

## KISWAHILI-SPEAKING AFRICANS IN GERMANY BEFORE 1945

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The history of Waswahili in Germany before the end of World War II, their life histories and living conditions have not as yet been subject of scientific research. In the period before the colonial occupation of Africa Africans came to Germany in small numbers voluntarily or as victims of violent abduction (Martin 1993). The Germans were interested in the exotic looks of the foreigners, but did not care about their regions of origin. Africa was the unknown black continent, *terra incognita*, its inhabitants indiscriminately 'blacks' or 'negroes'. Their homelands and ethnic or linguistic identities remained obscure, relevant only to a small group of researchers with an early interest in the continent and its peoples. Concerning the so-called Swahili people from Eastern Africa who came to Germany from the colonial period on one has to keep in mind that until the end of the forties their identities were usually defined by their knowledge of Kiswahili, not by their actual ethnic or linguistic origins. On the next pages some stories are told about Swahili-speaking people from the former colony of German East Africa, now Tanzania, who came to Germany temporarily or permanently and for different reasons left traces in written records, which help us to reconstruct parts of their biographies.

The first numerically significant group of Waswahili in Germany known to us through written sources came to Berlin in 1896 to participate in the 1. German Colonial Exhibition. This exhibition was part of the Berlin Trade and Commercial Fair ('Berliner Gewerbeausstellung'), the first of its kind with numerous colonial exhibitions to follow. Although business was in the centre of interest of the organisers, the people brought over from the different German colonies in Africa and the Pacific were not only supposed to attract a greater audience, but also to help gain the public's support for the colonial enterprise and its expenses. An article in the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* (Finsch 1896:210) put into words the role of the foreigners within the colonial exhibition:

A colonial exhibition would be incomplete ... without living representatives of the tribal groups ... The working committee has therefore ... brought some of our distant compatriots out of the tropics to enable an acquaintanceship to develop which is wanted by both parties. This target, which is not to be underestimated, has been surprisingly successful - at least concerning Africa. No exhibition in Europe has previously managed to unite as many Negro tribes as this one. ... They even managed to convince Massai warriors from the depths around Kilimanjaro to visit the capital of the German Reich. All of these tribes ... arrived with their wives and children too so that in their ... settlements

varied and busy life and action developed, which made a considerable contribution to the audience's amusement <sup>1</sup>

The organisers of the exhibition could engage 103 inhabitants of the so-called German *Schutzgebiete* (protectorates) The men and women signed contracts in which they committed themselves to obey orders of the exhibition managers during a period of eight month against a fixed payment The contracts guaranteed a free journey to Germany and back on deck of a steamer, fourth-class railway ticket, free board and lodging as well as warm clothes In Hamburg they were picked up by a staff member of the foreign ministry and brought to Berlin (Neisser 1897:26)

Through the intermediary of the Imperial Government in Lindi 41 persons from German East Africa were enlisted for the colonial exhibition including 18 Maasai, 21 Waswahili and 2 so-called 'Wakonde-people' (Neisser 1897:25ff) The Waswahili were:

Said bin Halfani, 40 years, smith  
 Sada, his wife Frau, 30 years [Saada binti Abdalla]  
 Arombanile (6) and Kanunu (4), their sons  
 Salim bin Farjalla, 28 years, weaver  
 Yomari, 28 years, carpenter  
 Yuma bin Hassan, 20 years  
 Mohamadi bin Achmed, 22 years  
 Ali bin Batamu, 21 years [Ali bin Matam]  
 Said Mdogo, 17 years [Saidi bin Abdallah]  
 Nassoro bin Saidi, 26 years  
 Issa bin Saidi, 20 years  
 Musa bin Chante, 20 years,  
 Said bin Ismael, 22 years  
 Maschariffa, 24 years, his wife  
 Mpote bin Hatibu, 25 years  
 Mohamadi bin Saidi, 12 years, carpenter's apprentice  
 Msee, 26 years  
 Missikki, 22 years, widow  
 Hassima, 15 years, redeemed slave  
 Aosse, 8 years

In the daytime the Africans stayed in the mock villages, at night members of the different ethnic groups slept in separate buildings, called *Tembe* by the organisers which, because of the raw climate, were equipped with floor-boards and iron stoves. These rooms were not accessible to the public. Only the East Africans bought their own bedsteads to Berlin (Neisser 1897:28). The

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<sup>1</sup> "Eine Kolonialausstellung würde ohne lebende Vertreter der Völkerstämme .. unvollständig sein ... Der Arbeitsausschuß hat daher .. Typen unserer fernen Landsleute aus den Tropen herbeizuschaffen gewußt, um dadurch eine für beide Seiten erwünschte Bekanntschaft zu ermöglichen. Dies nicht zu unterschätzende Ziel ist wenigstens in Bezug auf Afrika überraschend gelungen, denn bis jetzt hat keine Schauausstellung in Europa so viele Negerstämme vereinigt wie diese. ... Sogar weit aus dem Innern am Kilimandscharo hat man kriegerische Massai zu einem Besuche der Reichshauptstadt zu überreden vermocht. Alle diese Stämme sind .. auch mit Frauen und Kindern erschienen, so daß sich in ihren ... Niederlassungen ein wechselvolles geschäftiges Leben und Treiben entwickelt, das zur Unterhaltung des Publikums nicht wenig beiträgt"

official report on the exhibition published in 1897 gives a picturesque description of the efforts undertaken by the organisers to provide adequate provisions for the guests (Neisser 1897: 31ff):

For the first meal of the day there was, according to the particular customs of the tribes, coffee, milk or tea bread rolls, and three eggs each, with the exception of the Massai, who rejected these. Rice, potatoes, corn, batatas, and in addition 1 - 1¼ pounds of beef or mutton for each man made up the rations for the midday meals. The Swahili, who practice the Islamic faith, were given pieces of self-slaughtered mutton or poultry. There were also onions, salt, butter and pepper in considerably large amounts. Several times a week the Swahili received the ingredients for curry, Indian cumin, goldenseal and pepper, which were crushed together. Small pieces of mutton were braised in the curry powder for a short time, then rice or ugali (rice or corn flour) or grated coconut were added to it, and the truly delicious meal was ready. Some meat was often left from the midday meal for the evening. This was then eaten with potatoes or rice. Each man had a bottle of beer and the elders had two. This made up the quantum for the evening drinks. On cold and wet days alcohol was distributed in spoonfuls. The men were able to refresh themselves with two tablespoonfuls, the women with one spoonful each and the children with one teaspoon each of medicinal alcohol or watered-down rum.<sup>2</sup>

