

AFRICA AND THE WEST
A Documentary History

SECOND EDITION



VOLUME 1

From the Slave Trade to Conquest, 1441-1905

WILLIAM H. WORGER

NANCY L. CLARK

EDWARD A. ALPERS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2010

mass and charged the left of MacDonald's brigade. The distance was about 500 yards, and, wild as was the firing of the Soudanese, it was evident that they could not possibly succeed. Nevertheless, many carrying no weapon in their hands, and all urging their horses to their utmost speed, they rode unflinchingly to certain death. All were killed and fell as they entered the zone of fire—three, twenty, fifty, two hundred, sixty, thirty, five, and one out beyond them all—a brown smear across a sandy plain. A few riderless horses alone broke through the ranks of the infantry...

Thus ended the battle of Omdurman—the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians. Within the space of five hours the strongest and best-armed savage army yet arrayed against a modern European Power had been destroyed and dispersed, with hardly any difficulty, comparatively small risk, and insignificant loss to the victors...

C. Steevens on the balance sheet of conquest

[Steevens] Over 11,000 killed, 16,000 wounded, 4,000 prisoners—that was the astounding bill of dervish casualties officially presented after the battle of Omdurman. Some people had estimated the whole dervish army at 1,000 less than this total; few had put it above 50,000. The Anglo-Egyptian army on the day of battle numbered, perhaps, 22,000 men; if the Allies had done the same proportional execution at Waterloo, not one Frenchman would have escaped...

By the side of the immense slaughter of dervishes, the tale of our casualties is so small as to be almost ridiculous. The first official list was this. British troops: 2 officers ... killed, 7 wounded; 23 non-commissioned officers and men killed, 99 wounded. Egyptian army: 5 British officers and 1 non-commissioned officer wounded; 1 native officer killed, 8 wounded; 20 non-commissioned officers and men killed, 221 wounded. Total casualties: 131 British, 256 native = 387.

64 ♦ Voices of resistance (1893-1905)

The establishment of European rule was never a straightforward matter, particularly because of the determined resistance of Africans. Such resistance meant that the process of conquest sometimes stretched over several decades. It also meant that indigenous people developed new ways of combining, often across regional and ethnic boundaries, in their determination to overthrow foreign rule. In an oral account recorded in the 1930s, Ndansi Kumalo, an Ndebele chief born around 1860 and a subject of Lobengula, describes what happened when Rhodes and Lobengula disagreed about the terms of the treaty signed in 1888; Lobengula believing that he had only extended mineral rights to the diamond magnate, whereas Rhodes thought that the entire territory had become his personal fiefdom (as symbolized in the name he gave the country, Rhodesia). The events that Kumalo narrates took place in 1893 and ended with the British conquest of the Ndebele and the presumed suicide of Lobengula. Still, the British had to fight another even more violent war in 1896, ultimately dynamiting the caves in which African resistors fought to the last.

In an account from German Southwest Africa (present-day Namibia), Hendrik Witbooi calls on a German officer to respect the autonomy of the local inhabitants. Witbooi, a leader of the Nama people, had fought against German encroachment in the early 1890s and formed an alliance with

his long-term enemies soon concluded (after mans, he continued to to heavy taxation an anything but a conq In 1904, when he wa The Germans respon the desert, sealed the in forced labor camp column. He was not case in 1900 and on

Some Africans complained to the E was treating them. I like Lugard, who co chartered companie Brass merchants.

Jan Smuts, wh believed motivated British greed for B 20,000 British dead dren incarcerated i cal treatment, qui mostly among peo

In German I practical form for on these new plan their own needs) I boundaries. From groups, assumed i large-scale resista a third of the colc by a powerful an European arms August 1905. Aj supported Africa Kinjikitile, as syr

11. A. Margery Pe ed., *Nama/Nam* versity African Select Docume D. J. C. Smuts ace by W. T. S Salaam: East

s about 500 yards, and, d not possibly succeed, their horses to their ut- and fell as they entered d one out beyond them roke through the ranks

ver gained by the arms st and best-armed sav- destroyed and dispersed, oss to the victors . . .

