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## A HISTORY OF RUNGWE DISTRICT IN TANZANIA FROM PRE-COLONIAL TO COLONIAL PERIOD

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### **Abstract**

*This article highlights the historical events that occurred in Rungwe District, Tanzania in pre colonial and colonial periods. It gives an analysis of the situation during the pre-colonial period and how the district became integrated in the capitalist economic system after the establishment of colonial rule. Capitalist relations were in terms of the establishment of cash crop estates as an element of colonial economic structure. Both peasant-type and estate productions involved productions for exports to metropolitan countries by firmly solidifying world capitalist economic relations as the metropolises were set ready to receive processed products from the district.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

Rungwe District lies between longitudes “8° 30’ and 9° 30’ E” and latitudes “33° and 34° S” in the southern part of Mbeya Region.<sup>1</sup> It is bordered by Mbeya District to the North, Makete District in Njombe Region to the East, Kyela District in the South and Ileje District in the West. The district consists of four divisions, which are “Ukukwe, Busokelo, Pakati and Tukuyu.”<sup>2</sup> The geographical boundaries of the district have never been fixed in the past, but they have been changing by differently defined by the previous colonial governments of the Germans and British, and later by the independent government of the United Republic of Tanzania. The beginning of German colonial rule in Rungwe District was in 1893 by the German explorer Major Von Wissmann who founded a government station at a place along Lake Nyasa which was given the name “Langenburg” in the honour of “Prinz von Hohenlohe-Langenburg” the champion of German colonial endeavours (currently known as Lumbila in Ludewa District). It was from there that the Germans ruled Rungwe District which comprised the whole area currently known as Mbeya Region and included Makete and some parts of Ubena and Ufipa.<sup>3</sup>

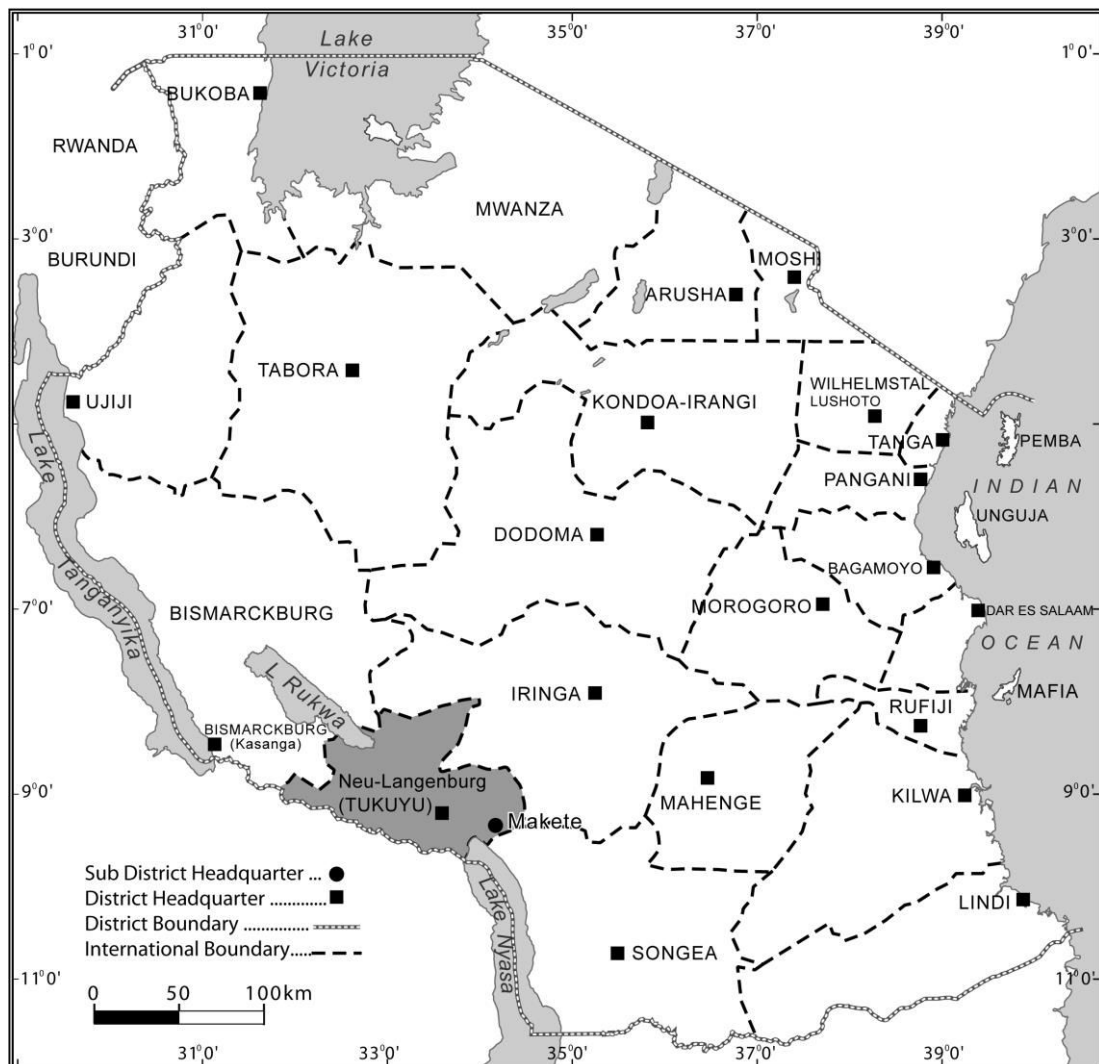
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<sup>1</sup> Rungwe District Council, *District Investment Profile, 2010*. Available online at: <http://www.mbeya.go.tz> (Accessed on 18/05/2016) p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid; p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Tanzania National Archives, *Rungwe District Book I*, “Early History of the “Rungwe District”(Berziriki Langenburg) up to the year 1914.”; J. Koponen, *Development for Exploitation: German colonial policies in*