During the day the Africans were supposed to play the part of unspoiled natives for the German spectators. After the last gaper had left the exhibition in the evening, the leisure time could be spent at their own pleasure. In the official report it says (37ff):

An interesting picture presented itself in the Arabian hut. Msee, one of the best-looking and most intelligent Swahili boys, who had offered his services as a servant for a long time in the past, was sitting on the top step and playing German folk tunes and couplets - on the violin. The silent observer of such a scene had to try hard to hold back his laughter when in a hoarse voice and in broken German 'Such a very small woman!' or 'Look, this is business!' rang out. They repeatedly sang their native songs, for example the 'Wissmann Song', which is known throughout the whole of Eastern Africa.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Um 10 Uhr fand gewöhnlich die Menageausgabe statt. Am Morgen gab es je nach Stammesgewohnheit zum ersten Frühstück Kaffee, Milch oder Thee, Schrippen und je 3 Eier, mit Ausnahme der Massai, die letztere verschmähen. Reis, Kartoffeln, Mais, Bataten, ferner für jeden Mann 1-1 ¼ Pfund Rind- oder Hammel-, ... bildeten die Rationen der Mittag Mahlzeiten. Den Suaheli, die sich zum mohammedanischen Glauben bekennen, wurden Stücke von selbstgeschlachteten Hammeln oder auch Geflügel zugeteilt. ... Ausserdem gab es Zwiebeln, Salz, Butter und Pfeffer in ziemlich grossen Mengen. Die Suaheli bekamen verschiedene Male in der Woche die Ingredienzen zum Curry, indischen Kümmel, Gelbwurzel und Pfeffer, welches zusammengestampft wird. Mit diesem Currypulver wurde zerschnittenes Hammelfleisch kurz eingesmort, dann Reis- oder Ugali (Reis- oder Maismehl) oder zerriebene Kokosnuß dazugesetzt, und das recht schmackhafte Gericht war fertig. Zum Abendbrot war gewöhnlich noch etwas Fleisch vom mittag übriggeblieben, das mit Kartoffeln oder Reis verzehrt wurde. Für den Mann eine Flasche Bier, für die Obmänner je zwei bildeten das Quantum des Abendtrunkes. An kalten und regnerischen Tagen wurde Alkohol löffelweise ausgegeben; die Männer durften sich an zwei Esslöffeln, die Weiber an je einem Esslöffel und die Kinder an je einem Theelöffel Alkoholmedizin oder verdünntem Rum laben."

<sup>3</sup> "In der Arabertembe bot sich ein überraschendes Bild. Msee, einer der hübschesten und intelligentesten Burschen von den Suaheli, der früher längere Zeit Dienste als Boy gethan hatte, sass auf der obersten Stufe ... und spielte die - Geige - deutsche Volkslieder und Couplets. Der stille Zuschauer solche Scene konnte nur mit Mühe das Lachen zurückhalten, wenn mit heiserer Stimme und in gebrochenem Deutsch ertönte: 'So'ne ganz kleine Frau!' oder 'Seh'n Sie, das ist ein Geschäft!' Vielfach sangen sie auch ihre heimischen Lieder, wie das in ganz Ostafrika bekannte Wissmannlied."

The colonial exhibition was held between May 1 and October 10, 1896 and on April 20th the Swahili and Maasai had arrived in Germany. Considering the long passage on deck it is small wonder that all had bad colds and were coughing. On July 28th Yuma bin Hassan collapsed and was brought into Charité hospital. He didn't recover consciousness and died of pneumonia on August 6th. Shortly before, on July 30th, Salim bin Farjalla had died in the Charité, after he was struck by high temperature and paresis followed by deep unconsciousness. The other Waswahili seem to have survived their stay in Germany with minor diseases which could be cured by the local doctors (Gronauer 1897:47ff).

103 'natives' from different German protectorates also presented an interesting sample for anthropological research and the anthropologist Felix von Luschan was therefore put in charge of the examination and measuring of the foreigners. Remarkable 82 participants agreed to be measured, only 51, however, allowed photographs to be taken (see appendix). The results of the anthropological investigation were summarised in tables and charts (see appendix) which were complemented by short descriptions of each person's physical characteristics and personal remarks such as 'very typical Bantu' ("sehr typischer Bantu"), 'diligent and efficient worker, also reasonably polite and pleasant' ("fleissiger und geschickter Arbeiter, auch sonst verständig, höflich und gefällig") or 'dense, sleepy, possesses none of the liveliness and alertness of other black boys of his age' ("beschränkt, schläfrig, hat garnichts von dem Munteren und Aufgeweckten anderer schwarzer Jungen seines Alters"). In spite of von Luschan's last remark, his characteristics are characterised by a positive attitude towards the Waswahili which markedly contrasts with the extremely negative attitude towards the Dualla from Cameroon (v Luschan 1897:225ff).

Further details about the fate of the Waswahili of the colonial exhibition and their journey back to Africa are unknown. The majority of the 22 persons travelled back without significant incidents. The desire to stay and start a new life in Germany which was wide-spread in the Camerounian and Togolese community, was evidently absent in the Waswahili group. Written documents, however, mention a shoemaker from Berlin who was so sad at the barefootedness of the Africans that he persuaded one of the Swahili boys to become his apprentice after the end of the exhibition (Sippel 1995:55).

Even before the 1st colonial exhibition Swahili-speaking men came to Berlin University to assist German professors in teaching Kiswahili ('Sprachgehilfen') and act as language informants. They were the predecessors of today's lecturers, did the same work then as today, but were not regarded as capable of doing so responsibly. They therefore worked together with a German scholar and were regarded as his assistant. From the late 19th century until the end of World War II several Kiswahili teachers worked in Berlin and Hamburg.