-that was the astound- man. Some people had d put it above 50,000. o men; if the Allies had vould have escaped . . . asualties is so small as : 2 officers . . . killed, ided. Egyptian army: cer killed, 8 wounded; asualties: 131 British,

articularly because of of conquest sometimes ed new ways of com- to overthrow foreign ief born around 1860 ugula disagreed about tended mineral rights d become his personal nts that Kumalo nar- and the presumed sui- r in 1896, ultimately

Hendrik Witbooi calls a leader of the Nama med an alliance with

his long-term enemies, the Herero, in order to strengthen the forces of resistance. Though Witbooi soon concluded (after the death of many Nama women and children) a peace treaty with the Germans, he continued to complain about the way in which he and his people were treated, subjected to heavy taxation and forced labor. The refusal of the Germans to treat the people of Namibia as anything but a conquered and servile people eventually caused Witbooi to rise again in rebellion. In 1904, when he was eighty years old, he led a revolt of Nama and Herero against colonial rule. The Germans responded by waging a war of extermination in which they drove their opponents into the desert, sealed the wells behind them so that they were without water, and placed the survivors in forced labor camps, where most died. Witbooi was killed leading an attack on a German supply column. He was not alone. A 1911 census recorded only half as many Nama living as had been the case in 1900 and only one-fifth as many Herero as a decade before.

Some Africans fought back with words, as did the Brass traders in the Niger delta, who in 1895 complained to the British government about the unfair way they maintained the Niger Company was treating them. Their letter directly challenges the arguments of exponents of commercial empire like Lugard, who contended that Europeans brought economic development to Africa and that the chartered companies sought to better the lot of backward people. The British government ignored the Brass merchants.

Jan Smuts, who fought with the Boers against the British, also had little doubt about what he believed motivated British imperialism—it was "the new forces of Capitalism" that he blamed. British greed for Boer gold resulted in the greatest casualty figures of any British colonial war: 20,000 British dead, 7,000 Boer men, and 30,000 Boer women and children (the women and children incarcerated in concentration camps, which, because of poor sanitation and the lack of medical treatment, quickly turned into death camps), and at least 15,000 African fatalities, likewise mostly among people incarcerated as the British pursued a scorched-earth policy.

In German East Africa (present-day Tanzania), the very ways in which imperialism took practical form forced the production of new crops for the export market, and harsh labor conditions on these new plantations (which meant little African land and labor devoted to growing food for their own needs) led rapidly to widespread opposition that, as in Namibia, transcended old ethnic boundaries. From July 1905 until August 1907, Africans from more than twelve different ethnic groups, assumed by German colonial officials of being incapable of working together, organized a large-scale resistance movement covering more than one hundred thousand square miles (or at least a third of the colony). Led by a prophetlike figure, Kinjikitile Ngwale, who claimed to be possessed by a powerful ancestral spirit and to have a war "medicine," maji [water] maji, that could render European arms ineffective, the movement persisted long after the Germans hanged its leader in August 1905. African casualties in the war exceeded 120,000. Still, leaders of movements that supported African independence in the 1940s and 1950s looked back to Maji Maji and its leader, Kinjikitile, as symbols of African defiance of European colonialism.¹¹

11. A. Margery Perham, ed., *The Africans* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936), 69–75; B, Georg M. Gugelberger, ed., *Nama/Namibia: Diary and Letters of Nama Chief Hendrik Witbooi, 1884–1894* (Boston: Boston University African Studies Center, 1984), 117–18; C, C. W. Newbury, ed., *British Policy towards West Africa, Select Documents, 1875–1914, with Statistical Appendices, 1800–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 143–45; D, J. C. Smuts, *A Century of Wrong* (London: Review of Reviews, 1899), issued by F. W. Reitz, with preface by W. T. Stead, 89–98; E, G. C. K. Gwassa and John Iliffe, eds., *Records of the Maji Maji Rising* (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1967), Part 1, pp. 5–6, 8–10, 11–12, 25–26.

