

## **THE RACE TO LAKE CHAD OR WHITE MEN'S 'SPORTING TOURS' IN WEST AFRICA, C. 1900–1902**

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### **1. THE HERO**

Although the Berlin conference of 1885 is said to have paved the way for the partition of Africa by the colonial powers, the situation on the ground remained vague and unclear for decades. According to the deal, each colonial claim had to be realized by 'waving the flag' in the territory that was claimed to be under the control of a certain colonial power, in addition to getting the signatures of the local kings and potentates. However, flags could only be delivered if one marched to a capital, and treaties had to be signed by the rulers themselves. Although the colonial powers – be it the French, the British or the German – had established a firm presence at several points along the African coast, the hinterland was more or less untouched. Thus, instead of painting the map of Africa in different colours, each colonial power had to send troops into the interior of its claimed possession to realize its claim. However, some parts of the African hinterland were unclaimed by any particular colonial power, which led to a race between two or even more colonial missions in their attempt to be the first to reach the ruler's court, and get his signature to a treaty which would close the territory to future competition from other colonial powers. One of these 'races' occurred around the beginning of the twentieth century, when French, British and German colonial missions tried to reach Lake Chad. Although the diplomats in Europe had divided the Central Sudan into French, British and German spheres of interest, nobody really knew how the future borders were to be drawn. In addition, there existed two major African states in the region, the Sokoto Caliphate and Rabeh's state in Borno, who not had been asked about their points of view. Thus, to solve the 'problem' and to deal with the local rulers, the colonial powers sent their troops, the French Triallieur Senegalaise, the British Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) and the German Schutztruppen, to deal with the situation. Between 1898 and 1903, the French, British and Germans fought their way towards Lake Chad, divided the spoils of war among themselves and established their rule of the

territories that had been designated to them, according to the various deals in Europe.

Among those men who participated in the conquest of the greater Lake Chad region, several of them were almost immediately hailed by the colonial lobby as heroes. For the French, their Commander Lamy was to become a martyr: he died in the Battle of Kuseri against Rabeh in 1900. For the British, again, the question of making heroes of those soldiers who participated in the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate was more complicated. British forces were at that time engaged in numerous wars, the two most well known being the war against the Mahdists in the Nilotic Sudan (which ended with Kitchner's victory at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898) and the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), a war that did not produce any heroes. However, the man who was the architect of the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate, Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard, certainly saw himself as a hero – he had won 'the race to Nikki' (the capital of Borgu) in 1894, was the creator and commander of the RWAFF and, after 1900, the High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Yet Lugard was different from his French or German counterparts: when on leave back in England, he did not dress in uniform but wore a civilian's suit.

For the German colonial lobby, the conquest of northern Cameroon produced at least one hero: Hauptmann Hans Dominik. He and other German officers engaged in the conquest of Adamaua (northern Cameroon), such as Hauptmann Cramer von Clausbruch and Oberleutnant Radtke, can be seen as the archetype of the 'white' conqueror: fearless, shameless, and brutal. Whereas British colonial forces would always try to apply a defensive tactic by forming a square, repelling enemy attacks, and thereafter slowly start their approach (or engage in a bombardment of a town), the German officers would choose the frontal charge against the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

The German hero of the conquest of the Cameroon hinterland invented himself through his writings. A forerunner was the semi-official *Mitteilungen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten*, the annually published journal of the German Colonial Office. Official reports by the officers in charge of the various expeditions were usually published verbatim, and other colonial journals, such as the *Koloniale Rundschau* and the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitschrift* would quote them extensively. A positive, heroic image of the conquerors was thus created through the articles in these journals, one where fearless German officers and their African

<sup>1</sup> On German colonial rule in northern Cameroon, see A. Wirz, *Vom Sklavenhandel zum kolonialen Handel: Wirtschaftsräume und Wirtschaftsformen in Kamerun vor 1914* (Zürich 1972); Monika Midel, *Fulbe und Deutsche in Adamaua (Nord-Kamerun) 1909–1916: Auswirkungen afrikanischer und kolonialer Eroberung* (Frankfurt am Main 1990); Holger Weiss, 'The illegal trade in slaves from German northern Cameroon to British northern Nigeria', *African Economic History* 28, 2000: 141–197.

troops engaged in a fearless attempt to increase the glory of Germany and were perceived of as being the spearheads of Western civilization. Their counterparts in northern Cameroon were the Muslim rulers of Adamaua, often described as fanatics or notorious slave dealers. The story presented in the German colonial journals was thus one where German officers were engaged in a 'just war', namely the imperial attack against the slave trade.

