, in contrast, continue to be a peripheral and neglected area, plagued by internal dissension. The presence of the Government and that of Christianity and Islam is more visible and primary education is widely

[75] Mzee Camelous Kiango of Nandete, 5 Sept 1967, Gwassa and Iliffe, *Documents*, p. 28.
[76] Beez, Geschosse, p. 103; Gwassa, Outbreak, pp. 383 ff; Iliffe, Modern Tanganyika, p. 165; Culwick and Culwick, 'A Study of Population in Ulanga, Tanganyika Territory'. *Sociological Review*, 30 (1939), pp. 365-376, and 31 (1939), pp. 23-43.

available. Yet in social and economic terms it is difficult to gauge the difference to pre-Maji Maji situation. For the Ngindo, Maji Maji can be seen to have marked a turning point, and for the worse. The people, to be sure, may well be more numerous now than they were before Maji Maji, depending of course on who is taken as a 'Ngindo'. Present-day Liwale is a small but growing township surrounded by a number a sizeable villages dotted with a dense mixture of cashew and *miombo* woodland. The post-1990 revival of the cashew economy remains precarious but has brought some modest prosperity, as manifested in bicycles, corrugated iron roofs and TV sets. Yet the living space of the Ngindo people has been reduced dramatically. Maji Maji triggered a series of calamities that finally led to the Ngindo being chased from most of their land to make space for the Selous Game Reserve, a huge wildlife sanctuary for foreign hunters. Major places like Madaba no longer exist.

Internal changes

Such blows unleashed processes leading to deep internal changes among the Southern societies. People moved and settled in new places. Their leaders changed. As so many died on the battlefield and the surviving rebel leaders were executed *en masse*, leadership positions went to a younger and differently disposed generation. This was most visible among the Ngoni, whose top aristocracy, some 84 people, were hanged by the Germans in Songea in early 1906. Maji Maji basically destroyed the Ngoni military society and did much to level out the old distinction between aristocrats and subjects. New chiefs were appointed not only from the educated sons of the old ones but also from subject Ndendeuli peoples. Changes were equally marked elsewhere. Among the Ngindo and Matumbi, whole clans died out. The execution of some 200 warriors wiped out the Vidunda leadership. Although some members of Mbeyela's family changed their names the Germans distributed their territory to new leaders, some indigenous and others brought from outside.[77]

New ideas produced a new mindset. Not only Kolelo and Bokero but the new God had been shown unable to save their black children. If a religion is something that deals with a 'culturally postulated non-falsifiable reality',[78] *maji* had definitely failed as religion. Its place was overtaken by Christianity and Islam. Christianity advanced especially in the West, in the secondary zone of the rebellion, and in its peripheries. It was given a major boost in Ungoni when the missionaries came back in tandem with the German military and some of the Ngoni leaders sentenced to execution, including Mputa, assented to be baptized before hanging.[79] However, not without some doubt. One of the chiefs being prepared for the gallows asked the missionary Father Johannes whether he *really* would rise again after babtism.[80] In any case, missionary schools were reopened and people flocked to them. Christianity also made headway around Mahenge, where the Kwiro mission had been spared from destruction, and in Ubena. In the East, the primary core of Maji Maji, the Ngindo and the Mwera turned

[77] Iliffe, *Modern History*, p. 200; Mapunda and Mpangara, *Maji Maji War*, pp. 22-23; Gwassa, Outbreak, p. 389; Nyagava, *Bena*, pp. 145-49.
[78] Thomas D. Blakely et al. (eds), *Religion in Africa*. London, 1994, p. 1, as quoted by Yusufu Q. Lawi and Patrick Masanja, 'African traditional religions in Tanzania: essence, practice and the encounter with modernisation', in Rwekaza Mukandala et al. (eds), *Justice, Rights and Worship. Religion and Politics in Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam, 2006, p. 74.
[79] Kigonsera Chronicle, 17 Feb 1906, extract in Gwassa and Iliffe, *Documents*, 25-26; Walter, *God's Faithfulness*, pp.171-172; Mapunda and Mpangara, *Maji Maj War*, pp. 21-22.
[80] Walter, *God's Faithfulness*, p. 172.