*A. Ndansi Kumalo describes the defeat of
Lobengula and the Ndebele, July-December 1893*

... When I first saw a white man I could not make it out and ran away. When we got used to them we would go with goats and sheep and buy European clothing. Later people used to take cattle and barter for beads and blankets.

We were terribly upset and very angry at the coming of the white men, for Lobengula had sent to the Queen in England and he was under her protection and it was quite unjustified that white men should come with force into our country. Our regiments were very distressed that we were not in a fit condition to fight for the king because of the smallpox. Lobengula had no war in his heart: he had always protected the white men and been good to them. If he had meant war, would he have sent our regiments far away to the north at this moment? As far as I know the trouble began in this way. Gandani, a chief who was sent out, reported that some of the Mashona had taken the king's cattle; some regiments were detailed to follow and recover them. They followed the Mashona to Ziminto's people [Victoria district]. Gandani had strict instructions not to molest the white people established in certain parts and to confine himself to the people who had taken the cattle. The commander was given a letter which he had to produce to the Europeans and tell them what the object of the party was. But the members of the party were restless and went without reporting to the white people and killed a lot of Mashonas. The pioneers were very angry and said, "You have trespassed into our part." They went with the letter, but only after they had killed some people, and the white men said, "You have done wrong, you should have brought the letter first and then we should have given you permission to follow the cattle." The commander received orders from the white people to get out, and up to a certain point which he could not possibly reach in the time allowed. A force followed them up and they defended themselves. When the pioneers turned out there was a fight at Shangani and Bembezi.

I was in the Matoppos and had not recovered from smallpox. I did not see Lobengula at this time for we were isolated. We sent a message to the King asking for permission to join with his forces; he agreed and we reorganized our regiment. The King agreed that we might come out of quarantine and told us to go to Gwelo's to fetch some of his cattle, but we could not; we were too weak. Only fourteen of our regiment went to try and recover the King's cattle and on the way they heard that they were too late. The white men were there and had seized the cattle. These fourteen incorporated themselves in Imbizo's regiment and fought at Bembezi, and two were killed. The next news was that the white people had entered Bulawayo; the King's kraal had been burnt down and the King had fled. Of the cattle very few were recovered; most fell into the hands of the white people. Only a very small portion were found and brought to Shangani where the King was, and we went there to give him any assistance we could. I could not catch up with the King; he had gone on ahead. Three of our leaders mounted their horses and followed up the King and he wanted to know where his cattle were. They said they had fallen into the hands of the whites, only a few were left. He said, "Go back and bring them along." But they did not go back again; the white forces had occupied Bulawayo and they went into the Matoppos. Then the white people came to where we were living and sent word round that all chiefs and warriors should go into Bulawayo and discuss peace, for the King had gone and they wanted to make peace. The first order we got was, "When you come in, come in with cattle so that we can see that you are sincere about it." The white people

said, "Now that you What could we do? We did so.

I cannot say what we could hear was that not be that his body was powerful and a great Zambezi. He was just the jealousy and cur ginning Lobengula had suffered loss and my relatives were killed towards them despatch them and but their wives said, It all arose from a di

So we surrendered our usual lives and all the valuable things; they took our cattle and goats. The white men We were treated like animals, their clothes and bags taken from them. In fact, the white men rather than bear it. I like a fire that suddenly breaks out in salt water in the water, branded and taken away. They said, "It is no good King gone, we had to be separated and tried to escape. Our weapons were so many that we could not beat them.

I fought in the battle to approach. We were forced by the natural force. They—the white men

I remember a few hundreds of us; the we had a good charge at the first charge, but they were too strong and we were quite a lot. I do not know how, we took him away. Ma

said, "Now that your King has deserted you, we occupy your country. Do you submit to us?" What could we do? "If you are sincere, come back and bring in all your arms, guns and spears." We did so.