The year 1893 was a time when effective occupation of the area took place, but it was put under German domination in 1890 by the Anglo-German Agreement which secured German East Africa for Germany. This was strengthened by “the first Moravian Missionaries who arrived and settled down at Rungwe in August [and followed by] the Berlin Missionaries who resided on a peninsula of Lake Nyasa at a Village known as Ikombe in October 1891.”<sup>4</sup> But in 1900, the District Administrative Office was transferred to Tukuyu from Lumbila and was named “Neu Langenburg.”<sup>5</sup> This made Tukuyu to be a new administrative centre of the district and the former was only left as a sub-office and a place where battleships could anchor (See figure 1 below).



**Figure 1: Map of German East Africa Showing Langenburg District and other Administrative Districts, 1914**

Source: Prepared by M. A. Ngowi, Cartographic Unit, University of Dar es Salaam, July 2014

*Mainland Tanzania, 1884-1914* (Helsinki/Hamburg, Finnish Historical Society, 1994) p.115., S. R. Charsley, *The Princes of Nyakyusa* (Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1969)p.108.

<sup>4</sup> Tanzania National Archives, *Rungwe District Book I*; op.cit.

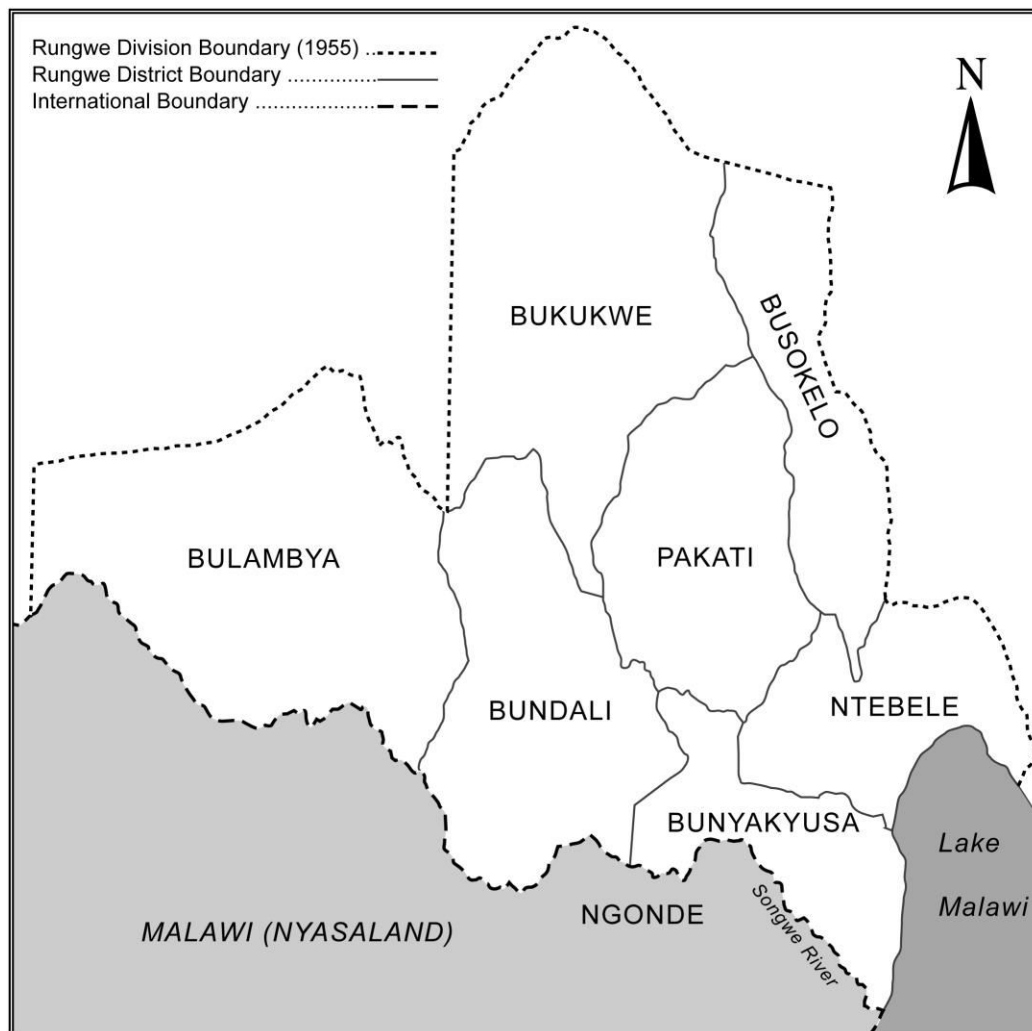
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