to Islam.[81] Christianity is told to have become a taboo among the Ngindo, who believed that by killing a bishop they had estranged themselves from the God of the Christians.[82] What happened to the old spirits is unclear; they hardly disappeared altogether but their public role was strongly reduced. The new spiritual configuration paved the way for more instrumentalist beliefs in the guise of witchcraft. Between the wars witchcraft and witchcraft eradication movements became 'an integral feature' of Tanzanian life. Witchcraft has remained widespread although it has taken ever more individualized and syncreticized forms.[83] The Bokero spirit himself is reported to have moved downstream towards the delta of Rufiji and become islamized there.[84]

Maji had sought connection and unity; its suppression spread discord. *Maji* had failed and its advocates were accused of deception. Matumbi elders sang of 'the swindle of Kinjikitile'. 'Kinjala led me astray,' were the last words of the chief Mputa before he was hanged.[85] The top leaders who escaped the German gallows died in the hands of their fellow Africans: Kinjala was captured by Ngindo loyalists and killed himself; Chabruma was murdered by his Yao allies. The Ngindo and the Matumbi were considered as the chief troublemakers as they had started the whole thing. For them, conversion was a way to claim a new identity. 'I am a Muslim, not a Ngindo', it was said in Liwale in 1908.[86] Half a century later, when Julius Nyerere drew on the *maji* message in mobilizing support for the independence movement, the failure of *maji* was still vividly remembered on the ground. For Nyerere, a British-educated Northerner, Maji Maji was a 'response to a natural call … ringing in the hearts of all men … to rebel against foreign domination'. Many elders in the South were less sure. When the Tanganyika African National Union started to spread its message and dispatch its men to the regions, they asked: was this not like Maji Maji began and didn't we fail to drive the European away?[87] Yet, in retrospect in can be argued that Maji Maji, even in its failure, in the long run helped to bring the peoples in Southern Tanzania closer together; in particular, the Ngoni were now more in line with the other African peoples.

From extractive to developmental colonialism

Other changes came about through policies, and some major policy changes can be traced back to Maji Maji. At the country level, as is well known, German colonial policies changed after the rebellion. It may not have been the kind of complete transition from excessive use of force to the 'scientific colonialism' as trumpeted in colonial ideology. The actual policies that followed Maji Maji changed more slowly and in a more contradictory manner than the public rhetoric of the top colonial rulers. But avoiding a new rebellion became the loadstar of policy. There was a general

[81] Larson, Ngindo, pp. 60-61; Iliffe, *Modern History*, p. 201. For the present position of traditional religions, see Patrick Masanja and Yusufu Q. Lawi, 'African traditional religions in contemporary Tanzanian society', Mukandala et al. (eds), *Justice*, pp. 97-113.
[82] Felicitas Becker, 'Südost-Tansania nach dem Maji-Maji-Krieg. Unterentwicklung als Kriegsfolge?,' Becker and Beez (eds), *Maji-Maji*, p. 193.
[83] Iliffe, *Modern History*, p. 367; see also Larson, Ngindo, pp. 72-74.
[84] Gwassa, Kinjikitile, n. 8, pp. 215-216.
[85] Mzee Upunda, 5 Sept 1967; Kigonsera Chronicle, 27 Feb 1906; both extracted in Gwassa and Iliffe, *Documents*, pp. 28, 26.
[86] Becker, Südost-Tansania, p. 193.
[87] Mzee Nassoro Hassan Kipungo of Makata Liwale, 14 Oct 1967, Gwassa and Iliffe, *Documents*, pp. 29-30; Mzee Abilali Tawete of Luhimba, 10 Apr 1968, Mapunda and Mpangara, *Maji Maji War*, p. 23.

extension of a more organized state apparatus throughout the country, including the ex-rebel areas. The Matumbi did away with the akidas and received a German staff sergeant instead. More importantly, there was also a strengthening of the existing developmental elements in colonial practice at the expense of the extractive practices.

To appreciate this argument we need some background. If we at all associate 'colonialism' with 'development' we usually think of late, post Second World War colonialism with its currency boards and self-confessed development programmes. For quite a while my larger argument has been that development, understood as intended economic and social change, is a much earlier phenomenon: something that emerged from the exigencies of early colonialism.[88] It does not necessarily make colonialism less oppressive and it certainly does not make it less exploitative. Surely development was not the aim of the Germans when they embarked on their colonial adventure in the 1880s; they simply were driven to it. The inner logic of conquest and exploitation made them develop their new possessions. Colonialism meant development for exploitation: resources had to be developed before they could be exploited. This was perfectly clear to the contemporaries; only our later development discourse with its identification of development with 'good' in a moral sense, has lost it. Yet, development was not simply or only a means to exploitation. What makes it possible to regard development as morally good is that it confers justification on the same exploitation it requires. Development can also be seen as a goal with inherently positive and desirable value content: its promise is that if we develop resources and exploit them it will lead to a social process at the end of which awaits something we again call development – Millennium Development Goals, prosperity, or power.