I cannot say what happened to Lobengula, but the older people said, "The light has gone out. We can do no more. There is nothing left for us but to go back to our homes." All that we could hear was that the King had disappeared alone; no one knew where he went. It could not be that his body, alive or dead, should pass into the hands of his enemies. Our King was powerful and a great king; he was invincible against other tribes. He ruled right up to the Zambezi. He was just; and if, unfortunately, many innocent men were killed it was through the jealousy and cunning of others who sent false reports which the King believed. At the beginning Lobengula was loved by everybody, but later bitterness arose in the families which had suffered loss and there was a good deal of dissension. I remember a tragedy when two of my relatives were killed. They were at the King's kraal and he was annoyed with them. He fired towards them with a shot-gun to frighten them and the warriors took it as a sign to despatch them and clubbed them to death. When news came to their kraal the children fled, but their wives said, "Let us die with them." The King sent them a message that it was mistake. It all arose from a dispute over cattle.

So we surrendered to the white people and were told to go back to our homes and live our usual lives and attend to our crops. But the white men sent native police who did abominable things; they were cruel and assaulted a lot of our people and helped themselves to our cattle and goats. These policemen were not our own people; anybody was made a policeman. We were treated like slaves. They came and were overbearing and we were ordered to carry their clothes and bundles. They interfered with our wives and our daughters and molested them. In fact, the treatment we received was intolerable. We thought it best to fight and die rather than bear it. How the rebellion started I do not know; there was no organization, it was like a fire that suddenly flames up. We had been flogged by native police and then they rubbed salt water in the wounds. There was much bitterness because so many of our cattle were branded and taken away from us; we had no property, nothing we could call our own. We said, "It is no good living under such conditions; death would be better—let us fight." Our King gone, we had submitted to the white people and they ill-treated us until we became desperate and tried to make an end of it all. We knew that we had very little chance because their weapons were so much superior to ours. But we meant to fight to the last, feeling that even if we could not beat them we might at least kill a few of them and so have some sort of revenge.

I fought in the rebellion. We used to look out for valleys where the white men were likely to approach. We took cover behind rocks and trees and tried to ambush them. We were forced by the nature of our weapons not to expose ourselves. I had a gun, a breech-loader. They—the white men—fought us with big guns and Maxims and rifles.

I remember a fight in the Matoppos when we charged the white men. There were some hundreds of us; the white men also were many. We charged them at close quarters; we thought we had a good chance to kill them but the Maxims were too much for us. We drove them off at the first charge, but they returned and formed up again. We made a second charge, but they were too strong for us. I cannot say how many white people were killed, but we think it was quite a lot. I do not know if I killed any of them, but I know I killed some of their horses. I remember how, when one of their scouts fell wounded, two of his companions raced out and took him away. Many of our people were killed in this fight. I saw four of my cousins shot.