Apart from the journals, several German officers wrote personal accounts of their 'adventures' in northern Cameroon. One was Oscar Zimmermann's *Von Campo zum Busch* (1909). The second part of Zimmermann's book deals with the so-called Wute-Adamaua expedition led by the German military commander Hauptmann von Kamptz in 1898–1899. It is a typical heroic account of a march and an engagement far away in the 'wilderness' of Africa, namely the conquest of the city of Tibati. The outline of the story was typical of the 'conquest phase' of the colonial period in Africa: a small imperial force of some 12 German officers and 325 African soldiers on a glorious mission to 'open-up' trade routes. Against them was one of the 'mightiest' African rulers (or, this was the way the Lamido of Tibati was portrayed in the account), who could send thousands of men onto the battlefield. Not surprisingly, Zimmermann's account was a success-story. The engagement of von Kamptz' troops outside Tibati on 11 March 1899 was a short affair. After the first attack by the Lamido's troops, the German troops crushed the defenders' line outside the town. Some 300 Tibati soldiers were said to have been killed and, while the German-African troops were looting the town, it was 'accidentally' burned down.<sup>2</sup>

Whereas Zimmermann's book was dealing with the first phase of the conquest, Hans Dominik's book *Vom Atlantik zum Tschadsee* (1908) dealt with the second phase. Dominik's book was to become a kind of a bestseller among colonial circles. The main theme of the book was the account of one man's achievements – Dominik's heroic deeds in the north. The book served two purposes. For one, it clearly showed to a large audience that the hinterland of Cameroon and the so-called *Entenschnabel*, the German territory between the Shari and Logone, had immense strategic, political and economic value. Especially the latter argument was an important one as an earlier scientific investigation, Fritz Bauer's *Die Deutsche Niger-Benue-Tschadsee-Expedition 1902–1903* (1904), had claimed that the north was virtually worthless from an economic point of view. However, it can be claimed that Dominik's second purpose, namely his self-glorification, was even more important. More than in his first book, *Kamerun* (1901), Dominik stood out as the archetype of the colonial hero. Whereas Zimmermann only participated as one among several German officers in von

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<sup>2</sup> Oscar Zimmermann, *Von Campo zum Busch* (1909): 109.

Kamptz' expedition, Dominik was the orchestrator and leader of the rest of the conquest.<sup>3</sup>

Even more than in Zimmermann's text, Dominik's account emphasized the importance of the scrupulous self. Moral considerations were regarded by Dominik as weighting lightly since his enemies would not understand Western ideas and concepts of pity and morals – as he claimed. Instead, Dominik himself would behave as a barbarian, although he would not see any problem in dealing with the 'natives' in such a way. On the contrary, according to his perception, this was the only way to gain respect among them. He followed a motto of creating fear among his counterparts, be it the Muslim rulers or non-Muslim chiefs, so that no native would ever dare to look down on a German or European. In Dominik's view, men like Oberleutnant Radtke, who together with a small force of 47 soldiers had started a private campaign during November 1901, were soldiers whose actions were in line with his own ideals and goals. Radtke attacked a strong FulBe position outside Rei Buba, almost lost the battle, but was able to rout the enemy troops in a final charge and thereafter conquered the town. Dominik reminded his readers that Radtke's dramatic and brutal conquest of Rei Buba earned him, among the Muslim population, great respect but also fear and was reflected in the nickname they gave to him: *sarkin yaki* or 'lord of warfare'.<sup>4</sup>