I suggest that colonialism in Tanzania can be understood as having been transformed from 'exploitation without development' to 'development for exploitation' and Maji Maji can be seen as a major factor facilitating the emergence of 'developmental colonialism'. The rebellion and its aftermath gave a final death blow to what remained of the predatory economy. Thereafter, the efforts at colonial development were given much more attention and shaped into a coherent programme. There was no longer any doubt that the colony was to be developed; the question was how and for whose benefit, as there were different lines competing within German colonialism, some favouring German settlers, others plantations and African cash crops production. I would argue that what Maji Maji did was that it very much accelerated the shift from a basically extractive and largely trade-based colonial policy to a more developmental one - developmental in the modern sense of the word, combining intentional intervention with high-sounding purposes. It goes without saying that this it was not a total shift: some elements of the developmental regime were there right from the beginning; some elements of the extractive mode, especially the widespread use of plain force in labour recruitment, lingered on. Yet by and large, German colonialism went into the developmental mode much earlier than is generally recognized, and the British fitfully carried it onwards.

Development and neglect

How then does it fit into this argument that the South of Tanzania is still so underdeveloped, or understood as such, and the recovery from Maji Maji has been so

[88] Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*, esp. ch. 4.

uneven? Two elements offer an answer. Firstly, policies are crucially dependent on how they are implemented, or not implemented, in practice. When colonialism went into a more developmental mode, the southern areas – largely those in one way or another connected with Maji Maji – were left outside the developmental drive and were broadly neglected. During the British colonial period, the neglect only deepened. The British in general were much less disposed to developing Tanganyika as their colonial possession than the Germans had been. There was much less pressure from the centre, and development initiatives locally in the South became crucially dependent on single officials and their changing whims. And they changed often; Liwale district, for instance, had 27 district commissioners during the first 26 years of British rule.[89] The neglect – and the administrative unattractiveness - has continued to these days. That is, here I agree with the thesis of colonial and postcolonial neglect, and some of its origins can paradoxically be traced to Maji Maji, which at the general level contributed so much towards a more active developmental policy.

Development in this context means the construction of railways and roads, the introduction of new crops and cultivation methods, the extension of missionary and colonial education, and the improvement of rudimentary health services. In the South, devastation apparent in the immediate aftermath of Maji Maji seemed to provide little potential for such efforts. There had been a plan to build a railway across the South from Kilwa to Lake Nyasa, paralleling those that were constructed from the coast to Kigoma and Arusha. It was scrapped by the Germans and never revived by the British. The neglect has continued long into the postcolonial period. A proper all-weather road from Dar es Salaam to Mtwara has been under construction in bits and pieces for some 30 years and is yet to be finished.[90] No systematic introduction of new cash crops was ever attempted after the ill-fated German cotton efforts – the cashew economy started to grow only in the 1930s and it was entirely market-led, spurred by intensifying demand from India.[91] Much of the education and health care was left to the missionaries in the South. The missionaries, including the Germans, returned, but missionary activities remained concentrated in a relatively few strongholds over a vast area.

Secondly, part of the answer can be found in a host of other, only partially, if at all, policy-related factors which affect the workings of societies. The Southern underdevelopment is no *sui generis*; the difference between the rest of the country is that of degree and not of kind. Despite colonial and postcolonial development efforts, most of Tanzania, a few pockets of affluence notwithstanding, remains underdeveloped or impoverished; the South may not even be the worst part.[92] The

[89] For the German period, see Koponen, *Development for Exploitation*; for the British period, see Gus J. Liebenow. *Colonial rule and political development in Tanzania: the case of the Makonde*. Nairobi, 1971. For Liwale district, see Roderick P. Neumann, 'Africa's Last Wilderness: Reordering Space for Political and Economic Control in Colonial Tanzania', *Africa*, 71, 2001, , p. 660.
[90] S. Mesaki and J. Mwankusye, 'The saga of the Lindi-Kibiti road: political ramifications', Seppälä and Koda (eds), *Periphery*, pp. 58-74.
[91] A history of the cashew economy in Tanzania remains to be written. I have collected some source materials and hope to be able to write it.
[92] If one looks at today's regional and district statistics, those of the South are not necessarily among the absolutely poorest in the country. In 2005, the Southern districts were at the very bottom only in under-five mortality, though this excluded Songea and Mbinga. For a poverty headcount, only Lindi Rural and Nantumbo are placed among the bottom 20 districts. See Tanzania, *Poverty and Human Development Report 2005*, Dar es Salaam 2005, p. xiv.