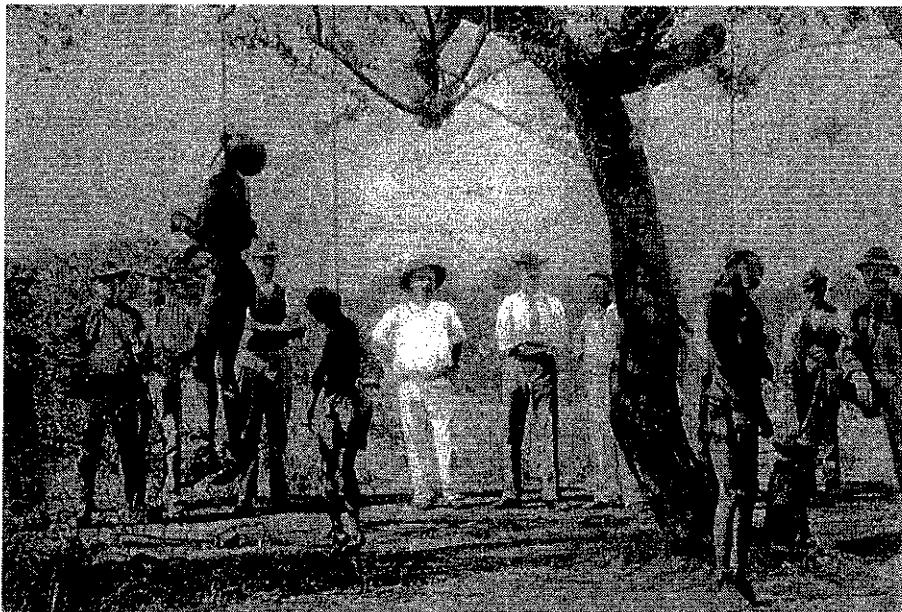


FIGURE 24 Olive Schreiner, a founder of the modern feminist movement in Great Britain, used this photograph of employees of Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company lynching Shona men in 1896–97 as the frontispiece of her account of colonial atrocities in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Olive Schreiner, *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*, 1897.

One was shot in the jaw and the whole of his face was blown away—like this—and he died. One was hit between the eyes; another here, in the shoulder; another had part of his ear shot off. We made many charges but each time we were beaten off, until at last the white men packed up and retreated. But for the Maxims, it would have been different. The place where we have been making the film is the very place where my cousins were killed.

We were still fighting when we heard that Mr. Rhodes was coming and wanted to make peace with us. It was best to come to terms he said, and not go shedding blood like this on both sides. The older people went to meet him. Mr. Rhodes came and they had a discussion and our leaders came back and discussed amongst themselves and the people. Then Mr. Rhodes came again and we agreed at last to terms of peace.

So peace was made. Many of our people had been killed, and now we began to die of starvation; and then came the rinderpest and the cattle that were still left to us perished. We could not help thinking that these dreadful things were brought by the white people.

B. Hendrik Witbooi, letter to Theodor Leutwein, August 17, 1894

Your Highness, dear Major Leutwein!

I received your long letter late last night. I take it from this letter of yours that you accuse me of various deeds. From this you seem to claim the right to condemn me to death as if I were a common criminal. You seem to try to reason with me by force of guns.



I. You accuse:

II. You claim to as well. You refer to he was quite against present attitude? If

III. You say that right to sell such to the red men, know the death of my great conquerors. I This means that I have no money, nor were they in my hands. This has been a proprietor to these lands. I do not see any other way in which you would you be attacked.

e have been told to
e suffered are now
id attack the Com-

severely punished;
very great, and it is
it we have done this
.. to tell us in what

y is too poor to cul-
get food from other
at which will enable

enin District

n," 1899

of the conflict which
n what may be, per-
e truth will triumph
efforts until they too

t upon by the enemy,
contempt...

characterised by dif-
in 1806, and lasted
ritish policy was one
r unfortunate people
hypocritical ingenu-
n accents which har-
mental philanthropy
ment in order to rep-
s, who were also men

nd period was a feel-
settlers in the Orange
as a result of the Great
iese wild and useless
luable after the Boers

had rescued them from barbarism, and opened them up for civilisation. It was felt that they ought to gleam amongst the jewels of Her Majesty's Crown, notwithstanding the obstacle in the treaties that had been concluded with the Boers. As far as the means were concerned—they were, from the very exigency of inborn hypocrisy, partly revealed and partly concealed; the one differing from the other as light from darkness. The secret means consisted in arming the Kaffir tribes against us in the most incredible manner, and in inciting them to attack us in violation of solemn treaties and promises. If this policy succeeded the real objects and means could be suppressed, and England could then come forward and pose openly as the champion of peace and order, and as the guardian angel of civilisation in this part of the world . . . The British succeeded . . . annexing the Diamond Fields—a flagrantly illegal act . . .