Dominik himself performed even greater heroic deeds in the north. Together with almost all of the German colonial troops in Adamawa, three German officers and about 90 soldiers and one machine gun, he began the conquest of northern Adamawa in January 1902.<sup>5</sup> On 19 January 1902, he defeated the 8,000 soldiers, both on horse and foot, of Emir Zubeiru of Yola, the ruler of Adamawa in a decisive battle outside the town of Marua. Dominik's account of the battle outside Marua echoes that of the British accounts of the battle of Omdurman. Emir Zubeiru's troops attacked the *Schutztruppen* on three sides, but their charges were repelled – mainly due to the deadly effect of the machine gun. Thereafter, Dominik gave the order for a counter-attack, and the FulBe cavalry withdrew, but not the soldiers, who protected their retreat. After 40 minutes, the battle was over and over 400 'Sikirri' – referred to by Dominik as 'Muslim fanatics' – were dead on the battlefield. After the battle, a massacre followed: all wounded FulBe soldiers on the battlefield were killed by the advancing *Schutztruppen*; no

<sup>3</sup> See also Albert-Pascal Temgoua, *La conquête militaire allemande et son impact sur l'économie de l'Adamaoua: 1899–1906*, *Paideuma* 40, 1994: 67–79.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Dominik, *Vom Atlantik zum Tschadsee* (Berlin 1908): 101.

<sup>5</sup> The fate of southern Adamawa had been sealed by the battle outside Garua in October 1901 when a German force, led by Hauptmann Cramer von Clausbruch, 5 German officers and 117 African soldiers, had defeated the main FulBe force, about 8,000 soldiers, led by the Emir Zubeiru of Yola.

prisoners were taken. Marua was open and the *Schutztruppen* soldiers looted the town.<sup>6</sup>

Much of the time that Dominik thereafter spent in northern Cameroon resembled that of the 'sporting tour' of his British counterparts in Northern Nigeria.<sup>7</sup> He was put in charge of the political and military organization of the German territory, the so-called *Residentur Garua* (German Adamawa) and *Residentur Deutsche Tschadseeländer* (German Borno). His main occupation was to pursue the fugitive Emir of Yola (who is portrayed in Dominik's account as a kind of 'noble but brutal' archenemy) as well as to wave the German flag and to get local rulers to sign treaties. In Dominik's account, the best ways of placing local rulers under German command was to teach them a lesson and to humiliate them. For example, Sultan Djagara of Gulfei was put in prison for some days just to soften him before he was allowed to sign the treaty. On another occasion, he even seems to have 'forgotten' to refer to the chaos he created while he was on trek waving the flag. In October 1902, he left Garua leading a military expedition towards the so-called *Entenschnabel*. Although Dominik pictured his tour as a mere 'safari' in his memoirs, his actions had caused such deep mistrust and instability in the area that Oberleutnant Stieber, who travelled one year later through the region, had to choose another route than the one taken by Dominik since the local population was not willing to provide provisions for him.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. THE DEVASTATOR

When Dominik returned from his sporting trip to the *Entenschnabel*, he expected to be promoted for his heroic achievements and his administrative talent. However, he was met with a bitter surprise: he was to be replaced by Graf Fugger von Glött as Resident and was given orders to immediately return to Germany. Even worse, he was notified that Berlin wanted an explanation from him about British accusations of cruelties against the local population committed by his soldiers in Adamawa and Borno. The local population had in 1902 complained several times

<sup>6</sup> Dominik 1908: 107–112. Only two of the African *Schutztruppen* soldiers had been killed in the battle.

<sup>7</sup> Risto Marjomaa, *War on the Savannah. The Military Collapse of the Sokoto Caliphate under the Invasion of the British Empire 1897–1903* (Helsinki 1998): 239. Many of the British officers who participated in the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate seem to have regarded it as a mere setting for adventure, a great chance for a big-game hunt or the advancement of one's military career. Arguably, however, some also thought it to be a moral and humanitarian duty to crusade against the slave trade.