Some of them are known by their names and the year(s) of their stay in Germany only, a minority left behind narratives of parts of their life stories in official documents or even in their own writings.

**Kiswahili teachers in****Berlin** (Reed-Anderson n.d.:48ff.)

Sleman bin Said (1889-1891)

Amur bin Nasur bin Amur Ilomeiri (1891-1895);  
b. 1867 on Zanzibar

Mtoro bin Mwengi Bakari (1900-1905)

Mroni Saleh bin Omer (1907)

Makinyo Makanyaga (1907)

Mdatschi bin Scharifu (1915)

Mohamadi bin Juma (1926)

Bayume Mohammed Hussein (1931-1940)

Juma bin Abdallah (1941-?)

**Hamburg** (Meyer-Bahlburg & Wolff 1986:85-91)

Mtoro bin Mwengi Bakari (1910-1913/14)

Abdallah bin Wazir (1914-1919), b. ca 1875 on

Comoro Islands, d. 1919 in Hamburg

Abdallah bin Muhammed (1919-1921), b.

on Comoro Islands

Hamisi bin Ferhani (1924-1931)

Juma bin Abdalah (1933-1937, 1948/49-1951), b.

1893 in Dar es Salaam, d. 1952 in Hamburg

Amur bin Nasur bin Amur Ilomeiri, was born on Zanzibar Island in 1867 and lived in Germany for four years between 1891 and 1895 (Reed-Anderson n.d.:49). He was employed with Carl Gotthilf Büttner until his death in 1893 and wrote down the story of his life 'for the sake of the presents' ("... um der Geschenke willen", 1894:190) offered by Büttner. The scholar translated Ilomeiri's account into German which was published together with the Kiswahili version in *Anthologie aus der Suahili-Litteratur* in 1894. His narrative is remarkable, because it presents one rare example of the written documentation of an early African experience in Germany. Ilomeiri's first year in Berlin is depicted on eighteen pages, and the German reader learns about his views of all the new things he came to know:

And so I boarded the steam engine, the ship of the dry land. And if someone walks from the port of Hamburg to Berlin, he will be walking for seven days. But by 'land ship' the journey takes five hours. ... When I saw Berlin for the first time I asked how many people there were in this city. And they told me there were one and a half million in this city. ... And I have never seen a boy over the age of six without work. You will see how every one of them has something to do and if anyone has nothing to do you send them away. If they won't go away, they must die of hunger. ... When you rent an empty flat you get it cheap, and if you rent it with furniture then it is expensive. But you get a bed and a sofa and nice chairs, and you also get a carpet in it and water and a toilet, and the servant makes the bed in the morning and sweeps all the dirt out and cleans the blankets and makes everything look nice in the morning. And when you come you see that she has prepared everything and you only have to pay rent every month, 20 to 40 marks and you get coffee and breakfast. ... And it is very cold in Berlin, it is cold for 6 months and for the other six months it is warm. And, as far as the heat is concerned, the cold is better than the heat. And when you feel very hot do not try and take off your clothes, otherwise you will get a cold in your chest and after that you will be ill.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Und so stieg ich in den Dampfwagen, in das Schiff des trockenen Landes, und wenn ein Mensch von dem Hafen in Hamburg bis nach Berlin zu Fuss geht, so wird er sieben Tage gehen, aber mit dem Landschiff reist er in fünf Stunden. ... Als ich zuerst Berlin sah, fragte ich, wie viel Menschen in dieser Stadt wären, und man sagte mir, anderthalb Millionen sind in dieser Stadt. ... Auch habe ich keinen Knaben über sechs Jahren ohne Beschäftigung gesehen; jeden, den du siehst, wirst du sehen, wie er etwas zu tun hat; und wer nichts zu thun hat, den bringt man sogleich auf die Reise, und wenn er nicht auf die Reise gebracht wird, muss er Hungers sterben. ... Wenn du eine leere Wohnung mietest, so bekommst du sie billig, und wenn du sie mit Möbeln mietest, so ist sie teuer; aber du bekommst ein Bett und ein Sopha und schöne

In the first decade of the 20th century Mtoro bin Mwengi Bakari became a rather notorious African celebrity in the German empire.<sup>5</sup> Bakari lived in Berlin from April 1900 on and taught Kiswahili at the Oriental Institute of the University. He was a well-reputed member of the staff who was also popular with his students. In a book with Swahili narratives of travels through Africa translated and published by Carl Velten (1901) we find two chapters written by Bakari and a remark by Velten that Bakari numbers among the most-educated and cultured people in East Africa (*ibid*, foreword). This positive appraisal turned out to be rather short-lived. Bakari's situation deteriorated abruptly in winter 1904/05 when it became known that he intended to marry a German woman, Berta Hilske. He had actually succeeded in obtaining the necessary documents with the aid of the East African officials and the Foreign Ministry which at that time were evidently oblivious to possible consequences of their way of acting as well as devoid of definite instructions concerning mixed marriages on the part of the political authorities.

'With respect to the investigations which took place due to the forthcoming marriage it is hereby certified that Mtoro bin Bakari, lector at the Oriental Seminar, last address: Bagamojo in German East Africa, was born in 1869 in Dunda in Useramo, the son of Mseramo Bakari - deceased - and his wife Sana binti Mhera, now living in Bagamojo, and that nothing is known to us to prevent his forthcoming marriage.'

Der Kaiserliche Bezirksamtman<sup>6</sup>

After the marriage Bakari completely lost the support of Velten and the other colleagues at the university. He was exposed to hostilities, his students booed him and disrupted his lessons. He finally had to leave the university and decided to return to Africa with his German wife. Bakari was hoping that it would be easier to make a leaving for his small family in his native country. When the Bakari and his wife arrived at Tanga, the German authorities, however, refused to give the woman permission to enter the country. Bakari himself would have been allowed to enter, but without his wife which he didn't want to. The colonial authorities in German East Africa were determined not to tolerate marriages between African men and German women (Sippel 1995:127). So on the same ship the Bakaris travelled back to Germany, after the Gouverneur von Götzen had promised to meet the costs.