When the First World War erupted in 1914, the area was invaded and lost to the British troops from Nyasaland (current Malawi) in 1916 after a fierce fight at the Ipyana German Military centre. The Germans retreated to Mwakaleli, leaving Neu Langenburg undefended. This provided a room for British forces to occupy Rutengano Mission, then Rungwe Mission and lastly Neu Langenburg (Tukuyu) in July 1916. A British political officer was stationed there.<sup>6</sup> After this occupation, Rungwe District was extended to occupy the whole area of the south west of the territory. The district came to be known as New Langenburg and included Bismarckburg (Ufipa), Iringa, Songea and Mahenge. But the district was not named Rungwe until 1920 when even the headquarters was named Tukuyu. Later on, the district was reorganised; the Central District remained Rungwe District taking a few parts of Ulambya and large areas of Usafwa. Mbozi became a Sub-District comprising of Usangu, Usafwa, Uwungu, Uwanda, Songwe, Unyamwanga, Mambwe, Unyiha and Umalila. The Makete Sub-District comprised of Ukinga, Ukena, and Uwanji. In 1919, the headquarters of Mbozi Sub-District was shifted to Mbeya and in January 1922 a move was taken to Igali. The Makete administrative centre was closed.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Rungwe District is amongst the oldest districts in Tanzania as it has been in existence since the advent of colonialism. From 1919 Rungwe was given new geographic boundaries and consisted of the whole of the current Rungwe District together with Kyela and Ileje. It consisted of seven divisions, namely, Ukukwe, Pakati, Busokelo ( in present Rungwe district), Ntebela and Bunyakusa (present day Kyela) and Bundali and Bulambya (currently in Ileje district ). (See figure 2 below).

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<sup>6</sup> Tanzania National Archives, *Rungwe District Book I*, "History of the Rungwe District after the British occupation up to the formation of provinces in 1926".

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 2: Map of Rungwe District showing her Divisions, 1955**

Source : Prepared by M. A. Ngowi, Cartographic Unit, University of Dar es Salaam, July 2014

But it was again split in 1973 to form the two new districts of Kyela and Ileje.<sup>8</sup> For the purpose of this study, the research will concentrate only on present day Rungwe District after the hiving off of Kyela and Ileje. The district has been divided into four divisions which are Ukukwe, Busokelo, Pakati and Tukuyu. Those divisions are divided up into 30 wards and 162 villages that are registered.<sup>9</sup>

Rungwe District is now one among the eight administrative districts of Mbeya Region. Rungwe District Council reports that, the district covers a total land area of about 2,211 square kilometres

<sup>8</sup> J. F. Mbwiliza, "An Economic History of Rungwe District 1890- 1962: Some Aspects of social and economic changes among the Nyakyusa" (*M.A(History)*, University of Dar es Salaam, 1975) p.3; Rungwe African District Council, *Report ya Wateule waliotembelea Johannesburg kuanzia tarehe 9<sup>th</sup>- mpaka 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1960* (Tukuyu, Rungwe African District Council, 1960) p.1.

<sup>9</sup> Rungwe District Council; op.cit; p.5

in which 1,668.2 square kilometers (75 percent) is the best arable land. The rest is forest land of about 44.5 square kilometres and 498.3 square kilometres covering mountaineous and residential land. Its headquarters is placed at Tukuyu town which is 72 km from Mbeya City.<sup>10</sup> Rungwe District is mostly mountaneous with an altitude ranging from “770 to 2265 metres above sea level”. The more raised parts of mountain ranges are featured by many streams which join to form rivers such as Kiwira, Lufilyo, Mwalisi and Mbaka. Kiwira, Mwalisi and Mbaka Rivers have their origin from Rungwe Mountain, while Lufilyo River comes from Livingstone Mountain Ranges. They all flow into Lake Nyasa in Kyela District.<sup>11</sup> The southern areas bordering Kyela District are characterised by lowlands while others are mountaneous and altitude increases as one moves northwards.