<sup>8</sup> Dominik 1908; Helmuth Stoecker, Hartmut Mehls & Ellen Mehls, *Die Eroberung des Nordostens*, in: *Kamerun unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft*, Band 2, ed. Helmuth Stoecker (Berlin 1968): 88.

about Dominik and his soldiers to the British Residents in Northern Nigeria, and when these accusations reached the Foreign Office in London, a secret note was sent to the German ambassador in London in August 1902: Berlin was about to face a political and diplomatic scandal. The memorandum presented by the British government painted a grim picture of Dominik's behaviour in the hinterland:

Most serious reports have recently reached the High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria of Lieutenant Dominik's cruelty in his dealings with the natives during his conduct of the Garua expedition. These reports, which have been received not only from native sources but from responsible British officials, were corroborated by Lieutenant Dominik's own statements made in the presence of officers in His Majesty's service and point to the conclusion that his policy has been to carry fire and sword through the country, that the natives were forced to provide cattle, horse and labour without payment and that captives and hostages were practically reduced to slavery and given to 'friendly' natives. All loot taken was divided according to the number of pairs of ears brought in and the number of cartridges expended. As women's ears were found to be included, another method of checking the number of men killed was afterwards adopted. Lieutenant Dominik's entry into Yola on March 3<sup>rd</sup> last is described by eyewitnesses as an almost painful sight; he had come twenty five miles without a stop. The ivory which he brought was carried by men from Marua, who, although weak and thirsty, were flogged along by soldiers accompanying the expedition.<sup>9</sup>

Even worse, influential British journals, such as Edmund Morel's *West Africa*, openly criticized German colonial policy in the Cameroonian hinterland, accusing German rule of having brought nothing but ruin and disorder, "leaving ruined villages, death, and desolation in its trail."<sup>10</sup> The German government informed the British that it would investigate Dominik's case and, after his return to Germany, Dominik had to explain himself in front of a tribunal. Governor Jesco von Puttkamer, however, came to the rescue of his most trusted officer, and declared in a statement that the British should be the last ones to criticize a German officer for cruelty and accused the British of having committed similar atrocities against the Boers in southern Africa. In Puttkamer's opinion, the British accused an icon and a champion of Western humanity and civilization: "Dominik ist, so lange ich ihn kenne, der bis jetzt überall bei den Eingeborenen beliebteste Offizier ... Und dieser durchaus und gediegene Offizier soll sich mit einem Mal in einen entmenschten Wüterich verwandelt haben? Schwer glaublich."<sup>11</sup> Dominik was portrayed by von Puttkamer as the archetype of the 'new hero' – he was educated and civilized but also brave, fearless and faithful. Most importantly, however, was that Dominik was the man whom he could send on a 'mission

<sup>9</sup> Bundesarchiv – Berlin/Licherfelde [BArchB] R175F FA 1/75, FO-Anklage gegen Dominik, 1902: 213bp (back page) – 214fp (front page): Memorandum from the Foreign Office, 6.8.1902.

<sup>10</sup> *West Africa*, January 1902, quoted in Stoecker et al. 1968: 88.

<sup>11</sup> Statement by Governor von Puttkamer, 10.11.1903, quoted in Midel 1990: 201.

impossible' and who was capable of completing it, i.e., to lead military expeditions into the unknown interior of the colony with a handful of men or to put down uprisings or regional troubles effectively with little cost and loss of his own troop's lives. Not surprisingly, Dominik was not found guilty by the court and was able to return to Cameroon, where he was put in charge of the station in Jaunde (Yaounde). There he continued to serve until he was wounded on a military expedition and died on his way back to Germany in 1910.

However, as Monika Midel has underlined, the British accusations against Dominik were true, and Puttkamer was most certainly aware of the actions of his officer. In an order signed 13 April 1904, he strictly forbade the use of Dominik's methods for counting enemies killed in battle and military actions:

[A]bgeschnittene Gliedmassen zwecks Feststellung der Zahl der im Kampfe gefallenen Gegner durch die Soldaten vorzeigen zu lassen [, sowie] planloses Verwüsten von Farmen und Abbrennen von Dörfern, sowie Zusammenschiessen fliehender Menschen vermögen wohl einen Augenblickserfolg hervorzurufen, schlagen aber dem Lande so tiefe Wunden, dass die Folgen einer derartigen Kriegsführung häufig erst in jahrelanger schonendster Verwaltung auch nur einigermaßen ausgeglichen werden können.<sup>12</sup>

Dominik's trial in Berlin 1903 was never made public. The situation in northern Cameroon, as well as the actions of the German military commanders, were hailed in the pro-colonial press in their usual terms. In fact, Cameroon was soon forgotten as problems mounted in German Southwest Africa and German East Africa.