The third period of our history is characterised by the amalgamation of the old and well-known policy of fraud and violence with the new forces of Capitalism, which had developed so powerfully owing to the mineral riches of the South African Republic. Our existence as a people and a State is now threatened by an unparalleled combination of forces. Arrayed against us we find numerical strength, the public opinion of the United Kingdom thirsting and shouting for blood and revenge, the world-wide and cosmopolitan power of Capitalism, and all the forces which underlie the lust of robbery and the spirit of plunder. Our lot has become more and more perilous . . . Every sea in the world is being furrowed by ships which are conveying British troops from every corner of the globe in order to smash this little handful of people. Even Xerxes, with his millions against little Greece, does not afford a stranger spectacle to the wonder and astonishment of mankind than this gentle and kindhearted Mother of Nations, as, wrapped in all the panoply of her might, riches, and exalted traditions, she approaches the little child grovelling in the dust with a sharpened knife in her hand. This is no War—it is an attempt at Infanticide . . .

Nor will a Chamberlain be more fortunate in effecting the triumph of Capitalism, with its lust for power, over us.

If it is ordained that we, insignificant as we are, should be the first among all peoples to begin the struggle against the new-world tyranny of Capitalism, then we are ready to do so, even if that tyranny is reinforced by the power of Jingoism . . .

[W]e now submit our cause with perfect confidence to the whole world. Whether the result be Victory or Death, Liberty will assuredly rise in South Africa like the sun from out the mists of the morning, just as Freedom dawned over the United States of America a little more than a century ago. Then from the Zambesi to Simon's Bay it will be

"AFRICA FOR THE AFRICANDER."

*E. African oral testimonies about the Maji Maji uprising of 1905,
recorded in the 1960s by G. C. K. Gwassa and John Iliffe*

During the [cotton] cultivation there was much suffering. We, the labour conscripts, stayed in the front line cultivating. Then behind us was an overseer whose work it was to whip us. Behind the overseer was a jumbe, and every jumbe stood behind his fifty men. Behind the line of jumbes stood Bwana Kinoo [a German settler named Steinhagen] himself. Then, behold death there! And then as you till the land from beginning to end your footprints must not be seen save those of the jumbe. And that Selemani, the overseer, had a whip, and he was

extremely cruel. His work was to whip the conscripts if they rose up or tried to rest, of if they left a trail of their footprints behind them. Ah, brothers, God is great—that we have lived like this is God's Providence! And on the other side Bwana Kinoo had a bamboo stick. If the men of a certain jumbe left their footprints behind them, that jumbe would be boxed on the ears and Kinoo would beat him with the bamboo stick using both hands, while at the same time Selermani lashed out at us labourers . . .

They [the people] waited for a long period because they were afraid. How could one clan face the Germans alone and not be wiped out? There had to be many.

It is true they were ruled for a very long time before they rose in arms against the Germans. The problem was how to beat him really well. Who would start? Thus they waited for a long time because there was no plan or knowledge. Truly his practices were bad. But while there were no superior weapons should the people not fear? Everywhere elders were busy thinking, "What should we do?"

He [Kinjikitile] was taken by an evil spirit one day in the morning at about nine o'clock. Everyone saw it, and his children and wives as well. They were basking outside when they saw him go on his belly, his hands stretched out before him. They tried to get hold of his legs and pull him but it was impossible, and he cried out that he did not want [to be pulled back] and that they were hurting him. Then he disappeared in the pool of water. He slept in there and his relatives slept by the pool overnight waiting for him. Those who knew how to swim dived down into the pool but they did not see anything. Then they said, "If he is dead we will see his body; if he has been taken by a beast or by a spirit of the waters we shall see him returned dead or alive." So they waited, and the following morning, at about nine o'clock again, he emerged unhurt with his clothes dry and as he had tucked them the previous day. After returning from there he began talking of prophetic matters. He said, "All dead ancestors will come back; they are at Bokero's in Rufiji Ruhingo. No lion or leopard will eat men. We are all the Sayyid Said's, the Sayyid's alone." The song ran: "We are the Sayyid's family alone. Be it an Mpogoro, Mkichi, or Mmatumbi, we are all the Sayyid Said's." The lion was sheep, and the European was red earth or fish of the water. Let us beat him. And he caught two lions which he tethered with a creeper, and people danced likinda before those two lions. They remained harmless. Then word of this new man spread afar . . .