The district gets adequate rainfall all the year round; the average ranges from “900 mm in the lowland zone to 2,700 mm in the high land zone.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, this shows that, the amounts of rainfall received by different areas of the district vary from one economic zone to the other in accordance with altitude. Though rains are said to be falling throughout the year, there is high down pour from November to May which counts for 85 per cent of the total annual rains.<sup>13</sup> Generally, the temperatures are moderate and range from 18<sup>0</sup> C to 25<sup>0</sup> C throughout the year.<sup>14</sup>

Rungwe District is one of the most populated districts in Tanzania. It had a population of “307,270 people with annual growth rate of 1.0 percent” in the 2002 National Population Census. The population density of the district was “139 people” per square kilometre.<sup>15</sup> In accordance with 1 percent annual population growth rate, the population could be projected to be about 331,852 people in 2010. But the Nyakyusa are the dominant. Other people are naturally forced to live by customs and traditions of Wanyakyusa. The Penja are said to be the early inhabitants of the district, they reside in the north- west part and have remained in discrete numbers, though the majority have intermingled with other tribes.

The soils of the district best for agriculture are to be found in the Midland and Lowland zones. The Highlands zone has moderately fertile soils as it is very much affected by soil erosion. Therefore agriculture is only possible due to high rainfalls that the area receives.<sup>16</sup> The productivity of the soils of Rungwe District tends to differ from one place to another due to differences in climatic conditions that influence soil formation and decomposition of humus. So the district is divided into three distinctive agro-economic zones, namely: the Highlands zone with an altitude 2265m above sea level. It is suitable for the cultivation of potatoes, pyrethrum, maize, beans and vegetables. The Midland zone favours the cultivation of tea, coffee, cardamom,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid; p.4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid; p.6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid; p.7.

<sup>13</sup> J. F. Mbwiliza; op.cit; p.5.

<sup>14</sup> Rungwe District Council; Loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup> National Bureau of Statistic s(NBS) and Mbeya Regional Commissioner’s Office, *Mbeya Region: Socio-economic Profile*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.(September, 2003) p.167.

<sup>16</sup> J. F. Mbwiliza; op.cit; Tanzania National Archives, *Rungwe District Book I*, “Physical-Soil”; Rungwe District Council; op.cit.

beans, bananas and groundnuts, and the Lowland zone at 772m above sea level supports the growing of paddy, maize, beans and cocoa.

The geographical location and characteristics we have seen will assist us to realise why tea cash crops production in Rungwe District was imposed and how it was possible for the area to respond to production. It will also enable us to comprehend how the environment of the area attracted the colonial powers and the Tanzanian government to support cultivation of cash crops and what policies and strategies they set up in making sure that their productions would prosper.

## **2.0 The Origin and Traditional Economy of the People of Rungwe District**

### **2.1 Origin**

It is said that the people who are the historical residents of Rungwe District, are not indigeneous to the area. They immigrated into the area from distant areas, and those different tribal stocks or ethnic groups amalgamated on their way to the area or just in the area. They tell different oral histories of their beginnings.<sup>17</sup> According to Nyakyusa tradition, the Nyakyusa came from Mahenge in Ulanga District through Ukinga area after “many tribal fights.”<sup>18</sup> From Ukinga, the Nyakyusa immigrated into the district, and most historians claim that, there is a close relationship between Nyakyusa traditional leaders [Abanyafyale] and those of the Kinga.<sup>19</sup> The first movement of the people occupying Rungwe can be traced to around “the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century”<sup>20</sup> when they invaded the area from Ukinga.

Militarily, despite of lack of military history of the people of Rungwe District, they had powerful military forces as during the arrival of missionaries in the district about 1890, “the Sangu chief Merere [who had] claimed suzerainty over the Ukukwe of the upper part of the valley ... had been defeated about four years earlier by Prince Mwamakula in the plains.”<sup>21</sup> All the time the Sangu invaded the people of Rungwe, they were seriously defeated and fled unorganised to their land, Usangu via Mporoto Mountains. The military strength of the people of Rungwe made them to defend the hegemony and sovereignty of the area for a long time until the establishment of colonial domination at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the people of Rungwe District have passed through a series of changes through their emergence on their way to Rungwe District and their reorganisations which made them politically and socially united; and as the physical natural features of the country prevented them from coming into constant collisions with militant foreigners like Arabs and other militant tribes like the Hehe and Ngoni.

<sup>17</sup> J. F. Mbwiliza; Ibid; p.3., M. Wilson, *Communal Rituals of the Nyakyusa* (London, Oxford University Press, 1959) p.1.

<sup>18</sup> D. H. Thwaites, “Wanyakyusa Agriculture”, *East African Agricultural Journal*, Vol.IX, No.4 (April, 1944) p.236; Interview with Chief Jack Mwakibwili, Former President of Rungwe African District Council and Ex- National MP, Mbeya Region, Masukulu, December 17, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> M. Wilson; op.cit.; M. H. Wilson, *For Men and Elders: Change in the Relations of Generations and of Men and Women among the Nyakyusa-Ngonde People 1875-1971*(London, International African Institute, 1977) p.8.

<sup>20</sup> M. H. Wilson, op.cit; p.9.

<sup>21</sup> S. R. Charsley; op.cit; p.95.