In 1908, however, northern Cameroon and Dominik became a hot issue for a while in Germany. Dominik had published his second account of his heroic deeds in Cameroon, *Vom Atlantik zum Tschadsee*. The book contained a description of his actions in Marua and Madagali during the pursuit of Emir Zubeiru and his followers. Zubeiru and his followers had retreated to the village of Pataka after the defeat outside Marua in 1902; he sent calls to the various *lamidos* (emirs) in Adamawa urging them to continue the fight against the infidels and called upon the *malams* (Muslim scholars) to declare a *jihād* and to recruit martyrs for his cause. Especially in Marua, where the inhabitants had felt the effects of the German sack of the town, Zubeiru's call seemed to have received much backing. The situation was therefore tense when Dominik and his troops arrived in Marua. Part of the court of the German-imposed new lamido of the town backed Zubeiru and the deposed lamido, and the new lamido turned to Dominik and denounced the pro-Zubeiru camp. Dominik had eighteen of them condemned to death after a brief trial and all of them were hanged on 27 July 1902.<sup>13</sup> Zubeiru, again, was

<sup>12</sup> Order by Governor von Puttkamer 13.4.1903, quoted in Midel 1990: 201.

<sup>13</sup> Dominik 1908: 215; Stoecker et al. 1968: 86–87; Martin Z. Njeuma, The Usumanuya system, radicalism and the establishment of German colonial rule in northern Cameroon, 1890–1907, *Paideuma* 40, 1994: 124.

able to flee once more and moved with his troops towards Madagali. When Dominik entered Madagali in early August 1902, Zubeiru had already fled. Angered, Dominik accused Lamido Bakari of Madagali of conspiracy and supporting Zubeiru; he then put him before a drumhead court martial and had him executed.<sup>14</sup>

Dominik's brutal actions in Marua and Madagali were condemned in the radical and liberal German press. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* argued that, instead of hanging, Lamido Bakari should have received a reward for being faithful and loyal to his overlord.<sup>15</sup> Once again, Puttkamer defended the actions of his officer – this time in his memoirs which were published in 1912.<sup>16</sup> However, in 1902 Puttkamer had already commented adversely on Dominik's methods. Dominik had informed Puttkamer about the trials in Marua and Madagali and underlined the need to pursue a tough policy in the north:

Wie nötig, wie aber auch durchschlagend erfolgreich das allerdings sehr scharfe Eingreifen der Station in der Folge war, das dem Lamido von Madagali und 8 Marua-Grossen standgerichtlich das Leben kostete, beweist die vollkommene Vernichtung Siberus und vor allem der Tod der beiden grössten Lamidos Nord-Adamauas, die unter der seitens der Station ausgesprochenen Acht, in ihren Ländern, wohin sie nach der Vernichtung Siberus flüchteten, ergriffen und hingerichtet wurden. Bei einer fortgeschrittenen, muhammedanischen Volk wie den Fullahs entschieden ein Beweis unbedingter Unterwerfung.<sup>17</sup>

In his reply to Dominik, Puttkamer hailed the firm actions of his officer.<sup>18</sup> However, Dominik's memory seems to have been rather selective about his actions in Madagali. According to local FulBe oral traditions, the 67-year old Lamido Bakari had fled when Dominik was approaching Madagali, but was caught and brought to Dominik. Dominik declared that Bakari was too old to rule and proposed that he resign in favour of his son, Hamman Yaji. However, Dominik's proposal was not a popular one among the Madagali FulBe, and being afraid of German retaliation, Bakari evacuated the town. This action proved unsuccessful as Dominik brought the refugees back to Madagali. Bakari, too, was found, but when he was approaching Madagali, the German troops opened fire – despite Dominik's earlier promise that Bakari's life would be spared if he returned to the town. According to oral testimonies, "Bakari was shot in cold blood, and

<sup>14</sup> Fritz Bauer, *Die Deutsche Niger-Benue-Tschadsee-Expedition 1902–1903* (Berlin 1904): 77; A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *Adamawa: Past and Present* (London 1969), 60; Stoecker et al. 1968: 87.