postcolonial development interventions have not been able to overcome the other forces that produce effects to the contrary of the proclaimed aims. Partly this is because though the goals of postcolonial development differ from those of colonial development the means remain much the same. Although the ideology of colonial development is now duly condemned and transcended, many of its forms continue to be relied upon in differing guises. For instance, building infrastructure – one of the basics of colonial development – continues to be necessary for economic development; but it does not automatically lead to it. It can also lead to intensified exploitation without development, depending on the broader socio-economic context in which it takes place.

One of the most striking differences between the rebel area as it was then and as it is now is that almost half of it has been emptied of local people and human life. Where Ngindo and other people lived in settlements of varying size, where caravans of porters travelled along well-established trade routes, and where the *maji* message was spread, there is now the Selous Game Reserve.[93] With its 55,000 square kilometres it is not only the largest wildlife reserve in Tanzania, but also in Africa, and one of the largest protected areas in the world. Its former inhabitants have been moved away and resettled. A huge chunk of 'wilderness' has thus been created. Roads are blocked in the middle of nowhere and the places surrounding the vast area have been turned into peripheral cul-de-sacs. Formerly closely interacting and settled peoples such as the Ngindo and the Pogoro are effectively separated – the former were pushed to the Liwale side, the latter to the Mahenge side. While the Selous is off-limits to local people and is advertised as one of last 'remaining' wild areas in Africa, it is far from empty and little if anything there is 'original'. It is accessible to people with enough foreign exchange. Its northern edge is reserved for 'common' tourists with cameras, and more lodges are being built for them. The area south of Rufiji is the economic mainstay of the reserve. It has been devoted to lucrative trophy hunting of big game, divided into hunting blocks and rented to mostly foreign hunting companies in a complicated web of business, patronage and outright corruption.[94]

The creation of the Selous was a long drawn-out process, extending over almost 80 years. Maji Maji was one but decisive moment in it.[95] Although the first, small game reserves were established north of Rufiji by the Germans as early as 1896, the reserve was expanded only gradually to its present size. The major extensions were carried out by the British from the 1930s to the 1950s. They stemmed from many motivations. The colonial game officers tried first to protect the elephant populations and, when they recovered, control their increasing numbers. The colonial administrators continued to experience the Ngindo as difficult to administer, 'especially with regard to tax collection'. And colonial medical authorities were concerned with apparent outbreaks of sleeping sickness. From the early 1930s onwards, the authorities realised that elephants multiplied rapidly. A drive started to eliminate them along the coast and corral them towards the west while trying to

[93] Named after the British officer and naturalist Fredric Courtney Selous, who was killed and buried there during the First World War.
[94] It is extremely difficult to get reliably documented information on the workings of the hunting block system. My understanding is based on personal interviews with actors in the wildlife sector.
[95] I follow Gordon Matzke, 'The Development of the Selous Game Reserve'. *Tanzania Notes and Records*, 79/80 (1976), 37-48; ibid, *Wildlife in Tanzanian Settlement Policy: The Case of the Selous*. Syracuse, N.Y., 1977; and Neumann, Africa's Last Wilderness, pp. 641-665. None of these, however, emphasize the role of Maji Maji.

prevent them from wreaking havoc on people's shambas. A 'voluntary' relocation of the inhabitants would have facilitated this but most refused. Pressure was put on them by gradually extending the borders of the reserve while leaving the people therein unprotected. Many moved on their own. The game officers came to the conclusion that both human and animal interests were best served by the creation of a big enough uninhabited area, and the administrators agreed from their own point of view. When a sleeping-sickness outbreak occurred nearby in the early 1940s it gave the Provincial Commissioner a pretext to go forward with his total evacuation plan. He confessed to the belief that the 'only solution for the betterment of Liwale district and its people [was] *its elimination*'. Although the implementation of the plan was slow and poor, thousands were officially relocated to concentrations on both sides of the reserve. Thousands others 'vanished in the night' before the government lorries came.[96] One of the places wiped off of the map was Madaba, emptied in 1945. Thus the ground was cleared for a major extension of the Selous. It was left to the postcolonial government in the 1960s and 1970s, with foreign exchange revenue in mind, to complete the job by adjusting the borders.