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Stühle, und du bekommst auch einen Teppich darinnen, und Wasser und ein Closet, und die Dienerin macht Morgens das Bett und fegt allen Schmutz aus und macht die Decken rein und macht alles am Morgen schön, und wenn du kommst, so findest du, dass sie alles bereit gemacht hat, und du hast nur jeden Monat Miethe zu zahlen, 40 bis 20 Mark, und du bekommst auch Kaffee und Brod des Morgens. ... Und in Berlin ist es sehr kalt; sechs Monate ist es kalt und sechs Monate ist es warm. Und was die Wärme anbetrifft, so ist die Kälte besser als die Hitze. Und wenn du dich sehr heiss fühlst, dann versuche nicht, deine Kleider auszuziehen, sonst erkältest du dir die Brust, und danach wirst du krank."

<sup>5</sup> Bakari's story is documented in BA Berlin, 1001, 5422

<sup>6</sup> "Dem Lektor am orientalischen Seminar Mtoro bin Bakari, zuletzt wohnhaft in Bagamojo D. Ost-Afrika wird hiermit aufgrund der stattgehabten Ermittlungen zum Zwecke der Eheschließung bescheinigt, daß er im Jahre 1869 in Dunda in der Landschaft Useramo als Sohn des Mseramo Bakari - verstorben in Bagamojo - und seiner Ehefrau Sana binti Mhera, jetzt wohnhaft in Bagamojo geboren und daß seiner Eheschließung Entgegenstehendes hier nicht bekannt geworden ist.

Der Kaiserliche Bezirksamtman "

The incident set off a passionate discussion in the German public and press about the legality and validity of African-German marriages. The argument was heard that such marriages were null and void, because they were conflicting with public morals. Some demanded a general prohibition of mixed marriages for reasons of the 'racial question'. The political consequences of Bakari and similar 'affairs' were investigated recently by Sippel (1997) and will not be discussed here. Bakari's case was not to be forgotten easily by the German public and the German authorities. When the latter failed to keep their promises concerning financial compensation and re-employment at the Oriental Institute, Bakari filed a petition to the German Emperor and sued the Empire (Sippel 1997:126; Mayer et al 1985:92). But although he was given his rights, he had to live in destitution for most of his life. Proposals to engagements as paid worker were rejected by Bakari as unacceptable. Documents show that in 1907 Bakari earned his living as private tutor for Kiswahili at a missionary society. In 1910 he finally succeeded in returning to university employment. For four years he taught Kiswahili at the University of Hamburg (Mayer-Bahlburg & Wolff 1986:87). About Bakari's further course of life much remains in the dark. He lived in Berlin-Neukölln with his wife and earned a small income with lectures on East Africa in different German towns. In 1922 he applied for a certification which proved him to be a former resident of a German colony. After the end of World War I and the occupation of the Rhineland by French troops parts of which consisted of African soldiers, the living conditions had become even more difficult for Bakari and other Africans resident in Germany for a long time. Indiscriminately Africans met with hatred and rage wherever they went. A certification was supposed to help Bakari in gaining the support of the authorities on his trips to the towns where he lectured. His problems are documented in the following letter:

injustice as result of suspicion and misjudgment endures because he was taken for one of the French ( ) colonial troops. After he had been rejected everywhere else he was even evicted, freezing, from the last guest house in the middle of the night, surely only because of misjudgment. In order to be able to secure his living in the way described, ( ) the humble undersigned turned to the government of the German Reich with confidence and humbly lodged the following plea:

May the government of the German Reich issue a protection certificate, or whatever such a document is called, through human goodness to the humble undersigned. This certificate should allow him, upon presentation to an authority in a town, accommodation - safe and undisturbed - and acceptance or support.<sup>7</sup>

No traces of Bakari's fate after 1922 have as yet been found.

<sup>7</sup> "Unbill infolge Mißtrauens und Verkennung ausstehen, da man ihn für einen der französischen (...) Kolonialtruppen hielt; er wurde sogar nachts in der 1 Stunde, nachdem er überall abgewiesen war, auch aus dem letzten Gasthaus frierend ausgestoßen, gewiß nur in Verkennung. Um weiter seinen notwendigen Lebensunterhalt auf die geschilderte Art zu sichern, ( ) wendet sich der ergebenst Unterzeichnete im Vertrauen an die Hohe Regierung des Deutschen Reiches und unterbreitet ihr ganz ergebenst folgende Bitte: Die hohe Regierung des Deutschen Reiches wolle in menschlicher Güte dem ergebenst Unterzeichneten einen Schutzschein - oder wie ein solches Dokument sonst zu nennen sei - ausstellen, das ihm durch Vorlegung bei der Behörde eines Ortes, daselbst Unterkunft - sicher und unbehelligt - und Aufnahme beziehungsweise Unterstützung gewährleistet."

Among those Africans who came to Germany during the colonial period, settled down and married, men from Cameroon and Togo, Germany's West African Colonies, outnumbered the others. It might be worth-while to follow up the question of why this was the case and why only a minority of East Africans felt impelled to leave their homeland. In the thirties the presence of at least four Kiswahili-speaking men from East Africa is documented through written sources: Josef Mambo, born on October 31, 1885 in Tanga; Mohamadi bin Juma, born in Daressalam, Hamisi bin Ferhani, born in Gindo; Bayume Mohamed Hussein, born on February 22, 1904 in Daressalam; Juma bin Abdalah, born January 5, 1890 in Daressalam.