<sup>15</sup> *Frankfurter Zeitung* 10.6.1908, quoted in Stoecker et al. 1968: 87.

<sup>16</sup> Jesco von Puttkamer, *Gouverneursjahre in Kamerun* (Berlin 1912): 42.

<sup>17</sup> BArchB RKoIA R1001/3302, 206bp: Report by Dominik (1.10.1902).

<sup>18</sup> BArchB RKoIA R1001/3302, 216bp: Puttkamer to Dominik (18.12.1902).



then apparently beheaded, for when the townspeople returned that evening the head was found severed from the body.”<sup>19</sup>

### 3. THE CIVILIZING MISSION AND THE SPORTING TOUR

About a decade after Dominik’s death, the ghost of the devastator returned – or at least, there was an attempt made in Moscow to do so. For some reason – it is not yet quite clear why – there was an attempt made by some (unknown) officials in the Comintern, the Third Communist International, to gather material about the conditions in the former German colony. As stipulated in the Treaty of Versailles, Germany had lost all its colonies and Cameroon as well as all other German colonies, which were taken over by the League of Nations but ruled by various colonial empires as mandated areas. In the case of Cameroon, most of it became a French mandate. The document in the Moscow archive consists of a rather lengthy carbon copy of a report on the political, economic and social conditions in Cameroon. Reference is made to the French, the British and the former German colonial regimes.

What is evident from the Moscow document was the hypocrisy of the various colonial regimes – or, at least that is the way the author of the document was presenting the case. Although all colonial regimes based their mandate on their alleged ‘civilizing mission’, the document – as well as later academic research – highlights the vast gap between the heroic rhetoric in the procolonial lobby in Germany and the dark side in the colony. Dominik, the hailed hero and example of white civilized supremacy, was remembered by the local population first and all for his ‘civilizing’ actions, namely for being one of the many Kurtzes of the Dark Continent.<sup>20</sup>

Under the headline ‘German policies towards the indigenous people (*Eingeborenepolitik*)’, a three-page long outline of Dominik’s atrocities was presented:

Eine besondere Rolle in der deutschen Eingeborenepolitik spielten die sogenannten ‘Strafexpeditionen’, durchgeführt von der Deutschen ‘Schutztruppe’, unter den berüchtigtsten der Kolonialsadisten, Hauptmann Dominik. Unter dem Vorwand, eine Faktorei sei im Inneren des Landes bestohlen, oder es sei eine Karawane irgendwie von den Eingebornen behelligt, wurde eine solche Strafexpedition nach dem betreffenden Ort losgelassen und nicht nur des angeschuldigte Dorf, sondern die ganze Gegend wurde von Dominik und seinen Horden dem Erdboden gleichgemacht. Nachdem alle

<sup>19</sup> James H. Vaughan, The context, in: *The Diary of Hamman Yaji. Chronicle of a West African Muslim Ruler*, ed. and introduced by James H. Vaughan and Anthony H. M. Kirk-Greene (Bloomington and Indianapolis 1995): 9.

<sup>20</sup> On Mr. Kurtz – the ‘Lord of Darkness’ in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and the horror of the Congo Free State, see Adam Hochschild’s outstanding *King Leopold’s Ghost. A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (London 1999).

