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Mikono ya damu: "Hands of Blood": African Mercenaries and
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(review)

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Mikono ya damu: "Hands of Blood": African Mercenaries and the Politics of Conflict in German East Africa, 1888–1904. By Erick J. Mann. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. ISBN 0-8204-5369-2. Maps. Tables. Figures. Glossary. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 335. \$52.95.

Erick J. Mann argues against the “unqualified” (p. 11) yet common assertion that Europeans conquered Africa simply through their employment of superior weapons technology. Instead, Mann insists that colonial conquest was “almost entirely conditioned and realized by local factors and initiatives” (p. 11). His study focuses on the German conquest of Tanganyika, and specifically on the central importance of the *Schütztruppen*, or defense force, as the “primary vehicle through which German colonial rule manifested itself” (p. 15). He thus challenges the extant historiography of Tanzania, which has failed to account for the *Schütztruppen* as the driving force behind early German colonialism. He also critiques available scholarship on the French and British colonial militaries for obscuring how local dynamics informed the creation and maintenance of these forces. Mann systematically explores the history of the *Schütztruppen*’s formation and development throughout the protracted period of conquest, tracing the various regional political and military dynamics that influenced *Schütztruppen* operations up to the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1905. Throughout, he reminds his reader that “conquest was not an event but a dynamic process, and a highly uneven one at that” (p. 199). In short, German *Schütztruppen* commanders responded haphazardly to the situations they encountered. Where possible they manipulated local circumstances to suit their needs, resorting frequently to extreme violence and scorched-earth policies to impress upon Tanganyikan peoples the futility of resistance. African leaders similarly chose alliances based on local politics and assessments of the *Schütztruppen* as a formidable military power.

Mann’s work expertly synthesizes secondary literatures on precolonial and German colonial Tanganyika. His archival work, conducted in Germany and Tanzania, supplements these materials beautifully, providing him evidence for challenging previous interpretations, as well as vivid examples of *Schütztruppen* activities. Most fascinating is his fifth chapter on the internal dynamics of the *Schütztruppen*: he explains how German officers recruited and secured the loyalty of the African troops who made up the bulk of the *Schütztruppen*. Here and throughout his study, Mann examines how local African politics and military considerations drove the Germans to construct their force in particular ways. Although he pays only passing attention to the gender and cultural history of the *Schütztruppen*, he hints at these areas as potential avenues of research. The work is widely accessible, though specialists in Tanzanian history and colonial military history will benefit most from its detailed presentation. Military historians especially will be impressed with Mann’s fusion of campaign details and political and social context. Maps, appendixes, and an outstanding bibliography provide valuable data for researchers. Mann’s thoughtful study of the German colonial

military in East Africa shows us that African history, German colonial history, and military history have much to say to each other.

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America at War: The Philippines, 1898–1913. By A. B. Feuer. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002. ISBN 0-275-96821-9. Maps. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xx, 265. \$64.95.

In a manner somewhat reminiscent of those end-of-the-nineteenth-century books that regaled American readers with stories of their army's and navy's accomplishments in the Far East—something like Murat Halstead's *Story of the Philippines* (1898) comes to mind—A. B. Feuer's version of the American conquest of the Philippines consists mostly of lengthy quotations from published and unpublished accounts of wartime events, some written at the time and others long after, by both civilian and military participants in the war.

Feuer begins with extracts from journalist John McCutcheon's reports to the *Chicago Record* of the Battle of Manila Bay, which McCutcheon had witnessed from a ship of the Asiatic Squadron. McCutcheon is also called upon to describe the siege and surrender of Spanish-held Manila. A soldier's view of the attack on the city is taken from the memoirs of Evaristo de Montalvo. The Cuban-born Montalvo served with a Utah artillery battery, as did Charles R. Mabey, who published an account of Nebraska Pvt. William Grayson's shooting of (or at) an "obnoxious [Filipino] officer" at the San Juan del Monte bridge in Santa Mesa on the night of 4 February 1899 (p. 89). This story is repeated without comment, even though the author of one of *America at War's* two forewords asserts that "the Filipino who was shot and killed was apparently an unarmed civilian" (p. xv). (In fact, as Benito J. Legarda, Jr., has recently described in great detail in *The Hills of Sampaloc: The Opening Actions of the Philippine-American War, February 4–5, 1899* [Makati City, 2001], Grayson was not at the San Juan bridge nor do contemporary army reports place him there.) John Brewer of the 10th Pennsylvania Infantry recalls the attack on Malolos, Edwin Merritt of the Iowa regiment describes the advance to San Fernando, a newspaper account by navy officer F. P. Allison tells of the Balangiga massacre, and so on. Feuer concludes with a description of the events at Bud Bagsak in June 1913, relying on the reports of several army officers who were there.

Feuer contextualizes little, does not always reveal where his sources can be found, and does not direct readers to additional related sources. Feuer is innocent of any knowledge of—perhaps simply is not interested in—the scholarly literature on the Philippine War. No mention of the works of Teodoro Agoncillo, John Gates, Brian Linn, Glenn May, Stuart Miller, or Resil Mojares is found here. *America at War* makes no contribution to the histo-