Joseph Mambo was brought to Dresden in 1897 at the age of twelve by the nobleman Freiherr von Elsaß who wanted to educate him as his foster-child. Between 1904 and 1913 he acted as a mounted timpanist for an infantry battalion in Bromberg. At the outbreak of World War I he returned to his old regiment which fought in Russia and France. He was wounded twice in East Prussia and Verdun, survived the war, but was severely disabled. He was decorated with orders and badges of honour (Eisernes Kreuz, Verwundetetenabzeichen) and drew a small war pension.<sup>8</sup> The last information about Mambo dates from 1935 when welfare organisations were trying to find a job which the handicapped man was able to pursue.<sup>9</sup>

Mohamadi bin Juma left a hand-written *curriculum vitae* from 1926, when he was employed as Kiswahili teacher at Berlin University.<sup>10</sup> He was born in Daressalam and went to the German school for six years. After school Juma learnt to telegraph and worked for the postal service for 8 years. Together with two Germans who also worked for the postal service he joined the colonial forces and was taken prisoner of war by the British troops in 1917. After 1919 he acted as shipboy on different German steamers which ran between the East Africa and Hamburg and finally went to Berlin to seek help from the Foreign Ministry. Juma was employed with the postal service in Berlin and as Kiswahili teacher at the University in the 1926 summer term. In October 1926 the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Eingeborenkunde organised a permanent employment for Juma with a coffee company in Linz. Half a year later he had left his job, because of the work being too hard and the salary being too low.<sup>11</sup> Whether he stayed in Germany beyond this date has not yet been discovered.

Hamisi bin Ferhani acted as Kiswahili teacher in Hamburg between 1924 and 1931 (Meyer-Bahlburg & Wolff 1986:91). He was born in Gindo on February 2, 1884 and his father was an *askari* in the German colonial forces.<sup>12</sup> At an unknown date he gave up his job as a teacher in Daressalam and signed on as a steward on a ship which ran between Hamburg and Daressalam.

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<sup>8</sup> BA Berlin, 1001, 6383, 7562

<sup>9</sup> BA Berlin, 1001, 1105

<sup>10</sup> Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz Rep 208 A, 124

<sup>11</sup> BA Berlin, 1001, 6201

<sup>12</sup> The meagre knowledge about Hamisi bin Ferhani originates from documents at the Institut für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik at the University of Hamburg, Afr S CIII 14



At the outbreak of World War I the ship was in the Mediterranean and took shelter at Constantinople. From there Hamisi bin Ferhani went to Germany. Nothing is known about his early years in his new home country. In 1931 he lost his job at the University of Hamburg as a result of economising actions. He was sick and had to be supported by the public welfare service. After his dismissal he immediately tried to return home, a venture which turned out to be difficult, because Ferhanis identity papers were missing. He was finally allowed to go back to Zanzibar on April 4, 1938.

Bayume Mohamed Hussein's and Juma bin Abdalah's biographies show many similarities. Both were born in Daressalam and both of their fathers were *askaris* in the German colonial forces. At the outbreak of World War I Hussein and Abdalah also joined the German forces, Hussein still being a child. They were wounded and held as prisoners of war in British camps. At different times they came to Germany and worked as Kiswahili teachers and circus artists.

Juma bin Abdalah was born in January 1890 and twelve years old when he met the German Africanist Carl Meinhof in Daressalam where he was fostered by the Protestant Mission<sup>13</sup>. He joined the colonial forces, was wounded twice<sup>14</sup> in the course of World War I and was decorated with the badge of honour (Frontkämpferabzeichen). He came to Constantinople with the German steamer 'General' and worked for the children's hospital in spring 1918 where he met again with Carl Meinhof. After the war Juma went to Germany and visited Meinhof in Hamburg who employed him to assist in translating and publishing Dzalamo-texts (Meinhof 1920/21:278). Nothing is known about his next years in Germany. In 1933 he became Kiswahili teacher at the university of Hamburg. By then he was married to a Chinese woman with whom he had one child.<sup>15</sup>

Bayume Mohamed Hussein was born in 1904 and therefore still a small boy when he joined the colonial forces and was wounded in combat<sup>16</sup>. The exact date of Bayume Mohamed Hussein's arrival in Germany is not documented. During the twenties he lived in Berlin and worked as a circus or variety theatre artist like most Africans at that time (Reed-Anderson, n.d.:49). Occasionally he signed on ships of the Woermann shipping company as a steward. In April 1930 he was employed as a waiter for the night club 'Wildwest' of the famous 'Haus Vaterland' and played small parts in colonial films of the Nazi period.<sup>17</sup> He married Maria, a Sudeten-German woman, with whom he had three children. In addition to the jobs mentioned, he became Kiswahili teacher at the University of Berlin in winter term 1931/32.

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<sup>13</sup> Afr. S. CIII 14

<sup>14</sup> BA Berlin 1001, 6383

<sup>15</sup> Afr. S. CIII 14

<sup>16</sup> Unless noted otherwise the file on Hussein is BA Berlin, 1001, 1105

<sup>17</sup> In the appendix you find a picture of Bayume Mohammed Hussein in the uniform of an *askari* taken during the shooting of a film

Although Juma's and Hussein's biographies were showing some parallels and even overlapped when they both worked for the 'German Africa-Exhibition' (Deutsche Afrika-Schau) in the late thirties<sup>18</sup>, there were also decisive differences which were crucial for the survival of Nazi Germany. There is hardly any information about Juma bin Abdalah in official documents, because he led an unobtrusive, quiet and financially secure life. Different public authorities, agencies and organisations had, on the other hand, constantly to deal with Bayume Mohamed Hussein from 1930 onwards. Hussein was a permanent nuisance to the authorities, never held his tongue when it came to suing them for his rights and was always short of money. Here we find some of the reasons, one of them, Juma, survived the Nazi period comparatively uninjured, the other, Hussein, was killed in Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

In 1930 Hussein drew attention to himself when he tried to assert a claim to belated pay for his and his late father's duties as *askaris* of the colonial forces. After the seizure of power by the National Socialists in 1933 the Africans who lived in Germany had to return their passports which proved them to be citizens of the German Reich ('unmittelbare Reichsangehörige'). They, as well as their German wives, received new papers which identified them as stateless persons. Hussein seems to have been the only one who protested this incisive measure, although without success.<sup>19</sup> As former *askaris* occupied a special position among the Africans who lived in Nazi Germany, it became important for Hussein to be recognised as one of them. This turned out to be rather difficult both, because the respective papers were missing and his late date of birth. The importance of the official acknowledgement might explain why Hussein tried to receive a badge of honour ('Frontkämpferabzeichen') in October 1934, sixteen years after the end of World War I. His application was turned down which he was not willing to accept. Better provided with new documents he tried again to be recognised as former *askari* by receiving the medal in 1936. The authorities now acknowledged his participation in World War I; at the same time Hussein's application triggered off a discussion among the appropriate authorities about the question whether Africans should be awarded orders and medals. In July 1936 the Ministry of the Interior (Reichsinnenministerium) finally decided that the badge of honour ('Ehrenkreuz des Weltkrieges') should be restricted to Europeans, i.e. white persons. Hussein's bitterness about the rejection becomes evident in a letter to the Foreign ministry, which is the only written document of Hussein still preserved<sup>20</sup>:

I was there from the beginning to end of the war. I don't want much, I only want my medal. I am entitled to it. It is not a lie, neither am I trying to obtain something for myself illegally. It is my right. I implore the respected gentlemen of the Foreign Ministry to help me. I ... I did not receive my or my father's payment in the war, and now you even want to deprive me of my reward? We never thought the Germans were like that.

Hussein's second attempt at receiving a medal was connected with an incident which resulted

<sup>18</sup> BA Berlin, 1001, 6382

<sup>19</sup> BA Berlin, 1001, 5148

<sup>20</sup> The first page of Hussein's letter is reproduced in the appendix

in a serious deterioration of his living conditions. In December 1935 he was fired by his employer, Haus Vaterland, after he had worked there as a waiter for five years. The reason for his dismissal was the denunciation by a German colleague who had stated that Hussein had embezzled 5 Marks of the day's takings. The same informant and another colleague had only two days earlier complained to the members of the works council that they had to work together with a 'Negro'. Again Hussein was not willing to put up with what was done to him and to accept the dismissal. When his protest with the works council was turned down, he entrusted a lawyer with a lawsuit at the labour court. The lawsuit was, however, turned down too and Hussein lost his most important employment. As he had to provide for a family with three children and had never been able to manage with his money, the part-time jobs which were left to him did not nearly earn him enough to meet his obligations. In autumn 1936 Hussein was deep in debt. He had arrears in rent which finally led to an eviction order. Half a year later he could not buy the necessary clothes for his children. During that time he approached different authorities and agencies with requests for money, which once more had to deal with him. In 1940 he fell out with his superior Diedrich Westermann who subsequently did not want to extend Hussein's employment. At first the Bantuist Martin Heepe took over his employment, but shortly afterwards Hussein and Heepe also had serious quarrels and separated.<sup>21</sup> We are not informed about the reasons for the disagreement, in a letter we learn about 'unruly behaviour' on the part of Hussein.

The many documents relating to Bayume Mohamed Hussein show that he was never a simple person. In the eyes of the authorities he was notorious, because he was self-confident and never held his tongue when his rights were at stake. On the top of it, his permanent applications for financial support had worn out their patience. When Hussein had an extramarital love-affair with a German woman (Ballhorn 1946:107) and the couple also had a child<sup>22</sup>, no one was willing to lift a finger to come to his defence and protect him against persecution. From the Nazi's point of view it was bad enough that he was married to a German woman at a time when this was possible without serious difficulties. Now the offence was *Rassenschande* (race defilement). Hussein was taken to prison first, but was soon brought to Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen without trial or conviction.<sup>23</sup> No one, not even at the university where he had worked for nine years, tried to help him. Being informed of Hussein's confinement the university reacted with sending a notice of termination. On November 24, 1944 after more than three years imprisonment Bayume Mohammed Hussein was killed in the Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen.<sup>24</sup> It seems almost absurd that he of all people tried to register as a war volunteer only one hour after the outbreak of World War II.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> BA Berlin, 4901, 1316

<sup>22</sup> Theodor Wonja Michael, p. c.

<sup>23</sup> BA Berlin, 4901, 1316

<sup>24</sup> Herr Wiedenhöft, Friedhofsverwaltung Berlin, p. c.

<sup>25</sup> Afrika-Nachrichten 20 Jg., Nr 10, Oktober 1939, S. 270

From the colonial period onwards Kiswahili-speakers from German East Africa came to Germany either for short periods or to settle down. From the German's point of view the most sympathetic among the foreigners were those who behaved unobtrusive and in accordance with their own expectations. Although the playing of the violin of young Msee at the 1st Colonial Exhibition was rated positively, the authorities regarded the fraternisation between German spectators and exhibited Africans as going much too far, and at the next colonial exhibition a high fence was erected between the public and the Africans (Arnold 1995:18). More than once it was expressed in different commentaries that some of the Africans were deformed by education and therefore spoiled and corrupt. Best known are those East Africans who did not come up to German expectations, but left bad impressions. Not to come up to expectations also included to lay claim to once rights. 'Diligent', 'well-behaved' and 'loyal' were attributes the Germans liked to use for 'their Africans'. This positive characteristics were forgotten as soon as one of the African, like Mtoro Bakari, claimed equal rights and married a German woman. In the first decade of our century this resulted in loss of work and reputation, in the period of Nazi terror such a relationship could be fatal, as was shown at the example of Bayume Mohamed Hussein. In contrast to Hussein, Juma bin Abdalah was able to survive, because he never attracted any attention - neither positively nor negatively.