Männer von Greis bis Knaben, abgemetzelt wurden, trieb man die Frauen und Kinder, wie Vieh zusammen, um sie irgendwohin weit entfernt von ihrer bisherigen Wohngegend zu transportieren. Vorher noch wurden alle ihre Hütten in Brand gesteckt. Nicht nur, dass die Frauen, unter dem Augen der weissen Anführer, auf eine nicht wiederangehende Art von den vertierten Schwarzen Soldaten geschändet wurden, ob auch noch nachher physisch ermordet, wurden ihnen fast immer die Kinder unterwegs weggenommen und im nächstbesten Fluss ertränkt. Dominik pflegte diese Barbarei damit zu 'begründen', dass das Schreien dieser Kinder die ganze Expedition, die durch feindliche Siedlungen marschieren müsse, besonders nachts, gefährde. Dominik liebte es besonders bei Vollstrecken von Todesurteilen in jenen Bezirken, die unter direkter Militärverwaltung standen, die ganze Eingeborenenenschaft, einschliesslich Kinder und Frauen, Zeuge dieser Exekution [sic] sein zu lassen. Nachdem er, hoch zu Ross, das Urteil und seine 'Begründung' verlesen und verdolmetscht gelassen hatte, gab er den Befehl die Opfer vor den Augen ihrer versammelten Stammesgenossen oft auch direkte Angehörige, aufzuhängen. Zur Sicherheit war immer eine Kompanie Schutztruppe zu solchen Exekutionen [sic] kommandiert. Die Leichen durften mehrere Tage, oft bis zur Verwesung, von den Galgen nicht heruntergenommen werden.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps his most detestable act of uncivilized behaviour was when he punished a certain Chief called N'Gila, who had protested against the use of the whip by some merchants when they were negotiating the price of goods. However, no actions were taken by the colonial authorities and the local people killed the merchant. Yet, killing a white person was an act that Dominik would not and could not leave without punishment:

Dominik liess ihm alle Finger abhacken; vorher wurden alle Häuptlinge der Nachbardörfer nach dem Marktplatz vom Dorfe des N'Gila befohlen, um dieser scheusslichen Prozedur beizuwohnen. N'Gila wurde gezwungen, sein eigenes Fleisch, seine Finger, zu essen. Als er sich weigerte wurden ihm auch noch die Zähne abgehackt; man zwängte ihm seine abgehackten Glieder in dem Mund und N'Gila spuckte sie wieder heraus. Jetzt stürzte sich Dominik rasend vor Zorn, wie eine wilde Bestie, auf dem wehrlosen gemarterten und hieb ihm eigenhändig mit dem Säbel den Kopf ab. Der Kopf und die übrigen Körperteile mussten vor dem Augen der versammelten Häuptlinge abgekocht werden, es wurden Bananen unter ihnen verteilt und Dominik zwang sie, das Fleisch des Erschlagenen mit Bananen zu essen. Die Liste ähnlicher Scheusslichkeiten, dieses vertierten Menschen im Dienste des deutschen Imperialismus im Vorkriegskamerun ist damit weder erschöpft, noch bildet sich eine Ausnahme. Die deutsche Eingeborenenpolitik und ihre Ausführungsorgane waren alle mehr oder weniger solche Dominiks. So grauenhaft die obengeschilderten 'Heldentaten' eines Dominiks dem unbeteiligten Aussenstehenden auch erscheinen mögen, ist doch an ihrer Richtigkeit nicht im geringsten zu zweifeln; die Eingeborenen von Edea, von Kribi, von Ebolowa und von überallher in Kamerun, wissen von ihren Besatzamtännern, von Krücke, Geelen u.a. ähnliche zu berichten.<sup>22</sup>

But was Dominik a unique or a typical representative of the white colonial officers in Africa in the early twentieth century? If one scratches the surface of

<sup>21</sup> RGSAPI (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History) fond 532 opis 4.69, Kamerun (Carbon copy of a report in German on the political situation in Cameroon, no author, no date), filed as 69/No 43/Neger/5Ex 2.VI.33), pp. 47–48.

<sup>22</sup> RGSAPI fond 532 opis 4.69, Kamerun, p. 49.

both British and French colonial history in West Africa, similar ‘heroes’ pop up. One was the infamous French military mission under the command of Voilet and Chanoine, the Mission Afrique Centrale (MAC). This mission ploughed its way through the Sahel savannah, laying waste to the region it travelled through and, ultimately, shooting a French Officer who had come to relieve Voilet and Chanoine of their command. The outcry concerning the atrocities the MAC raised in France were not because of the uncounted African villages destroyed and human beings killed but because a French Officer had been shot.<sup>23</sup> In similar ways, the Mission Peroz travelled a few years later along the same route as the MAC and caused similar sufferings to the local population with no outcry.<sup>24</sup> The British conquest of ‘their’ protectorate was again remembered as a ‘promenade’ rather than a cold killing. Only one British officer, F.P. Crozier, was frank enough to admit what had happened after the battle outside Kano and the storming of the town: a ‘real’ slaughter as the Mounted Infantry, the British troops, attacked and killed anyone whom they saw inside and outside the town.<sup>25</sup>