## 2.2 Economic Activities

The people of Rungwe practiced crop cultivation, livestock keeping and fishing. They were keen crop cultivators who practiced intensive crop rotation on their fields with maize, beans, finger millet, yams, pumpkins, bananas, cow peas and sweet potatoes. The progress that they got in crop cultivation, according to Marcia Wright, was supported by “abundant rainfall, rich soils and relatively advanced agricultural techniques”<sup>22</sup> which made them independent in foods for centuries. During the whole pre-colonial period, the people of Rungwe managed to get all the commodities that could not be obtained in their own land only by exchanging crops with neighbouring societies. Despite residing in mountaneous areas, they managed to control soil erosion by digging contoured ridges and terraces (“matumba”<sup>23</sup>) and applying green manures and cattle manures as well as fallowing so as to preserve soil from erosion and improve the soil which showed signs of deterioration. As indicated by Michael.G.McKenny, the people’s economy depended much upon the production of cereals and bananas which were staple foods harvested all the year round.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the good climatic condition of the area, advanced agricultural techniques of the people and fertility of the volcanic soil of Rungwe, led to the development of intensive crop cultivation in the area and created a self-sufficient economy of the people throughout the time they have lived there.

Livestock keeping was another important economic activity that was practiced by the people of Rungwe. The animals kept were cattle, sheep and chicken. Chicken and sheep were kept for domestic consumption and were seldom traded. Women were mostly in charge of chicken which were regarded as women’s animals and the large ones men’s. Cattle belonged to men and were kept for the provision of milk, meat and skins. They were also used for paying bride price which gave cattle great importance among the people of the area since they determined kinship by increasing marrying capabilities that could increase numbers of members. Monica Wilson made it clear that to them “kinship is cattle.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, an increase in the number of cattle determined the increase of population because whenever a sufficient number of cattle existed, it fuelled polygamous marriages.

Fishing was also an economic activity practiced along large rivers like Kiwira, Mbaka, Mwalisi and Lufilyo. Fish were consumed locally and others exchanged with other commodities from neighbouring societies. S. R. Charsley notes that fishing was done by poisoning the streams containing fish using poisonous plants known in Kinyakyusa as “Unkondo” and “Mingolya” which were mixed and ground to get poison used in killing fish in streams. Fishing was controlled by the Prince (Umalafyale) who allowed people to fish only when there was large supply and prohibited fishing by poisoning sometimes when he saw that fish were in short

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<sup>22</sup> M. Wright, “Nyakyusa cults and politics in the Later Nineteenth century”, in T.O. Ranger and I. N .Kimambo(eds.).*The Historical Study of African Religion* ( London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1972) p. 153.

<sup>23</sup> Matumba is a Nyakyusa word which means ridge terraces dug on the gentle or steep slope for preventing the movements of rain water to erode soil surfaces which could remove the natural soil fertility and cause the area infertile that can not endorse further growth and development of crops.

<sup>24</sup> M. G. McKenny, “The social structure of the Nyakyusa: A Re-Evaluation”, *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol.43, No. 2(Apr., 1973) p .92.

<sup>25</sup> M. Wilson, op.cit; pp. 30-62.

supply. But the decision to control excessive fishing was done by village headmen.<sup>26</sup> Despite poisoning being very destructive to fish of all sizes, it provided the people of Rungwe District with an important source of protein and acted as a trade item for a very long time until recently.

### 2.3 Trade Relations

Pre-colonial residents of the area involved themselves mostly in local trade rather than long distance trade, because different trading activities were conducted within the same geographical region without walking very great distances from their areas of residence. Trade was in the form of barter. Rungwe was characterised by regional traffic in grains, clothes, pottery, iron and salt. Grains were exchanged for pots and fish from Kisi who lived along Lake Nyasa on its north eastern shores. They grew only millet and cassava which could not support them throughout the year. Kisi women made pots and men engaged in fishing that provided pots and fish to be exchanged for food in Rungwe. Alternatively, the people of Rungwe themselves went to Ukisi to look for fish and pots. Monica (Hunter) Wilson reports that pots were sold by filling grains in pots and that the pot market was situated at a place known as “Pupangandu” which is presently known as Ilyililo in Ikombe village near Matema Beach in Kyela District. In later years before colonial rule, the Kinga acted as “middlemen” by transporting pots from the market and Ukisi to Rungwe and beyond.<sup>27</sup> Trade in pots has been an ancient activity in the district which facilitated procurement of pots that revolutionised cooking among the people as many different types of food could be prepared using pots. This trade was important because clay soils used to make pots are not found in Rungwe.