The paper will therefore be concluded with an obituary for Juma bin Abdalah which appeared in the newspaper *Hamburger Abendblatt* and which illustrates some of the points that were mentioned above:

Juma bin Abdallah, the former Negro advertising sandwich man for 'Fix' translation service of, Mönckebergstr. 11, Hamburg, passed away recently. He was born in Daressalam in 1893 and fought in the First World War as a non-commissioned officer in German East Africa. Afterwards he lived in Hamburg with his Chinese wife, who worked as a translator. The owner of 'Fix' translation service, who sat under palm trees with Abdallah in the former German Daressalam in 1913, will never forget his dear old employee.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> "Juma bin Abdallah, der frühere Neger-Reklameträger für das Übersetzungsbüro "Fix" in Hamburg, Mönckebergstr. 11, ist kürzlich verstorben. Er ist 1893 in Daressalam geboren und kämpfte im Weltkrieg 1914/18 als Unteroffizier in Deutsch-Ost-Afrika. Seitdem lebte er in Hamburg mit einer Chinesin verheiratet, die sich als Dolmetscherin betätigt. Der Inhaber des "Fix"-Übersetzungsbüros, der mit Abdallah im Jahre 1913 im ehemaligen deutschen Daressalam unter Palmen gesessen hat, wird seinen lieben, alten Mitarbeiter nicht vergessen"; Afr. S. CIII 14

*Suaheli von Expeditionen v. Wissmanns, Dr. Bumillers, Graf v. Götzens und Anderer* Göttingen pp. 138-197

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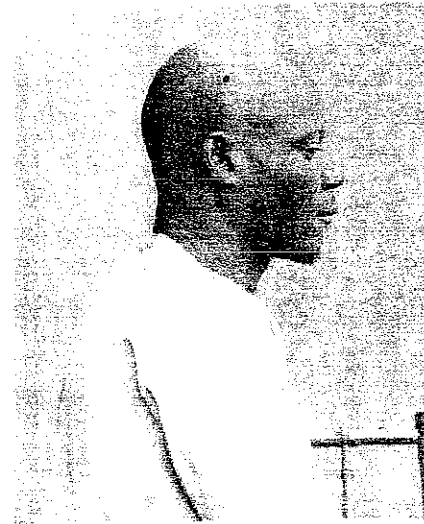
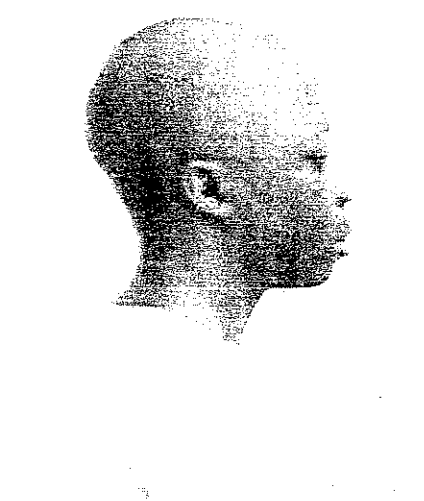
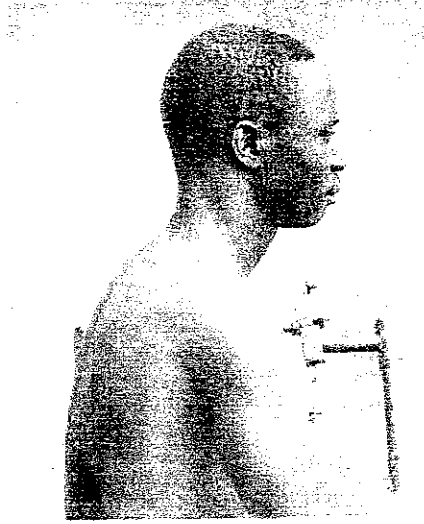
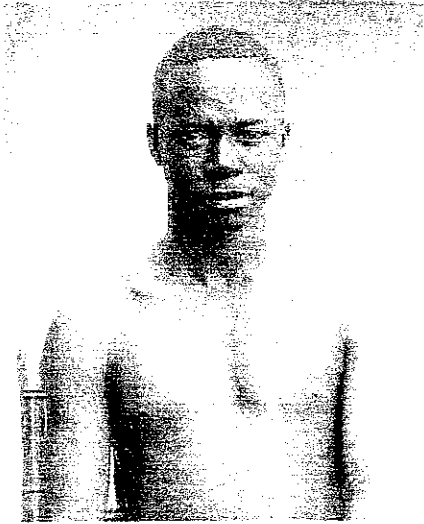
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TUSCHAN FOTO 1886.

LICHTDRUCK: ALBERT FRISCH BERLIN

SSWAHILI-MÄNNER: Ali bin Matam, Ssaldi bin Abdallah, Ssaldi bin Halfani



LUSCHAN PHOT. 1896

HOHNDRUCK W. NEUMANN & CO. BERLIN

SWAHILI FRAUEN Mssiki, Saada binti Andalia

Wasswahli, darunter ein Junge aus Unyoro (26) und ein Mkonde (32).