In retrospect, the idea of humanitarian actions and a civilizing mission conducted by European colonial officers during the early period of the colonial era seems rather strange. However, one could argue that the behaviour of the officers, Dominik among others, was much in line with the common European mood of the time. Several historians claim that a shift in the meaning of ‘manliness’ occurred during the nineteenth century. This shift was manifested through a cult of the emphatically physical instead of earlier – softer – ideals of moral strenuousness and Christian manliness. Whereas the earlier ideal had highlighted serious earnestness and integrity, the new ideal was to centre around robust visibility and toughness. Clean manliness and good form were to mark the ‘new’ man, instead of ideals of godliness and education, or, as Ronald Hyam as argued: “Manliness (...) moved first from chapel to changing-room, into an ‘overpowering phil-athleticism’, and then into almost a militarization of the public school after 1901.”<sup>26</sup> Studies about the boarding school in Britain as well as the boys’ schools in the Nordic countries have highlighted the new paradigm of sport and body culture, while others have examined the changing concepts of masculinity and the (male) hero during the imperial age.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See further Sven Lindqvist, *Utrota varenda jävel* (Stockholm 1992): 229–239.

<sup>24</sup> Holger Weiss, *Babban yunwa. Hunger und Gesellschaft in Nord-Nigeria und den Nachbarregionen in der frühen Kolonialzeit* (Helsinki 1997): 160.

<sup>25</sup> F. P. Crozier, *Five Years Hard* (London 1932): 136–137. See further Marjomaa 1998: 178–179.

<sup>26</sup> Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality. The British Experience* (Manchester 1992): 72.

<sup>27</sup> See further A. N. Wilson, *The Victorian* (London 2002); Henrik Meinander, *Towards a Bourgeois Manhood. Boys’ Physical Education in Nordic Secondary Schools 1880–1914*

In the German Empire, for example, unification had been achieved by the bullet not the pen and resulted in the mental crisis of the 1848 liberal bourgeois generation. Authors such as Heinrich Mann have described the mentality of the new Germany as ‘*Untertanentum*’ (servility) where Prussian military values permeated society.<sup>28</sup> Although German militarism and conservatism were mocked by liberals and leftist intellectuals,<sup>29</sup> the ‘common’ people seemed to have hailed the military pomp and circumstance. The heroes of the day were the military commanders of the war of unification, the Emperor in his uniform – and a group of individuals who made possible Germany’s bid for a place in the sun. As in Britain and France, the ‘colonial adventure’ produced a group of heroes who embodied the ‘new’ manliness, namely the solitary ‘conquistador’, who fought bravely against the ‘barbarians’ far away in Africa and Asia. Military characters such as Hermann Wissmann and Lothar von Trotha<sup>30</sup> made refractory ‘natives’ feel the power and might of the invincible German troops and paved the way for Germany’s colonial dreams. For the colonial lobby at home, earlier colonial characters such as explorers and adventurers – Gerhard Rohlfs, Gustav Nachtigal or Carl Peters – would be hailed but they belonged to an older generation of the ‘founding fathers’ of the German colonial adventure. The colonial dream was to be realized through military might, not through mercantile momentum.<sup>31</sup>

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(Helsinki 1994); Jens Ljunggren, *Känslornas krig. Första världskriget och den tyska bildningselitens androgyna manlighet* (Stockholm/Stehag 2004), Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes. British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London 1994).

<sup>28</sup> Heinrich Mann, *Der Untertan* (1918).

<sup>29</sup> An outspoken critical voice was the satirical journal *Simplicissimus*.

<sup>30</sup> Major Wissmann was the commander of the German forces which quelled the so-called Arab rebellion in German East Africa in 1888–1890 whereas General von Trotha was responsible for the annihilation of the Herero during the war in German South-West Africa in 1904–1906.

<sup>31</sup> On German colonial dreams, see further Helmuth Stoecker (Hrsg.), *Drang nach Afrika* (Berlin 1991).