Njwiywila meant secret communication such as at a secret meeting. At that time if you listened to Njwiywila you paid one pice. That was the meaning of Njwiywila. The message of Njwiywila was like this: "This year is a year of war, for there is a man at Ngarambe who has been possessed—he has Lilungu. Why? Because we are suffering like this and because . . . we are oppressed . . . We work without payment . . . This Njwiywila began at Kikobo amongst the Kichi, for they were very near Kinjikitile. It spread to Mwengei and Kipatimu and to Samanga. But the people of Samanga did not believe quickly. It spread quickly throughout Matumbi country and beyond. In the message of Njwiywila was also the information that those who went to Ngarambe would see their dead ancestors. The people began going to Ngarambe to see for themselves . . .

It was like a wedding procession, I tell you! People were singing, dancing, and ululating throughout. When they arrived at Ngarambe they slept there and danced likinda, everyone in his own group. The following morning they received medicine and returned to their homes . . .

The song of M language. He used t around sprinkling t under very strict di

And so on as they r

And so on as they a

During that ti each one was told type of likinda. Th meant "what do yo bullets," and they u and it meant that th ing, that is military or destroy him . . .

The District (He could if necess Johannes had prev sible.) Fr. Johanne in which the conde gaol were therefore soon as Fr. Johann to undertake these who had already re be baptised before

I to rest, of if they
we have lived like
a stick. If the men
boxed on the ears
at the same time

now could one clan

s against the Ger-
they waited for a
re bad. But while
elders were busy

about nine o'clock
outside when they
to get hold of his
want [to be pulled
water. He slept in
e who knew how
said, "If he is dead
s we shall see him
about nine o'clock
the previous day.
All dead ancestors
will eat men. We
yid's family alone.
ne lion was sheep,
e caught two lions
e two lions. They

At that time if you
a. The message of
garambe who has
nd because . . . we
kobo amongst the
a and to Samanga.
ughout Matumbi
n that those who
g to Ngarambe to

ing, and ululating
kinda, everyone in
to their homes . . .

The song of Mpokosi [a representative of Kinjikitile] during likinda was in the Ngindo language. He used to take his fly-switch and his calabash container for medicine, and he went around sprinkling them with medicine. It was like military drilling with muzzle-loaders, and under very strict discipline. Thus Mpokosi would say:

"Attention!
We are at attention.
What are you carrying?
We are carrying peas.
Peas? Peas of what type?
Creeping peas.
Creeping?
Creeping?"

And so on as they marched, until Mpokosi ordered:

"Attention!
Turn towards Donde country [inland].
(The warriors turned).
Turn towards the black water [the ocean].
(They obeyed).
Destroy the red earth.
Destroy!
Destroy?
Destroy?"

And so on as they advanced as if to shoot.

During that time they were dressed in their military attire called Ngumbalyo. Further, each one was told where to go for this type of drilling. Thus, all gathered at Nandete for this type of likinda. The song was entirely in riddles. Thus the question "what are you carrying?" meant "what do you want to do?" The answer "we are carrying peas" meant "we are carrying bullets," and they used peas in their guns during drilling. "Creeping peas" are those that creep, and it meant that they were marching to the battlefield. "Creeping, creeping"—that was walking, that is military marching. "Destroy the red earth"—that meant tear the European apart or destroy him . . .