The story would have been very different without Maji Maji. Scholarly opinions differ as to whether the area teemed with wildlife earlier, or whether there rather was a scarcity of wildlife, and if so, whether it was a temporary one caused by devastating panzootics or a more permanent feature. There is no doubt, however, that predators greatly increased in numbers after the suppression of Maji Maji decimated the population and scattered the survivors.[97] In the Matumbi Hills, 'before the war the population was very dense and it was very difficult to find a piece of land on which to grow food … Now, alas, you see only bush everywhere.' Ngindoland also suffered a three-year famine when people went into hiding and were unable to cultivate. The Ngindo probably were some 50,000 before the rebellion. They had been mostly living along the fertile river valleys, which left most of the land unsettled. They were also used to moving their homesteads relatively frequently. But their presence in strategic locations obviously kept wildlife and tsetse at bay, and the decimation of more than half and the dispersal of much of the rest of the human population in the Maji Maji aftermath opened the way for man-eating lions, growing hordes of elephants and the advancing tsetse fly. While Maji Maji probably was the major blow, its effects were exacerbated by the requisitioning of porterage, labour and food by the warring European armies during their subsequent mutual war, less than ten short years after Maji Maji. Many Ngindos, again, abandoned their homesteads and moved into the bush. Wild animals and flies regained the initiative.[98]

I have argued above that one of the forces of underdevelopment in the South has been colonial and postcolonial neglect. This can also been seen as a blessing in disguise; paradoxically, it has also protected some of the major natural resources of the South. There still seems to be much land and much forest in the South. Newcomers are often surprised at the extent of uninhabited space playing the 'symphony of green foliage

[96] The quotations are from: Acting District Officer, Liwale, to Provincial Commissioner, Southern, 22 Jan 1935; Provincial Commissioner, Southern, to Chief Secretary, 21 Nov 1945 (emphasis in the original); and District Commissioner, Liwale, to Provincial Commissioner, Southern, 7 June 1944, as quoted by Neumann, Last Wilderness, pp. 656, 657.
[97] Cf. Neumann,'Last Wilderness', p. 654; and Matzke, *Wildlife*, pp. 60 ff.
[98] Mzee Kiango 5 Sept 1967, Gwassa and Iliffe, *Documents*, p. 28; Crosse-Upcott, The Ngindo, pp. 454-456; Gwassa, Outbreak, p. 393; Matzke, *Wildlife*, pp. 16 ff..

and blue sky', particularly during the wet season.[99] Of course, few if any places and forests are 'intact' in the sense that they would have remained untouched by human influence. The forests near settlements and roads have long been used for domestic purposes and commercial logging of the most valuable species has been a long-standing practice. A recent inventory classified most forests in Liwale and Tunduru districts as 'degraded' and those in Rufiji, Kilwa and Nachingwea districts as 'heavily degraded'. But compared with the rest of the country, the southern regions from Rufiji to Lindi and Mtwara and Tunduru in Songea are relatively well forested. Southern Tanzania is in fact home to some of the largest remaining stands of *miombo* woodland in whole of Africa. *Miombo* with its dominating shortish *Brachystegia-Julberdarnia* species may seem modest to a layperson's eye but it contains many commercially valuable trees, while the coastal forests of the South are of great biodiversity importance.[100]

Now this long neglect, originating from the time of Maji Maji, is coming to an end: only 60 kilometres of the Dar es Salaam – Mtwara road remains unpaved. This means that the protection provided by neglect is coming to an end as well. The global biofuel boom increased the value of land even in Tanzania. More than 640,000 ha of land had been transferred to foreign investors for production of biofuels, much of it in Lindi and Mtwara regions which are regarded as most promising for biofuels.[101] The demand for African timber has considerably increased during the last years, especially from China, and the logging frontier is moving down to the South. The way the timber trade is presently organized brings little benefit to local people or the Tanzanian state. The value chain leaves the local harvester with hardly one per cent of the export price. Most of the logging is illegal and evades taxes and royalties. According to the calculations, only 4 % of the revenues due to the state are actually collected. Officials at all levels are involved in relations of patronage and bribery with businessmen. This new system of extractive exploitation has been greatly facilitated by infrastructure development, especially the opening the Mkapa Bridge over Rufiji in 2003. The effects of the logging boom have been greatest in Rufiji and Kilwa districts.[102] Further South they have been less felt, and some of the pressure may have been temporarily relieved by the global economic crisis. When the road is there and the easy areas elsewhere have been exhausted, however, there is little doubt that the remaining Southern forests will be targeted again.