Laufende Nummer	26	28	27	23	19	34	25	32	18	33	24	22	20	29	30	31	21
	Djuma	Mussa b. Siamte	Omadi b. Ssaidi	Issa b. Ssaidi	Mpate b. Hatibu	Djuma b. Hassan	Omari b. Mpate	Tschingongwe	Ssaïd b. Ismail	Ssaïd b. Abdallah	Salim b. Fadlallah	Muhâmmed b. Achmed	Ssaïd b. Hal-fani	Aossa	Mssiki	Kanûni b. Ssaïdi	Saada b. Andalla
Ungefâhres Alter	16	20	12	20	25	22	25	25	22	16	25	25	40	10	16	6	30
Kopflänge	201	202	178	195	194	199	203	188	194	188	189	199	189	181	183	172	187
Kopfbreite	144	147	130	144	146	150	154	146	151	148	149	157	150	132	136	132	145
Ungefâhre Ohrhöhe	133	129	113	120	124	140	133	126	135	127	125	126	123	120	122	113	125
Ungefâhre Basislänge	95	87	85	94	95	93	99	89	97	88	93	97	92	80	84	72	91
Kleinste Stirnbreite	105	111	95	107	110	103	109	110	111	112	112	119	109	98	99	87	104
Gesichtshöhe A	175	181	165	177	188	177	167	189	173	169	183	171	190	159	162	150	170
» B	117	103	110	121	126	112	111	105	118	114	112	112	115	96	102	87	107
» C	74	82	68	77	81	73	78	70	81	76	74	75	79	67	64	50	70
Nasenhöhe	52	48	44	57	56	46	52	46	47	49	46	50	46	40	42	38	43
Nasenbreite	43	47	45	44	48	43	46	45	48	43	43	45	50	35	34	32	(41)
Jochbogenbreite	134	135	118	135	142	135	138	131	142	132	140	138	141	123	117	106	128
Kieferwinkelbreite	98	102	92	100	105	99	109	95	111	99	106	105	107	96	94	75	109
Entferng d. inneren } Augenwinkel	38	33	21	38	40	37	36	36	38	38	36	37	38	36	31	32	40
» » } ausseren von einander	95	98	86	96	104	101	99	98	102	104	105	100	97	94	95	84	93
Mundbreite	46	50	51	48	52	53	57	55	60	46	52	59	53	51	52	40	43
Lippenhöhe	31	29	29	23	26	30	29	24	30	28	25	30	15	24	27	21	24
Ohrlänge	60	60	54	55	53	52	60	53	57	50	53	54	54	52	52	45	54
Ohrbreite	34	30	32	29	32	34	34	31	39	31	33	32	35	29	31	28	40
Körperhöhe im Sitzen	833	853	690	848	860	902	874	—	830	852	833	900	850	680	804	575	800
Höhe im Knien	1210	1250	1020	1225	1270	1300	1214	—	1200	1182	1190	1246	1210	990	1045	780	1140
Gauze Höhe	1668	1678	1385	1666	1735	1770	1648	—	1650	1590	1580	1666	1650	1340	1584	1050	1530
Höhe des oberen Brustbeinrandes	1356	1400	1140	1380	1410	1453	1376	—	1360	1290	1320	1372	1350	1095	1033	800	1260
» » Nabels	1030	1060	865	1025	1060	1100	996	—	1000	930	913	1050	993	805	980	—	995
» » der Kniescheibe	430	460	405	430	450	492	434	—	490	420	400	440	435	365	410	240	410
Knieferweite	1763	1810	1450	1785	1800	1842	1706	—	1770	1630	1715	1770	1690	1365	1035	1070	1650
Schulterbreite	385	405	331	410	440	408	412	410	410	361	412	430	397	305	303	250	370
Hüftbreite	250	246	190	240	250	220	230	—	230	230	230	233	250	194	220	150	238
Länge des hängenden Armes	791	764	635	766	770	805	736	740	770	709	736	753	753	640	716	460	729
» » Vorderarmes	499	481	407	481	486	480	450	404	430	442	450	440	460	392	441	304	439
Länge der Hand	193	193	164	192	185	186	184	177	188	177	178	180	171	119	179	124	172
Breite der Hand	81	80	66	82	83	76	90	76	77	75	80	83	80	67	74	55	75
Länge des Mittelfingers innen	83	80	65	84	83	80	81	75	75	74	77	77	70	61	78	52	73
» » aussen	121	114	97	113	114	112	116	106	111	106	108	114	108	99	107	78	105
Horizontaler Umfang des Kopfes	550	570	500	540	555	560	—	550	530	545	560	550	500	510	480	535	—
Brustumfang	770	830	630	830	830	840	820	—	870	750	800	790	850	640	790	520	810
Kleinster Umfang d. Unterschenkels	185	200	170	210	220	225	205	—	230	190	190	180	190	170	190	150	200
Grösster » »	290	320	260	340	350	310	—	380	300	343	300	285	230	200	200	320	320
Grösster Umfang d. Oberschenkels	420	460	410	470	500	490	485	—	530	440	500	450	470	360	440	290	420
Fusslänge	260	250	220	260	260	253	243	—	260	233	230	240	240	217	230	153	212
Fussbreite	80	85	70	(85)	86	85	85	—	86	80	85	82	79	67	71	51	75

Wasswahli (darunter ein Mann aus Unyoro und ein Mkonde). Indices.

Geschlecht	No	Stamm	Ungefâhres Alter	Name	Kopflänge					Jochbreite zur					Körperhöhe zur			Armlänge zu		
					Breite	Höhe	Gh A	Gh B	Gh C	Stirn-breite	Nasen-Index	Sitz-höhe	Klafter-weite	Arm-länge	Ober-arm	Vorder-arm	Hand	Mittel-finger		
Männer	26	Nyoro	16	Djuma	716	677	130	873	552	783	827	496	105	474	369	631	242	153		
	28	Sswahili	20	Mussa bin Siamte	728	634	134	763	607	822	979	509	107	453	370	628	252	148		
	27	Sswahili	12	Omadi bin Ssaïdi	730	646	139	932	576	805	1023	492	104	458	359	640	257	152		
	23	Sswahili	20	Issa bin Ssaïdi	738	610	131	896	570	793	772	509	106	459	372	627	250	147		
	19	Sswahili	25	Mpate bin Hatibu	753	649	132	887	570	775	857	495	104	443	368	631	240	148		
	34	Sswahili	22	Djuma bin Hassan	754	744	131	830	541	763	935	504	104	445	392	607	231	139		
	25	Sswahili	25	Omari bin Mpate	758	645	122	804	565	790	885	530	103	446	388	611	250	157		
	32	Konde	25	Tschingongwe	777	670	144	801	533	840	978	—	—	—	312	627	239	143		
	18	Sswahili	22	Ssaïd bin Ismail	778	649	122	831	570	781	1022	503	107	448	376	623	244	144		
	33	Sswahili	16	Ssaïdi bin Abdallah	787	695	128	864	576	849	877	472	102	445	376	623	249	149		
	24	Sswahili	25	Salim bin Fadlallah	788	688	130	800	528	800	935	527	108	470	388	611	242	146		
	22	Sswahili	25	Muhâmmmed b. Achmed	789	633	124	834	543	862	900	540	106	452	407	592	245	151		
	20	Sswahili	40	Ssaïdi bin Hal-fani	794	630	135	816	560	773	1087	521	102	450	388	610	237	143		
	Frauen und Mädchen	29	Sswahili	10	Aossa	729	690	129	780	544	797	875	507	102	477	387	612	260	154	
		30	Sswahili	16	Mssiki	743	710	138	872	547	846	571	507	103	452	386	615	250	149	
		31	Sswahili	6	Kanûni binti Ssaïdi	767	651	141	821	471	821	842	542	102	438	339	660	267	168	
21		Sswahili	30	Saada binti Andalla	775	652	133	812	593	812	953	523	107	476	398	602	237	144		





Bayume Mohamed Hussein