Rungwe District had by then no known iron ore source. So the inhabitants used to import iron instruments from Ukinga which was endowed with a lot of iron ore. Monica Wilson claims that the people of Rungwe were dependent on iron smelted by the Kinga who made it into weapons and tools and sold them to the area up to the introduction of European colonialism.<sup>28</sup> She also notes that, they were getting iron weapons and tools from the Nyiha in the west who were experienced in iron smelting, hence enabling them to obtain hoes and spears from either Ukinga or Unyiha.<sup>29</sup> In the later years, the Kisi supplied hoes and other iron implements to the people of the area after buying them from the Kinga and Mwela when they crossed the lake using their canoes.<sup>30</sup> These were exchanged for cattle, food, and trees for the construction of canoes. Before they came into contact with iron smelting areas, especially Ukinga, they used wooden hoes which were more crude and ineffective to cultivate their land.<sup>31</sup> Trade relations in iron weapons and instruments promoted close relations between the people of Rungwe, Kisi and Kinga because of their constant meetings caused by demand for iron from these sources.

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<sup>26</sup> S.R.Charsley; op.cit; p. 60.

<sup>27</sup> M. H. Wilson; op.cit; p.10.

<sup>28</sup> M. Wilson; op.cit; p.15.

<sup>29</sup> Monica (Hunter) Wilson; op.cit.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid; p. 72.

<sup>31</sup> M. Wilson; op.cit.



Bark clothes were imported in Rungwe District from Undali to the west, whereby the Ndali had become skilled bark cloth makers. Though the trade in cloth between the two communities existed for generations, Monica Wilson notes that it was not very significant because there were also many people in the area who had become specialised in cloth making from tree barks.<sup>32</sup> The ability of the people of Rungwe to manufacture their own cloth to a large extent did not necessitate for a very important trade in terms of cloth between people of the area in the current Rungwe District and Ndali, and this made the former to value more the trade in iron weapons and equipments and pots with Kinga and Kisi to the east than with Ndali to the west.

Salt was a very important commodity of trade in pre-colonial Rungwe, which increased social relations among the residents themselves and with other neighbours as it sometimes was given as gifts after it was purchased. Monica (Hunter) Wilson points out that, according to oral tradition, salt was imported to Rungwe from Ubena through Ukinga, though archaeological evidence demonstrates that the main centre for salt production was “Ivuna” which was located to the north west of the district near Lake Rukwa.<sup>33</sup> Salt was an essential commodity among them and all other communities involved in it, as it was very important in giving their food a better flavour that attracted them to eat. It was also used to preserve food. Therefore, this necessity made salt to be one amongst the most demanded goods among the different ethnic groups in Rungwe District. Consequently, trade relations that existed between the people of Rungwe District and their neighbours in that geographical region by then, were a result of an unequal distribution of resources whereby some had and others had not, scarcity of vital metals or minerals especially iron and salt that made the societies with shortages of those commodities to seek them from those that had, and the presence of regional specialisation whereby one society engaged in production of certain commodities more efficiently and needed to supplement their necessities of life by getting them from other areas which were better in their production.

### **3.0 The Colonial Period**

#### **3.1 Rungwe District under German Colonial Rule 1893 to 1916**

Without delay, after the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 the Imperial Government of Germany began to use the chartered company, German East Africa Company to colonise the area currently known as Mainland Tanzania. This was a result of bogus treaties that were signed between Karl Peters and native chiefs declaring the territory a German Protectorate in 1884. This arrangement was acknowledged by the British Government.<sup>34</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1891, the Imperial Government took over the territory from the German East African Company after it failed to run the colony due to many problems and without aid from the government.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid; p. 98.

<sup>33</sup> M. H. Wilson; op.cit; p.10.

<sup>34</sup> Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division, *A Hand book of German East Africa* (January, 1916) p. 68.

<sup>35</sup> G. F. Sayers (ed.). *The Hand book of Tanganyika* (London, Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1930) pp. 43, 66.

The introduction of German colonial rule was not an easy process. It faced stiff opposition from local people almost everywhere like Bwana Kheri and Abushiri along the coast in 1888/89, the Hehe resistances of 1891 to 1898 and the serious Maji Maji uprising in 1905.<sup>36</sup>

Rungwe came under effective occupation by the Germans in 1893 when the German explorer Major Von Wissmann entered the area through Lumbila which was named Langenburg. This locality was to be found on the shores of Lake Nyasa, currently in Ludewa District. A military station with a steamer was built there. Rungwe started to be ruled from Lumbila. The first District Officer (Bezirksamtmann) known as Baron von Eltz was appointed. But attempts of introducing colonial rule in Rungwe were met by resistance from Nyakyusa chiefs in the southern part of the district. The Germans managed to suppress the resistance and imposed effective colonisation leaving about 200 to 300 people dead.<sup>37</sup> The defeat of the Nyakyusa Chiefs and their people marked the beginning of complete colonial domination as no one dared to resist the Germans who had sophisticated weapons compared to theirs. In 1900 the District Office ("Bezirks-amt") was transferred from Lumbila ("Langenburg") to Tukuyu in Rungwe District. It was named "Neu-langenburg" which meant New Langenburg, and Lumbila was given the name of "Alt-Langenburg" to mean Old Langenburg. Old Langenburg (Lumbila) was left as a sub-office ("Nebenstelle") and an important harbour to anchor the small steamer that was brought by Von Wismann having duties to "fight against slave traders" who tended to penetrate into the area from Nyasaland (Malawi).<sup>38</sup> Rungwe District was known then as Langenburg District. It was very large covering the whole of to-day's Mbeya Region and some parts of Ufipa, Ubena, Ukinga and Songea.