Conclusion

There are many features in Maji Maji which we do not and probably will never know and understand. Its nature, causes and consequences are justifiably seen in many different ways, and as our 'power' requirements change so do our interpretations and assessments. The monolithic 'statist' interpretations are eroding and giving way to a

[99] Clement Gillman's 1936 description, as quoted in Matzke, *Wildlife*, pp. 16-17, is still valid,.
[100] More detailed reliable quantitative information is not available. A forest inventory was undertaken in 11 districts, including Rufiji, Kilwa, Lindi, Nachingwea and Tunduru, in 2005 by a team of Forconsult at the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation of the Sokoine University of Agriculture, but the estimates of the inventory have been suspected as exaggerated.
[101] The figures are from a study of the Dar es Salaam-based Land Research and Resources Institute, as reported by *The Citizen*, 24 July 2008, when the issue was debated in the Parliament.
[102] Details of timber trade are documented in the major study of Simon A.H. Milledge, Ised K. Gelvas and Antje Ahrends, *Forestry, Governance and National Development: Lessons Learned from a Logging Boom in Southern Tanzania*. Published by TRAFFIC, Dar es Salaam, 2007, esp. pp. 35 ff.

postcolonialist predilection for seeing Maji Maji as a contingent collection of local uprisings and struggles. It has been the broad argument of this article that this is not the only possible way of reinterpreting Maji Maji. I have suggested that it can also be understood as a socio-religious movement, manifesting itself in a chain of struggles interconnected under the *maji* umbrella. In this view, Maji Maji appears as a loose and internally differentiated mass movement which emerged from a confluence of extreme colonial exploitation along with the ferment of new spiritual ideas springing from an ancient water cult. Its most remarkable feature was its search for an anti-colonial connection, in the guise of the advent of a God of the 'Black People'; and what millenarian or apocalyptic tones it may have had sprang from the social and political configuration of the early colonial system of exploitation. More tentatively and speculatively, I have also suggested that the movement may have acquired its basic nature rather late and continued to develop along with the unfolding events: the crucial incubation period may have been the few weeks' interregnum from the first 'disturbances' at the Matumbi Hills to onset of the systematic colonial military backlash, including the first heady weeks of rebel military successes. Its nature seems to have changed from a more broad-based social movement to a more political and strategic one when it was exported from its primary core areas to the secondary zones in South-West and North. There *maji* became more a symbol of a political alliance. Its brutal suppression led not only to a terrible loss of human life but a fundamental rethinking of cultural and political values.

The consequences of Maji Maji were as contradictory and varied as it was itself. It facilitated the spread of new ideas and taught some healthy disrespect towards hyperbole in politics.[103] It contributed to the emergence of a new, more active and developmental colonial policy but neglected those areas which participated in it, leaving them outside the developmental drive. After more than 100 years, the areas involved recovered but very unevenly, and the partial protection lent by the neglect of Southern natural resources is coming to an end. Where Maji Maji failed the independence movement triumphed; but the postcolonial policies have been unable to solve the basic dilemmas of development and exploitation. Their dialectics continues. While colonial exploitation is now duly condemned and transcended, many of its main means in colonial development continue to be relied upon, and the consequences may be much the same. In today's political and economic context in the South of Tanzania, new infrastructure does not seem to lead to economic development but rather to intensified exploitation of natural resources without their development.

Maji Maji failed partly because of its spontaneous and *ad hoc* nature, while the independence movement won because of its organization and discipline; but also the international environment and the possibilities allowed by it were entirely different. In any case, one can argue that *maji* was bound to fail because it was based on promises the major ones of which had no credence in the material world – they could be falsified all too manifestly. But to prove it took a terrible toll. Combining the lessons of Maji Maji with those of the subsequent development history of Tanzania, one can perhaps suggest that if it is harder to fight poverty and underdevelopment than foreign rule, it is not only because the mechanisms are more subtle and the agents are more

[103] Cf. Ebrahim Hussain's play *Kinjikitile*, which, far from being nationalist exaltation is best to be seen as a subtle allegory of Nyerere and his flawed promise of *ujamaa*, as suggested by M. M. Mulokozi, in his presentation in Maji Maji Conference, 4-5 August 2007, University of Dar es Salaam.

difficult to identify but also because it is so difficult to judge in advance whose promises will turn out to be hollow and what it will take to find this out.