



## 'A Thoroughly Pugnacious Settler'

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observer, as his earlier reports from south-western Ethiopia (another remote and contested area), also printed in *Sudan Intelligence Reports*, show. Despite these problems of editing, what does the manuscript itself tell us, as a source, of the pre-war history of the peoples of this area?

The Sudan–Uganda border area east of the Nile on the eve of the First World War may have been remote from centres of power, but it could scarcely be described as ‘untouched’. Throughout the diary there are constant references to those who preceded – and remained beyond the reach of – formal government: the expeditions of hunters and traders whose trails criss-crossed this region, linking it with the trading centres of East Africa and south-western Ethiopia. Their presence was felt not only in the evidence of their caravan tracks but in the languages used as a medium of communication: Swahili, ‘Nubi’ and ‘bastard Arabic’. Securing suitable interpreters was a constant problem throughout the expedition: quite literally as the interpreters were frequently handcuffed or (as in one photograph) tied with ropes around their necks to prevent them escaping. A relay of languages was needed as interpreters interrogated other interpreters: from Arabic to Acoli or Swahili to Karamojong and back again.

Kelly at first attempted to draw a distinction between the Sudan and Uganda’s methods of government. He thoroughly disapproved of Uganda’s administration by punitive patrol. Yet the distinction was more apparent than real. His own escort of Sudanese soldiers tended to shoot at distant groups of natives without provocation (‘the usual civilising Sudanese way’), and Kelly adopted his soldier’s habit of referring to the natives as *abid* (slaves). His disapproval of Ugandan methods turned to acceptance. He noted that the people on the Uganda side of the border had a better idea of ‘what is due by them to the Government’ than those on the Sudan side. He was impressed, in spite of himself, by the militarization of the Acoli: each hill chief seemed to have his own bugle and drum band to greet the expedition and speed it on their way.

The boundary commission attempted to delineate an international border that would coincide with tribal boundaries. In this they failed, owing to the fact that there were no discrete tribes. A useful comparison could have been made with similar experiences elsewhere in the Sudan: not only Major Gwynn’s better documented survey of the Sudan–Ethiopian border, but internal attempts to define tribal boundaries as well. The colonial enterprise of defining peoples by delineating their territory was not a preoccupation of international commissions only.

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### ‘A THOROUGHLY PUGNACIOUS SETTLER’

*Koloniale Konflikte im Alltag: Eine rechtshistorische Untersuchung der Auseinandersetzungen des Siedlers Heinrich Langkopp mit der Kolonialverwaltung in Deutsch-Ostafrika und dem Reichsentschadigungsamt.* By NORBERT AAS and HARALD SIPPEL. Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies Series, 1997. Pp. 179. DM 29.90, paperback (ISBN 3-927510-50-5) (ISSN 0178-0034).

In 1928, Heinrich Langkopp, a thoroughly pugnacious former German settler from Tanganyika walked into a government building in Berlin and threatened to blow up himself and his hostages if he did not immediately receive reparations for all that he had lost in the First World War. In essence this act was typical of Langkopp. It was this belligerent attitude that characterised his life in Germany and Africa, and which comes across most clearly in the book, which, though it bears a title more befitting a social history, is in effect a discussion of colonial jurisprudence in the guise of a biography.

In 1898, at the age of 22, Langkopp emigrated to the South African Republic where, in referring to bounty collected in a commando raid against the Tswana, he discovered 'how one can do business in Africa' (p. 23). Following the Boer War, Langkopp returned to Germany whereafter he found employment in Tanganyika as a labour recruiter for the railway line which was to be built between Dar es Salaam and Ujiji. After dabbling in cattle trading, labour recruitment, butchering and business, Langkopp set about establishing himself as a settler farmer near Iringa in the Hehe highlands of South-western Tanganyika. To supplement his income Langkopp continued recruiting labour.

Langkopp's recruiting methods were unconventional to say the least. Claiming to be operating on behalf of, and with the mandate of, the colonial state, Langkopp engaged the services of sub-contractors. These men, believing that they had been employed by the colonial state, then travelled to local leaders in outlying areas to demand labour for the construction of government works. When Langkopp was confronted by the authorities about these practices, he denied all knowledge of the affair and allowed the arrested sub-contractors to be sentenced to three months in chains and 25 lashes. In later years Langkopp described the beauty of this scheme in his autobiography.

In Iringa, Langkopp's life appears to have revolved around physical violence, and access to and control of labour. Unfortunately this aspect of colonial life is not developed, even though, of the eight court cases in which he was involved at the time, six dealt specifically with the issue of labour, and four of the cases involved violence initiated by Langkopp. In 1912, Langkopp assaulted the highly respected Jamadar bin Mohamed, who was in his sixties at the time, and who in the past had been a local government official. Initially Langkopp was found guilty, though on appeal he was cleared of the charges by the court which stated, 'no White person need tolerate physical contact by a Native, and... is entitled to violent defence' (p. 49). After the First World War Langkopp was deported to Germany where he came into conflict with the Weimar Republic on account of the payment of war reparations.

Unfortunately, the book tells us little about African history, being instead the summary of a number of court cases that effectively document the life of an extremely aggressive man. A chance has been missed to use the cases to explore everyday life in the Hehe Highlands, and the reader is continually left wondering about the role and views of Langkopp's wife (who only met him two days before they were betrothed in an arranged marriage), of fellow settlers and of colonial officials, let alone, local overseers and the local populations. Reading the text one cannot help but feel that this material could have been developed to a far greater extent. Be that as it may, the book is sure to provide an introduction and ample source material for those seeking to develop and write a social, political or economic history of the Hehe Highlands between 1880 and 1920.

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## FAMINE IN THE CENTRAL SUDAN

*Babban Yunwa. Hunger und Gesellschaft in Nord-Nigeria und den Nachbarregionen in der frühen Kolonialzeit. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der späten vorkolonialen Verhältnisse und der Einwirkung der Kolonialmächte.* By HOLGER WEISS. (Bibliotheca Historica, 22). Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1997. Pp. 480. No price given, paperback (ISBN 951-710-056-6).

*Babban yunwa* means 'big hunger' in Hausa, the *lingua franca* of the Central Sudanic regions of northern Nigeria, southern Niger and northern Cameroon,