The colonial state set about to create mechanisms to mobilise labour to perform all activities related to colonial exploitation of Rungwe resources. In 1900, the District Administrative Office imposed hut and poll taxes of about "3 Rupees"<sup>39</sup> upon the indigenous people for the purpose of forcing them to provide labour in the colonial economic projects. This is said to have caused a lot of unrest among the people as the Germans applied brutal means to force them to come out to work in order to procure money to pay taxes. The Maji Maji Resistance of 1905 was felt in Rungwe District as it caused some unrest, though no open fighting took place against German troops. A few remnants of Ngoni fighters were forced to go and live in an area south of Tukuyu town known as Masukulu in order to limit them from any possibility to mobilise other people to fight against the colonial administration. In 1909, European settlements, apart from missionaries, were very much attracted following the visit of the "Unter-Staats von Lindequist", that is, the ministry of colonies, in the district. More settlers came and started to plant coffee. Moravian Missionaries at Kyimbila opened a big rubber plantation about 1906 and later tea was grown by

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<sup>36</sup> J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977) pp.92-98., Admiralty War Staff, Intelligence Division; op.cit; p.16.

<sup>37</sup> Tanzania National Archives, *Rungwe District Book I*, "Early History of the Rungwe District (Bezirks Langenburg) up to the year 1914".

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid; S. R. Charsley; op.cit; p.114.

both missionaries and settlers in different areas of the district.<sup>40</sup> The year 1910 marked the highest stage of colonial hegemony and domination when “an Askari company” was positioned in the district at Neu-Langenburg and later moved to Masoko.<sup>41</sup> These aimed at making all people obedient to colonial rule and participate fully in all economic activities the indigenous people were assigned in their process to seek cash to pay taxes. In 1912, the “Bezirksrat (Advisory Council)” was established at Neu-Langenburg with elected members from the European population, with “two missionaries.”<sup>42</sup> It acted to advise the civilian district government on how to rule the district in the best interests of Germany without facing a lot of problems in ruling the natives from the district.

The end of German Rule in Rungwe was in early 1916<sup>43</sup> when the German troops and Civil Officer left Neu-Langenburg for Njombe leaving the whole district under British troops who started their civil administration at Tukuyu in July the same year. Rungwe District is likely to be unique when compared to the whole territory which came under the full-control of the British Colonial State as a Mandate Territory of the League of Nations in 1919; because once it was conquered in 1916 by British troops from Nyasaland, a complete civil administration was set up and signalled an absolute end of German Rule in the district.

### 3.2 Rungwe District under British Colonial Rule 1916 to 1961

As pointed out above, Rungwe was taken by British troops during the First World War in 1916 when German troops withdrew from the district and Major Wells became the first District Political Officer. During this time, most administrative duties were connected to Nyasaland (currently Malawi) until February 1919 when Mainland Tanzania became a mandate territory entrusted to Britain under the League of Nations. The first Administrator of the occupied territory was Sir Horace Byatt.<sup>44</sup> It was at that time that the connection with Nyasaland ceased, with senior officials being withdrawn, and only the District Political Officer Major Wells remaining. This is regarded to be one of the reasons for the Ex-President of Malawi Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda to claim that Rungwe District was part of his country in the post independence era. In 1920, the district was renamed Rungwe and its township New Langenburg, Tukuyu. Present day districts of Kyela and Ileje continued to be parts of Rungwe District until very late in the 1970s.

Like Germans, the British had the same motives of colonising, and therefore, introduced measures to make people work to pay taxes. In 1917<sup>45</sup>, the British imposed tax so as to compel them to work on several economic projects that were left unfinished by the Germans. The British revived them.

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<sup>40</sup> Tanzania National Archives, Rungwe District Book I; Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> G. F. Sayers; op.cit; p. 66; Tanzania National Archives, *Rungwe District Book I*; op.cit.

<sup>45</sup> D. H. Thwaites; op.cit; p.238.