The District Officer let Fr. Johannes know that the sultans were to be hanged today. He could if necessary see for himself whether any of them wished to be baptised. (For Fr. Johannes had previously sought permission from the District Officer to baptise them if possible.) Fr. Johannes therefore went into the gaol, or rather into the passage between the gaols, in which the condemned men were lodged. They had just received sentence, and things in the gaol were therefore animated. Each still had commissions for his dependents to carry out. As soon as Fr. Johannes set foot in the place, some of those he knew came to him and asked him to undertake these commissions, which he said he was prepared to do. Then he asked some who had already received a certain amount of instruction at Peramiho, "Do you not wish to be baptised before you die?" They asked, "Can we do that?" When they were assured of this,

many raised their hands and called out, "I want to be baptised, and I, and I!" A few who had not as yet received any instruction asked what this was all about. Fr. Johannes told them that if they would only be quiet he would explain it to them. Mputa [a paramount chief] himself then demanded silence, and Fr. Johannes instructed them briefly in the essential truths and on baptism and contrition. Then he asked who wanted to be baptised. Thirty-one men declared themselves ready for baptism, among them Sultan Mputa. Seventeen men, among whom were numbered a few Muslims, wished to know nothing of baptism. Despite exhortation, Mpambalyoto said briefly, I will die a pagan. Msimanimoto, a chief from the neighbourhood of Peramiho, also wanted to know nothing of baptism, for he protested that he would die blameless, he had done no wrong. Even those who had taken part in the attack on Kigonsera offered themselves for baptism, although they had not previously received instruction. Some —Fratera, for example—showed themselves especially pleased that they could still be baptised. One asked whether he would truly rise again. The District Officer had allowed half an hour, but not all had been baptised when this expired, so that he extended it slightly. When all were baptised, they were called out in threes and their hands bound. Then they were led out to the gallows, which were alongside the gaol, outside the boma. Some took leave of Fr. Johannes with the words, "Until we meet again." As he went out, Mputa, who showed genuine contrition, said in his bad Swahili, "But Kinjala led me astray."

The mood of the condemned men varied. Some cheered themselves with the fact that they could at least all die together. Kasembe declared: "Why should we fear to die? My father is dead, my mother is dead; now do I merely follow them." A few began to tremble somewhat as they were called out and bound. Others sat quietly by, and one could see from their behaviour that they were grieved and reluctant to die. On the whole, the business sat lightly on many, who chattered and laughed as at any other time. One asked Fr. Johannes for a pinch of snuff. Since he had none, he applied to Sergeant Leder, who stood watch, to get some from the guard. At this others also wanted snuff, but no more could be obtained. Some began to sing as they were led out. A few, however, cursed the District Officer especially. Mpambalyato declared that Chabruma would soon come to revenge them. Several asked Fr. Johannes to tell their families to bury them themselves, to buy cloth for the purpose and to wrap them in it. Bonjoli flatly demanded that Fr. Johannes should arrange it so that he was not hanged—from now on he would be true. Fratera prayed aloud the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," and said, after he had been instructed, that at the end he would pray, "Jesus, Saviour, receive my spirit." For one the affair went on too long. He wanted to be led out before his turn. Fr. Johannes remained in the gaol until all had been led out, exhorting them to prayer and to a sense of contrition.

Thus many found at the end a merciful death, many who otherwise stood in grave peril of being lost eternally. God be thanked for it.

A vast crowd had naturally assembled outside to be witnesses of the "spectacle." At evening the hanged men were buried in a large common grave.

Bibliographic Guide

Norton, Mary Beth, a
Literature, 3d ed. :
to world history, v

Journals

African Affairs
Canadian Journal of A
Imago Mundi: Interna
International Journal
Journal of African His
Journal of Modern Afr
Journal of Southern Afr

Encyclopedias

Africana: The Encyclo
and Henry Louis
New Encyclopedia of
2008.

Maps

The most comprehen
Maps of Africa, 2d ed.
A Resource Guide (L
volume by Richard J
Continent to 1700 ('t

More dated but
Crowder, eds., Histo
Atlas of African Histo
History, rev ed. (Ne

General Histories

The best one-volum
York: Cambridge U