### 3.3 The Labour Question

During the whole period of British colonial administration, labour was abundant since most natives were seeking work in order to get money because there were no “economic crops.”<sup>46</sup> But when the British allowed peasants to grow coffee, many taxable unmarried young men were attracted to go out to work in order to get money to pay bride price, since economic crops were mainly owned by men who got married and resided in permanent localities. Even people who grew coffee as a cash crop had necessity to leave in search of work as coffee was badly affected by pests and diseases resulting in low yields.<sup>47</sup> This forced them to look for work wherever they could sell their labour power and obtain money that would enable them to pay tax and sustain daily lives. Originally, government work on road construction and portering were the usual work whereby people got paid for in terms of cash. Portering was very common prior to the opening of roads to “Iringa and Kilosa and the early years of the King’s African Rifles” which employed many porters from the district. Later on when the Lupa Goldfields were opened, labour flocked to the place. From about 1925 many people from the district started to be pushed to work in “sisal estates of the Central Railway Line and Tanga Province.”<sup>48</sup> 1932 witnessed many labourers employed on tea estates that had been established in place of coffee that experienced many diseases. The higher demand of labour at Lupa Goldfields, Mbozi coffee farms where the planters paid better wages than the tea planters in Rungwe resulted in shortages of labour from time to time in tea estates in the district.<sup>49</sup> During the months of January to March, which are a period of agricultural activity for natives of Rungwe, there was normally a shortage of labour as tea is not a seasonal crop; it needs a constant labour supply, hence, causing awkwardness to tea estate owners. Therefore, the question of labour was very important in determining the exploitation of Tanganyikan resources since the British, like other Europeans, were physically and socially incapable to work. They needed natives to provide their labour through putting mechanisms that forced them to respond positively (See table 1 below).

**Table1: Estimates of labourers from Rungwe District employed in different sectors during British colonial rule from 1923 to 1926 and 1929**

Activity	Year	Number of labourers
Portering – King’s African rifles	1926	1195
Administrative Officers	do	421
Labourers – roads	do	926
Buildings, brick making and lime burning	do	2152
Farm labourers	1923	500
	1926	500

<sup>46</sup> Tanzania National Archives, Rungwe District Book I; Loc.cit.

<sup>47</sup> D. H. Thwaites; Loc.cit.

<sup>48</sup> TNA, Rungwe District Book I; Loc.cit.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Recruited Labourers for the coast	1923	2123
	1924	2457
	1925	1209
	1926	1655
Labourers on the Lupa gold fields	1923	700
	1929	3000

Source: TNA, Rungwe District Book I; op.cit

The struggle for labour within and without the district created stiff competition among colonial investors for labourers and those who paid lowly were liable to miss reliable and constant supply of manpower.

#### 4.0 Early Attempts at Establishing Cash Crop Production in Rungwe District

The first cash crop to be grown in Rungwe District was coffee which was brought by Berlin Lutheran Missionaries about 1900. Natives were not allowed to grow it until the year 1930. Europeans endeavoured to make coffee an industry from 1924 but the plan was not successful. They were forced to start planting tea as a substitute.<sup>50</sup> Coffee was then left by Europeans to be grown on estates as it was much prone to pests and diseases while tea had very few diseases which by that time were not seen. African peasants were permitted to grow coffee in their smallholdings as the Europeans decided to cultivate tea that was free from pests and diseases. Thus, coffee became a peasant cash crop after the Europeans resorted to grow tea by uprooting coffee plants and planting tea seedlings. Before seeds which were planted at Kyimbila Mission in 1904 grew into seed bearers that started to yield seeds for establishing tea estates in the 1913, the Moravian Mission at Kyimbila had begun a large rubber plantation about 1906 which could no longer thrive after a great price depreciation. At Manow, the Berlin Lutheran Mission stopped growing rubber and started a coffee plantation.<sup>51</sup> When the former crops, coffee and rubber were seen to be likely unprofitable to Europeans due to pests and diseases which reduced yields for coffee and fall in price of rubber, the latter crop (rubber) totally disappeared in the vicinity of the district. However, coffee became a peasant crop grown together with banana trees. The introduction of cash crops in Rungwe District resulted in widespread alienation of land which was granted to settlers and created a great tragedy to the people as they were drawn away from their ancestors' land leaving everything destroyed.

<sup>50</sup>D. H. Thwaites; op. cit.

<sup>51</sup> Tanzania National Archives, *Rungwe District Book I*; op. cit.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

This article has looked at the geography, economic activities in Rungwe District conducted by indigenous people and colonialists. Before the introduction of colonialism in 1893, the natives engaged in self-sufficient economy in which production of all basic needs took place and the rest was exchanged for other commodities from neighbouring societies that produced different from theirs. The situation led to the development of amicable trade relations within the region. The people of Rungwe District never participated in long distance trade because they were very industrious.

It was German colonial rule that started to integrate them into the World Capitalist economy, by making them participate fully in production of raw materials on the settler estates, buying European manufactures at the expense of local commodities and construction of colonial physical infrastructures, like roads, administrative buildings and military fortresses. But that integration meant exploitation of the African people by Germans as the latter forbade natives to grow cash crops. During British colonial rule which existed for a long time, people of Rungwe were further pushed into world economic systems by forcing them to sell their labour cheaply on settler estates in the district and in distant areas such as the sisal plantations in the coastal areas of Tanga and Morogoro, and the Lupa Gold fields. The pressure exerted by the cash economy which is one of the important elements of the capitalist economy played a great role to force people to seek money so that they could pay colonial taxes and perform any other necessary activities that needed money. The change of the former self-sufficient economy into a dependent colonial economy had wicked impacts among the indigenous people and most of the previous good economic systems and institutions never recovered because colonialists aimed at eliminating them from the district.